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TITLE

‘Otherness’ and self-censorship in the land of coups: Greek correspondents in Turkey pre and post-coup attempt.

ABSTRACT

Greek correspondents are a unique species among the other foreign correspondents based in Turkey, due to their nationality; they have a delicate role of ‘otherness’ since their home and host countries are neighbors with a long history of fragile relations. Set within the frame of the failed coup attempt in Turkey in July 2016, this research localizes the differences in the Greek correspondents’ job before and after the failed coup attempt bearing their ‘otherness’. Based on the collection of primary data through in-depth semi-structured interviews with all the Greek correspondents in Turkey, the findings were conceptualized within the Actor Network Theory combined with the framework of Histoire Croisée. The results revealed that after the failed coup attempt their work has deteriorated by four major changes: encumbrance of their journalistic role due to their ‘otherness’, increase of self-censorship, more workload due to higher demand for stories and extinction of governmental and diplomatic sources. This research claims that the identity of the ‘opponent otherness’ is a key factor aggravating the practices of foreign correspondents in times of political crises; lastly, it is revealed that when democracy is backsliding, local and foreign journalism are becoming parallelly ill and present a causality effect.

KEYWORDS

foreign correspondents, 'opponent other', self-censorship, failed coup attempt in Turkey, actor network theory, *histoire croisée*.

INTRODUCTION

Foreign correspondents always share their energy and work between the host and the home country (Hahn & Lönnendonker, 2009). Their job is often referred to as the ‘the art of balancing’ because of cultural and political differences between their two countries (Kester, 2010). They are responsible for the image that they give of their host country to their home country and they must “cross cultural barriers and make the unfamiliar familiar to their audiences” (Williams, 2011:27) Additionally, ‘going native’ after having spent too many years in the host country may deprive the foreign correspondent of the critical eye needed to report the host country’s news impartially (Hamilton & Jenner, 2004).

The existing literature shows that for foreign correspondents reporting from Turkey, as Yanardağoglu stresses (2014), have to deal with the most figured issue which the country negotiates with: the way Turkey -as a predominantly Muslim secular country- treats Islam. The self-censorship among Turkish journalists has risen considerably under the rule of the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi - AKP) -after the party firstly came into power in 2002- and this rise lies on legal, political and ownership-status pressures on journalists (Yesil, 2014). Kaymas (2011) affirms that there is a strong and interactive bond between media systems, democracy nexus and Turkey’s paternalistic and clientelist media structure, which influences this balance and makes it fragile, especially in times of crises. Furthermore, the combination of the existing media ownership in terms of holdings may lead toward a model of neoliberal media autocracy (Akser & Baybars-Hawks, 2012); Över (2021) claims that the convergence towards a unilateral state narrative in Turkish media had already started in the country since the second victory of the AK Party in the elections of 2007 and has continued to develop toward that direction. Finally, Akin (2017) argues that the failed coup attempt of July 2016 in Turkey has deteriorated the access to political news and the news making process has become a crucial and complex operation.

Set within the frame of the failed coup attempt in Turkey in July 2016, this research localizes the differences in the Greek correspondents’ job before and after the failed coup attempt bearing their ‘otherness’, based on the collection of primary data through in-depth semi-structured interviews with all the Greek correspondents in Turkey. The originality of this research lies on the combination of two factors:

- a) The notion of the ‘opponent other’ in a journalistic identity or how do Greek correspondents perceive and perform their role in Turkey as journalists or representatives of the ‘opponent neighbour’.
- b) The frame of political unrest created by the failed coup attempt of July 2016 and its aftermath and the relevant repercussions on the work of the Greek correspondents.

In the existing literature, there have been some recent relevant academic works, amongst which two stand out for their close relation to our research. Davis (2020) conducts interviews with foreign correspondents in Turkey and presents the existence of self-censorship among them. Even if this research offers an interesting insight on self-censorship of foreign journalists in Turkey, on one hand it does not focus on the attempted coup d'état of July 15, on the other hand the interviewees are in general 'westerns' (Americans, one Canadian and one English journalist). Within the same spectrum, the research of Pukallus, Bradley, Clarke & Harrison (2020) argues that the amount of self-censorship has increased after the failed coup attempt in Turkey; however, aims at local journalists only. Consequently, no research has been conducted on foreign correspondents in Turkey using as a crucial point in their job performance this failed coup attempt combined with their so-called 'otherness', as described by researches relevant to the stereotypic 'otherness' in Greece and Turkey (Anastasiou & Bilge, 2015, Kostarella, 2007, Millas, 2004, 2017). In this regard, this paper fills the gap by focusing on the two aforementioned crucial points in an attempt to widen the discussion about the encumbrance of foreign journalism due to opponent 'otherness' in times of political unrest. Through in-depth semi-structured interviews with all the Greek correspondents living and working in Turkey we gained valuable data in order to construct the network of the key actors in their job; we proceeded with the conceptualization of these networks through the prism of Actor Network Theory (Garrety 2014, Latour 1996, 2005, Lezaun 2017, Walsham, 1997) combined with the methodological approach of Histoire Croisée (Entangled History) (Droux & Hofstetter, 2014, Iriye & Saunier, 2009, Wernen & Zimmerman, 2006). This combination offers an explanatory ecology, as Archetti (2019) suggests, within which the constellations of the Greek correspondents demonstrate all the critical changes in their work before and after the failed coup attempt. The combination of ANT with Histoire Croisée was chosen because ANT grants equal agency to both humans and non-human actors; it allowed this research to conceptualize the non-human actors -the failed coup attempt, the city of Istanbul, the Greek agency's agenda, the official sources, the correspondents' mobile phone and computer, internet and social media, their output stories- and explore the interplay with the human factors -Greek correspondents and their colleagues. The construction of networks has no defined point of beginning and end; therefore, this research opted to apply the approach of Histoire Croisée because it allows the research itself to define the beginning and the end of networks' construction during the research, being an inductive approach that does not shape a priori categories (Archetti, 2019); consequently, there is no arbitrary choice made by the researcher.

