Behind the Bylines:
Fixing World News in Turkey

Noah Arjomand

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

2018

© 2018
Noah Arjomand
All Rights Reserved

ABSTRACT

Behind the Bylines: Fixing World News in Turkey

Noah Arjomand

A chain of actors brokers the flow of information through news organizations and transforms local realities into international journalism. “Fixers” are a crucial intermediary link between foreign reporters and local sources, translating, arranging logistics and interviews, and otherwise assisting reporters in gaining access and interpreting events. Fixers’ social networks and management of exchange between reporters and sources, this study argues, significantly shape the news.

Brokers’ moral worlds, constituted by both norms of behavior toward brokers and norms that shape the behaviors of brokers themselves, are the focus of particular attention. How do news organizations, client journalists, and local news sources and power holders treat fixers? How do fixers navigate the uneven moral terrain created by conflicting expectations toward them? And how do their strategies for managing clients and sources shape the production of knowledge?

This study, based on ethnographic research conducted in Turkey between 2014 and 2016, explains fixers’ mediations and their effects on the news. Empirical chapters provide composite narratives of fixers to illustrate both variation in mediating practices and typical career trajectories, followed by theoretical discussions.

The production of international news, I argue, cannot be properly understood without reference to the national and local politics and media worlds that affect who becomes a fixer and what they use fixing to accomplish. Based on these contexts, some see fixing as an opportunity to gain recognition, as an apprenticeship toward a career in global journalism, or as a way to

expand their social world; others see fixing as a way to remain anonymous while utilizing journalistic expertise they have developed, as a relatively safe form of activism in non-democratic political systems, or a step toward claiming refugee status. Patterns in who becomes a fixer and why affect the selection of "newsworthy" sources and events, the way local realities are transformed into information fed to client reporters, and the organizational structure of the foreign press corps. Fixers have difficulty, and are socialized to avoid, challenging overarching and preexisting meta-narratives, or frames, that foreign news organizations apply to Turkey and Syria. Nonetheless, they make use of "wiggle room" afforded them through the process of abstraction of local complexities into overarching narrative frames to shape international news in ways that are significant at the local level.

This study offers insights not only into the production of international knowledge about Turkey and Syria, but also into the process of brokerage, a universal phenomenon in all contexts involving coordination of action and sharing of knowledge across social difference.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES ..... ***v***

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ..... ***vi***

CHAPTER ONE: STUDYING FIXERS

Solmaz, 2016 1

Fixing World News 5

Solmaz Is Not Real 7

Research 11

Fixers as brokers 15

Types of journalism 21

Types of Fixing I: Status vs. Charisma 25

Types of Fixing II: Middlemen vs. Catalysts 31

What Next 37

CHAPTER 2: BECOMING

The First Fixer 42

Ayşe, 2013 43

Elif, 2013 45

Can, 2007-2011 45

Burhan, 1990s 49

Gül, 2011 51

Karim, 2011-2013 52

Leyla and Aziz, 2012-2014 54

Habib, 2000s 55

Nikolaus, 2012 56

Patterned serendipity 57

Insiders and Outsiders 63

CHAPTER 3: TASKS AND LABELS

A Contentious Label 68

Ayşe and José, 2012-2014 70

Elif, 2014 74

Burcu and Elif, 2013-2015 77

Can, 2014-2016 79

Burhan, 1996-2014 81

Karim, 2013 81

Leyla and Aziz, 2014-2016 86
Habib, 2015-2016 87
Nikolaus, 2013 89
People labeled fixers do different tasks 90
Fixers are not the only ones who fix 91
Labels are related to status 95
Labels signal evaluations of substantive differences 100
Labels are strategic resources 101
CHAPTER 4: MORAL WORLDS OF AMBIVALENCE
Sociological Ambivalence in a Fragmented World 107
Elif, 2014 110
Burcu, 2009 113
Ayşe, 2014 115
Elif, 2014 119
Gül, 2015 (Part 1) 121
Gül, 2015 (Part 2) 126
Leyla and Aziz, 2015 129
Karim, 2014-2015 133
Habib, 2015-2016 136
Nikolaus, 2012-2014 141
Burcu, 2015 145
Types of Conflicts that Produce Moral Ambivalence 147
Rhythmic Ambivalence 149
Coding Ambivalence 155
Strategic/Informational Ambivalence 157
Reciprocity Ambivalence 158
Managing Social Capital 167
Biased and Ambivalent Fixers 171
Fixers' Transcendent Norms 174
Signals, Stereotypes, Stigmas, Shibboleths 178
Unifying Moral Worlds 187
Outsourcing Immorality 191
The Expertise of Managing Moral Conflict 192
CHAPTER 5: TRANSLATIONS
Communication as Information 194
Ayşe, 2016 201
Solmaz, 2016 (Day 1) 208

Solmaz, 2016 (Day 2) 211
Can, 2016 218
Noah, 2016 228
Michael, 2016 (Day 1) 230
Michael, 2016 (Day 2) 247
Michael, 2016 (Day 3) 252
Mad Lib Journalism 254
Wiggle Room 263
Fixer Capacity 266
Noise and Music 271
CHAPTER 6: LOCAL AND GLOBAL
In the Middle of It All 278
Can 279
Ayşe 280
Burcu 281
Elif 282
Gül 283
Burhan 283
Jimbo 284
Leyla and Aziz 285
Karim 286
Habib 288
José 288
Nikolaus 290
Mutual Apprenticeship 290
Turnover 293
Emergent Fields 296
CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION
Strategic Ambiguity 300
Future Directions: Cyborg Journalism 305
Vocabulary for an Emergent Field 309
Filling the Blanks of Grand Theory 310
REFERENCES* *313
HISTORICAL APPENDIX: Brokers' Place in Turkish and Syrian History
From Dragomans to Fixers 327
Brokers in Syria: From Protectorate to Nation 331
Then and Now 333

METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX: SOCIOLOGICAL FICTION

Introduction 334

PART I: On Anonymization and Fictionalization

Truth vs. Reality 336

Checking the Reality and Truth of Ethnography 338

Anonymity and Remixing Reality 341

Sociological Fictions 342

Checking the Truth of Fiction 357

The Value of Reality and Tradeoffs of Compositing 358

PART II: Building Theory and Narrative with Composite Characters

Compressing Informants into Composites 364

Narrative and Composite Characters 369

Comparing Fiction to Fiction and Calling It Science 373

External Analogical Comparison 375

Conclusion 376

References to Methodological Appendix ***378***

Tables to Methodological Appendix ***384***

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Brokers and Brokered Parties 16

Figure 1.2: Ambivalent and Biased Brokers 19

Figure 1.3: Social Proximity and Journalism Type 21

Figure 3.1 The Chain of Contributors to New Production 94

Figure 5.1: An Information Transmission Model of Communication 195

Figure 5.2: Blank Template 254

Figure 5.3: Story 1 255

Figure 5.4: Story 2 255

Figure 5.5: Template After Editor's Fill-Ins 258

Figure 5.6: Template After Michael's Fill-Ins 259

Figure 5.6: Story 3 276

Figure 6.1: Simplification of change in Karim's social network, 2011-2016 297

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study was made possible first and foremost by the fixers, reporters, producers, and editors who generously offered their time as I interviewed, observed, and otherwise bothered them with little to offer in return. I am deeply grateful for their time and, in many cases, their friendship.

Many thanks to Diane Vaughan, Michael Schudson, Gil Eyal, Peter Bearman, and Karen Barkey for the formative influence they had on my graduate training and on this dissertation. Shamus Khan, Herbert Gans, Ann Cooper, and Helen Benedict also provided valuable feedback about this project and otherwise supported my work. My fellow graduate students at Columbia have offered good advice and good company throughout my time at the program; in particular, I thank Ryan Hagen, Adrianna Bagnall Munson, Olivia Nicol, Philipp Brandt, Pierre-Christian Fink, Anand Gopal, and the late great Devon Wade.

Outside of Columbia, Sinem Aydınlı, Iddo Tavory, Burce Çelik, Ebru Diriker, Bilge Yeşil, Erika Gilson, and Aslı Tunç each made helpful suggestions about different aspects of the research. I also thank the student participants and organizers of the NYLON working group, especially Anna Skarpelis and Liz Koslov, from whom I learned a great deal as I shared my work in progress.

I am lucky to have a family full of intellectuals who were willing to read my work. My father Said Amir Arjomand, sister Minou Arjomand, and brother-in-law Harel Shapira all blazed a trail for me and provided useful feedback about my projects, presentations, and drafts. Most of all I thank my wife Brett Umlauf, who gave me vital support throughout graduate school and penned the sharpest edits of anyone. My mother, Kathryn Arjomand, sadly did not live to see me complete this study, but her strength was an inspiration and her faith in me a powerful motivator.

The National Science Foundation and Institute of Turkish Studies provided me financial support to focus on my research and have my sincere thanks. To formally acknowledge the former: this material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship under Grant No. 201214092. Any opinion, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.

Dedicated to Kathryn

1953-2017

CHAPTER ONE: STUDYING FIXERS

Solmaz, 2016

In spring 2016, I wrote an article for *Dissent* magazine about the Turkish state's crackdown on opposition news media. I did not work alone: I hired Solmaz to assist me as a fixer. Solmaz was a Turkish journalist and, conveniently for me, freshly unemployed by the government's seizure of *Today's Zaman*, an English-language newspaper based in Istanbul. *Today's Zaman* was part of a media group associated with Fethullah Gülen, a Muslim cleric living in the United States with a devoted following inside Turkey. Gülen had been a key ally of the country's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) and increasingly authoritarian prime minister and later president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, until a few years earlier. The 2013-2014 Gülen-Erdoğan split had almost toppled the government, but by 2016 Erdoğan had consolidated power and was purging the state, business world, civil society, and media of the Gülen movement's affiliates who, with his support, had gained prominence since the AKP came to power in 2002.

Solmaz had nothing personally to do with the Gülen movement. But when she returned to Istanbul after years of living and studying in the UK without a clear idea of what to do with her life, she had found *Today's Zaman* eager to hire and make use of her fluent English. As long as she did not criticize Gülen, she could write whatever she wanted on her relatively apolitical beat. We had already been introduced through expat circles and she struck me as a good observer and independent thinker, willing in private to talk trash about the Gülen movement and anyone else in equal measure. Now, I hoped to put both her intellect and contacts with the Gülen-affiliated media to use by hiring her to fix, that is: arrange interviews, translate, research and discuss the issues with me.

We met at a café and decided together whom to interview and what to ask. Solmaz suggested asking her erstwhile colleagues about how politics was affecting their family lives, about their social media use, and about the status of court cases in which they were defendants. She knew, I reckon, that they would be more receptive to those lines of questioning than to any about their connections to the Gülen movement, which adherents call *Hizmet* (service) and state officials had by then taken to calling the Fethullahist Terror Organization (FETÖ). I had Solmaz make all the calls on her phone. Our interviewees' phones were very likely under surveillance, and I did not want to draw attention to myself, operating as I was on a tourist visa and without a press card.

The first interview Solmaz arranged was at the office of *Özgür Düşünce* (*Free Thought*), a shoestring operation that had sprung up after its predecessor newspaper, *Bugün* (*Today*), was forcibly placed under state "trusteeship." Solmaz introduced me to Cihan Acar, a reporter on staff who used to work at *Zaman* (*Time*), the Gülen movement's flagship paper that shared a building with Solmaz's English-language spinoff. Cihan was happy to talk about *Özgür Düşünce's* hardships and police violence in the takeover of *Bugün* and *Zaman*, but asking about their (widely known) connection the Gülen movement was a game of cat and mouse. He repeatedly cited *Yarına Bakış* (*Look to Tomorrow*) and *Meydan* (*Public Square*), other Gülen movement newspapers, as some of the few other free press organs, and even mentioned being "transferred" from *Zaman* to *Bugün*, but when I asked about connections among the outlets and to the movement, he would only say that they happened to have similar editorial lines. I pointed out that demonstrators respectively supporting *Zaman* and *Bugün* looked remarkably similar--many of them women in dark coats and flowery headscarves--and unlike those at other free press protests.

"Those coming here," he responded evasively, pointing to a protest photo on his computer screen, "could be supporters of this movement. They could be democrats or [just] people passing by on the streets."

I tried to approach the subject from an empathetic tack, inviting him to talk about oppression the movement faced: "I notice you're avoiding saying anything—you're avoiding the word Hizmet [as Gülen supporters call their movement]; you're avoiding the [name] Gülen. Is it dangerous now even to talk about these things?"

Cihan dodged again, saying that they were not a PR agency for Hocaeffendi—using, Solmaz pointed out as she translated, the movement's respectful term for Gülen—and the work they did was entirely journalism, not publicity.

After we walked out onto the street, Solmaz seemed more annoyed than I with Cihan's responses. There is a linguistic habit in Turkish, she commented, where people speak indirectly, not mentioning specific names like Hocaeffendi (though she had been sure to highlight when he slipped and used the title) or Hizmet, out of a sort of politeness. Cihan, she said, was taking advantage of that linguistic culture to deflect questions and pretend that *Özgür Düşünce* was independent. She grew increasingly exasperated as we walked to the metro station. Do they think we're stupid? Do they actually think it works to avoid answering, that they're convincing us they're independent?

Next, we interviewed a famous journalist loosely aligned with the Gülen movement. A servant let us into her extravagant home overlooking the Bosphorus, and as we waited on rococo furniture, Solmaz admitted that she was a little nervous. She admired our source as a trailblazer for female journalists in Turkey and had long followed her work.

The interview turned out to be fairly acrimonious. I had reviewed her writings of previous years, which included numerous statements supporting the prosecution of journalists *critical* of the Gülen movement, and I asked questions she did not like, more or less accusing her of hypocrisy. She stuck to familiar Gülen movement talking points about Erdoğan and the AKP previously duping her that they were a force for democracy and refused to accept parallels between the current round of oppression of the news media and previous, Gülen movement-backed crackdowns against Kurdish journalists and journalists who criticized (pre-Gülen-Erdoğan split) trials in which prosecutors thought to be affiliated with the movement backed flimsy accusations of a secularist coup plot, code name Ergenekon, with fabricated evidence. The famous journalist was comfortable speaking English, and the two of us sparred back and forth while Solmaz sat quietly.

The next day, the famous journalist called Solmaz in a rage. She had invited us into her home only for me to ask rude questions and completely miss the point that it was the government that deserved criticism, not her. The famous journalist repeated what she had already told me, that the reporters whose prosecutions she had supported years earlier were not *real* journalists but just agents of the Ergenekon plot. She asked Solmaz tell me that she reviewed those cases and in fact one of the journalists in question was even arrested for murder, nothing to do with media work.[1]

The famous journalist followed the angry call with a text message saying it was so nice to meet Solmaz, followed by a long string of heart emojis. Solmaz relayed the message on to me,

[1] I later found court documents from a civil suit that journalist won against her for falsely making this claim. In conveniently shoddy reporting on his case in the Ergenekon trials, she had conflated him with a murderer in a different city with the same (common Turkish) name. Given the damages she was ordered to pay, I find it unlikely that she repeated the claim to Solmaz through a lapse of memory.

noting that she did agree with our source that one of the journalists I had asked her about was a sketchy dude, an Ergenekon guy.

A few months later, a coup d'etat attempt, which the government immediately blamed on FETÖ, rocked the country. Purges of Gülenists accelerated sharply in the aftermath. Government officials claimed that the Gülenists had duped them by infiltrating the state and other powerful positions in society and had to be removed en masse for democracy to survive. Cihan and the famous journalist were both imprisoned for attempting to overthrow the constitutional order based on their media work and without any evidence that either was involved in the putsch's planning or execution.

Fixing World News

This is a study of news fixers in Turkey. Although the role of fixer is ubiquitous in foreign correspondence, fixers have only recently begun to receive attention among scholars (Fontan and Palmer 2007; Bishara 2013; Murrell 2015; Palmer 2017) and in debates about ethics, professionalism, and danger within the field of journalism (Klein and Plaut 2017). The lack of attention paid to fixers in unsurprising, given that their status can be ambiguous--are they journalists or just translators?--and that they work largely behind the scenes without public acknowledgement. But if we hope to understand how the news that informs the world and constitutes a first draft of history gets made, we should not overlook the humble fixer. Their faces and names may be unfamiliar compared to the foreign reporters they assist, but they play an essential and difficult part in creating connections and facilitating the information exchange at the heart of journalism.

This study will take a close look at who fixers are and what they do under what circumstances, from a broad level of their careers down to the micro level of their word-by-word

translations. How do news organizations, client journalists, and sources treat fixers? How do fixers navigate the uneven moral terrain created by these different parties' conflicting expectations of them? And how do their strategies for managing clients and sources shape the production of knowledge? My answers to these questions will demystify the process through which local events turn into world news, as well as provide insights into a range of other, analogous social processes.

The process of news production, I argue, consist a chain of brokerage: fixers broker between sources and reporters, reporters broker between fixers and editors, editors broker between reporters and news organizations, and so forth. For this part, fixers act as brokers by matchmaking client reporters to sources who can provide news story content and coordinating their interactions as translators and "coaches"--for instance providing reporters with background information and suggesting how they might best elicit sought-after responses from sources. This position between sources and reporters allows fixers some wiggle room to direct reporters toward specific information, yet being in the middle of interactions across cultures also subjects fixers to competing moral pressures. From the strategic level of acquiring/transmitting information that serves their interests down to the micro-level of rhythms of conversation, reporters and sources often have conflicting normative expectations of fixers--that is, thoughts and feelings of what *should* be done. Fixers thus live in moral worlds of ambivalence, and they strategies they come up with to manage competing normative expectations shape the content of the news.

In this first chapter, I will discuss my methods for researching and writing about the topic, then explain key concepts that I will use throughout the study. Along the way, I orient readers to

the analytic utility of writing in terms of ideal types, spectrums, and fields, which will serve as tools for making sense of patterns and differences in subsequent chapters.

In the first theoretical section, I will argue that fixers should be conceptualized as brokers who mediate communication between reporters and sources. Much of their behavior can be explained by the social position of the broker bridging disparate fields and cultures. Next, I will describe the field in which fixers work, journalism, as taking different forms based on journalists' social distance from or social proximity to different parts of society. The concepts of social distance and proximity will be important moving forward because fixers both bring foreign journalists close to and keep them separate from local societies in dual catalyst-middleman roles. I will further connect social distance and proximity to the concepts of status and charisma. In any field, journalism included, high status is connected to the purity enabled by distance from outsiders, in the case of journalism, from sources and others who are biased by being "too close to the story." On the other hand, the very contamination of proximity to outsiders to a field offers charisma, the possibility of excitement, surprise, and change. The opposing attractions of status or of charisma, I will argue throughout this study, shape the way fixers present themselves to colleagues and to me the researcher, do their jobs, and anticipate their futures.

Solmaz Is Not Real

Before going any further, I should mention that Solmaz is not a real person. This is a work of fiction. The characters whose stories I tell are composites based upon real news workers, but

whose individual stories have been remixed.[2] If you are wondering how a work of fiction can also be a work of sociology, please consult the methodological appendix.

In brief, creating fictional composites allowed me to better protect the anonymity of the news workers I interviewed and observed. Journalism is a field in which participants produce publicly available work, have large social networks, and rely heavily on their reputations both with colleagues and the subjects of their reports; together these factors mean that if I were only to change names, individuals whose stories I tell could be identified and, in some cases, face professional or even legal or physical harm. Many journalists were aware of my research and of who was participating in it, and so I attribute some of my own experiences and observations of reporter-fixer interaction to other characters in order to obscure identities.

I used real data, albeit remixed, but not because using them proves my arguments to readers. It is perfectly possible to select and misrepresent real data in the service of a bullshit argument (Frankfurt 2005:46-56; Leifer 1992). Using real data was more for my benefit than for readers. Real data rather challenged to me to build arguments that could explain patterns and variations that I had not expected to find beforehand; real data contained surprises that I could not have dreamed up if I had just invented stories out of whole cloth to illustrate my arguments.

The method of using real data to create fictional narratives was more than just a compromise for the sake on anonymity. The process of creating composite characters was also analytically useful. It forced me to think explicitly through which similarities and differences among news workers were more and less important for the questions I was asking and through the

[2]I use Cihan's real name because I already did so in my *Dissent* article. Throughout the book, I use real names of people who are already publicly identifiable for doing the things I describe them doing, as well as real names of public officials like Erdoğan. When I do use real names, I only include what people told or showed me on the record in my capacity as journalist or information that is already publicly available about them.

connections among elements of their careers. To create characters who were not real but were *possible*, I had to consider whether an experience or characteristic of one person would make sense when added into a composite narrative that included experiences and characteristics of others.

The number of characters I created represents a balance between imperatives to show patterns and to show variations. Had I treated everyone who participated in my study as unique--and indeed, no two life stories are ever quite the same--then it would be impossible to generalize about patterns that were common to multiple people when abstracting from their particular details, at least not without creating second-order, implicit composites to the effect of, "When it comes to X variable in Y situation, characters Solmaz and Elif were basically the same." Had I, my contrast, lumped everyone into a single archetypal character, The Fixer, to discover one overarching pattern, then I would leave none of the person-to-person variation that is essential to explaining causes and effects through comparison and to refining arguments.

Using this Goldie Locks rule of thumb--not to specific, not to abstract--I ended up with ten main fixer characters, a supporting cast of five (mostly foreign reporters who hire our protagonists), and a number of named and unnamed sources and colleagues. The characters come from different backgrounds and their lives unfold in different ways that illustrate the range of possibilities for fixing careers. I initially had fewer characters, but in the process of writing, when I felt there was important data to present that did not fit with, or was likely to partially unmask, an existing character, I brought in a side character as the carrier of that data. When there was a strong pattern that existed in some but not others of the real people constituting a composite, I split that character into two.

The result is a series of narratives of characters that traces their career trajectories across chapters: how they became fixers, what they did and how they were treated as fixers, and what they used fixing to become. These narratives provide a means of showing patterns and variation in how fixers shape the news based on their pasts and expected futures, how fixers become experts and/or disillusioned with the work, and how their statuses in relation to journalism and other fields change over time.

I contend (and a defense of this contention is in the appendix) that these narratives are fictional but objectively possible: all the experiences attributed to a character *could* have happened to a real person, they just did not. Although the narrative and characters are fictional, the quotations are all real[3] and the events described are all based on my research data, albeit with details changed to protect anonymity.

This fictionalization may make for a frustrating reading experience: you will not know what I observed firsthand and what is hearsay; you will not be able to tell which parts of events actually happened as described. Good. My other intention in writing sociological fiction is to invite readers to find a way to evaluate my theoretical claims beyond trusting that they come from real data. I encourage you to constantly compare and evaluate my arguments against other cases you know as you read subsequent chapters. Does my argument about fixers' moral ambivalence hold up when compared to the real estate brokers with whom you have dealt? Does the point I make about labeling being used to claim social status help to explain your own colleagues' gossip about one another? Theories, after all, should be useful for explaining more than just the case at hand. Perhaps the most important difference between sociology and

[3]Whenever quotation marks are used, the speech was transcribed from an audio recording or marked in my field notes as a direct quotation. In cases where I am paraphrasing, I write in the manner of speech but without quotation marks, as when Solmaz asked me, Do they think we're stupid?

journalism is that I am more concerned with providing theories that people can use to interpret facts, while the journalists I study are more concerned with pinning down facts that people can use to substantiate claims (i.e. build theories) and to make decisions.

Research

Though I have fictionalized, my theories have not come out of thin air, but from observing and asking participants about the facts on the ground. I made three research trips to Turkey between 2014 and 2016, totaling approximately 15 months. I began by interviewing fixers and foreign reporters about their work. After a few interviews, in which I had difficulty directing answers from generalities toward specifics, I started looking up study participants' work and asking them for links to stories that had been interesting or challenging to report. We would then review stories together and they would walk me through the reporting processes that went into them.[4]

On my first two trips, most of the data I got was from such interviews, along with the news stories produced by my interviewees that allowed me to see the end result of the work they described. It was not difficult to find news workers to sit down for interviews, and most interviewees were willing to connect me with their colleagues. Getting permission for participant-observation, the favored method of ethnographers who want not just to know what people say but also to see what they really do, was more difficult. From the start, I asked if I could accompany reporters and fixers as they reported stories and even while they met with each other to plan reporting. Many interviewees said it would be no problem, but then, with just two exceptions, ignored my subsequent communications or told me each time I asked that it would

[4]Vandevoordt (2017:611-13) developed the same method, though I did not know it at the time, for interviewing reporters covering the Syrian conflict, and his article provides further arguments for its utility.

not work for me to observe them reporting the particular story they were busy with at the moment. At three news organizations, I pursued formal permission from foreign headquarters or an arrangement like an internship that I could also use for my study, which went nowhere. I tried to sweeten the pot by offering my services as a photographer (I had some professional experience) for free if I could accompany them, but with no luck.

Part of the reason may have been concern that I would get in their way and attract extra attention by swelling the ranks of their teams. I also suspect that, being savvy to the ways media can unfavorably represent their subjects and favor the improper and sensational when given free access, they were willing to sit down for interviews in which they could better control what I knew about them, but unwilling to let me get behind the scenes.

On my third and longest trip, from February through September 2016, I took a new tack. I began working as a reporter, hiring multiple fixers for each story I worked on so that I could compare how they approached their work and collaborated differently. I also began advertising my services as a fixer, eventually working with five different journalists on stories.

I had written articles and taken photos here and there for magazines and websites, which prepared me to work as a reporter, and had done some Turkish-English translation work for academic and NGO projects, which prepared me to work as a fixer. I was not particularly good at either job but taking on both roles alternately gave me new insights into the different thrills and stresses that each entails.

Initially, I intended only to study reporters and fixers covering Turkey. As my fieldwork continued though, I decided that I ought to include those covering Syria as well, as they represented a significant part of the Istanbul-based foreign press corps. The backgrounds of Syrian fixers I met were different from those of their Turkish counterparts, as was the way they

reported, as by 2015 very few were going into Syria, and those who did faced severe constraints and dangers. This allowed me to see more variation on which to base comparisons and build theories.

My research on Syrian fixers was limited to interviews and analysis of the news they produced. Not speaking Arabic, knowing less about Syria than Turkey, and being wary of spending much time hanging around the border, a relatively dangerous place for journalists at the time (see e.g., Taub 2015), I stuck to second-hand accounts. In retrospect my ignorance might have been an asset to my study, allowing me to better simulate a foreign reporter approaching stories as a complete outsider and with limited knowledge, but I lacked the boldness of journalists to dive headfirst into the unknown.

I did put on my foreign reporter cap to report on the Afghan community in Istanbul. This participant-observation allowed me to broaden my perspective by looking for comparison at another community, with its own social organization and kinds of contact with the international media.

One shortcoming of my research is that, by and large, the foreign reporters who participated were from and reported for news organizations in Europe or the Americas, with the exception of a few who had freelanced for Gulf Arab news outlets. My "snowball" recruitment method of asking participants to introduce me to their colleagues is in part responsible for this bias: I went out of my way to ask both fixers and foreign reporters for introductions to any correspondents from other countries, and those participants, who prided themselves on their wide range of contacts, nevertheless mostly came up blank.

My impression that the network of fixers working for European, North American, and Australian media had little connection to media from elsewhere in the world—which may or may

not have meant that other media hired professional fixers in Turkey—was reinforced when I obtained a copy of the PDF "Fixer and Translator List" maintained by the Foreign Press Club of Turkey. Entrants completed a little questionnaire with their contact information, skills, location, and the media organizations and journalists for whom they had previously worked. The 72 fixers and translators available for hire in Turkey and neighboring countries listed 189 news organizations; of those, 137 were in Western Europe and 37 were in North America. Seven outlets based in the Arab world (mostly English-language media) made the list, four from Eastern Europe (Russia, Poland, and Greece), and four from the rest of the world. Many individuals listed working across both American and European media; others worked for numerous outlets of just one national media, suggesting an interconnected network with national clusters.

There were several fixers who had worked and told me about their experiences with Japanese journalists, but none of those whose contact information the fixers gave me responded to my interview requests. I reached out on my own to Chinese and Russian journalists and news offices in Istanbul but received no response. If they are working with fixers (and, I will show, they must be, whether or not they call them fixers), those fixers are apparently in separate social networks from those assisting Euro-American reporters, networks to which I never gained access.

I had lunch with a friendly reporter for Iranian state news, but he told me that his outlet relied mostly on official sources and was focused largely on reporting from Ankara, Turkey's capital city. It was early enough in my research that I took this claim at face value, not considering all the forms of brokerage by people not labelled fixers upon which I can now say with confidence the Iranian media *must* have relied.

My Western-centric pattern of recruitment of participants risks reproducing the tired stereotype of the formal West (bureaucratic news organizations) vs. the informal East (wily Turkish and Syrian fixers).[5] Had I studied non-Western news organizations, I probably would have found them to rely on their own formal processes, and if I had studied their operations in New York or London, I likely would have found wily Westerners brokering their work.

Furthermore, one major takeaway of this study should be that what appears to be a uniform group is actually a chain of mediators, all of whom are trying to figure out their immediate interlocutors as representatives of and proxies for larger groups with internal order and formality. If I had made foreign reporters my main focus, there would be more emphasis on just how wily and informal they too are. Journalist are not mere rule-followers or undifferentiated members of a pack, but rather creative brokers between disparate cultures: of editors on the one hand, and fixers and sources on the other.

Fixers as brokers

Brokerage—the mediation between otherwise disconnected parties—is central to journalism as a whole and to fixing specifically. Journalism connects audiences to events and people to which they would otherwise have no access. If we zoom in to the level of individual contributors to new production we find, as mentioned above, a chain of mini brokers.[6]

Brokers bridge gaps in social structure and so allow interactions and the transmission of information across those gaps (Stovel and Shaw 2012:141). By a gap in social structure, they

[5]Not all of the fixers who participated in my study were Easterners, it is worth mentioning. Of the 72 total fixers and translators on the list, seven did not list a local language as their mother tongue. Most of them were Europeans living in Turkey.

[6] Bishara (2013:50-67, 159-161) describes the chain of brokerage through which news is produced as "accumulated authorship". Tumber and Palmer (2004) discuss war correspondents' practice of embedding with military units as creating another such brokerage relationship. Gürsel (2016) describes the brokerage of images by photo agencies and visual editors in newsrooms.

mean a potential relationship that does not yet exist. There was no gap, when I become interested in writing my article about Turkish journalism, between Solmaz and me because we already knew and were able to interact with each other. There was, however, a gap between me and Solmaz's journalist colleagues; she could become a broker by bridging that gap: introducing and translating for us. Brokers can connect "parties" consisting of individuals like me or aggregations like the staff of *Bugün*, as represented below. White dots are brokered parties and black dots are brokers; lines represent relational ties between individuals that could be friendship, kinship, professional, or any other kind of acquaintanceship.

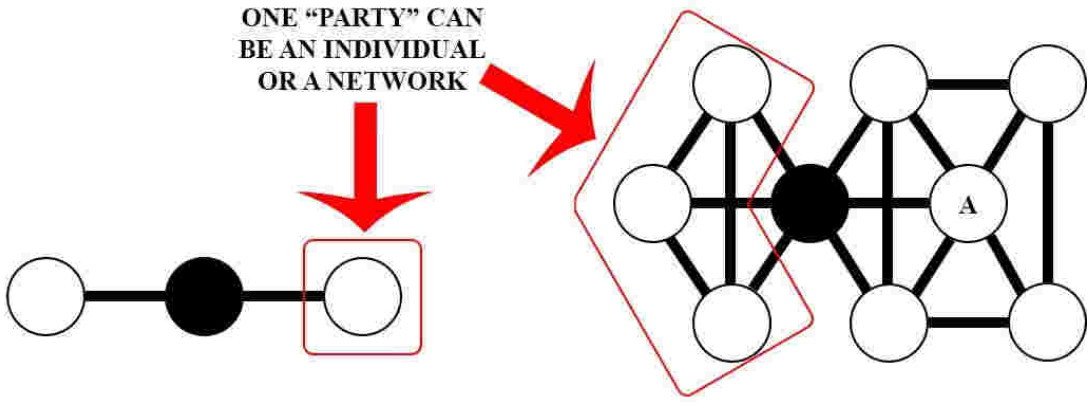

Figure 1.1: Brokers and Brokered Parties

(adapted from Stovel and Shaw 2012)

Brokers have a privileged position in social structure in part because they have some control over others' access to information (Burt 2007:15-16). Let's say that Solmaz is represented by the black dot in Figure 1.2, and I am one of the white dots on the left-hand side, which for the moment represents Istanbul's expat social scene. More lines from more networks lead to Solmaz than to the white dots (expats on the left; local journalists on the right), meaning she has the opportunity to learn from more interlocutors; even though dot *A*, which let's say represents a source, has some connections that Solmaz does not, she still has an advantage because the parties

on the left and right live in respective insular social worlds. *A* can learn from all connected dots, but they are a relatively homogenous Gülen movement-affiliated network of colleagues with a good deal of redundancy in their knowledge, whereas Solmaz can learn from both *A*'s network and my expat network on the left, which has different information and a different perspective (Stovel and Shaw 2012:144; Burt 2007:16-19). And because Solmaz is the only bridge between right- and left-hand networks, she can control what *A* learns from and about the expat network.

Given brokers' control over information, trust is thus a key ingredient of brokerage: we must each trust that Solmaz will act according to our wishes because we cannot know for sure if she is doing so (Levi 2015:15922; Burt 2007:93-107). In addition to the having to worry about maintaining trust, brokers' freedom of action is constrained by the availability of alternative bridges between brokered parties and their own morality (Simmel 1950:155-156, 160-162). If we can easily circumvent Solmaz by using Facebook as a means of checking her honesty, or if overwhelming feelings of guilt at the mere thought of dishonesty to someone as nice as me constrain her freedom of action, she is less able to get creative in her dealings with us.

It is important to consider brokers as moral beings.[7] Morality, for our sociological purposes, is a sense of what should and should not be done based on one's own background, the demands of a particular situation, and the normative expectations of those with whom one is

[7]Empirical studies of brokers have also tended to focus on strategies rather than ethics or values, and indeed even the label "broker" seems to lead analysts to limit their analysis to consideration of "interests." Even Ann Swidler and Susan Watkins (2017), in their perceptive study of aid networks in Malawi, counterpose foreign "altruists" motivated by benevolence against local "brokers" as motivated by their career goals and other interests. In fact, those altruists are themselves brokers, for instance mediating between international aid organizations or churches, and are also self-interested, but nonetheless their actions are presented as morally motivated, even if those actions are ineffective or counterproductive. (Swidler and Watkins 2017:36-56) This arbitrary division of people into altuists with values vs. brokers with interests problematically reproduces a long tradition of representing Westerners as movers and shakers whose ideas are their own and Easterners/Southerners as simply reacting to the hand they are dealt, whether in opposition or smelling profit, and as intellectual inferiors whose ideas are implanted, whether by religion or alien Western ideology.

interacting. Fixers may take brokered parties' norms more or less seriously, depending on their degree of ambivalence or bias.

A biased broker has closer ties to one party being brokered than the other, and so is subject to greater moral pressure to conform to that party's norms and expectations, even at the cost of the other party. Either a stronger tie (as represented by the thick line on the top of Figure 1.2) or more social ties to one party than to another biases a broker. Solmaz would, I hoped, be biased in my favor in the sense of privileging my desire to report objectively (a term to be unpacked later) over sources' desires to ignore inconvenient history and politics and limit my article to a condemnation of the Turkish state. This bias would be a moral stance that she ought to weigh my normative expectations more heavily than her colleagues', based on our stronger social tie.

It is worth noting this simple model of dots and lines captures only the present moment and does explain on its own what makes a tie weak or strong. Solmaz's history and her expected future influenced the weight each party's moral pressure: she had, in her tenure at *Today's Zaman*, invested in and come to aspire to a career as a journalist, yet she saw the writing on the wall and knew that she had no future working for the Gülen-affiliated media. This expectation lent me greater moral influence—given that we were not otherwise socially close—than I would otherwise have had, while the demise of the Gülenist media weakened the moral influence of sources. Money and the sense of obligation that can come with it can also shape our moral worlds: the fact that I was paying Solmaz in itself lent moral weight to my expectations of her.

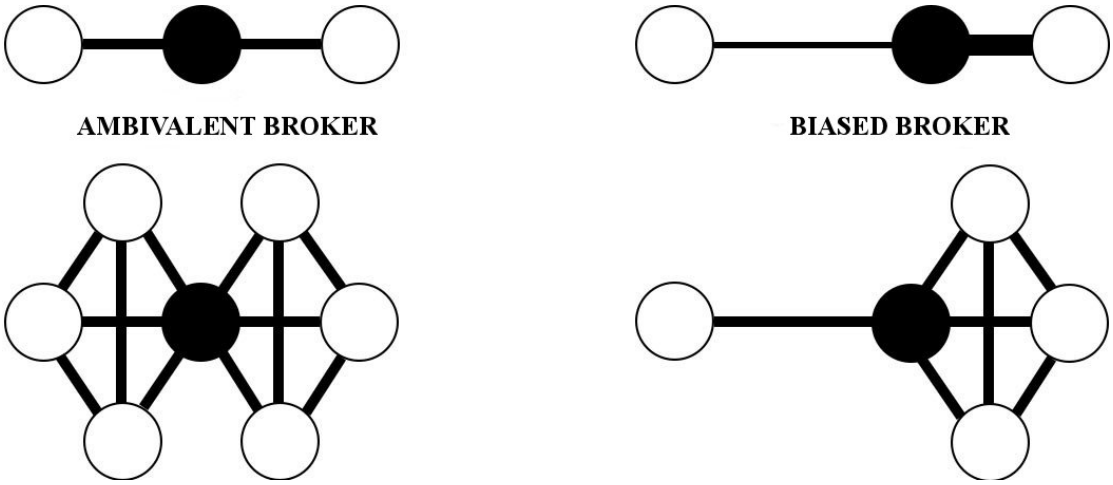

Figure 1.2: Ambivalent and Biased Brokers

(adapted from Stovel and Shaw 2012)

If the balance of ties between brokered parties, either as individuals or as aggregates, is equal, you find an ambivalent broker who facilitates interaction between parties without experiencing disproportionate moral pressure to ally with one against the other.[8]

A further useful distinction can be made between brokers' "catalyst" vs. "middleman" roles. A catalyst serves to create new social connections between individuals who then interact with one another. The classic example is a matchmaker who sets up a romantic couple and then (one would hope) steps aside. When fixers serve as matchmakers, making introductions between journalists and sources who then interact on their own, they are catalysts. Solmaz more closely approximated this type of broker in the case of the famous journalist, whom I interviewed without translation. A middleman, by contrast, is a fixture in the relationship between parties, continuing to facilitate the flow of information or goods between them (Stovel and Shaw 2012).

[8] Stovel and Shaw (2012) use the term "neutral" broker.

In the case of Cihan, for example, Solmaz did not simply introduce us and then walk away, but continued to be involved in our exchange as a translator.

The middleman role is the more interesting of the two in that it alters not only who interacts with whom, but also how they interact. The presence of a middleman creates a three-party (triadic) relationship that is fundamentally different from the two-party (dyadic) relationships we often use for our simplified models of the social world: buyers and sellers, masters and servants, parents and children, principals and agents, teachers and students, organizations and their regulators. Whereas in a conflictual dyadic relationship parties simply struggle for supremacy over one another, in a triadic relationship, it becomes strategically important for conflicting parties to try to win over the middleman and for the broker to reduce the differences between them (Simmel 1950).[9] The famous journalist did her best to win over Solmaz (who *after* the interview was back in a middleman position as the journalist did not have my number) with heart emojis and an argument that the real enemy of press freedom to focus on was the government to which Solmaz, having just lost a her job in the press at the hands of government trustees, was sympathetic.

A final point about catalyst and middleman roles is that brokers can both make and buffer social connections. A catalyst compresses social distance by bringing together previously unconnected parties; a middleman maintains social distance between indirectly interacting parties.[10]

---

[9]Parties being brokered by a middleman are always conflicting in some way—otherwise they would rely on catalyst brokers and then be able to carry on unmediated interaction of their own.

[10]Maintaining a social buffer may be the middleman's main function, as when a "fence" buys stolen goods from a thief and then sells them to ordinary consumers, allowing the consumer a bargain without direct exposure to the criminal underworld. A fence also serves to mediate between thieves and police, whom the fence may assist in recovering stolen property on occasion to allow police to look good to their constituents without the trouble of a true crackdown on crime (Klockers 1974).

Having written in abstract terms about brokerage, I will now introduce the particularities in fixers' brokerage of journalism in Turkey and Syria. This introduction will be a two-step process: 1) describing connections and disconnections between brokered parties, that is, journalists and the broader society, and then 2) describing the ways fixers have been observed to bring together and keep apart those parties.

Types of journalism

Debates about what journalism is and should be center around journalism's social proximity to and distance from those other fields of society. This can be further simplified to journalism's social proximity to powerful special interests (nowadays usually the state and corporations) and to the public (either readers or as subjects of reporting).[11] The types of journalism that different combinations of distance from and proximity to special interests and publics produces can be illustrated with the following chart:

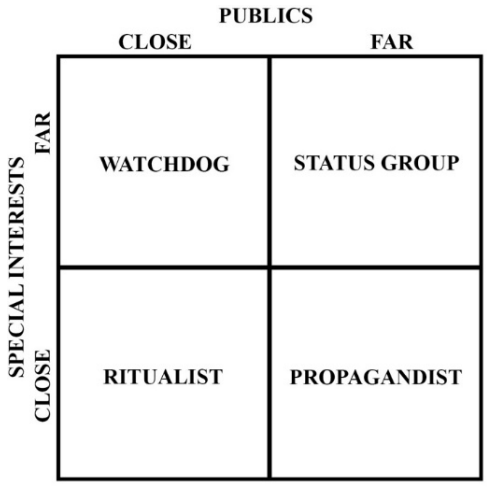

Figure 1.3: Social Proximity and Journalism Type

[11]As will become clearer as this chapter proceeds, the idea of "the public" is a fiction—the public is a collection of special interests, not some monolith—but it is a powerful fiction that shapes the way journalists and scholars think about journalism's role and legitimacy, just as the fiction of the Will of the People is a powerful one for democratic politics LaPierre 2013:231)

The Watchdog: This is the liberal ideal for the news media. To serve as a watchdog, keeping the powerful in check "as a surrogate for the public," (Marder 1998) journalism must have distance from those it investigates to maintain its autonomy and critical stance; it must also be close enough to the public to understand its problems. (Coronel 2008; Schudson 2003:38-40)

The Status Group: This is the picture that rightwing critics of the American news media paint. Journalists are recruited from elite ivory tower universities walled off from workaday America, then join an elite professional status group that is unaccountable to the state or the rest of society and indifferent or hostile to national interests and values. They are rewarded for adhering to the status group's private values and for attacking other centers of power (Lichter and Rothman 1982:20; see also Weber [1921] 2010: 142-148 on privileged status groups; and Schudson 2003:41-45).[12]

The Propagandist: This is the leftwing critique of the media. Although obvious in political systems in which the state directly controls or censors journalism, a less visible but perhaps even more nefarious collusion between journalism and the powerful exists even where the press is superficially free. Media ownership by corporations, dependence on advertising revenue, the ability of the state and other powerful interests to use lawsuits, regulations, and even just the threat of denying access, and the subsidization of journalism by public relations machines that do reporters' work for them (with a spin), bring news outlets into line with the

[12]A less polemical view that nonetheless highlights journalism as a status group separate from the rest of society (though not necessarily an elite) has it that journalists' professional routines and the social organization of the news affect what stories they cover and how they choose to cover them. Journalists are immediately accountable not to the public or to officials or corporations keeping them on a short leash, but to their editors and peers. They thus orient their work and conform to norms and routines of that status/reference group, rather than primarily to acting in the public interest or as propagandists for the powerful (Gans [1979] 2004:78-115, 151-152, 229-235; Schudson 2003:48-56; Shirky 2008:55-61).

status quo and prevent critical journalists from ascending to influential positions (Herman and Chomsky 1988:1-35; Schudson 2003:134-150).[13]

The Ritualist: This might be called a holistic view of journalism as inseparable from society as a whole. In this view, the press is not centrally involved in transmitting information either as propaganda or as resistance to hegemony. Journalists both get their ideas from and serve to re-affirm a collective consciousness, a shared experience of and set of myths about the world. Insofar as the news media do provide information, they serve to create a common body of knowledge and gossip across cities and nations, as exists organically in villages where everyone knows one another (Carey [1989] 2009:11-28; Park 1923).

Various authors argue about which of these ideal types bears the closest resemblance to the journalism that exists in a particular time and place and subdivision of the field, yet their arguments all fit within the same general logic of the way social proximity and distance affect journalism.[14] It is worth underlining that *far* and *close* here are relative terms as illustrated above in the diagram of ambivalent and biased brokers: it is not just whether journalists are socially tied (close) to one party or another, but the balance of strength in their ties to different parties that matters—whom they are closer to.

I have presented journalism so far as existing in a simple unified model of the world with a public on one side and special interests on another. Special interests, in this model, are powerful

---

[13] The degree to which this propagandist indoctrination actually works (see Schudson 2003:16-27) is irrelevant here. For our present purposes, it is not the effect but the orientation of journalism that is important.

[14]This correlation of social contact to affinity and favorable coverage might seem obvious and conforms to the logic of brokerage described above: brokers are biased in favor of those with whom they enjoy the most and deepest social ties. However, as alternatives we can imagine a "familiarity breeds contempt" hypothesis, according to which journalists produce the most negative representations of those they know best, or a "boundary work" hypothesis, according to which journalists seek to carve out an autonomous professional identity and differentiate themselves from those with whom they rub elbows through critical reporting.

everywhere and are not the same as the public. But things get messy when we apply this thinking to the real world, particularly to international journalism. Depending on one's perspective and level of analysis (i.e., micro or macro), special interests and publics can be defined in different ways. This means that one man's propagandist can be another man's watchdog.[15] Imagine an X through the center of the 4x4 chart above serving as axes of reflection; opposite diagonals are doppelgängers of a sort.

Imagine a journalist reporting on Iraq in the mid-2000s for an American audience who, restricted from leaving his fortified compound because of security concerns, has little contact with Iraqis but close ties to Americans, spending hours a day on social media chatting with friends and family back home. Does the relevant "public" in this case consist of ordinary Americans or ordinary Iraqis? The two publics are far from unified. From the Iraqi perspective, he is socially far from the public and socially close to a special interest (the American occupiers) for whom he leans propagandist. But if we switch perspectives, he is socially close to the American public and far enough from Iraqi special interests to serve as a watchdog, not, for instance, becoming so sympathetic to or vulnerable to pressure from Iraqi insurgents fighting the US military as to avoid hard-hitting reporting on their violence.

Now imagine a "parachutist" reporter, a generalist whose employer sends her to report on breaking news around the world. She is constantly on the move and so her ability to establish deep social ties with either special interests or publics in the countries she bounces among is

[15]For example, the Russian state-sponsored channel *Russia Today* (*RT*) has provided in-depth watchdog coverage of human rights violations in the American "War on Terror" and of the Occupy Wall Street protest movement against inequality and corruption in the United States (Bloodworth 2013; Rawnsley 2015:275-281). *RT* also serves as a propagandist for Russian state interests. These two roles serve the same function of legitimizing Russian policies and delegitimizing American policies (Yablokov 2015). The example of *RT* brings to the fore that this typology of journalism makes no distinction in terms of the quality of information disseminated, which will be addressed in Chapter 5: **Translations**.

limited. By necessity, then, her reports tend to stick to the conventional wisdom about events and broader narratives about those countries. Her constant social anchor, however, is her job. She is close to both the higher ups and the rank and file of journalism, knowing how to quickly integrate with the foreign correspondent scene wherever she goes and establish serviceable relationships with the fixers, photographers, and others she collaborates with on short notice. At the level of the societies which she covers, she is an isolated status group member, but if we zoom in to the field of journalism as its own little society, she is a ritual reenactor, reproducing shared myths and re-enforcing the collective worldview of international journalism by crafting her stories to meet editors' expectations and impress colleagues. The ritualist and the status groupie can be two sides of the same coin when perspective is changed, just as can the watchdog and the propagandist.

The watchdog, status group, propagandist, and the ritualist are "ideal" types, as opposed to categories (e.g., print, radio, or television journalism) according to which actual cases of journalism can be classified. Ideal types are intentional exaggerations that are designed to present particular relationships (e.g., the closer the social tie of a journalist and a special interest, relative to the journalist's other ties, the more the journalist's reporting will serve the agenda of that special interest) in clear relief rather than descriptions or categories of real-world phenomena (see Ringer 2004:101-104). Each of the ideal types outlined above contains its own internal tensions and contradictions that make its existence in pure form impossible, except in our imaginations. Journalists need some contact with both special interests and the public in order to do their jobs, yet necessarily have some social separation from each by virtue of their specialized training and work.

Types of Fixing I: Status vs. Charisma

Where do fixers fit into the picture? Fixers both compress (as catalysts) and maintain (as middlemen) social distance between reporters, on the one hand, and special interests and publics on the other. They can allow reporters to extend their social reach as well as buffer reporters' contact with different parties.

A reporter who by their own position in society (e.g., as a newly-arrived foreigner lacking local language competency) is not—and has difficulty becoming—socially close to particular kinds of sources hires a fixer to compress that social distance and catalyze interaction with new parties. Yet although social contact is essential for journalists' doing their jobs, it also has a contaminating effect, reducing journalists' independence. This contamination is in some cases and from some perspectives seen as a good thing: accountability to and understanding of the public is necessary for the performance of a watchdog role. Yet social contamination can also turn journalists into propagandists or threaten their position in their status group.[16] Social contact can also be dangerous: for instance, foreign journalists working in Iraq during the height of war in the mid-2000s attributed their dependence on "second-hand reporting" through fixers to the likelihood of being killed or kidnapped if they, foreigners, left Baghdad's high-security "Green Zone" to make direct contact with the Iraqi people on whom they were supposed to be reporting (Murrell 2015:116-132). As middlemen, fixers buffer reporters from contamination and danger. In so doing, they expose themselves to that very contamination and danger.

---

[16]Sociologist Andrew Abbott argues that isolation from outside social contamination and real-world complexity is the central determinant of status differences within professions, rather than factors like wealth, power, or job difficulty. Abbott (1981:823-824) writes,

> Intraprofessional status is in reality a function of professional purity. By professional purity I mean the ability to exclude nonprofessional issues or irrelevant professional issues from practice. Within a given profession, the highest status professionals are those who deal with issues predigested and predefined by a number of colleagues. These colleagues have removed human complexity and difficulty to leave a problem at least professionally defined, although possibly still very difficult to solve. Conversely, the lowest status professionals are those who deal with problems from which the human complexities are not or cannot be removed.

The buffering role is most obvious when journalists never see or meet their sources, but fixers can serve as buffers even when their clients come face-to-face with publics and special interests. By selectively recoding questions and answers in translation, pre-interviewing sources to ensure they can provide what reporters are seeking, and preparing both reporters and sources to interact, as addressed in Chapters 4 and 5, fixers absorb the contaminating messiness of local realities and repackage those realities for clients in purified form. In so doing fixers become contaminated themselves (NB this role of purifying messy reality to fit technical language and classification schemes and so allow interaction across cultural divides is discussed as "uncertainty absorption" in the organizational sociology literature [Vaughan 1999:277]).

Yet with the danger and contamination of contact with the disorderly social world comes charisma. By charisma, I mean an attractiveness and mystique people can gain when seen to expose themselves to and master disorder (Abbott 1981; Weber 1946; Douglas [1966] 2001). In dramatic portrayals of journalism, or for that matter of any job, charismatic heroes tend to live and work on the fringes of organizations and on the front lines; drama comes from their exposure to danger and outside influences. Heroes' very exposure to the world outside their organizations helps them to transcend received understandings and assumptions, create change, and broker peace. The by-the-books managing editors, police chiefs, CEOs, and so on of dramas are conformist bureaucrats, unheroic in their hostility to the loose-cannon heroes. "Purity," writes anthropologist Mary Douglas, "is the enemy of change, of ambiguity and compromise" (Douglas [1966] 2001:163). Impurity, on the other hand, carries the potential for new ideas and for

reconciliation. It is also essential for dealing with the messy reality of the real world (Douglas [1966] 2001: 163-170).[17] Status emerges from order, charisma from chaos.

The charisma of exposure to the messiness of society is intimately connected to professions' *public* claims to legitimacy (as opposed to their *intra-group* claims of status). The public face of a profession tends to be the charismatic hybrid engaged with real-world problems, not the purist who deals only with other members of the profession to address esoteric problems in professional jargon, although that purist enjoys high status within the profession (Abbott 1981:829-832).[18]

In her study of news fixers, Colleen Murrell (2015:32) argues that foreign correspondence's central myth is of the charismatic reporter as a "lone explorer in foreign lands." Again, think of movies about international journalism: what is celebrated again and again is heroic exposure to and struggle to make sense of disorder, not the professionally purer work and more routine work of, say, compiling predigested wire agency reports and sound bites from official sources into stories. This myth helps explain why fixers are largely invisible to readers of the news or of

[17] Gil Eyal (2006:68-69) cites similar tensions between status and charisma in competing claims among experts of Arab affairs in Israel. Locally-experienced Arabists competing with German-training philologists in claiming oriental expertise described in *The Disenchantment of the Orient* paraded their charismatic knowledge of colloquial Arabic and wide range of local contacts in making that claim they better understood Palestinians (Eyal 2006; 68-69). As Eyal (2006:11) writes of both the Arabists and the philologists, "their very authority depended on existing within the border zone, 'between East and West,' alongside the hybrids," that is, on charismatic connection to the East. Yet at the same time, experts had to defend their status--a competition in which the philologists had the upper hand--as epistemologically pure of Arab influence in order to "disentangle themselves from the no-man's-land inside the boundary and to purify themselves so they can appear as credible allies of state elites." (Eyal 2006:15)

[18] To talk about purity and impurity, order and disorder, we must always take on a subjective perspective of a particular actor and understand more or less how they see their current and future place in the world. Does a fixer view herself as a peripheral member of the field of journalism and aspire to one day rise to higher status within that status group? Or does she view herself as a player in the field of local politics, with her client reporters functioning as sources of outside contamination and charisma? What looks like disorder from journalism's perspective may be understood as following an orderly logic from the vantage of local politics, and vice versa. The status/charisma distinction, like the insider/outsider, public/special interest, watchdog/propagandist, ritualist/status groupie, and signal/noise distinctions that appear in this study, is relational and perspectival. You are an insider in relation to something or someone, and that makes you an outsider to something or someone else.

journalists' memoirs: making their buffering presence between foreign correspondents and the world visible would spoil their clients' claim to charismatic exposure to and mastery of foreign disorder (Murrell 2015:23-45). The myth is strongly valued among reporters themselves, and so cannot be seen as something for public consumption only. Reporters are morally ambivalent, attracted to both status and charisma. Chapter 4: **Moral Worlds of Ambivalence**, explores analogous ambivalence among fixers; the chapter could just as easily have been written about their clients and occasionally makes comparisons with the latter.

A solution to ambivalence between status and charisma is for journalists to rhetorically split themselves into what might be called ontological and epistemological selves. The ontological self refers to social and physical position; the epistemological self refers to intellectual position. This point might best be explained with an example:

In *The Forever War*, a collection of scenes from the post-9/11 wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, *New York Times* reporter Dexter Filkins as a rule writes his dialogues as though he were speaking directly with Afghans and Iraqis. He portrays himself as hanging out extensively with locals and witnessing local realities while avoiding being fed stories by US embassies like less competent journalists. Yet Filkins balances ontological proximity with epistemological distance. He is in a sense ontologically local (he is in the field and in direct contact with publics and special interests) but epistemologically Western and modern. To underline his professional and disengaged epistemological self, he frequently points out the inseparable gap between corrupting local ways of understanding the world and his own:

One of them [a Talib] would be sitting across from you in a restaurant, maybe picking at a kebab, *looking at you from across the centuries* [emphasis added], kohl under his eyes, and you

knew he'd just as soon kill you as look at you. Dumb as a brick, but that hardly mattered. (Filkins 2008:25)

Filkins is presenting a split self: his ontological self is charismatically exposed to disorder (he is getting up close and personal with scary Taliban); his epistemological self is pure (he retains a worldview fundamentally different and disconnected from the primitive Afghan trapped in a centuries-old epistemic mode). This splitting allows him to claim both charisma and status.

The difficulty is that one's epistemological and ontological positions are connected: our social position influences how we think and act (this point is also central to the correlation between social distance and journalism type described above). It is difficult to simultaneously be an ontological insider and epistemological outsider. Fixers help with this problem with their dual connecting and buffering functions: they allow interaction and ontological proximity but absorb and protect journalists from epistemological contamination.

In the case of my reporting, I was able to borrow[19] Solmaz's contacts and built-up trust with Gülen-affiliated media, which took years of employment and with it initiation into their worldview to develop, and use it to quickly gain ontological proximity. I could enter their offices and homes, interview them, then depart with, I would like to think, the epistemological buffer between us intact.

For her part, Solmaz also sought to split her epistemological self from the ontological self that was close to our sources. After our interview at *Özgür Düşünce*, she asked me rhetorically, Do they think *we*'re stupid? Do they actually think it works to avoid answering, that they're convincing *us* they're independent? Combining the two of us into a plural pronoun put her in my epistemological camp *against* her erstwhile colleagues.

[19]I take the term "borrow" from Murrell's (2015:82) discussion of journalists "borrowing" fixers' embodied capital.

Her job was made more complex than Filkins' (at least at the stage of writing about his exploits to an international audience) by the fact that she had also to signal to sources that her ontological proximity to foreign journalists had not so compromised her epistemologically that those sources could no longer trust her to steer clients toward favorable reporting. The degree to which she worked to signal such a split to Cihan et al., on the one hand, and to me, on the other, related to her expectations of the future. Solmaz was at the time looking for something new and aspired to rise in status among international journalists, which aspiration contributed to her efforts to present herself to me as epistemologically outside of the Gülen media sphere.

Types of Fixing II: Middlemen vs. Catalysts

The degree to which fixers take on middleman as opposed to catalyst roles is connected to the type of journalism they are facilitating and to their status among journalists. Fixers are able to 1) shift journalism toward one type or another as catalysts who increase journalists' social interaction with special interests and/or publics, and 2) as middlemen, buffer client journalists from the contamination of social connection to those sources. Some authors discussing fixers have stressed the middleman role, others the catalyst role of fixer. For the most part, examples of both can be found in scholars' accounts of and journalists' memoirs discussing fixers, but for the sake of clarifying my own argument, I will exaggerate and purify those authors' accounts, just as I have in proposing ideal types of journalism.

For those highlighting watchdog journalism, fixers serve to connect their clients to the public as catalysts and/or to buffer them from special interests as middlemen. Jerry Palmer and Victoria Fontan (2007), in an interview-based study of fixers assisting foreign reporters in Iraq as the country descended into civil war and insurgents increasingly targeted journalists, described

fixers as their clients' "eyes and ears" who allowed them to collect information outside of Baghdad's high-security "Green Zone."

