

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE “PENGUIN MEDIA” RISES? CENSORSHIP, RESISTANCE, AND PEACE JOURNALISM: TURKEY’S MEDIA POLICIES BETWEEN 2002 AND 2020

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Historically, the media in Turkey has been censored by both left-wing and right-wing governments. Today, the presence of free media is considered a threat by the government, and journalists and media owners who dispute government policies experience censorship, loss of employment, imprisonment, and violence. This case study offers new insights into Turkey’s media environment by providing a context for both the historical and current political reasons behind the lack of free media in the country. Specifically, I identify a pattern of increased censorship following political threats, especially increased social unrest (Gezi Park protests) and opposition parties’ gains in the parliament. In focusing on the Justice and Development Party (AKP) era of supremacy from 2002 to 2020, I explain why the AKP government considers media freedom a threat and examine how it punishes journalists and media owners who dispute government policies. After outlining the relevant aspects of Turkey’s history, I discuss the notion of an ideal press and the challenges of peace journalism (PJ), then analyze the political landscape under the AKP. Finally, I argue that (1) social unrest and increased presence of opposition parties in parliament are the primary reasons driving ongoing press censorship in Turkey and (2) Turkey, despite having elections, is not a full democracy because it lacks a free press.