This research sheds light on the work of the Greek correspondents bearing in mind that working as a correspondent in the *opponent's* country requires the 'know-how' of reporting to the home agency about issues of national interest to both home and host country (Anastasiou & Bilge, 2015, Yanardağoglu, 2014). Throughout the interviews taken for this research, the Greek correspondents admitted that they find

themselves many times in between the two countries, often in quest for the appropriate words. As news about Turkey make very often headlines in the Greek news (Anastasiou & Bilge, 2015, Kostarella, 2007), the role of the Greek correspondents in Turkey is viewed as a valuable eyewitness from the insides of the most ‘interesting neighbor’ according to Millas’ (2004) use of this term. On the other hand, for all of them, the failed coup attempt, the following state of emergency which lasted for two whole years (Çelik, 2018) and the crackdown on domestic and foreign journalists (Davis, 2020, Pukallus et al., 2020) has had serious repercussions also on them. The results can be summarized as follows:

- the amount of self-censorship has risen considerably for various reasons: they are afraid of sanctions (deported, work permit annulled, entry denied) in the Turkish state of surveillance and the uniformed governmental narrative within the autocratic local media landscape puts pressure on the choice of the correct words,

- they consider their role as more fragile and delicate than before, feeling the pressure of not to irritate the authorities of the host country but in the meantime try to satisfy the needs for stories from the home agency and its ‘imagined audience’, which is the perceived receiver of what the journalist communicates as Litt (2012: 331) points out,

- the access to governmental sources as a news source has become extinct deteriorating verification of political news,

- the workload has increased because the home agency requires for more stories, which is in line with Fracchiolla (2020) who reported increased workload as a post-coup aftermath for the correspondents of other European countries.

OTHERNESS, LAND OF COUPS AND SELF-CENSORSHIP

Why the Greek correspondents in Turkey have a special interest?

Millas (2017) argues that Greece and Turkey are both “founded on the negative image of the demonized ‘other’”. His study about the teaching of history as a school subject in both countries indicate that both countries’ history school textbooks present an image of the “other” full of prejudice, historical distortions and one-sided information (Millas, 1991).

After the deadly earthquakes of 1999 in Athens and in Istanbul, a peaceful period started which lasted for four years and brought the two countries closer through means of ‘disaster diplomacy’ (Koukis, Kelman & Ganapati, 2016); the two countries seemed to inaugurate a new phase of mutual improvement in their

relations -attempting to find a solution even about the Cyprus issue- which lasted until 2014 (Atrashkevich, 2019).

Nevertheless, nowadays, the political relations of the two countries are still based on misperceptions, national stereotypes and the three traditional disputes: the Cyprus issue, the Aegean Sea dispute and the reciprocal minorities (Heraclides & Çakmak, 2019). To sum up, both countries present for each other a special interest in political, historical and social fields (Millas, 2004) as an important and 'opponent' geopolitical neighbor. Finally, when it comes to media, Kostarella (2007) claims that both countries' national media contribute to the perpetuation of the narrative of conflict between the two countries; in her study about how the Greek media frame the Turkish 'other' she claims that in events of mutual national interest, such as the Imia/Kardak crisis in 1996, the Greek media framed a stereotypical 'other' drawn upon aggressiveness and hostility. Anastasiou and Bilge (2015) claim that the journalists of the two countries detect signs of nationalism when it comes to covering news of national interest against the 'other'.

A land of coups, the failed coup attempt of July 2016 and its aftermath

The course of democratization of the country since the inauguration of the multiparty system in 1950 has been interrupted quite some times by the intervention of military coups (Arsan, 2013, Esen & Gumuscu, 2017). The relevant literature will allow us to give a quick glance to the history of military coups in modern Turkey (Kaya, 2019, Milan, 2016, Zürcher, 2017): the coup d'état in 1960 led by General Cemal Gürsel resulting to the removal of President Celal Bayar and to the execution of Prime Minister Menderes, the 1971 military memorandum against the government which led to another coup and the fall of Demirel's government, the 1980 coup d'état led by General Kenan Evren which established martial law until 1983 and later was replaced by state of emergency in several south-eastern pro-Kurdish regions of Turkey, the 1997 military memorandum –known as 'post-modern coup'- led by admiral Salim Dervişoğlu requesting the resignation of Prime Minister Erbakan. Finally, the most recent is the failed coup attempt of July 15th in 2016.