> In Iraq, the situation has been such that the critical factor is the extent to which the Western journalist wants to based stories upon information deriving from the Anglo-US military and political administration in Iraq; stories deriving from these sources scarcely need fixers' intervention, as Western journalists have all the access they need…Fixers become essential at the point where contact with 'ordinary' Iraqis is needed…Several journalists spoke of the desire to 'see for themselves' and several spoke of distrust of information coming from the coalition. (P. 9-10)

Here, fixers created connections to the Iraqi public under circumstances in which security concerns would otherwise keep international journalism closely bound to the special interests of the occupying military and Iraqi government it was propping up.

Middleman buffering does not come into play in Palmer and Fontan's story, as the journalists' were already socially close to those special interests. But ethical discussions among journalists of the fixer's role of absorbing risk and blowback, thus allowing them to report, illustrates the place of fixer buffering in watchdog journalism (see Palmer 2017:11-14 for a roundup of foreign journalists' reflections on how fixers serve to protect their clients while exposing themselves to danger). Openshaw (2008), an experienced South African photo and video journalist, commenting on a journalism web forum thread titled "What makes a good fixer?" advised his colleagues,

> Always remember that you get to leave – he or she has to live in that country, in that neighborhood. So if you keep on shooting after the local gangster boss says stop it, you might get a blue eye or a broken camera – HE gets his house firebombed and his kids harassed after you are gone.

The local gangster boss is a special interest here, and his limited contact with the foreign reporter—the gangster might beat the latter up in the street, but otherwise has a limited reach to pressure them--allows the fixer to get access without having to worry about enduring exposure to the gangster's contaminating influence on reporting. In this example, though, the journalist's

connection to the fixer is possibly exposing the reporter to indirect contamination, which would threaten the reporter's watchdog role if he were to soften reporting or otherwise defer to the gangster to avoid harm coming to the fixer.

In the case of my reporting on the Gülen-affiliated media, Solmaz buffered my contact with both the famous journalist and the Turkish state very concretely by making all the calls for me. The famous journalist could not yell at me directly. I did not hesitate to contact Gülen movement-affiliated journalists--which would have been a kind of pre-emptive self-censorship serving the special interests of the state--out of concern that they were under surveillance because it was Solmaz's phone number, not mine, that would be traceable.

Former Associated Press (AP) correspondent Matti Friedman (2014) describes the foreign press in Israel and Palestine not as a watchdog, but as something between a status group ("Journalistic decisions are made by people who exist in a particular social milieu, one which, like most social groups, involves a certain uniformity of attitude, behavior, and even dress. . . These people know each other, meet regularly, exchange information, and closely watch one another's work") and a propaganda wing of the United Nations and international NGOs, who "provide reporters with social circles, romantic partners, and alternative employment" as well as a steady stream of information unfavorable to Israel. Friedman argues that local media brokers contribute to the foreign journalists' bias against Israel, pushing press coverage yet further in the direction of propaganda. The foreign press, he writes, depend heavily of local Palestinian staff who are contaminated by their exposure to the influence of the Palestinian militant organization Hamas:

> Hamas learned that international coverage from the territory could be molded to its needs…Most of the press work in Gaza is done by local fixers, translators, and reporters, people who would understandably not dare cross Hamas. . . The press could be trusted to play its role in the Hamas script. . . .

Friedman goes on, in an article published after leaving the agency, to describe a series of instances in which Hamas intimidated local AP staff or controlled the agency's coverage to serve its strategy of provoking Israeli strikes on civilians and then using coverage of casualties to score public relations points.[20]

When reporting on the Turkish media, I ended up leaving all mention of the famous journalist out of my story. In large part, I did so because I simply did not have space for a labyrinthine explanation of false accusations and political defections; she may have been famous in Turkey, but few *Dissent* readers would have heard of her and so her career's sorted details did not merit lengthy dissection. At the same time, though, I was a bit relieved to let the whole thing go. I had looked more into the journalists whose prosecutions the source had supported, which I would not have done had not Solmaz planted a seed of doubt by agreeing with her that they were sketchy deep state operators. And some of them *did* seem sketchy as I dug deeper. Had Solmaz not be epistemologically close enough to the famous journalist to share her view, I might have included her in the article in an unfavorable light.

Anthropologist Amahl Bishara (2013) also writes of foreign journalists and their local colleagues covering Israel and Palestine, highlighting the propagandist and status group types of journalism, but in her account, international coverage and press hierarchies are overwhelmingly biased against Palestinians. Local news workers are distrusted when it comes to editorial judgments because of their perceived social proximity to Palestinian interests.[21] They are also

---

[20]Murrell (2015:113) similarly notes that in Gaza, "Sometimes fixers get lobbied by their communities to influence newsgathering by, in turn, lobbying the correspondents they work with to cover something." Those lobbyists may have been *ordinary people*, that is, members of the public, from a Gazan perspective, but from the perspective of a foreign correspondent interested in balancing all views in the Israel-Palestine conflict, they represented a special interest (see also Bishara 2013:36-50 for a critique of the American journalistic value of "balance").

[21]I will return to the distinction between *neutral* embodied, logistic, and technical work, on the one hand, and *agentic* editorial work, on the other, in Chapters 4 and 5. I will argue that fixers shift between claiming they are

centrally important to the "embodied and up-close work of journalism" and able to draw foreigners and Palestinians into physical or visually-mediated (i.e., through photos and videos they capture) proximity.

Describing American coverage of Israel-built separation walls in the West Bank, Bishara (2013) writes,

> Palestinian journalists' expressions, body postures, and habits also help them to establish rapport with the Palestinians they are interviewing. . . For Walid, another Palestinian fixer. . . . it was not his gregariousness that made the difference but his embodied social position and his graciousness. . . The U.S. journalist stood back as Walid reasoned gently with the woman, with an empathy that might have emerged from the fact that his own family's home had also been compromised by the building of the separation wall nearby. (P. 149-150)

The American reporter is able to stand back, remaining aloof and interacting only indirectly with the source, because Walid is there as a middleman to extend the reporter's social reach (facilitated by Walid's empathy/contamination) while buffering their social contact. In Bishara's argument, such aloofness from local society is central to foreign journalists' claim to be objective and disinterested. Walid's own lack of separation also justifies inequality in the journalism status group on the basis of his social contamination: he is too close to the story to be trusted with editorial input or to be considered an equal to his foreign colleague (Bishara 2013:50-56, 106-130). Thus, buffering serves the functions of allowing the US journalist access without a substantive shift in social position while elevating the journalist and subordinating the fixer within the professional status group. American reporters are, thanks to Walid and others, successfully able to present themselves within the status group as ontologically close to but epistemologically independent from their sources. Their Palestinian peers, on the other hand, find themselves trapped in a distrusted position of being ontologically close to (they work closely

---

doing one or the other in order to alternately avoid responsibility and take credit for the news stories they help produce.

with foreign news organizations) professional journalism but epistemologically "other" and thus too close to the story to be objective professionals (Bishara 2013:34-67). Similarly to Murrell, Bishara argues that the public erasure of Palestinian contributions tidies up the claim that news is produced by ontologically close but epistemologically remote professionals:

Much collaboration between Palestinian and American journalists is hidden, largely because of the norms of U.S. news institutions that prefer to identify a single person, usually an American, as the carrier of news from distant places, and because the values of journalism favor disinterest, distance, and balanced objectivity as opposed to Palestinians' embedded values and knowledge. (P. 252)

Accounts presenting foreign journalists as ritualists are fewer and farther between, for the obvious reason that foreigners are by definition socially remote, but fixers are on occasion seen as catalyzing their clients' contact with their societies writ large to nudge them closer to ritualism. *Newsweek* correspondent Joshua Hammer describes his fixer Samir Zedan inviting him into Zedan family life and introducing him to a range of Palestinian Christians, from a pro-Israel former mayor to a longtime anti-Israel insurgent leader. Through the immersion in this social milieu that Zedan catalyzed, Hammer (2003:71) "began to look at the world though Palestinian Christian eyes." Indeed, Hammer's narrative of events in Bethlehem throughout the book largely takes on their framing of their situation, that is, as reluctantly dragged into conflict by Israeli forces and settlers on the one hand and Muslim Palestinian radicals on the other (NB zooming out from Palestinian Christian society as a unit of analysis to Israel-Palestine as a whole would turn Hammer from ritualist into propagandist for Christian special interests).

Ideal types, again, never exist in the real world, and *watchdog, professional elite, propagandist, or ritualist* should best be understood not as categories into which we can fit

actual cases here discussed, but rather as poles of a map on which we locate those cases. Middleman fixers allow journalists to take multiple positions by proxy while avoiding the associated contamination; catalyst fixers substantively shift clients' positions. The original positions of foreign journalists and fixers' functions in the above examples can be roughly mapped out as follows. Middleman lines are dotted to indicate that a second position is taken by proxy, while catalyst lines are solid to indicate a substantive shift of a reporter's position.

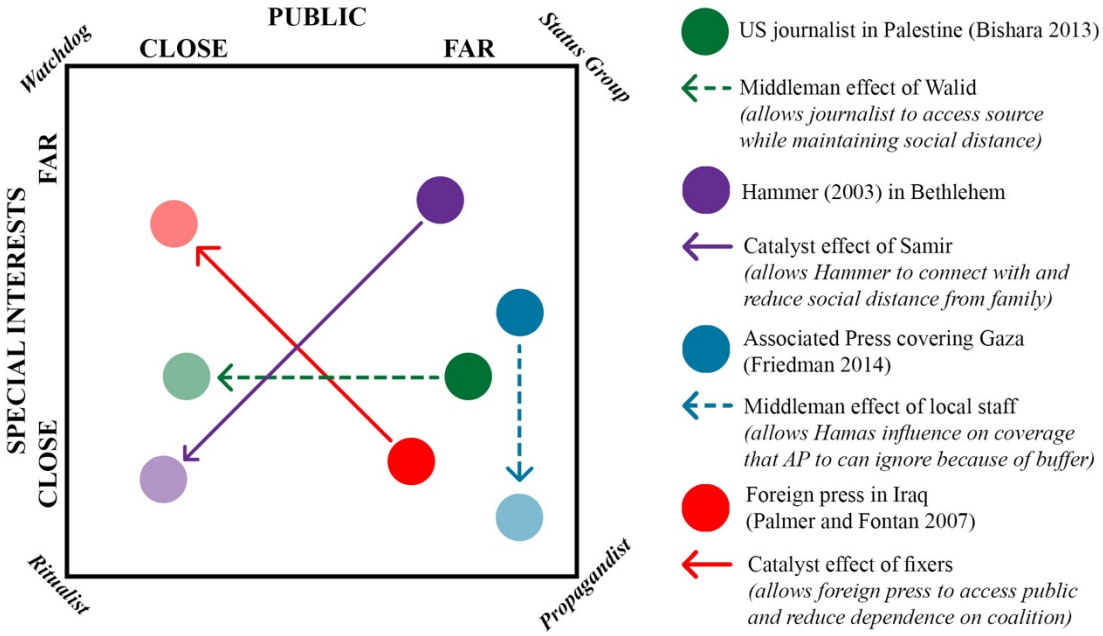

Figure 1.4: Fixers' Effects on Journalism

For now, I will leave open the possibility that the fixers of my study both catalyze and buffer, and that the same action can be alternately understood as catalyzing or buffering depending on perspective. The interpretation of actions as one or the other, after all, is tied up in my characters' claims of and struggles over journalism type, group affiliation, status, and charisma.

What Next

Chapter 2: **Becoming**, describes patterns of who becomes a fixer and how. The social and cultural capital required to work as a fixer mean that foreign reporters are not paying for access to blanket "local access" when they hire fixers, but rather biased access limited by fixers' own elite social positions. National contexts, from the Turkish state crackdown on opposition media to the Syrian civil war, also pattern the profiles of fixers and the social networks reporters access by working with those fixers, meaning that global knowledge production intertwines with local politics. Events that draw large numbers of foreign journalists generate new cohorts of fixers whose backgrounds and ways of fixing are shaped by the particularities of that event. Some fixers begin as charistmatic insiders, close to news sources and events that client reporters pursue; others as outsiders, less connected to stories but able to claim status in news organizations and to step back from and objectify local realities, considering how they might be turned into international news.

Chapter 3: **Tasks and Labels**, discusses fixers' place in the field of foreign correspondence's status hierarchies and division of labor. People labeled "fixer" do a wide variety of tasks, most of which are also done by people with other labels. But a label is more than a job description. To label oneself or another as a "fixer," "producer," "translator," or "activist" is to make claims of competency, objectivity, and group affiliation that influence interpersonal expectations and trust. Calling someone a fixer situates them as a moderately respectable link in a chain of mediation between charismatic locals close to the action and high-status professionals closely tied to news organizations. Substantive differences do exist, however, in the abilities of different mediators to gain local access and to transform local realities into "newsworthy" information, leading to a division of labor along the brokerage chain stretching from field to newsroom.

The deep ambivalence of fixers, caught as they are between competing normative expectations from the parties whom they broker, is the topic of Chapter 4: **Moral Worlds of Ambivalence**. Fixers' moral worlds are ambivalent because of contradictions inherent to the job that are caused by discrepancies between news organizations and news sources. News organizations and client reporters have goals, rhythms to their work, and media-specific requirements that often clash with sources' lives, and it falls to fixers to manage the conflicting expectations of the parties between whom they mediate while maintaining relationships with both. Fixers attempt to synchronize discrepant norms through the application of expertise and absorption of stress, by disciplining both clients and sources into producing actions and words that the fixers can mediate to meet the other's expectations, and by controlling reporters' and sources' exposure to one another. Insofar as fixers maintain a buffer between reporters and sources, reporters also, consciously or not, outsource immorality to their fixers, who can interact with sources in ways that breach norms of journalism without reporters; direct involvement.

Chapter Five: **Translations**, continues the exploration of fixers' management of ambivalence by examining at the micro-level how fixers talk with clients and sources and simultaneously interpret interviews as middlemen. From their choices of how to matchmake reporter to source to the degree to which they explain in addition to translating utterances to their willingness to interrupt and steer conversations, fixers cannot help but transform the flow of information in ways patterned by their moral considerations. Before and during interviews, fixers coach and discipline both sources and reporters to harmonize discrepancies between what the reporter seeks and what the source offers. Fixers then bridge remaining gaps between reporter and source by taking creative advantage of their control over information and power to

coordinate conversations in ways that lead to the transmission of information that fits with reporters' stories.

In every link of the chain of brokerage through which news is produced, information becomes abstracted from its details to the broader point it makes and specifics become interchangeable. In this process there exists wiggle room for fixers to influence *which* specifics make it into news stories; making the most of this wiggle room is an important element of fixing expertise. Whatever the wiggle room fixers enjoy as transcoders of information between reporters and sources to highlight certain bits of information and ignore others, they are limited in the degree to which they are permitted change the broader template of stories within they work. By pushing the boundaries of reporters' and editors' story templates, though, fixers inject new ideas into foreign reporting.

Chapter 6: **Local and Global**, connects fixers' micro-level actions described in the previous two chapters to the meso-level of their careers within international news organizations and the macro-level of national and international politics. Some fixers are hindered by their impure localness from upward mobility within news organizations; others seek the credentials and experiences that would allow them to become more than locals, in their colleagues eyes. Still other fixers are able to transform their charisma into status within emerging fields with their own hierarchies and perspective on purity and impurity. Fixer changes people--what they are capable of, whom they are close to, and what they want out of a job--and as a result, there is a continual turnover of fixers, as new recruits fill gaps created by the transformations of veteran fixers.

The **Conclusion** provides a theoretical framework for comparing fixers to other information brokers and to nonhuman media in how they recode information, discipline interlocutors, and themselves transform over their careers. Previous theories of humans have

used the terms broker, status, charisma, expertise, and so forth, and previous theories of nonhumans have used the terms media, signal, noise, capacity, and so on; I propose a unified vocabulary that makes the most of the respective strengths of each school of theory. Human fixers can be or have already been replaced by machines in various ways, and I conclude by addressing the implications of this shift for the internationalization of knowledge and the future of journalism.

A historical appendix: **The Broker's Place in Turkish and Syrian History** follows the conclusion by discussing the history and particularities of brokering local-foreign interactions in Turkey and Syria. This appendix provides an example of how the theoretical framework developed in this study can be applied in historical and comparative perspective. The section also provides further explanation of the historical background of the region as it affects fixers today: the questions of who becomes a fixer, how locals perceive them, and what cultural divides they must bridge all have a historical component to their answers.

Finally, a methodological appendix: **Sociological Fiction**, explains my use of composite character narratives in comparison to more conventional qualitative and quantitative methods for moving from data to theory. The method I use to create composite narratives protects informants' anonymity and serves as an analytic technique for building theory based on similarities and variations in informants' career trajectories and actions.

CHAPTER 2: BECOMING

The First Fixer

Jackson and Hellyer's 1914 dictionary of criminal slang defines a "fixer" as "one who acts as go-between for thieves and bribe takers." In the early 20th century, the term was used pejoratively to describe brokers doing shady deals in criminal and political contexts, for instance lobbyists who bought off public officials (e.g. Irwin 1909). The *Oxford English Dictionary* traces the first use of "fixer" in the field of journalism to a 1971 article in *The Guardian* about Victor Louis leaking former Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev's memoirs to *Life* magazine (Zorza 1971).

Louis, nee Vitaly Yevgenyevich Lui, began his life as an international broker working low-level staff jobs in foreign embassies in 1940s Moscow, only to end up serving years in the Gulag on espionage charges. Released early from the labor camp under some sort of agreement with the KGB, he took the name Victor Louis and began hanging around the US embassy, chatting up foreign diplomats and journalists with impunity. His intelligence and Kremlin connections made Western journalists at once distrust and value Louis: he had incomparable access to both real and doctored breaking news, for instance of Khrushchev's imminent ouster in 1964, that satisfied both foreign editors and his KGB handlers. Over three decades, Louis worked for outlets including *CBS News*, *The London Evening News*, *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *France-Soir*, and *Time* magazine (Vronskaya 1992; Whitney 1992; Schechter 2012).

Ever since the fixer became a recognized role as broker between reporters and news sources, the term has been tainted by its etymological inheritance from those who mediated between the criminal underworld and corrupt officials. Some fixer themselves dislike the label for carrying a connotation of unprofessional and untrustworthy wheeling-dealing. Yet ever since Vitaly became Victor in the 1950s, fixers have also been managing the way they present themselves to smooth

out relations with foreigners, as well as making the most of their precious, if precarious, position in the middle.

Despite being in some ways a prototype, if not caricature, of future fixers, the way Victor Louis entered the business was remarkable. The recruitment of the fixers I got to know in Turkey began (as far as I can tell) without any quid pro quo with intelligence services. Instead, they became fixers through either a gradual shift away from other kinds of media production or in moments of seeming serendipity made possible by fixers' backgrounds and by their social and geographic positions. Some started off as insiders, with local social ties that help them connect sources to reporters. Others were from the beginning of their fixing careers relative outsiders, closer in perspective and social ties to client reporters than to sources, which made them valuable to journalism in different ways.

Ayşe, 2013

Ayşe (pronounced Ay-shey) learned what a fixer is in June 2013, in Gezi Park, Istanbul. In late May, a group of environmentalists occupied the centrally-located park to protest municipal plans to demolish the park in order to build a shopping mall designed to look like an Ottoman barracks. Police ousted the peaceful protesters from the park with pepper spray, batons, and water cannons. In response, tens of thousands flooded into the park, a disparate collective united by antipathy toward the government. After violent clashes, the police eventually withdrew, and the protesters erected barricades and settled in for an occupation. The Gezi movement's aims expanded well beyond environmentalism: within days they were calling for then Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's resignation (Göle 2013, *Hürriyet Daily News* 2013).

Ayşe was in her early 20s, a political science masters student. She was the high-achieving daughter of a lower-middle class family that disapproved of her lefty political leanings but liked

that she was going places. She joined the Gezi occupation with a workers' rights organization where she had been volunteering. Ayşe found the Gezi Park experience amazing. There was a mix of people and ideologies never found together in the same place, all spending their days peaceably debating the issues: there were LGBT activists, Kurdish nationalists, soccer hooligans, right-wing secularists who accused the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) of betraying the secularist principals of Atatürk's republic. At some point a group calling themselves Anti-Capitalist Muslims showed up and discussed with Ayşe their religious objections to the AKP's neoliberal agenda.

The news media, both foreign and domestic, flocked to Gezi Park and adjacent Taksim Square. A few days into the occupation, Alison, an American radio reporter, approached Ayşe and asked if she spoke English and would do an interview about her experiences. Ayşe's English was decent from university courses and American TV, but what Alison really appreciated was her enthusiasm. After talking a while, Ayşe introduced Alison to some other people and translated. Ayşe was excited to share with the world some of the things she herself had just learned from new acquaintances, for instance that Gezi Park was really important in Istanbul's LGBT subculture, a place where they felt safe to meet up. Alison suspected that the translation was a bit spotty, but that was not the most important thing.

"She was really good at emotion," Alison later told me:

> So her actual translations word-for-word weren't great, but *she* was really great--and for the purpose of public radio--at relaying the emotion of the people I was interviewing, and I ended up crying in an interview because of it. . . She really was really good at mimicking the tone, probably because she was very empathetic. She was also active in the movement, like in the whole protest movement, and so she was really good at relaying the emotion. . . For the purposes of what I was doing, that trumped the word-for-word, because in the end the message, like what was being delivered got delivered. It was a personal experience that she was describing.

They exchanged phone numbers, and the next day Ayşe got a phone call not from Alison but from a freelance reporter named José, who said that Alison had recommended her as a fixer. Ayşe had little idea what that meant, but said they could meet and talk. José offered her $50 US a day to translate for him, help him find people who he couldn't on his own, and give him background information. Ayşe needed the money, and it sounded fun, if nothing else a pretext to approach even more strangers and ask them about their lives. They continued to report together even after the police crushed the Gezi Park occupation a few days later.

Elif, 2013

Elif also began her fixing career with Gezi Park. In a reversal of Ayşe's process of becoming a fixer, though, her social ties to foreign journalism predated and led her to making connections with the movement's activists. From the start, then, she was more oriented to satisfying foreign reporters' requests than to presenting sources' worlds to those reporters.

Elif had grown up between the United States and Turkey and attended Istanbul's elite English-language Boğaziçi University. In 2013, she was working a boring, as she saw it, but well-paid job she had gotten through family connections and was hanging out regularly with English-speaking expats in the labyrinth of Beyoğlu district's side street cafes and bars around Taksim Square.

She was dating Tim, a reporter for the American TV channel XYZ, when the Gezi Park movement erupted and foreign journalists descended on Turkey. Tim told her that all the parachutists who had just arrived were looking for fixers and all the good ones were booked. Would she help out an XYZ colleague for a day or two?

Can, 2007-2011

Can's (pronounced Jon) introduction to fixing was more gradual than Ayşe's or Elif's. Instead of being thrown into fixing by a reporter's seemingly chance request for help, he consciously shifted from domestic to international journalism as the political climate made critical reporting more difficult on the domestic stage.

To explain Can's trajectory adequately, it is necessary to backtrack to the era following Turkey's 1980 coup d'état. After initially exercising strict control over both the state and the press, the military allowed multiparty elections and permitted the liberalization of the media. In the late 1980s and 1990s, private newspapers and then TV stations proliferated, the largest of them under the ownership of industrial conglomerates with interests from managing ports to mining to banking (Yeşil 2016:loc.791-1084). The owners of those outlets used their media power to smear rival companies and to cement patron-client relationships with government officials and the still-influential military, providing favorable coverage in exchange for lucrative contracts and other forms of political favor (Finkel 2000; Yeşil 2016:loc.741-875). The mainstream media backed, for example, the secularist military when it pressured the coalition government led by the AKP's Islamist predecessor Welfare (*Refah*) Party into collapse and the prime minister into resignation (Över 2017:76-77).

Two of the most influential media moguls were Aydın Doğan, whose media group included *Hürriyet* and *Milliyet* newspapers, and Dinç Bilgin, who owned *Sabah* newspaper and *ATV* channel. The ouster of the Welfare Party was succeeded by weak coalition and caretaker governments[22] that failed to pass regulatory economic reforms and oversaw a string of corruption scandals, runaway inflation and the collapse of the country's banking sector. Among

[22]These dysfunctional coalitions brought together parties of right- and left-wing nationalists and economic liberals while excluding the Virtue (Fazilet) Party, the AKP's direct predecessor which was eventually closed down, like Welfare, by the Constitutional Court for violating principles of secularism.

private banks that borrowed extravagantly from foreign lenders, made illegal backroom deals, and then went bankrupt was Dinç Bilgin's Etibank. The state Saving Deposit Insurance Fund (abbreviated TMSF in Turkish) seized *Sabah* and *ATV* twice for their parent company's misdeeds: first in 2000 and then again in 2007 when investigators found that even the deal to sell the outlets off to another businessman to repay Bilgin's debt was crooked (*Economist* 2001; Frantz 2001; Yackley 2007).

In 2007, Can was a business reporter at *Sabah*. The AKP was now running a single-party government, and *Sabah* was its staunch center-left opponent. On April Fools' Day, black-suited police showed up unannounced and, after a brief brawl with security guards that left the lobby strewn with flowers and vase fragments, announced to Can and his startled colleagues that their newspaper was now owned by the state and they were legally required to cooperate. In the year that *Sabah* remained under TMSF management, Can had no complaints: political pressure was no worse than usual, and in fact salaries were raised and a new private insurance policy introduced. But then *Sabah* was auctioned off to Ahmet Çalık, a businessman close to the AKP, with generous financing from a state bank. Erdoğan's son-in-law's brother became CEO. Upper management and then editorial staff began to be replaced with new hires from pro-AKP *Yeni Şafak* and from *Zaman*, the flagship newspaper of the Fethullah Gülen movement. At the time, Gülen was still a close ally of Erdoğan and was enjoying a good deal of success in internationally branding his movement as a moderate and liberal face of Islam. Within Turkey, though, secularists like Can were deeply suspicious that Gülen followers, upon whom the AKP relied for technocratic expertise and global image management, were establishing themselves in state, financial, and media institutions with the secret goal of turning Gülen into the country's master puppeteer, if not of transforming the republic into a theocracy (Hendrick 2013).

The business desk was increasingly pressured to attack businesses controlled by AKP opponents and favor businesses close to the party and the Gülen Movement. "Even the simple stories start to become a problem," Can told me, "I mean like 8pm the demands start to come to change the news, to change the headlines, even to change the sentences."[23]

The immediate cause of Can's departure from *Sabah*, though, was his new editor's demand that he cut his hair. Can had a long ponytail; it was his thing; he would let it down to headbang to the heavy metal music he loved. That was the last straw and he quit.

Can next found work at Aydın Doğan's *Milliyet*, only for Doğan Media Group to be hit with $2.5 billion tax penalty in 2009, just months after Erdoğan had called for a boycott of the group's publications. Erdoğan was reportedly enraged that they had extensively covered a court case in Germany implicating prominent AKP supporters in a Turkish charity embezzlement scheme (Corke et al. 2014:7). As part of the tax settlement, Aydın Doğan was forced to sell *Milliyet* to another businessman close to Erdoğan. And once again, Can's place at his paper gradually became marginal:

> My like last days at the paper, it was like hell, like seriously, *yani* [I mean] because you write stuff, you write stuff, and they are not get published, and then you feel like freaking out. *Yani* if you're a journalist of course you want to see your articles published in the paper, right?" He laughed. "If you can't do it then so what's the point?

[23] Can admitted that political and business intervention into reporting was nothing new: "there was always that kind of pressure on the business journalist in Turkey, from the big holdings, big corporations, from the state ministries, state banks, blah blah… In those days it [was] always hard to write negative about TÜSİAD." TÜSİAD (Turkish Industry and Business Association) is an industry group representing thousands of businesses that by and large form the commercial old guard of the secular establishment. What was new under *Sabah*'s Çalık Holdings regime was that TÜSİAD's religiously conservative and pro-AKP counterpart MÜSİAD (Independent Industrialists and Businessmen Association), along with the Gülen Movement's industrial group TUSKON (Turkish Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists), were now favored (Gürakar 2016:13-21). In some ways this freed Can's journalistic hand: "When Çalık bought [*Sabah*], he had nothing to do, for instance, with TÜSİAD. For example, we were more comfortable writing about TÜSİAD. You know, there was some counterbalances actually. Now for *Sabah* MÜSİAD, TUSKON were good boys. But TÜSİAD started to become bad boys." But Can's own center-left political sympathies made him uncomfortable with this new editorial stance. (See also Sönmez 2014 on MÜSİAD and TUSKON's later enmity that came with the Erdoğan-Gülen split.)

For several years, starting when he was at *Sabah*, Can had occasionally helped out Geert, a Belgian reporter friend. Geert was based in Istanbul for years and learned a bit of Turkish, but nonetheless sometimes needed Can's assistance to get ahold of the right people, navigate bureaucracy, or understand the local context. On days off from work at *Sabah* and *Milliyet*, Can would travel around with Geert and enjoyed exploring the country beyond his own news beat: one day they would interview a soccer team, the next be invited to a dance with Kurdish shepherds. Geert would pay for all their travel expenses, but beyond that Can refused payment. He was helping out as a friend.

As Can prepared to quit his job at *Milliyet* and planned his next move, he considered that Geert, in their many arguments about Can accepting money for his services, had told him fixers were usually paid about $150 a day, more for TV work. Can decided that he could live decently off of that wage if he could find a steady flow of reporter clients, and besides, he felt hopeless about the future of the Turkish domestic media. So Can asked Geert to start sending colleagues who needed fixers his way. Geert also got Can's contact information and summary of qualifications on a document circulated among foreign journalists in Turkey.

Burhan, 1990s

The 2010s may mark a low point of perceived political oppression for left-leaning Turks,[24] but in Kurdish-populated eastern Turkey, the 1990s were crushing. The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), after several years of fighting with other Kurdish and leftist would-be revolutionaries, staged its first attack on the Turkish military in 1984 with the goal of carving out an independent Kurdistan (Marcus 2007:33-81). The Turkish state, which had long suppressed

[24]See Över 2017:161-164 on unfavorable comparisons of the 2010s with the post-1980 coup era among mainstream journalists.

Kurdish identity and governed the region something like an internal colony, responded with force. The brutality of insurgency and counter-insurgency reached a climax over the next decade, as Burhan was growing up.

Burhan grew up outside Diyarbakır, the unofficial capital of Turkish Kurdistan, assisting his father and older brothers in running the village tea shop. Burhan's first language was Kurdish, but at school it was Turkish only, instruction heavily laced with Turkish nationalist propaganda from Western Turkish teachers assigned to the region as a civilizing mission (see İnce 2018:113-135 on the perspectives of Turkish teachers in eastern Turkey). He kept his head down at his high school in Diyarbakır city, where ordinary students passed through metal detectors while Hizbullah-affiliated students flashed knives and handguns and, he strongly suspected, murdered his favorite teacher, who had veered from the curriculum to lecture about the importance of peace and tolerance.[25] At home, Burhan taught himself English and German. He reasoned that foreign languages were his most likely ticket out of the trap of village poverty and political violence, and indeed his halting abilities were enough to secure him a job at a hotel in the city frequented by state officials and journalists.

Occasionally, when Burhan manned the concierge desk, a foreign reporter would approach to ask if he could recommend a translator or fixer. As Burhan became more confident in his language skills with practice, he began putting himself forward. His bosses at the hotel did not mind this side project if it satisfied customers and so helped Burhan out using their own

[25]Not to be confused with the Lebanese Shi'ite group by the same name, Kurdish Hizbullah is a militant organization founded with an Islamist revolutionary mission in 1979 with close ties to the new Islamic Republic of Iran, but which came to serve as a proxy for Turkish intelligence in its war against the PKK in the early 1990s, specializing in assassinations and other brutalities in which Turkish security forces wanted to plausibly deny involvement (Kurt 2017:18-38).

connections. In this way Burhan expanded his network of contacts well beyond the village tea shop.

He would also lead hotel guests on tours of the old city and sometimes drive them to Mardin or other nearby sites of touristic interest. Whereas aforementioned protagonists were inducted into the field in such a way that they saw fixing as a distinct role within journalism, there was not a clear separation for Burhan between guiding and fixing: both meant showing guests around and introducing them to the area. During the busy summer tourist season, Burhan began traveling west to work at better-paying resorts on the Marmara coast. And when he was back in Diyarbakır, returning reporter clients would let Burhan know they were coming to town and needed his help, or the staff he was now friendly with at various hotels would refer new clients to him.

Gül, 2011

In 1998 Turkey threatened Syria into evicting the PKK from its longtime bases; in early 1999 Turkish intelligence captured PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan (Marcus 2007:269-276). The PKK did not disappear with the imprisonment of Öcalan: fighting restarted in 2004 and continued off and on; but at the same time, the Kurdish movement pivoted, redoubling emphasis on civil society activism and civilian politics, particularly at the local level.

Growing up bilingual in Kurdish and Turkish in the medieval maze of backstreets in Diyarbakır's old city, Gül stood out for both her rebellious streak and her intelligence. The latter earned her a place at the prestigious English-language Middle East Technical University in

Ankara in the late 2000s. During breaks she would return to her home town to volunteer and translate at Kurdish political parties'[26] and aligned NGOs' events and conferences.

At one public meeting during the 2011 parliamentary election campaign, a reporter pulled Gül aside during a cigarette break. She introduced herself as Alison and said that while she was in town for election coverage, she was also interested in doing a radio story about *dengbêjan*, singer-storytellers whom the movement was promoting in an effort to promote Kurdish traditions (Scalbert-Yücel 2009). Would Gül be interested in assisting her? Alison could pay her a modest day rate.

After that first introduction to fixing, Gül returned to school in Ankara. After graduating, she moved back to Diyarbakir and continued working as a translator and interpreter for various NGOs and for a delegation from the European Union. But when reporters would come--Alison had added her name to foreign press fixer/translator directory as well--Gül would work with them. Then they would refer their friends to her, and so on, and she began charging more for her services. Eventually, she realized that she could get by comfortably just working as a fixer for a few clients each month.

Karim, 2011-2013

South of the border that same spring, Karim was unknowingly starting down the path to his own career in news media. Karim was from the Syrian capital Damascus but grew up mostly in the United Arab Emirates, where his father was a businessman and where English is as much the lingua franca as Arabic. Karim returned to Syria in the early 2000s to study economics at

[26]Since the 1990s, the Kurdish movement has been represented by a string of legal political parties that have regrouped under new names and color schemes each time the Constitutional Court shuttered it for separatism and to reflect fusions and fissions within the movement: The People's Labor Party, Democracy Party, People's Democracy Party, Democratic People's Party, Democratic Society Party, Peace and Democracy Party, and most recently a coordinated Peoples' Democratic Party for the national level and Democratic Regions Party for the local level.

university and then start a job with a firm owned by President Bashar al-Assad's relative. When the security forces massacred protesters in the southern city of Deraa in March 2011, Karim was propelled into political activism for the first time. He began volunteering with one of the *tansiqiyat*, or coordination committees, that sprang up across the country to organize non-violent resistance and document events (Yassin-Kassab and Al-Shami 2016:57-60). Karim was tasked with running their English-language social media accounts, posting hour-by-hour updates about military raids, demonstrations, shootings and the like, captioning videos and photos, and responding to foreign media who got in touch. It was chaotic and amateurish--after all, the state had previously repressed or co-opted civil society and independent media (Yassin-Kassab and Al-Shami 2016:18-21)--but despite their lack of experience, the *tansiqiyat* members' intention, Karim told me (years later and after being socialized into norms of journalistic objectivity) was just to put out all the accurate information they could:

> I would just volunteer as much time as I could to translate the news to go as is. And what I liked about it was, at least when I was there, they had a standard of like, you know, no emotion, no *Bismullahs* ["in the name of God"], no nothing. It's just like, 'This happened on this street to this person.' Next. Just really, it was very much like a breaking news, kind of like a wire.[27]

Damascus was still under state control, and after some months intelligence services found and arrested Karim. He was held for several weeks, tortured, then released. He fled to Douma, a suburb of the city under rebel control, and began working for a media office that gathered and disseminated information from a network of local *tansiqiyat*. He now worked more closely with foreign reporters, arranging their visits and security provided by revolutionary fighters.

A hodgepodge of Islamist and socialist militias controlled Douma and faced the challenges of being the de facto government while under a siege of variable constriction. The militias not

[27]By "wire" he refers to agencies like *Reuters*, *Associated Press*, and *Agence France Presse*.

only fought the regime, but competed with one another for funding and to monopolize the provision of aid and services, sometimes violently (Alsaafin 2015; Yassin-Kassab and Al-Shami 2016:85-86, 121-125). I cannot say with confidence exactly what Karim's connection was with local militias or what his role was in their power struggle. He told me he was never a fighter, though the first time we met, in a touristy-hip Istanbul cafe, he did proudly pull up various articles of clothing for me to see scars and feel shrapnel still under his skin.

Karim did continue to wield his pen, angering a powerful militia's leadership in 2013 by accusing the group of corruption. He received threats and friends advised him that he was in danger, so Karim fled and made his way to Turkey. Once across what was still a porous border, Karim contacted journalists he had met while working at the media center and found fixing work.

Leyla and Aziz, 2012-2014

Sometimes fixers come in teams. Working together, they can divide labor between those with outsider traits like English language fluency and those with insider traits like political connections.

Leyla was an English teacher in Aleppo, Syria's most populous city before the war, who married her cousin Aziz. On the side of her high school day job, Leyla translated English literature into Arabic. The couple lived in the western side of the city, which has remained under state control throughout the conflict. It was Eastern Aleppo that was taken by rebels in summer 2012, where almost all the fighting took place, and that was ground down into rubble in a siege that lasted until rebels gave up the city in 2017. Western Aleppo was sometimes bombed and shelled by rebels, but remained largely intact.

Aziz ran a small business, but he also had been interested in politics and involved in activism since before the civil war, which he quietly continued as it raged on. In 2014, though, a relative of theirs and fellow activist was detained. Worried that Aziz might be next, they left for a refugee camp in southern Turkey: first Aziz, then Leyla, then other family members concerned that they might be targeted in Aziz's absence.

It was not the squalid tent city one might envision as the typical refugee camp. Turkey's Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) had built row upon row of neat container homes equipped with hot water and satellite TV for Syrian "guests"; AFAD kept the streets, schools and playgrounds clean and safe (McClelland 2014). Aziz was nonetheless eager to get back to work, and once he found employment with a Syrian relief organization based in the nearby Turkish city of Gaziantep and an affordable apartment, he and Leyla moved out of the camp; other relatives stayed behind.

Leyla worked various Arabic-English translation gigs. When foreign reporters made contact with Aziz's new organization, he would ask her to help out with English. When they chatted and found out she had relatives in the camps, those reporters would ask Leyla to bring them inside for a visit and interview. One of those reporters, a Belgian named Geert, realized that between the two of them, Aziz and Leyla had both good English and good contacts still inside Aleppo, and offered to put them on retainer.

Habib, 2000s

Habib came to Turkey from Afghanistan on a student visa and not, like so many of his compatriots, as an asylum seeker. He attended a Gülen Movement school in Afghanistan--whatever the movement's critics in Turkey might say, it was well respected in Afghanistan for providing some of the best secular schools that managed to run effectively while much foreign

aid for education was wasted (Hendrick 2013:159-160)--where he studied English and Turkish. Habib was accepted with a scholarship into a private English-language university in Istanbul, where he joined his older brother Abdullah.

The latter had already come to Turkey to study, then stayed upon finding employment as an interpreter for an international NGO that worked with Persian- and Pashto-speaking asylum seekers. Habib moved in with Abdullah, who introduced him to the city's Afghan community and international aid worker scene. As Habib went on from his studies to follow in his brother's footsteps as an NGO interpreter, Abdullah and expat NGO staff began sending reporters Habib's way when they asked for recommendations for a fixer who could help them with an Afghan refugee story.

Habib's initiation into international journalism through the cognate field of international aid would shape, we shall see in the next two chapters, the ways he matched sources and reporters and the kinds of reciprocal relationships he established to secure reporters' access. He worked a bit differently than our other protagonists.

Nikolaus, 2012

Not all fixers are locals, or even from the national community that they cover. Nikolaus came to Turkey as an exchange student and fell in love with Istanbul. To practice his Turkish and learn geography, he would board a random bus departing central Taksim station in the morning and get off at the last stop, then spend the whole day wandering his way back and talking to as many people as possible along the way. Nik continued studying Turkish and Turkey as he completed his masters degree. After graduating, Nik returned and found an internship that turned into an editorial job at an English-language newspaper in Istanbul. It paid decently, and he

learned a lot about the country and about Turkish journalism from his colleagues, but Nik wished he could be out reporting instead of at the office copy-editing.

One night in 2012, Nik surfed around Craigslist Istanbul and found a job posting. DND, a German news service, was looking for a local assistant. When Nik responded to the ad, Ernst, the correspondent, was pleasantly surprised to have a native German speaker assistant with journalism experience in Turkey. Nik's imperfect Turkish was good enough to convince Ernst when they went out on a reporting test run together, and Nik was hired.

Patterned serendipity

Kids do not tell their parents they want to be fixers when they grow up; nor do their parents pressure them into becoming fixers. Students do not study in school to be fixers or attend career fairs with fixer kiosks. Most accounts of becoming a fixer involve chance encounters or friendships unexpectedly evolving into jobs (cf. Swidler and Watkins 2017:22-35, 108-112 on the seemingly "miraculous" encounters that kindle "romances" between local brokers and international AIDS activists in Malawi). I came to expect interviewees to tell me that they became a fixer by accident.

But that is not to say that who becomes a fixer is random. A potential fixer has to meet their first client reporter to get their toe in the door. Certain abilities, most obviously linguistic, are preconditions to mediating between reporters and news sources. And a potential fixer has to choose to do the work, whether out of financial necessity or other motivation.

A fixer often meets the reporter who notes their potential and inducts them into the craft through a face-to-face encounter or through a mutual contact. The market for fixers is not

routinized,[28] though instances like Nik responding to a job ad show that on occasion fixers are matched with reporters through impersonal processes. But for the most part, for a potential fixer to meet a reporter, they have to be in the same place at the same time or know the same person.

The Istanbul foreign journalist scene is insular. Foreign journalists disproportionately reside in Beyoğlu district, Cihangir neighborhood in particular, and frequent a relatively small set of area cafes and bars. Elif, as a Cihangir resident with a history of living in the United States, was thus far more likely to join their social circles than anyone living and socializing outside the central districts of Istanbul. There is some circularity at play here: foreign journalists base themselves in Beyoğlu not just because of its central location, but because it's known as the kind of cosmopolitan place that people like Elif are found. To a lesser extent, similar foreign journalist hubs exist in the capital Ankara or Gaziantep, the base for much reporting on Syria, and provide recruitment grounds for fixers.

There is no Diyarbakır foreign journalist scene. Just one Dutch reporter, Federike Geerdinke, was based there is recent years, and she was deported in 2015. So Diyarbakır-based fixers are highly unlikely to meet foreign reporters at their local bar or cafe; they must meet their first reporter another way, and are thus likely to enter the field of international journalism with a different background and trajectory than Elif.

Fixers and reporters may also meet in the course of reporting. Fixers-to-be may themselves be the subject of reporting, like Ayşe, who went from being a radio interviewee to fixing for

[28]This informality is not uniform across the globe. In neighboring Iran, for instance, there are several fixer agencies officially approved by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. They serve the dual role of assisting foreign journalists and monitoring them for the state (Niknejad 2014). In recent years there have been attempts to rationalize and automate the recruitment of fixers in Turkey and around the world, notably by the website worldfixer.com, in which fixers list their qualifications and receive star ratings from clients. But in order to learn what a fixer is and about that website in the first place, one need already have a connection to the news media world.

Alison in Gezi Park, or may simply be in the vicinity and the only or most enthusiastic English speaker around, becoming impromptu, often unpaid fixers. José, the freelancer who worked with Ayşe during and after Gezi, told me that reporting in refugee camps is easy because there are always English speakers around who are bored out of their wits and jump at the opportunity for any kind of adventure. To be thus induced into the craft, therefore, fixers-to-be must have the good or bad fortune to be somewhere of journalistic interest. This necessity rules out most places most of the time.

Likewise, local historical and political circumstances matter a great deal for the profile of fixers covering Syria from Turkey. I did not, for instance, meet or hear of any fixers from Syria's Armenian minority working in Turkey. Although there is a sizable and well-educated Syrian-Armenian middle class from whom competent fixers could no doubt be recruited (Payaslian 2007:117-120), its members have, unlike their Muslim compatriots, not sought refuge in Turkey in large proportion. They have fled in the tens of thousands, but to Armenia or Lebanon rather than to Turkey, because of religious and kinship ties with Lebanese Armenians (although Turkey has its own Armenian minority), because of specific efforts from the Republic of Armenia to take in Armenian refugees, and because they simply do not want to go to Turkey. If historical legacy is not enough--many are descendants of those who fled either the 1915 Ottoman genocide or the 1939 Turkish annexation of Hatay Province from French-mandate Syria--Syrian-Armenians have tended to view Turkey as a major backer of anti-Christian rebel groups in the civil war (J.A.R. 2014; Johnson 2015; Keshishian 2015).

Reporters for domestic media have the advantage of possibly meeting foreign reporters not just on a singular occasion of being a subject of interest themselves, but on many occasions as

they frequent the same press briefings and are at the scene of events.[29] Local journalism, along with the local NGOscape, is also a go-to source for ad hoc and unpaid fixers in the absence of personal connections. One reporter for a major US paper told me that local journalists are often so wowed by the status of her publication's name that they are excited to volunteer help.

Simply being in the same bar or camp or presser as a foreign reporter is of course not enough: one must have the rudiments of certain abilities already in place to be recruited as a fixer, most obviously in the lingua franca of international journalism, English. In Turkey and Syria, English language proficiency is uncommon except among the upper-middle and upper classes, and is more common among young people than old (EF 2018). This social fact is more apparent still among Afghans, only a small elite of whom are proficient in English. Social abilities also matter: potential fixers must be able to establish rapport with reporters for the latter to consider recruiting them, though the degree to which rapport matters depends on how desperate a reporter is for help. To great extent, the social conditions that allow learning and even the process of learning a foreign language also open people up to interacting with those who are culturally different from them, but there is not a one-to-one correlation between language and rapport-building skills. Elif, as she continued to work with her boyfriend Tim's colleagues, credited her fluency in American pop culture and humor as much as her English language abilities with earning trust.

Both language and social abilities are learned and can be improved over the course of a fixing career, but at the crucial juncture of potential recruitment, they must already exist to the

[29]Foreign journalists also often contact local journalists to provide expert analysis on a range of topics, but those are usually columnists whose work appears in the English media, who enjoy high enough pay and status that fixing professionally is generally not a tempting proposition. Such columnists do, however, serve as informal "meta-fixers" connecting journalists with fixers, as discussed in Chapter 3. (See Finkel 2000:155 on columnists' disproportionately high status within the Turkish media.)

extent that the reporter decides--usually with an eye to limited time and money at their disposal and few alternative fixers available--that someone will make do as a fixer. The necessity for preexisting abilities skews fixer recruitment toward cosmopolitan elites or those already in careers involving exposure to foreign cultures such as foreign language teachers or tourism industry employees.

Even if they meet some with the right abilities, a reporter has to be able to offer something that appeals to their prospective fixer. That something might be the payment the reporter offers, which is high for some fields and low for others. Reporters poach fixers from low- or non-paying activist work, from grad school or English teaching, not from corporate or government public relations positions.[30] In a research trip to Afghanistan that got me interested in the topic of fixers in the first place, two doctors-turned-fixers half-joked with me that in 2002 the foreign media, rushing in to cover the fall of the Taliban, had devastated the health sector because they could pay doctors, among the few English speakers to be found, far more than clinics or hospitals could.

Or that something offered by the prospect of fixing might be an escape from the bore of an orderly life and a charismatic connection to new social worlds: an excuse to talk to people whom one otherwise would not; a means to learn about journalism and practice language skills; an opportunity to present one's own society and political views to the world or to see it through the eyes of outsiders. Just being seen working with a foreign reporter can be charismatic where international and local social worlds are divided, or can be a source of status in emergent local-global hybrid fields. Particularly among desperate asylum seekers, association with any

[30]See also Schudson (2003:20-22) on PR representatives as "parajournalists" not so different from fixers in that they mediate between journalists and news sources, except, significantly, they are hired by the news sources as opposed to the journalists.

representative of the abstract international community from which those asylum seekers hope for help signals high status and perhaps the power to channel international assistance (see also Swidler and Watkins 2017:78-105 on the status of aid brokers in Malawi).[31]

The attractiveness of an offer to fix is not wholly intrinsic, but depends on local circumstances and how they affect a potential fixer's other prospects and expectations for what they could use employment in the international media to accomplish. The AKP's crackdown on opposition media has contributed to the trickle of AKP-critical Turkish journalists into fixing careers. Pro-AKP and Gülenist journalists were not competing with Ayşe, Can, and Elif to become fixers in part because they had no problem finding employment: those journalists were welcome at expanding news outlets or those that had recently changed over to friendly ownership and were having difficulty filling all available positions with employees with the right professional and ideological qualifications. The Gülen Movement also hosted well-funded organizations including schools and NGOs around the world where Gülenist English speakers could readily find employment (Hendrick 2013). That would change with the Erdoğan-Gülen split, following which the state began to target the Gülen-affiliated media (Arjomand 2016) and eventually drove the likes of Solmaz, the former *Today's Zaman* reporter mentioned in the introduction, into a fixing career. But for secularist journalists, particularly of the Left, starting in the mid-2000s, fixing provided an attractive opportunity to continue to work in the news media for decent pay and, as discussed subsequently, without a target on their backs.

[31]The case of asylum seekers is one in which charismatic connection to outsiders transforms into status as a new field emerges. Those with connections to what was the peripheral field of international NGOs are suddenly central in a field, the refugee industry, that brings together the NGOS with asylum seekers. Field emergence and the related conversion of charisma into status will be discussed further in Chapter 6: **Local and Global**.

If in normal times, there is a trickle of potential fixers into the field, once in a while foreign journalists flood into a country to cover a big story, and suddenly the demand for fixers far outstrips the supply and that trickle becomes a flood. Some impromptu fixers recruited to cover the big story go back to their previous lives; others begin a fixing career. And so out of transformative events like Gezi emerges a new cohort of fixers, patterned according to the nature of the event. The Gezi cohort was unlikely to be pro-government. The Syrian civil war cohort in Turkey was unlikely to be Christian.

Certain reporters like the American Alison and the Belgian Geert, particularly those based long-term in the country, are active talent scouts, finding new fixers and then referring them to colleagues or, in some cases, keeping them to themselves to allow a leg up over their competitors. Freelancers like José often work with new fixers out of necessity, because they do not have the budget to pay market rate, in 2010s Turkey $100-$200 US per day for print, radio and photojournalists, and more for TV. Recruiting fixers around the country enhances reporters' own social capital, allowing them easier access to a wider range of sources; also, being capable of offering referrals to other journalists signals charismatic local connection and serves as a currency in the informal favor economy within the semi-cooperative foreign press corps.

Insiders and Outsiders

Different fixers are helpful to foreign reporters in different ways, at least at the time of their initial recruitment. Leyla was able to provide intimate access to her own family within the refugee camp. Karim, by contrast, arrived in Turkey disconnected from family but armed with greater knowledge, gleaned during his time at the media center outside Damascus, of what foreign reporters thought about Syria and what kinds of events they found newsworthy. Ayşe was useful for connecting with Gezi protesters because of her very affiliation with the group. She

was able to elicit and communicate into English their perspective and emotion. If Alison had worked with Can on the same story, she may or may not have been able to talk to the same people, depending on how important a fellow protester's introduction was for their willingness to speak with a foreign reporter. But would his voice have quivered while translating in that way that made for such good radio?

Then again, Can had a far wider range of contacts than Ayşe and, as a reporter himself, was used to analyzing developments in Turkish society from an outsider's perspective. He had also become, in his friendship with Geert and other foreign reporters in the years before he started fixing fulltime, more familiar with the norms and perspectives of the status group of the Istanbul foreign press corps, which helped him to understand what contributions clients would value.

During the Gezi protests Can assisted not Alison but a reporter whom a major US newspaper flew in to report the story. He contacted Can before arriving with a list of possible interviewees and asked Can for alternative and additional suggestions. "And I said that Okay, your list is good," Can later recounted to me, "but to make the story more balanced we should talk to some other people from the government side, okay?" As an outsider to the movement, Can was better positioned to consider which news sources could provide the reporter the analysis and range of views the latter sought, as well as to set aside--or at least convince Geert he was setting aside--his own politics to cater to the editorial balance valued in mainstream American journalism.

Whether one is an insider or outsider depends on the story--Can was an insider for me when I reported on press freedom in Turkey--but foreign reporters need both insider and outsider fixers.[32] Which they need depends on the reporter and the story.

---

[32]As noted in Chapter 1, people are "insiders" or "outsiders" in relation to something and from a particular perspective. To avoid confusion, I will from here on take a local perspective using these terms. "Insiders" are those

Neven, the semi-fictional character of journalist/cartoonist Joe Sacco's graphic novel about Bosnia in 1990s, *The Fixer*, developed connections and skills that serve him well as a fixer through a life in organized crime and then in a paramilitary unit. When he decides to settle in Sarajevo because of a war wound and an ailing aunt, he finds that working for reporters comes easily to him because of his social capital, that is, his ties to others that serve as resources for accomplishing goals (Sacco 2009:22-25). Sacco writes, "How comforting to trot alongside Neven on his coffee bar rounds, to bask in the acquaintance of his grizzled old comrades, to nod greedily for their stories. . ." (25). Yet even as Neven may have been helpful to a reporter looking for *emic* data (local perspectives), because of his embroilment with local politics and criminality he could not be fully trusted to provide *etic* data (an external observer's interpretation of local perspectives).

By contrast, Victor Turner, an anthropologist doing ethnographic fieldwork in Zambia in the 1960s, found his most valuable informant in Muchona, a healer who was the son of a slave, relatively socially rootless and low in status, and disliked by many local men. It was this very lack of social integration that Turner saw as an asset in Muchona's ability to think critically about his own society:

> Living as he had done on the margins of many structured groups and not being a member of any particular group, his loyalties could not be narrowly partisan, and his sympathies were broader than those of the majority of his fellow tribesmen. . . he may have cherished hatred against those more securely placed in the ordered groupings of society. Such hatred may itself have given him a certain clairvoyance into tense relationships in the kinship and political systems. Forever outside the village circle, he could see the villagers' weak spots and foibles more clearly than most. His very objectivity could further his general revenge. (Turner 1967:134-147)

---

close to sources. "Outsider" fixers are socially more distant from sources and usually closer to news organizations, which would make them insiders if we were to switch over to the perspective of the field of journalism.

A marginal figure can be a good contributor to watchdog journalism. He can be more trusted to provide background information on interviewees, translate honestly, and so on, because he is less embroiled in local social conflict, but then again, he is less useful in making social connections. A reporter looking for *emic* data would think themselves better served by an insider like Neven; one looking for *etic* data would think themselves better served by an outsider like Muchona.[33]

If we imagine the ideal-typical foreign correspondent as a professional outsider, and the ideal-typical news source as a complete insider, fully embedded in what they doing and unreflective of how their situation looks from the outside,[34] then fixers run the spectrum between those two poles. Fixers often begin as insiders, particularly when they meet their first reporter by being part of the story. As their careers progress, however, they learn to be useful as outsiders as well. Over time, fixers learn to provide different kinds of access and experiences to reporter

---

[33]Paul Rabinow (1977:155-162) makes a similar point about the different sorts of access and information that key informants Ali and Ben Mohammed assisted him in gaining:

> Because of his demeanor and antagonism [Ali, one of Rabinow's key informants] had almost become an outcast in the village. The insights and orientation which he continued to provide me throughout the field experience were invaluable. . . Ali was an insider's outsider. . . Ali was, however, now outside village affairs, basically out of touch. He provided little help on the day-to-day level, but could be relied on for vital aid. . . (157)

By contrast, Ben Mohammed was "internal to the Moroccan tradition," deeply embedded in local community and religion, and as such could provide insight into his own interpretations of Islam but could not step outside of them to view his community from Rabinow's etic perspective as Ali and other informants could. "We were," Rabinow writes, "profoundly Other to each other" (142-148, 161-162).

Rabinow, discussing a French informant, makes the additional point that marginal figures are often the ones easiest for outsiders to connect with. Their outsider-ness facilitates intersubjectivity, the alignment of norms (discussed in Chapter 4), and thus smooth interaction and, in terms of the physical prerequisites for connecting to brokers, they are often spatially found at the intersection of a community with the outside world (a hotel, in Richard's case): "The contact with Richard was immediate. There was no language barrier. He was eager to talk. Being an outsider to all other Sefrou groups, he had interesting stereotypes of each. . . His very accessibility, however, was also revealing of his limitations. . . He was located on the very edge of Sefrou society, its most external point. His corner was easily accessible, but it revealed only the fringes of Moroccan society." (155-156)

[34]Social scientists use ideal types not to describe the actual world, but as exaggerations of patterns that provide poles against which to compare real phenomena. In the real world, news sources do not have a static perspective that exists no matter who they are talking to and in what context; instead, they imagine how their words will be received and what their interlocutors expect from them. But for this argument, it is useful to imagine a pure, ideal-typical insider against whom we can measure different fixers at different moments.

clients, to strategically present themselves as insiders or outsiders to different audiences in order to gain trust, convince reporter clients of their utility, or elicit desired responses from news sources.

The insider/outsider distinction is not just important for an impartial analyst like myself as measure of capacities. Reporters and news sources also think of particular fixers as insiders or outsiders and adjust their behavior toward and trust in those fixers accordingly. For that reason, self-presentation as insider or outsider can be strategic. As the next chapter will discuss, different labels for participants in the field of journalism reflect different positions along the insider/outsider spectrum. Participants struggle to label themselves and others using the field's own terms for insiders and outsiders. Successful labeling of oneself and others is a key tool for career advancement and for winning arguments about who should be allowed to do what in the reporting process.

For now, suffice it to summarize that international knowledge is entangled in local politics, because those local politics affect who becomes a broker of international knowledge. Class and geography also play important roles in fixer recruitment, meaning that fixers provide more than simply a generic or encompassing local perspective, but in truth patterned and partial local perspectives which are then baked into news stories, even as their carriers might remain invisible to news consumers.