This coup attempt went live on Turkish media at 10 p.m. local time on Friday the 15th July and soon after midnight the Prime Minister at that time and nowadays President of the Turkish Republic, Recep Tayyip Erdogan made a live appeal to all Turkish citizens to go out in the streets and protect democracy against the putschists (Esen & Gumuscu, 2017). Next morning found the country with 272 deaths and hundreds of injuries (Milan, 2016). Erdogan and the AK Party declared shortly afterwards that the master mind behind the failed coup attempt is the self-exiled in the USA former Turkish Islamic cleric Abdullah Fethullah Gülen and his Islamic Movement Hizmet (Service) naming them as the terrorist organization FETÖ (Yavuz

& Balci, 2018). As Taş (2018) underlines this failed coup attempt was a ‘gift from God’ for Erdogan because it allowed him to eradicate all roots and connections of the Gülen movement -formerly allies but later on enemies- from all fields of the Turkish life: militaries, academics, public servants, judges, policemen and journalists. Five days after the failed coup, the country entered a state of emergency (Olağanüstü Hal – OHAL) which was being renewed every three months and lasted until July 2018 (Çelik, 2018). The period of the OHAL meant that thousands of people, suspected of having a connection to the Gülen movement, were prosecuted, jailed, fired often without a trial but with just an administrative decision or a legislative decree, creating an environment of limited freedom of expression (Insel, 2017).

Despite its failure, Akkemik, Çiçek, Horioka & Niimi (2020) argue that the coup attempt had a significant negative effect on the state of happiness, trust and life-satisfaction of Turkish people, as well as on the Turkish economic growth as Yagci (2018) claims. Akin (2017) argues that the totality of the journalistic environment of the country suffered a major impact in terms of increasingly lack of freedom of expression.

Self-censorship in a state of surveillance

Noelle-Neumann (1974) gave a crucial insight in the process of the public opinion formation when she talked about the ‘spiral of silence’: when someone holds an opinion, which belongs to a minority, s/he tends to conceal this opinion in front of public or remain silent. This is a common practice for local journalists and foreign correspondents in authoritarian media landscapes, such as Turkey’s, when the ‘fear’ occurs (Davis, 2020): fear of being sanctioned, fired, prosecuted, jailed, deported or even fear for your own safety and for your loved ones’. Foucault (1975), through his famed ‘Surveiller et punir’, brought into the attention of the wider public the idea of ‘panopticon’, firstly developed by Jeremy Bentham¹. Foucault (1975) argues that in a panoptic society, the discipline of the citizens –in fear of punishment- is guaranteed. The

¹ Jeremy Bentham (1748 -1832) was an English philosopher, jurist, and social reformer regarded as the founder of modern utilitarianism. He developed his idea of a circular building, applicable to prisons and allowing fewer staff, where the guard would be able to watch directly the prisoners without them seeing him; the innovation was that even without a guard, the prisoners would believe that they were still watched, creating an everlasting effect of being under constant surveillance and thus rehabilitation. In Bentham & Božovič (1995: 1) it is explained that:

[...] The panopticon writings consist of series of Letters written from Russia in 1787 ‘to a friend in England’, and two Postscripts written in 1790 and 1791 [...]. The panopticon is nothing more than ‘a simple idea in architecture’, never realized, describing ‘a new mode of obtaining power or mind over mind, in a quantity hitherto without example’ -the possessor of this power is ‘the inspector’ with his invisible omnipresence, ‘an utterly dark spot’ in the all-transparent, light-flooded universe of the panopticon [...]

transparency of the society that the panopticon promises becomes the trojan horse used to establish an open-air ‘prison’. For a journalist in a state of surveillance, who is afraid of potential punishment, the means of self-censorship is one of the key self-defense mechanisms in order to avoid legal repercussions (Arsan, 2013).

Consequently, the question that arises is the following: Is Turkey a state of surveillance for journalists?

Let the numbers talk. Turkey is the second biggest jailer of journalists in the world, after China and out of 179 sovereign countries it is classified 154th in the 2020 World Press Freedom Index (Reporters Without Borders [RSF], 2020). According to the Committee to Protect Journalists’ data, which are available for the years between 1992 and 2021 (CPJ data, 2021), in 2020 Turkey had 37 journalists in prison², all Turkish citizens, whereas the number of journalists and media workers killed in Turkey in total between 1992 and 2021 with motive confirmed is 26. The Stockholm Center for Freedom (SCF, 2021)³ raises the number of jailed journalists in Turkey and gives us more detailed numbers for the ones arrested, pending trial and wanted: as of January 8 2021, 81 journalists are convicted and are in prison, 94 are arrested and pending trial and 167 are wanted and are being either in exile or remain at large. The website turkeypurge.com⁴ focuses only on “Turkey’s port-coup crackdown” and informs us that as of March 4 2019, 189 media outlets have been or have shut down after the failed coup attempt of July 2016.

During the two years of OHAL, with the excuse of ‘keeping democracy protected’, many basic rights and freedoms were suspended throughout the country (Merz, 2018). According to the articles 119 and 120 of the Turkish Constitution, the Council of Ministers and the President can declare a state of emergency for

² It worth mentioning that in the year of the failed coup attempt (2016), the number of imprisoned journalists in Turkey reached the highest number among all the years available in this database (CPJ, 1992-2021) and it reached the number of 86 journalists. For more detailed data by year, see <https://cpj.org/data/imprisoned/>

³ Stockholm Center for Freedom (SCF) ‘is a non-profit advocacy organization that promotes the rule of law, democracy, fundamental rights and freedoms, set up by a group of journalists who have been forced to live in self-exile in Stockholm, against the background of a massive crackdown on press freedom in Turkey’ (<https://stockholmcfr.org/about-us/>).

⁴ According to the creators of this website (<https://turkeypurge.com/>) it is “a website that was established with the aim of tracking the extensive witch-hunt in Turkey [...] We are a small group of young journalists [...] we keep a daily account of academics, military officers, police officers, teachers, government officials and bureaucrats who have been dismissed from their jobs as part of the ongoing purge”. It compiles data from PEN International (<https://pen-international.org/>), Platform for Independent Journalism ([P24] <http://platform24.org/>), Stockholm Center for Freedom ([SCF] <https://stockholmcfr.org/>), Journalists’ Union of Turkey ([TGS] <https://tgs.org.tr/>), Progressive Journalists Association ([ÇGD] <https://www.ifj.org/>), and Bianet online news portal (<https://bianet.org/>).

two main reasons: natural disasters, epidemics, economic repression or reasons related to national security and deterioration of public order (Göztepe, 2018).

Among other restrictions and prohibitions implemented during this period such as gatherings, searching of people and their belongings and longer duration of keeping people arrested before trial, the most relevant to our research are the ones referring to:

- a) Intervention to media and freedom of expression: publication and circulation of newspapers can be restricted or prohibited; written, verbal and visual communication tools can be monitored and prohibited; media activities can be restricted or suspended (Özkut & Aşçı, 2020).
- b) Cross-border operations: if emergency situations continue across the country's border or with neighboring countries or actors responsible for the emergency situations fleeing to neighboring countries, a cross-border operation is initiabile⁵.

The existing literature argues that the Turkish media workers after the failed coup attempt suffer from an increasing autocracy in the media landscape leading to a lack of freedom in news-making (Akin, 2017) and to their self-censorship (Davis, 2020); furthermore, the mainstream media outlets of the country function as a means of propaganda for the demands of the ruling AK Party and its president within a frame of a state of surveillance (Topak, 2019) and little space is left to journalists to fight against the authoritarian Turkish government (Ataman & Çoban, 2018). Yesil and Sozeri (2017: 543-544) claim that the Turkish government has implemented an online surveillance system according to their logic of religion and conservatism⁶. Lastly, content on social media can be banned if the social media's companies fail to present local representatives in the country according to a recent 'social media law' voted in January 2021; this law "stifles dissent" according to Sezer and Butler (2021).

Consequently, within this socio-political frame, the following hypotheses are formulated:

⁵ The day after the failed coup attempt, eight Turkish soldiers fled to the border city of Alexandroupoli in Greece seeking refuge. They were arrested for illegal entry and led to court. Turkey demanded their extradition because they were suspected of being involved in the coup attempt. For fear of their lives, the soldiers requested asylum in Greece and asked to remain in detention. This quickly provoked the anger of the Turkish side and escalated in a tension between the two neighboring countries (Smith, 2016).

⁶ They further argue that the key political developments that enabled the government to expand their authoritarianism and surveillance are the Gezi protests throughout the whole country in June 2013, the revelations of serious corruption cases incriminating high governmental members in December 2013, the extensive armed conflicts in the southeast region of Turkey in July 2015 and the failed coup attempt in July 2016.

H1: Greek journalists in Turkey, as their local colleagues, many times seek refuge to self-censorship while reporting, in an attempt to maintain their safety in the host country.

H2: Their national identity of ‘otherness’ plays an important -often negative- role in their journalistic work in the host country.

METHODOLOGY

We conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with all the Greek correspondents, since the relevant to foreign correspondents literature (Archetti, 2012, Hamilton and Jenner, 2004, Kester 2010, Williams, 2011, Yanardağoglu 2014) argues that in-depth interviews is considered an appropriate methodology to extract the findings needed. The sample was gathered through personal networking -because the researcher has lived in Istanbul during the period before and after the failed coup attempt- and all of the existing Greek correspondents in Istanbul participated to the research.

The robustness of this research is guaranteed by two factors: firstly, this research includes the totality of the Greek correspondents residing in Turkey before and after the coup attempt. Secondly, we aimed to achieve the ‘theoretical saturation’, where all data from the interviews was explored and exhausted until no new information was obtained as suggested by Bowen (2008) and Morse (1995). The term of the ‘theoretical’ or ‘meaning saturation’ refers to “the point in data collection when no additional issues or insights emerge from data and all relevant conceptual categories have been identified, explored, and exhausted” (Hennink, Kaiser and Marconi, 2017: 592).

Kvale (2008: 102-103) proposes six steps when it comes to in-depth interviews: Self and routine, Relationships, Interpretation by the interviewer, Analysis of the transcript, Follow-up interviews if needed and finally Relating interview to interviewee’s pre-interview action. Taking those six steps into consideration, the planning of the questions was based and categorized according to Archetti’s (2012) suggestion and so, the questions were shaped under seven main categories, referring to: Identity, Working routine, Sources, Output/stories, Image of Turkey, Coup questions, Changes after coup questions. Lastly, as Turner III (2010) suggests, we conducted follow-up interviews with all the participants addressing questions derived from the reviewers’ comments with the aim to gain deeper and corroborated data.