CHAPTER 3: TASKS AND LABELS

A Contentious Label

The term *fixer* was not in common currency until the early 1990s. Sydney Schanberg, whose 1980 article "The Death and Life of Dith Pran" became the basis for the film *The Killing Fields*, refers to Pran not as a fixer but as an "assistant" or "guide and interpreter" who goes on to become a "stringer" when he receives an official contract and retainer from *The New York Times* (Schanberg [1980] 2013). In Peter Weir's film *The Year of Living Dangerously*, on foreign correspondence in Indonesia under Sukarno's rule, the protagonist Hamilton's fixer in Jakarta introduces himself simply and ambiguously as "Kumar, from Jakarta office." Hamilton refers to Kumar as "my assistant" at one point to get him through a military checkpoint.[35]

It was around the time of the first Persian Gulf War in 1991 that the term *fixer* came into common parlance among international journalists (Reporters Without Borders 2017). In the 21st century, when journalists seek assistance reporting in a foreign country, they overwhelming use the word *fixer* when writing on online forums or email lists; *translators* are sometimes sought, usually for the specific task of translating particular media the journalist has already accessed, and broadcast journalists occasionally ask for *producer* contacts. *Fixer* is on rare occasions also applied in domestic news contexts to intermediaries who open doors to hard-to-access communities (e.g. Terry 2011).

Despite its commonplace usage, the term has its detractors. In Turkey and elsewhere, some consider labeling a person as a *fixer* to be a demeaning if not colonialist way to brand them as "epistemic others," less capable and trustworthy than Western journalists (Bishara 2013:50-56).

[35]In keeping with the trope mentioned in the previous chapter of suspect/torn loyalties among fixers, Kumar is secretly affiliated with the Indonesian Communist Party as it plans rebellion.

The *fixer* label, in this view, minimizes the contributions of the labeled and establishes a boundary between them and a *journalist*, justifying attribution of greater status and credit to the latter (see Sanjek 1993 on a similar criticism of anthropology's erasure of the contributions of local fieldworkers).[36] This kind of "boundary work," only tenuously tied to actual differences between what those called journalists and those called fixers actually do, is a weapon that foreign reporters wield against potential local competitors--fixers who might do the journalists' job better than they could--to maintain a privileged position in the professional field (see Gieryn 1983:791-792 on how scientists similarly differentiate themselves from non-scientists according to shifting criteria).

If these critiques are correct, the danger of studying fixers *as such* is that I reify the concept of a fixer as something substantively different than a journalist, when really a fixer is just a journalist branded with a subordinating label. But I cannot just assume *fixer* to be a discursive weapon instead of a marker of substantive difference. Instead, in this chapter, I will parse both how people are labeled and label themselves, and what they are substantively tasked with doing in their jobs. Doing so will help make clear both the division of labor of international journalism and the strategic uses of labels in the field.

What is the difference between a fixer, a translator, a guide, a news assistant, a stringer, a producer, a reporter? Does each one do different tasks, or at least does being labeled as one or the other change how a person is perceived and what is expected of them? The basic points I will

[36]"Labeling Theory" in sociology has focused mostly on deviant labels (Becker 1997; Goffman 1990) that are used to control and limit people, but the theory's basic insights can be applied to other labels as well. In particular, Labeling Theory teaches us that 1) labels are applied with varying degrees of success not just on the basis of objective criteria but as part of struggles for status and authority, and 2) labels alter expectations of the labeled and so shape both the latter's opportunities and others' interpretations of their actions. Labels not only restrict but also license action: if I can successfully be labeled journalist (sometimes but not necessarily through an official process like the issuance of press cards), for instance, I can do things that would be otherwise socially unacceptable, like invite myself into the home of strangers grieving a family death or chat online with jihadists.

illustrate are 1) people labeled as fixers do lots of different tasks, 2) people doing the same task are given different labels, 3) labels are nonetheless meaningful and reflect to some degree substantive differences, and 4) people attempt to control the use and meaning of labels of themselves and others to make status claims, negotiate access to sources, and accomplish other goals.

Ayşe and José, 2012-2014

After her initial, thrilling induction into fixing during the Gezi protests, Ayşe returned to her graduate studies and continued working with José, the freelance American journalist, on the side. Her routine fixing duties became primarily desk- and café-based. José would email her English-language news stories on subjects he wanted to cover or Turkish-language stories that he had run through Google Translate to roughly understand, and Ayşe would dig deeper with online research and translate what she found. José would also pay her an hourly rate to sit with him and explain Turkish politics and history over tea. Although as time went on, they also talked about Turkish politics and history as friends without payment.

"At first I didn't think it--I felt very weird to be paid by a conversation because I was enjoying it as well," Ayşe told me. "But he kind of, he told me--I mean we had a lot of conversations without paid [sic] as well, because we became friends afterwards. But at first he was literally like, 'Okay, we started at 12. We talked for 3 hours. I think I should pay you three hours.'"

They occasionally went out together to interview people, but José was so busy--sometimes writing four articles in a day for different outlets--and cash-poor that he could not spend many days each month reporting in the field with Ayşe. Often he had to make do on his own.

José had come to Turkey in 2012 after studying journalism and deciding that he wanted to move straight into the international arena instead of settling for a local news beat in the American Midwest where he had grown up and which he found boring. There had been no mention of fixers or collaboration with local colleagues in any of José's journalism classes. A teacher had helped him enough with connections that he was able to plug into the Istanbul foreign journalist scene and quickly learned about fixers, but those on the list forwarded to him by a new friend charged around $150 US a day and did not appreciate his attempts to haggle. José could expect a couple hundred dollars from online publications for an article that might have taken him a week to report, a bit more from newspapers. And that was articles that got published: others he reported first and then submitted on spec[37] to editors--the only way he knew, without personal connections, to establish a relationship with a new publication--with a high likelihood that the article would fail to sell and end up another frustrated post on his blog.

Working as a reporter on his own, José relied heavily on *Hürriyet Daily News* and *Today's Zaman*, the English-language papers of Doğan Media Group and Gülen-affiliated Feza Media Group, respectively, for story ideas. He followed the Twitter accounts of all the English-tweeting Turkey experts, correspondents, and politicians he could. He sought guidance from established journalists about whom to follow and interview and how to contact them.

José's first story was on the Ecuadorian street vendors who are mysteriously ubiquitous in Istanbul's touristy spots. He could speak Spanish with them and they were easy to find. After weeks of shopping the story of an indigenous family that lived in squalor while saving money for remittances and airfare, bringing Ecuadorian trinkets to Turkey and then Turkish fabric back to

[37] A story submitted on spec is not commissioned by a news organization, but rather first completed and then offer to an editor.

Ecuador, he sold it for a pittance to an online start-up specializing in human interest stories from around the world.

After that, José did a story on Istanbul's tiny atheist community. Mina, an Afghan-British reporter who had been in the country a few years, and to whom a journalism teacher had introduced José, put him in touch with a pundit and commentator on religious issues often interviewed by foreign journalists to provide the moderate Turkish view. José walked to the Istanbul office of an organization for Turkish atheists and was lucky enough that there were a couple English speakers present who were willing to do interviews and to translate what the others hanging out in the office said. I say he got lucky, but it was no coincidence that the atheists were a well-educated and cosmopolitan bunch.

Working on stories like these about obscure corners of Turkish society allowed José to begin developing a nuanced view of Istanbul and a roster of contacts off the beaten path for foreign journalists. The problem was that his abilities to access sources did not line up with most editors' interests in stories about Turkey. The big stories they cared about coming out were struggling democracy, relations with the European Union, fallout from the war in Syria, political Islam vs. secularism (he was able to use the *besieged secularism* hook to sell the atheism article, but the story was still a bit "in the weeds" as his editor put it), and not Ecuadorian migration.

Even when he began working with Ayşe and other fixers, mostly English-speaking students in need of beer and cigarette money whom he recruited to help with a story or two, José tried to do as much as possible on his own to save costs. He did online research as best he could with help from Google Translate, tried to line up interviews with English speakers through social media or references from foreign reporter friends. When it came to covering events and getting *vox pop* quotations, he made the most of the rudimentary Turkish he was teaching himself. If he

could not afford to pay Ayşe or another student to come with him, or if they were busy, José would write out questions for potential interviewees with help from her or a barista at the hipster café that served as José's office. When he arrived at the event or location of interest, José would look around for people fitting a variety of stereotypes (headscarves were a useful guide) and hope that their answers represented the range of views he needed. José would introduce himself and ask the questions he had rehearsed, then record answers on his phone without understanding them. At the end of the day, he would send Ayşe the recordings to transcribe and translate on her own, thereby reducing fixer expenses from a half or full day to an hour or two. Follow-up questions, needless to say, were impossible with this method.

Ayşe finished her master's degree and continued to work with the worker's rights NGO she had been involved with as a student, but she had become disillusioned with civil society after the Gezi Movement's defeat. Journalism still interested her as an avenue for her idealism, and by then she had realized that her hourly earnings were far higher than José's; in other words, she could make more as a fixer than if she became a freelance reporter for the international media herself. It was also nice not to pay tax on her earnings, which were all under the table, unlike payment would be working for the Turkish media.

"After that I became more kind of institutionalized," she told me. She opened an account on the now-defunct photographer and journalist web forum lightstalkers.org, where she advertised her services and checked for journalists posting that they needed an Istanbul fixer. She began increasing her day rate and realized that it could vary a great deal depending on whether she was working for TV or print, staff or freelance reporters.

Sometimes facilitating news work meant acting as a personal assistant to give a foreign journalist time to do their work. In one case, Ayşe, recounted, "I felt more like his assistant than

his fixer sometimes. . . I babysat his daughter a bunch of times; just like shit like that. They were rebuilding his house so I would just be with the workers sometimes." Such tasks infuriated Ayşe as an affront to her claim to be an emerging professional, not a teenager in need of a few extra bucks, but she did them. That particular journalist did have the virtue of introducing her to many of his colleagues, who soon poached Ayşe with the promise of more respectable and interesting work.

Around this time, Ayşe decided that if she were to be a professional fixer, she had to segregate her fixing from her activism. Henceforth, when assigned or pitching a story about workers' rights, she would refuse payment and tell reporters that she was helping them as a representative of her NGO, not as a fixer.

Ayşe and José continued to work together occasionally. After a couple years of struggle, José got a string--an informal agreement to accept his work on an ongoing basis, even though he was still paid per article as a freelancer--with a syndicated news website, which allowed him to write one article at a time with confidence that he would be paid, if often belatedly and only after complaints to the editor. He could also--if he convinced the editor--sometimes expense Ayşe's fees instead of paying them out of pocket. She would just have to type up a receipt for "translation services" for him to forward along to the editor.

Elif, 2014

In May 2014, Elif was about to attend a yoga class when she got a phone call from Burcu, a Turkish-American producer at *XYZ*, her ex Tim's TV channel. Tim had recently moved on from Turkey (and from Elif) to another news bureau, but Elif had already befriended Tim's circle of journalists, and fixing for them had developed into a paid hobby. Burcu told Elif that there had

been a huge explosion at a coal mine in Manisa, five hours' drive from Istanbul, and asked if Elif could accompany the *XYZ* team.

Elif rushed out of the yoga studio and bought cargo pants and a rugged-looking jacket on her way to the *XYZ* office, then packed into a car with a driver, cameraman, and correspondent from the UK named Jean (British accents are favored on American radio and TV for adding class and gravitas).

The story was a big one both because of the number of deaths--301 would become the final figure--and because just weeks earlier the AKP had voted down an opposition party motion in parliament for an investigation into safety at that very mining complex. The first day the *XYZ* team did mostly live shots, meaning the correspondent standing in front of the disaster area explaining what had happened. After that, Elif recounted to me over cappuccinos a year later,

> They told me, like, 'We need like an emotional story; we need a family.' And so I was talking to a waiter at the hotel we were staying in. And you know he, he told me, 'Oh you should go talk to this *bakkal* [grocer].' I went; I was like talking to this guy. . . He was like, 'Ah I know a family lost their kid in this one village. Maybe you should talk to the *muhtar* [local administrator].' So he gave me his number; I called the *muhtar*.

Elif introduced herself as working for *XYZ* American TV channel and asked about the dead miner's family. "He was like 'No, you know, we really--they should be left alone.'" Elif consulted her colleagues, who were still breakfasting at the hotel and were interested in this lead, then called the *muhtar* back. "I was like, 'Look, the world needs to see the story--you know--otherwise no one's gonna know. Can you help? Like--we're--we'll be sensitive, and--you know--we won't be in their hair too long.' And he said 'Okay fine, meet us; come to the village'. . . I was like pretty nervous because I don't know how it's going to end up being."

Elif got lucky: the family was hospitable, and various relatives packed into the house to talk with the journalists. The crew was very pleased with the footage they got: the dead miner's wife

even collapsed sobbing on camera. When family members broke down in tears as they recounted their last memories of the young man, Elif cried too.

When it came to editing the video, Jean and Burcu decided to keep a shot of Elif crying. In the segment that aired on American TV, Jean narrates and provides simultaneous voice-over translation of everything said in Turkish, with Elif's field translations cut off except at one moment when her voice shakes with emotion. Jean signs off as such in the segment and is named in the video's online description, but Elif is never identified despite her appearance in several shots.

Elif and I discussed that story a couple times over the next years.

Noah: I remember with Soma you mentioned that then you appeared on the camera.

Elif: Yeah.

Noah: Also you burst into crying, and they thought that was like a good moment.

Elif: Yeah, how cheesy. [laughs]

Noah: Does that ever happen now? Do they tend to use you--

Elif: [scoffs] Crying?

Noah: Or to use you as like--I thought that was like an interesting thing because you became part of--

Elif: --part of the story--

Noah: --the evidence, like you were a Turkish citizen for a second, not a fixer. Has that happened more recently also?

Elif: I think I was--I think I was not necessarily a Turkish citizen there. It was both, Turkish citizen slash fixer.

Elif thought about it for a moment and told me that, no, she did not appear on camera any more. "But I choose--I don't want to be in it either. I think, then I didn't have the experience--like then I just listened to them and. . . it was like we were sitting on the floor and everyone was on camera, basically. But now I know to stand behind my correspondent."

Burcu and Elif, 2013-2015

When I asked Burcu, the *XYZ* producer, what the difference was between her job and Elif's, she recalled how Elif's then-boyfriend Tim had first recruited Elif to help a colleague from the channel who had flown in to assist with Gezi protest coverage.

"I was like, [Tim], I'm desperate. I don't need a producer. I don't need a fixer. I need somebody who speaks English and Turkish. Can you recommend somebody?"

So Elif had started out not as a producer or even a fixer, though she had since developed into the latter. A fixer, Burcu explained, can do more than just translate. She has an idea of how to contact the right sources for a story, where and when to film. A producer like Burcu, though, is "in charge of a wider picture" that includes not only the local events being covered but also the news organization and audience it serves; producers know what duration and format the organization wants for segments, how to navigate the organization's bureaucratic and technological processes, and, most importantly, what stories the organization wants. This knowledge of a wider picture invests producers, unlike fixers, with the ability and authority to routinely pitch story ideas and to say *no* to correspondents and to *XYZ* headquarters when they make unreasonable or stupid suggestions, then propose alternatives that would work for *XYZ* and its audience. A producer knows how to convince *XYZ* that a viewer in rural Arkansas will be interested in the story she is pitching. These abilities were hard to find in Turkey, Burcu told me.

> The quality of the people we work with here generally is really not that good. Whether it be cameramen or producers--who are not really producers--something's always lacking: either an understanding of television, an understanding [of] how to put television together, or the--I don't know if it's an inability, but I'm going to call it an inability for now--the inability to understand what an audience outside of Turkey would be interested in hearing.

Burcu told me that a nice thing about Elif, as she had become a proper fixer, was that she "doesn't need that much micro-managing." Burcu increasingly trusted her even to work independently of a foreign correspondent. Increasingly, Burcu worked with Elif at the pre-

production stage of choosing interviewees and deciding on the general direction and framing of stories, but allowed Elif relative autonomy when it came to actual reporting in the field:

> With [Elif] it's, 'Look, I need this very sensitive piece.' We're dealing, for example, . . . [with] the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide. And we had to be more careful than usual with the people that we chose to be our objective analyst / expert, as they call them in the States. And it was a painstaking process. Like [Elif] was throwing out. . . names and I'd Google them, and then there'd be one sort of anti-government tirade, or there'd be a staunch sort of Armenian stance in an article that they'd written like 2 years ago. . . This was a particularly sort of sensitive story. But. . . I would say what I want, and then eventually [Elif would] come up with a name [of a source] that would fit perfectly to a T. We'd talk about what the story is, and then of course there's a cameraman as well. Then they'd go out and shoot it. So I usually give them sort of direction and then they'll sort of go out and prosper.

It was not a one-way street of progress in Elif's professionalization. Two months after the April 2015 Armenian Genocide anniversary coverage, Burcu did have to step in to micro-manage Elif. She recalled dressing Elif down for choosing to include allegations of electoral fraud in *XYZ*'s piece on the June 2015 parliamentary elections:

Burcu: During elections, or election coverage, I called [Elif], I'm like 'Um why on earth would you pick this soundbite?' It was an incredibly provincial soundbite.

Noah: Do you remember what it was?

Burcu: Yes. One of the HDP[38] guys, it may even have been [then party co-chair] Demirtas. . . The opposition folks who have pretty much everything at stake--before the polls closed, before anything, before votes were started to count--they came out with these allegations of like voter fraud and like, 'This whole entire, this election process has been riddled with fraud and blah blah blah blah blah.' And they ended up in the edit, but I'm like--and pardon my language--but I'm like, 'What the fuck? What is this doing here and why is it in the edit?' Because I heard on television what they had said, and there were plenty of other things that could have been put in the edit as opposed to this totally unfounded--like, how do you know? Voting hasn't even started. Like how do you know there's like rampant fraud? Do you see what I mean? So it was--it shouldn't be, but it was staggering to me that [an] otherwise smart [person] would choose that as *the* soundbite on election day from Turkey. Does this make sense?

Noah: Absolutely. And do remember [you] what they said? Do you [have a] sense of why they wanted to use [that soundbite]?

[38]The Halkların Demokratik Partisi (Peoples' Democratic Party) is a Left-Kurdish party.

Burcu: …[T]ruth be told, my personal opinion on why that happened, and it continues to happen, and it will happen for a long long long long time: there is a fine line between activism and journalism in this country, particularly with the young folks, and it is almost impossible to separate the two in their minds. And those sound bites were a--because I know [Elif is] staunchly anti-government, and in [her] mind it's like, perhaps not consciously, but perhaps subconsciously, it's like 'Ah-ha, this is what I'm thinking; this is what I want this guy to say.'

Noah: So is a significant part of your job as a producer making sure that your employees stay on the journalism side of that line?

Burcu: Absolutely, it is *the* main part. It is the main part. Because you--we're all human, right? We all have our opinions. I'm extremely opinionated; obviously I vote. I know who I like, who I don't like--but it doesn't affect my job.

Even among nominal producers there are different levels, Burcu said. She remembered how, although her official title at *XYZ* was "bureau producer" from the start, she began substantively as a fixer. Only later was there a shift among foreigners working at *XYZ* from "[Burcu] is our local staff" to "[Burcu] is our Turkey producer." This shift came, she thought, with their recognition that she could set aside her opinions for the job. Now she pretty much ran the bureau.

Burcu, discerning as she was about shades of difference among producers and fixers, told me that she actually liked to be "just the translator" when working on a controversial story. This was true both in the field, when she was the one standing behind the foreign correspondent, and when handling reactions to reporting. Burcu was usually the one at the *XYZ* office to answer phone calls from powerful people angry about unfair coverage, and her favored way to deflect such anger was to join in trash-talking the Western media as if, though she might work for *XYZ* to make ends meet, she just mechanically carried out translation services without editorial contribution.

Can, 2014-2016

Can, the former *Sabah* and *Milliyet* newspaper reporter, covered the Soma disaster with *Puke*, an American news site that took pride in its edginess. By then, he was established in the

journalism game and had developed routines for finding sources that could be applied even in contexts where he did not have personal contacts. Instead of like Elif driving to Manisa first and hoping to meet the right victim when he got there, he monitored the Turkish media, skimming every story reported on location until he found an article mentioning an Alevi village that lost more than a dozen men in the disaster, many of them related. Erdoğan and the AKP, with their Sunni Muslim identity politics, had a contentious relationship with the country's Alevi minority, and Can knew *Puke* would bite at a story that was not just sobs but also accusations of oppression. And with so many dead, they would find someone willing to talk to them.

Can got in touch with the author of the report on the Alevi village through a friend at the latter's news agency. Can called and explained that he was working for *Puke* on the story, which both impressed the author and made him willing to share contacts, as he did not view international English-language outlets like *Puke* as competitors.

Two years later, I hired Can as a fixer for my story about press freedom in Turkey. While Solmaz, mentioned in the introduction, introduced me to the Gülen-affiliated media, I relied on Can for connections with secularist opposition journalists.

I was impressed by the fluidity with which Can shifted from being a fixer to being a domestic press reporter to being a source, and how each role afforded him opportunities in the others. We started the day with a ferry ride to Istanbul's Asian side, tossing sesame pretzels to seagulls and discussing the agenda. First we would go to a news office to interview a journalist who had been arrested and tried in 2011-2012 in alleged connection to a coup plot; then we would talk to the editor-in-chief of a struggling independent news website; then we would meet a photographer who had worked for a variety of newspapers, both pro-government and opposition, over the years; and finally, Can suggested that I interview him whenever we had downtime. Can

had a camera bag over his shoulder, and I asked if he planned to take photos; he shrugged evasively and said he had it just in case.

It turned out that on the camera's memory card Can had footage that he had recently shot on the side while working with an Australian TV crew down on the Syrian border. After interpreting for me in the first interview,[39] he showed the video to the journalists in the office, stressing the exclusivity of the shot he had gotten of a Qatari jet taking off from a Turkish base on a mission inside Syria--the Turkish media had yet not reported this story. They seemed interested and chatted for a while, but no deal was made.

We had to sprint to catch our ferry back to Europe. As it happened, Can was a regular contributor to the news site whose office we visited next. At their office, Can made introductions and set me up interviewing the editor-in-chief in English and then went across the newsroom to show someone--the video editor was my guess--that same footage. After that, we had time for me to interview Can in a café about his own experiences with censorship and political pressure at *Sabah* and *Milliyet,* because Can had scheduled the meeting with the photographer for early evening. That was not the only interview Can gave that day. It turned out that Can had arranged for us to meet the photographer next to the Kabataş ferry terminal at dusk because he knew it would provide a picturesque backdrop for the interview he had scheduled at the same time with Iranian TV. Can stepped away to comment as an expert on Syrian affairs while I spoke with the photographer.

Burhan, 1996-2014

[39]I speak Turkish but asked fixers to translate for me nonetheless, recording audio of interview as a means of gathering data on simultaneous translation, which will be used in Chapter 5 especially.

The tasks of fixers have changed significantly over time. Technological advances, along with infrastructure development that has made travel easier, have obviated the need for fixers to play as prominent a logistical role as they used to in terms of handling telecommunications and transportation. Despite these changes, fixers continue to be tasked with logistical work when it comes to smoothing over local relationships in order to allow to reporters get where they are going.

Burhan took a break from fixing in the mid-1990s to complete his compulsory military service. His language skills earned him a position as an interpreter for an officer in Istanbul, a relatively comfortable posting, particularly for a Diyarbakir Kurd (see Altınay 2004 on the treatment of Kurds in the Turkish military). He made the most of his time in Istanbul by selling souvenirs and trinkets when off duty.

When he returned to eastern Turkey, he picked up where he had left off as a guide to tourists and journalists alike. Burhan often traveled with journalists in the late 1990s and early 2000s to Iraqi Kurdistan, a break-away region on Turkey's southeastern border protected by an American no-fly zone from Saddam Hussein's military. There especially, arranging logistics and communications figured prominently in Burhan's tasks as fixer:

> I used to work in northern Iraq, Iraqi Kurdistan. For a phone call, to make a phone call, you are traveling 6 hours, just for a phone call, from Erbil to Turkish border. There was not any land lines. There was only a satellite phone. It was not working properly and it was very expensive. I'm not sure but as I remember, one minute was between 5 and 10 dollars. One minute, yeah. We don't have laptops to write our story. We have to write notes and tell on the phone, and they write it. And it takes a long time. So it cost a big money. So we have to-- if it's not urgent, travel 6 hours to border and make phone call and then go back. We don't have any equipment to transmit our materials like pictures, like video. Like video, like pictures. For example there was not digital camera. We were using manual cameras with films. We sent films; we traveled 6 hours to the border, and from border 4 hours to Diyarbakir. We send our films and then they wash it and print it. And they send it Istanbul. It was so difficult.

Burhan would arrange their hotels and car rentals, which until the late 2000s was (in both eastern Turkey and Iraqi Kurdistan) a matter of knowing someone who would rent you their car or drive you around. A Hertz or Europcar reservation was not an option. Security was a key component of the logistics Burhan managed. Driving out from Diyarbakır and across the border, Burhan and his clients could expect both gendarmerie and PKK checkpoints, and it was up to Burhan to get them through without being shot or detained. On occasion navigating checkpoints could be combined with Burhan's fixing duty of lining up interviews. Once, Burhan recounted, when a group of PKK guerrillas had blocked their way on a remote highway, his correspondent was initially terrified. But Burhan greeted the commander as *hewal* (comrade) and soon struck up a conversation that gradually transitioned into the correspondent asking the commander about life in the mountains.

With experience, Burhan picked up tricks of the trade to keep his clients safe in urban and village reporting as well. When in a dodgy area being followed by a posse of boys, Burhan would call over the biggest one and appoint him as their security guard, thus co-opting a group who might otherwise have started throwing rocks at the foreigner for sport. Sometimes Burhan paid the bully in candy; sometimes a grown-up granting the boy the dizzying authority to cow his peers into obedience was payment enough.

By the time I met Burhan in 2014, he was fixing as his main income and was a partner at a carpet shop in Diyarbakır's old city, but he was looking for something new. Whatever expertise he had developed as a fixer, the informality of that job, as well as the arrangement he had with the carpet shop's owner, bringing in tourists he was guiding in exchange for a commission, had become a problem. Relatives of his had emigrated to Australia, and he thought that he would have a better prospect of receiving a visa to follow suit if he could provide documentation of a

steady job. So Burhan was looking for on-the-books work at a recognized employer, whether a news outlet or hotel or petrochemical company.

Karim, 2013

Turkey has an odd way of dealing with refugees. The country is a signatory to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, but maintains a "geographic limitation" of granting asylum solely to refugees from Europe. Refugees from the east and south can come to Turkey, apply to be officially designated as refugees by the UNHCR, and then for resettlement in another country, but they will never find a permanent home in Turkey.[40] The Refugee Status Designation process could take years--even before the 2010s migration wave created a massive case backlog--and during that time asylum seekers are ineligible for work and required to reside outside of Turkey's major cities.

When Syrians started flooding into Turkey to escape the civil war--more than 100,000 by the end of 2011--the Turkish government designated them with the ambiguous appellation of "guests" and started building camps and providing humanitarian aid under a mysterious legal guideline inaccessible to the public. The status and rights of Syrian guests were not formally and publicly laid out until a 2013 law and then a clarifying regulation in October 2014. As the number of Syrians in Turkey approached 1 million, this law granted Syrians the right to stay in Turkey.[41] The Turkish government started providing Syrians with identity cards (*kimlik*) that

[40]Erdoğan has occasionally suggested that some Syrians will be granted permanent residency or citizenship, but that has yet to happen.

[41]The 2014 Regulation does not mention Syrians specifically; it is up to the discretion of the Turkish Council of Ministers to decide which groups meet that criteria. It only states that "foreigners whom having been forced to leave their country and cannot return to the country they left, have arrived at or crossed the borders of Turkey individually or in masses seeking emergency and temporary protection and to whom international protection status determination procedures do not apply" are eligible for temporary protection. The Council designated Syrians and Palestinian refugees coming from Syria as eligible, but not Afghans or other national groups (İneli-Ciğer 2015:30). Thus Afghans in Turkey, if they do not avoid migration bureaucracy altogether, either come on normal visas or apply for refugee status through the existing UNHCR system.

entitled them to free healthcare and education. In theory, Syrians could also apply for work permits, but in practice, Turkish authorities provided them in such small numbers that the vast majority of working Syrians did so under the table, with all the opportunities for exploitation that go with illegal employment. Another problem for Syrians was that their *kimlik* was location-specific; if they wanted to move within Turkey, they had to inform authorities in advance, then re-register for another *kimlik* in their new location, a time-consuming process (Baban et al. 2016; İneli-Ciğer 2015). Turkish officials and companies often did not know the complex and unclear rules any better than the Syrians, which could create problems for bus and plane travel.

In this context, Karim's press card was particularly valuable. He arrived in Turkey in 2013, before the *kimlik* and work permit registration processes were in place. After freelancing for several months, he was hired as a producer for a German TV news outlet that helped him obtain a press card. Karim found that his press card, as official backing from Turkey for who he was and what he was doing, helped him avoid problems when traveling. When we first met, Karim's one-year press card was expiring soon, and so he was asking to be credited in stories to which he contributed. During this time, early in his fixing career, he generally preferred to "work in the shadows," but he would need to show his name on news stories to the Turkish Prime Minister's press office when he applied to renew the card.

In those days, before the dramatic rise of ISIS and widespread targeting of foreign journalists, Karim's clients were primarily interested in high-adrenaline trips into Syria to report from the front lines. Expanding his connections from his days in the revolutionary media center, Karim was able to establish working relationships with militia commanders under the loose Free Syrian Army umbrella to secure safe passage for the teams he led into the country. He did some fixing for stories inside Turkey too.

For one story, his correspondent posed as an employee from a German museum interested in buying stolen artifacts looted from Syria. Karim played the part of a go-between (a fixer in the older sense) with an antiquities smuggler and arranged a meeting. The correspondent equipped Karim with a hidden camera and pushed him to get the smuggler to show them as much merchandise as possible and to state the provenance of his wares.

Karim may have had "bureau producer" on his contract from when he first started working in Turkey after fleeing Syria, but reporters and foreign producers referred to him as their fixer. He preferred producer.

Leyla and Aziz, 2014-2016

Leyla, on the other hand, preferred to call herself a translator. After fleeing Syria, Leyla's freelance NGO translation and journalism work supplemented her husband Aziz's income from activist work, allowing them to scrape by in Gaziantep and support relatives still living in camps on the border. They worked mostly with a Belgian reporter named Geert, who was constantly traveling around the Middle East and Europe for his newspaper. They would keep him updated about developments in Aleppo and in the Turkey-Syria border region via Whatsapp and email, and if he was interested in doing a story on events they briefed him about, Aziz would try to set him up with sources inside Syria. Leyla would translate three-way Whatsapp chats with Geert and the source, as well as local media coverage of the issue. Sometimes Geert would have her conduct the interviews herself via phone or Skype and send him any important quotations. He came to Turkey a few times, but mostly they worked remotely.

Geert told me that exchanging ideas with Leyla and Aziz was, given their local vantage point, an important part of his process:

> '[They] will regularly say like, 'Hey, I met this person by--I was meeting up with a friend of mine, and they introduced me to their uncle or their cousin that came from Raqqa, and they

> say that this is happening.' And you--and then we'll write a story about it, or whatever it is. Or I'll say like, 'Look this is what I'm hearing. Can we write a story about this? Who do you know?' And [they]'ll be like, 'Oh, that's such a coincidence. I was speaking to somebody about that very thing in a café the other day. They said that they got a call from their mother in Urfa or Deir al-Zour.'

Occasionally, a new reporter would call Leyla. The reporter might have been referred by Aziz's contacts among Syrian activists exiled in Turkey, perhaps by Geert. "So when people contact me," Leyla told me, "They ask if I could fix things. So I tell them that I am not a fixer. I can help them with the translation and the interpretation, sometimes even I don't even charge anything, if it's only a couple of hours. . . So I do this job not particularly for money, unless it's like more than a couple of days or something like that."

Leyla might have done many of the same tasks as other fixers of introducing those journalists to sources and sometimes traveling with them--they were particularly interested in visiting the refugee camp where she had relatives--but nonetheless she told me, "Although I worked as fixer, I think I'm translator." This was in part, she said, because she relied on her husband's relationships for contacts, whereas a true professional fixer would have their own network. But also, calling herself a translator related her work in journalism to the work she did translating forms, documents, and interviews for expatriate Syrian NGOs, as well as to her lost life in Syria: when she taught English back in Aleppo, she had translated a novel from English as a side project.

When we spoke in 2016, Leyla and Aziz had just gotten visas for Sweden and were planning their move for the next month. In the small city where they were headed, Leyla told me, there would be no need for a fixer. But Arabic translators would be in high demand in Sweden, and she planned to continue to translate for NGOs working on Syrian issues.

Habib, 2015-2016

Habib was always hired to cover one aspect or another of the same story: Afghan refugees. Like Ayşe, he separated out his NGO work from his fixing. At his day job, he was an interpreter for asylum cases, but he did not approach asylum seekers whose cases he handled as news sources. Instead, Habib found sources in Zeytinburnu neighborhood, the hub of Afghan life in Istanbul. West of the old city and Aksaray, the center of Syrian, Iranian, and African life, and east of the airport, Zeytinburnu had an Afghan community dating back to the 1980s, when people fleeing the Soviet war laid down stakes. Afghans subsequently migrating to and through Turkey--aside from ethnic Uzbeks who already spoke a Turkish language (if not Istanbul Turkish gleaned from satellite TV soap operas) and could integrate more easily--found in Zeytinburnu compatriots to help them navigate the city. As the exodus from Afghanistan to Europe accelerated in the 2010s, call shops sprung up across the neighborhood that also arranged money transfers to and from Afghanistan and coordinated boats smuggling asylum seekers to Greece, along with Afghan restaurants and textile sweatshops taking advantage of the cheap new Afghan and Syrian labor supply.

Call shops were easy places to meet sources; at the height of Mediterranean migration in 2015, long queues of Afghans with camping backpacks lined up daily outside the shops, waiting to board buses that would take them to the coast. Habib quickly learned, however, that there was an order to things in Zeytinburnu, and it was most prudent to seek smugglers' help and approval recruiting sources instead of circumventing them. Habib might have found contacts for reporter clients separately from his NGO work, but he would nonetheless highlight that work when introducing himself to asylum seekers. For example,

"I have been working in Turkey for the past [several] years and work for the UN in the refugees' affairs section. When some friends come from other countries, they approach me to help them on refugee-related matters."

The UN part was a stretch--he worked as an interpreter for an NGO that handled cases for the UNHCR. He followed that introduction up, when I hired him to help me on a story, with a statement that, "This does not harm you nor it can have a direct passive benefit for you," but it seemed to me that phrasing this caveat in UN-style bureaucrat-ese only furthered our sources' impression of the officiality of our conversation. Trying to signal cultural comradeship through my own self-labeling, I then introduced myself as Iranian-American. "And I'm Afghan-Afghan," Habib told the asylum seekers and everyone laughed, the mood relaxing slightly.

Nikolaus, 2013

Nikolaus, for one, happily adopted the label of fixer. To him, it was a signal that his project of becoming intimately familiar with Turkey had succeeded, that he was in a sense passing for local.

One moment of charisma that Nik remembered with a mix of pride and embarrassment came as he reported on the Gezi protests. It was after police had driven occupiers from the park and instead spent their evenings chasing demonstrators away from Taksim Square and off İstiklal Boulevard. Usually, the cops would stay on the main boulevard rather than pursue protesters down the maze of side streets that branched out from İstiklal. Riot police were themselves outsiders, brought in from out of town. This deployment helped keep police unsympathetic to protesters but also meant they did not know the city well. Nikolaus, by contrast, had spent many an evening bar-hopping those side streets and knew them intimately.

One evening, Nik, having just parted ways with his correspondent Ernst, happened upon a pair of cops who had gotten lost chasing protesters. He laughed, took their photo, and told them they were going the wrong way and should go back to their bus. The cops were not amused. They demanded his passport, press card (he did not have one), and the SD card from his camera. Nik handed over his passport and, in a slight of hand he learned from a German cameraman, fiddled with his equipment before handing them a blank SD card instead of the one he had been using.

Nik thought for a moment he was in too deep when they told him he was detained and should sit on the curb while they radioed their commander. But then a clanging started above them. Residents of the street's apartments banged together pots and pans, more and more joining the cacophony by the second. The police suddenly looked scared. Then water splashed down, hurled by old ladies, then glass bottles that shattered around the two policemen. They threw Nik's passport back in his face, turned tail, and ran to cheers and jeers. Nik knew he had been stupid to provoke them, but he was also elated: the neighborhood had taken his side against the police; he was the insider.

People labeled fixers do different tasks

The basic responsibilities most often referenced in discussions of fixers are translating and arranging contacts and logistics. But sometimes fixers do not do these tasks: Can did not need to translate all the interviews he arranged for me; Ayşe did not often arrange contacts for José; Leyla rarely handled logistics for Geert. And sometimes fixers are also security contractors, as Karim was on his visits to Syria and Burhan was driving through PKK country and visiting poor neighborhoods. Sometimes fixers are expert analysts, researchers, and fact-checkers, as Ayşe was for José. Sometimes fixers play characters in sting operations to incriminate sources on

hidden camera. Sometimes fixers merely arrange interviews; other times they conduct them themselves and then report back to reporters, as Leyla did for Geert.[42] Sometimes fixers are part of the story, even at the same time as they function as intermediaries in other capacities. Elif served as a member of her community as she cried with Soma victims' family members; Can simultaneously served as a Turkish journalist driven out of successive newspaper jobs and as a fixer lining up interviews for my story about press freedom.

Fixing may be done by a jack-of-all-trades like Burhan who will as soon sell you a carpet as score you a PKK interview. It may be done by full-time professionals like Burcu, Karim, or eventually Ayşe. It may be one part of a portfolio of media work for journalists also contributing to the domestic press like Can.

The same fixer's tasks can change depending on the team, the demands of the particular medium--different fixing tasks are required for audio, visual, and print journalism--or over the course of a career without the label changing. Ayşe went from insider tasks (introducing Alison to her comrades in Gezi Park and mirroring their emotions) to outsider tasks (conducting online research for José). Karim similarly went from insider activist to outsider producer, but for dangerous reporting within Syria was valued for his insider ability to secure the trust and protection of rebel fighters.

Fixers are not the only ones who fix

Karim's contractual label was producer and not fixer, though Burcu, doing her own boundary work to highlight her professionalism and connection to headquarters, might have

[42]In the past, Herbert Gans tells us in his classic *Deciding What's News*, reporter and writer were considered two different jobs. The reporter would go out and do interviews and research and send raw materials back to the writer to turn into a story. Thus Leyla might be labeled a reporter or stringer and Geert a writer. Gans also notes that in his day, too, formal job descriptions did not always line up with informal functions performed by different news makers (Gans 1979:86-88, 126-127).

quibbled that he wasn't a true producer. Much of what Burcu herself did also overlapped with the tasks of fixers, however. Likewise, international reporters, particularly those with hyphenated national identities and those who have been in the country for a long time, often informally fix for neophyte and parachutist colleagues.[43] Informal and unpaid fixing across medium and language-of-publication lines is common because journalists are more collegial with those who are not their direct competitors.

To think about differences in what people actually do and distinguish between discursive labels and substantive roles, it is useful to think in terms of verbs rather than nouns: fixing, pitching, writing, shooting, rather than fixers, producers, reporters, photographers who are simply assumed to do different things by virtue of their label. Fixing is mediating between news sources and the credited authors of news stories,[44] which includes bringing them into physical or virtual proximity, preparing them to interact, and translating. (Translating in the broad sense will be addressed in Chapter 6.)[45] Writing in turn is a mediation between fixers and sources on the one hand and news headquarters on the other.

It is not only humans who fix. Machines can fix, and indeed telecommunication technology replaced many of the tasks Burhan did as a fixer in the 1990s to connect Iraqi Kurdistan to the international media. Fixing machines can be placed along an insider-outsider spectrum just like

---

[43]On the division within the international press between long-timers and "parachutists" or "spiralists," see Hannerz 2012:39-42, 83-88. "Parachutist," meaning a journalist who is not based in a country but "parachutes" in when something newsworthy happens, is another good example of a label wielded in the struggle over status between insiders and outsiders discussed below. Fixers and foreign correspondents long serving in the same country apply the term to highlight so-labeled parachutists' superficiality and distance from the societies on which they report, in contrast to the labelers' own insider expertise. Hannerz (2012) writes that the parachutists tend to prefer labels like "firemen"--that is, brave souls who rush from one emergency to another--though I never heard anyone refer to themselves as such.

[44]I have been calling these authors *reporters* as a shorthand. Who is really reporting what, when will be unpacked in subsequent chapters.

[45]This is more or less the same as Michael Schudson's description of what "parajournalists" do, though he focuses only on those closely linked to sources, or indeed to sources who are themselves feeding stories (Schudson 2003:3-6, 20-21)

fixing humans. The Turkish-language newspaper websites José scanned[46] served more as insiders because they reported in and for local or national communities without much consideration for an international audience. The social media feeds he monitored served more as outsiders because they tailored their mediation to what they calculated José would most likely click on.

I focus on narratives mostly of those humans labeled fixers by their colleagues not because they are the only ones who fix or because fixing is the only thing they do, but because they are more routinely and professionally engaged in fixing than in tasks at other stages of news production. Fixers are very rarely in direct communication with editors, and I have never heard of fixers being in contact with anyone from, for instance, the sales or advertising teams of news corporations.

Sometimes multiple human intermediaries (and even more nonhumans) fix between author and source; professional fixers are usually charged with coordinating that chain of intermediaries, as Elif was when searching out family tragedy in Soma. She linked waiter to *bakkal* to *muhtar* to family. Here I add an analytic label of my own, **meta-fixer** (substantively, one engaged in meta-fixing). Meta-fixers are fixers who recruit and manage other fixers.

[46]The case of local-newspaper-as-fixer can, like others, be further decomposed to show that José relied on a chain of human and nonhuman mediators from 1) local journalists who wrote 2) articles in local papers whose 3) online editors converted and optimized the content on their 4) website, where 5) a search engine located it for José to 6a) plug into Google Translate or 6b) send to Ayşe to translate.

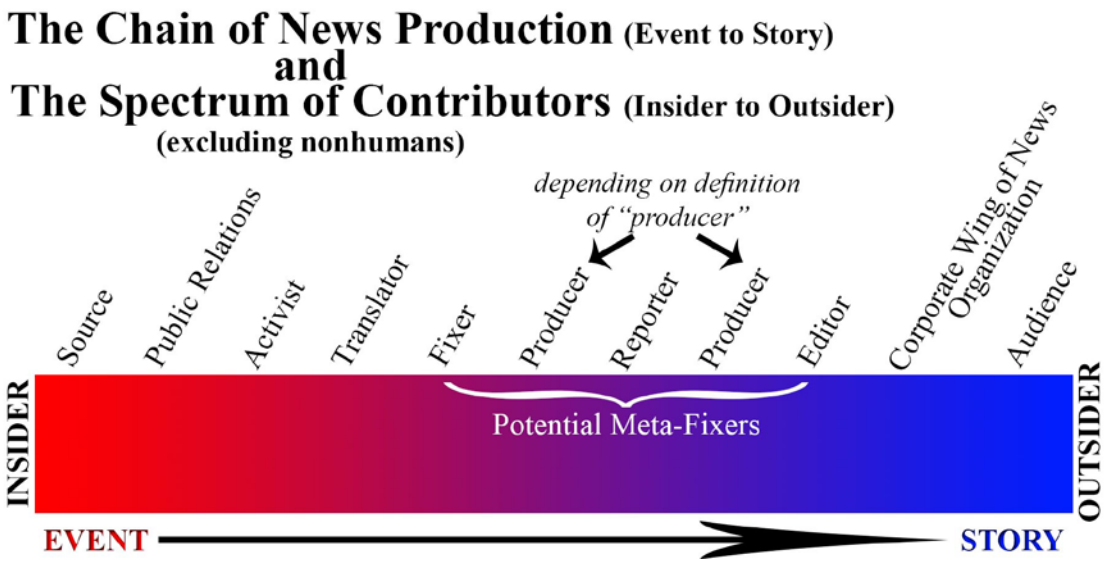

Figure 3.1 The Chain of Contributors to New Production

Even among those involved in fixing, there are different roles and a hierarchy of status that is isomorphic to the chain of news production. Information travels from source to mediators closely linked to that source, such as public relations representatives and impromptu translators like the atheists who helped José on his first story. Then on it goes to producers and reporters before being transmitted back to editors. Editors, in turn, mediate between the stories written by reporters and meddlesome (as brokering is generally perceived by those other than the mediator [Serres 2007]) Search Engine Optimization teams and others from the organization's corporate and sales wing (Dick 2011; Lohr 2006; see also Gürsel 2016:68-77 on friction between sales and editorial teams at a photo agency). Among the sources,[47] activists, public relations representatives, translators, fixers, and producers engaged in fixing, there is a status hierarchy within the field (and from journalists' perspective) corresponding to position along the insider-

[47]After all, sources are themselves brokers. News stories need to be about more than individuals' stories to be of interest beyond their immediate community--hence the importance of a "nut graf" telling readers in a print article's second paragraph that the anecdote or quote of the lede (opening) paragraph reflects a larger issue--and must address abstractions like Islamism or democracy or class struggle or American interests that can only be accessed indirectly through the mediation of sources.

to-outsider spectrum. Labels serve both to signal status and as a guide to client reporters as to the fixing tasks that each mediator can or cannot be relied upon to carry out.

That is not to say the people always apply labels with confidence. Sometimes a single person will carry out multiple roles, as when Ayşe served as her own translator when she first met Alison as a source during the Gezi protests--participants may recognize the ambiguity of such cases and hesitate to label that person one way or the other.

Labels are related to status

Differences in status do not necessarily correlate to income.[48] Ayşe earned far more than José per hour, but was lower in professional status. Rather, as discussed in the introduction, status within a particular field is connected to purity, to insulation from the contaminating messiness of the world outside of that field (Abbott 1981:820-827). I have been using *insider* to refer to those inside of local societies; but from the perspective of the field of journalism, they are impure *outsiders*. Moving from left to right on the "Chain of News Production" chart above, we start with sources > PR representatives > activists, whom journalists consider to be outside of their field and whose contributions to news making are seen by purists as dangerous sources of corruption. Continuing rightward to translators > fixers, we find lower-status participants in the field of journalism; purists hem and haw over whether they should really be considered journalists, given their contaminating proximity to local societies. Somewhere around the reporter / producer /editor point, we reach a high water mark of status, the center of the field of journalism, from where status actually descends as we continue to the right. An editor--particularly one of a higher rank like a managing editor--might make more money, be higher up

[48]Charismatics on the fringes of new organizations may earn good money on a per-story basis, but as will be discussed in Chapter 6, benefits like insurance and pension that go through official channels and imply long-term service to an organization *are* connected to status and indicate close social ties.

in the news organization's bureaucracy, and be farther removed from the contamination of *sources*, but is contaminated from the *other* side. The managing editor is exposed to the corruption of administrative and corporate concerns and perhaps seduced by the powerful special interests with whom they rub elbows (see also Abbott 1981:825 for examples of bureaucratic hierarchies not corresponding to professional status because of the contamination of organizational and corporate responsibilities in medicine and the academy).

It is all a matter of perspective, but not all perspectives are equal. Many fixers aspire to rise in status in the journalistic community, whereas reporters rarely aspire to rise in status among fixers. Where outsiders move leftward, it may be in pursuit of the excitement and charisma that comes with exposure to local impurity; what attracted Nik to fixing was the promise of an escape from the order of university life. A move leftward may also be a move toward status in a different field, as when journalists join the public relations industry.

Following the money is important insofar as the *direction* that money flows is an easy first indicator of insider vs. outsider status. PR reps are paid by sources and have good access but are biased insiders; fixers are paid by journalists, and so are closer to the outsider pole of the spectrum. The *producer* label also roughly approximates position along the insider-outsider spectrum: producers are more closely tethered to outsider news organizations than are fixers, hence, when Burcu and Karim went from being freelance to being staff on contract, they also went from being fixers to being producers (c.f. Murrell 2015:127 on the BBC's Baghdad bureau changing staff members' job titles from "fixer" to "producer" as they took on greater editorial

roles). This transition furthermore signaled their higher status to their colleagues. (Bishara [2013:57] notes the same hierarchy of *fixer* and *producer* labels among Palestinians.)[49]

Securing a formal label is not enough, though, as colleagues might go on calling you a fixer or "local staff" even after you are awarded a producer contract. Thus you must demonstrate your outsider-ness, for instance by showing yourself to be objective (in colleagues' eyes) when reporting a politically controversial story or by pitching a story that shows editors you can imagine what someone in rural Arkansas finds interesting, before they start calling you their "Turkey producer."[50] And once accepted as a producer, you yourself have to engage in boundary work, policing who else gets called a producer, as Burcu did, so that unworthy others cannot pollute the label.

Those labeled fixers in turn do boundary work to keep out *mere* translators. Can complained to me that,

> Sometimes [reporters] think that they hire fixer but they hire translators. The fixer sometimes don't have the sources. Sometimes they are biased. They are the translators…Sometimes the person might say she's a fixer but she or he is only a translator. Because I think that a fixer might have--should have the capacity to improve your story, because you're in a country that you don't know.

This boundary work was particularly evident when Can functioned as a meta-fixer and had to differentiate himself from the bottom-rung intermediaries with whom he worked, stressing how they were incapable of seeing what is interesting from an outsider perspective. Here he is

---

[49]Karim and Burcu may have not have liked being referred to as fixers, but for Nikolaus, the German study-abroad-student-turned-fixer, the label was cool. Nik did not have to worry about foreign journalists questioning his outsider credentials; rather, for his own private status hierarchy as an adventurer going native, *fixer* was a prestigious sign of progress toward being a local insider.

[50]Spending more time at the office also affirms status and closer tethering to the organization. One notable exception is among Syrian fixers in Turkey who, because of the dangers of reporting from inside Syria, work remotely from news offices scanning social media and making phone calls, but do not enjoy particular status or authority. Even though they may be lower in status than producers, they have higher status than the insiders they are in touch with in Syria.

telling me about the network of connections he had developed since Turkey's southern border became a journalism hot spot with the outbreak of the Syrian civil war:

Can: So of course [near the Syrian border] local journalists, like human rights associations, NGOs and all these, *yani* [I mean] I'm kind of getting all kind of connection. Who[ever] is useful, you know? Like it might be a local journalist, but stupid guy, you know? He's worthless. I mean I don't--I keep friendship but I don't like use him as a connection or all these things. In Kilis there was a guy who's keep calling me all the time. There's some news but stupid, you know? Like he was like saying, 'Oh, there was a municipality doing a pavement work.' So what [the] fuck? I mean--

Noah: He would try to give you stories?

Can: He was giving me some information. It's like, 'There was a wedding ceremony between Syrian and Turk.' I mean it's--it's not that interesting for me.

Can found him worthless as a fixer or producer coming up with story ideas because he could not distinguish between locally significant and internationally significant events, though Can would use him as a bottom-rung intermediary as part of their "friendship" if looking for someone in Kilis.

There exists a paradox of status among journalists. Their public claim to legitimacy is their ability to access communities around the world, and their charismatic image is the rugged correspondent comfortably interacting with the foreign. Yet within the field of journalism, the highest-status members are those who maintain a social distance from communities that are the object of reporting (as discussed in introduction; see also Abbott 1981).[51] Even within the profession, there is a tension between the status of being a disinterested outsider to local messiness, objective and authoritative within the news organization, and the charisma of being an eyewitness insider with contacts everywhere and with credible war stories to tell (Bishara

[51]On the hierarchy from "A Team" staffers to "B Team" stringers to Salvadorans, and on mirroring resentment engendered by A team remoteness from local realities in the case of foreign press covering El Salvador's civil war, see Pedelty 1995:69-83, 201-213. On the hierarchy from cosmopolitan to national to district to volunteer brokers in the world of international AIDS altruism, see Swidler and Watkins 2017:78-105.

2013:109-111; Pedelty 1995: 29-39, 69-83). Hence, not long after the Soma disaster, Burcu lamented to me, “I’m still a bit jealous,” for missing out on being teargassed by Turkish police with a team she had dispatched to the Syrian border. She had sacrificed the thrilling contamination of the field for the status and relative professional purity of the office.

A further problem regarding insider vs. outsider tensions is that fixers and producers do more than just fix. They are necessarily insiders on certain stories, and indeed are valuable to clients as insiders. But in order to preserve their status claims, they must carefully split themselves between insider and outsider. For Ayşe, becoming an institutionalized fixer meant becoming more of an outsider. On stories where she was an insider, namely stories in which she had an interest like workers’ rights, she couldn’t be a professional fixer, and instead worked at no charge to reporters as an NGO activist. While acting as a propagandist for a special interest like workers is a red flag when someone is labeled a fixer, when they are instead labeled as an activist, propagandizing is expected. Identifying this conflict between professional status and local advocacy, Ayşe split her self in order to retain her position as both insider activist and outsider fixer.

I have focused on labels’ meanings within the field of journalism, but it is not necessarily the only or even the primary field in which fixers live. Leyla may have fixed for Geert and others, but she was more closely tied to NGO and educational fields, where translator was a meaningful label and professional title. Hence, she had no problem labeling herself as a translator rather than a fixer; doing so may have marked her as low-status in the journalism field, but it marked her as higher-status in the NGO and education fields than would the fixer label. Fixing was just something Leyla did occasionally, sometimes for free, while stuck in Turkey; the fixer label fit less comfortably than translator. The latter label, with its narrower focus on language, connected

her present dabbling in journalism with the larger story of her past as an English teacher and literary translator in Syria and the future career that she envisioned in Sweden.

Labels signal evaluations of substantive differences

Can's and Burcu's arguments about differing competencies among producers, fixers, and translators might be self-serving ways to draw boundaries that support their status claims, but that does not mean those arguments should be dismissed out of hand. Much of the expertise of mediation between disparate groups (like American audiences and Turkish sources) involves the ability to accurately imagine oneself in the perspective of each to figure out what they find interesting and on what terms they are willing to engage with the intermediary. (See also Goffman 1969:15-17 on the importance of imagining how things appear to those with whom one interacts for competence in strategic interaction of any kind.) The insider-outsider split is not just a question of self-presentation, but of influencing, substantively, fixing competencies.[52] As Geert, the Belgian journalist who worked with Leyla and inducted Can into fixing in the previous chapter, told me, "Fixers on the whole should be journalists. Why? Because they think in terms of sources, and they have no shame, and they have no fears. You know, you're always--they're able to bludgeon their way into things, whereas non-fixer, just translators, are always going to be--you know--inhibited."

Shame is for insiders, a discomfort at standing out from one's own moral community (Katz 1999:319-320), for example by bothering its members on behalf of a meddling foreigner.

---

[52]Simmel similarly writes that a *stranger*, who is physically close yet socially distant, is more capable of objectivity:

> [The stranger] is not bound by ties which could prejudice his perception, his understanding, and his assessment of data. This freedom. . . permits the stranger to experience and treat even his close relationships as though from a bird's-eye view. . . he examines conditions with less prejudice; he assesses them against standards that are more general and more objective. . . . (Simmel 1971:146)

The stranger has his own subjective biases that shape his perception and understanding, but is objective in the sense of being able to objectify what he observes as not unique and irreducible but rather in a class of phenomena comparable both to each other and to abstract general standards (see also Rabinow 1977:94-95, 152).

In this sense the insider, though they have access to the community, is inhibited from using that access. Similarly, Elif's emotional trajectory signaled a shift from insider translator to outsider fixer. She laughed at her former emotional involvement as cheesy. As she professionalized, Elif developed emotional distance that mirrored her physical distancing from sources, going from sitting cross-legged beside them to standing behind her correspondent when interpreting.

But foreign journalists need both insiders and outsiders, particularly when journalists are parachutists or otherwise too far outside to even access insiders without help. For radio and TV, where the translator's voice and sometimes face may be included in the story (whereas they are almost always invisible in print journalism), the insider's emotional connection to sources can also be an asset. That is where meta-fixing comes in, linking reporters to insiders via a moderate outsider meta-fixer, while limiting the reporter's direct exposure to the insider's near-sightedness, bias and inhibition.[53] The bottom-rung intermediary introduces the meta-fixer to sources whom the meta-fixer--unlike either the true insider or the true outsider foreign reporter--can both understand well enough to facilitate the sources' engagement, and yet also objectify without shame to suit the reporter's needs.

Labels are strategic resources

Because they signal competencies to others, labels like fixer or translator affect interactions, providing opportunities and limitations for action. We make sense of the world and calibrate our expectations based on labels that arrange things and people into categories. We learn that, instead of becoming intimately familiar with every person and object with whom we interact, we can tentatively rely upon the labels applied by others who are more familiar with those people and

[53]Similarly, doormen manage the disorder and uncertainty of the street so that residents don't have to, and professional "fences"--sellers of stolen goods--provide the service of insulating buyers of hot merchandise from the criminal underworld (Bearman 2005; Klockars 1974).

objects. We use those premade labels to assess what tasks someone or something can carry out and what demands they will make upon us, which in turn affects how we proceed and become familiar with them. If someone tells me an object is a chair, I expect that it will bear my weight, but that it will demand that I apply my weight slowly rather than hurling myself onto it haphazardly. I might never try to hold the object over my head to shade me from the sun as I walk around; it might do that job admirably, but because it was introduced to me as a chair, it might not occur to me to try to use the object in that way. Labels are not automatic, though: labels are applied by people in negotiation with others and with interests at stake, and always subject to revision. I might get creative and hold the object over my head, then relabel it as a 2-in-1 chair and parasol; if others accept my label, the object might be sold in different stores and subject to different import/export duties than chairs.

When it comes to people negotiating their own labels, the stakes can be similarly high. Successfully securing a particular label for yourself changes how others treat you, particularly new acquaintances who will use the label as a rough-and-ready compass for their preconceptions, both a temporary substitute for and a guide to getting to know you.

Early in Elif's career, when she was just a translator in Burcu's eyes, Burcu micromanaged Elif's work and sought to minimize her autonomy. As Elif progressed, Burcu contributed to her being informally relabeled as a fixer among *XYZ* employees. Burcu and others began to grant Elif greater autonomy. For Burcu, this progression was based on continued observation of Elif's work and assessment that was individualized, not label-based. She did step in to slap Elif's wrist when, for example, Elif selected what Burcu considered a biased soundbite about election fraud. Elif's label became more important, however, when a big story came up and *XYZ* parachuted in foreign correspondents. Those newcomers would work with Elif without getting to know her,

and *they* used the informal *fixer* label that Burcu and other high-status bureau employees were applying to Elif to gauge how much to trust Elif, how free of a hand to give her. This trust and allocation of responsibility provided Elif greater opportunity (discussed in Chapter 5 as "wiggle room") than a mere translator to report the story as she saw fit, though within limits: Burcu would still review her edits before they aired.

Elif's established, intimate acquaintances like Burcu were able to rely more on individualized identification to predict and interpret her behavior, while new and distant acquaintances were forced to rely more on categorical identifications, as signified by the evolving labels applied to her (Goffman 1983:3-4). Even for Burcu, though, Elif's label was important. Whatever Burcu's own assessment of Elif, colleagues would use their respective labels to situate them in relation to one another in a status hierarchy, and Burcu wanted it to be clear to everyone, including me, that though they were both "local staff," that did not make them equals.

As Burcu and Karim's cases show, even having an official job title like producer does not provide irrefutable evidence of competency in others' eyes, who may informally label you otherwise. But an official title does provide some anchoring nonetheless, not just within the field but also as proof of one's membership in the field to those outside it. Lacking such an anchor, Burhan worried, would cause Australian migration authorities to treat him differently, rejecting his visa application. Karim's press card afforded him greater ease of travel by labeling him as a journalist on the authority of the Turkish prime minister.