The interviews were held via Skype, they were recorded, transcribed and translated in English. They took place between March and June 2020 and the duration of each one was between 60 and 90 minutes. The number of participants is five and covers the totality of existing Greek correspondents in Turkey. In order to curb hesitance and suspiciousness of the participants, due to the socio-political frame of the Turkish

surveillance, as explained before in this research, they were granted total anonymity. Additionally, they were given the right to have access to the final product of their interview and eventually delete any kind of information which could potentially incriminate them in the eyes of authorities, if the content of these interviews were to be leaked out in the public in any way. Thankfully, this didn't happen. Furthermore, they received a cover letter explaining in detail the topic and the aim of the research, which included all personal data of the researcher and a declaration statement for informed consent form, which both researcher and participant had to sign and agree that the results of the interviews as well as transcript parts would be published in a research paper.

Theoretical framework

In order to be able to map the 'before network' and the post-coup change(s) in the work of the Greek correspondents, the results of the interviews are being contextualized according to the Actor-Network Theory. The Actor Network Theory (ANT) offers the chance for the construction of networks (Latour 1996, 2005, Lewis & Westlund, 2015), within which the Greek correspondents can be assigned as actors and the political crisis due to the failed coup attempt, the political situation established in post-coup Turkey and the correspondents' routines are assigned as objects, as Archetti (2014: 586) suggests. Additionally, we attempt to trace the actors that the Greek correspondents "delegate competences" to (Johnson, 1988: 310), from their technologic tools until the human or non-human relations/situations/concepts which emerge. When an Actor delegates power to a factor or an object (Delegation), s/he inscribes the factor as an Actor (Inscription) and the explanation of 'how' an actor is bonded with another actor refers to the Translation (Lewis & Westlund, 2015). Any act in the world (e.g. the job of a Greek correspondent) is influenced by different (f)actors. The actors, their ties, their nodes and the relevant translations create a Network. The ANT describes the ongoing processes within such a network (Archetti, 2014).

Furthermore, taken into consideration that the Greek correspondents create and belong to a series of networks and assuming that both humans and non-humans are inseparable (Nimmo, 2011: 116) this research maps their 'eco-system' (assemblages) and the 'chains' or 'nodes' that associate them to one another and thus create their networks (Garrety, 2014: 15). The existing literature (Couldry 2008, Fioravanti and Velho 2010, Lewis & Westlund 2015, Plesner 2009, Tabak 2015, Turner 2005) suggests the applicability of Actor Network Theory to scientific researches in the areas of journalism and communication, whereas the number of participants does not contradict nor confute the applicability of ANT on this research.

The Actor Network Theory was chosen for several reasons, based on the aforementioned literature: because it explores how relations between objects, people and concepts are formed, rather than why they are formed. Also, it grants an equal amount of value and agency to both human and non-human actors. Finally, because the ANT seeks to define and describe the relational ties between human and non-human actors within a network by placing a said network within a flat ontology.

Challenges arisen while applying the ANT

A researcher can easily fall into the trap of over-describing a network. Since we assume that all our relationships create networks, how are these networks firstly traced and shaped and where will all these networks stop? Taken as a given that every assemblage (network) is made up of actors and actors are made up of assemblages, where should the research of an assemblage stop? Is it up to the researcher to stop the breaking down of assemblages? And if s/he does, will this be considered as arbitrary? How will we ensure the validity of our mapped and researched networks?

The solution offered by Histoire Croisée

In an attempt to establish boundaries of a phenomenon and to make sure that everything relevant to our research is included, Archetti (2019) proposes the methodological approach of Histoire Croisée in the field of Journalism for the first time.

Histoire Croisée (Entangled History) was developed in the science of history, when historians passed from the nationalization to the internationalization, rooted into the notion of globalization, around the '90s (Iriye & Saunier, 2009, Wernen & Zimmerman, 2006). It marked a point when historians passed from the national history to the transnational or international history (Droux & Hofstetter, 2014).

Belonging to the “relational approaches”, the Histoire Croisée has been employed ever since in various social sciences. It takes into account the socio-cultural interactions and thus alternations –still identifiable– between actors and objects, “not only in relation to one another but also through one another, in terms of relationships, interactions and circulation” (Wernen and Zimmerman, 2006: 39).

As Archetti notices (2019: 6), the correspondents and their networks are constellations of actors, technologies, locations and situations which create a ‘circulatory regime’. Saunier (2013) underlines the importance of ‘circulations’: in other words, actors, networks and the ties between them. This enables us to track down the creation and the dynamics of the networks of our foreign correspondents for our research and thus define their system and construct their ecology.

Consequently, referring to the two main questions arisen while applying the Actor Network Theory –how a researcher firstly traces a network and secondly where does s/he has to stop tracing networks- the ‘Histoire Croisée’ gives adequate answers:

1. Since it is an inductive approach, it does not shape a priori categories (Archetti, 2019), but it allows them to be created and accomplished during the research (Wernen and Zimmerman, 2006: 47).

2. Therefore, the conception and construction of our Greek correspondents’ networks as well as the stopping point of examining these networks will be decided by the research itself and not by the researcher.

In this way, the concept of this approach allows us to avoid acting arbitrarily because it is the research itself and the findings which will define and clarify the aforementioned doubts.

FINDINGS

Some demographics and a conceptualization of the findings according to the ANT

For reasons of robustness of this research, we interviewed all of the Greek correspondents in Turkey. 60% are women and 40% are men. All of them hold at least one university degree in journalism or relevant social sciences and have attended many seminars and workshops in journalism. They are all above 45 years old. They have more than 20 years of journalistic experience in general and more than 10 years of experience as a correspondent. Lastly, all of them have been living in Turkey for the past 10 years at least. For 80% of them, Turkey is the first foreign country where they work as correspondents whereas for 20% it is their second country. For the sake of anonymity, we will name them by numbers: Greek Correspondent (GC) 1, GC2, GC3, GC4 and GC5.