Fixer is an odd label because, despite its ubiquitous usage, it does not appear in official vocational texts or in news organization's employment records: journalism students are not taught how to collaborate with fixers, new organizations' ethics guides do not specifically

instruct fixers or their clients on best practices (e.g. *National Public Radio* 2012; *New York Times* 2004; *Toronto Star* 2011), and nobody is officially a fixer. When fixers are credited in an article, it is not with an "Ayşe, fixer," byline but with an ambiguous formulation in the footer like "Ayşe contributed to this article." If they are a high-status fixer and make what the reporter deems to be a significant contribution, they may be credited as a second author without distinction from the article's writer. In video journalism, fixers tend to be credited as "line producer" or "researcher."[54] When someone receives a contract to officially join a news organization's staff, they go from being a fixer to being a news assistant or producer (or, in the past, a stringer). When they fix as independent contractors, they usually invoice interpretation and transportation services, not "fixing" on official news organization documentation. Most fixers, until they become news assistants or producers and unless they are also journalists in the Turkish media, do not get pensions or press cards either, although the latter is a double-edged sword, opening some doors but also putting you on the radar of the Prime Minister's Office Directorate General of Press and Information.

Coming to authorities' attentions was a particular danger for Solmaz, who as discussed in the introduction began to work for the foreign press after the state takeover of her previous employer, a Gülen-movement publication. She consulted a lawyer, who advised her to try to get an international press card but not a Turkish card. No good would come, she and the lawyer decided, from an official background check that could bring her previous affiliation with what the state had by then labeled a terrorist organization.

[54]There are exceptions to the trend of fixers' not receiving credit as such; TV shows in particular sometimes roll "fixer" credits.

This point about the benefit of *not* having a press card points to the informality and ambiguity of the fixer label also providing opportunities for strategic action. (See also discussions of "frame ambiguity" in Goffman 1974:302-321 and Baker 2006:105-139.) The fixer label is not widely understood outside the field of journalism. Even within the field, the line where fixing ends and friendship begins is often unclear even to those in a fixer-journalist relationship. This means that it does not make sense for fixers to introduce themselves as such; instead they introduce themselves as a client journalist's friend or identify themselves by another permissible label. They select a label not randomly but strategically, portraying distance from or proximity to the news organizations employing them or even affiliation with another group. Habib chose to use his alternative label of NGO interpreter (stretched to "working for the UN") to make refugees more willing to talk and to help them classify him and the foreigner asking them questions within now-familiar categories. Furthermore, labeling clients as "friends" left their status ambiguous enough that asylum seekers might think their cases would be helped by talking to the reporter. Elif's introduction of herself to the gatekeeping *muhtar* as an employee of *XYZ* invested herself with the authority to promise, "we'll be sensitive, and. . . we won't be in their hair too long" on behalf of the company. Even the *producer* label is ambiguous enough that Burcu could be "just the translator" when expedient to deflect anger at *XYZ* away from her.

Other labels beyond job titles can, when applied explicitly or implicitly, also affect fixers' interactions. And multiple labels can be used in combination. Habib highlighting that he was "Afghan-Afghan" after first introducing himself as a UN-affiliate was a way to gain the advantages of being both an outsider representative of the international community and an insider compatriot to the asylum seekers we were interviewing. Karim was both a producer able

to attract international attention and a fellow revolutionary when negotiating access with militias inside Syria.

It is worth paying careful attention to labels, because they are intimately connected to authority within the world of journalism. Labels both reflect and affect who is able to contribute which elements to news stories. World news as it appears on the page or screen is not simply a chronicle of reality or a tool to brainwash the masses, but also an artifact of the status struggles that labels make visible.

Labeling is a subset of a larger phenomenon of signaling. One can present oneself or others through a variety of signals in ways that change expectations and norms and how people define the situation in which they find themselves. We turn to presentation in the next chapter, discussing the ways and reasons that fixers send different signals to client reporters and to news sources about who they are and what they are doing.

CHAPTER 4: MORAL WORLDS OF AMBIVALENCE

Sociological Ambivalence in a Fragmented World

The word *ambivalence* is little over a century old. Swiss psychiatrist Eugen Bleuler coined the word at a time when psychologists and sociologists were grappling with the rapid social change of modernization. In new metropolises, millions of people could move--with far greater ease and speed than in the village--among disparate social worlds and take on multiple roles (Bernet 2006; Simmel [1903]1971). There was a great deal of worry that society's moral order would come crashing down because people were faced with a splintering of culture and morality as they moved from work to home to recreational life, instead of being able to abide by the unified moral world. Taking on a multitude of roles and being exposed to a multitude of different expectations, the anxieties went, could free people to do whatever they wanted with no unified moral code to regulate their action, or simply render people ambivalent to the point of moral paralysis or psychological breakdown. Taken to extremes, ambivalence was a component of the pathological fragmentation of thought, feeling, and intention for which Bleuler coined the term schizophrenia, from Greek words for "splitting" and "spirit" (Bernet 2006).

Since the turn of the twentieth century, gross human ambivalence has increased with greater heterogeneity of societies and with the extension of humans' communicative reach. It is just such a disunified but connected social world where intermediaries like fixers find their purpose. They bridge gaps between social worlds, which are necessarily also moral worlds, and in so doing find themselves caught in the contradictions between those worlds.

While psychological ambivalence describes the experience of mutually contradictory thoughts and feelings, Robert Merton's concept of *sociological ambivalence* takes us outside our

heads to focus on the configurations of social relationships.[55] Conflicting normative prescriptions[56] (that is, expectations of what someone *should* do) directed toward a single person due to their position in society generate sociological ambivalence (Merton 1976:6-12).

There are, Merton argued, two kinds of sociological ambivalence. The more commonplace and easier one to deal with is when a person performs multiple roles, each subject to its own norms that are in conflict with one another.

Businesspeople, for example, might be expected to be cutthroat and selfish—being seen as moral failures by their colleagues if they fall short of these prescriptions—but then go home to spouses and children who expect them to be gentle and altruistic (Jackall 1998; Zaloom 2006). This is the easier form of ambivalence to deal with, because it can be managed by compartmentalizing the self into different personas for different moral worlds, as we already have seen Ayşe doing in separating her fixer self from her activist self. Anthropologist Caitlin Zaloom provides a vivid example of such a splitting of spirit in her description of a futures trader named Chris who adopts a workplace alter ego, "Frank," who is unbound by normal rules of behavior. Frank is a caricature of unbridled masculinity, picking his nose and belching and behaving with the ruthless selfishness that the trading pits demand, but then Chris goes back to the very different moral world of home life, where he has a son to think about (Zaloom 2006:114-118).

---

[55]Bleuler (1950[1911]:53-55) identified three kinds of ambivalence, described succinctly by Merton (1976:3) "the emotional (or affective) type in which the same object arouses both positive and negative feelings, as in parent-child relations; the voluntary (or conative) type in which conflicting wishes make it difficult or impossible to decide how to act; and the intellectual (or cognitive) type, in which men hold contradictory ideas." I focus on fixers' experiences of being pulled by different parties to act in conflicting ways, most similar to voluntary ambivalence, although the other side of that same coin is that journalists, sources, and news stories themselves arouse, as objects, conflicting feelings and ideas in fixers.

[56] I use *prescription* following Latour's (1988a:305-306) definition: "whatever a scene presupposes from its *transcribed* actors." Here "transcribed" means primed to behave according to a particular script for a scene of social interaction to occur with minimal conflict and effort.

Not everyone finds such compartmentalization easy; ambivalence spawned from holding multiple roles is associated with various problems of stress, identity crises, and leakage of work personas into private relationships. Attempts to split the self can also run up against physical limits: for instance, a businessperson might violate family norms by abiding by corporate norms that they should stay late at the office.

In many cases, organizations do their best to pull members into their own moral worlds. Organizations encourage close ties among their members by educating them, overseeing rituals meant to create and reinforce organizational identities, and separating members from the rest of society. These programs together we can call the process of socialization. It is only the fictional, ideal-typical "total institution," though, that can fully strip people of their old identities and mold them into obedience to a new, unified moral world of the institution itself (Goffman 1961). We can call this a *total moral world* to provide a pole for comparison.

In the case of fixers, if news organizations sought to fully socialize fixers and segregate them from local populations, it would defeat the purpose of hiring the fixer in the first place. In order to carry out their fixing roles, fixers must bridge the respective moral worlds of journalism and of sub-fixers/sources.[57] Fixing inherently exposes a person to multiple, disparate groups with their own moral worlds. This exposure places fixers close to the pole of an ideal *ambivalent moral world* and opposite the "total moral world" pole.[58]

---

[57] I want to be careful here to avoid the idea that all journalists exist in a unified moral world of journalism, or that all sources and sub-fixers exist in a unified moral world of local society. I have described the process of news production from a bird's-eye view as a chain of brokerage. But if we zoom in to any particular broker in that chain, their immediate interlocutors look like representatives of the networks and moral worlds behind them. Move on to the next broker in the chain, and now the previous broker looks like a representative of the moral world behind *them*, when in truth they are also subject to greater or less degree to moral ambivalence.

[58] Goffman's (1961) typology of the total institution provides an outline of the social conditions for a total moral world, but does not consider its opposite ideal typical pole--the fragmentary non-institution--that provides the social conditions for an ambivalent moral world. Adding a second pole to this typology allows us to plot real-world phenomena along a spectrum and to consider the specific conditions that nudge people toward one type of moral

The stickier kind of ambivalence that Merton describes, which resists compartmentalization as a solution, emerges when a single role is inherently subject to multiple, conflicting norms. Brokers of all kinds are subjected to this ambivalence in bridging moral worlds.[59] Fixers cannot easily compartmentalize their local from professional selves as they leave one moral world and enter another, because the connecting of worlds is precisely what their clients pay them for. This chapter will explain the situations that make fixers more or less ambivalent, the different types of ambivalence they experience, and how they manage conflicting normative expectations.

Elif, 2014

"I call myself a rat," Elif told me over cappuccinos, a year into her fixing career. She felt like her job was leading her to *use* people in a dishonorable way, subjecting them to journalists' interrogations and dehumanizing them as mere bits of information. For routine stories, she generally preferred to direct her clients to local journalists as interviewees because, she said, at least the latter knew the game. She protected her friends, or in a less generous interpretation, held them in reserve.

---

world or the other. For example, Goffman (1961) describes the military as a total institution. But we might plot different cases of military life on different points of the spectrum in order to understand variation in soldiers' experiences and problems. Various studies have found, for instance, that military drone pilots, despite being far from the dangers of the battlefield, suffer high rates of post-traumatic stress disorder, with many citing the difficulty in adjusting between home life and work (Asaro 2013:214-217). Because they are not segregated from the rest of society, these drone pilots' moral worlds are more ambivalent than those of soldiers living on military bases abroad, which provide them a more total moral world in which they can straightforwardly conform to warrior norms—though even this totality is challenged by telecommunications technology that allows soldiers routine contact with their families back home.

[59] In "actor-network theory" (ANT) as developed by Bruno Latour and others, everyone and everything operates in an ambivalent moral world. The ANT critique of concepts like structure and institutions is that in fact every individual in an organization is not subject to some unified corporate norm, but mediates between those humans and nonhumans with whom they are in immediate contact--so actually everyone is exposed to the stickier ambivalence and exists in their own atomized moral world (Latour 2005b). Yet the ambivalent moral world is also an ideal type that emerges from specific social circumstances; sometimes moral worlds are more atomized and sometimes they are more similar from actor to actor. In network terms, we would expect a total moral world to look like a perfectly distributed network and an ambivalent moral world to exist in a network lacking any bicomponents connecting nodes through multiple independent pathways.

She still worked mostly for American TV channel *XYZ*, but she was also freelancing for others and further afield. We spoke in summer 2014 after she had recently traveled for the first time to Kurdish-majority southeastern Turkey to assist with a documentary film. She had also been detained for the first time.

Elif met Mahmut when reporting a human interest piece about the popularity of nationalist Atatürk signature tattoos. He was originally from a Kurdish village near the Iraq border, but now worked as a tattoo artist in Istanbul's swank Kadıköy district, where he found himself inking clients with a symbol, for many Kurds, of ethnic nationalist Turkish chauvinism. Elif made a note then that he had an interesting life story and filled a gap in her social network; she was sure to keep in touch for when he was next useful.

When Brigitte, a French filmmaker, got in touch to ask Elif for help on a documentary about perceptions of the Turkish-PKK peace process in the Kurdish heartland, Elif thought of Mahmut. She introduced Elif and Mahmut, and together they arranged a trip to his home region. Elif would serve as meta-fixer and English-Turkish translator; Mahmut would be her subcontracting fixer, Turkish-Kurdish translator when needed, and a source.

The Turkish government and PKK had started to seriously pursue a "Kurdish Opening" with secret talks in Norway in 2009. In an early sign of a split between then-Prime Minister Erdoğan and the cleric Fethullah Gülen who had hitherto supported his rise, recordings of the talks were leaked and a prosecutor thought to be affiliated with the Gülen movement went after Erdoğan-loyalist intelligence chief Hakan Fidan for treason, signaling that powerful forces within the state opposed the peace process. The Kurdish Opening looked to be in danger of closing, and there was a surge of violence in 2011-2012, but government ultimately doubled down and went public with peace talks in 2013 and agreed to a ceasefire with the PKK. Imprisoned PKK leader

Abdullah Öcalan, along with leaders of the legal Kurdish-leftist Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), joined government officials in a rhetoric of Turkish-Kurdish peace and brotherhood. In early 2014, hope was high and violence low in the southeast, though the peace process was still on shaky ground: conciliatory rhetoric and gestures had yet to be backed by legislation or any official agreements (Karaveli 2012; Hakyemez 2017; Güneş and Besaw 2016).

It was in this environment of tense and tentative optimism that Brigitte, Elif, and Mahmut traveled to Şırnak Province, an area that had often been a hot-spot of conflict and where security forces still had a heavy presence. They interviewed pro-government Kurdish village militia members, PKK supporters, children who had grown up with a slow-burning insurgency always in the background. They asked about the peace process and about the upcoming presidential election, in which charismatic young HDP leader Selahattin Demirtaş was running, against but posing little threat to Erdoğan (the latter went on to win the August election with a first-round majority). They were chatting with village kids and taking selfie photos when police approached and invited them to their station for a chat. Unbeknownst to the team, who thought they were just capturing the beautifully rugged landscape in the background of their selfies, there was a gendarmerie installation out there that they now stood accused of illegally photographing. The police demanded to see photos and footage; Brigitte had had the foresight to transfer footage of pro-PKK interviews to a hard drive left in their hotel room, so there was nothing to get them in trouble on her camera's memory card.

"Then somehow they focused on [Brigitte] because [she]'s foreign, you know? And they were very--it was very peculiar. I mean, they said very strange things. They asked [her] if [she]'s a spy. They asked [her]--and I have to translate this…the police were saying these very bizarre things like, 'Are you a spy?' And I would have to say, like, '[Brigitte] are you a spy?'" Elif

laughed remembering it. They also lectured Brigitte about PKK terrorism and, while at it, European heartlessness toward Syrian refugees, with Elif serving uncomfortably as translator.

> I had to translate and it felt so gross for those words to be coming out of my mouth, because they were saying, 'You know, these terrorists,' talking about the PKK. . . He was kind of equating ISIS to the PKK. And it was just [a] bizarre kind of train of thought in this mentality that it was kind of weird coming from my mouth, I guess. Apparently I wasn't very good at hiding my expressions while they were saying this 'cause [Brigitte] was like 'You, you just look shocked.' And I was shocked; I was like '*What*?'

Ultimately, the police treated them to colas and let them go. "Yeah. It's nice to be non-threatening, white complexion, female," Elif laughed, at least in a situation like that. Mahmut was interrogated separately and more sternly, although he was used to it. Spending more time with Kurds for her work, Elif was becoming newly aware of the suspicion and routine contact with police that men with dark skin and distinctively Kurdish noses could expect to face, not just in the southeast but also in Istanbul.

Burcu, 2009

Femininity had been less useful to Burcu for a story she worked on five years earlier, at the start of the Kurdish Opening (also known as the Kurdish Initiative or National Unity and Brotherhood project over the years) and back when she was a freelance fixer herself. A parachutist (her word) radio reporter arrived in Turkey knowing he wanted to do a story about Kurdish language use in Turkey. This was indeed an area of controversy--an element of Erdoğan's outreach to the Kurds was support for limited mother tongue education initiatives and Kurdish language broadcasts on public TV and radio (Zeydanlıoğlu 2012)--and Burcu thought it a worthy general topic. But the reporter seemed stubbornly resistant to Burcu's attempts to explain nuanced distinctions, important in Turkey, between speaking Kurdish, which had been illegal until 1991 but was no longer controversial, and official usage of the language, for instance in election campaigns and public education (on controversy around and perceptions of official

Kurdish language use, see also Aydin and Ozfidan 2014; White 2013:loc.330-442). He insisted, based on his reading before arriving in Turkey, that many Turks thought that Kurdish should not be spoken and wanted to include someone saying this for his piece to "balance" the pro-Kurdish voices that Burcu found for him.

They visited several neighborhoods Burcu knew for their Turkish nationalist reputations but could not find anyone who would say they were against people speaking Kurdish. The reporter continued to pressure Burcu to find a source to balance the story, so she called a local "Idealist Hearth" (Ülkü Ocağı), a social club for members of the Grey Wolves, with the reporter's phone--she did not want them to have her number--and arranged a visit. The Grey Wolves are a militant group linked to the rightwing Nationalist Action Party (MHP by its Turkish initials) and implicated in a great deal of political violence against minorities including Kurds and Alevis as well as leftists (an overlapping category) since the 1970s. It was not fear of violence that prompted Burcu to use the reporter's phone; rather, she knew that if they got her number, they would start calling her up to make unwanted advances.

When Burcu and the reporter arrived outside the club, he recognized the Grey Wolf logo on the door with surprise and asked Elif: Wait, are these the people who shot the pope? Yes they are, she told him. As it turned out, even the club members gathered were not as extreme as the reporter had hoped, agreeing that it was fine to speak Kurdish privately, just not in official communications. But when pressed, one of the men did oblige with a soundbite that using Kurdish letters was a kind of separatism and should be prosecuted. The letters X, Q, and W are used in Latin-alphabet Kurdish but not in Turkish, and at the time a 1928 law making their usage illegal was still on the books. The reporter was finally convinced that speaking Kurdish would not work as the story's focus, and he modified his original idea to settle on the controversial

letters.

After that interview, the reporter called the Idealist Hearth number saved on his phone to follow up on details for the story and, after having difficulty communicating given club members' limited English, gave them Burcu's phone number so they could be in touch in Turkish. As predicted, Burcu ended up getting flirtatious calls and text messages from lonely Grey Wolves.

Ayşe, 2014

In the first half of 2014, the self-proclaimed Islamic State (ISIS) shocked the world with a blitz that captured Raqqa in Syria and Fallujah, Mosul, and Tikrit in Iraq. In September, now equipped with American-made heavy weaponry and armor captured when the Iraqi army fled Mosul without a fight, ISIS launched a major offensive against the Syrian Kurdish enclave of Rojava. The region had been under the control of the Democratic Unity Party (abbreviated PYD from its Kurdish initials)[60] since 2012 in an uneasy and inconsistent ceasefire with both the Asad regime and with other Syrian rebel groups. Turkish officials justifiably regarded the PYD and its militias, the People's Protection Units (YPG) and all-female Women's Protection Units (YPJ), as merely the Syrian wing of the PKK. Thus was the Turkish state deeply worried that an autonomous Rojava would provide a safe haven for the PKK and inspire further separatism among Turkey's own Kurdish population (Catar 2015). When ISIS gained ground in Rojava, soon encircling the small border city of Kobani, the PKK rushed to send reinforcements from Turkey and northern Iraq to their Syrian comrades while Turkish forces stationed along the border stood by, watching the siege unfold. The Kurds widely believed Turkey to be supporting

[60]The faction was later rebranded as the Syrian Democratic Forces [SDF] under American sponsorship and with the inclusion of some Arab militias.

ISIS, an accusation lent credence by reports that Turkish guards were giving a harder time at the border to Kurds crossing into Kobani to fight or provide aid, than to Syrian and foreign radicals crossing to join ISIS (Filkins 2014; Letsch 2014; Stein 2014). Turkish-Kurdish relations were intertwined now more than ever with events in Syria.

Ayşe's first time in southeast Turkey was an extended trip to Suruç, the town just on the Turkish side of the border across from the battlefield. The Kobani story had blown up in the international media after the United States came to the beleaguered Kurds' aid with air strikes at the end of September. José asked if she would accompany him and a photographer to the border. It was a big enough story that the news site he contributed to as a stringer would pay expenses for once. Ayşe jumped at the opportunity, as she already felt drawn to what seemed like a heroic last stand. Her leftist political orientation and labor rights activism went with a sympathy for the Kurdish cause, particularly as Rojava was branding itself as a radical experiment in grassroots "democratic confederalism,"[61] and at any rate it was easy to root against ISIS.

Whatever her enthusiasm, Ayşe did not speak Kurdish or Arabic. Before they flew to Gaziantep, the largest nearby city, Ayşe contacted the local HDP office and asked if they could recommend a driver who spoke good Kurdish. From previous reporting, she had learned that the HDP, eager for international sympathy, was the most responsive of political parties to the foreign press. She spoke to three drivers they recommended and selected the one who seemed the most politically connected and spoke in PKK lingo: she hoped having a Kurdish movement insider with her would help open doors.

[61]Reports on PYD/SDF intolerance of dissent and expulsions of local Arabs have suggested a gap between claims of a radical experiment in pluralist democracy and "libertarian municipalism" to international audiences and a more authoritarian reality on the ground (Amnesty International 2015; Gutman 2017a & b; Yassin-Kassab and Al-Shami 2016:73-75)

In Suruç, Ayşe first experienced pack journalism: journalists both foreign and domestic clustered in the town and often went out in groups to report. Television crews found a hill with a good view where, side-by-side with Kurds watching the battle with binoculars, they could do their "stand-up" daily broadcasts with Kobani in the background and get footage of explosions. Print and radio journalists focused on testimonials of refugees, funerals, and protests over Turkish military obstruction and inaction at the border.

With so many journalists in town, Ayşe met other fixers for the first time. She and the HDP driver joined other fixers in organizing an ad hoc charity, sharing some of their earnings with refugees. The fixers also compared notes about which foreign reporters were knowledgeable or ignorant, ethical or unethical, generous or petty, giving them nicknames like Cheapo.

Nigel, the photographer who had come with Ayşe from Istanbul, they nicknamed Sleazeball. He was a freelancer and, Ayşe told me, ruthlessly ambitious. Nigel had the idea of giving cameras to Kurdish youths who were sneaking back and forth across the border smuggling aid to Kobani. They documented life near the front lines and brought pictures back to him to forward to publications. Nigel earned, Ayşe learned from José, around £500 (then about $800) per image and initially paid the actual photographers nothing. Ayşe argued with him and he grudgingly agreed to pay them a pittance, around 50 Turkish liras (then about $20) per image.

"He was so disgusting. So, so disgusting," Ayşe told me. After that, Ayşe refused to work with Nigel, and she and other fixers warned sources to avoid him.

Ayşe was ashamed of any association with Nigel but proud of some of the work she did with José. Ayşe found that with the driver's help, they were able to get far better access in Suruç than the Turkish domestic news teams (with the exception of Turkish-Kurdish news outlets), whom the locals viewed as Turkish nationalist propagandists. After several days of asking around, Ayşe

and the driver were able to find a young Turkish-Kurdish man about to sneak across the border to join the YPG and fight ISIS who was willing to sit down for an interview. She let the driver do the talking, addressing the fighter as “heval” (comrade) and stressing that the HDP had organized their reporting trip.

It took some time to get the fighter past sloganeering. Ayşe had heard the stock phrases before from leftist Kurdish friends and in the media, and so could tell José when they needed to push further. José was happy to have her ask her own questions as well, and she directed the interview to more personal questions about the young man’s family life, his hopes and fears.

José liked interviewing him with Ayşe because of her educated fluency in the language of leftism and sensitivity to the Kurdish perspective, despite not sharing his ethnicity. On a previous occasion, he had interviewed a Kurdish writer who had spent time in prison for supporting the PKK via Skype with one of his novice/budget student fixers at his side. During the interview, José noticed the Kurdish writer noticeably bristle when asked about the PKK, and from there on their answers seemed more terse and stiff. After they hung up, the fixer apologized to José, and confessed that she had been pronouncing PKK as *pekAkA* out of force of habit and kept failing to catch herself doing so despite noticing the interviewee’s reaction. *PekEkE* is the more neutral way of pronouncing the acronym; *pekAkA* includes the sound kaka, as in poop, as a petty derogation. But *pekAkA* was how they had been taught to say it in Turkish public school, and she had trouble changing that habit. Ayşe, José was pleased to note, always said *pekeke* to the prospective YPG fighter.

The fighter left for Kobani soon thereafter, but clandestinely crossed back into Suruç several times in the couple weeks that Ayşe and José were in town. He would give them updates of the battle while she let him charge his phones in her hotel room.

The story attracted a bit of attention from other members of the foreign press in Suruç. One foreign journalist approached Ayşe to ask, in a friendly but pushy way, very detailed questions about the smuggling routes the YPG was using to cross the border at night. Ayşe pretended to have no idea, though she thought that her YPG fighter had come to trust her enough to probably show her if she asked. Much as she dismissed widespread conspiracy theories about foreign journalists being spies, this "journalist" raised her suspicions and she felt protective of her source.

Ayşe returned to Istanbul after a few weeks. Once ISIS was finally driven from Kobani after months of grueling urban warfare, the young fighter likewise returned home. Once he resumed life as an ordinary citizen, he was no longer a particularly valuable source, but he continued to send her messages on her phone and on social media, a mix of pro-Kurdish propaganda for her to forward along to the international media and where-are-you-what-are-you-doing messages that she found tiresome. Nonetheless she felt obliged to respond, though she gradually receded from him over the next year.

"If I don't stay in touch with people I'm doing good stories with," Ayşe told me, "it's like I'm using them."

Elif, 2014

Elif also went to Suruç for several days with *XYZ* during the siege of Kobani. In her meta-fixer role, she recruited "Jimbo" (she never learned his real name), an enterprising Syrian refugee who had fled the IS advance. Jimbo frequented the hill above Kobani to offer his services to TV crews, and a news network he had worked with the previous week referred him to Burcu, the producer at *XYZ*, who in turn gave Elif his phone number before she arrived.

For a story the correspondent wanted to do on refugees, Elif and Jimbo walked around a neighborhood that Jimbo knew had taken in many recent refugees, peeking into windows and yards. Through a door left ajar, they found a family sitting on floor pillows speaking Kurdish and invited themselves in. The family had just come from Kobani and, as a huge added bonus to the story, it turned out that one of the daughters had been a YPJ fighter and was recovering from a wound.

It took them some time to get the family to agree to allow them to return with a correspondent, producer, and cameraperson to interview the young woman. Elif spoke no Kurdish or Arabic and the family spoke no Turkish, so Jimbo translated. As they talked, Elif grew increasingly irritated with him, as she later related to me.

Elif: We were like sitting with the family, trying to convince them, and you know he wasn't listening to me. He had this like arrogance.

Noah: [Jimbo] wasn't [listening]?

Elif: Yeah. He had this like very patronizing style towards this family as well. I was like really uncomfortable with [the situation]. I don't think he was translating properly. But somehow we got the interview.

Noah: What gave you the feeling--do you remember?--that he wasn't translating properly?

Elif: Just the way he sat, like it was very, like when I'm in that room, like as a--you know, I don't want to impose. I'll make myself as quiet and respectful as possible. But he was just kind of lounging and like, you know, Kurdish man. And maybe it's a male thing. . . Me and [the young YPJ fighter], we were like always like very quiet. And it was important for me, for her to be comfortable with me. And she was.

This sit-down with the family was not only meant to secure consent, but also serve as the "pre-interview," that fixers often conduct in TV reporting. The pre-interview prepares both the sources, by giving them a practice run at answering questions, and the news team, by figuring out what questions the correspondent should ask on camera to elicit newsworthy responses. When it came to the actual interview,

> She was like very timid until we asked her about what it means to be a female fighter for the YPG, what it means for Kurds, and she like gave us her standard, doctrinized answer that was very strong, and that was interesting. So I was like kind of sitting outside the. . . room, and [Jimbo] was like sitting to the side. And. . . he was interrupting her. But you, you shouldn't interrupt, right? [Be]cause you need the soundbite. So then we told him, 'Shh don't interrupt, and just give us a summary later.'

I had observed fixers interrupting sources regularly and was interested that Elif criticized Jimbo for doing so. I asked her, "When you're talking about him interrupting. . . What do you do if you have to interrupt somebody? So example, if somebody's talking for a really really long time or rambling or something, how do you handle that?"

Elif considered. "I think when the sentence is done you can go ahead and interrupt. I mean the only reason why you don't want to interrupt is so that you have a clean edit and also to be polite, obviously."

In the case of this YPJ fighter, Elif and the correspondent privately agreed that they did not trust Jimbo's translation. *XYZ* had another Kurdish translator check his work.

It was not clear to Elif whether it was the family's idea or Jimbo's, but after the interview,

> [T]hey were like. . . 'Maybe you can contribute something?' So me and the [XYZ] producer that I was working with, we went shopping. We went and bought her like a nice jacket, bought them like a lot of food, like lentils and rice and blahblahblah. . . and it was very embarrassing. . . They were embarrassed; we were embarrassed. Yeah it's embarrassing. We just like walk in with all this--but I mean like everyone needs food so, it's not like, you know, giving cash. You can't give cash anyway. But, you know, we, we did appreciate their--I mean it's not easy to--I don't understand why she would sit--like, I wouldn't ever sit down for an interview like that.

Gül, 2015 (Part 1)

A parliamentary election was scheduled for June 2015, and the Kurdish-leftist Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) seemed to be on the ascent. This rise meant that they posed a threat to the AKP parliamentary majority that had ruled since 2002. In the Turkish electoral system, political parties need to win at least 10% of the national vote to enter parliament. The fewer the parties that exceed the threshold, the disproportionately higher their share of seats. In 2002, the

AKP won only about a third of the national vote but was awarded two-thirds of the 550 seats in parliament because the only other party, the center-left Republican People's Party (CHP), made the threshold. In 2007 and 2011 elections, the AKP share of the vote rose to almost 50%, but the number of AKP members of parliament declined, because the ultranationalist MHP joined the CHP in making the threshold.

In the past, Kurdish-left parties ran their candidates as independents, who could be elected by local constituencies without being members of a party exceeding the 10% threshold nationally. In 2015, though, if their new strategy of drawing votes from Kurdish conservatives and non-Kurdish groups like environmentalists and LGBT voters was successful, they would not only enjoy larger parliamentary representation, but also prevent the AKP from getting the majority needed for one-party rule. The loss of an AKP majority could interfere with Erdoğan's push for "reforms" meant to increase his presidential powers. The HDP was polling right around 10% as the election approached.

Tensions between the AKP's Syrian policies and the Kurdish Opening had been laid bare during the siege of Kobani, and now the HDP's electoral threat further reduced the government's interest in the Kurdish peace process, which was seen to help the HDP's cause. Erdoğan cut off talks with imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan and returned him to solitary confinement (George 2018). Multiple HDP rallies and offices were targeted in arson, bombing, and gun attacks during the campaign season; perpetrators were never caught or, HDP supporters argued, seriously pursued.

In Diyarbakir, the heart of the Kurdish movement, Gül's services were in high demand. In addition to the election campaign, there was the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide, the resettlement of refugees across the region, and continued reporting on the aftermath of the siege

of Kobani that took Gül on frequent trips down to the border. During and after the siege, foreign reporters sometimes wanted to use her connections to help them sneak into Kobani, but Gül refused, worried that the Turkish authorities would assume she was YPJ if they were caught crossing the border in either direction. She complained to me that journalists who failed to consider the likelihood that her phone was tapped would call her and ask stupid things like, Do you know protest organizers? or Do you know people in Qandil (the mountain base of the PKK in Iraqi Kurdistan)? Admitting such associations could get her in legal trouble,[62] so Gül would tell them over the phone, No, I don't know such people, but maybe if we walk around we might run into such people. They would discuss sources further in person.

Most of Gül's reporting was in Diyarbakir and nearby towns like Mardin and Midyat that had taken in large numbers of refugees. Covering political rallies, Gül had by this time learned to position herself and her clients in the middle between the police side and, in her words, "society's side." The advantage of this positioning was that demonstrators, deeply suspicious of the Turkish national media, would not think they were associating with the police, and the police would not think they were part of the rally when they moved in shield formation to disperse the crowd with batons. The downside was that gas canisters, paintballs (to later identify troublemakers), and rubber bullets would whizz past them in one direction and bottles and stones in the other.

She ran into less trouble shepherding foreign reporters when they came alone than when they were accompanied by Turkish colleagues. On one occasion, a TV crew came with a Turkish

[62]Evidence of contact with the PKK had been used in the prosecution of Kurdish journalists on charges of membership in a terrorist organization, prominently in the years-long KCK trials that began in 2010. Defendant journalists and critics of the trials argued the evidence drawn from wiretaps and intercepted emails did not show them doing anything more than journalistic work: contacting PKK affiliates as sources (Human Rights Watch 2011).

cameraman, who wore sunglasses and otherwise resembled a cop. Some demonstrators noticed him discretely filming them and beat him up, smashing his camera. Gül eventually came to his rescue, convincing her comrades that they were trying to get the Kurdish message out to the world.

I spoke to several journalists who worked with Gül in 2015. Geert told me that he liked working with women in general, and Gül in particular. Can, for instance, had great contacts, but Can and other men "often tell me how to do my work." They also tended to work less hard, in Geert's experience, at making sources comfortable than did female fixers. Gül was capable of setting sources at ease but also of impressing them, particularly with her Kurdish language fluency.[63] On one occasion, a source even apologized, embarrassed but admiring, that their Kurdish could not keep up with hers, and asked to continue the interview in Turkish. Even when she brought Geert to the office of the right-wing Hüda Par,[64] Gül acted polite and professional. She had waited until after the interview, when they were in a taxi, Geert recalled with a chuckle, to explode with counterarguments and refutations of all the lies she said the Hüda Par representatives had told.

Gül brought Geert to interview Hüda Par members on his request, but when less knowledgable journalists came to town, she was happy to direct them only to sources with whom she was more sympathetic. In Istanbul that summer, I had brunch with a London-based journalist who was passing through after a brief trip reporting from Diyarbakir for the first time. He had worked with Gül and had a great time and commented to me that it was impressive how "on the

[63]The Kurdish language has been undergoing a self-conscious revival in recent decades as part of the Kurdish nationalist project (Scalbert-Yücel 2009).

[64] Hüda Par (short for the Free Cause Party, and a play on Hüda: the Lord) is the legal political party affiliated with the Islamist militant Kurdish Hizbullah group and violently clashed with Kurdish-left supporters over the Turkish state inaction against ISIS during the siege of Kobani.

same page" everyone seemed to be over there in support of the Kurdish cause. He was surprised when I told him about recent violence between Kurdish leftist and religious factions. Gül had used her ability to control his knowledge of local politics--which was enhanced by his lack of foreknowledge with which to assess her bias--and guide him to a view that the Kurdish Left was the only representative of the Turkish Kurds.

By the time Alison, the American radio journalist, arrived in Diyarbakir later that spring, the effects of overwork were catching up with Gül. Alison had found it a delight to work with Gül on previous visits, but now she seemed to be working almost on auto-pilot: "[Gül's] like, 'Okay, I'm burning out. These are the story ideas I have. Let's go.' And it doesn't work for everyone. And having the same story over and over and over in the media is also not necessarily a good idea."

When Gül took Alison to meet a Syrian-Armenian female refugee, Alison got the uncomfortable impression that Gül had been using and re-using the woman as a source for multiple clients:

> It sounded like she had been interviewed, like [Gül] had taken a few people to interview her. But [the refugee woman] was just exhausted. Like she was hopeless. Like her kids--one of her kids didn't remember how to read. Like she was just really desperate to get out. And so she had come, like [Gül] had arranged us to interview her, and it was like--I'm looking at her, and I'm like, 'I don't want to interview her. Like, this woman just needs help at this point.'

In another case, though, Alison found Gül's familiarity with a source helpful. For a story on the upcoming anniversary of the Armenian genocide, Gül introduced her to a source who had recently been investigating his Armenian heritage and whom Gül had interviewed enough times to be familiar with his story and to address him as a friend. As Alison remembered, "[She] was really comfortable and like knew what to ask, knew how to ask it, and was like, 'Hey hey hey,

explain this thing. . . This thing that I already know about.' Like, 'Hey, this is a good. . . story; why don't you tell [Alison] about this?'"

Gül's repeated contact with sources, Alison pointed out, gave Alison the advantages of longer-term reporting even though she was only in town a few days:

> I've interviewed people more than once for the same story and knew much better what to ask the second time around or the third time around. . . It could shape stuff, yeah. Because maybe I would have never learned this thing about [the source], had [Gül] not been like--had [she] not known about it already. Maybe it would never have come up in our conversation.

Gül, 2015 (Part 2)

The HDP scored a short-lived victory in June. They received over 13% of the vote and a hung parliament resulted. With the AKP unable to agree with any of the three opposition parties to form a governing coalition, Erdoğan called for snap elections to take place in November.

On July 20, an Islamic State-affiliated suicide bomber killed 32 young leftist volunteers in Suruç on their way to help with Kobani's reconstruction. The PKK, accusing the Turkish state of collusion with IS, retaliated by killing policemen and soldiers, and the ceasefire and peace process collapsed. Erdoğan ramped up the hardline nationalist discourse and blamed the HDP for PKK terrorism, courting rightwing MHP voters and undermining the HDP's cross-ethnic and conservative Kurdish support. The strategy paid off: the AKP regained its parliamentary majority in November.

Soon after the Suruç bombing, Geert returned to Diyarbakir to do a story with Gül on resurgent violence and the PKK's connections with the Syrian Kurds. This was a particularly politically sensitive subject, as the United States had by now taken on the YPG and YPJ militias as their closest allies fighting IS in Syria, even as the PKK remained on the US State Department's list of terrorist organizations. So the Syrian Kurds and Americans were at pains to represent the Turkish and Syrian groups as separate, while Turkey demanded its NATO ally stop

providing support for what it considered a single terror group. On this story, Geert did not entirely trust Gül. He may have appreciated her ability to make sources comfortable, but with the political situation so fraught, he was concerned that she was *too* close to them.

Geert: The Kurds, they do a lot of like editing.

Noah: You mean when they're doing translation?

Geert: When they're doing translation or--they mediate things much more in the sense of, like culturally. . . [Gül]'s very much like a cultural ambassador. So whenever I'm doing faux pas, [she]'s right next to me telling me like, You're doing a faux pas."

Geert recounted interviewing a woman running an organization that commemorated PKK "martyrs" and feeling tension with Gül as the conversation moved into the minefield of PKK-Syrian connections:

> I was like, 'How many martyrs do you have from the YPG-YPJ?' Like I wanted to know like out of your family of martyrs, how many are. . . PKK martyrs, and how many of them are YPG-YPJ. And she didn't want to answer that question. But I'm used to having people offended by my questions. So I reformulate and I come at it from like different angles.

But, Geert said, started making dramatic faces at him as she translated back and forth,

> Like, '*Why* are you asking these questions five different ways? Like, she clearly is not going--she doesn't want to answer it, and it's not correct to keep pushing.' And, you know, [Gül] felt upset that I kept pushing. And I was like, 'Just ask her, tell her I don't need to source it to her. . . just like a ballpark figure. . . give me a spectrum that I can work in.' Finally, what I got was that these two notebooks, these two fat notebooks were full of like YPG-YPJ names. That was all I could get. I had to like ask eight times and [Gül] was just like, 'Very rude!'" Geert imitated a petulant voice with a laugh. "I'm like, 'Sorry, like I'm not here to make everyone happy.' Like, sometimes our work has to be a bit confrontational. Like, you're not going to be buddy-buddy with everyone you interview.

When talking to the families of those killed in the most recent fighting, also, Geert found work with Gül was impeded by her personal emotional involvement:

> [Gül] gets very like emotionally affected. . . [She's] kind of on the edge of tears whenever you're working, because it's [her] people so [she]'s upset. So then in that context [she]'ll be very protective of like the people who are in mourning and like, 'Don't ask them too many questions.' Or, 'Don't bother them for too long.'. . . [She]'s usually very good with the translating, but like in these kind of like raw moments, [her] translations go to shit, and it's

> really shitty because you're like, 'I kind of need to know: is it the father or the uncle that got killed? Can we ask again?' And [she]'s just like. . .

Geert imitated Gül holding back tears.

I was in Diyarbakır around the same time. It was before the PKK's urban youth wing dug trenches, constructed barricades, and declared Diyarbakir's Sur district an autonomous zone, and before Turkish security forces crushed the uprising and much of the district in the process, its ancient city walls offering little protection from modern siegecraft (International Crisis Group 2016). The closest to combat I witnessed was teenagers throwing fireworks at a police station and then escaping down side streets when an armored vehicle gave chase. In the evenings it was still safe enough that I could stroll the old city and eat at streetcorner grills, though every night after I returned to my hotel I would hear and smell fireworks and teargas.

I asked around at hotels, the local government, and local news outlets about fixers, looking to recruit new participants to my study. One young man with a low level municipal job[65] said that he had met a French journalist and offered to take me to a café where they knew her and could put us in touch.

As we walked, he told me that to complete my education as a sociologist I really needed to read the books of Öcalan and Murray Bookchin, the anarchist-communalism theorist who inspired the former in his prison cell. He also confided that he was sure this French woman was a spy; why else would she be going around asking so many questions? We got to the cafe, a leftie-intellectual hangout by the decor, and it turned out, the "French" journalist-spy was none other

[65]In Turkey, municipal governments are locally elected. The municipal government was thus at the time run by the HDP's regional branch party and staffed by party loyalists. In 2016, though, as part of an aggressive strategy toward the HDP, the central government jailed Diyabakır's co-mayors for links to the PKK and replaced them with appointees (Reuters 2016).

than Gül, who at any rate did not have time to talk with me again. My guide had lumped her in, nationality-wise, with her foreign clients.

A few days later, the police showed up to my hotel while I was out to inquire about a list of persons of interest that included my name. I left soon thereafter. Contact with the police, I was worried, could not only be personally unpleasant but also compromise or cut short my research.

Shortly after I left, two British Vice News reporters were detained in Diyarbakir and deported. Their fixer Mohammed Ismaeel Rasool, an Iraqi Kurd who had attended a Gülen movement-affiliated university, remained in detention for far longer (Evrensel 2017). Fréderike Geerdink, the only foreign journalist based in Diyarbakır, was arrested the next week and later deported, and a few months after that American journalist David Lepeska was denied re-entry into Turkey after reporting on the destruction of Sur district (Lepeska 2016).

Leyla and Aziz, 2015

2015 was a difficult year for Leyla and Aziz, as well. They were short on money, particularly as they felt obliged to support other family members in Turkey, with Aziz even intermittently taking work in Antep as an unskilled laborer, side by side with other Syrians with advanced degrees and past careers as professionals. Their income from helping reporters with stories on Syrians in Turkey or to remotely report on events within Syria helped keep them afloat, though for a long time they turned down requests from journalists to cross the border with them for reporting trips. But eventually, ground down by manual labor and financial stress, Aziz decided that it was worth the risk and agreed to bring a group to Aleppo to cover the ever-grimmer regime siege of the rebel-held side of the city:

"I have good connection with Free Syrian Army. So I asked some of leaders there that like, 'A journalist want to get inside and work.' And these people I have asked, I 100% trust. So they

said, ‘We can provide you with a permission if you want, just for you because you are a friend of us.’” Although Aziz described his contacts to me as from the secular FSA, they were actually from an explicitly Islamist group that intermittently cooperated and fought with the FSA as well as other Islamist groups. A high ranked commander wrote Aziz a letter of safe passage and offered an escort of armed fighters, which Aziz would later regret declining. Leyla stayed behind in Turkey.

Between 2012 and 2014, numerous journalists were targeted by militants in Syria, some ended up in ISIS custody. Initially there was a blackout of media coverage of these abductions, in a later-controversial consensus that reportage could compromise negotiations for their release, but in 2014, ISIS released beheading videos of freelance reporters James Foley and Steven Sotloff and the group’s targeting of foreign journalists and aid workers made headlines around the world (Simon 2014).

By the time his group crossed into Syria, Aziz’s first time fixing inside the country, more than 80 journalists, local and foreign, had been killed and an even larger number abducted (Mahoney 2015). The number had declined in 2015, not because Syria was getting safer, but because international news organizations had ceased sending people into the country and because so many Syrian journalists had already fled the country (Beiser 2015).

The Turkey-Syria border could no longer be crossed as easily as when Leyla and Aziz had fled Aleppo the previous year. Aziz’s rebel/activist (the line was blurry) contacts referred him to a reliable smuggler who got them across the border. It was a hike of four hours or so through the mountains at dawn until they rendezvoused with their driver. The friendly commander had lent them the driver, who knew the front lines of Aleppo and would also serve as a guide. On the drive to the city, the group passed through frequent rebel checkpoints without

problem. In the city, they stayed with a relative of Aziz's still living in what they called the "liberated zone" of eastern Aleppo, dining on Syrian home cooking and smoking a hookah together.

The next day, they began driving around the city, visiting various places of interest the reporters had selected from the menu Aziz and the driver had put on offer. All was going well until a black van cut them off in the street. Armed men wearing all black piled out and grabbed them all. "They appeared like they are kind of ISIS," Aziz remembered, adding that it only took about ten seconds before they were stuffed into the van with bags over their heads. "They put a knife on my neck here, and just, yeah, and Kalashnikov like here, just here, try to scaring me," Aziz indicated a gun barrel to the side of his head.

After a long drive, they were herded into a basement, where their captors said they would kill them all, showing no interest in Aziz's protestations that they were under a rebel commander's protection. After a few hours, the foreigners were taken in one direction and Aziz and the driver in another. "I felt like some guilt because of my friends. . . They put their trust on me, so I was very sad in that situation."

They released the driver after a few days but Aziz remained behind the bars of a homemade prison cell. Initially, Aziz feared that ISIS had kidnapped them and they would all be gruesomely executed on video, if his clients had not been already. However, when his captors provided Aziz with some religious books to read, he noted that they were stamped with the logo of Jabhat al-Nusra ("The Victory Front"), Al Qaeda's affiliate in Syria.[66] This was a slightly better predicament than being held by ISIS.

[66]The Nusra Front would in 2016 rebrand itself Jabhat Fateh al-Sham and claim to cut ties with Al Qaeda in an effort to rehabilitate its international image.

Aziz: Nusra Front told me that I am a bad person because I--these journalists are enemies and I support them, which means like I'm a bad guy. I'm against Syria or something like this.

Noah: And what did you, what did you say to them?

Aziz: I said, We are journalists. Like we show the people--like, other media inside are focusing on ISIS, on--we know that ISIS is very bad, but we have to focus about what Syrian regime is doing, bombing the Syrian people. So we have to show the world. . . how Syrian regime bombing, how the situation is so bad. Because we have to show the people, like, the truth. But they didn't believe me and they didn't respect.

A Nusra judge began coming to visit Aziz in his cell, just for a few minutes every week or so. He rejected Aziz's claims that the foreigners were journalists, saying that they were intelligence agents, and asked Aziz where they had visited. At first the judge called Aziz a traitor, but eventually softened to saying he was an unwitting collaborator, and then that he had committed no crime, but they needed to hold him in custody for a time so that he could not talk to anyone, perhaps because of hostage negotiations taking place over the foreigners. Nusra did take decent care of him and provided good medicine, he said: anti-depressant tablets.

After many weeks, and to his surprise, Aziz was released. They brought Aziz first to a large holding cell with a mix of prisoners from the FSA, the regime, and ISIS, then put him in a car and dropped him off in the middle of the highway, telling him to go straight back to Turkey without talking to anyone. He hitchhiked back to Aleppo and complained to the commander who had vouched for him, who Aziz said was furious at the Nusra Front. It was only later, though, that the foreign reporters' release was secured by negotiations involving multiple governments and multimillion-dollar ransoms.

Back in Turkey, Leyla had sought desperately to find out what happened after she lost touch with Aziz. When the driver was released, she learned the story from him and posted about it on Facebook. She received a barrage of support and also questions from the journalists they had worked for and from new ones, particularly from the abducted reporters' countries. Aziz and

the driver got much less press than the foreigners. Most articles I found in European and American media mentioned him in passing in a single sentence or not at all. With the exception of reporters who already knew the couple, most journalists who interviewed and asked Leyla for updates about the abduction in these months focused on Aziz's kidnapped clients and were primarily interested in her husband insofar as they probed whether he had betrayed them. When they were finally released and returned from Syria, the abducted journalists were in touch with Aziz on social media and told him that they trusted that he had not been complicit in their abduction, but that it was nonetheless his fault for failing to understand or manage the risks in Aleppo.

Karim, 2014-2015

By 2015, Karim looked back on his first year in Turkey working for German TV with embarrassment, if not contempt. In addition to using deception, for instance by posing as buyers of smuggled artifacts and secretly filming the seller, the channel was willing to pay to get stories, particularly about ISIS. They would pay sources hundreds of euros for interviews and pay them thousands for bringing footage from inside ISIS territory at risk of gruesome punishment. When Karim confided in Sally, an American print journalist, about these practices, she told him bluntly that shit like that got people killed and ruined other journalists' relationships with sources. And being based in Turkey was no guarantee of safety to Karim or to these sources: particularly near the border, ISIS assassinations and abductions were not unheard of (e.g. Remnick 2015).

He did not renew his producer contract with the German TV channel after a year, preferring to go freelance. He worked closely with Sally, who had moved to Istanbul a year earlier to cover Syria after spending several years elsewhere in the region. Karim reflected, "You know, when I

start working with [Sally's publication], I wasn't journalist. I was fixer. But. . . [she] made me a journalist."

Sally's policy was to always tell sources they were journalists and what the story was that they were reporting and to not pay them. This policy swam against the tide of media money that was washing over the Turkey-Syria border. In 2014, journalists, including well-heeled TV crews, flooded in to report on ISIS and transformed the journalism economy. A new cohort of fixers emerged who operated on the border in *a la carte* fashion, charging journalists not a day rate but a negotiated fee based on the value of the source, as Sally described them, "all these weird middlemen who like want to be paid thousands of dollars just for like a very simple introduction." By late 2014 and early 2015, when what became known as the European Refugee Crisis became a top story and brought yet more international media attention to Syrians in Turkey, sources themselves were increasingly expecting to get paid for their time. The explanation, according to Sally, was both parachutists changing the norms of interaction and refugees growing tired of talking to journalists without seeing any evidence that coverage was helping them: "By that point, it was like the refugees were asking for money, like people just sitting in camps. . . [T]hey were just like, 'This is like the eighth interview that I've given, and why would I bother my time? And I really need money because, you know, I need to feed my family.'"

Sally had some sympathy for these sources' perspective, but not for the journalists and fixers involved in this exchange of money. The money not only made it difficult for journalists who observed the norm of not paying sources to do their jobs, but also corrupted the stories produced:

> What they do is they come down [to the border] and they want like an ISIS defector. We did a story about that. They will tell the fixer that. . . and the fixer will sometimes bring them a real defector for a price of--like, you know--five thousand dollars for an interview, I know one journalist paid. . . So when we were doing that story, we had a lot of, like, wasted time. .

> . We always [insisted], 'We're not going to pay, just so you know.' And [sources would] say, 'Yeah of course.' [But] like once we get into the interview, they're like, 'Okay I'll tell you, but you have to pay.' They think we're, like, not serious.

Karim told me that paying for interviews led some fixers to invent in-demand sources when they had none to offer. In the case of one fixer Karim knew,

> [*XYZ*] ask him to interview a woman defected [from] ISIS. They were looking for a woman in [ISIS's all-female] Al-Khansaa Battalion. . . So this guy, he told [*XYZ*], 'Yeah I can find this.' And he brought them his sister," Karim laughed, "and he covered her face. And he told them that she wants 500 dollar. And they said 'Okay we'll pay her.' And they paid 500. He took the 500 and. . . just ask people in ISIS region, 'Okay, what they do? Woman in Al-Khansaa Battalion, what they do usually?' And they say, 'Okay, they do this and this and this.' So he told his sister, 'You have to say this and this.' It's a true information, but yeah. And he got the money.

Sally likewise claimed, "I can point you to any number of [stories] where--even [in] American TV media--where I know it's fake, and I know the fixer faked it. And I know it's because. . . people just come, they tell the fixer to make all the contacts, and then they just do the interview and they leave, and in that story--I mean, you never see the fixer's name or anything." The combination of enormous demand for news stories about ISIS and enormous difficulty gaining access to report those stories created perhaps the perfect storm incentivizing such shoddy reporting.

Not playing this game meant that Sally and Karim had to devote far more time to earning the trust of their sources, convincing sources that it was worth talking to them for its own sake, and persuading existing sources to vouch for them with others and help them find new sources. "We have a reputation to be really honest," Sally told me, "and never paying for information and never lying, and never just doing any of the stuff that kind of starts to border the line with intelligence work."

The line between journalism and intelligence work was being blurred not only by exchanging money for information, but also by foreign journalists whom Sally and Karim had

good reason to believe were working with their respective national intelligence services. In one case, a journalist approached Karim, ostensibly to offer him a job as a translator at a foreign embassy in Ankara:

> First you know, she told me that, someone works with [my] government wants to talk to you, and I told her Why? She said, He can help you; he can send your family to [our country]. You will work with them. And she told me that it's--she want me to work as translator in the embassy. . . So I told her 'Yeah okay, so give him my number.' And then, you know, I met him and he told me that--first meeting he said, 'I'm from the government and we want you to work with us, and we'll send you the information, what we want from you. You can translate everything.' And I told him Okay. . . And then he send me email. He wants to find. . . fighters [from his country that] came to Syria. So I sent him an email back, 'Do you work with the government or with the intelligence or--? You offered me to work in the embassy.'"

The man replied that this was the work the embassy needed. "I told him 'Fuck off,' to be honest," Karim told me. The same journalist reached out to Karim again after he and Sally did a story about the smuggling of goods into ISIS-controlled regions. This time, he recounted, she attempted to recruit him into a scheme to put tracked cell phone SIM cards in the hands of ISIS members:

> So after this article, the journalist who put me with [her country's] intelligence before, she spoke to me again and she told me that, 'The guys spoke to me and they will pay you good salary if you start work with them. Just they want to know those smugglers, because they want to send SIM cards, like they give them iPhone and SIM--put inside the iPhone SIM card just gives them the location.' So then I blocked her. I told her that if you try to reach me again, I will tell all journalists about you.

Habib, 2015-2016

While Syrian fixers had to contend with militias as gatekeepers and contaminating threats to their status as professional journalists, Habib had to contend with the power that organized smuggling had over the Afghan migrants whom journalists wanted him to help them access.

When I hired him to work with me on a story about Afghans in Istanbul, he relied primarily on a network of smugglers to recruit sources. We first went to meet a young Afghan man who had come to Turkey with a vague notion of reaching Europe but stayed upon finding

work. As we rode the bus together, I asked Habib if sources ever demanded money for interviews. I was as yet unaware of his methods and had heard about money exchanging hands for interviews with Syrian refugees. I was surprised that Habib said no.

He told me that sometimes other fixers would mark up their own day rates in order to give sources a cut. This was similar to the way brokers and assistants to smugglers operated: they would tell asylum seekers that they just wanted to help and would demand no money from them. Brokers would then approach smugglers with the offer to bring them paying customers if the smuggler would increase their usual price for transit to Europe to provide the broker a finder's fee; with smugglers' assistants, the same payment was institutionalized as a commission per customer.

Habib, though, was honest with the journalists he helped and did not charge any hidden fees. Instead, he accessed sources by maintaining a symbiotic relationship with smugglers, particularly one named Wahid.

Habib had met Wahid years earlier on one of the first fixing gigs his brother arranged for him. Wahid was a naïve, freshly arrived asylum seeker then, but had since spent his mid-twenties rising through the ranks of organized smuggling to where he rented numerous apartments around the neighborhood to temporarily house migrants and delegated day-to-day operations to several employees. Habib, with his legal residency in Turkey, at the time on a student visa, had allowed Wahid to rent the first of those apartments in his name. Habib was useful to Wahid and his colleagues not only for legal cover, but also as a broker to the field of international humanitarianism. When an asylum seeker had developed gangrene on their feet after being injured on the rough hike across Turkey's eastern border with Iran, Habib had been able to secure healthcare for them with the help of one of his brother's NGO contacts. When he visited

Wahid's asylum seeker customers, he would answer their questions about the refugee status designation process they could expect once Wahid smuggled them into the European Union. Such ad hoc info sessions were in themselves a reassurance to disoriented Afghans that they were in good hands with Wahid, on their way to Europe, and avoiding being swindled.

We met Wahid at a Zeytinburnu café on the second day of our reporting. Wahid was fasting for Ramadan but Habib had a tea and a cigarette. Wahid was wearing a brand new smartwatch that Habib reached over to play around with while Wahid made calls to his employees to check who was in which apartment for us to interview. Wahid stayed glued to his phone even when not making calls, avoiding my eyes. We walked together to an apartment, making a detour on the way to pick up a baggy of hashish for Habib. I don't know if he paid or if it was another perk of his relationship with Wahid.

Turkey had recently signed a deal with the European Union to stop the passage of hundreds of thousands of migrants through Turkey into Greece, mostly by sea on unreliable boats that Wahid and his ilk provided. The deal included provisions for the resettlement of Syrians but not of any other nationality (Collett 2016).

Many of the Afghans we interviewed in Wahid's apartments had been smuggled from Afghanistan, though some had stayed in Iran for extended periods, since the Turkey-EU deal was signed and realistic prospects of them reaching Europe--with the exception of a few who could pay extra to join the small number still making it overland into Bulgaria--had vanished. For the most part, they were unaware or little aware of the deal and its implications for them. The smugglers in Kabul or Tehran had told them the route was still open, taken their money, and deposited them after an arduous journey in Istanbul, where they were housed by associate

smugglers like Wahid and encouraged to find work in the neighborhood's booming textile sweatshop sector.

I went through the motions, through Habib's translation, of explaining informed consent and that they were free to refuse to talk with us. But what truly informed consent would look like for people living illegally in a foreign country under the eye of organized criminals (who had given the go-ahead for the interview) and ignorant of some basic facts of their situations--like the Turkey-EU deal and refugee resettlement process--I do not know. Habib, by the way, had assisted multiple European social science research projects relying on these recruitment and consent processes.