After the interviews were transcribed and translated in English, the first step in order to start identifying the actors and mapping their networks before the failed coup attempt was based on a twofold basis: on one hand the relevant literature about foreign correspondents, their national identity, the media landscape of Turkey and its political landscape before July 2016 and on the other hand the interviews themselves. The second step was based on the findings and it involved the exploration and interpretation of the interviews’ data; this allowed us to achieve the theoretical saturation where no new information was added (Bowen, 2008, Hennink, Kaiser & Marconi, 2017, Morse, 1995). After that, we proceeded with the third and final step of this research, which involved the actual charting of the networks, following the frame of the Actor-Network Theory alongside with the approach of the Histoire Croisée. This visualized application was chosen to facilitate comprehension. Other scholars, while applying the ANT on various fields such as commerce, management, tourism or cultural studies (Aka, 2019, Arnaboldi & Spiller, 2011, Caniëls &

Romijn, 2008, Effah, 2012, Laasch, 2019, Shim & Shin, 2016) adopt the depiction of the conceived networks through bubbles to define the actors and arrows to show the relational ties between them.

For our research, inspired by the aforementioned researches applying the ANT, we decided to construct conceptualized figures of the Greek correspondents' networks: Figure 1 demonstrates the pre-coup network whereas Figures 2, 3, 4 and 5 depict the action of every post-coup change, as identified by the interviewees. It is important to use the terminology offered by the ANT. The main actor of this research are the Greek correspondents and they are put in the center. Around them, the factors or objects, which they delegate competences to, form the assemblages/networks. When these factors, both humans and non-humans, act, this action is inscribed; this inscription gives space for translating them into actors too. The double-ended arrows are used as nodes which represent the reciprocal ties/bonds between all the actors. When a tie becomes unilateral, it is depicted with one-ended arrows. When a tie between two factors becomes stronger it is depicted with thicker or multiple arrows, one-ended or double-ended, depending on the inscription and the translation of this actor. The approach of the *Histoire Croisée* was applied here in order to determine the induction process and to help us avoid constructing networks eternally; adopting this approach allowed us to be based on the research findings themselves to show us where to begin and where to stop assembling networks.

The Networks

The 'before' Network – Figure 1

According to our research, this is the circulatory assemblage of the Greek correspondents in Turkey made up of people, technologies, locations and situations/concepts. It is constructed based on the findings of the research and in alignment with ANT and inducted and exhausted by the approach of *Histoire Croisée*. The Greek correspondents are positioned in the center as main actors and around them are all the actors conceived by them as their network, the ecology constructed by them and for them, within which they live and work. The arrows show the interconnectedness, the interdependence and the interinfluences. Transcription parts are used to illustrate the findings and reinforce the literature.

The importance of the location -as Archetti claims (2014)- together with the contribution of technology is affirmed by GC5: *"Istanbul is full of stories but such a difficult place to get around [...] My home is my office. Technology saves us kilometers here..."*. The connection between colleagues is frequent for the Greek correspondents because they are not so many, as GC1 claims: *"I know it's not so common but we are*

only five of us here and we talk everyday with... and very often with... [other Greek correspondents' names] and chatting apps and social media are on fire when a juicy story comes up! 'Did you read that? What do you think?' ...". The access to official sources is critical in the process of making stories (Akin, 2016) as GC3 argues: *"Oh yes, the good, old days before the coup, we were invited once a month to a brunch with governmental officials and we had a briefing [...] Many stories for my agency were derived directly from those briefings..."*. The dilemmas between what the Greek correspondents think that their imagined audience requires from them (Litt, 2012), what are the home and the host country's agendas as stressed also by Yanardagoglu (2014) and the socio-political frame of Turkey shape the output of their stories as GC2 confirms: *"My audience? When I am not judgmental enough, they think of me as an enemy of Greece, other times I am the hero who brought valuable news about Turkey's moves [...] yes, we have some interaction, mostly through social media, I can imagine them more or less..."*. GC4 talks about these dilemmas: *"The stereotypes of the audience in Greece about Turkey are not as they used to be 20 years ago, but still there are, sometimes I have to act as advocate of Turkey because the home agency agenda is different than the one I have in mind, come on, let's be serious, Erdogan is not always wrong..."*. Lastly, given that all of them have resided in Turkey for more than 10 years, a point mentioned by all 5 interviewees referring to their professional experiences before and after the failed coup attempt concludes to one major point: their work may have never been easy but *"[...] things were different during the previous years, you could see the optimism in people until 2013"* says GC3; GC1 adds *"After the Gezi protests in 2013, we started sliding into the dark years until we reached the peak during the failed coup attempt and the state of emergency afterwards for 2 whole years"*. *"We were always 'the Greeks' for the Turkish authorities even before the coup attempt, our articles could be randomly chosen and translated but the stress that followed after July 2016 no one could have foreseen"* claims GC2. *"Before the coup, Turkish authorities would interact with us often with sympathy or even pity due to the Greek financial crisis which started in 2010; it was clearly humiliating when they were saying 'how much is your debt, we can pay it!'"* states GC5.

The changes after the failed coup attempt of July 2016

Through the interviews, we identified four conceptual categories of changes after the failed coup attempt:

Change 1: The 'otherness' on their shoulders – Figure 2

In this assemblage, we see the birth of new factors. The actor 'Socio-political frame of Turkey' is replaced by the actor 'Failed coup attempt' as a concept which acts as an actor and it is underlined in order to show the significance of the event as it is named as the marking point of this research. The actor 'Events of national interest for the two countries' emerges as a factor which affects the bond between 'Greek agency's

agenda' and 'Failed coup attempt'; both of these actors, through the actor 'Events', put on display another new actor, the 'Otherness encumbered' setting a unilateral pressure on it which affects negatively the Greek correspondents, as shown by the thunder-like arrow. The Greek correspondents' performance is negatively affected because they try to keep the balance, as Kester argues (2010), between the home country's agenda and the restraints set by the host country's post-coup socio-political frame, as GC2 claims: *"After the coup, especially during the state of emergency, I had great difficulty in renewing my work permit, because of my nationality..."*. In case of events of 'national interest' (Anastasiou & Bilge, 2015) for both countries, the Greek correspondents view their role as more difficult after the coup, as GG5 confirms: *"...whenever there is an event in the Aegean, Turkey sees us as spies..."*. The usual issues of dispute such as the Aegean, the Cyprus issue and the minorities (Heraclides & Çakmak, 2019) took a bigger significance after the coup attempt ... GC3 stresses that *"when the situation between the two countries is peaceful, we are the 'neighbors', when issues about Cyprus or the Aegean come up, they call us 'enemies', even more now..."*. Lastly, they feel that conflict events like the militaries seeking refuge in Greece right after the coup attempt (Smith, 2016) endangers their own situation, as GC1 argues: *"Yes, that event took huge dimensions for us, I remember governmental officials asking me 'why don't you extradite them here?', as if it was up to my hands. Or Gülenists fleeing to Greece by boat. It's not my fault..."*.

Change 2: Self-censorship – Figure 3

As Davis (2020) argues, foreign correspondents experience higher level of self-censorship and they feel unsafe as a repercussion of the failed coup attempt. Similarly, in this figure, a new actor emerges: the 'Self-censorship', which holds a unilateral repressive bond from various actors; this action is translated into a reciprocal bond between Greek correspondents and their self-censorship. Furthermore, the actor 'Failed coup attempt' inscribed two new actors: 'surveillance state' and 'autocratic local media'. The sanctions faced by local colleagues as pointed out by Pukallus et al. (2020), the creation of an autocratic media landscape (Akin, 2017), the state of surveillance dominating post-coup Turkey (Yesil & Sozeri, 2017), the uniformed governmental narrative imposed on the Turkish media (Över, 2021, Topak, 2019) deteriorate the work of the Greek correspondents, as depicted through thunder-like ties. GC2 confirms the surveillance state and the problematic ties with internet and social media *"...I know that they watch and translate whatever I publish in Greek [...] How do I know? I know...I received many times 'remarks' not to use this or that word or I have received governmental 'suggestions' to use specific, friendly tones in my articles. This proves that my writings are read or translated"*. Relatively to the pressurized tie with local colleagues, GC5 claims: *"...Didn't you see what has happened to [Turkish journalist's name]? And the crackdown on*

[name of a Turkish newspaper]. I don't want to be deported or arrested...". GC1 depicts the state of surveillance by saying "...before starting our interview, let me put my phone farer, you never know who is listening to us...I am saying this because there have been cases of phone surveillance which led to imprisonment, I have to be careful what I say or write". In the same perspective, GC3 adds: "...Even before, but mostly after 2016, every journalist knows that some issues are taboo, when you touch issues about Kurdish, you face sanctions, you become a terrorist. Why should I risk it? I don't lie in my stories, but I stay within the safe zone of news...". Similarly, GC5 mentions "...some words or phrases are banned in my mind, like the word 'sultan'. When colleagues from my home agency use it while being on live reporting, I always try to remind myself to use words like 'the President' or just 'Erdogan'. Words are tricky and they can incriminate you". Finally, GC4 explains that "my home agency sometimes asks for deeper stories about hot issues, like the story about Berat Albayrak (c.f. former Minister of Treasury and Finance and son-in-law of President Erdogan). I deny. I just present the news. In such stories, the deeper you go the worst for your safety. We know it. Local colleagues have been fired. No, I don't want to be deported". All of the aforementioned actors undoubtedly keep influencing the Greek correspondents, both professionally and psychologically, toward an increasingly self-censorship.

Change 3: Increased workload – Figure 4

The Greek correspondents confirm that the interest of the home country in Turkish news has increased considerably after the failed coup attempt, as it has happened in other European countries (Fracchiolla, 2020), but to a much less extent, according to their words. **The failed coup attempt** as an event or a concept –the attribution of ‘concept’ is suggested by Archetti (2014)- and its repercussions put pressure on the Greek agency’s agenda for more and more stories, as depicted by the multiple unilateral arrows toward the ‘Greek agency’s agenda’. On its turn, this **creates a pressurized tie to the Greek correspondents**, which other times is bilateral but most of the times unilateral. The thick unilateral **arrow toward the actor ‘Output stories’ shows the pressure for more and more stories, resulting in an increased ‘Workload’**. “...We keep good relations with many other European colleagues, because many times they come to us (Greeks) to ask more information about stories, they know that we search everything... Greece is not only Turkey’s neighbor, it’s also their connection with Europe...For Greece, everything has journalistic interest, I can’t miss anything because my home agency asks for everything...”, claims CG3. **Talking about workload, GC1 argues that “...Of course I have always been busy here [Turkey], but after July ’16, I go live at least 3 times per day on my TV channel plus articles for the newspaper [...] There are no days off, I am always alert and prepared...”. In the same notion, GC4 adds “...What did Erdogan say, where did he go, who did he meet**