Habib was initially hesitant about asking Wahid to sit down for an interview with me. Eventually the three of us did sit down together, this time while Habib and I ate ice cream and Wahid fasted. I was curious about his transformation from a powerless migrant into a powerful smuggler, and so my first question was about when he first arrived in Istanbul: I wondered if he also worked in a textile sweat shop like many of the migrants he now lived off of. Habib quietly told me that it would not be good to ask that question right now; Habib knew all about his past and would tell me later. Habib was happier to translate and Wahid seemingly blasé to answer questions about the effects of the Turkey-EU deal on his business and about his arrangements with associates from Baluchistan to Bulgaria, though I noticed his shirt's underarms darkening with sweat as we talked. I wondered how voluntary *his* consent to be interviewed was.

Habib had enjoyed a less harmonious relationship with smugglers a year earlier, when Belgian reporter Geert had paid to fly him down to Izmir, on the Aegean coast, for a story on asylum seekers boarding boats to nearby Greek islands. Habib's, and Wahid's, connections in

Izmir were yet to be cemented at that time, and so he arrived without prior contact with anyone there. I asked Habib how he found Afghan asylum seekers.

"It's hard not to," He replied. "You just walk to Basmane Square and they're everywhere. . . I don't know how. . . [but] it just became the smuggling central."

Habib was familiar with the name of the square[67] from Afghans in Istanbul: many planned to go down the coast to Izmir to cross into Greece, if they had not already been through that path and then deported from Europe, only to attempt the journey again. Sure enough, when he arrived in the square to scope it out for Geert, he was greeted by a multilingual cacophony of smuggling brokers and assistants:

> They're like, 'I work with a good smuggler,' 'My boats always make it,' or 'My boats are cheaper.' Just like something to try to grab your attention. Or like, 'Hey [brother] are you trying to make it to Europe?' Something like that. They tend to employ brokers of different nationalities so that they can reach to refugees of different nationalities and languages. So there's like naturally a whole bunch of Syrians, some Kurds, Syrian Arabs, Syrian Kurds, Iraqis, Afghans.

Habib found some Afghans shopping for smugglers or waiting to board boats and then brought along Geert to speak with them in the courtyard of a mosque on the square that had become a gathering point for migrants and smuggling brokers. As they tried to conduct interviews, a group of brokers--Afghan migrants themselves, teenagers with red-rimmed eyes and PTSD, as he described them--gathered around them and heckled Habib in Persian about working for the foreign media, mockingly asking him over and over if he thought journalism was actually doing any good.

[67]The square is, like many things in Izmir, officially named September Nine, after the 1922 recapture of the city from Greek forces in the Turkish War of Independence, but draws its informal name from its location next to the Basmane train station.

“They were like, ‘You still believe in it? You really still believe in it? Are you that naïve? You really still believe in it?’ And I was like, ‘I don't see myself asking you any questions. This story's not about you. You don't like the media? You don't like me? No one's forcing you to be here.’” There was apparently no better sport to be had in the courtyard, though, and the brokers kept bothering them, which Habib found particularly obnoxious as they were interviewing asylum seekers about their experiences of violent trauma. Habib did his best to translate for Geert while also making sure nobody stole his or Geert’s passports, wallets, or equipment and keeping an eye out for police: Habib had no press card and here on unfamiliar terrain was worried he could get in trouble for interviewing people out in plain sight.

Nikolaus, 2012-2014

When Nikolaus first started fixing, he worried that, as a non-native speaker, he would not have the vocabulary with specialized topics to do a big job. Like the others, though, he found that the hardest parts of fixing, and even of translation, were not the word-for-word conversion of Turkish into English but everything that took place around it.

DND, the German news service that hired Nik as an assistant, did print and radio stories, along with short video “packages.” Ernst, the country correspondent, worked in all three media, supported by German DND staff flown in to help with big breaking stories and by freelance Turkish photographers and videographers.

Nik’s first radio story was about protests against the prosecution of hundreds for allegedly plotting a coup codenamed “Sledgehammer” in the early 2000s. Critics claimed that Fethullah Gülen-affiliated police and prosecutors were spearheading the cases, which included flimsy and obviously fabricated evidence that Gülen-affiliated media presented as damning proof, in order to eliminate opponents of the government’s and of Gülen’s effort to undermine secularism

(Jenkins 2011). As the Germans interviewed demonstrators gathered outside Silivri Prison on Istanbul's outskirts, Ernst repeatedly had to remind Nik to stop back-channeling: making *hmm/really?/yes* listening noises in response to what interviewees were saying. Ernst needed clean audio and Nik's little noises would be a distraction and make editing harder. Ernst also kept telling Nik off for slowly retracting the audio recorder from in front of her face: there was a lot of background noise from the protest, and Ernst wanted the microphone jammed just inches from her mouth. Nik would have been uncomfortable doing this in a casual conversation, let alone while being told by an emotional stranger about Gülenists framing her family member.

Another challenge of audio and especially video (because of the short length of the clips they produced) reporting was getting sources to say what DND needed in a pithy soundbite. This directive was not a problem when interviewing politicians, who were used to speaking in punchy and broad terms and understood what the team was after, or public intellectuals, who were likewise savvy and usually preferred doing interviews in English to speak directly with the correspondent, but could be frustrating with man-on-the-street *vox pop* interviews. DND already had a routine for where to go when they needed a representative voice from one group or the other: Karaköy (which also provided the attraction of a bridge, ferry station, and view of the old city) for a range of views to balance against one another, Beşiktaş for secularist views, Fatih for Islamist views. The problem was that even when they found someone to express the view they were looking for, the sources would often speak in convoluted sentences and reference people and events indirectly. Such indirectness is characteristic of political discourse in Turkey, as Nik had learned in his early years in the country as he struggled to interpret the allegories and allusions of Turkish newspaper columns. It was Nik's job to not just translate from Turkish to German, but convert Turkish-style political discourse into political discourse comprehensible to

a German audience and expressed within a few seconds. He would rephrase DND's questions again and again and ask them to be specific until they provided the requisite soundbite. Sources often found this obnoxious.

It was also only a small minority of passersby who would talk to Nik at all, let alone remain polite as he pressured them into a soundbite. In that first radio story on the politically polarizing coup trials, Nik went to Karaköy on his own with orders to keep interviewing people until he got one soundbite in favor and one soundbite opposed to the trials. He had early success with young people angrily denouncing the trials as a witch hunt, but then ended up standing at the dock for half the day trying to get the other side. Older people in particular were avoiding him like the plague. At first, he would launch into an explanation that he was working for German news and wanted to know views on the trials, but over the course of the day shortened his opener to "Hello, do you have a bit of time?" following the example of the NGO fundraisers in colorful vests who had accosted him on many a walk down İstiklal Avenue and en route to the Beşiktaş ferry. Most still said no and kept walking, but Nik had more success with those who stopped, perhaps, he suggested to me, because by that point it would be more awkward for them to just walk away.

Nik knew how to put together a print story from his previous job at an English-language Turkish newspaper, but his role in interviews for print stories was also different as a fixer. Ernst and others liked longer, more rambling narratives for print than for video. They could then craft these narratives into their own story through quotation and paraphrase, but Nik had to learn to interrupt those rambles just right to balance the flow of the storyteller with the demands of the audience. Often a source would not have reached the end of the point they were making when Nik's correspondent would start making little frustrated noises and looking pointedly at him. Not

understanding the Turkish, they would base their expectations for the right amount of time between translations on the number of seconds elapsed rather than the content of the narrative. Sources who were not used to being interviewed, particularly through simultaneous interpretation, expected to talk until they finished making their point.

Given the difficulty Nik had and suspicion he encountered approaching strangers--even more than that encountered by other journalists because of his foreign features--he worked hard to expand his personal network. People were more willing to speak to a friend of a friend. The downside to this, Nik felt, was he increasingly thought of people as sources of information: *friends* were turning into *contacts*. His ears perking up when someone mentioned a person who would be valuable as a source, and this objectifying gaze he could never quite turn off, even when he was not working on a particular story.

Nik soon had an impressive contact list, but a significant gap remained in his network: he simply never rubbed elbows with pro-government people. As the foreign media increasingly turned against Erdoğan, and he demonized and linked them to conspiracy theories, getting pro-government *vox pops* was becoming more difficult and even dangerous.

During the June 2015 parliamentary election campaign, DND dispatched Nik to cover an AKP rally. Erdoğan gave a rousing speech--despite the constitutional requirement that sitting presidents be unaffiliated with any political party--and then Nik walked around asking opinions before the crowd dispersed. AKP supporters were aggressive and he found himself backing away from one group after another in the face of angry stares. One old man hit him over the head with a party flag.

Eventually, Nik found a quiet spot and a young woman, a law student, willing to do an interview. Part way through the conversation she noticed one of Nikolaus's tattoos poking out

from his short sleeves. She told him that she did not want to be rude, but felt she ought to let him know that she knew he was a servant of Satan and part of the reason she was studying to be a prosecutor was so that she could one day help punish the immorality that people like him spread. Then they continued the interview.

Burcu, 2015

Burcu thought it made sense for the fixers she hired as freelance to hedge their bets and not do everything *XYZ*'s foreign correspondents asked of them, especially in violent situations, because frankly she did not know herself if the organization really had their backs. Thus far, the channel's Turkey bureau had not experienced a freelance fixer injured, arrested, or abducted while working for them, but if and when it did happen, Burcu was suspicious that *XYZ* might withhold the same high-level support it would offer contracted staff. Burcu at least made sure that fixers always got the same safety equipment as foreign correspondents: if a situation was dangerous enough that an American ought to wear a flak jacket and helmet, it was dangerous enough for a Turk to wear them as well. She saw this as unfair and criticized how other news organizations treated freelance fixers. "They're asking you to be part of the team" but without providing training, for instance for working in hostile environments, or providing health insurance. Such measures were not only fair but also provided a way to make them feel that they could trust *XYZ*, which she thought made them do better work.

If Burcu herself felt the contradictory pulls of ambivalence, it was less between ordinary people and foreign journalists than between the government and her news organization. Burcu saw herself as taking a more measured view from her vantage point at *XYZ*'s bureau, of the government and its alleged misdeeds than did fixers and foreign correspondents in the field. She

felt she sometimes acted as a moderating force, as when she stepped in to re-edit Elif's video that included speculations about AKP electoral fraud.

She had attended the elite Middle Eastern Technical University in Ankara and "my classmates now are, they're in the ruling circle." She knew ministry technocrats and influential columnists in the pro-government press from school. She knew them personally, which was part of her value at *XYZ*, because she could arrange interviews with senior government officials, and also knew their perspective on the news.

There existed, Burcu told me, "a large misunderstanding between members of the media and the government. Because the government is not used to an open free press with the standards that we're used to in the States, France maybe, Australia, England, what-have-you. So they react in some cases understandably to what they perceive as tremendous bias on behalf of the media." This was understandable, Burcu said, given the reality of tremendous bias in Turkey's national media. The government, as she saw it, thought in terms of positive and negative coverage rather than true or false reporting and criticized *XYZ* accordingly:

> [J]ournalism in this country is almost like, it's opinion. You're either for or against and there's nothing really in between. . . [Y]ou have to be affiliated with one camp. And that's what I mean by like there's this misunderstanding because there's no real--whatever that is--journalism practice, so the government reacts to that, because they don't know what real journalism is.

She remembered receiving a call from one of Erdoğan's close advisors over *XYZ*'s coverage of the Gezi protests. "He said, 'Okay [Burcu], I'm very disappointed with you, because we were good friends back then [in university].' 'Why? I'm a journalist,' I said."

As *XYZ*'s lead producer, Burcu might have been in closer contact with government officials than lower-status fixers, but that contact was of a different, less intimate kind than many fixers experienced with their sources. In fact, Burcu found that as she increasingly was involved in arranging and translating more high-level interactions, she became more invisible: "Interviewing

someone doesn't mean they know you. Because a lot of the time you're the translator standing next to the important person they're talking to." With the exception of those she already knew from university, VIPs, as she called them, were also more likely to ignore her phone and email messages but respond when she had one of the foreigners at *XYZ* call them. Likewise, when government public relations offices sent invitations to *XYZ,* whether for special access passes to the Edirne oil wrestling festival or to join a prime ministerial press junket, they were addressed to the foreign staff and not to Burcu. This slight came in spite of the fact that she played a large role in deciding what *XYZ* would cover, and she was the one whom government officials reached on the phone to vent about stories they found unfair.

Back when she had been a freelance fixer and spent more time talking to ordinary people, she felt like she made more genuine connections, perhaps because ordinary people tended to talk to Burcu and not *through* Burcu to the important person beside her. When she would go to Kasımpaşa, the conservative working-class neighborhood where Erdoğan grew up, people she had asked the same questions about Erdoğan a million times would greet her with hugs. Not long before we spoke about this, Burcu had run into a man who worked at the neighborhood's soccer stadium, and he asked her why she never came around anymore.

Types of Conflicts that Produce Moral Ambivalence

Morality might seem a lofty concept associated with philosophical treatises and legal codes. But everyday morality is grounded in our norms large and small, that is, prescriptions of what should be done, how, and when. In the case of news making, morality often takes the form of norms about what should be *communicated,* how, and when. These norms may not even take the form of conscious ideas or judgments, but we can detect them when they are breached and we experience awkwardness, discomfort, annoyance, feeling out of sync. It is worth considering

different norms that, when misaligned between brokered parties, produce moral ambivalence for brokers, by drawing distinctions among strategic/informational, coding, rhythmic, and reciprocity norms, although the four are sometimes inseparable in actual practice.

The push and pull between competing norms is perhaps most obvious when a source wants to talk about one thing and a reporter wants to talk about another. At the PKK martyr's association, for instance, Geert and Gül's source wanted to focus on the plight of the Kurdish people and righteousness of the PKK's cause, but Geert was more interested in knowing about overlap between the PKK and Syrian Kurdish militias. We might call this a conflict of *informational or strategic norms*: different brokered parties think different information should be transmitted to serve different strategic ends. Strategic norms are what we usually have in mind when we think of journalists' and fixers' biases.

Yet fixers are constantly caught in the middle of subtler normative conflicts as well. Even the pronunciation of a word can be morally fraught. When José's fixer pronounced PKK as *pekAkA* in Turkish, it violated a source's normative expectation that the acronym be encoded as *pekEkE* and caused a breakdown in the interaction. We can call such disconnects in norms, as to *how* messages should be communicated, *coding conflicts*. In that particular case, José would not have minded the fixer saying *pekAkA*, but in many cases the brokered parties put fixers in a state of coding ambivalence. I use *code* in a broad sense to mean any system of rules governing the symbols that represent messages. Code in this sense includes rules governing the meaning of sounds and movements, along with social "rules," as in, for example, The Code of the Street, according to which behaviors are likewise decoded for messages, for example, that someone shouldn't be messed with.

Language barriers are perhaps the simplest and most ubiquitous case: clients and sources expect fixers to speak their respective languages. They generally acknowledge the need for fixers to speak the other language, but, that is a concession that fixers are expected to minimize. Nik learned from his clients' pointed looks and throat clearing that he could not simply allow sources to speak their minds and then translate in due course, because clients felt they were being left in the dark for too long. A breach was gradually opening of their norm of German communication the longer Nik allowed sources to continue speaking in Turkish.

This example exhibits the overlap of coding conflict with what we can call *rhythmic conflicts* over the temporality of communication. *When* information is communicated can be as important as *what* is communicated and *how*, because we consciously and unconsciously use rhythms to prepare ourselves for what comes next and to coordinate with others in order to accomplish any collaborative work (Snyder 2016:loc. 290).

A final source of moral ambivalence to be explored I will call *reciprocity conflicts*. In addition to what, how, and when communication occurs, there is the question of *why* it should occur at all. It is usually clear why reporters want sources to engage with them: they get paid for reporting stories (setting aside the appeal, even when pay is low or zero, of engaging with sources to enhance charisma in the field of journalism). But why should sources agree to participate? There are a range of reasons and most violate reporters' norms, creating a fourth axis of ambivalence among fixers.

Rhythmic Ambivalence

Pointing out instances of rhythmic ambivalence is a way to broaden our concept of morality and to consider the expertise of fixing. Social time, as opposed to clock time, is not necessarily measured in minutes or hours but in rhythms of action people adopt to navigate the

world. These rhythms are present down to the briefest moments or interaction and help form the fabric of our moral worlds (Snyder 2016).

Multiple rhythms are constantly intersecting in what sociologist Ben Snyder 2016:loc. 320-371) calls *timescapes*, which are sometimes synchronized (e.g. the coffee shop opens early enough that I can get my caffeine fix before arriving at the station just in time to catch a train that gets me to work on time) and sometimes subject to a clash of desynchronized rhythms (e.g. the café is late to open so I miss my train and am late to work).

Synchronization may exist by happy accident or by institutional design (e.g. more trains running at rush hour), or it may fall to an individual middleman to actively synchronize conflicting rhythms, another kind of absorption and re-coding of contaminating messiness. In this case it is specifically the disruptive rhythms of the outside world (from each brokered party's perspective) that the broker must absorb and transform into a time signature that the brokered party can work with.

Reporting often takes place in a desynchronized timescape. Down to a moment-to-moment level, foreign journalists' normative rhythms tend to differ from those of their sources. Conversations follow a normative rhythm. When we are interrupted or our interlocutor drones on too long or fails to respond to us in turn, we experience the sensations of moral breach. Yet foreign reporters frequently demand peculiar forms of speech of sources, whether that be sources speaking in soundbites or the reporter asking all the questions and the source providing all the answers, as opposed to the kind of conversation a source may be more used to, in which questions and answers are reciprocally exchanged.

It often falls to fixers to synchronize these conflicts.[68] In the case of combining coding and rhythmic ambivalence of reporters' wanting to know as soon as possible what sources are saying and sources wanting to complete their own statements, fixers are under moral pressure from one side to interrupt and the other to not interrupt.

Depending on the medium, such micro-level rhythmic conflict can be overcome through expertise: Burcu for one had mastered the art of simultaneously listening to sources' speak and whispering translations into correspondents' ears. This technique mollified reporters' demand that she force sources into rhythms of speech that allowed the reporters to understand sooner what they were saying and interject follow-up questions, and worked well for print. For radio and TV, though, when clean audio of the sources' responses was needed, and there was a greater expectation of soundbites over storytelling, Burcu again faced rhythmic ambivalence. Rhythmic conflicts during TV and radio reporting were synchronized by mastering the art of timing interruptions, both anticipating clients' expectation of prompt translation and identifying the end of a soundbite from the source, all without offending the source, as Jimbo drew Elif's criticism for failing to accomplish. Part of this expertise consists of understanding brokered parties' norms, which vary by situation and by individual. I observed one fixer working for a video journalist who enjoyed the art of editing rambling monologues into short, poignant stories. The two knew each other well and the fixer, the only one I met with a degree in translation studies, would listen patiently as a source spoke for minutes on end and then translate it into English with remarkable accuracy and authority.

[68]Gürsel (2016:82-125) provides a detailed example of the work of "image brokers" in the newsroom of a photo agency--another position in the chain of contributors to journalism--to synchronize the rhythms of American publications with the rhythms of the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Print journalism is by no means immune from such rhythmic conflicts. Shorter print stories similarly need brief soundbites, while reporters writing long form print stories tend to demand that sources provide long rambling accounts which they can selectively quote and combine with other sources' quotations into their own creative, narrative pastiche. For many sources, being asked to provide longwinded, detailed accounts can violate their norms: conversation should be a back-and-forth exchange of views rather than a monologue, troubling issues should be allowed to slide by with the lubrication of a stock truism or political slogan. When reporters expect a rhythm of asking questions and then immediately moving on without reciprocating with their own stories and answers, it can conflict with sources' norms of polite reciprocity--a case of overlap with coding conflict.[69]

Zoom out to the timescape of a day. On one occasion, I was hired by a reporter named Michael who had flown in to Istanbul for a week from a European newspaper. Michael needed to file every day in time to get it to his editor long enough before the paper went to press that his article could be copy-edited: around 6:30pm Istanbul time. I would ask him every evening what he was thinking for the next day's story. This way I could get started finding sources, but sometimes Michael would pin down a topic only once he had spoken to his editor the next morning. In one case, Michael told me in the morning that he wanted to talk to someone about recent purges of alleged Gülenists from the judiciary. I scrambled to find someone, anyone who would fit the billing, and eventually and uncomfortably reached out to a lawyer named Özge, a past romantic partner with whom I had been out of touch for years. She generously agreed to talk to us after she got off work around 5pm.

[69]This is also a conflict over the proper interactional order when a source thinks they are talking to the fixer but the reporter thinks the source should be talking to them, albeit through the fixer.

We met at Özge's apartment; she turned out to be full of inside knowledge and sharp opinions. But after a half hour, just as we were, in my opinion, getting to some fascinating stuff, Michael apologized that he had to run back to his hotel to file his story. Özge was surprised at this quick turnaround and exchanged apologies with the reporter. Even if Michael had to go, Özge insisted that she and I catch up and have dinner together. I felt it would be enormously rude, and possibly squander my social capital with someone who had turned out to be a valuable source, to adopt Michael's rhythm and demur. This invitation had a knock-on effect of desynchronizing my work time from my private social time: my current girlfriend was back at our apartment waiting for me, having cooked us dinner.

Michael, it's worth noting, as a broker between source and fixer (the lawyer and me), on the one hand, and his newspaper on the other, was also exposed to asynchrony. He did his bit to synchronize our social time with his editor's work time through expertise and stress by hammering out an article of over 500 words in the space of a half hour.[70]

If we zoom out again to months and years, yet again we find fixers managing asynchrony between foreign journalists and sources. Sources often expect a continuously flowing legato rhythm of interaction, the kind we are used to with friendships in which people try to keep in regular contact. For reporters, on the other hand, interactions with sources (with exceptions for the most valuable) should either be one-offs or follow a staccato rhythm: a beat there, another beat maybe months or years later when they next have a use for the source. Journalists, particularly "parachutists" covering vast areas, don't, after all, have time to be constantly in touch with all their sources.

---

[70]Reporters' accountability to the rhythms of the news room also helps explain why only one client, a long form magazine writer whose work rhythm was closer to that of a pottering grad student, took me up on my offer to record and take the time to transcribe our interviews for the sake of accuracy.

Fixers synchronize these social rhythms by keeping more regular contact with sources to smooth over client reporters' sudden appearances and disappearances. Fixers may keep in touch with sources in a conscious calculation that they will be useful in the future, but also do so out of a sense of moral obligation, as when Ayşe kept in touch with the YPG fighter on social media even when she was not contacting him on behalf of José or other clients. That sense of moral obligation did fade, however: as the fighter returned to civilian life and became less valuable as a source and so less able to sanction Ayşe for failing to meet his normative expectations by withholding a valuable resource (himself as news source), so did his normative pull on Ayşe diminish.

There are two kinds of expectations at play when we describe fixers' moral worlds. The first is clients', sources', and fixers' own expectations of what *should* be done and what they *want* to happen, which has been the focus of analysis thus far. But expectations, or predictions, of what *will* happen are also relevant. We act with reference to time maps, in Snyder's (2016: loc.371-396) terminology, that chart our past, present, and expected future--a career trajectory is, for instance, a time map of employment.

Foreign reporters, by and large, expect to leave. This expectation can cause rhythmic conflicts with fixers and widen strategic conflicts with sources. Geert's willingness to cause discomfort by pressing for information about numbers of Turkish Kurds who had died fighting in Syria was influenced by his expectation that he would be in another province the next day, another country the next week, and likely never speak to that particular source again.[71] The

[71]Much criticism toward Washington-based journalists as propagandists centers around their time maps. These journalists expect that they will continue working in the capital, and so trade favorable coverage of politicians and government agencies for future access. The logical implication is that if DC were covered by parachutists like foreign stories, they might be more critical, though perhaps that approach would lead to entire news outlets, rather than individual journalists, being blacklisted.

temporary nature of Geert's relationship with that source meant that Geert was himself less subject to moral pressure from the source, which allowed a greater disparity between their informational norms.

Gül, by contrast, expected to stay in Diyarbakir and continue working as a fixer, which influenced her discomfort with his line of questioning. Fixers find themselves protecting sources, particularly when they expect their relationship with the source to last longer than with the journalists, as when Habib dissuaded me from asking Wahid about a shameful past.

Coding Ambivalence

The classic solution to being expected to encode communications in different ways by different parties, for instance to speak Turkish by one brokered party and English by another, is code switching: using one code, then the other. Code switching (which I use in the general sense of switching between any codes, not just language as the term colloquially references) will be explored in more depth in the next chapter, but for now it is worth stressing that coding can be a point of serious conflict and source of moral ambivalence among fixers. Simply using one code and then the other is often easier said than done.

The very discomfort of thinking in two languages simultaneously or in quick succession points to translating as being an inherently conflictual undertaking. Inexperienced fixers, myself included, who are comfortable speaking either of two languages for long stretches, find it exhausting to translate back and forth between them for long periods. People often used metaphors like *brain melt* or *brain fry* when talking about feelings that develop over the course of a long day of translating. However, it does seem possible to build code-switching expertise stamina with time and practice, whether on or off the job. Mina, an Afghan-British journalist, commented that she had grown up translating between Persian- and English-speaking sides of

the family who frequently visited one another. Elif told me that when learning what a fixer did, she realized that the translation part was something she was already doing routinely for her expat friends and romantic partner.

Not just the language but also the manner and function of communication can be a site of conflict. When Geert and Gül spoke with the family members of people killed in the 2015 flare-up of violence in eastern Turkey, Geert was communicating for the purpose of acquiring information: “is it the father or the uncle that got killed?” The sources, by contrast, oriented their communication toward ritual lamentation, the clear transmission of information being less important to them than the honoring of the departed through tearful stories of their virtue. In that case, Gül disappointed Geert by joining the sources in their emotionality and discouraging him from asking too many informational questions.

Codes of politeness (an overlap between coding and reciprocity norms) are another frequent site of clashes between foreign reporters and sources with which fixers must contend. Fixers often complained to me that their clients would want to immediately get down to business asking direct questions, whereas sources wanted to chat, perhaps drink tea, and ask about the fixer and journalist before they entered into serious conversation.

Politeness is less about what you express--that is, what information you transmit--than about how you express it, though coding here overlaps with information control insofar as politeness can be a tool to avoid giving informationally direct answers. Gül found herself in the middle of a combined strategic-coding conflict when Geert refused to take evasive answers and rudely asked repeatedly for information that the PKK martyr organization representative did not want to provide. This form of ambivalence cannot be easily managed through code switching: Gül could not be polite with the representative and direct with Geert unless she flatly lied and gave him the

casualty count he was seeking. *Switching* implies a management strategy based on a temporality--using one code, then another--that is not always possible. As in the case of politeness codes, fixers sometimes face not just the brain-frying challenge of oscillating between codes, but the greater challenge of facing conflicting and *simultaneous* expectations.

Ambivalence between coding norms plays out at the micro-level of conversation as well. When working on TV and radio stories, Nik was caught between the competing expectations 1) that he be silent so clean audio could be recorded, and 2) that he back-channel little listening sounds to show sources he was attentive, the latter being a deeply ingrained habit. Nik had to discipline himself and learn to back-channel silently with eye contact and head movements to reconcile sources' and clients' respective expectations for feedback and lack thereof.

Strategic/Informational Ambivalence

Strategic conflicts are common sources of breakdown in the chain of collaboration that constitutes journalism. The government supporters with whom Nik had so much difficulty talking saw an insurmountable strategic conflict between themselves and the foreign media. They saw little point in talking with journalists whom they expected to spin whatever they said to strategic ends of which they disapproved; some even thought it better to impede Nik's work outright and just chased him away.

It is in the management of strategic ambivalence that signaling becomes important for fixers. When a source considers themselves to be in strategic conflict with a client journalist or vice versa, they look for signs that the fixer is their ally against the other, epistemologically close to them and distant from the other. Fixers work, with varying degrees of freedom and success, to signal to both sources and journalists that they are biased brokers in each one's favor.

Additionally, fixers can attempt to reconcile informational conflicts by directing reporter-source interactions to different objects that the two approach in informational/strategic alignment. When Ayşe redirected José's interview with the YPG fighter from the political to the personal, she reconciled an informational/strategic conflict. The conflict stemmed from José wanting a fresh take on the YPG, while the fighter wanted to ritually re-affirm the YPG's official line through sloganeering. She encouraged the fighter to provide instead something he was willing to give that José would happily accept as an alternative to information about the militia: discussion of family and personal life.

Reciprocity Ambivalence

Engaging with journalists takes time and effort and can put sources at risk. Sources thus reciprocally expect something in return. That something may come through the engagement itself: just as contact with locals promises charisma to journalists, some sources find engaging with foreign reporters to be a charismatic and exciting form of contact with the outside world. The appeal of interaction with journalists lies in its very disruption of the order, if not monotony, of their lives.[72] José recounted to me a trip he made to a refugee camp, during which he happened upon a former English teacher who seemed eager to engage with him, essentially because he was bored out his mind. The man spoke with José at length and then acted as an impromptu fixer, showing José around, translating, and introducing other refugees to his reporter friend from America, then refused José's offers to pay him.

[72]Such disruption can also be described as normative breach, whether along strategic, coding, rhythmic or reciprocal dimensions. I have discussed fixers' efforts to avoid breaching brokered parties' norms, but in some cases, people actually seek or enjoy normative breach: exposure to surprises that fail to meet expectations, to the shock of being challenged by different worldviews, indeed to badness can be exhilarating. People rebel, for instance, to the predictable orderliness and total moral world of the white-collar office career by willingly exposing themselves to the chaotic rhythms and ambivalent moral worlds of entrepreneurial or even criminal life (Snyder 2016:loc896-1056).

Engaging with reporting teams can promise any number of other benefits. Habib could offer his expertise on the asylum process to sources he interviewed. Fixers and reporters can offer or be misinterpreted as offering friendship or romance, or even just contact information to give sources a toe in the door to establish a friendship or romance. Discomfort with seducing sources without an intention to follow through is at the heart of fixers' moral ambivalence about "using people."

If education and potential romance can serve as carrots, then persistence bordering on harassment might be a stick. Engagement with journalists can provide a reciprocal benefit to sources just insofar as it makes the journalists leave them alone. The cost of rebuffing persistent journalists, possibly breaching sources' transcendent norms of hospitality or accountability, can be more trouble than just speaking to them.

Sources can also engage with journalists out of an expectation that, if not the interactions themselves, then the news stories that result from those interactions will yield a benefit. This benefit may come to them personally, to a special interest they represent, or to the public and the advancement of knowledge more generally. Reciprocity norms here overlap with strategic/informational norms.

Personal benefit

In Izmir, one of the sources whom Habib and Geert had managed to interview was an Afghan man who had recently attempted the voyage to a nearby Greek island with his family. Their boat had capsized and many of his family members drowned, though the man had been rescued by the Turkish coast guard. After that experience and after discussing his options with Habib, the man had decided to apply for asylum in Turkey instead of again hazarding the sea.

Geert recounted the man's tragedy in a magazine article he wrote, but the story was delayed by the magazine's editors. Breaking news from Europe took up more pages than expected, and they already had other refugee stories in line. The man had intended to use Geert's story, particularly its discussion of the dangers that forced his family to flee Afghanistan, as documentation in his asylum case. Given the massive backlog of asylum cases at the UNHCR, he was a long time away from an interview to determine whether he would be officially designated as a refugee. Nevertheless, the man felt he had been duped as the weeks dragged on without Habib sending him a link to Geert's article. He repeatedly called Habib to complain and demanded to know when the story would be published, as well as to assert that Habib ought to help him now that he was struggling to get by in the central Anatolian town where the UNHCR had assigned him.

Special interest/group benefit

Sources' engagement with the media to benefit their organization or other special interest needs little explanation. We all know the public relations sector exists largely to spin media representations in special interests' favor. And we know that warring parties seek to benefit from media demonization of their enemies, as the rebel commander who promised Aziz and his clients safe passage doubtless did in welcoming them to report on the Syrian regime's war crimes in Aleppo.

This normative expectation of sources, that journalists with whom they engage will provide favorable coverage, conflicts directly with journalistic values of independence and objectivity. Reporters must grapple routinely with this conflict, and sometimes do so by outsourcing to fixers the work of building trust and reaching implicit understandings with sources, as did the clients Aziz brought to Aleppo. Other reporters make promises themselves: one client I fixed for made

me uncomfortable by telling every source we interviewed that her story might help them or their cause in some way.

Such a strategy of hollow promises may work when a continuous supply of new sources, who are not communicating with each other, is available to journalists. But trust is built or lost over the course of repeated interactions and evaluations of outcomes, whether between individuals or between groups with internal means of communication. In the case of Syrian asylum seekers in Turkey, journalists promising that coverage would help during the early days of the exodus contributed to the breakdown of Syrians' trust writ large in the foreign media, as they failed to see how coverage was helping them. Norms change with expectations, and Syrians came to think that foreign journalists should pay them.

Public benefit

If journalists had it their way, the general benefit of disseminating knowledge would always be enough for sources. In cases where journalists claimed to me that sources had spoken to them simply because they believed the story was important and wanted the world to know, however, their participation could always be understood as serving a special interest. As discussed previously, who constitutes the public and who constitutes a special interest is always a matter of perspective and of selective representation. A foreign reporter might be able to convince their readers and themselves that a source represents *the* Turkish, *the* Syrian, *the* Afghan, or *the* human perspective, but upon closer inspection sources always seek to provide information that represents and serves a more particular interest, even if that interest is invisible to outsiders with limited knowledge and an abstracting gaze. In cases where a special interest benefit from stories was not clear, more often than not, I found fixers seducing sources, creating ties with them. They

used these ties to pressure sources into participation, lest they lose the valuable resource of the fixer's personal attention, and/or indirectly coerce them, as will be discussed below.

Claims that sources participated out of an interest in the public benefit were nonetheless useful for reporters and fixers. The claim helped them avoid the appearance of a breach of journalistic norms of independence and objectivity. As a reporter and fixer, I also encountered sources claiming that they participated merely for the public good, which more often than not served to disguise a personal or special interest benefit expected from engagement with journalists or from the story produced.

Lacking expectations of one or more of these benefits, sources may expect money, the universal medium of exchange for time, effort, and risk. Money, after all, establishes the reciprocal relationship between fixers and reporters. Reporters pay fixers, and in exchange, fixers provide access, information, and other services. But in the case of contributors farther down the chain, sub-fixers of some kinds and sources, exchanging money for access or information is unacceptable in journalism's moral world. This norm is not universally strong or respected: some foreign news organizations routinely pay sources, although the fact that this is done quietly demonstrates that they recognize that doing so breaches professional norms.

Reciprocity conflicts are often conflicts over labels. Labels denoting who is inside and who is outside the field of journalism, who is a fixer and who is a source, are ambiguous products of boundary-work that nonetheless have important consequences. A person's label determines whether payments to them are morally required or morally proscribed. An example can be drawn from an occasion when I asked Karim where he had gotten the idea for two recent stories he had pitched to Sally and her editor. The story discussed in detail below was about the experiences and futures of children born in the nascent Islamic State to foreign ISIS fighters. Karim wanted

to report the story by interviewing the mothers of these children. It was apparent that Karim found it normative, in his words "professional," to pay some contributors but considered it to breach professional norms to pay others for similar work.

Karim: My source in Germany [gave me the idea]. Because I always talk to him, just it's not about [work]--just to say hi, just to keep in touch. . . So I ask him once, what--if he has any idea. And he gave me this idea. He told me, 'You have to write about this.' And [regarding our] other story about ISIS children's stories: I was with my source in Urfa [in southern Turkey] and he. . . told me, 'I know a woman.' Because I always ask my sources about the ideas. And he said, 'I know a woman [widowed] from ISIS fighter. He came from France and she got married with him in Syria and he died. And [my source] said, 'You can interview with woman.' But the idea, you know, ISIS, you know, their future, the children future, it's my idea. He told me. . . 'Only interview this woman, maybe you would be interested.' So I told him, 'Okay, yeah it's interesting to me if we found three more woman like her.' And yeah he was trying to help me. He told me more than 7 or 8 woman but they're refusing to talk.

Noah: And these guys, your people who you talk to in Germany or in Urfa, do you ever hire them also?

Karim: No.

Noah: Like officially do they ever get paid, or they're just doing [it] because they're interested in getting the story?

Karim: No, [Sally's outlet] don't pay. I told you, I like [the outlet] because they are professional; they are really journalist.

It might seem obviously unethical and unprofessional to Karim to pay these sources, but they were also fixing in the sense of brokering a story to a news organization. He was sub-contracting his job of finding sources to them, yet by labeling them as "sources" rather than "fixers" and claiming the story *idea* to be his even if the mechanical job of catalyzing his connection with the women was theirs, he was situating them outside the field of journalism. As sources and not fixers, reciprocating their help with money would have breached the news organization's norms of exchange. (I never got to the bottom of why they were in fact helping Karim.)

Sometimes fixers and client journalists disagree about whose work deserves payment. Nigel, the photographer with Ayşe in Suruç, considered the youths he gave cameras to photograph the Kobani seige to be sources and the pittance he paid them something between charity and a token of appreciation. From Ayşe's perspective though, the young Kurds were doing Nigel's job for him, putting themselves in danger while he reaped most of the profits of their work. It was appropriate, nay ethically required, for Nigel to pay those taking photos even as Ayşe agreed it would be immoral to pay sources for the work of sitting down for an interview.

Journalists sometimes get creative in ways to reciprocally give to sources without paying them. Elif and her producer brought the Syrian-Kurdish family in Suruç food and clothing instead of money and did so after their interview was complete.

Such norms, not just of reciprocity but of medium and timing (and here reciprocity ambivalence overlaps with rhythmic ambivalence), of exchange are found everywhere, but vary from one field to another in their particulars. It would be rude to hand a dinner party host a twenty-dollar bill instead of a bottle of wine of equivalent value, or to respond to a loved one giving you a gift by insisting on immediately buying them something of equivalent value (see also Mauss 1967).

Reciprocal conflicts can occur when brokered parties have different expectations for the form that reciprocity should take, when sources ask for something reporters think it wrong to give or vice versa. Finding a medium of exchange acceptable to both parties, for instance food instead of money, can bridge a gap in norms.

Thus far I have (with the exception of sources engaging with journalists just to stop them calling) discussed what might be called *consensual reciprocity*. But at the far end of the reciprocity spectrum is coercion, where it is the stick not the carrot brandished to incentivize

sources' engagement, the promise of avoiding harm rather than gaining benefit that serves to balance the scales. The ability of journalists to directly coerce is usually limited, at least when they are acting independently and not as avatars for other authority. In the case of one interview I conducted with Habib, it became clear that sources believed me to be an avatar of authority when a family of Afghan asylum seekers asked midway through our conversation whether we were working for the United Nations.

Another form of coercion was evident in my collaboration with Habib as assisted by the smuggler Wahid: reporters can work through a chain of intermediaries and outsource coercion to sub-fixers at least one link removed from themselves. Under Wahid's effective control, the asylum seekers we interviewed likely feared negative repercussions of not engaging with us once he had given the go-ahead, whatever we told them about their participation being voluntary. I could have told myself that working through Wahid as a sub-fixer was alright because he was merely serving as a catalyst, not intervening into interviews but just making introductions. Even when he left the room, though, he was effectively serving as an active middleman, continuing, despite being absent, to provide sources a reciprocal exchange in the form of *not* punishing them for refusing to engage with us. For his part, Wahid was benefiting from Habib's reciprocal brokerage services between his smuggling operation and the city's international NGOscape. Habib's experience in Izmir shows that it can be difficult to work without sub-contracted coercion of sources. Habib lacked ties to smugglers in Izmir and could not rely on reciprocal exchange of sources for NGO access with them, as he could with Istanbul smugglers. The Izmir smugglers, rather than helping him, actively impeding his reporting with their heckling.

To describe sources' deference to authorities when asked to engage with journalism as coercion in all cases would be to perhaps make too great a liberal assumption, namely, that

everyone shares the norm of individual freedom as an inalienable right and experiences deviance from that norm as coercion (Mahmood 2004). But following a leader can be normatively experienced as altruism, as the right or the cool thing to do, a way to re-affirm one's membership in a community, to be part of something larger than oneself instead of a lonely atomized individual. In this view, fixers manage conflicting norms about what comprise the basic units of social life that engage in reciprocal exchange: individuals or groups (as represented by leaders)?[73] What looks from the outside like morally repugnant oppression can feel on the inside like group solidarity, and vice versa (the difficulty in parsing oppression from solidarity is, for example, at the heart of debates over whether women choose or are forced to wear Islamic headscarves [Gill 2007]). Habib bridged conflicting moral worlds by recruiting sources through a smuggling network in which Wahid effectively consented for the group while paying lip service to my hybrid journalist-academic norm of individual autonomy, telling sources that their participation was voluntary and asking for their individual consent.

Wahid's smuggling network represented an extreme case in which moral sticks were more important than moral carrots for solidarity with group norms. In other cases, sources can find moral ease in following the leader's signals for what the group should do, rather than moral distress at norms of individual autonomy being breached. In the process of reporting on the resurgence of violence in the southeast, Geert and Gül visited a Kurdish youth organization. Geert recounted,

> With the youth. . . it was a bit like hierarchical. So there was the top leader. . . until he came they didn't really want to talk. Once we interviewed him for like an hour and a half and we

[73] Another kind of discrepancy over what we might call social personhood, that is, over who has the status of a full person or subject in social exchange/interaction, was evident in Nik's unease over objectifying friends as mere information sources rather than as unique individuals. The demands of his fixing job normalized assessing people as *objects* of one-way acquisition (of information), which clashed with his transcendent norms of treating people as *subjects* of two-way exchange.

> could see that he was in, like, I've-gotta-go mode, even though he was very friendly. He was like, 'Is there anything else I can do?' I was like, 'Do you mind if I hang out here for an extra half hour and talk to these kids?' Because I knew he was going to leave. And since he'd already talked to me the kids would be like relaxed and--so he left and we talked to the kids and then so we got all the nice quotes that really captured the story.

This tactic of using an authority figure as an informal sub-fixer is broadly effective. Fixers and reporters recounted to me on many occasions that getting people to talk became much easier and more relaxed once a superordinate signaled approval, cluing them in to the normative acceptability if not obligation to engage with the journalists. This form of group rather than individual consent nonetheless must be reconciled with journalistic norms of individual autonomy.

Like other distinctions I have discussed (such as insider vs. outsider), the distinction between cultures treating groups as social units and cultures treating individuals as social units is more than an objective or neutral measure of true difference; it is also a discursive tool to accomplish social action. Highlighting the solidary and downplaying the coercive side of group consent through talk of cultural differences between East and West can be a useful strategy for fixers to align clients normatively to coercive situations.

Managing Social Capital

Fixers themselves have some ability to sanction, if not coerce, sources' engagement. If reporters' and sources' ties to fixers allow them to pressure fixers to behave in line with their expectations, the same ties also give fixers leverage to pressure reporters and sources. Fixers beg and plead and cajole friends, relatives, and strangers into engaging with their clients, and their ability to do so depends on a combination of the strength of their ties to those prospective sources and their skills of seduction.

Vox pop interviews on the street are difficult to secure because the weakness of fixers' moral leverage over strangers forces them to rely on seduction. Ploys like Nikolaus's of first

greeting strangers with a vague “Hello, do you have a bit of time?” in order to get them to stop, effectively increased the weight of his moral leverage over them because, once they had consented to engage in conversation, the normative cost to them of impolitely walking away once Nik revealed he was a newsman had instantly increased.

Aside from demoralization and the small risk of a violent reaction from a prospective source, pressuring a stranger on the street into talking has little cost to fixers, as strangers on the street are in plentiful supply and have no pre-existing ties to fixers that are compromised in the process. Pressuring an acquaintance into participation, however, is costlier. If a person’s social capital consists of their ties to others, calling in favors by bothering people to engage with reporters without them seeing a benefit to it is an expenditure of that capital.

When I began fixing, I quickly came to recognize that some of my friends were more valuable than others as sources and/or unpaid sub-fixers. If I kept asking their help and offering nothing in return, I could only call them so many times, I felt, before they would stop answering.

It is better to rely on the arts of persuasion, a kind of rhetorical expertise in convincing sources (and for that matter reporters) that they are in fact getting a benefit from engagement. Whether a source comes away from an interaction still convinced that the fixer is doing them a favor and not vice versa depends on the reporter’s performance, the resultant story, and the fixer’s success in reconciling conflicts between source and journalist.

Convincing a source that participation is worthwhile or potentially beneficial, only to have a reporter fail to engage is a risk that fixers learn to consider when matchmaking. Every time a client had me contact someone and then ended up not following through because they changed their mind or had a deadline or had enough already to write the story I felt cheated. I had already called in a favor, perhaps even convinced the source that it would be a good

experience (what I call coaching below), only for the reporter to fail to uphold their end of a bargain I had brokered without their knowledge. Foreign reporters more readily cancel interviews than fixers because the former have invested less of their own effort and social capital into the pre-production work of finding and seducing sources.

Established fixers seek to avoid this predicament by vetting clients, working only with reporters they know well enough to trust not to spoil their ties with sources. Their selectivity also relies on stereotypes, notably stereotypes of clueless parachutists, of differences among reporters of different nationalities, and of cut-throat ambitious young reporters.[74] Fixers conceive a hierarchy of clients by trustworthiness and of sources by value, pairing only trustworthy reporters with valued sources. Likewise, meta-fixers have certain sub-fixers in their stable whom they deem high value and avoid introducing to clients for whom they predict fixing could be a pain. The value of a person can be based on their utility as a source or sub-fixer generally or for particular stories, or on the basis of a fixer's transcendent norms described below. Elif told me in one of our chats over cappuccinos at fancy cafés that she had recently met the widow of Hrant Dink, a prominent Armenian-Turkish journalist murdered in 2007, at an event of his memorial foundation. Elif came away impressed enough with Rakel Dink that she deemed her too vulnerable, and too valuable for specific purposes, to connect with reporters for just any story:

> She has this weird smile, it's like--she's lived through a lot, you know? It's like very, I don't know, you can see pain on her. . . I wouldn't approach her for anything that's not, that I don't--I don't think that I would approach her for anything, really. You know, if it was like a long-form documentary. . . maybe then. Yeah. But these wounds are like really, really deep. [I would not approach her for] a two-minute story. Plus like it wouldn't have meant that much to have her on [*XYZ*], like for an international audience.

[74]Fixers' stereotyping of reporters thus has the effect of depriving those who fit the wrong stereotype of access, whatever their individual reporting styles and respectfulness, to valuable sources.

Sources and sub-fixers may not be universally valuable but valuable nonetheless for particular stories; part of the art of matchmaking while risking minimal expenditure of social capital, then, is to pair reporters who will normatively align in ways important to a specific story with sources and sub-fixers who will be useful to those reporters for that specific story. In the case of Rakel Dink, Elif did not want to risk expending social capital and burn a source whom Elif valued for her own moral reasons, particularly by mismatching Dink to a two-minute TV story rather than a longer documentary.

Social capital is expended when fixers fail to synchronize expectations into a unified prescription. It is gained when synchronization is successful and both brokered parties come out understanding themselves or their group to have benefited. Instead of *calling in* favors, fixers learn to select and to coach (as discussed below) reporter-source matches so that the brokered parties understand fixers to be *doing* favors; fixers thus acquire social capital with the parties instead of expending it. (See also Mears 2015:1107-1114 on the efforts another kind of broker, VIP party promoters, to convince attractive women that party attendance is a desirable leisure activity [a favor by the promoter] rather than unpaid sexual labor [a favor by or exploitation of the women].)

As a researcher, I was not above these concerns about reciprocity, about providing something of value in exchange for my subjects' participation in the study and expending social capital if I did not. Money was the medium of reciprocity with which I had the most success: I offered discounted rates when I worked as a fixer, and as a reporter I paid fixers to work with me. I also looked for ways to do favors. I offered my services as a photographer for free, but nobody seemed interested. I did find, however, that my own social ties were occasionally useful to fixers working on tight deadlines.

On one occasion, Ayşe called to say she was working with a TV crew that wanted the views of Americans living in Istanbul. I referred her to a comedy troupe consisting mostly of expats, thinking that they would make for more interesting footage than the usual tourists standing in front of the Aya Sofia, and that the troupe would also see a benefit to getting international TV exposure. In the end and after Ayşe coordinated with the troupe, the channel dropped the story. I acquired social capital for my sub-fixing: Ayşe was apologetic on behalf of the channel for wasting everyone's time and, I think, felt that she now owed *me* a favor. As Ayşe took the blame for the failure, I felt that I came out with my tie to the comedy troupe intact as well.

Biased and Ambivalent Fixers

It makes sense that brokers have to deal with normative conflicts between the parties they broker. After all, by definition a broker is someone who bridges otherwise separate social worlds, which are also usually different moral worlds.

There is only ambivalence when there is a conflict between the sides being brokered. Social distance does not always mean moral conflict, and different source-journalist pairings morally conflict and harmonize in different ways. When Burcu arranged interviews between *XYZ* correspondents and government technocrats, there was relatively less coding and rhythmic conflict--the latter spoke soundbite-friendly English and were socialized to the rhythms of the interview and the news cycle. Given this relative harmony, Burcu acted more as a catalyst than a middleman. However, when informational/strategic conflicts did become evident to one party, namely sources upon seeing their interviews edited and contextualized unfavorably in stories, Burcu might be dragged back into the equation as a middleman, with a source calling her in protest, applying moral pressure on her to mediate clients' reporting in a more favorable way.

The example of Burcu shrugging off politicians' criticism highlights that fixers are not always or necessarily ambivalent about which conflicting norm to accede to. Burcu was willing to push on with critical reporting despite her old classmates' criticism in part because of her close tie to and high status within *XYZ*.

Fixers are only ambivalent about normative conflicts between clients and sources to the extent that neither party can, whether through promise of immediate reward or sanction or due to precedent socialization and future career expectations, assert greater moral sway over them. Elif felt little rhythmic ambivalence in ignoring Grey Wolf flirtation after the story about Kurdish language was done: members of a random Idealist Hearth were not irreplaceable or much-sought sources and had no ties to Elif outside of her work, nor had she acquired ultra-nationalist sympathies through family or education.

Karim was initially deeply ambivalent about working for his German employers, with the money he needed for survival and helpful press card serving as the main resources for tying him to their normative expectations. These resources were enough that he was alright with tricking an antiquities smuggler, toward whom he felt little sympathy. But when it came to the channel enlisting ordinary Syrians to risk their lives collecting footage in Raqqa, Karim was less comfortable.

After he parted ways with German TV and started working closely with Sally, though, he became increasingly biased toward her moral world. He came to accept her moral value of not paying sources and of avoiding any blurring of lines between journalism and intelligence work in part because Sally and Karim's time maps synchronized. I wrote above that usually fixers intend to stay after journalists leave, but in this case, Sally and Karim, with little optimism about an end to the Syrian civil war, expected that Karim would eventually move to America, either as a

refugee or, as their relationship evolved, as a husband. This expected future served to tie Karim more closely to journalism and to bias him toward Sally's norms when they came into conflict with the norms, for instance, of sources who expected to be paid for their time.

Fixers can experience rhythmic or coding ambivalence even when they are comfortably biased on the strategic/informational axis along which we usually consider bias and ambivalence. When Elif was forced into the role of a middleman between Brigitte and police in Şırnak, she was rhythmically and strategically biased toward the former's moral world, seeing the trip to the police station as a waste of time to be completed as soon as possible, and viewed their interrogator's questions about the refugee crisis and accusations of Brigitte's espionage as respectively irrelevant and ludicrous. Elif was nonetheless caught between moral worlds by her middleman role, having to serve as an avatar for the police and speak their words with her own mouth: *terrorist, spy*. Her look of shock served, intentionally or not, as a signal to Brigitte that Elif was in no danger of taking their interrogators' side, wondering herself whether Brigitte was a spy.

Note that I am using "bias" more expansively than journalists do themselves. For journalists, bias means partiality toward special interests; I also consider partiality to the norms of journalism as a status group and moral world in itself to be a form of bias. Both insiders and outsiders are biased, just toward different norms. For her part, Burcu's advocacy of more formalized employment with greater benefits and protections for fixers was a way of increasing their moral bias toward her news organization. Providing fixers with pensions and insurance would be a way to turn work into a career, to make their time maps more predictable and synchronized to the organization.

Fixers, insofar as they catalyze new ties between clients and sources, are not necessarily more biased toward sources than are reporters. When she introduced Allison to a Syrian-Armenian refugee, Gül acted as a catalyst as she brought the two women into the same place, and they interacted directly: Allison could read the refugee's body language, see her fatigue and struggle to take care of her children. In that case, Allison, in her own world of normative conflicts, weighed protecting the source more heavily than did Gül. Foreign reporters are themselves caught between conflicting norms oriented respectively toward status and charisma: epistemological separation from their sources on the one hand, and empathy for the residents of the dangerous fringes they skirt on the other. Clients' moral worlds contain their own tensions, and so fixers like Gül can misunderstand their expectations and act in ways that breach both their and sources' norms.

Fixers' Transcendent Norms

The role of fixer thrusts people into states of greater or lesser moral ambivalence, with the norms of client reporters and sources competing in fixers' considerations of what should be done. But fixers can misunderstand those norms, as the example of Gül and Allison shows, and, more importantly, are not just reeds blowing in the wind of whatever brokered tie is strongest. They have lives outside of fixing, had lives before fixing, and have aspirations for the future beyond fixing. These moral factors of socialization and aspiration, which both transcend and shape the particular configuration of ties in any given situation of fixer-journalist-source interaction, influence 1) what makes a tie strong, and 2) fixers' occasional considerations that something is right or wrong despite the normative expectations of both reporters and sources.

The force of moral pressure a party exerts is based not just on the leverage they have at a particular moment to help or hinder a fixer, but also on fixers' own life histories. While Elif felt

little ambivalence about ignoring Grey Wolf phone calls, Ayşe did feel ambivalent about ignoring the YPG fighter as he sought a rhythm of interaction out of sync with her work. This ambivalence continued after the fighter had demobilized and gone back to school (losing much of his value and thus moral leverage as a source), in part because Ayşe's socialization as a leftist activist intellectual had primed her for sympathy to the Kurdish-leftist fight against ISIS, a fight he represented. Her transcendent norms caused a more gradual weakening of the source's moral pull--Ayşe continued responding to his messages for months--than in the case of Elif and the Grey Wolves. In the latter case, Elif's cosmopolitan socialization served, by contrast, to accelerate the weakening of the Grey Wolves moral sway over her, which ended essentially as soon as the story was complete.

Sometimes fixers find it right to do something of which both sources and foreign reporters disapprove. One Syrian fixer I spoke with had undergone a personal journey from devout, headscarved Muslim to privately self-professed atheist over the course of her country's increasingly sectarian civil war. She now refused to wear a headscarf and was infuriated when a client reporter suggested she do so for an interview with an Islamist rebel commander. From the client's perspective, the fixer should have facilitated the interaction with the commander by avoiding such a sartorial challenge to his religious norms. The fixer, by contrast, felt it important as a Syrian citizen to assert, not minimize her views as they conflicted with those of other Syrians:

> I think--and this is the part where like that's my bias as someone who's local--where I feel the right to challenge perceptions, in the sense where like, 'Sorry but Turkey is a secular country, and even if you just came out of [ISIS's claimed capital] Raqqa that's not my problem. I'm not going to wear a burka for you. You don't want to talk to me, don't.' You know? Now if I'm going into your home and you prefer me not to be--like I'm not gonna walk in in a tank top, you know? I'm gonna like dress respectfully and in certain areas that are more conservative like Urfa, I would wear longer like sleeves. . . I would wear like a, a

> scarf to cover my chest area. I'm not an asshole about it. But I also like to stand my ground with it in just the sense where, like 'Sorry not sorry.' Like, this is a secular country.

Fixers' moral stands, especially as they conflict with both reporters' and sources' norms, are connected to their positions in and aspirations across different fields, from Syrian politics to journalism. For foreign reporters, with social positions and aspirations of their own, the appeal of *blending in*, or, less politically correctly, *going native*, in accordance with their understanding of local norms can be stronger than for fixers in more direct contact with locals.

That same fixer went on, "I think it's really funny when like white journalists, female journalists, they're like somewhere where you really don't need to wear hijab, like [Turkish cities] Gaziantep or Antakya, and they're like," she mimed dramatically flinging a headscarf over her shoulder and imitated a posh British accent, "'On the border of Syria.' And then it's their Twitter photo or their Facebook photo, and I'm like, 'Calm down.'" She laughed, "It's kind of like if I was sent on assignment to the US and the first thing I bought was a baseball cap. . . to blend in with the natives, you know?"

As previously discussed, foreign journalists' outsider-ness from local society is clearer than fixers' and their status within the field of journalism more secure. Instead of having to prove their status, they work to prove their charismatic and dangerous connection to sources' worlds to their peers and audiences, in ways including posting social media profile pictures of themselves in headscarves or body armor.

Fixers who aspire to raise their status within journalism or other international fields, by contrast, have to work more to differentiate themselves from the local. Fixers who work in the field already have charisma aplenty, though elite meta-fixers like Burcu can bear more semblance to their foreign colleagues, as when she lamented not getting teargassed.

Habib came not from a monolithic Afghan community, but from a cosmopolitan Afghan elite, educated abroad. Members of that elite were very aware of, and took pains to differentiate themselves from, the image of the backward Afghan villager. When Habib began to spend time with poor Afghans in Turkey, he told me, the other elite Afghans studying abroad at his university thought he was weird for slumming it. Their Afghan community in Istanbul was centered in the high rises of Beylikduzu, not the tenements of Zeytinburnu. Those classmates were looking to careers as white- collar office professionals, but for Habib, whose older brother had provided him a career model to aspire toward status in the field of international aid, ontological proximity to asylum seekers was essential. This charismatic ontological position had to be balanced, however, by signals of epistemological differentiation from the Afghan poor. He wore a hipster beard tuft on his chin and headphones around his neck, smoking and eating during Ramadan in front of sources who were fasting. Habib made a show for NGO expats, for reporter clients, for sources, and for himself, of epistemological outsider-ness to temper his ontological insider-ness. His behavior did not accord with the norms of his sources, but instead a moral orientation based on his career aspirations.

Whatever a fixer's aspirations and targeted fields of status enhancement, a fourth party constantly in the background, and occasionally in the foreground, of any fixer's interactions with reporters and sources is the state.[75] When speaking with foreign reporters on the phone, Gül had to consider not only satisfying their normative expectation that she as a fixer connect them to sources, but also the normative expectation of the state that she assumed was surveilling her. As far as the state was concerned, she should not be connected to the PKK. This moral pressure

[75]Representatives of the state can also be more directly involved in the reporter-fixer-source triad when serving as sources themselves.

from the panoptic state, whether anyone was actually surveilling her or not, created a coding conflict between her and her clients. For the clients, using the medium of the telephone was desirable because it would allow them to arrange their reporting before arriving in Diyarbakir; for Gül, that same medium for encoding their communication had the serious downside that it was more audible to the state than face-to-face talk.

Gül was able to reduce the moral pressure of the state through tactics to simply avoid it. Aziz was abducted with his clients when he failed to avoid one of the militant groups that constituted, in 2015 eastern Aleppo, the closest thing to a state.