[...] If I could say a number, I'd say at least 20 stories per week...My colleagues from other countries? 1-2 stories per week, as they tell me". Comparing the situation for the Greek correspondents with other foreign correspondents, GC2 claims that "... You can't compare us with the other foreign correspondents, especially non-Europeans. I envy them [...] Their stories weekly? Much fewer than us...". In the same tone, GC5 mentions that "I see for example my Spanish or Scandinavian colleagues; yes, of course, Turkey is not as 'interesting' or 'hot' to them as it is for Greece".

Change 4: Access to official sources disappeared – Figure 5

Akin (2017) underlined the importance of having access to official and governmental sources for a journalist and how this access has been aggravated after the coup attempt. The Greek correspondents state that access to official, governmental and diplomatic sources has become extinct; this is depicted by the strikethrough of the actor 'Official sources' and the thunder-like arrow which translates into a detrimental effect on Greek correspondents. This extinction leads unilaterally to rely more on the actors 'Colleagues', 'Mobile phone and computer' and 'Internet and social media' [these two create an independent reciprocal bond]. Depicted by thicker reciprocal arrows, the ties between these three actors and the Greek correspondents are stronger; the correspondents tend to rely more on them and the three actors are translated into the alternative solution acting as a source of political news. As GC1 claims: "...*When those briefings and brunches with the government officials disappeared, we were kind of panicked. It stopped immediately after the coup [...] 'How will we have access to officials now? How will we verify some political stories now...'*". Their stronger tie with internet and social media as sources of news is confirmed by GC3: "...*thank god for social media, Twitter is a good start for instance to start digging on a story further [...] Local journalistic sites have become a source but you never know, most are biased, it needs cross-check...*". Lastly, GC2 underlines the importance of solidarity between colleagues: "...*We collaborate even more now, we even have a chatting group and we cross-check some information between us many times...*".

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

Overall, this research examined the professional network of the Greek correspondents in Turkey pre- and post-coup attempt of July 2016. We found that the coup attempt further encumbered their work by pointing out their 'otherness' and led to increased self-censorship and workload due to 'home-interest' and lack of official sources. Through the ANT conceptual depictions of the Greek correspondents' networks and the post-coup negative changes, our findings showed an increased self-censorship, parallel to that of local

journalists (Davis, 2020), confirming a causality effect between local and foreign journalism, in line with Davis (2020) and Pukallus et al. (2020). Furthermore, McNair (2009) points out that ‘the histories of journalism and democracy are closely linked’; when democracy in a country is backsliding, journalism suffers too. This constitutes a topic worth to be further researched.

The national identity seen as the opponent ‘other’ neighbor often puts obstacles and determines the way journalists as bearers of ‘otherness’ exercise their work, verifying the findings of other researches about national journalistic cultures which represent the opponent ‘other’ neighbor (Sun, 2007) or reporting from an authoritarian host country (Zeng, 2018). Zeng (2018) claims that China often tends to use authoritarian control over foreign correspondents aiming at discrediting them. Sun (2007) examines the Japanese correspondents’ reporting from China and claims that the correspondents struggle to balance within the authoritarian Chinese hosts; this process makes their job challenging in fear of sanctions in China. He also argues that ‘China is Japan’s most crucial neighbor’ (ibid), like in the case of Greece and Turkey. Furthermore, according to Beiser’s special report in 2019 for the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), China is the country with the highest number of jailed journalists, followed by Turkey. Similarly, our research demonstrated that the ‘otherness’ puts extra weight on the Greek correspondents’ shoulders in situations including neighbors with a history of conflict, especially in times of serious socio-political events, like the failed coup of July 2016. Within this frame of ‘otherness’, Kostarella (2007) gives us another example of socio-political, transnational event -the Imia/Kardak crisis in 1996- by claiming that the image of the ‘other’ on both countries’ media during this crisis was biased through nationalistic stereotypes. On the top of that, the failed coup attempt led the home agency to demand for more and more stories; increased workload combined with the ‘otherness’ of the Greek correspondents in Turkey as examined in this research, may lead to ‘journalistic’ burnout. Burnout due to ‘otherness’ and heavy workload worth to be further researched for the benefit of media policy makers and the journalists themselves.

The case of Turkey is a special one when it comes to foreign journalists and the findings of this paper indicate that journalism in Turkey, both local and foreign, is seriously ill because of surveillance, autocracy and self-censorship. Official, governmental sources should not be the key source of political news in a democratic country; they should only constitute one side of the story and a frame of freedom for further ‘digging’ to a story should be granted to journalists. The fact that official sources became extinct after the failed coup attempt and this extinction affected so severely the work of the Greek correspondents should worry the policy makers of Turkey regarding their transparency and the accessibility to sources available to free journalism. Lastly, our results could be of use to international NGOs about the protection of press freedom and international journalism for the safety and well-being of all foreign journalists in Turkey.

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