Signals, Stereotypes, Stigmas, Shibboleths

Ideally, a broker can avoid or reconcile conflicts altogether between parties. Such synchronization is not always possible, though, and when brokered parties identify a conflict with their opposite, they seek to 1) win over or ensure that the broker is on their side, 2) find a different broker who will be on their side, or 3) cut off the brokered relationship altogether. Options 2 and 3 put the broker out of a job; Option 2 is especially dangerous when alternative brokers are easily available. It serves brokers well, then, to convince each party to trust that the broker is on their respective side, whatever the degree of their *actual* ambivalence. Such trust is built through the accumulation of signals. With a necessarily circular reasoning, I mean by *signal* anything that an observer decodes for information, in this case, to predict the behavior of another person.

If a reporter or a colleague has worked with a fixer before with good results, that precedent signals to the reporter that in the future the fixer can again be relied upon to take their side against sources. Sources likewise take past experiences in engaging with fixers as signals to predict whether it is worthwhile to engage with them again. When interlocutors do not have

precedents or referrals to go by, signals can take the form of explicit statements, like Aziz's telling his Nusra audience that he had brought the reporters to expose the Syrian regime's (and not their) brutality. Subtler phrasings and gestures can also signal to a reporter or source that the broker is in some critical way *one of them*. Whatever the semantic content of a fixer's utterance to a source, using the word *heval* (comrade) signals solidarity with the leftist-Kurdish cause and pronouncing PKK as pekAkA does the opposite. Part of a fixer's expertise, then, is the acquisition of cultural tools that can be deployed according to the needs of a situation to signal that fixer's bias to a particular audience (Swidler 1986).

When a fixer's interlocutors do not have access to the reliable signals of precedent interaction with the fixer, they rely on stereotypes to decode the subtler signals which the fixer expresses. Stereotypes are lay theories, rough-and-ready ways to use observations to classify others and so predict and interpret their behaviors. In some cases stereotypes are encoded as labels, but in other cases stereotypes are just unlabeled correlations observers make between things. It is a stereotype that leftists say *comrade*, just as it is a stereotype that foreigners with cameras in eastern Turkey are spies, as the police detaining Brigitte with Elif and Mahmut suspected. Stereotypes are both culturally inherited and subject to continual revision based on personal experience; interactions can prompt an observer to revise their stereotypes or to reclassify particular interlocutors as different types.

Stereotypes are often better than nothing to guide interactions with new acquaintances, but are sometimes dead wrong. Signaling of any kind depends, after all, on encoding and decoding processes that can go awry (Hall 1973). Solmaz, the journalist-turned-fixer who assisted my reporting on the plight of the Gülen-affiliated media in Chapter 1, complained to me about a reporter who hired her after our collaboration. They had been walking around a conservative

neighborhood on a Friday, and came across a large congregation praying who spilled from a mosque courtyard out onto narrow side streets. The reporter wanted to just walk through the praying men, whose prayer rugs covered the lane, but Solmaz insisted on taking another route around. Solmaz had done so out of respect, but the client, ignorant of Solmaz's employment by and friendships with deeply religious Muslims of the Gülen movement, misinterpreted her insistence as a signal that she was hostile to Islam. He categorized her as a stereotypical secularist and made it clear, in the subsequent work they did together, that he did not trust her advice or judgment about appropriate sources for stories on religion. In this case, the signal Solmaz unintentionally sent suggested she was on neither the reporter's nor the potential sources' side, but on the side of a third party, and so, altogether unfit to broker.

The client was in Istanbul for just a brief reporting trip and responsible for covering the entire region from the base of Beirut. The problem for parachutists is that they do not have the opportunity either to repeatedly interact with the same interlocutors (there are exceptions, like Geert, who made a point of maintaining a stable of fixers he trusted and worked with routinely in cities large and small across Europe and the Middle East) or to develop very accurate or locally-specific stereotypes.

In addition to the problem that signals can be decoded in unexpected ways, fixers are not free to send whatever signals they like. Some cultural tools, like the ability to speak a language fluently and colloquially, are expensive in time and effort to acquire for one's kit; others, like facial features or skin color, are limited edition and inaccessible entirely to those who do not possess them (I am not aware of any fixers using plastic surgery or tanning salons in the service of their work). Other signals that serve to undermine trust are difficult or impossible to *avoid* sending. Tools/signaling devices that provide--according to the observer's stereotypes--useful

information about the trustworthiness of a person and are difficult to mimic are valuable to the observer (Gambetta and Hamill 2005:10-14). We can classify such markers into stigmas and shibboleths. (See also Brekhus 1998:34-37 on marked identities that affect interlocutors' predictions and interpretations of behaviors.)[76]

A stigma is a disqualifying signal that is difficult to hide (Goffman [1963]1990). Why did Nik have particular difficulty persuading government supporters to talk with him and his clients? Being tall, blonde, and German served as a stigma in that particular case and to that particular audience, signaling to prospective sources in ways out of Nik's control that he was on the side of the foreign media.

Even for those who look local, mere association with outsiders can be stigmatizing. Aziz was thrown in a cell and threatened with execution for being with foreign reporters, whatever they were reporting, because Nusra Front militants thought that they were not really journalists but spies and thus that he was a traitor. Even a leftist Kurdish municipal worker thought Gül a French spy: why else would she be working with foreigners asking so many questions? Again, this stigma stems from a stereotype that may be exaggerated but is not baseless. Intelligence agencies court fixers, particularly in war zones, and blur the lines between reporting and spying as a matter of strategy.

---

[76]The literature on "marked" and "unmarked" identities tends to imagine homogenous cultures in which certain features simply are or aren't marked (often by referencing mainstream/hegemonic culture and ignoring variation in what is marked or unmarked elsewhere as noise interfering with the dominant signal), rather than thinking in terms of subcultures, network positions, and situations in which different features are and are not heeded (see literature reviewed in Brekhus 1998). For example, whiteness may be unmarked at a broad level in the United States but was marked, for example, when Eminem rose to prominence as a "white rapper" within a subculture in which blackness was the unmarked racial identity. The literature on marked identities also makes little mention of marked identities as signaling group membership in ways that can be valuable in some situations.
A feature may be a useful signal for evaluating and differentiating others only in particular situations, but if that situation is reproduced enough times for a pattern to develop we might speak of a marked identity emerging. Nonetheless, that same feature is not necessarily marked, or marked as signaling the same thing, when situations and interactional parties change. So, something can be a positive marker in one situation, a negative marker in another, and unmarked in a third.

As far as the state's evaluation of bias goes, Kurdish-ness is an important stigma. The Kurdish-ness of Elif's sub-fixer in Şırnak, Mahmut, made police suspect he was close to the special interest of the PKK. Gül's Kurdish-ness forced her to take extra precautions to avoid suspicion of PKK affiliation. The state is not the only party to stereotype Kurds in a way that limits their possibilities for social action: Geert had developed a stereotype that Kurdish fixers "do a lot of like editing" and so was particularly careful about monitoring their bias and manipulation of stories.

A shibboleth is the opposite of a stigma: a qualifying signal that is difficult to mimic. The word shibboleth has a biblical origin in a story (to today's reader, about murdering refugees for failed cultural assimilation) in which Gileadites made suspected Ephraimites say the word "shibboleth," the name for a part of a plant in Hebrew, and killed them if they mispronounced it. (Judges 12:6, The New King James Version). The difficulty anyone who was not born and raised a Gileadite stereotypically had pronouncing the word made it a valuable signal to evaluate who was really on the Gileadite side and who was a mimic.

Some shibboleths come, like the original shibboleth, in word form: Gül's mastery of the Kurdish language is a good example. If Gül's intention was merely to facilitate communication, it would seem odd for her to speak Kurdish to sources who had been educated in Turkish schools and sometimes had to apologetically revert to speaking the latter language when addressing complex topics. But Gül was not just communicating the messages her clients' wanted translated, but also signaling her consummate membership in the sources' ethnic group.

Other shibboleths are embodied. Being a member of the foreign might have been stigmatizing when trying to engage with government supporters, but in Suruç, many local Kurds were hostile to the Turkish press but friendlier to foreign journalists they hoped would bring

international support to those struggling to repel ISIS's onslaught. Nik's tall, blonde German-ness was likewise a shibboleth to foreign reporters signaling that he was fundamentally an outsider like them and so could be trusted not to be pro-source biased. This example brings me to the point that a disqualifying stigma to one audience can be a valuable shibboleth to another.

In general, the difficulty of being in the middle of normative conflicts is that a signal to gain the trust of one brokered party can undermine trust if intercepted by the other party (Goffman 1959:135-137). Gül's tears when interviewing grieving family members signaled her insider-ness, or pro-source bias, likely the family's trust but making Geert wary of her bias.

One method of managing conflicting expectations from different parties is oscillation: send one signal to one audience, another signal to a different audience with conflicting norms (Merton 1976:8,17-19). To be successful, oscillation relies on the segregation of those audiences from one another; if a party catches wind of a broker sending contradictory signals to their opposite, it undermines trust more surely than if the broker was forthright and consistent in signaling their own norms (Goffman 1959:137-140). When Burcu joined angry sources in criticizing the foreign media in phone calls, she was signaling her affinity to those sources while segregating them from her foreign colleagues at *XYZ*, who may have disapproved of such talk. When two conflicting audiences are in the same room, as is often the case, a broker may signal to one in a code the other does not understand, but generally it is a more difficult and delicate task to send conflicting signals without separation of time and space.

Another strategy through which fixers can avoid replacement by another broker is to signal that they are a *non-person*. A non-person may be physically present but is socially absent/dead, even if they serve a role and are addressed by the people present (Goffman 1959:151-153; Bearman 2005:7-11; Wadensjö 1998:66-67). Servants are a classic example: one need not be

polite or ashamed (for example, of not being fully dressed) in front of them, and they are ideally expected not to exhibit personal characteristics or to participate in conversations or arguments. A non-person may carry out a mechanical task, but does not need to be considered for their bias, because they lack agency to affect the interactions they background. The person vs. non-person distinction mirrors the middleman vs. catalyst distinction: catalysts are non-persons insofar as they bring parties together but then do not play an active role in their interaction.

Non-personhood can be signaled through appearance, for instance a uniform that turns a butler or maid or doorman from a distinct individual into a generic servant, or through language, for instance a translator who takes on the pronouns of the parties whose utterances they translate (Wadensjö 1998:111-118). Burcu did not have to do much to signal that she was a non-person as she shifted to brokering between government officials and foreign reporters, because the process of reporting was routine enough to all parties involved that she was overlooked with little thought. Whereas non-VIP sources unfamiliar with media exposure would treat Burcu as a person, remembering her name and asking her even years later why she never came around their neighborhood anymore, officials and clients would simply address one another through Burcu without bothering to consider her as a third party in their interaction.

In other cases, though, fixers must actively signal that they are non-persons to reap the strategic benefits of being overlooked. Jimbo, when brokering between Elif and the Kurdish family in Suruç, failed to signal non-personhood and so brought attention to himself as a potentially biased middleman. Elif did not trust Jimbo's translation, not because she understood any Kurdish or because it seemed inconsistent or incoherent, but because of his body language. Jimbo *lounged* and imposed himself as the center of attention, thus asserting his presence and personhood in the interaction, as well as his insider status as a member of the Syrian-Kurdish

family's community. Jimbo's embodied self-presentation signaled to Elif that he was serving as a middleman, not merely a catalyst, which made his bias as an insider problematic. Elif feared that Jimbo was pushing their journalism in a propagandistic or at best ritualistic (for the Syrian-Kurdish community) direction as he translated their source's replies to be well-worn YPJ slogans.

Reporters are not necessarily naïve to the utility of fixers presenting themselves as sources' allies, even against the foreign media. José, for instance, liked that Ayşe, unlike his rookie student fixer, could adjust her pronunciation and vocabulary to signal solidarity with the YPG fighter source. Reporters and fixers can form teams (I borrow the term in this sense from Goffman 1959:77-105) in something resembling a good-cop-bad-cop routine: the fixer presents themselves as on the source's side and as giving them the opportunity to give their side of the story; the reporter presents themselves as swayable if the source collaborates with the fixer.[77] Teaming up in this way is particularly demanding of trust between reporter and fixer. Fixers can unwittingly play good cop, convincing a source to engage and then feel betrayed and guilty when a story is published that conflicts with a source's strategic expectations.

One Syrian fixer told me that he had been burned too many times by reporters using him for access and then publishing stories of which he and sources disapproved; he now worked only with Japanese reporters. He complained to me that American and European reporters would use him to get access, tell him and sources that they were doing humanitarian stories about regime war crimes, but then fixate on ISIS or ask detailed questions about rebel factions that made both the fixer and sources suspicious. A source might tell them ten things, the fixer complained, but

[77] Murrell (2015) describes similar phenomena as reporter and fixer team members borrowing one another's cultural and embodied capital.

the reporter would only choose the one. If the regime killed a hundred people they would not report it, but if ISIS killed three they would do a feature. On another occasion, a source gave a reporter a photograph of themselves on the promise, which the fixer convinced them to trust and trusted himself, that the reporter would use the photo only privately as a writing aide. A week later, the photo was published in the reporter's article, putting the source in danger. The Japanese were the only ones of whom this fixer had developed a positive stereotype: they told the truth about the focus and sent him their stories to review.[78]

A final option is signaling neutrality toward conflicting sides. When audience segregation and signaling non-personhood are impossible, signaling separation from all parties can be the best bet. When she covered political protests in Diyarbakir, Gül *had* to stand somewhere; she could not be a non-person in a situation where the location of one's body signaled membership in one party or another, and she could not send different signals to protestors and police facing each other in a public square. Thus, Gül would stand with her clients between the two sides, hoping they did not catch a stone or gas canister to the face in the cross-fire.

I have been discussing *signaled* as opposed to *actual* bias and ambivalence. To talk in terms of actual bias and performances that diverge from that truth, would be to assume I know who fixers *really* are. Such terms would further assume fixers to have a true self, at times exposed, at times hidden (as Gambetta and Hamill [2005] assume in their discussion of mimicry--what is mimicry if there is no authenticity?—and in distinguishing between signals and signs, the former being an *intentional* subset of the latter). We generally think of strategy as based on intention and choice (as Erving Goffman [1969:6-7, 14-22] does in distinguishing between unintentionally

[78]Fixers more aligned with the field of journalism had negative stereotypes of Japanese reporting on largely the same grounds. Japanese journalists, I was told, were too complacent about accepting sources' claims uncritically and too willing to grant sources discretion in guiding stories.

"expressed" vs. intentionally "transmitted" information and among "unwitting," "naïve," and "control" moves as levels of strategy), which makes it difficult to discuss signaling as wholly strategic.

I, however, will leave open the possibility that signaling and strategy is automatic/uncontrolled. We can then discuss the concepts without assuming that action is separable from social position, that is, without assuming the existence of agency. We can limit ourselves to the actions themselves, which show fixers to be non-unitary moral beings who enact different morals in relation to different interlocutors, without worrying about the intentions behind those actions or their divergence from or convergence with some underlying *actual* bias. For this view, I redefine *strategy* simply as action that efficiently completes a task. For example, a fixer facilitates engagement between reporter and source, giving the former the material to produce a story. Such material would otherwise require much greater effort, for instance one of the parties learning a new language or changing their worldview (Latour 1988a:299 calls such efficiency "delegation" or "translation": the transformation of a major effort into a minor one). To step from intentions back to actions not only makes fewer assumptions about what is going on inside fixers' heads, but also preserves the possibility, discussed further in Chapter 6, that the *appearance* of agency is just an artifact of the complex intersection of different fields.

Unifying Moral Worlds

A fixer's job is much easier when conflicts among parties can be avoided in the first place. Matching together sources and reporters with already-aligned expectations to one another and to fixers' transcendent norms is ideal. That way, all actors can behave according to consistent prescribed scripts amenable to all parties' norms. At least for that moment, the three share a moral world. The more expansive a fixer's social network and the more accurate their

understanding of what particular clients want and what sources want to give them, the better they can align norms at the match-making stage, before parties ever meet. Burcu told me that correspondents trusted her to choose sources because they knew her talent for understanding "who would give you the best quote in the smallest amount of time." It can be strategic, then, for fixers to use the same sources repeatedly because they have a better idea of what to expect from them and how to approach them for a smooth, if homogenized, reporting process (discussed further in Chapter 5).

But reporters are less likely to need fixers to broker their interactions with such sources in the first place: aligned norms would mean they speak the same language, are working toward the same goals, and are on the same schedules, so they likely already know each other.

When reporters' and sources' expectations are misaligned/out of sync, though, fixers can work before and during their interaction to align them.[79] The "pre-interview," a staple of TV fixing, is a way to familiarize sources with the rhythms and informational expectations of journalism, to coach them on how to encode their answers as soundbites. After fixers pre-interview their source, they consult with their client, allowing fixers to coach the foreigners on what to ask and how in order to get what they want from the source. Such alignment is particularly important for TV, given the brevity with which soundbites must summarize issues to unfamiliar foreign audiences. Here again, it can be helpful for fixers to already know sources, or at least have a refined stereotype to apply to a particular source, in order to predict the axes on which they need alignment and how to achieve it. Ayşe's familiarity with leftist discourse and

[79]Latour (1988a:307-308) refers to such work, priming actors to behave in prescribed ways before they come into interaction, as "pre-inscription," noting that an alignment of pre-inscriptions minimizes conflict among actors, decreasing their awareness of the brokerage process altogether.

slogans gave her a good idea of when her and José's YPG source was lazily regurgitating received wisdom and needed pressuring to align with José's expectation of novelty.

Fixers coach reporting using culture talk, explaining the norms of sources, often couched in terms of Eastern and Western cultures. They advise reporters to expect to drink tea and hang out for a little while before getting down to an interview, that they should respect local hierarchies by getting the go-ahead from the heads of families and other groups before approaching lower-status members. Reporters, keen for the charisma of acquiring foreign cultural fluency, may be receptive to this coaching. Their keenness might stop at surface level, however, as they transform themselves only in appearance or by participating in local rituals, never in their deeper epistemological selves. (The desire to keep the epistemological self intact can make journalists ambivalent about some coaching. For instance, they might hesitate to adopt a norm or accept group rather than individual consent). Nevertheless, reporters recognize the value of this coaching and can see it in fact as a reason to work with fixers.

Fixers also align reporters' expectations through the background information they provide about who subjects are and more generally about what is going on. Being selective and creative in describing local actors and events to outsiders can preempt the asking of uncomfortable questions. I was hardly immune to such alignment as I conducted my research. Aziz told me his contacts were FSA, a group he probably thought I would be both familiar with and sympathetic to, instead of naming the actual Islamist group that promised him safe passage to Aleppo, which would have invited questions from me about his relationship to that group.

The degree of freedom fixers enjoy in thus aligning reporters depends on the reporter's own knowledge and ability to question what the fixer tells them by triangulating it with alternative information. Gül could get away with giving one parachutist the impression that everyone worth

talking to in Diyarbakir was in the Kurdish-left camp, thus shaping his expectations so that they did not conflict with her own transcendent norms. Even that reporter later found an alternative informer--me--who challenged the impression she helped create of a unified front among the Kurds, though by then the story was already published.

Whose views fixers work to align depends on this degree of information control over respective brokered parties, as well as fixers' bias. In the case of the ideal ambivalent fixer, we would see bidirectional alignment efforts. In the case of the ideal biased fixer, we would see unidirectional effort aimed at changing the norms of the party with the weaker tie to the fixer in order to bring them into line with the other party's norms. (Wadensjo 1998:133-139 provides a detailed example of a police interpreter thus aligning a suspect to the institutional norms of the state, toward which the interpreter is biased).

If conflicting norms cannot be aligned before client and source meet, fixers can coach sources and reporters on the spot to avoid conflict. Such coaching often takes the form of little asides a fixer makes to reporter and/or source, breaking up the question-translation-answer-translation-question turn-taking of an interview. When I asked Wahid the smuggler about his undignified history as a clueless refugee, Habib, instead of translating my question, made an aside to me that it would not be right to ask that question just now; Habib himself would tell me Wahid's back story later. Habib correctly recognized, I think, that this was a relatively unimportant question for me to have answered by Wahid in particular, and not worth embarrassing Wahid to the point of risking a breakdown in the interaction that would prevent me from getting the information for which Wahid was a less replaceable source: the latest about the usage and cost of various smuggling routes.

Such coaching, even if it prevents a breakdown in communication, can be unwelcome and simply shift the reporter's conflict from the source onto the fixer themselves. Geert saw himself to be in normative conflict with Gül when she advised him to resist asking grieving family members too many questions. In such conflicts, fixers can use their own moral leverage to align reporters to sources' norms (or vice versa) by force, though at the expense of social capital if it weakens their ties. Fixers can threaten to withhold their brokerage services and even, in some cases, prevent parties from simply circumventing them and using a different broker, as when Ayşe and other fixers in Suruç refused to work with the exploitative photographer Nigel and warned sources against him. Short of such drastic measures, fixers can use their charismatic local-ness to embarrass a reporter into alignment, as by telling them they are being rude and that this is simply not the way things are done here. The danger to social capital and status from such alignment efforts is that reporters can take them as signals that the fixer is biased toward sources, too close to the story. Gül sought to align Geert to their source as she gave him pointed looks to discourage his reformulations of the same question over and over until he got an answer. She succeeded only in reducing his confidence in her.

Unifications can be fleeting, particularly when a party's moral pressure on a fixer is based purely on the threat of not engaging in the brokered interaction and when the fixer is able to segregate reporter and source audiences. Gül performed polite neutrality to members of Hüda Par, whom she despised for transcendent moral reasons, during her and Geert's interview with them, but then breached the party's strategic norms by refuted the interviewees' claims as soon as they were out of earshot.

Outsourcing Immorality

Viewed in a different light, fixers serve as a useful buffer of corruption to whom reporters outsource, wittingly or not, the breach of journalistic norms. This arrangement is another, darker way in which reporters and fixers can form teams, in this case not so much against sources as against the norms of journalism. If Sally and Karim were right that reporters often look the other way while fixers pay sources and recruit actors to play the parts that reporters want to cast, that prominent reporters have built their careers on fixers' misconduct, then we cannot speak of fixers worrying about disappointing their clients by breaching their norms. Rather, clients are hiring fixers precisely *to* breach their norms, so the clients do not have to themselves.[80] Reconciling conflicts between brokered parties is still required and is achieved by lies that reporters readily swallow to avoid being confronted with the breach of their norms.

Fixers' moral ambivalence, in these cases, lies in the conflict between particular clients' expectations that they absorb/buffer the contamination of misconduct as middlemen and their own aspirations--if they have any--in the field of journalism. Developing a reputation for breaching general journalistic norms (even by satisfying a particular client's expectations) prevents a fixer from rising in status within the field. For Sally and for others, paying sources for information contaminates journalism, making it more like intelligence work, a field from which journalists are at pains to differentiate themselves. News organizations' boundary-work to distinguish themselves from intelligence means they will refuse to hire and promote someone who has a reputation for blurring that line.

The Expertise of Managing Moral Conflict

In sum, expertise in brokering between parties in conflict consists of:

- Understanding the norms of each brokered party and what each party identifies as conflicting with those norms

[80]I discuss the analogous case of empires outsourcing brutality to local client rulers in Arjomand 2015.

- Convincing brokered parties that they stand to gain a reciprocal benefit from engagement with one another
- Seducing brokered parties into more heavily weighing fixers' own expectations in their respective moral worlds
- Signaling oneself to be biased to each brokered party, to be a non-person without the agency to side against the party, or at least to be neutral
- Pre-inscribing brokered parties to synchronize/align norms before interaction
- Reconciling conflicts as they emerge in interaction
- Understanding when it benefits a party to breach that party's own norms

The next chapter will look at the deployment of these methods of managing ambivalence at the micro level. Our focus will be the set-up, realization, and aftermath of interviews, journalists' primary means of collecting information and engaging with sources.

CHAPTER 5: TRANSLATIONS

Communication as Information

The previous chapter described fixers' moral worlds and their strategies to manage ambivalence. If we care about brokers themselves as an object of study, these things may be of interest, but if our object of study is the news itself, why do their moral worlds matter? Chapter 4 had little to say about how fixers actually affect the news, except insofar as it gets made at all because fixers facilitate engagement that would otherwise be impossible or far costlier.

This next chapter will answer why fixers' moral worlds matter by showing how they affect the content of news stories. Fixers' efforts to align reporters and sources in order to manage their own ambivalence simultaneously transform the information transmitted from sources to reporters that will constitute the news.

The previous chapter, with its focus on the intersection of social worlds at which news is created, considered communication largely as a social activity, a means of signaling identity, accomplishing tasks, making alliances, and so forth. We can refer to that focus as following an interactional model of communication. This chapter, by contrast, will focus on the *object* of that activity and consider communication as information.

Any communication has both interactional and informational dimensions. When I say something, I am both signaling my role in an interaction and providing information. To illustrate and introduce vocabulary for an information transmission model of communication, I will start with a hypothetical example.

Let's say that during my time working as a reporter, a colleague referred me to a Turkish fixer named Temel. My colleague told me Temel spoke English, but when we met, it turned out that no matter what I said, Temel responded "Hello!" Whether I asked him to explain his

qualifications for fixing or what time it was, he just said “Hello!” I became frustrated thinking that I could not gain any **information** (synonymous here with **data**) talking to Temel because he had no **freedom of choice** to say different things, and so when I asked a question there could be no uncertainty how he would answer. But then I realized that he could not only say “Hello!” but also shrug his shoulders, providing one bit of information. We slowly developed a shared understanding of what combinations of hellos and shrugs meant, a **channel** of communication that I dubbed Temelçe. For instance, hello!-hello!-shrug-hello!-shrug meant turnip juice. Temelçe worked well enough, though sometimes Temel would **overload** the channel by **transmitting** shrugs and hellos too quickly for me to track, or I would forget my glasses or hearing aide at home, which **impaired** my **reception** of his **signals**. Also, Temel liked walking around with a boombox on his shoulder, the **noise** of which would sometimes confuse me and **distort** the signal he was transmitting, especially when he played the Beatles’ song “Hello, Goodbye.” The lyrics would **bleed** into Temel’s own utterances of “Hello!” and I would be unable to make out who was saying what in the **crosstalk**.

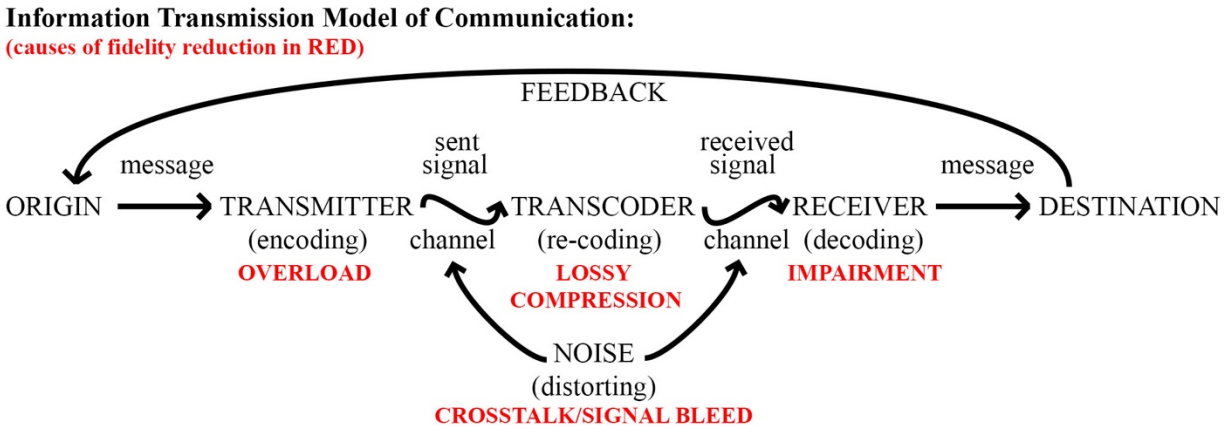

Figure 5.1: Information Transmission Model of Communication

(Adapted and expanded from Weaver 1949:3)

The ability to transmit information depends on the freedom of choice that transmitter has to select different signals to send to a receiver (sometimes referred to as *observer* in previous chapters), which is also the degree of uncertainty of what signal will be received (Weaver 1949:4-6). If Temel could only say "Hello!", he would have no freedom to choose different signals and so his communications to me could contain no information. When we added the shrug as a second possible signal, though, he gained the ability to send information; at any moment, I was uncertain whether he would next speak or shrug, and choosing one or the other would provide me with one bit of information. The meaning of the word *hello* is irrelevant here as, rather than being one word with a particular meaning in an English language with many words from which to choose, it functioned simply as a binary opposition to a shrug. It would not matter if the content of his signals was instead *yes*/*no* or *0*/*1*. The channel of communication we developed, Temelçe, had a capacity, in bits per second, far lower than English and could suffer from overload at the stage of Temel encoding his messages into Temelçe or impairment at the stage of my re-coding his messages back into English (Weaver 1949:7-8). Temel managed his ability to think in Turkish at a far higher bitrate than he could transmit Temelçe signals by **compressing** the data he received. He did not bother to **transcode** (a term I will use interchangeably with "translate") filler words, or even words he deemed non-essential to the point he wanted to make (this was **lossy** compression, in transmission model terms).

Another cause of **fidelity** loss, that is, of messages Temel conceived in Turkish turning into different information by the time I decoded his Temelçe, was noise, defined as anything *added* to cause a difference between the sent signal and the received signal (Weaver 1949:8-10; Clarke 2010:162-164). This noise might take the form of random, white noise, for instance when Temel would shout "Hello!" at me over the roar of a waterfall. I would have to subtract the roar in order

to extract the signal he sent from the one I received. More vexing yet, the noise could be not random but patterned, like the music Temel played on his boombox, and could even be encoded into signals used in Temelçe like the word *hello*, resulting in crosstalk in which the Beatles' signals bled into those Temel was sending.

It is worth noting that what is signal and what is noise depends on one's perspective and position in an interaction (Serres 2007). From the Beatles' perspective, their lyrics were signals containing information and not mere noise: we should be listening to them and reflecting on why we say goodbye. The transmission model diagrammed above relies on us already knowing what is signal and what is noise, who should properly be understood as origin, what or who as transcoder, and who as destination.

Fixer-brokered communication happens through a chain of human and non-human channels and transcoders. **Transcoders** can be non-humans, such as devices that turn analog signals into digital ones, or can be human middlemen. A transcoder is also a destination for one transmission who then becomes the origin for the next transmission. Thus, who is defined as a mere transcoder, whose contributions are unwanted data loss or noise that reduces fidelity, as opposed to the proper origin and destination of a transmission, depends on whom we think the proper interlocutors are in an exchange of information. The transcoder, in the view of a brokered party trying to preserve fidelity from origin to destination, is a non-person who ought to play only a support role. Transcoders may accept or even be attracted to this non-person role, or they may, to the contrary, view it as appropriate that they **enhance** signals in the transcoding process. Or they may see themselves not as transcoders at all, but as origins or destinations in information transmissions whose start and end points they define differently than one or more of the parties they broker.

Once Temel and I were confident in our shared understanding of Temelçe, we went to work reporting stories. Sources would encode their messages in Turkish and Temel, serving as a transcoder, would re-code their utterances into Temelçe for me to decode. Sometimes his mind would wander during interviews or he would decide to improve upon what they said, and so the messages I received were quite distorted renditions of the messages transmitted. When I found a message particularly confusing, I might ask a follow-up question, which provided the sources with **feedback** about how their messages were being received. When I did feel I understood, I would **back-channel** signals--nods and smiles--that their message had been successfully transmitted.

Setting the limitations of Temelçe aside for a moment and considering the languages that will be discussed in this chapter--English and Turkish--it is worth stressing that word-for-word translation with perfect fidelity is an unattainable ideal. Differences in channel capacities between Turkish and English may add to the difficulty of translation; as Maureen Freely (2006), who has translated many of Orhan Pamuk's novels, puts it,

> The distance between Turkish and English is so great that literal translation is next to impossible. English, as we know, likes a linear logic. It has the soul of an examining magistrate. It wants to know who did what, and if at all possible, when, where and why. The word 'is' lies at the heart of the equation, alongside the word 'has.' The road between subject and object is paved with prepositions. But Turkish is lean and double-jointed, arching effortlessly from active to passive voice, delighting in nuances, dispensing with definite articles, stringing suffix to suffix to create sparkling *mots justes* that would need eight or nine or even a dozen words in English, and offering up a tantalising array of clauses that do not link up until the sentence reaches its last syllable. It is interested in correspondences that cannot be reduced to equations, in games with time that tangle causes and effects. (Pp. 146-147)

The objective properties of Turkish make it easier to transmit some information, as with *mots justes* that would require more letters or sounds in English, while the requirements of English for clearer definitions of subject and object, cause and effect, lend themselves to the transmission of other information.

The larger reason for the impossibility of perfect, literal translation, though, is that words have not just dictionary definitions, but also shared meanings among cultural subgroups (Wadensjö 1998:38-42). Words make references to things not directly mentioned and signal the speakers' identities, which affects the meaning of the messages transmitted in wordy signals. Signals are never self-contained packets of meaning, but have meaning added to and subtracted from them by the particular transmitters and receivers that encode and decode them (decoding being more commonly referred to as "interpretation" in the social sciences). This meaning is easily lost in translation as a signal does not carry its references with it from one transceiver to the next. Culturally-specific references aside, words are also always uttered in particular interactional contexts that are not carried with the words as they travel, through translation, into new contexts (Bourdieu 1999:221).

Temel and I ran into these problems when we interviewed two women near an political rally of the ruling AK Party for an article. The first described herself in Turkish as "*modern*," while the other described herself as "*çağdaş*." Temel translated both of these words into Temelçe as shrug-shrug-hello!-hello!-shrug-hello!, which I further decoded into English as "modern." The meaning of our sources' respective words that eluded me was that in Turkey, the term "*modern*" has been specifically embraced by Islamic modernists; the first woman was identifying herself and the political cause she was supporting at the rally with a particular brand of modernism. The second woman, hearing the first call herself "*modern*," pointedly used the term "*çağdaş*," which referenced a Kemalist conception of contemporary civilization as a break from the past and the reign of superstitious religiosity, identifying her defiantly as a secularist in opposition to the political rally past which she was walking (White 2013:loc1138-1163). Temel's translations were correct in a literal sense; he might have translated the second woman's self-characterization

as shrug-shrug-hello!-hello!-shrug-shrug ("contemporary") to differentiate the two, but even this translation would obscure the cultural meaning and interactional usage of the word.

Novelist Elif Shafak (2006:156) notes that in Turkish, "depending on the ideological camp you are attached to, e.g. Kemalists versus Islamists, you can use either an 'old' or a 'new' set of words." That statement is an oversimplification: there are not just two ideological camps but many, each with their own jargon and set of references that defy literal translation. As this chapter will demonstrate, the Gülen movement, the Kurdish Left, and other factions each have their own ways of talking and attribute different meanings to particular terms. Fixers decode and re-encode their statements and coach reporters in ways that can reveal, obscure, or change sources' meanings; whichever they do, they shape the knowledge produced through interviews.

Freely (2006) writes of the translator's task, "You must choose what's important and leave the rest behind. More controversially, you must decide if your first allegiance is to the sentence or to the fictive world behind it" (147). If we replace "fictive" with "cultural," we have a good description of Temel's dilemma as he struggled to decide how to compress Turkish into Temelçe and how to translate statements imbued with deep cultural references like "I am a *çağdaş* woman." In this chapter, our protagonists will contend with this dilemma, and with the dilemma of deciding whose *moral* world to align with in the transcoding process. Their management of these dilemmas, I will show, changes the news.

In this chapter I will depart from the style of presenting character narratives with a theory section at the end which draws on examples from the narratives. This chapter will look in close detail at micro-level interactions, so will be easier to follow with data and analysis side-by-side, and big-picture theory to conclude. By focusing on the micro-level, I can show how signals are

compressed, enhanced, and distorted as they pass from source to fixer to reporter, resulting in different information constituting news stories.

Though the focus of this chapter will be on information sent and received, the broader point I wish to make is that the informational and interactional dimensions of interviews are actually inseparable, that we cannot understand why information is transmitted in particular ways without reference to the interactions that produce the information and to the contexts of those interactions. For that reason, I will describe not just transformations of signal and meaning between source and reporter, but also the interactions that produced the signals and meaning-making.

Ayşe, 2016

As Turkish security forces recaptured city centers across the southeast from the PKK's youth wing in early 2016 and the death toll mounted, it struck me that foreign news reports about the conflict were still using the same estimate for the total death toll of the Turkey-PKK conflict--approximately 40,000--that had appeared a decade earlier when I first started following the issue. I decided to write an article about where the estimate came from and why it seemed stuck at 40,000.

I hired Ayşe to help me reach out to the government ministries and armed services, which were claiming high numbers of "neutralized" militants in the latest round of fighting, as well as NGOs which had kept independent tallies of combatant and civilian casualties over the years. Ayşe also had the idea of requesting court documentation from the trial of Kurdish insurgent PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, in which casualty counts were included as evidence of his alleged crimes against state and nation. Ayşe had little luck on the state side: the Interior Ministry directed her to the Armed Forces General Chief of Staff, and the Armed Forces General Chief of

Staff directed her back to the Interior Ministry. Meanwhile the court directed her to the Justice Ministry for the Öcalan trial documentation, and the Justice Ministry directed her back to the court.

She did, however, manage to arrange an interview with Ümit Efe, a senior representative of İnsan Hakları Derneği (İHD), in English, The Human Rights Organization. İHD is associated with the Kurdish movement, and over a dozen members of their staff are counted among the thousands of unsolved murders connected to the conflict. Ayşe already knew Ümit, first through Ayşe's labor rights activism and then as a go-to source for reporters. This selectivity of sources based on Ayşe's social ties and her savvy, or lack thereof, in cajoling state institutions into engaging with me already, before any interviews were done, shaped the informational content of my story. I would be relying on opposition voices for my information, even as my base was covered as far as presenting my reporting as balanced: I could write that the ministries, military and court did not respond to my queries.

I came to the interview looking to get a quotation about why the organization counted casualties in the first place, that is, why the numbers state institutions published were not reliable. I was also hoping to get more information about İHD's methods for gathering data, which are poorly explained in annual reports issued since the early 1990s containing casualty counts from the Kurdish conflict. I had gotten my hands on as many of İHD's annual reports as I could, but I only found hard copies of a few years at Boğaziçi University library, and the links to older reports were broken on İHD's website. At İHD's office they told Ayşe that they did not have hard copies in Istanbul.

Ayşe and Ümit greeted each other warmly when we met at the dingily cool cafe next to İHD's Istanbul office. From the start, Ayşe introduced me and the story in a way she predicted

would be most amenable to Ümit, as an Iranian-American who spoke Persian (Persian and Kurdish languages are close cousins, and in my experience and evidently Ayşe's, Persian is perceived as a kindred ethnic/cultural identity among Kurds in Turkey). As Ayşe began to explain the story, Ümit piped in that she had recently been to Cizre and Nusaybin and asked if we were also covering the destruction of those towns in recent months. "I think we'll also include that," Ayşe told her, despite me giving no indication in our previous discussions that I intended to do so. Ayşe's confirmation was interactionally oriented, giving a nod to Ümit's strategic norm to encourage her engagement with us, but it may have also have shaped the informational content of the interview, as it sanctioned Ümit's repeated returns to talking about Cizre and Nusaybin throughout the interview.

Ayşe, though ethnically Turkish herself, was familiar enough with Kurdish-leftist coding norms to address Ümit with insider lingo, for instance calling PKK fighters "guerillas" whereas she had called them "terrorists" in her communications with Turkish state institutions. In Turkish, the word "guerilla" is not neutral but signals sympathy with the cause. Even as Ayşe spoke in Kurdish nationalist codes to Ümit, she softened Ümit's own Kurdish nationalist signals in her English language translations: when Ümit said "Kurdistan," for instance, Ayşe translated it back to me as "the southeast" or as "Kurdish cities and areas." This choice served, she consciously or unconsciously predicted, to make Ümit a more reliable information source to an outsider like me.

Other distortions Ayşe made when transcoding words from Turkish into English had less to do with politics in general, and more to do with subtly turning Ümit's utterances into information encoded to provide what I was seeking. So, when Ümit said the state "never fully gave the names of soldiers" who died, Ayşe translated it as "Government never gave all figures

about the security forces." "Names" turned into "figures," as Ayşe knew numbers were my interest, even though the words are not equivalent in meaning: the state could have provided complete figures without publicly naming everyone killed. Likewise, "soldiers" turned into "security forces" as Ayşe knew the latter was the category used in the casualty statistics we had been perusing, although security forces also include not just soldiers but also police and others. It is irrelevant for our purposes whether these changes were consciously calculated or unintentional--perhaps in the course of our research I had gotten Ayşe thinking in terms of "figures" and "security forces" and so those words just automatically popped out. It is enough to note simply that neither "name" nor "soldier" is difficult to translate directly nor does either carry ambiguous meanings in Turkish, yet Ayşe did the extra work of encoding them to accord with my line of inquiry.

It soon became clear that Ümit was uninterested or unable to speak in any detail about İHD's methodology for figuring out in the fog of insurgency how many had died and who were civilian. She would not be helping me to find the missing years of the organization's annual reports. I shifted gears to asking what she thought about the media's loose use of casualty figures in an exchange transcribed below, from about 20 minutes into the interview. The passage provides an example of the meandering route information can take from asker to answerer and back and the way clarity can be lost and re-found as messages are translated back and forth. Turkish language speech is in italics.

Turn	Content	Speaker
1	I've seen a lot of different numbers in the media, both inside of Turkey and in the foreign media, that some reports say 30 thousand, sometimes 37 thousand, sometimes 40, sometimes 45 thousand. I wonder, does she know where those numbers come from and how reliable they are?	Noah
2	*This of course-- I feel this way; Nuh* (the author's name in Middle Eastern languages) *also feels this way.* (inaudible) *the total figure from*	Ayşe

	the beginning of the war is unclear; (subject unclear) *says that it became 30 [thousand], it became 35, then we passed forty, [then] they pulled it back to 35. Both from the domestic press, foreign media, as well as from institutions, from the state. Why is it like this?*	
3	*How do **you** feel?*	Ümit
4	This is also (inaudible)--	Ayşe
5	No no no, she should answer the question this time (Ayşe and Noah laugh)	Noah
6	*In **your** view*-- (inaudible, Noah interrupts)	Ayşe
7	I interviewed [Ayşe] yesterday so--	Noah
8	(talking over both me and Ayşe) *You mean civilians?*	Ümit
9	*I did an interview too.*	Ayşe
10	*The death of civilians?*	Ümit
11	*No, the total number, like it changes*--	Ayşe
12	*The total number*--	Ümit
13	(talking over Ümit) *Reality*--	Ayşe
14	*Because the state doesn't tell the realities. Actually* (inaudible) *psychological. But we know that, for instance in Nusaybin, they sent medicine to soldiers in need for mental depression and they sent a psychiatrist.*	Ümit
15	*When?*	Ayşe
16	*Two days ago. [Soldiers] began to submit petitions in large numbers to resign [or] to change postings. The state actually doesn't only perform a physical attack, it performs a psychological attack. And it does not provide true figures either about itself or about the other side. For that reason, the work of human rights organizations is very important; lawyers' (inaudible) the people's testimonies is very important.*	Ümit
17	First of all, it always have been a psychological war, so the government never gives the true figures. For example, and of the impact now in Nusaybin recently there's a spreading depression among the security forces and a psychiatrist was sent there.	Ayşe

This passage illustrates, first of all, that the reality of interviews can be far messier than the ideal-typical question>translation>answer>translation>question organization of interpreted interviews when that order is not enforced and when coding and informational conflicts exist among interacting parties (Wadensjö 1998:104-106). Ümit, apparently confused by the question, redirects it to Ayşe to answer instead of responding herself; Ayşe and I depart from the question-answer format to chat about my previous interview with her; Ümit and Ayşe exchange unclear sentence fragments as the former tries to understand what we are asking; everyone interrupts and talks over everyone else. Yet from this messy exchange, full of cross-talk and confusion, I received information that I could turn into a straightforward quotation that satisfied my expectation, which had not been satisfied in my previous questions that directly asked about the provenance and reliability of different casualty counts, for a line from someone with institutional authority about official figures being unreliable. My article read, "Counts of the dead, Ümit Efe told me, 'have always been a means of psychological warfare.'"

But how in the actual interaction did we arrive at that information? After Ümit and Ayşe exchange asides from Speaking Turns 8-13 that fail to clear up the initial question, Ümit responds with a statement at Turn 14 about the psychological problems of soldiers in the southeast that seems to have little bearing on the question. Ayşe then asks "when?" at Turn 15, effectively abandoning the original line of questioning to align herself with the topic Ümit wants to discuss, shifting her position in the conversation from translator to interlocutor. In Ümit's response to "when?", however, comes fortuitously an utterance that Ayşe can transcode back into information that satisfies my broader informational expectations, even if it does not directly answer my last question. In Ümit's original utterance at Turn 16, it is unclear whether the "psychological attack" she is referring to related to the military's own troops whom she

previously discussed as becoming depressed and wanting to leave their posts, to the provision of false figures she subsequently discusses, or if psychological warfare is just a theme that ambiguously tied both of those issues together (to paraphrase Freely as quoted above, a correspondence that cannot be reduced to an equation). Yet, Ayşe renders the statement as "it always have been a psychological war, so the government never gives the true figures," with "so" providing a clear causal link between psychological war and government figures.

I wrote down this last translation as "It's always been a psych war so govt never gives real figures" and scrawled a star beside it to remind myself to quote the statement. When it came to transcoding Ayşe's non-fluent spoken statement, as already transcoded into handwritten shorthand in my notepad, into a full sentence in standard English, I distorted the signal one final time into a formulation that made the relation of psychological warfare to counts of the dead clearer still. I doubt Ümit would object to being quoted in this way, but reading my article, one would have to assume that the quotation was produced simply from me asking an understood question to which Ümit provided an understood answer, rather than out of a three-way exchange in which the central actor, Ayşe, had to worry as she spoke, not just about relaying information but about the immediate necessity of managing the competing normative pulls of two people who wanted to talk about different things.

It is worth noting that Ayşe dropped entirely Ümit's last sentence of Turn 16 about the importance of human rights organizations and lawyers. This utterance was actually of interest to me, but in the process of compressing the data with which Ümit overloaded her, Ayşe, consciously or not, judged that information of lesser importance than the information about government psychological warfare, which she led with as it would satisfy me, and mention of troops' mental problems, whose transmission was oriented toward Ümit's moral world insofar as

that topic constituted the bulk of Ümit's speech in Turns 14 and 16.

Much of the rest of the interview was more or less a conversation between Ümit and Ayşe (Ümit barely looked at me) about the former's fact-finding trip to Cizre and Nusaybin and the situation there, which Ayşe relayed on to me in summarized form. Ayşe, having worked for me to align Ümit to my story and extract as much useful information as she could for my purposes, now catered to Ümit's strategic norms, giving her the opportunity to say her piece. She in a sense buffered me from the information contamination of a source-oriented conversation, translating just bits and pieces that she judged might in fact conform to my informational expectations.

Solmaz, 2016 (Day 1)

Later that spring, following the closure of Gülen movement-affiliated news outlets including *Zaman* and *Today's Zaman* newspapers, I worked on a story about the state crackdown on opposition media. To help me reach out to journalists working for movement-affiliated media, I hired Solmaz, who, as discussed in the introduction, had just left *Today's Zaman*. She was in the unusual position of being an insider-outsider in the Gülen media field, on the one hand critical of, but on the other hand familiar with and socially tied to movement-affiliated journalists.

This familiarity made her a helpful coach, teaching me about our sources' backgrounds and norms to pre-align me to make sense of what they would tell me and to give me the tools to elicit the information from them that I sought. She coached me that whereas adherents refer to the Gülen movement as *Hizmet* (service), outsiders use the mildly disparaging term *Cemaat* (the flock). She told me about how one source was long-winded and should be interrupted if I wanted to get in a word edgewise, how one was a Twitter addict and might give interesting information

if I ask him about his use of social media, how one had recent legal troubles to which he might refer or be guided to discuss.

Solmaz also talked generally about the atmosphere at the Gülen movement-affiliated media, how she felt she had more freedom to write what she wanted at *Today's Zaman* than journalists did at many mainstream outlets, as long as she respected the obvious unspoken red line of not criticizing the movement. She described the media group as resembling a bulletin for the movement to talk to itself, with guests like her given a bit of space on the side to do their own reporting. I wrote in my notes on a day we met to discuss the story, "[she] says *Zaman* when it started was more of a newsletter for a community than a newspaper."

Solmaz first arranged a visit to *Özgür Düşünce* (Free Thought) to speak with journalist Cihan Azar. I have already described this interview in the introduction, but one exchange is of particular interest for illustrating the connections between a fixer's social position and the transmission of information. Solmaz's abilities and limitations as a translator, as well as her choices of how to translate, depended not just upon linguistic skill, but on her social position and understanding of the parties she brokered.

Turn	**Content**	**Speaker**
1	So I notice you're avoiding saying anything, you're avoiding the word *Hizmet*, you're avoiding the word Gülen. Is it dangerous now to even talk about these things?	Noah
2	*I am seeing that the words Hizmet and Gülen are not even coming out of your mouth*--	Solmaz
3	(over her last words) *Because the work that we do* (Solmaz tries to interject) *is completely journalism.*	Cihan
4	Because our job that we do is completely just journalism.	Solmaz
5	*Our viewpoint, our situation*-- (pauses)	Cihan
6	Our point of view, our stance	Solmaz

7	*A-- we aren't a PR agency.*	Cihan
8	We're not a PR agency.	Solmaz
9	*I mean we are not* (inaudible) *advertisement.*	Cihan
10	We're not an advertising agency.	Solmaz
11	*I mean we're not a committee doing the Hizmet movement's publications.*	Cihan
12	*Uh not?*-- (trails off)	Solmaz
13	*Like we are not a press* (inaudible) *of the Hizmet movement.*	Cihan
14	*You're not? You are that way [öylesiniz]* (ambiguous whether this is a question)	Solmaz
15	*We are not. I mean, we are doing journalism.*	Cihan
16	He said, we're journalists. We're not people just here to advertise for the *Hizmet* movement.	Solmaz

After Cihan cuts Solmaz off before she has completed her question, the statement-translation-statement-translation order of speaking goes smoothly until Turn 12. Solmaz seems to be confused, and until Turn 15 the two engage in a side conversation to clarify Cihan's statement of Turn 11. That statement was clear as a linguistic signal: "we're not a committee doing the *Hizmet* movement's publications." It is no more difficult to translate, when viewed without context, than the other statements that she translated without difficulty. Yet the decodability of a signal is not just a property of the signal itself, but depends on the receiver, Solmaz in this case. Solmaz was unable to decode, that is, make sense of, his statement because it clashed with her understanding of the Gülen-affiliated movement and with the way she had aligned me pre-interaction. Before the interview, Solmaz had *defended* the movement media precisely by saying they should be thought of and judged as a community publication. Now Cihan was saying that they were *not* a community publication, a challenge both to her alignment efforts and to her

standing as an information source to me. They go back and forth as she makes sure that is what he *really* meant. It is unclear whether the second part of her utterance at Turn 14, "you are that way," is a question or a rebuttal; it is not phrased as a question.

When she does pivot to translate back to me, she departs from the precedent she established in Turns 4, 6, 8, and 10 of taking on Cihan's subject position (e.g. "we are"). Instead, she translates this last statement with the preface "He said," thus distancing herself from the utterance and signaling the information's unreliability to me (see also Diriker 2004 on inconsistent subject positions of conference interpreters). It is not just information that reaches me, but also a nudge as to how to interpret that information.

A minute later, Solmaz was sure to point out to me, in an aside to a translation, that Cihan used the movement insider's term Hocaeffendi to refer to Fethullah Gülen. She took time for this explanation instead of taking the more efficient route of translating the former title into the latter name (as e.g. Can does below translating "Cemaat" into "Gülen movement"). Solmaz's aside reinforced that Cihan was an adherent of the movement and so affected how I decoded and found meaning in signals from Cihan. She was encouraging me to interpret Cihan's words in alignment of her transcendent strategic norms: I should not take Cihan's claim of independence at face value.

Solmaz, 2016 (Day 2)

Not long after visiting *Özgür Düşünce*, Solmaz and I went to the offices of *Özgür Gündem* (Free Agenda), which despite the similar name is a newspaper associated not with the Gülen movement but with the Kurdish movement. She had met Çağdaş Kaplan, our first interviewee, in the course of her work at *Today's Zaman*. Once the Gülen movement-affiliated media joined the opposition, its journalists, including Solmaz, began to sympathetically cover

human rights and media issues related to the Kurds and so came into contact with their Kurdish counterparts. Yet compared to Ayşe, who was socially and epistemologically close to the Kurdish Left and had a refined sense of how to code switch between Ümit and me, Solmaz was new to figuring out how to transcode Kurdish leftist journalist speech into foreign reporter-field speech.

In particular, Solmaz seemed oddly disinclined to frame issues in her translations as relating to the Kurds specifically. As we asked Çağdaş about his experience of prosecution for his journalism, Solmaz's translations tended to lose data in a way that made it appear he was speaking about the press in general, rather than the Kurdish press specifically.

Timespan	**Content**	**Speaker**
2:32.3 - 2:34.9	*News that was published on Diçle News Agency with my own signature,*	Çağdaş
2:34.9 - 2:42.1	uh was that the news article that had my own byline for Diçle Haber Ajans	Solmaz
2:42.0 - 2:45.6	*live telephone connections that I made with Kurdish channels in Europe,*	Çağdaş
2:45.5 - 2:57.8	The live uh phone um feeds that I gave to uh European uh news outlets	Solmaz
2:57.7 - 3:00.4	*and telephone meetings that I made with news sources,*	Çağdaş
3:00.4 - 3:05.9	And the uh telephone conversations that I had with my sources.	Solmaz
3:05.9 - 3:07.1	*interviews,*	Çağdaş
3:07.0 - 3:08.8	the interviews	Solmaz
3:08.7 - 3:09.5	mhm	Noah
3:09.5 - 3:19.5	*these were put [forward] as evidence and [it was claimed that] these served as propaganda for the PKK Kongra-Gel[81] terror organization, [and] therefore also that I was an organization member.*	Çağdaş

[81] The PKK adopted Kongra-Gel, short for the People's Congress of Kurdistan, as its official name in 2003 to mirror a shift in official ideology. Solmaz did not translate "Kongra-Gel," perhaps because she thought it more likely to confuse than to inform me, or perhaps because she was not comfortable using an insider term to refer to the organization.

3:19.4 - 3:32.5	They were, these were used as evidence against me saying that I was producing propaganda for the PKK and that I was a member of a terrorist organization.	Solmaz

. . .

4:04.6 - 4:16.4	*This case--at that time, the AKP government preferred a policy of security on the Kurdish problem and [this case] was opened as a political case. The silencing of the press was wanted, the Kurdish press.*	Çağdaş
4:16.4 - 4:32.8	Uh the, in this period the AKP the AKP opened this case as a political uh case for national security and uh tried us for this reason.	Solmaz
4:32.7 - 4:39.0	*I mean the Kurdish press's most important new organizations were attacked [basıldı]; silencing them was wanted.*	Çağdaş
4:39.0 – 4:39.4	Mhm	Noah
4:39.4 - 4:54.4	Uh and the uh this was an attack on the Kurdish media, and the Kurdish media is, and these outlets are the most important outlets. And this was a, this was an attempt to silence these Kurdish outlets.	Solmaz

Following both Çağdaş's Turkish and Solmaz's English, it became apparent that she kept leaving out the word "Kurdish" in her translations to me. At 2:50, Çağdaş's "*Kurdish channels in Europe*" became "European news outlets." At 4:20, Çağdaş's "*the AKP government preferred a policy of security on the Kurdish problem. . . The silencing of the press was wanted, the Kurdish press*" became "the AKP opened this case as a political case for national security and tried us for this reason." It was only after I back-channeled directly to Çağdaş at 4:39 with an "mhm" *before* Solmaz had a chance to translate his Turkish that she began translating the word "Kurdish," perhaps reminded that I understood his Turkish and was aware of her pattern of omission. Throughout the rest of the interview, she was inconsistent about including the word "Kurdish" in her translations.

I cannot know for sure why she repeatedly lost the word "Kurdish" in translation. Perhaps, consciously or unconsciously, she marked mention of Kurdishness and Kurdish organizations

specifically as divisive, as marking our source as a partial and unreliable special interest group member (whereas Cihan, whom Solmaz went out of her way to remind me was a special interest group member, had been careful to always frame the Gülen media's oppression in universal terms of press freedom). She may also have tacitly judged that removing these references served to better align his utterances to my interest in Turkish press freedom in general. Or perhaps, more calculatingly, she was trying to direct me away from giving special consideration to the Kurds by lumping them in with the rest of the media.

Solmaz's lack of experience reporting on the issues Çağdaş was discussing also impaired her abilities as an information receiver: she found some of his words and references incomprehensible, whereas she could decode terminology specific to the Gülen movement and its legal issues to me with ease born out of greater familiarity. Social proximity makes brokers biased toward parties in the strategic sense of pressuring them to transcode signals in a way that provides them the information they seek; at a more basic level, social closeness also makes brokers biased toward their coding norms, in the sense of understanding what they are talking about with minimal exposition.

As Çağdaş explained his 13 months in jail as he was tried with dozens of other journalists for association with the KCK (Union of Kurdistan Communities, an umbrella organization connected to the PKK), Solmaz first struggled to translate the legalese name of the special court that tried the KCK cases. Whereas Can, as described below, had previously reported on and was closely familiar with the legal case of another journalist we interviewed, Solmaz had never worked as a court reporter or covered the KCK trials, nor had she learned before our interview the conventions for translating related terms into English.

Then, Çağdaş made an oblique reference to the Gülen-Erdoğan schism that Solmaz missed in her translation, setting the stage for further confusion of the English transcript. The subtlety of Çağdaş's reference to Gülenist misdeeds was likely a politeness to Solmaz, whom he knew had worked for *Today's Zaman*, yet that interactional gesture of subtlety toward what he presumed to be Solmaz's norms had the effect of substantially transforming the information transmitted to me.

Timespan	**Content**	**Speaker**
5:51.6 - 6:02.7	*Of course the AKP government--I mean changes took place. Changes took place in the political atmosphere in Turkey. When it was proved that this court had done illegal thing[s], these courts were closed down.*	Çağdaş
6:02.6 - 6:13.8	Uh of course there were lawlessness uh involved in these cases on, by the part of the AKP and since then the, this specific type of court has been closed.	Solmaz
6:13.8 - 6:21.1	*President Erdoğan personally--at that time he was prime minister--also said these courts were not going to be trustworthy [güven olmayacağını söyledi]*	Çağdaş
6:21.0 - 6:32.2	Uh the, the prime, the then prime minister himself Erdoğan then said that these cases were, were not secure? (questioning intonation)	Solmaz
6:32.2 - 6:35.0	*But he had himself opened [the courts] before that* (inaudible, interrupted)	Çağdaş
6:35.0 - 6:36.6	But he's also the one that filed them.	Solmaz
6:36.6 - 6:37.5	*He closed [the courts] himself.*	Çağdaş
6:37.5 - 6:40.1	And he's also the one who shut them.	Solmaz

The events Çağdaş 5:51-6:02 is obliquely referencing are as follows: the special courts in which the KCK cases were tried had been created in 2004 along with positions of "specially authorized" public prosecutors with special powers to prosecute civil servants. Prosecutors and judges thought to be affiliated with the Gülen movement spearheaded, with AKP government

support, both the Ergenekon coup plot trials and the KCK trials. But, as the rift between Gülen and Erdoğan grew, the special prosecutors started going after government loyalists, particularly those involved in the Kurdish peace negotiations of which Gülen apparently disapproved, eventually culminating in the 2013 corruption scandal that implicated members of Erdoğan's inner circle. The government responded by purging the judiciary of suspected Gülenist prosecutors, judges, and police and passing a law that put an end to the special courts and special prosecutorial powers. These were the "changes in the political atmosphere" that Çağdaş references; the "illegal things" were wiretaps of senior government officials (Jenkins 2012; Sinclair-Webb 2014:15-22; George 2018).

Solmaz may have been critical of the Gülen movement, but she had spent years working in its media bubble, and may not have been aware of the details of these events in the judiciary. Or she may have wanted to keep the conversation's focus on Erdoğan and the AKP, as they were, as she understood it, to be the principal villains of my story. At any rate, she turns Gulenist illegality into AKP illegality in her translation from 6:02-6:13. The problem is that this distortion makes the rest of Çağdaş's account nonsensical. First, from Solmaz's 6:21-6:40 translation it seems that Erdoğan reverses his position and turns against the court because of his own party's illegality, which is not consistent with what any of us understood to be Erdoğan's pattern of behavior.

The translated narrative only grew more internally inconsistent over the next two minutes. The closure of courts in Çağdaş's original became the closure of his case in Solmaz's English rendition, but then the case that Solmaz told me had been closed was brought to the constitutional court. In Çağdaş's original, the constitutional court then "dropped" the case (i.e. declined to hear it, pushing it back down to the local court level), which Solmaz, unfamiliar with

either Turkish or English legalese, translated as “overturned.” So the narrative transmitted to me in English of the history and current status of Çağdaş’s case made no sense: the case was tried at a special court which was closed down because of AKP lawlessness, prompting (AKP leader) Erdoğan to close the case, which then went to the constitutional court, which overturned the case, which was going to have a hearing in a few days at a local court.

The overall effect of these distortions was to make Çağdaş’s utterances useless as information for my story. The signal-to-noise ratio, from my point of view, was too low to be useful, like a photo so grainy you can’t be confident what objects were captured except in the broadest strokes. In my article, I reduced the information about Çağdaş’s legal travails to a line that he “has been on trial since 2011.”

I could, of course, have done more research to figure out from other sources what actually happened with the KCK journalist trials, as I later did for this study. But that would have required extra time and effort. Reporters have deadlines, and even when they do not, stories only remain topical and sellable to editors for so long. In my case, I did not have a deadline, or even to worry about publishing news as an essential income source, but I had too much other work, between my other reporting and fixing and interviews for my study, to go to the trouble of deciphering Çağdaş’s cryptically-translated narrative (or even to carefully listen back to and transcribe my recording) in time for that article’s publication. The point is that there may be more tools available in the Internet Age than ever that reporters can use to complement and check fixer-brokered information transmissions, but using those tools increases reporters’ workloads--what fixers are hired to reduce in the first place. The time and effort saved from the delegation of language skills, social networking, acquiring background knowledge, and so forth

to fixers is expended again if reporters must re-discover the same information through different channels.

Can, 2016

I hired Can to help me for the same story about the crackdown on the Turkish press. The "peg" on which I thought I could hang the story, in other words, the important recent event or subject of international interest to which I would connect my piece to convince an editor that audiences would find it newsworthy, was the recent seizure of *Zaman*. When I discussed my idea with Can, though, he did not suggest any Gülenist media sources but instead encouraged me to contextualize recent events with the history of the Gülen movement's former support for and collusion in targeting critical journalists. Can had in a sense been a victim of the Gülen movement's media activities insofar as he left his job at a Turkish newspaper after it was seized over financial malfeasance and then sold to a businessman loyal to the government, who oversaw the hiring of both AKP loyalists and Gülenists (then allies) who eventually pushed Can to quit. He said that in addition to fixing for this story, he could serve as a source as well if I wanted to interview him.

Can also pushed hard for us to interview someone at the news website *OdaTV* whom the AKP-Gülen alliance had prosecuted in the Ergenekon trials, an idea I was initially skeptical of because I thought of *OdaTV* as too far outside the mainstream. *OdaTV* is associated with the ultra-nationalist, leftist *ulusalcı* faction, whose most prominent political figure, Doğu Perinçek, was convicted in Switzerland for Armenian genocide denial and has garnered just a miniscule percentage of the vote when he has run for office. *OdaTV*'s founder Söner Yalçın, was for his part notorious for anti-Semitism and conspiracy theorizing (Baer 2013). Can readily told me that the outlet was controversial but nonetheless, on his second or third attempt, convinced me that it

would be worth talking to an erstwhile defendant or two of the *OdaTV* case, part of the Ergenekon trials, because the Gülen-affiliated media played a prominent role attacking other journalists and publicly disseminating falsified evidence in that case.

When we settled on a list of prospective sources, including from *OdaTV*, Can picked up one of the two cell phones he had laid out on our café table and checked frequently, asking me as he dialed what outlet I was writing for. I stumblingly said that I had pitched the story to *The Nation* (which ended up rejecting it) and Can translated this over the phone into me *working* for *The Nation* as he requested interviews. His tone speaking to Barış Terkoğlu of *OdaTV* was familiar and jovial: "How's it going?" "Good, bro."

We went to *OdaTV*'s office in Kadıköy district later that week. Unlike Solmaz in our interview with Çağdaş, Can knew Barış's legal case inside and out. He had attended more than a dozen of his court appearances during the long-drawn-out OdaTV case as a fixer for various foreign news organizations. Barış was taken to court as a conspirator in the alleged Ergenekon plot to topple the government after he reported that evidence against other defendants had been planted.

As Barış described the events leading to his prosecution, Can aligned the information in transit to my interest in the prosecution of journalists, dropping words unimportant to this line of inquiry. He also moderated Barış's claims by adding words that made them more amenable to a skeptical outsider like me. For example:

Content	**Speaker**
Some soldiers were being prosecuted for bombs found in an excavation. I found and published camera recording (inaudible) *concrete evidence that they were buried there by police.*	Barış
Also I, I also showed some footages that have been founded in Ergenekon case during the investigations that there's some weapons buried in some	Can

places. But I found some footage that police was, it is quite possible that police have planted that weapons to that places.

Can dropped mention of soldiers--I was interested in *journalists'* prosecutions, after all--and not because he was simply pressed for time: he meanwhile added that this was part of the Ergenekon investigation as clarification for me. Can also rendered Barış's "concrete evidence that they were buried there by police" into English as a much softer formulation: "it is quite possible that police have planted that weapons to that places."

It might seem that I am finding patterns in random mistakes. Maybe Can just is not a great translator. He does, after all, confusingly conflate the footage Barış obtained with evidence used in the Ergenekon trials in a way that does not serve any apparent interactional purpose. But the pattern of dropping and adding data not at random but to align parties was persistent. These additions and subtractions of information often coincided with struggles to transcode complex sentence constructions. Another way of thinking of these signal distortions is that in managing information overload, Can compressed signals from speakers by losing some of the signal data. Can highlighted some information as important to relay to me because it conformed to my coding and informational expectations and was sure to preserve that in the translation process, while less useful data, like the word "soldiers," were less likely to be highlighted and so more likely to be dropped. Take the passage below, in which Barış overloads Can's capacity as a channel/transcoder with a long and complex sentence full to bursting with sub-clauses:

Content	**Speaker**
In brief, the thing I want to say is that Zaman newspaper supported this arresting of journalists in Turkey, and behaved as a part of the political power's conspiracy against everyone opposed to it, and, like an organization mouthpiece or the publication of a structure organized for [the purposes of] the state, just about played a leading role in this matter.	Barış
Actually *Zaman* newspaper supported, when we look at that period, *Zaman* newspaper has supported the journalism--uh journalist arrests to be taken, taken the journalism	Can

into the lock [NB I think he means "locking up journalists"], and they were spokespeople of this mentality in Turkey.

As he struggles to translate, Can leaves out the more conspiracy-theorist-sounding stuff about "the political power's conspiracy against everyone opposed to it" and "a structure organized for the state." In Can's rendition, *Zaman* is acting hypocritically but not conspiratorially, as in Barış's original. This softening could only go so far, however. Can's freedom of choice to speak in ways that brought utterances into alignment with end-destination interlocutor's norms was limited by 1) Can's own transcendent norm of avoiding mistranslation (wherever he drew that line), and 2) Barış's and my respective expectations that his messages reach me, coupled with Can's knowledge that we were able to check his work to some limited extent: Barış and I knew enough of one another's language to tell if Can was getting too creative. Besides that, he knew we could rely on things such as the other brokered party's body language and the length of their utterances to get a rough idea of whether what they were saying lined up with Can's translations.

It is worth noting that Barış's utterance above, which took him about 25 seconds to express, was exceptionally long for the interview. From the start, Can would interrupt him when he continued too long, disciplining Barış to conform to a conversational rhythm that both minimized translator overload and served my expectation to be included at frequent intervals. After the first few minutes of the interview, Barış's utterances mostly lasted 5-15 seconds, and he began to adapt to the enforced conversational rhythm by speaking in shorter, punchy sentences and pausing on his own for dramatic effect as he gave Can openings to translate, as in the next passage below.

This passage also illustrates how, on occasion, Can used his knowledge of the *OdaTV* case to fill in Barış's statements and to read between his lines, adding information to Barış's original utterances:

Turn	Content	Speaker
1	*First the target would be shown by the Gülen media.*	Barış
2	First you started to be appointed by the Gülen Movement and media.	Can
3	*It would be explained that you were a coup-ist [darbeci], that you were a terrorist, that actually you were a person with secret goals working to topple the government.*	Barış
4	They started to write and talk about that you're a coup, pro-coup person, that you have some hidden agenda to take the government, to make coup or something. They were always publishing these kind of stories first.	Can
5	*What an interesting coincidence: in exactly the same period that pro-Gülen police listened to your phones, they began to follow you with vehicles.*	Barış
6	It was such an interesting coincidence that the same time a pro-Gülen police officers and Gülenist other uh officers was following you, taps your phone, they tapped your phone in the same time, follows you where you go or, you know, take a close look at your personal and private life.	Can

The only straightforward mistranslation, obscuring meaning without doing any alignment work that I can discern, is his use of "appointed" in Turn 2. Other "mistranslations" or signal distortions are embellishments or reductions of the original that serve to bring Barış's utterances into alignment with my coding norms and informational interests. Adding "They were always publishing these kind of stories first" at Turn 4 adds emphasis to Barış's statement and clarified the subject doing the defaming to be the Gülen media, whereas Barış's use of passive voice was normative in Turkish but weak in English. At Turn 4 Can also leaves out "terrorist," which serves to align our codes of communication, as the term is used more freely in Turkish to refer to people not engaged in violence than it is in English and would, he may have consciously or unconsciously predicted, throw me off. (See e.g. Weise 2016 on Erdoğan's expansive use of the

term.) Can's addition of "take a close look at your personal and private life," when Barış only says police surveilled you, at the end of Turn 6 might be better described as *predictive translation* than as straightforward *mistranslation*. Can knew from his past reporting that details of defendants' sex lives had been leaked in the press and addressed in court. Barış did get around to mentioning that, "your sexual life, your family life, your private relations were published by those newspapers" four minutes later.

In other cases, Can's translations folded his own explanations of what Barış was saying seamlessly into his renditions of Barış's words. From an information transmission purist perspective this was problematic signal bleed, but for a pragmatist like Can it was a more efficient way to align us into coding harmony than to make separate asides to me in which Can would have to take the time to mark that he was changing from translator to interlocutor role.

In this example, Barış is talking about Gülen's pragmatism in instructing his followers to conform to secular norms in order to access and infiltrate state institutions:

Content	**Speaker**
When the headscarf [türban] debate was going on at universities, Gülen, instead of fighting, advised his loyalists to take off their headscarves and enter university.	Barış
For example, when there was this fight come up in universities because of the closed, closed girls-- I mean covered girls was forbidden to enter universities. Gülen said, was okay, and said his supporters that 'You can go to university uncovered.' He suggested that to his supporters.	Can

Barış assumed the signal receiver's knowledge of the previous ban, lifted by the AKP after years of resistance, on headscarved women entering public buildings, including universities, in the name of secularism in his reference to "the headscarf debate. . . at universities." Can expanded on the original with the explication "covered girls was forbidden to enter universities" based on a prediction, conscious or not, that I would otherwise find Barış's reference to a university headscarf debate incomprehensible. Whereas Solmaz's inexpert distortions of signals

from Çağdaş had made his account incoherent, Can distorted signals from Barış to make his account *more* coherent to an outsider.

Listening back to the transcripts and noting where Can diverged from direct translation and where Barış added explanatory notes himself, I could approximately reconstruct Can's and Barış's respective predictions of what I did and did not know and where they diverged. When Barış revealed his prediction that I was unfamiliar with the PKK in explaining, as he discussed the prosecution of a Gülen critic, "*He was accused with making propaganda for the PKK organization-- I mean a separatist organization*," Can by contrast revealed his prediction that I *was* familiar with the PKK by compressing his translation to "charged with being a member of PKK."

Some of Can's changes to the signals he was relaying from Barış would have been unnecessary, and could have carried *more* information, if he had taken the time to tune the end receiver (me) beforehand through coaching. Solmaz, having coached me on the information to be gleaned about a speaker based on whether they used the term *Hizmet* or *Cemaat* for the Gülen movement, was sure to preserve the original Turkish appellations in her English translations. Can provided no such coaching and so, either predicting I was not familiar with the Turkish name for the movement or preferring the more neutral English "Gülen movement" to the more negatively charged Turkish "Cemaat," chose to translate the latter for the former throughout the interview.

Can's signal enhancements (or distortions, depending on point of view) worked in both directions. When I asked vague, unclear, wordy questions, he would improve on them in ways he predicted would elicit a more useful response than direct translations of my original questions. Sometimes this was more or less explicit to me, as when Can asked clarifying side questions of me (e.g. Turn 2 below) before translating.

Turn	Content	Speaker
1	Since, in the last two years since Gülen and Erdoğan have been fighting, have Zaman and other newspapers continued to write about for example about *OdaTV*, about secular opposition papers? Have they changed the way that they talk about for example what you do?	Noah
2	(overlapping with the last of my words) you mean the fight, the fight started, after the fight started?	Can
3	Yeah just since after the fight started.	Noah
4	So after the brouhaha [telaş] broke out between Erdoğan and Cemaat, after the fight grew, did Zaman continue to target you, journalists like you, for instance OdaTV and such? Or did a change take place in [Zaman's] policy?	Can
5	After the war erupted, both sides actually held back from directly opposing journalists like us. (Can: mhm) I can even say this: the general trend was that they tried to pull (inaudible), not just me, to their [respective] sides. (Can: mm) Because they wanted to make alliance.	Barış
6	After the fight come up, both sides, Erdoğan's side and Gülen's side, they hesitate to hit against the journalists like them. Actually I can also say as an addition that they want to pull us near to them in order to make a kind of a coalition against the other side.	Can

Above, Can narrows my question to get at what he predicts I really want to know by asking not the general question: whether *Zaman* "continued to write about" *OdaTV*, but specifically "did *Zaman* continue to target you?" He then further assists Barış in providing an answer to satisfy me by back-channeling approving sounds during Turn 5 as Barış begins to say useful things.

In other cases, though, I asked specific questions and Can generalized them in translation when it served to align them to what he expected Barış was ready to offer in response. Below, I try to pin down the details of the Gülen media's role in the attack on Barış as an Ergenekon conspirator. Can changes the object of the news under inquiry mid-sentence from the singular *you* [sen] to the plural *you all* [siz], reducing the burden on Barış to recall details of news coverage of himself specifically and allowing him instead the easier task of describing a general pattern:

Content	Speaker
And was the [defamatory] news published first in *Zaman*, in *Taraf*, in-- the news about you specifically?	Noah
Was news coming out about you (singular)-- *about you* (plural) *generally coming out in Taraf and Zaman first?*	Can
First it was Taraf and Zaman. Actually the two newspapers were just about behaving as though there were a business arrangement between them (laughs).	Barış

Can's prediction that losing specifics would cost less to me than demanding specifics would cost of Barış may in this case have been incorrect. (NB I have been using the word predict rather than understand because it more strongly suggests the possibility of inaccuracy.) Barış may well have remembered which newspaper specifically targeted him first, and if it had been *Zaman*, that would have been a good detail for my story about *Zaman*'s seizure.

Some of Can's alignment effort is not capturable through textual reproduction of the interview alone. Late in the interview, I asked Barış what he thought of the counter-argument that I had been hearing from Gülen media affiliates: yes, in the past they had done wrong, but wasn't it better to fight the government's monopolization of the media now by defending *Zaman* and other outlets? And shouldn't freedom of expression be defended even for those who had made mistakes? Translating this argument into Turkish, Can suddenly sounded exhausted, almost slurring his words, and uncharacteristically switched back to English midway through to ask me to repeat the second half of my question. This served to distance Can from this counter-argument, non-verbally expressing his skepticism to Barış.

Taken alone, each of these changes in the signals Barış was relaying between Can and me was small, relatively unimportant. But they added up to help Barış to give me useful information while convincing him that Can was on his side, and to give me the impression, even as I tried to simultaneously follow the Turkish, of Barış's moderation and comprehensibility. Whereas

Solmaz had signaled to me through her translation choices that Cihan's information should be treated with skepticism, Can translated in ways that enhanced the credibility of the information from Barış. It also helped that Barış, under Can's rhythmic pressure, spoke in short, pithy sentences that made for manageable quotations, like "politics is the art of presenting your problem as if it is everyone's." Accordingly, Barış ended up with central billing among opposition journalists, with a hundred more words about his case than about Cihan's or Çağdaş's. A local journalist friend who knew these issues well later commented to me, in a tone and expression that signaled to me that he thought Barış an extremist, that it was very "interesting" the way I had included him in the article as the main voice of the opposition. By then, even if I had wanted to, even if my friend had convinced me I had made an unconscionable mistake, it was too late for me to change the article, which had already been published.

The Solmaz-Çağdaş interview showed that a fixer can effectively block a source's information from inclusion in a story by transcoding in a way that incomprehensibly breaches the end-receiver reporter's coding and information norms, given the extra time and effort that the reporter would need to use other information sources to reconstruct the source's message. The Can-Barış interview shows, by contrast, that a fixer transcoding in a way that distorts a signal to maximize its harmony with the end receiver's coding and informational norms can encourage the inclusion of a source's information. Setting aside the question of the continuing fixer-reporter relationship to focus only on the information received from that particular source on that particular occasion, the reporter only needs to remain convinced until a story is published, after which even if information from other sources leads the reporter to reinterpret or question the signal received from the fixer transcoder, the story has already been distributed to audiences and is more or less out of the reporter's grasp.

Noah, 2016

Late one July evening, I was home browsing Twitter while my girlfriend rehearsed music in the other room when strange reports started appearing in my feed: tanks and armored personnel carriers had blocked off bridges; soldiers were on the street telling people to go home, it was not a drill. A coup d'état was under way, the Turkish internet was collectively realizing. Social media websites were blocked, though this did little to impede access: established internet censorship meant that VPN or other proxy connections were a standard part of users' network setups. Soldiers appeared in Taksim square and at Istanbul airport. Our apartment's TV was not working, so I turned on a radio. At midnight, I listened as the "Peace at Home Council," which had taken over public TV and radio stations, announced that they were now in charge.

Resistance emerged swiftly, though. Erdoğan appeared via Facetime on CNNTürk--the putschists had, in what seemed like a throwback to simpler days of military takeover, only taken over the public broadcaster and not bothered to control the more popular private stations--and invited the nation into city squares to resist. Huge crowds of civilians challenged the putschists and loyalist police and soldiers exchanged fire with their compatriots. We could hear the popping of automatic gunfire coming from the nearby Bosphorus Bridge, and then we cowered as a fighter jet screamed overhead with a sonic boom. A member of my Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu club's Ankara branch wrote on our Whatsapp group chat that it looked like Star Wars fighter jets and helicopters did combat in the skies above the capital. Mosques around us began repeatedly sounding the *ezan*, the Islamic call to prayer--on direction from the Ministry of Religious Affairs to draw the faithful to the government's defense, I would later learn--and the *sela*, an eerily beautiful recitation imploring God to forgive the Muslim dead that is usually reserved for

funerals and disasters (Gill 2016). By about 4am it seemed the coup attempt had been beaten back, though fighting continued in Ankara, and we went to bed.

The next morning, I ventured out of our apartment block hesitantly to the main road, wondering if it would be deserted or have a heavy police presence. But the heavy vehicles I heard driving by were in fact garbage trucks and not armored police trucks. Our local grocer was doing a brisk business and told me nonchalantly that if there were not at least one coup attempt every couple of decades here in Turkey, it would be abnormal.

I had fixed for a few clients as part of my research before this, but after July 15 my fixing career really kicked off. Had I wanted to continue the line of work, the coup attempt might have been for me what the Gezi Park movement was for Elif and Ayşe: a transformative event from which a new cohort of fixers, in the right place at the right time with the right skills, arises. The coup might not have been as ideal a foreign news event as Gezi--there was not a clear geographic focus point to which reporters could flock, the main protagonists were not as open to foreign media coverage as the Gezi occupiers, and foreign reporters found it more difficult than in the case of Gezi to figure out who to root for--but nonetheless it was a story that created a demand that outstripped the supply of established fixers. When I thanked Elif the next month for referring one client to me, she did not even remember doing so; she had been so busy and gotten so many requests which she forwarded to anyone who might fit the fixer bill that she had lost track.

The coup attempt lasted from Friday night through Saturday morning, and by Sunday I had lined up a week working fulltime with Michael, a staff writer for a European newspaper who flew into Istanbul (Atatürk International Airport was one of the sites where putschist soldiers faced off against loyalist civilians and police, but was back up and running within a day) that night.

In our initial email communications, Michael said he wanted to do a story about what former Gezi Park protesters thought of the coup and the mass resistance against it, wondering how the democratic opposition to Erdoğan would have felt had he been undemocratically ousted. This seemed to me a reasonable thing to wonder, especially for outsiders thinking about Turkey in comparative perspective with an eye to the recent precedent of the Egyptian counter-revolution backed by Egyptian "liberals" against the elected Muslim Brotherhood government (Fisher 2013). Other fixers, though, later complained to me about working with clients who could not get it through their heads that being anti-Erdoğan was not the same as being pro-coup.

Michael, 2016 (Day 1)

I met Michael at his hotel on Monday morning. He asked me over coffee about my research and about Turkish politics. He was filling in for the newspaper's regular Turkey correspondent, who had mistimed her vacation. Michael had reported in Turkey on a couple previous occasions (the fixer with whom he had then worked was already booked) but did not have detailed knowledge of the country, asking very general questions about Gülen, whom the government was already fingering as the coup attempt's mastermind. My explanation of the Gülen movement as a wide network with a conspiratorial side but with many affiliates engaged in nothing more sinister than teaching children mathematics was probably more sympathetic than the briefing Can would have given and less sympathetic than the one Solmaz would have given.

I had found former Gezi protester sources for Michael, but he decided to put that story on hold and focus that day on the vast purge of the judiciary that had just been announced. He now wanted to find judges, lawyers, or others who could comment on the judicial purges.

Michael had read a Reuters article that included one lawyer's full name, and he suggested the man as a source. The lawyer was on Facebook and I sent him a message but never received a

response. I remembered another lawyer I had met years ago who remained a Facebook friend, and I messaged her as well. She responded that she was dealing with too much and was too exhausted to talk to the media. I never told Michael about her, lest he prod me to convince her to engage with us.

I remembered that I had the phone number of a representative for a local bar association, whose number I had gotten for a previous story but whom I had never ended up calling. We went down together to the hotel's basement conference room. My cell phone had no signal down there, so I used Skype to call, which I later realized probably made the call's origin read suspiciously as "unavailable" or "unknown." The prospective source answered. I introduced myself as the American assistant to a newspaper reporter who wanted to ask about prosecutors and judges who had been fired and/or arrested. He responded, sounding somewhere between terrified and angry, that he was driving and could not talk. I asked if there was a better time for us to talk and, almost yelling, he replied no, and the only thing he had to say was that those arrested were Gülenist traitors. We thanked each other and hung up. It is worth mentioning that in Turkey it is par for the course to assume the hand of America behind everything bad in politics, and that by this time government officials and pro-government media had already begun to more or less explicitly accusing the United States, where Gülen has lived in exile for decades, of masterminding the coup attempt. I relayed the man's scared and hostile tone to Michael. While the interaction was a failure insofar as I did not recruit a source, the episode gave Michael a sense of the tension and fear in the air that I think was ultimately reflected in his article.

At the time, though, I just felt I was failing from the get-go. I did have one more contact to try: Özge, my former flame and a lawyer. As mentioned in the previous chapter, she agreed to meet us when she returned home after 5pm; Michael told me that he hoped to be done speaking

with sources by 4:30, but Özge could not meet earlier. I also managed to arrange a source from the government side for Michael: a government official whom I knew to be a Columbia University alumnus. I introduced myself to him in a Twitter direct message as a Columbia grad student helping out a journalist friend, and he responded that we could speak that afternoon and provided his phone number.

In the meantime, I walked Michael over to the İHD office outside of which I had interviewed Ümit Efe, thinking that the Human Rights Organization might have something to say about the latest arrests. Ümit was out of the office but those present were friendly, sat us down on a couch and gave us waters. The senior representative there had no inside information and so reoriented her answers toward what she wanted to talk about: Kurdish and Alevi issues and the oppression of the Kurdish-leftist Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) with whom İHD is closely aligned. Each time Michael in turn reoriented the conversation toward the judges and prosecutors he wanted to write about that day. I will paraphrase for the sake of brevity into numbered original questions and answers (for the moment, we can pretend that I translated with perfect fidelity):

Question 1: Are these latest arrests worrisome to civil society organizations like yours?

Answer 1: For a long time the government has been pressuring and arresting all opponents. Since June 7[82] especially things have gotten worse.

Q2: What about the judges and prosecutors in particular, do their arrests raise particular concerns?

A2: The Gülen movement and the AKP were allies and co-oppressors for a long time. Two years ago their alliance broke, and in that time other serious problems arose: ISIS, Kobani, Kurdish issues. Before that things had been more relaxed [NB at the height of the Kurdish Opening].

[82]Here she referred to the June 7, 2015 elections, which marked the AKP's decisive turn against the HDP and contributed to the collapse of the PKK peace process. I had to quickly explain this in asides to Michael as I translated.

Since and even before June 7, the government has been on a lynching campaign against the HDP and opposition.

Q3: Who are these judges? Are they all Gülenists?

A3: The government says those detained are all Gülenists, but then there is also the issue of the thousands of conscripted soldiers. These conscripts say they were forced to participate in the coup, and now they are being mistreated and tortured.[83] We are looking into petitioning on behalf of conscripts in detention.

Q4: Since my article has to focus on judges and prosecutors, I wonder: are you concerned that with 3,000 judges and prosecutors replaced, the system will become more packed with AKP sympathizers and that will be bad for your cause?

A4: For a long time there has been no judicial independence. The security services decide, the prosecutors give the case to the court, and the judges pass down sentences. Before the coup attempt, the prosecutors and judges now detained were part of this unjust system. [Kurdish] activists and people in Sur [Diyarbakir's old city devastated in recent fighting] were arrested without committing any crime. We think this situation will get even worse after the coup attempt. It is good the coup was stopped, but its defeat does not mean that democracy in Turkey is growing.

Q5: And what is your full name?

A5: (Gives name) Also, in Alevi neighborhoods in Istanbul and Ankara now they are sounding the [Sunni funeral recitation] *sela* day and night on loudspeakers, creating tension.

The sources sought to align Michael and me with the information they were able and interested in transmitting. Each answer would begin with a response that addressed at least the theme of Michael's question (A1: arrests, A2: AKP action against Gülen movement; A3: claim that Gülenists detained; A4: judicial independence, A5: source's name), but then steer toward topics of İHD interest (A1: Kurds, A2: Kurds, A3: conscripts, A4: Kurds, A5: Alevis). Our source recognized the norm that questions should be met with responses that answer them (Goffman 1981:5-6; see also Weaver 1949:5 on Markoff processes). They were normatively constrained from just saying whatever they wanted, but nonetheless, after anchoring their

[83]Mistreatment and suspicious deaths of conscripts is another topic İHD has reported on extensively (e.g. İnsan Haklaı Derneği 2016).

utterances to the preceding questions with reference to the preceding question's themes, went on to focus on issues outside the scope of Michael's questions, and for that matter Michael's story.

To be fair to our source, I had done a poor job of match-making: I had matched Michael to a source not much interested or able to provide inside information about the latest purges. They were doing their best to provide *something* of interest to their guest from within their own stock of knowledge. Furthermore, from their perspective, questions about the judiciary and questionable arrests had to be understood in a broader context than Michael was addressing in his narrow focus on the post-coup attempt crackdown.

In Michael's article published the next day, there was no mention of Kurdish or Alevi issues. He quoted the Human Rights Organization representative only as saying that for a long time, there had been no judicial independence in Turkey. Between this and Özge's later interview, however, Michael did become interested in the Alevis, a religious minority of whom he had not previously heard.

After we left İHD, it was time to call that government official I had earlier contacted. I sat us down at a table in front of a café just down the street, which turned out to be a mistake. As soon as I dialed the number, a series of motorcycles drove up and sat idling noisily beside us. I spoke to the government official for just a few seconds, confirming that this was a good time before handing the phone to Michael. They spoke in English, and Michael plugging his free ear against engine noise as he asked questions mostly oriented toward pinning down the facts of who was detained, on what charges, and with what planned next steps, without getting confrontational or questioning the official's claims. I was pleased that the interview proceeded amicably because--whatever my own politics and skepticism about the official's statements--I was short on AKP

sources and hoped to reuse this one. I was sure to send him a friendly follow-up *thank you* message, to which he never responded.

We then headed back to Michael's hotel, where he scanned the international news and wire services, and I scanned the local news. He wrote down notes on the previous two interviews, reducing the amount of work he would later have in the rush to file his story after our final interview. He was nonetheless noticeably on edge when Özge was late, and we waited outside her apartment building.

Özge finally appeared and welcomed us, insisting on serving drinks and slicing melon for us as we sat on her coach. As it happened, Özge was also Alevi and made mention that some of the judges were Alevis and leftists (categories that overlap significantly), and not (Sunni) Gülenists. This time Michael asked me how to spell Alevi.

Below I include long transcripts of our interview with Özge. I transcribed this interview after returning from Turkey to New York, and listening back to it was, frankly, tortuous. Sweating and blushing as I transcribed, I shook my head despairingly and almost shouted at my past self whenever he failed to take advantage of a momentary pause or end of a phrase to jump in with a translation: Go! Here's your chance! Translate, damn it! I could almost feel Michael breathing down my neck as I listened, impatient to know what Özge was saying and frustrated that I kept allowing Özge entrances to take additional speaking turns before I had fully translated or Michael had a chance to ask a new question.

I had remembered myself as doing a bad job of translating, in the sense of relaying accurate information, because of Özge's use of technical legal terms. As I listened back, though, it became apparent that where information did get lost in translation, my failure related as much to coordinating the conversation as to limited language ability, to the *interactional* side as much as

to the (interconnected) *informational* side of the communication. Compared to Can's coordination of my interview with Barış, it was night and day: whereas he had made the most of limited English abilities by forcing Barış to speak in short, easily translated turns, I made my job more difficult by allowing long speaking turns. This interview with Özge, when compared to the Barış interview, thus provides an illustration of how it is impossible to separate activity from information: the interactional dynamics of how the conversation unfolded affected the words that were the objects of our communication, and vice versa (Wadensjö 1998).

My failure on the interactional side was particularly evident when it came to turn-taking. In their speech, fixers not only transmit signals in the form of renditions of brokered parties' original utterances (i.e. translations), but also signal to each when it is time to take a turn speaking and whether they are expected to respond to something else said or to address a new topic. This coordinating task of the fixer can, when done smoothly, serve to make their job of transcoding information easier by breaking it into manageable chunks of speech and to repair any perceptions of misunderstanding that arise between the brokered parties (Wadensjö 1998:105-110; Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974). In my case, though, a laissez-faire approach to coordination and disciplining speakers resulted in data loss, as I allowed speech turns long enough to overload my memory capacity.

The transcript below begins around four minutes into my recording of the interview, after Özge said that some non-Gülenist Alevis were detained.

Timespan	**Content**	**Speaker**
4:07.5 - 4:23.3	And does she worry about--you know, this obviously opens a lot of judicial vacancies for the regime. (inaudible) how the regime puts its own people into all those jobs, what effects does it have on Turkish life?	Michael

4:23.3 - 4:45.2	*And so if the vacancies being created now are filled with AKP, I mean Erdoğan-ist judges and prosecutors, what kind of an effect will there be? I mean for you, for the whole justice system?*	Noah
4:45.2 - 7:09.6	(sighs) *I mean for us of course the regime is changing; it is slowly changing. Actually today we were debating this: in the Constitution, law--the Republic of Turkey is a state of law [hukuk devleti]. If the term state of law there [in the Constitution] is removed, then it will be possible for execution to be introduced in this country today.*[84] *For that reason of course it is their goal to change the regime. But as you know, we are legalists [hukukcu]. I mean all of a sudden Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's guys, I mean judges and prosecutors, they can't instantly take their posts and change everything. Because of that [the state of law], for instance, there is still a court* [i.e. due process] *for the soldiers who attempted the coup. Of course, by the Year 2023*[85] *all these--step by step they can go [to the point of changing everything]. Because really they are working step by step. They are working very systematically. But the effect of this on people like me will be like this: I mean with judges and prosecutors we are* experiencing *very big problems with one-on-one [birebir] communication. Because we are trying to protect human rights and on this point they don't want to work, or they raise other problems and for that reason one-on-one arguments can increase. Besides that, it is very interesting that--like in the past official [public] offices could not be entered wearing a headscarf because of secularism. But now we have one judge, Çağ--a judge in Çağlayan Courthouse in Istanbul. And she comes out to hearing headscarved. And in her official chamber, on the walls are prayers, Arabic writing. And there are [she makes] interesting admonitions [uyarılar]. For instance, I witnessed one admonition [by this judge]. We go to her chamber a lot and of course we ask questions to be able to do our jobs. If she doesn't understand what you say, she recites in your face, God is perfect [Suphanallah] God is perfect God is perfect, [then says] Get out of my face!*[86]	Özge
7:09.6 - 7:10.9	(I try to interject)	Noah

[84]Here Özge is referring to Erdoğan's call, immediately following the coup attempt, for the death penalty (which was removed as part of the EU accession process) to be reinstated.
[85]When Erdoğan's term would end were he to be, as Özge correctly predicted, re-elected president in 2018.
[86]This passage provides a good illustration of the difference between spoken and written speech, and between Turkish and English uses of subjects and objects. Just to make her statement intelligible in written English, I had to insert six bracketed comments to clarify the subjects or objects of her speech.

7:10.9 - 7:21.9	*Like that. I mean when recounting this to you* [using second person singular] *I can't believe it* (laughs) *but I think these kinds of things will probably increase.*	Özge
7:21.8 - 7:27.6	It been, they do definitely want to change the regime. And step by step over time--	Noah
7:27.6 - 7:28.1	Change the--?	Michael
7:28.1 - 7:28.8	The regime	Noah
7:28.7 - 7:30.1	The legal regime?	Michael
7:30.1 - 7:48.6	The legal regime, step by step over time this has been happening. Right now in the constitution Turkey's defined by a uh legal state, I guess. (to Özge) *How shall I translate hukuk devleti*? Legal state a--	Noah
7:48.5 - 7:49.0	The Rule of Law?	Michael
7:49.0 - 7:49.7	*hukuk devleti*--	Özge
7:49.6 - 9:13.1	Rule of law, rule of law. If they take out this word, then they can do forward with what they want to do with putting in the death penalty and with these things. However, you do see in Turkey, although they are going step by step in a very systematic way, they still haven't taken over the entire justice system. That's why there is still a justice system in place to deal with the soldiers who were arrested for instance that isn't entirely under the control of the uh of the government. However, they are moving step by step and she's seen in the last few years, for example, it used to be that in, people, women wearing headscarves were not allowed to enter state, public buildings. However now there's for example at Çağlayan, the big, largest court in İstanbul, there's one court where there's a judge who goes to hearings covered and on her walls there are religious verses. (to Özge) *Stuff like calligraphy, prayers*? (Özge confirms nonverbally) Like calligraphy, Muslim and--	Noah
9:13.1 - 9:15.1	So she wears her headscarf in court?	Michael
9:15.1 - 9:17.0	Yeah who wears her headscarf. And--	Noah
9:17.0 - 9:18.1	What is it on her wall?	Michael

9:18.0 - 10:24.6	Uh religious like writings. *For instance stuff from the Koran*? (Özge confirms nonverbally) Yeah like things from the Koran, calligraphy. She's, for her this is, it's tough to imagine that this is the case now. And she and other people are pushing for things like human rights and judges who have been installed, the more recent judges aren't really interested in this. And this is going to, she expects this to become even more difficult to get across. And she said for example that the judge who wears the headscarf and has the, you know, religious verses on her wall, when you say something she doesn't understand-- (to Özge) *So what does that judge do when you say something she doesn't understand? What did you say?* (Özge replies inaudibly) *That judge, I mean when you say something she doesn't understand, what does she do?*	Noah

From the start, my allegiance to the norm of non-interruption made the task of translation more difficult, as I allowed Özge to speak for nearly three minutes straight in her initial response. I did not align her, by interrupting, to a rhythmic norm amenable both to Michael, who wanted to be included, and to myself, given that it is easier to translate just a sentence or two at a time instead of memorizing minutes-worth of speech. My silence may have stemmed from a bias toward her or from my own transcendent norms for conducting interviews: as an ethnographer educated in inductive analysis,[87] I had learned to value allowing interviewees to say their piece with minimal intervention. Whatever its reason, my interactive non-action allowed Özge to overload my capacity as a channel of communication with information, which would come back to bite me a few minutes later.

[87]Induction is the process of first gathering evidence and then using it as the basis with which to create a theory, as opposed to deduction: creating a theory first and then looking for evidence to prove or disprove it. Proponents of inductive analysis, also called Grounded Theory, argue that this evidence-then-theory method is essential for coming up with new ideas. You do not want to lead (or informationally align) the witness, so to speak, to say things that conform to existing theories, but instead want them to provide data that is recorded with minimal selectivity or guidance on which to base new theories (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Proponents of "abductive analysis," myself included, add the proviso that it is impossible to approach a subject or turn observations into data without pre-existing theories, but that minimizing guidance of research subjects is the best way to produce data which force you to rethink or refine your existing theories (Tavory and Timmermans 2014).

At the end of the passage above, around 10:20, I asked Özge a clarification question about the judge's admonition. The question was, from an informational standpoint, feedback signaling to her that her message needed to be resent. It was a means of repairing overload, ensuring that information from Özge was transmitted to Michael with fidelity. From an interactional standpoint, though, my allegiance to the norm of accurate information transmission led me to invite Özge to take another turn speaking (Goffman [1981] discusses such invitations as the "ratification" of participation status as a speaker). She used the invitation to take a speaking turn not to resend her original message (uttered from around 6:30-7:09) but to make a new original utterance lasting more than 40 seconds, from 10:24-11:09.

Timespan	**Content**	**Speaker**
10:24.6 - 11:09.6	(inaudible question)? (Noah: mhm) [subject unclear] *tries to undermine/discredit* [itibarsızlaştırmaya] *lawyers because now judges and prosecutors, they're bureaucrats. They are directly under the state's control. And we are independent types. Nobody can fire us from our jobs and so forth. Because of that we came to constitute the law's warriors of freedom. I mean we didn't want to but this kind of situation arose. On this matter the judges--we experienced everything there [at the courthouse]. I got beaten a lot, I don't even know [bilmem ne] and nowadays those guys can do anything. We, we need to get a signature. We knock on his door. We say Mr. Prosecutor, can we get a signature? He goes Get out! I mean, like, do you understand?*	Özge

By trying to preserve signal fidelity, a concern that Can and others did not seem to share to such a great extent, making sure I got it right before I translated, I was in the same acts of back-channeling clarifying inquiries failing to coordinate the interaction, which in turn resulted in information loss. Then, at 11:09, I dug myself in even deep to the hole of information overload. Instead of seizing on Özge's pause after her question, "Do you understand?" to translate to Michael, I answered it, again yielding the floor:

Timespan	**Content**	**Speaker**
11:09.6 - 11:10.5	I understand.	Noah

11:10.5 - 11:26.9	Polite/humane [insani] relations--and in that way they undermine the lawyers. They throw paper in your face or, I don't know, they don't take a file. A file waits there for months, waits for years. Like you don't move that file forward.	Özge
11:26.9 - 12:29.1	So people like her, lawyers are still, they're, they're independent. They can't just be fired by the government, whereas prosecutors and judges are bureaucrats. It sounds that they're state officials and so they're directly under the control of the state. And so they're able to, to put pressure on independent lawyers not directly, because they're more free, but through the way that they interact with these other officials. So for example, she'll go to the court and she'll have to get just the signature, something very standard, from a prosecutor. So she'll go in and ask for the signature and very rudely they'll just say, Get out of here, not sign it. Or for example they'll just refuse to take a case file, or you'll give a case file and it will just sit there for months or for years even and they won't address it. And so in these small ways they can make the work of lawyers like her more difficult.	Noah
12:29.1 - 12:32.2	mm, through the prosecutors?	Michael
12:32.1 - 12:34.9	Through prosecutors and judges, yeah.	Noah

By taking her question "do you understand?" to be directed at me (rather than Michael) and responding, I signaled that I was a person, a party myself in the interaction and not just a communication channel that would allow her speech to reach its proper audience, Michael. By responding as a person in the conversation, as her interlocutor, and back-channeling "I understand," I effectively signaled her that it was her time to speak again, adding another 15 seconds of speech for Michael to wait and me to memorize before I returned to translating. Here, my feedback had the effect not just of signaling to the speaker whether or not their message was reaching its destination, but of reconfiguring the interaction to place me, not Michael, in the destination seat.

By the time I got back to translating for Michael, more than four minutes had elapsed since Özge's original account of the judge's admonition. I made no further attempt to transmit that

information to Michael. I do not know whether I had forgotten about the female judge or just decided to drop the information about her for the sake of coordination (i.e. allowing the conversation to move forward), and I instead rendered just Özge's latest (10:46-11:09) utterance about rude prosecutors into English.

Just as interactional dynamics shape the transmission of information, the information transmitted shapes the way the interaction unfolds. Particular transcoders (me, in this case) are more capable of translating some signals than others. Had I been confident with my translation of *hukuk devleti*, the side conversation from 7:30-7:50 could have been avoided and I could have continued my turn translating about the judge sooner. Had I been more familiar with the folksy speech patterns of Turkish Islamists, Özge's account around 7:00 of the judge's admonition may have better stuck in my mind, avoiding the need for my aside around 10:24 asking Özge to clarify her speech, which she took as a signal that it was again her turn to speak an original utterance.

Furthermore, my unclear renditions of Turkish speech into English with the terms "regime" (7:28), "covered," and "they" [88] meant that where Michael *did* have a chance to take a turn speaking, at 7:27, 9:13 and 12:29, he used it to direct asides to me, feedback meant to clarify/check the signal transmitted to him, and not to pursue new lines of inquiry. Whereas in the İHD interview, Michael had been able to steer the conversation back toward information most useful in his story each time he asked a new question, here he had (clarification questions aside) been able to ask just one question in the course of eight minutes, with Özge largely

[88]"Covered" (*kapalı*) would have been immediately decodable as meaning "headscarved" had I been speaking Turkish; in a state of coding ambivalence, I was letting Turkish codes bleed into my English speech. In the case of "they" I likewise adopted the Turkish coding norm of an ambiguous subject, even though I was in fact not rendering anything Özge said into English but adding my own conclusion to her speech.

determining the direction of the conversation after that, and the clock was ticking. By the end of this transcript, we were more than a third of the way through the time Michael had before he had to rush back to his hotel to write.

Some blame for my mistranslations thus lies in the rhythm of conversation, while in other instances I could be accused not just of incompetence but of actively meddling with the signal in order to align Michael and Özge. Or, more generously, I was enhancing and recoding signals to harmonize their interaction as best I could. From the start, I did not render Michael's question (4:07-4:23) about the effect of anticipated judicial appointments on Turkish life in general into Turkish with the utmost fidelity but added (from 4:24-4:45) the specific reference to AKP and Erdoğan, as well as a request for Özge to speak about her personal experience not found in Michael's original. From a purist information transmission view (and perhaps Michael's view, had he realized), my changes were noise interfering with the original question's signal. But from my perspective, I was enhancing the signal and avoiding coding conflict, reading between the lines that Michael was interested in *Erdoğan* (rather than the more general "regime"[89]) loyalists in the judiciary. Asking about Özge personally, rather than Turkish life generally, likewise served to add specificity in a way that I expected would summon an answer from her that actually fit Michael's needs better than his original question. Whether or not these were consciously thought-out decisions or just how it felt best to translate, I not only transcoded but transformed Michael's questions on the assumption that 1) I knew what he wanted, 2) I knew

[89]Rendering Michael's original word into Turkish more directly as *rejim* or *devlet* (state), I may also have been concerned, could have introduced ambiguity or confusion. "Regime" in Turkish tends to refer to the system of government rather than the government in power, while "state" tends to refer not to the elected government or president but to the bureaucracy and so-called "deep state" that persist as governments come and go.

Özge better than him, and therefore 3) I could formulate questions than more effectively elicited answers from Özge that would be useful to him.

Translating back from Turkish to English, I likewise added, reduced, and substituted words to bring answers more closely into alignment with what I understood to be Michael's interests. Around 12:20, for instance, I inserted a statement that was not a rendition of anything Özge had said at the end of my translation in order to explicitly tie her utterance back to Michael's original theme of the effects of clientelism on the legal process.

Around 6:30pm, Michael cut the conversation short, declining her offer of Turkish coffee and thanking Özge for her time. I went with him as far as an avenue to hail a taxi that bought him back to his hotel, where he managed to hammer out his story in time to make the next morning's newspaper. Then Özge and I had dinner in Beyoğlu, the sounds of pro-government demonstrators at the "democracy vigil" in nearby Taksim Square chanting the *tekbir*--*God is great*--in Arabic in the background.

Alevis in Turkey have always been to some degree a community apart from the Sunni mainstream, tending toward secularism and leftism, and sometimes the target of sectarian attacks and accusations of disloyalty by religious nationalists who equate Sunni Islam with true Turkishness (Lord 2017). When I had previously known Özge, though, I had not even realized she was Alevi--it never came up. Yet over the ensuing years, the Turkish government's increasingly open discourse of Sunni majoritarianism and the Syrian civil war, which took on a sectarian character over time pitting Sunnis against Alawites and other religious minorities that spilled over into Turkey in the form of rising sectarian tensions,[90] seemed to have sharpened her

[90]Turkish Alevis and Syrian Alawites are both heterodox sects that revere Ali, but they have very different national histories. Despite these differences, as the Turkish state supported Sunni rebels in Syria and accommodated Sunni

Alevi identity and hostility to those who were now chanting the *tekbir* a few blocks away.[91] She told me about riots since the coup attempt targeting Alevis in Gazi and Okmeydanı neighborhoods of Istanbul (long-restive Alevi- and Kurdish-populated areas: see e.g. Marcus 1996), and that for the first time, she feared sectarian mob violence for her life. Sunni chauvinists were, it seemed, taking the opportunity provided by the victory of July 15th to assert dominance over political rivals of all stripes, whether or not they had anything to do with the coup attempt (see also Arjomand 2017).

On my metro ride home, a video appeared on the train car screens. The denizens of a Turkish city are going about their days when a shadowy figure cuts the cable holding up a massive Turkish flag in the city's central square. The people, seeing the flag fall, fight back against this act of sabotage. They flood into the city square, forming a massive human pyramid around the flag pole. A young man climbs to the very top and, holding the severed end of the cable, leaps down, martyring himself in order to raise the flag back to its rightful place. Throughout this sequence, subtitles of the muted voiceover pronounce Turkey's national anthem. The video ends with a portrait of Erdoğan and the slogan, "THE NATION WILL NOT BOW DOWN / TURKEY WILL NOT BE DEFEATED." There was no way, I thought to myself, it could have been produced in the space of two days, and it seemed to specifically reference the coup attempt: the city square, the people's resistance, the celebration of martyrdom all fit perfectly.

Syrian refugees in ways that Alevis in some instances found threatening, Alevi-Sunni tensions in Turkey grew (Rios 2018).

[91]The *tekbir* is not a specifically Sunni chant across the Muslim world--it is commonly used among Iranian Shiites, for example--but in Turkey the chant has come to be associated with Sunni Islam in particular, and secularists see it (at least in contexts like the AKP's "democracy vigils") as a political Islamist rallying cry. Among Turkish Alevis, by contrast, not the *tekbir* but *Oh God! Oh Muhammad! Oh Ali!* is the sectarian chant heard at political rallies.

In the days after the coup attempt, conspiracies abounded about the government staging the coup attempt as a ploy to further consolidate power. There were details about Friday and Saturday that did not seem to make sense, for instance that Erdoğan had flown with his family to Istanbul while putschist F-16 fighter jets were still in the air nearby, pursuing but not attacking his plane (Popp 2017). The European Union commissioner in charge of Turkish accession to the EU had that day accused the government of preparing a list of political enemies in advance to be purged when the opportunity arose (Bartunek 2016). The hashtag #darbedegiltiyatro (*not coup but theater*) was trending on Twitter, and people I had interviewed in the street the previous day with another reporter had similarly claimed that it had been a ridiculous attempt: real coups were staged before dawn when everyone was asleep, they said.[92] I had taken those conspiracy theories as outlandish, but this video unsettled me. Had it been produced in anticipation of the events of Friday and Saturday? And could they be sloppy or arrogant enough to broadcast it just two days later?

I mentioned the video I had seen on the metro and why it raised my suspicions when I spoke to Michael on the phone later that night. The production value was just too good to have been created overnight along with the images of the martyrs of July 15th that now plastered metro stations. Michael was intrigued, and I told him I would look into it further.

Özge had made a strong impression on him. She really gave it to the AKP with both barrels, he commented, and I told him that she did not used to be so political, or for that matter to foreground her Alevi identity. Our conversation, along with references made in both İHD and

[92]Government officials had a different explanation for the unusual timing of the coup attempt: the plot had been discovered and so the conspirators were forced to move earlier than planned (Popp 2017).

Özge interviews to the targeting of Alevis, further cemented the Alevi story in Michael's mind as a possible topic for later that week.

Michael, 2016 (Day 2)

First thing in the morning, I met Michael again at his hotel to decide what we would work on that day. We discussed doing a piece on Sunni-Alevi tensions, though Michael was not convinced that it was a big and urgent enough story to take priority. He decided in the end that he wanted to do a story on Erdoğan supporters, preferably those who had confronted soldiers the night of the coup attempt.

I knew a group of young men in Bahçelievler who were Erdoğan supporters, and whom I suspected would know people who had been involved in fighting at the nearby Fatih district police headquarters, if they had not been themselves. However, those young men were my sources for another story, a photo essay about young men being conscripted into the military. I was wary of introducing them to Michael, who might ask controversial political questions and, I feared, burn connections that had taken me (and a couple fixers I hired) a lot of work to establish.

I also had friends in Balat, a working-class neighborhood then on the edge of gentrification that gave Erdoğan and the AKP solid majorities in every election. Those friends certainly knew plenty of Erdoğan supporters, but I expected it would be a bother and expend social capital for me to recruit them as sub-fixers for this story. I knew that they were already self-conscious of their neighbors viewing them as socially dangerous outsiders, gentrifying bohemian weirdos, if not worse: on one occasion, my friend shushed me for chatting about ISIS in public, concerned about giving neighbors fodder for suspicious gossip. To now ask those neighbors to talk to a Michael and me (foreign spies) would potentially be socially costly to them, a cost that would be passed on to me through their resentment. Also, they were valuable as sub-fixers for more

specialized sources in the arts and media; why expend social capital with them to find a pro-Erdoğan source when half the country fit that description?

Additionally, the cutting short of our interview with Özge had made me acutely aware of Michael's time constraints, and I sought to avoid being once again caught in rhythmic ambivalence between his deadlines and sources' schedules. Bahçelievler in particular was far away and even to take a taxi there would risk getting stuck in a traffic jam.

I opted instead to bring him to the two neighborhoods closest to his Taksim Square hotel with reputations for government support: Tophane and Kasımpaşa. Both neighborhoods are overrepresented in reporting on Erdoğan's popular support for reason of their proximity to foreign reporters' lodgings. We walked the neighborhoods in the middle of the day, which meant that in addition to recruiting our sources from a standard site of foreign media attention, our recruitment skewed toward older men: shopkeepers and those hanging around in public. This translation of his request for pro-government voices into a walk around Tophane and Kasımpaşa would affect the transmission of information similarly, though on a broader scale, to the creative translations of sources' words into useful information in the examples above.

I did manage to arrange one interview in advance, albeit with another middle-aged man: a local journalist named Onur running a news site about and for Kasımpaşa residents. He told us about neighbors gathering at the local loyalist police station before marching to Taksim to confront the putschist soldiers, that the assets of coup plotters should be seized and given to the families of July 15th's martyrs, about the character of the neighborhood: always ready to fight. Michael seemed happy with the interview, and quoted from it extensively in his article. When, however, it came to my attempts to recruit Onur as a sub-fixer by asking him to introduce us to other locals, Onur resisted. People here do not like journalists, he told me. Too many had come

and when they said black, the journalist wrote white. I tried to convince him that we were different, stressing my Iranian-ness and Michael's anti-imperialist-ness, but to no avail.

Sure enough, most people we approached in Tophane and Kasımpaşa did not want to talk to us, including at the local administrative offices (*muhtarlık*), but we did manage conversations at a café and a mosque. The effect of my match-making with older sources on the information was that the meaning of resistance to the coup attempt was framed in a look backward to Turkish history. Their praise for the president was full of references to his time as mayor of Istanbul, from 1994-1998; they credited him with literally and metaphorically cleaning up the city. Sources compared the coup attempt to the 1960 overthrow of Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, to whom Erdoğan has been likened by supporters and detractors alike, and referenced the 1997 non-violent military intervention (or "post-modern coup") that toppled the AKP's explicitly Islamist predecessor Welfare Party. They talked about their memories of shame over civilian complacency when the military stepped in in 1980 and 1997 and their pride at the people's triumph over soldiers days earlier.[93] If we had spoken to younger men or to women we might have gotten a different world of references, a different framing of the event and their motivation for participation.

That is not to say that that our sources came up with these comparisons on their own. The day after the coup attempt, a video circulated of a man shouting, as police pulled pustchist soldiers from a tank, that soldiers had staged coups before and, "At that time our father[s] and grandfather[s] were silent, but we will not be silent" (Gill 2016). Onur repeated this rallying cry

[93]In another case of re-coding to enhance compatibility with receivers, these sources referenced these events by day and month, as momentous dates are coded in Turkey (e.g. the 1960 coup is 27 May; the 1980 coup is 12 September; the 1997 military memorandum is 27 February), but one man ended up directly quoted in Michael's article as referring to "the 1980 coup."

almost verbatim in a quotation Michael included in his article. Nonetheless, of all the viral videos circulating in those days, Onur may have been most inclined to parrot that one because of his experience living through the 1980 and 1997 military interventions. I chatted with my younger pro-government contacts in Bahçelievler extensively about the coup attempt, and 1960, 1980, and 1997 precedents never came up in conversation. When they talked about their support for Erdoğan, it related to his actions as prime minister and then president, not his actions as Istanbul mayor when they were too young to be politically aware.

Michael's choice of fixer (me) also may have made it easier to arrive at the backward-looking contextualization of coup attempt resistance that appeared in his newspaper the next morning. Between interviews, Michael asked me about the references they made, and I gave an enthusiastic account of the history of military intervention in Turkey and of the Menderes era, happy to put my book-learning--one area I felt I had an advantage as a fixer--to use.

Michael was not naïve to the partiality of our source recruitment, and in Kasımpaşa said he wanted to get the views of some women as well. Just as choosing me as a fixer may have made information about Turkish political history more easily accessible to him, it may have limited his ability to collect information from women, particularly in those conservative neighborhoods. I tried but was repeatedly rebuffed by women on the street and in shops. One young female woman working at a pharmacy did talk with us, but gave short stock answers: yes, the president grew up in this neighborhood; yes, people love him here; yes, he visits here but I have never seen him; I was happy that Turkey was strong and people supported each other against the coup attempt; no, I did not see anything that night because I stayed home. She did not make it into the article.

Michael was, however, interested in including mention of the mysterious high-production-value video that I had seen on the metro. Once home, I searched online for the video and for anyone else discussing its sudden appearance as suspicious. I learned, just in time, that I had gotten it completely wrong. The video had in fact been made for the AKP's 2014 municipal elections campaign, but was banned because it illegally used the Turkish flag to advertise for a particular party (*Reuters* 2014). Had I been a Turkish TV watcher in 2014, I probably would have known and remembered this controversy. I quickly contacted Michael to admit my mistake, and he removed the suggestion in the article that the video was newly created, though he still cited the video's appearance on metro cars as an illustration of the fervor that the state was drumming up to rally that nation behind Erdoğan. Had I not fessed up in time, though, a major European newspaper would have published that bit of conspiratorial fake news about the government having a pre-made coup resistance video.

I was ashamed at my mistake, but Michael seemed to take it in stride. We went on to discuss stories for the next day and Sunni-Alevi tensions again came up. I liked the idea because the story was receiving little attention outside Turkey despite the explosion of international media coverage following the coup attempt; I also liked the idea because Özge and our İHD interviewee had swayed me, and because I had the impression when we dined together that I could rely on both as pro-bono sub-fixers to report the story.

I wrote in my field notes that evening,

> We part [ways] at 4 and [Michael] says he'll think over options. He asks me for story suggestions. I had suggested in morning Alevi angle and I suggest it again now, offering to start looking into it, saying [Özge] could help, also İHD, and we could go to neighborhoods where there have been attacks. In morning I say majoritarian democracy peg, in afternoon I say Syrian connection peg. Now he seems receptive. I think this would be a nice thing to do for [Özge]; for me this is closest thing to activism.

But then, not long after Michael and I had our evening debrief over the phone, Erdoğan announced a state of emergency.[94]

Michael, 2016 (Day 3)

Michael still wanted to do the Alevi story the next morning. I wrote to Özge asking if she could help us with contacts for a visit to Okmeydanı, an Alevi neighborhood where fighting had occurred in recent days, but she responded simply, "State of emergency was declared don't go". Michael wanted to go anyway, but I resisted, unsure what the state of emergency meant in practice. From what I had read, it meant everyone had to have identification ready to show police, who I imagined had a heavy presence in that neighborhood. As it turned out, the state of emergency had little effect on day-to-day reporting. At checkpoints, mostly located in the entrances to mass transit stations, police ignored me and pulled aside mostly darker complexioned young men for ID checks instead. But I did not know yet how the state of emergency would and would not matter, and Özge's message had both unnerved me and signaled that I would not have her as a sub-fixer to insulate me from the risk of police contact. Michael was planning to leave Turkey after a week of reporting; being deported a few days early would have been no great inconvenience. I, however, wanted to stick around to complete my research and, for that matter, to return to Turkey in the future. My time map made me more risk-averse than Michael, and after days of work aligning him to the story, I effectively killed it.

We settled on a safe and ho-hum story about the effect of the coup attempt on tourism instead. This was easy to report with a trip to Sultanahmet district, where we spoke to tourists

[94]Detail-oriented students of Turkey may note that we are only up to Tuesday, and Erdoğan's state of emergency announcement was on Wednesday night. To reiterate, this is fiction, and in this case, I have changed around the chronology of events and our reporting both for streamlined reading and so it is more difficult to identify the stories whose production I am describing.

and shopkeepers. A friend of mine ran a city tour company, and I catalyzed an English-language phone conversation. I promoted my friend openly and shamelessly, citing their top ratings on tripadvisor.com. This was low stakes propagandizing, not like asking him openly to put in a good word for a particular political faction, and Michael agreed with a laugh to give them good publicity and did so in his article, mentioning the company's *much-celebrated tours*.

The only hitch in the tourism story came when we happened upon some Iranians waiting to take a ferry to the Princes' Islands. I put my Persian language ability to use for the first time in my brief fixing career, and it turned out that one was not a tourist but a tour guide, organizing trips for Iranian visitors to Istanbul and Antalya. She had interesting things to say about changes in the industry in recent years, about the exodus of Iranians from Turkey after the coup attempt, and about her own fear living in Istanbul in such dangerous days. When at the end of the interview Michael asked for her name, though, she deliberated with her friends whether to do so. I suspected, from her short hair and piercings that she might be one of many LGBT Iranians who fled the Islamic Republic, which criminalized homosexuality, for still-relatively-liberal Turkey (one of the few countries that Iranians can visit for three months without a visa) and then either illegally overstayed or illegally worked and resided in Istanbul while applying for asylum, hence her concern about giving her name. "It doesn't need to be real," I told her in Persian, and after further deliberation she told us her name was Vaghar, spelling it in English for Michael.

Later, as Michael went over his notes from the interview with me, I mentioned offhandedly that I did not think it was her real name, without acknowledging my aside to her inviting a fake one. I was surprised, given that it was just a first name and that she was not any kind of public figure, that Michael was very disappointed by this and did not end up using her interview in his

story. The information she provided, he told me, was not good enough to merit using if her name might be fake.

Mad Lib Journalism

Phrasal template word games--the best-known brand is Mad Libs--can be very funny when done artfully. The game is sold as a notepad. On each page, there is a new story told with blank spaces for the player to fill in. Under each blank space is written in parentheses a general category of words to be filled in, but the player has the freedom to choose what specific word to insert. For example:

The _____ way to write a journal article is to begin with a _____ vignette. Then,
(adjective) (adjective)

review the work of prominent _____ who have researched the _____ you
(plural job title) (noun)

are addressing and describe the _____ of those authors, while also pointing out the
(plural noun)

gaps in their _____ that your article will _____.
(plural noun) (verb)

Figure 5.2: Blank Template

The general outline, which I also call a structure, frame, plot, or line of inquiry, is already on the page, and you cannot change it unless you go rogue and start crossing out printed words and inserting your own. But the normative expectation of the game is that you will fill in the blanks in funny ways that conform to the given categories. For a linguistic formalist studying grammar or patterns in the structure of sentences and stories, the particular words you insert do not matter. Your contributions do not change or challenge the hegemonic structure that the template author has imposed. But this abstract viewpoint misses the joke, the whole point from the player's

perspective. The words the player inserts matter a great deal for the specific meanings of the sentence and determine whether they are funny or not. The formalist does not notice the different between Stories 1 and 2:

The _best_ way to write a journal article is to begin with a(n) _illustrative_ vignette. Then,
(adjective) (adjective)

review the work of prominent _scholars__ who have researched the _subject_ you
(plural job title) (noun)

are addressing and describe the _contributions of those authors, while also pointing out the
(plural noun)

gaps in their _arguments_ that your article will _fill_.
(plural noun) (verb)

Figure 5.3: Story 1

The _flatulent_ way to write a journal article is to begin with a __turgid__ vignette. Then,
(adjective) (adjective)

review the work of prominent _charlatans_ who have written on the __aardvark__ you
(plural job title) (noun)

are addressing and describe the __nostrils__ of those authors, while also pointing out the
(plural noun)

gaps in their __teeth__ that your article will __floss__.
(plural noun) (verb)

Figure 5.4: Story 2

Journalism too is produced through the delegation of fill-in-the-blank tasks that flesh out pre-made templates. These structures and blank spaces are more or less explicitly recognized depending on the subfield of journalism. This chapter has focused on print journalism because that is what I spent the most time working on myself, but in the case of TV stories, from short

packages to long-form documentaries, pre-production includes the drafting of a "shot list." This list is a roughly defined sequence of images and statements that will be filled in by specific captured footage. From the abstract perspective of the shot-list drafter, any specific footage is essentially interchangeable with any other specific footage that would fill in the same shot list item. There is a strong practical mandate for this practice: video is expensive to produce and unwieldy to edit, so an inductive approach, as social scientists with loose deadlines and low production costs would call it, of just going into the field without a preconceived notion of what images should be captured and what sound bites are needed would be a recipe for failure.

Foreign news editors bring master plots, rough outlines of what is going on in Turkey or Syria or wherever, to their judgments about what stories are newsworthy and how reports of those countries should be framed to best hang from the peg of a big event or important trend.[95] There is likewise a practical mandate for this outlining: editors need the tools to quickly make sense of what is happening around the world and to evaluate what is most important to cover and why.

Reporters are either assigned to particular stories according to these master plots or must pitch stories to editors, who will say *Yes*, *No*, or *Maybe if you do it this way* based on the pitched stories' conformity to the editors' outlines. Reporters' abilities to go rogue and negotiate a revision of those outlines depends on their status in the field of journalism relative to the editors. My article about PKK conflict death counts, though it addressed two topics of international media interest in summer 2016--the Turkey-Kurdish conflict and fake news--did not fit into editors' templates. It took more work to produce and made more original points different from

[95]Editors' master plots are not immaculately conceived, but based on editors' own consumption of media, surveillance of their competitors' work, and exposure to the influence of agenda-setters like state agencies. This is beyond the scope of this study but is covered by Gans [1979] 2004 and Fishman (1980).

the vast number of repetitive international stories about the conflict. Due to this very difference of approach, though, it failed to resonate with editors, whose own template for how to report the issue was based in large part on such repetitive stories about the PKK and other conflicts. I did not have the status in journalism to negotiate a revision of that template, and after failing to sell the piece to a half dozen outlets ended up posting it on medium.com without earning a dime.

Reporters, in turn, come to fixers with ideas for stories and with more specific plots and fewer blank spaces to fill (Baker 2006:78-83). If editors are concerned, keeping roughly with the Mad Libs metaphor, with the overall shape of paragraphs and delegate filling in particular sentences to reporters, then reporters are add to the template at the sentence level and then delegate the filling in of particular words to fixers. An editor or a reporter might have particular specific words they want inserted in some spaces; they nonetheless leave blank spaces for contributors down the chain of news production. It is the fixer's job to manage the filling in of the remaining blanks by brokering between reporters and sources. (Gans [1979] 2004:90-103 describes a similar process, which he calls "buying, selling, and highlighting" of stories, along a chain of reporters, writers, editors, and senior staff in the context of American TV news.) Fixers receive reporters' templates as informational norms: expectations of what information should be transmitted to the reporter.

Just as reporters pitch stories that promise to flesh out the templates editors are already interested in filling, fixers pitch stories to reporters by advertising fill-ins they can provide that they predict will fit with a template the reporter has or would consider drafting. Can, for example, would send me text messages occasionally advertising, for instance, that he had great contacts in the Russian tourism industry of southern Turkey. His message came after the Kremlin called on Russian citizens to boycott Turkey amid a diplomatic row over Turkey shooting down

a Russian jet over the Syrian border (*Daily Sabah* 2016), which Can predicted would make those sources attractive fill-ins for an outline about rising geopolitical tensions.

For the story Michael and I did on Day 1 about the purges of the judiciary, Michael's editor may have (this example is not based on real data; I was not privy to their communications) presented him with a template that looked something like this:

> In Turkey, since Friday night's coup attempt, _____. According
> (account of recent repressive action)
>
> to the Turkish government _____. But critics in the country
> (justification for aforementioned action)
>
> contend _____. The case of those repressive actions is part of a
> (refutation of government's justification)
>
> trend toward _____.
> (government's end goals, according to critics)

Figure 5.5: Template After Editor's Fill-Ins

Michael would have found it difficult to sell, for instance an article about the PKK to his editor within those constraints; he would have needed to fit it into the template, connecting the PKK issue somehow to the coup attempt and the latest repressive actions. An article about the purges of the judiciary, however, could fit the bill nicely. Michael filled in some blanks and then delegated to me the task of brokering interactions with sources that would yield the information to fill in the rest of the template:

In Turkey, since Friday night's coup attempt, __many judges were arrested____.

According to Turkish government representative _____, the purges are justified __because
(name of gov't source)

conspirators in the judiciary posed a threat to national security: "_____". But
(quotation to this effect)

critics in the country such as _____ contend that ____these purges are actually
(name of expert source)

opportunistic actions to undermine judicial independence and _____.
(further criticism of the purges)

The judicial purges are part of a larger trend toward _authoritarianism and_____.
(other gov't goals, in source's words)

Figure 5.6: Template After Michael's Fill-Ins

Which blanks, or rather blanks at which level of abstraction, one is trusted to fill in, or to manage the filling-in of, relates to status, role, and label within the field of journalism. Although people with the label "producer" were not discussed in this chapter, Burcu's explanation of how her work as a producer was different from that of a fixer was in keeping with the notion that holders of two labels intervene at different stages of template-building: "A fixer is just someone who is doing what he is told," she told me, whereas a producer decides what the story will be. She might have added that fixers have some leeway and producers work within constraints, but that would have muddied the message she wanted to get across to me that producers are trusted to fill blanks at a higher level than fixers.

As a fixer, I was not trusted to decide whether the newspaper would cover Turkey that day. I was not trusted to determine whether the coup attempt was the most important story going on in Turkey that week. I was not trusted to determine whether the coup attempt's failure should be presented as a triumph of democracy or as a retrenchment of authoritarianism. I was not trusted

to determine whether the retrenchment of authoritarianism should be covered by discussing the purges of the judiciary, though this may have been a negotiable level of the template: if I had great contacts among teachers, for instance, I might have persuaded Michael to revise his template to discussing purges of the ~~judiciary~~ education sector. I was, however, trusted to determine whom we should contact for information about purges in the judiciary.

When someone not trusted with a level of the template attempts to revise it or provide a fill-in that does not fit into the template as written, they can simply be locked out of contributing to the story. For instance, the Human Rights Organization source Michael and I interviewed for that story provided information about oppression of Kurds and Alevis; to include that information would have required a revision of the template to change the focus away from judicial purges.

Within the constraints of the template Michael offered me, however, particular sources and particular information were in a sense interchangeable with alternative sources and information. If the bar association representative I scared on the phone or the human rights lawyer who was too tired to talk had consented to engage before Özge did, they could have filled in the same blank spaces, still yielding a story conforming to the template.

The fact that details were interchangeable was evident in the mistakes Michael made. Each day I worked with Michael, I would closely read the story we had done the previous day in his newspaper. There were usually one or two little mistakes, which I would point out and Michael would pass on to his editor for correction in the newspaper's online edition, though it was too later for the print edition. Without fail, these mistakes were in details that Michael included despite their irrelevance to the story from the relatively abstract vantage point of a foreign editor or reader interested in what was going on, in broad strokes, in Turkey. Michael was sure to mention details like street names, the names of *vox pop* sources, and the proximity of

neighborhoods to city landmarks, but often got them wrong. Checking the details--which he could have done talking to me or using the map on his phone--clearly mattered less than the more general arguments he was making in his articles; what mattered was just that he *had* details, their unique specifics being interchangeable.

Saying that details are interchangeable is not the same as saying that they are unnecessary. If including unique specifics did not matter, Michael would have left more space for analysis by not writing them; for that matter, Michael's editor could have saved the cost of flying Michael to Turkey and written the article themselves. Specifics create what Roland Barthes (1989 [1968]) calls a "reality effect": seemingly insignificant details serve as a powerful rhetorical tool for convincing an audience of an author's legitimacy as a witness and chronicler. They also demonstrate the reporter's charismatic exposure to local realities both for others and for the reporter themselves (see also Zelizer 2007 on "eyewitnessing" as lending authority to journalism).

Getting details wrong only matters when they are noticed. Michael was quick to apologize and forward corrections to his editor when I pointed out mistakes. It was important that he also thought the details he included were real--the reality effect operated on him, not just on his editor and readers. Michael's allegiance to real, if interchangeable, details was evident after our interview with the Iranian woman about tourism. Michael would not use a fake name, even though it did not matter (she was not a public figure and providing a first name would have made it no easier to fact-check Michael's story), because having *real* details was a powerful norm to which he complied as part of his professional identity. He should not knowingly get things wrong, as with the Iranian source's fake name, but if he got them wrong unknowingly it was not a big deal. For my part, when I told him the Iranian's name was likely fake, I failed to

insulate him from the contamination of that lie and so to align his expectation of a name with the source's expectation of anonymity; revealing the alignment spoiled it.

It might seem, in my initial characterization of international news production as conforming to the order of templates imposed by high-status outsiders on lower-status insiders, that I am arguing that news production is homogenous and that lower-rung contributors are hegemonically dominated through the template. But calling the process homogenization and domination privileges the abstracting viewpoint of the outsider over the specific viewpoint of the insider.

This difference in perspective mirrors the different views of the media detailed in the introduction. For scholars who present journalism as ritual, the reproduction of the broadest frames is the central function of the news. The particular heroes and villains and events might change, but the news continues to flesh out skeletal archetypes deeply rooted in the cultures they address and reproduce, bringing in new actors and deeds to act out the same morality plays at the root of the collective consciousness. For them, it is the broadest template that matters. By contrast, for those who think about watchdog vs. propagandist journalism, the action is in how the blanks are filled in. "Who is cast as good guy and bad guy?" ask those viewing journalism as propaganda. "On what factual basis?" ask those viewing journalism as watchdoggery.

Whether one thinks about a story from the international vs. local perspective likewise dictates whether the template or the fill-in is privileged as most important. The farther to the left we move on the chain of contributors and from outsider to insider, the more those details matter in their uniqueness, and the more the agency of lower-rung contributors is evident. It mattered to me that Michael got the name of Onur, the local journalist we interviewed in Kasımpaşa, correct. I wanted to send Onur the published article to show him that when he said black we had not written white, building trust so I could turn to him as a source and sub-fixer in the future.

In my article about the state crackdown on the Turkish media, it did not matter for the broader point I was making to an American audience that I had included an *ulusalcı* journalist like Barış, rather than a liberal, as a prominent voice of the opposition and victim of injustice. Including Barış specifically did matter quite a bit to my local journalist friend and potentially to Barış himself, enmeshed as they were in local politics. My article lent him legitimacy on an international stage.

The ability/agency to change details in ways that matter from the insider perspective, even as they conform to the outsider's template, I will call wiggle room. We will next look at how fixers maximize and make use of wiggle room afforded them to understand how fixers matter for the content of the news, if not from the template perspective then from the fill-in perspective.

Wiggle Room

Each stage of filling in blanks in the template is relatively autonomous from the next. I take the term *relatively autonomous* from Stuart Hall (1973), who proposed we study the media as composed of four relatively autonomous stages: production, distribution, consumption/reception, and reproduction. Production is only relatively autonomous because concerns about the other stages shape how it is done: for instance, editors and producers think about means of distribution--whether they have page space left in their next magazine issue, whether the story has the visual elements necessary to work for TV, and so forth--and about audiences--what people are interested in, how long their attention spans last, and so forth--when they are deciding whether to buy or assign a story. My argument throughout this study has been that if we zoom in to the production stage we in fact find a chain of miniature production-distribution-consumption-reproduction processes linked end to end. A source produces a message, which a fixer distributes

through translation to a reporter, who consumes the message and then reproduces it in a new form within the stories they produce and distribute to their editor via email or FTP transfer, and so on. These miniature chains are likewise relatively autonomous from one another: editors' demands and priorities trickle down to fixers through reporters, but it is the normative expectations of those immediate interlocutors--reporters as well as sources—that directly affect fixers' actions in ways that can have little to do with far-off concerns of news organization headquarters.

For our purposes, relative autonomy, wiggle room, freedom of choice, and for that matter disorder, are all synonymous.[96] This wiggle room is found at what we could call the meso-level of interaction, fixers' match-making between sources and reporters, and at the micro-level of their choices of speech, tone, and body language as they translate between reporters and sources. The prosecution of journalists is common enough in Turkey that Can had the freedom to choose from among numerous potential sources who could tell us about being put on trial for their reporting. He chose to introduce me to Barış, which significantly shaped the story. When Michael decided to do a story about government supporters, I had half the country to choose from.

Yet I did not really have absolute freedom of choice within the template's constraints. I was also constrained by the moral imperative to avoid breaching Michael's rhythmic norms by traveling halfway across the city and to avoid breaching my Bahçelievler sources' strategic

[96]Goffman's (1981:230-231) synonym for wiggle room within constraints is "frame space" within which people have leeway in how to act, whose dimensions he similarly stresses are particular to the holder of a negotiated role in a situation: "different possibilities in conjunction with the participation status [an individual] could enjoy comprised what might be called his *frame space*." (emphasis in original; see also Baker 2006:105-110 on the frame space of translators and interpreters specifically). Goffman (1974:345-377) meanwhile refers to what I have been calling "going rogue," that is, acting outside the wiggle room normatively afforded to you, as "breaking frame."

norms by bringing them a reporter who asked hostile questions. What looks like wiggle room in relation to the template does not necessarily look like freedom if we zoom in to the fixer's moral world. The template is just one normative expectation among many. Fixers must also contend with pressure to conform to the situational and transcendent norms identified in the previous chapter. Their freedom of choice is limited by the imperative to harmonize these competing norms.

Numerous examples in this chapter have established that the words a source speaks do not in themselves determine, that is, eliminate all freedom of choice from, a fixer's translation. Rather, the way a fixer translates is a negotiation among the norms of the fixer and their interlocutors, including but not limited to the informational expectations of the reporter (through which the story template is expressed) and the normative expectation that they interpret accurately.

The strength of different parties' ties to the fixer influences how those norms are weighed, as discussed in the previous chapter, but so too does the degree to which fixers control information. Norms carry less weight when their breach is not detectable or punishable, and fixers' control over information reduces their accountability to some norms. If a reporter and a source cannot tell how accurately a fixer is translating, the fixer can prioritize translating in a way that best aligns the respective informational and coding norms of the two or in a way that aligns with the fixer's own transcendent informational norms over translating in the greatest possible conformity to the norm of accurate translation. We repeatedly saw this to be the case: fixers moderated tones, clarified or generalized questions and answers, and folded explanations of statements into their translations, changing the informational content of messages between reporters and sources in the service of alignment. Fixers' control over information is never absolute, however: reporters and sources often understand some of each other's utterances, or at least body language

and metalinguistic features like tone and length of speech, and reporters have a variety of means to check fixers' work after the fact against other information sources, depending on their deadlines and workloads. All these factors contribute to the relative moral weight of the norm of accurate translation in a given situation.

In short, from the outside, the wiggle room afforded to fixers by the interchangeability of fill-ins looks like a source of heterogeneity and charismatic disorder within the constraints of the templates that impose order on the news. But when we look closer, we see that there is a moral order to the use of that wiggle room down to the micro level of word choice (or rather word *selection*, as choice implies freedom).

Some fixers in some situations are substantively better or worse at brokering alignment among interlocutors and to story templates: some fixer-brokered interactions yield information that makes it into stories and other interactions do not. It is to the capacity of fixers to create alignments and the situated nature of that capacity that we now turn.

Fixer Capacity

When a reporter comes to a fixer with a story idea (or vice versa), the amount of wiggle room the fixer enjoys depends on their capacity to provide multiple different fill-ins to satisfy the reporter's template. That capacity is larger or smaller depending on the fixer's interrelated social capital, transcoding capacity, coordinating expertise, and prediction/interpolation ability.

A person's social capital is the sum of their ties to other people. Social capital is for our purposes a kind of channel capacity. A channel with a given capacity is able to connect a receiver to a certain amount of information in a certain amount of time. A fixer with a given amount of social capital is able to connect a reporter to a certain number of sources--and through them, to a certain amount of information--in a certain amount of time. If I have a large network

of contacts who will answer my call and agree to an immediate interview, I will likely have multiple sources to choose between when a reporter tells me they want to talk to a member of a particular category of people. If, by contrast, I do not have much social capital among the category of people with whom the reporter wants to connect, I might struggle to find even one person to serve as a source. Like a channel with a low bitrate, I might still be able to connect the reporter with the same information by searching for new sources and convincing them to engage, but it will almost surely take longer, perhaps too long to meet that reporter's rhythmic norms.

When Michael asked me to find him a government critic who was also an insider to the judiciary, I struggled to find any source. After I accidentally scared away the prospective source from the bar association (due to both the stigma of the foreign in those nervous days and to a lack of coordinating expertise [discussed below] on my part), I next contacted a human rights lawyer friend who told me she was too tired to talk. I used what little wiggle room remained to me to avoid expending social capital with her and instead contacted Özge. Had Özge been unavailable or unreceptive, I do not know where I would have turned to next. My wiggle room to fill in that particular blank was narrow because of my lack of social capital. Likewise, Ayşe lacked social ties with state officials whom she could ask to sit down for an interview or to help us access official casualty counts for my article on the PKK; when formal channels at the courts and ministries were not helpful, she had no capacity to find alternative means to provide me the information I sought.

The ability of a fixer to turn a source's utterance into a signal that a reporter can decode for story information depends on the fixer's transcoding capacity, which often takes the form of language ability (see also previous discussion of cultural toolkits). Lacking a broad vocabulary in either Turkish or English legalese, Solmaz was able to translate fewer of Çağdaş's statements

about his legal issues into useful information that could fill in blanks for my story. Solmaz's case points out that technical capacity, like social capital, depends on the situation and on the object of reporting. Her better understanding of Gülenist lingo afforded her more options in choosing Cihan's statements to convert into information for me. Her ability to differentiate among the shades of meaning in his references to the movement and its leader afforded her more opportunities to provide translations and asides to me that filled in my story. This transcoding capacity was built through experience and consisted of more than just the ability to find the right dictionary definition to match a particular word Cihan said. She understood meanings behind Cihan's signals that she predicted could be lost in my decoding and knew how she would need to recode those signals as translations and aside to me.

However wide a fixer's transcoding capacity, the signals they transmit to reporters are still effectively limited by the capacities of reporter's receivers. If a fixer tells a reporter something that would fit brilliantly into their story, but the reporter does not understand it, the fixer has effectively gone rogue and the information they transmitted is unlikely to make it into the story. Thus, one way that fixers make the most of their transcoding capacities is to not only understand how sources' transmitters and reporters' receivers work and transcode accordingly, but to enhance those transmitters and transcoders. Fixers can work to enhance reporters' impaired reception capacities so that they are capable of decoding a wider range of signals. Solmaz did so when she coached me before our interview on Gülen movement lingo. When Can back-channeled supportive sounds to Barış whenever he said something that could be easily translated into a statement that would make a good quotation in my story, he was in that moment coaching Barış on how to best encode his messages.

In other cases, it can be strategic to *not* provide the coaching that would enable brokered parties to more directly decode one another's messages, in order to maintain information control (c.f. Eisenberg [1984] and Swidler and Watkins [2017] on the utility of lack of understanding for allowing differences without the perception of disjuncture, thus preventing conflict). A fixer has more leeway to transcode in ways that create alignment when they have greater control over information due to receiver impairment.

Fixers also make the most of limited transcoding capacities by deploying coordinating expertise. The importance of coordination was evident in its breach in Michael's and my interview with Özge. When I failed to interrupt her and then delayed translation with clarifying back-channel questions that she took as signals to take additional speaking turns, I ended up translating statements uttered three minutes earlier from memory.

Humans not only have transcoding capacities, but also data buffers called memories in which they store data before decoding it to avoid channel overload when encoding occurs faster than or before decoding. When using a digital camera if you snap a series of photos in quicker succession than the camera's processor can decode sensor data and re-encode them into image files, the camera stores data from the sensor in its memory (RAM), also known as data buffer. If you continuously take photos, the buffer will fill up. When the buffer is full, the morally uncompromising camera will prevent you from triggering the shutter again until the buffer has been cleared in order to prevent overload, effectively coercing you to align with the camera's rhythmic norm.

Coordinating novice that I was, I did not coerce Özge into respecting my buffer. I was overloaded with information and, in my struggle to catch up, had a limited ability to choose what and how best to translate to ensure Michael's comprehension. The result was him interrupting

my translation with clarification questions directed to me, setting me back even further. By contrast, in the Barış interview, Can expertly coordinated our interaction through interruptions and back-channeling that disciplined us on when we should start, end, or continue our speaking turns. This coordinating work allowed Can to mostly avoid overload and so maximize his wiggle room in transcoding Barış's utterances into signals that I would find useful.

Coordinating expertise operates on a larger scale as well. Fixers coordinate interaction between reporters and sources in the basic sense of convincing them to join each other in the same physical or virtual space. I did not manage to coordinate a meeting with Özge and Michael that lasted long enough to give me much wiggle room: I had few chances to transcode her statements into information for him before Michael had to return to his hotel.

Another way to make up for limited channel capacity is through prediction and interpolation. When translating, if I predict what each party is going to say before they are done saying it, I don't need to understand every word. I can cognitively prepare to optimally transcode instead of spending my attention hanging onto their every word. I can also predict what is important and what in unimportant to my client and compress the data according to that logic rather than at random due to overload, the latter of which would risk the loss of important information.

In normal speech, we automatically fill in, or interpolate, words that we don't hear or that are not comprehensibly articulated according to what they *should* be (Heritage 1984:96). These interpolations are based on a missing word's position in a series and our knowledge as listeners. If you hear me say "My name (inaudible) Noah," you can reasonably interpret the inaudible word to be "is." As a translator too, I can make up for impairment of my reception of signals by interpolating words I presume a speaker said between words I actually heard and understood, or simply devote less effort to listening and more to figuring out how best to align norms.

Such predictive and interpolative transcoding adds to the homogenization of the story, limiting *sources'* wiggle room to transmit information that I do not expect but which fits a template. Speech can be unpredictable, and prediction or interpolation can go wrong, then cause difficulty for fixers when the speaker's subsequent utterances fail to fit with the previous translation. When Solmaz did not understand Çağdaş's sentence obliquely referencing a special court's closure for Gülenist illegality, she interpolatively reconstructed his statement, based on her understanding that we were talking about government misdeeds, to say the court was closed for AKP illegality. This interpolation blocked Çağdaş's freedom of choice to transmit information that fit the template even as it defied expectations at the next rung of the chain of contributors. Solmaz's interpolation also started us down the path of a narrative whose logic I could not decode and so omitted from my article.

Noise and Music

Noise in the sense of useless information can also be noise in the colloquial sense. Motorcycles driving up and down a narrow street, as during Michael's interview with the government official, can disrupt sources' signals. Part of fixers' coordination expertise is to bring reporters and sources together in conditions where disruptive noise in minimized.

It is not, however, exogenous, environmental noise that we are concerned with here, but rather endogenous noise produced through brokerage. The chain of contributors to the news, and the news media as a whole, are normatively expected--at least where a norm of objectivity prevails and the news media are not expected to be the mouthpieces of special interests--to be mere transcoders, converting information about events around the world into signals that allow end-destination audiences to understand those events. Distortions, that is, information added and removed in the process of re-coding from original signals sent (by the world) to signals received

(by audiences) is noise disrupting the world's true signal. (NB Although noise is defined in the information transmission model specifically as *additions* to a sent signal, I will use noise here synonymously with distortions to mean *any* changes between sent signal and received signal.)

Individual reporters, as transcoders themselves between sources/fixers and news organizations, often face accusations of disrupting signals from the world with their own noisy subjectivity, if not lying then harping on about their pet issues instead of conforming to the template dictated by the public interest: all the news that's fit to print (and none that isn't). They are normatively discouraged, depending on the conventions of the genre and medium, from injecting their own opinions into stories or obsessively reporting on a fringe issue, when they are supposed to be merely dispassionate chroniclers, transcoding the information that reaches them into signals that audiences can decode. "Just the facts!" an editor bellows as they decimate a "noisy" draft with a red pen. The editor also crosses out all they deem extraneous because it does not fit the template that they have pressed on the reporter with the understanding that it is the proper way to frame the issue.

From the reporter's perspective, fixers and sources can likewise produce noise. For reporters, a useful signal is one that provides the information they seek to fill in blanks on their template. Fixers go rogue when they bring reporters into interaction with sources who transmit to them information that does not fit the template and/or that fixers do not transcode into a useful signal. When Michael and I visited the İHD office, for instance, Michael was tuned to receive information about judicial purges, but the interview ended up with a low signal-to-noise ratio, with our source talking mostly Kurds, Alevis, and conscripts, with just a few remarks that actually addressed his line of inquiry (which Michael did seize on and include in his article).

The noise that fixers and sources add appears to be random from the perspective of the template, which is tuned to sensibly decode only what information fits within its frame. But when we zoom in to consider the moral negotiations through which that noise was produced, we understand that the information transmitted to reporters that exceeds the frame of a particular story is not just random, white noise but in many cases has an order of its own. This order that noise exhibits we can call its *timbre*.

In music, the timbre of an instrument or a voice consists of a combination of audio frequencies around the note being played or sung. From the perspective of sheet music, timbre is useless noise. On the page, a single tone is written, but the real-life performer includes semitones that are not written, adding their own information. Yet that timbre is what turns the sound into music (Clarke 2010:163-170). A MIDI file produced by composition software provides (almost) noise-free audio, and this almost perfect signal-to-noise ratio is precisely what makes the sound soulless, lacking musicality compared to noisy humans and noisy instruments. Few people listen to MIDI files for pleasure. Timbre, then, can be not only a disruption of signal but an enhancement.

When fixers align sources too well to the templates with which reporters approach them, they can come to sound a bit like MIDI files. By fitting neatly within the frame, they do nothing to stretch it. The reporter learns nothing that leads them to revise the way they fill in their own blanks on the template, nothing that could lead them to go rogue themselves and challenge their editor to revise their respective fill-ins.[97] The templates that contributors at each link in the chain

[97]Similarly, in a study of fixers in Iraq, some journalists interviewed "referred to the danger of fixers understanding too well what their journalist wanted," filtering out noise that they anticipated would not fit their client's signals, for instance sources' talk about "resistance" early in the US occupation when the frame for reporting on the country was still to focus democratization and gratitude toward American liberators, only for that "noise" to become an important signal later on as insurgency grew and story templates changed (Palmer and Fontan 2007:14-18).

of news production contend with are, after all, not immaculately conceived by editors or anyone else, but rather accrued through repeated iterations of storytelling. Furthermore, templates are constantly, if glacially, shifting as a result of negotiated settlements to conflicts that arise when contributors up and down the whole chain go rogue on their contiguous supervisors (see also Baker 2006: 101 on narrative accrual).

When fixers go rogue, then, their insubordination carries with it the possibility for change (see also Burt 2007:58-92 on the connection of brokerage to creativity and learning). In the timbre of the fixer are patterns for the reporter that, to them, may be new, exciting, original. My particular choice of sources on our first day of my reporting with Michael--Özge and İHD--subjected Michael to the noise of repeated references to Alevi issues that had nothing to do with the story he was writing on judicial purges. Michael had never heard of Alevis, in fact, and I had to give him a quick primer on the community as an aside that did nothing to fill blanks in his story template.

This initially useless noise, however, put Michael on the trail of a new story about Sunni-Alevi tensions, led him to consider filling the blanks of the template his editor handed him in ways he would not have previously realized possible. The declaration of a state of emergency led me to kill the story; otherwise, we might have done a story that Michael could never have predicted when his plane landed in Istanbul.

Reporters, then, can attune themselves to appreciate the timbres that exceed the notes they ask fixers to play. This appreciation I will call connoisseurship. As with other kinds of connoisseurship, it is easier for people with extra money and time on their hands to develop and exercise. Having larger budgets gives reporters more options in recruiting fixers; the reporters who hired me did not have the alternative option of working with a high-end fixer charging a day

rate of $250 or more. Reporters who are constantly under pressure to meet deadlines have less time to hang around with fixers and sources chatting about issues unrelated to the story they are scrambling to fill in and file. On another day of our reporting, for example, Michael had no time to interview a source before filing and so asked me to do the interview myself, then send him any quotations or other information that would fit in with the article of the day. This was a good way to ensure a high signal-to-noise ratio and to filter out any noise so that he could snatch any useful information with minimal time expended. But this method also stripped the signal of any interesting timbre and so prevented new ideas from reaching Michael.

The higher the signal-to-noise ratio a fixer provides their client, the less room for surprise or change. But the lower signal-to-noise ratio, the less a reporter is able to satisfy their immediate need to write a story. A very low signal-to-noise ratio can even make information incomprehensible to reporters. [98] (Schudson [1989:167-170, 175] similarly argues that a cultural product has power when it "resonates with existing opinions and structures (without disappearing entirely into them so as to have no independent influence to exert)," [parentheses in original] meaning when contains enough signal to be comprehensible but enough noise to be distinctive.)

The game of Mad Libs is funny because it is an exercise in harnessing noise within constraints, of domesticating rogue action. The player is asked to provide words that go rogue insofar as they defy expectations. Mad Libs gets boring quickly if you just fill each blank with the most commonplace and most likely expected word to fit the sentence, as in the example Story 1 above. At the same time, Mad Libs turns from fun into gibberish if you go too far rogue,

[98]This last point should be made with the caveat that many reporters understand far more than they are able to write about within the constraints of their jobs; their own decoding capacities are not necessarily limited to those of the templates within which they work.

ignoring the parenthetical categories written under the blank spaces that preserve at least the syntactic order of sentences:

The ___door__ way to write a journal article is to begin with a(n) __eat__ vignette. Then, (adjective) (adjective) review the work of prominent __softly__ who have researched the __either__ you (plural job title) (noun) are addressing and describe the _defy_ of those authors, while also pointing out the (plural noun) gaps in their __hinted__ that your article will ___apple___. (plural noun) (verb)

Figure 5.6: Story 3

The template breaches of the rogue fixer thus need to be made in moderation to ensure a signal-to-noise ratio that is just right. The connoisseur reporter, then, recruits and manages fixers in order to obtain that optimal signal-to-noise ratio. The connoisseur fixer, in turn, chooses sources who will provide enough information to satisfy a reporter's immediate needs while also saying enough extra information to stretch the reporter's frame, if not in time to meet the current deadline, then for their next story.

Had I been a more discerning connoisseur of a reporter, I may have hired Solmaz for the Cihan interview, in which her particular timbre paired well with our sources to provide me with information that was both useful for my story and generative of new ideas, but not for the Çağdaş interview. In the latter case, the noise she added was of a quantity and quality at which a true connoisseur would turn up their nose.

Contributors to news production can thus learn to appreciate the timbre of what, from the vantage point of the blanks they are asking their sub-brokers to fill in, is useless information. That timbre can then be harnessed toward the end of creating the charismatic disruptions to the

order imposed from above that make reporting exciting, even musical, in the first place. [99] When Can translated predictively and interpolatively to me, I got what I needed for my story and reframed it--taking a harder line criticizing the Gülen movement media--than I originally planned, based in part on the timbre with which he enhanced Barış and other interviewees signals. At the same time, due to his prioritization of alignment to my informational norms when it came to signals he did not deem important to enhance, I also missed information from Barış that might have led me in new directions. Barış's information about military officers tried in the Ergenekon trials, for instance, which Can did not prioritize in his transcoding, could later have become relevant when many of those same officers returned to their post in 2016 to replace those who had staged the July 15 coup attempt (Tol and Taspinar 2016). A fixer with a different timbre than Can might have helped plant a seed in my mind that those officers would be a good topic to revisit at some point.

The next chapter will consider the trajectories of fixers' careers, asking what conditions and accumulated experiences lead fixers to transcode and manage ambivalence in different ways and to produce different signal-to-noise ratios in the information they broker.

[99] This is not a new idea, at least not the other academic subfields than journalism studies, and it is worth quoting a few scholars who have phrased it with a more beautiful timbre to their writing than I have. Philosopher Michel Serres (2007[1980]:21) writes, "The bit of noise, the small random element, transforms one system or one order into another." Anthropologist Gregory Bateson (1972:410) writes, "All that is not information, not redundancy, not form, and not restrains--is noise, the only possible source of *new* patterns." Translation theorist Mona Baker (2006:98), citing psychologist Jerome Bruner, writes "breaches of canonical scripts [read: templates] are what makes a narrative worth telling."

CHAPTER 6: LOCAL AND GLOBAL

In the Middle of It All

Victor Louis, broker extraordinaire between the Soviet Union and the West and the first news fixer, made the most of his privileged position that allowed control over the precious commodity of information. Louis and his British wife might have lived in Communist Russia, but they were famous for entertaining foreign guests at a dacha festooned with high-tech Western gadgets and precious antiques; a carpet that had once belonged to Catherine the Great decorated their living room (Vronskaya 1992; Whitney 1992; Schechter 2012). From his lowly origins, as a political prisoner likely paroled by the intelligence services in order to serve as a spy on foreign diplomats and journalists, Louis managed to turn his marginal but charismatic position on the fault lines between the Soviet state and Western bloc fact-finders into one of high status in a murky, emergent field of transnational power games and information dealing. Louis later reminisced that after some time working in the media,

> I gave up trying to persuade people that I was not working for any agency beside my newspaper. But I also learned that it was much more beneficial to belong to a mysterious department than to be just a journalist. I was treated with respect and sometimes even with servility in most countries. I was received by ministers, heads of state, assistants to presidents and vice-presidents. The aura of a man belonging to a mysterious government body, even if it is the secret police, would open many doors for me which would be slammed in front of an ordinary journalist. I have learned to puff my cheeks, spread a tail like a peacock and prophesy as if I really were 'the hand of Moscow'. (Schechter 2012:2526)

Embracing, or even exaggerating, his ties to local power rather than denying them in order to claim the status of an objective, disinterested journalist like any other, Louis carved out a field in which he occupied the central position. In a field that included both senior government officials and foreign correspondents, he enjoyed the status of being the most purely enmeshed in transnational power games of them all.

Some of our protagonists likewise came to be behave and to be seen by their colleagues as high status players in emergent fields. Others became altogether disillusioned with their abilities to rise in status within journalism and to affect news templates and look for new possibilities. Established fixers' advancement within or departure from journalism opened up new gaps between foreign news organizations and local sources, and with them new brokerage possibilities for the next cohort of fixers.

Can

When Can first started fixing, he coached clients that Turkish opposition journalism was under siege, that Ergenekon and Sledgehammer coup plot trials were a sham, that Erdoğan was an authoritarian amassing power. They largely dismissed Can as an embittered Kemalist and ignored what he provided that did not fit into the dominant Western media template, according to which the AKP was democratizing Turkey, integrating the country into Europe, and performing an economic miracle. At most, Can's reporters would introduce mention of contradictions to that narrative in their stories but frame them as minor glitches, mere noise interfering with the stronger signal of the triumph of democracy and provision of a "Turkish Model" of the whole region. Can went rogue in vain, and his control over information to clients was undermined by another class of brokers who circumvented him: media-friendly, English-speaking liberal intellectuals who were still behind the AKP.

If there was a decisive turning point in international media's Turkey template, it was the Gezi park protests. By then, though, Can had already begun to view his job more like sales than production. Disillusioned by the intransigence of clients to his attempts to change their framing but enjoying the day rates, Can began to take a certain distance from the stories he worked on, caring less that they were original or made an argument he endorsed and more about being

efficient: minimizing the amount of work it took to get clients what they were asking for. Re-using sources was efficient because the more times he interviewed the same person, the more easily he could transcode their statements to fit clients' information norms without listening to them as carefully. When he had a good set of sources for a particular story, he would sell it over and over to different clients. The working routine that Can developed, managing his moral ambivalence by dehumanizing colleagues into sellers and sources into products, served to contribute to the homogenization of global news: the same blanks were filled with the same local details in many different stories on the same topic as Can kept busy with a steady stream of clients from around the world.

Ayşe

Like Can, Ayşe grew frustrated over time with the formulaic nature of the news and with her limited ability to affect it. There were some good reporters like José with whom she worked closely for years and who would come to her with ideas for stories that she was excited to investigate with them. But most reporters, she told me, came to her "as a baby," wide-eyed and ignorant. She had to explain everything to them and cater to their same derivative story ideas again and again as existing clients left for other countries and new clients parachuted in. By 2016, after three years on the job, she felt she was burning out. Unlike Can, she refused to manage her unease by becoming a salesperson. She had started fixing during Gezi park to help get a message out to the world and still determinedly wanted media work to be more meaningful than just another job.

Instead, Ayşe grew pickier about who she would work with and used fixing as occasional supplemental income to support her NGO work and personal media projects that she found more creatively rewarding. She had, at least, learned a lot about video production in her work with TV

and documentary crews. She was putting that knowledge to use on her first documentary film, a no-budget project about the gentrification of an Istanbul neighborhood, when I completed my fieldwork. The film might not fit into an international template for representing Turkey, but she thought it was an important story to tell for the neighborhood's residents and for others being marginalized by urban redevelopment projects across the country.

Burcu

Burcu, established as she was as *XYZ* TV channel's chief producer in Turkey, also felt her aspirations limited. Burcu told me that in her *XYZ* contract she had the right to request posting anywhere in the world. If she wanted to work at *XYZ*'s Brazil bureau, she could ask. But she did not ask, in fact felt that it would be weird to ask, as she put it to me. There was still a marked difference between her and her American and European colleagues who would come and go from Turkey. Whatever the status she attained in the organization, there was an unspoken understanding that her position and value in the organization was geographically rooted. She was not a global news producer or correspondent like them; she was their Turkey producer. This difference was, I think, based in good part on the way Burcu had come up through the organization's ranks: as a fixer whose value was tied to her connection to local society, rather than to academic credentials or ties with upper management at *XYZ*'s US headquarters. Burcu thus felt she had hit a ceiling and was not sure where she would go from her current position: "What will I be? A senior producer? A *more* senior producer?"

At the same time, Burcu was, by virtue of her shift to office work and high-level producing, less connected to local sources and more reliant on her stable of sub-fixers than ever. Her rise at *XYZ* had coincided with a distancing from the local people and local problems that she had once known intimately.

Elif

Being a fixer, Elif told me, isn't really a career. It's a job, and if you are good at it then you become a producer or reporter. After a few years working at *XYZ*, Elif decided she was at a crossroads. Either she could aspire to Burcu's job, either as her eventual replacement at *XYZ* or more likely as the Turkey producer for another outlet, or she could become an international correspondent herself, with the world as her beat.

She was not jealous of foreign reporters for getting the credit for stories and having their faces appear on screen. As a blonde in Turkey, she told me, she had always gotten more than enough attention and did not covet visibility. On the contrary, working in Turkey, she was happy to remain behind scenes. Among other things, she did not want tax auditors showing up at the company her family owned because of something critical of the government she wrote or said publicly. What she did come to envy was foreign reporters' epistemological status: even those she knew to be incompetent were taken seriously by people both inside and outside of *XYZ*. This also translated into official status: Elif had seen qualified candidates, both Turkish and Syrian, passed over for senior positions at print, radio, and TV outlets in favor of less qualified Americans and Europeans who, she gathered, were more trusted to maintain a disinterested outsider's perspective. There were certainly Turks covering Turkey as reporters in the international media, most of them dual citizens and/or educated abroad. Nonetheless, given the local broker career track she had entered in journalism, Elif felt it would be an uphill battle to become a correspondent trusted not only to produce stories in collaboration with foreign colleagues, but also to report anywhere in the world as the supervisor of a local broker.

She told me that she needed to leave Turkey for her journalism to move forward. She would have to go to where she was an outsider and establish herself not as a Turkish journalist,

but as an international journalist. Elif decided to apply to Columbia Journalism School, which she thought would add to her international legitimacy, and was accepted. We met during her first J-school semester and my last one on campus, and she was very skeptical that she was learning anything practical not already covered on the job. The school was, however, a good place to build relationships, especially with New York editors and producers to whom she planned to pitch stories after she got her masters degree, wherever in the world she next ended up.

Gül

Gül also decided to report abroad, though under very different conditions. She felt she needed a break from frantically paced fixing work, and also from the Kurdish conflict and Turkish politics generally. Working nonstop with reporters in the southeast throughout 2015 on the collapsing peace process and refugee crisis had left her exhausted, but also with enough savings to travel.

Gül had kept in friendly contact with many of the reporters with whom she had worked and now had places she could stay all across Europe. After touring the continent, she headed to Colombia, a country about which she had always been curious because of its own smuggling economy and long-running leftist guerilla insurgency, like Kurdistan in the jungle. A Colombian former client offered for Gül to stay with her family as long as she wanted. The next I heard from her, she was complaining on social media about a lazy, unscrupulous Colombian fixer. Then she returned to Diyarbakir and to fixing.

Burhan

Gül was not the only Diyarbakır fixer who seemed personally affected by the tragedy unfolding around them. When I visited the city in summer 2015 as the PKK conflict re-escalated, Burhan was less busy fixing, in part, it seemed to me, because he had slipped into a depression.

When I stopped by his carpet shop, he first told me that he was not feeling up to answering my little questions with all that was going on. But then he called me the next day, apologetic, and told me to come meet him for tea. When we met and I asked him about reporting he had done on the June election, I had little success focusing Burhan as he kept reverting back to lecturing me about recent history and reiterating defiant slogans like "PKK cannot be separated from [the] people, and PKK is the hope of people." In his tough talk and refrain of Kurdish grievances, he seemed to be working though the traumatic prospect of, perhaps steeling himself against, a return to the violence of the bad old days.

He later found a management job at an oil company, which seemed to involve brokering between the international corporation and the local workers. He told me it was harder work than fixing, but he hoped that on-the-books employment would help the visa application he had filed to join relatives in Australia.

Jimbo

The Syrian Kurd, nom de guerre Jimbo, who had fled ISIS's advance for Turkey and then put himself forward as the man on the spot for international media covering the siege of Kobani, went on to become a full-time fixer. Covering the whole southeast and border region and picking up a rough working knowledge of Turkish, he gained a reputation for a willingness to conform reality to reporter's requests in order to earn a payday.

The American radio reporter Alison traveled to the border with a Turkish fixer/photographer to do a story on Syrian women in desperate situations marrying Turkish citizens for money, a trend which Alison's colleague had read about in the Turkish press. Jimbo assured them he had worked hard and found some Syrian wives who fit the bill, then brought them to a house where he said a group of sources had agreed to meet. In the house, a Syrian man,

whom Jimbo translated as saying he was a relative to one of them, remained present throughout the interviews, and Alison and the Turkish fixer felt that something was not quite right as the women told stories that matched one another's very closely.

After the interview the Turkish fixer asked neighbors, who confirmed their suspicions that the women were prostitutes and the man their pimp. A twinkle in his eye, Jimbo said Yes, maybe he had been fooled as well, and they were actually prostitutes. He then asked for money to pay them for their time, and when Alison refused, for $150 for a driver to drive them the short way back to the airport. Alison did pay Jimbo his day rate, which had risen to $200 by then.

"He is very charming," Alison conceded of Jimbo. But she would not work with him again.

Leyla and Aziz

After Aziz's abduction, the couple had become more guarded and suspicious about working with the foreign press. They still helped out journalists like Geert who they already knew and trusted but did not take new clients. Leyla told me that her husband's abduction had cemented an unease she had already felt over the work. They never came to accept the norm of conforming stories to pre-crafted templates, particularly as that norm often clashed with the norms of the activist work with which Aziz was still closely involved.

Aziz complained that an interviewee could tell a reporter ten things, but the reporter would just cherry-pick the one that suited the story they already had planned. Clients, feigning alignment with Aziz's and with sources' strategic norms, would claim they had humanitarian motivations but then fixate on uncomfortable details about rebel factions and rebel misdeeds or salacious details about ISIS. They might learn that the regime had killed a hundred people, but for the reporter it would not be newsworthy. If ISIS killed three people, though, it would be a

story. In short, Leyla and Aziz felt that the timbre they offered went unappreciated; they felt alienated from the stories they contributed to.

For them, fixing was only ever a complement to NGO work and a way to support themselves and their extended family while they applied for asylum. They were eventually accepted as refugees to resettle in France, and anticipated their fixing work ending when they left Turkey. Aziz planned to go to graduate school to study politics, and Leyla planned to continue as a translator and look for employment as an Arabic teacher.

Karim

I first got in touch with Karim after Leyla, shocked that I had not talked to him yet, told me, only half-joking, "He's the king of fixers." When we first met in 2015, we sat in Lavazza coffee shop in the shadow of Galata Tower and he told me war story after war story. Two British men in suits stopping for takeaway coffee greeted Karim cordially, even deferentially. They're from the embassy, he told me.

By then, Karim had transformed. He arrived in Turkey in 2013 a desperate refugee, sleeping seated upright at 24/7 internet cafés because they were cheaper than hotels or apartments as he reached out to every foreign journalist he had met in his time at a rebel media center inside Syria. He took whatever fixing work they gave him, eventually securing a producer job for a German TV outlet that he later looked back on as exploitative. 2015 Karim, though, was not a marginal player caught between worlds but a central node in a network of information about Syria that incorporated reporters, fixers, sources, government agencies, and NGOs.

Over the course of my fieldwork in 2016, I watched him further. He began coaching newcomers to the field of Syrian fixing. A Syrian-American woman named Amal who came to Istanbul straight out of college for an internship at a foreign news bureau, working as their fixer

for Syria stories, met Karim at a journalist party. Amal was going to leave the party alone late at night after a few drinks, and he took it upon himself to make sure that, unfamiliar as she was with the city, she got home safe. The two ended up sitting in a café talking about the job over tea and baklava until dawn.

> He was like. . . They're going to ask for stories that are sexy. They're going to ask for things that their editors want but not might always be what is right. And you have to make a decision that you can go to sleep at night with. And that you're not just kind of--because being the middle person can be a good thing and can be a bad thing. And you can be a vehicle like for reinforcing stereotypes and for reinforcing bad narratives and untrue narratives. And you can be the trust that they use to do things that are not ethical [i.e. they can use you to earn the trust of sources only to breach sources' or journalism's norms]. And then they can say they didn't do it; their fixer did. And so these are like a lot of things that it really helped to have in the back of my head, because it was easier for me to recognize them later on and it wasn't as much of a shock. And [Karim] also explained rates to me [for] print, radio, broadcast, documentary, freelance, staff. And he explained to me what breaking news rates meant. He was like, Besides screwing yourself over, you're screwing everyone else over in the city. And you're screwing the people further south who get paid a little bit higher because they're closer to the border. And you're screwing over the people in Syria who get paid extra. He was like, So when one person knocks their rate down it hurts everyone.

In coaching new fixers to balance foreign and Syrian norms and act in solidarity with other fixers, Karim was working to turn Syrian brokers in Turkey (he coached Syrians working in the NGO sector too, for that matter) into a field in its own right, a shared and recognized moral world of its own. He was encouraging his fellow fixers to treat their moral considerations and their work not as secondary to that of their clients or as lonely and ad hoc, but as an orderly part a field with its own internal organization and morality.

If Karim had become King of (Syrian) Fixers, then he reigned together with American reporter Sally as his Queen. As their relationship grew closer, they began to share bylines and then to share a bed, and after a year of blurry lines between working and dating, they decided to put a ring on it. Among other reasons for marrying, they recognized that their marriage would make it much easier--as compared to applying for asylum--for Karim to move to the United

States when the time came for them to move on from reporting fulltime on the Syrian conflict. Between the two of them, Karim and Sally had a combination of contacts and credibility with both sources and news organizations that placed them at the center of the Turkish hub of Syrian reporting.

Habib

Habib had come to Turkey from Afghanistan as a student and initially aspired to follow in his older brother's footsteps. After a few years, he seemed well on his way to carving out a little empire of his own, in his case out of the border region among fields of international journalism, humanitarian aid, and Afghan refugee smuggling. His relationships with journalists, NGO workers, smugglers, and migrants made him valuable to each one for his ability to connect them with each of the others. As Habib catalyzed new ties among local and international NGOs, the UNHCR, and journalists (smugglers preferred to keep him as a middleman), he was becoming a central node in an emergent network. If he was a marginal actor in either one of those fields, he was central to what could be called the Istanbul international Afghan refugee industry.

José

Like Elif, José came to the point where he needed to become something different or move on. By his fourth year in Turkey, José felt that he had finally developed a good understanding of what he was writing about and of local cultures. His Turkish language skills had progressed to where he could conduct interviews on his own unless the topic was technical or new to him. Increasingly, other foreign reporters turned to José for contacts, relying on him as an unlabeled, pro-bono catalyst fixer.

Yet at the same time, José, was growing increasingly frustrated with editors' restrictive story templates and frustrated in his efforts to pitch what he found to be interesting and original stories to them. His pitches would be met with responses that his proposed story was "in the weeds" or "inside baseball," meaning the stories he pitched did not present local details within a frame that was easily digestible, fitting with a familiar template. Editors, particularly his editor at the syndicated news organization where he had a string that sold stories to small newspapers without foreign correspondents of their own, encouraged him instead to focus on 500-word articles on big, breaking events, the majority of which would end up being background information he felt was needed to understand those events and that he had written many times before. Editors would also enrage José by slapping headlines on his articles that had little to do with their nuanced content, instead trumpeting the standard clichés that he prided himself on exceeding in his stories.

As José became a connoisseur, appreciating local timbres that led him in new directions, he was simultaneously becoming more of a ritualist from the Turkish perspective, reproducing the diversity of local perspectives through his reporting. He no longer divided the country simplistically into Islamist vs. Kemalist, into East meets West. This connoisseurship made him more of an aloof status groupie from the perspective of international journalism, fitting in better with other country experts and valuing their norm of producing novel knowledge about Turkey, rather than the norm of making Turkey palatable to foreign publics.

If José wanted to escape his frustration and do work that he found interesting again, he decided, he could not go on being a stringer in Istanbul. He could choose to embrace the "country expert" and go to graduate school or apply for think tank jobs. He might be able to get a job as a columnist in a Turkey-based English language publication, with all the compromises and

job insecurity that entailed. Or he could relocate and start over as a freelancer someplace new, somewhere he did not know too well to conform to editors' templates. He chose the third option and moved to North Africa. His decision was made easier by his desire to be able to return to Turkey, a country he had come to love, in the future. In recent years he had seen foreign colleagues deported or denied re-entry into the country after producing reporting the government did not like, and José thought his own days of criticizing the government while renewing his residency were numbered anyway.

Nikolaus

Nikolaus, by contrast, took the country expert route. After a few years he left the German outlet that had first hired him and went freelance as a fixer. Like Ayşe, he fixed enough to get by, which still left enough time to work on his first book. With Turkey constantly in the German news and Erdoğan established as a villain in German pop culture, there was a market not only for fixers but also for non-fiction books about the country, and Nikolaus now had the bona fides to sell his as an insider's account.

Mutual Apprenticeship

Reporters and fixers learn from each other. Reporters like José who stay in a place long enough, and who are charisma-oriented to the extent that they welcome and learn from fixers and sources going rogue and surprising them, grow increasingly sophisticated in their understanding of local issues and of the "noise" excised from international representations of those local issues. Where fixers closely coach reporters and catalyze their relationships with sources with whom the reporters can increasingly communicate on their own, they essentially make themselves unnecessary by increasing reporters' capacities to work without hiring them. Either because of successful catalyzation, turning outsider reporters into insiders, or because their clients have

moved on to other countries, fixers must continually find or be found by new clients and start the process all over again. When turnover of clients occurs in rapid succession and coaching and catalyzation become routinized, that is, come to have an order that the fixer recognizes, fixing can cease to feel exciting. Some fixers, like Ayşe and Elif, then look for new ways to chase charisma, while others, like Can and Burcu, come to accept the routine nature of their jobs. These differences may reflect a growing-up process: Can and Burcu were older and married, familial obligations aligning them normatively to the predictable rhythm of routine.

Fixers, for their part, learn how to turn events into international news stories. They learn both how to 1) recognize and capture the kind of details that make for compelling fill-ins, and 2) fit them into international templates. At journalism school, Elif realized that she had already learned these steps as a fixer better than they could be taught in the classroom. Can, who had already worked as a journalist in the domestic media for years, learned how to put together and sell stories conforming to international templates with maximal efficiency, allowing him to lead clients down something like an assembly line of sources with a neatly packed article or TV spot coming out the end. In Leyla and Aziz's case, continued local ties may weigh on them morally to reject those templates and their journalism apprenticeship with it. Ayşe likewise grew frustrated with the templates of international news outlets but put her education in Step 1 to use in creating a documentary film oriented toward a local audience.

Something is also lost in these learning processes and the shifts in social position that accompany them. Familiarity with the local, for reporters, and familiarity with the global, for fixers, reduce reporting capacities in their own ways. There are practical reasons why news organizations shift their staff around from country to country every few years to maintain their outsider-ness.

Insider reporters can, like José, become intransigent about conforming to editors' templates, and they increasingly clash with the reporters' transcendent norms of getting past the standard clichés. They may also lose their ability to see certain things that are unremarkable from an insider perspective but interesting from an outsider perspective.

During the course of my work with Michael on a story about government supporters in working-class neighborhoods, we talked politics with some men in a tea shop. They sang Erdoğan's praises, yet a portrait of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk hung on the wall. I write "yet" but this was not a noteworthy contradiction to someone who lives in Turkey and comes everyday into contact with people who love both leaders, though as a fill-in it did nicely challenge the cliché that reduced Turkish politics to a struggle between Kemalists and Islamists. I did not even notice the portrait. What might have been a noteworthy detail when I first came to Turkey had become just part of the background. But Michael, with eyes that were outsider enough to see Atatürk and insider enough to recognize him, did notice it. "Who's that?" Michael asked, knowing full well but using the question to elicit a conversation about Atatürk's and Erdoğan's comparative virtues. "We worship God first and Atatürk second," they told us. But what about Atatürk's secularism, Michael asked, and they responded that the question of religion was beside the point. Atatürk led our first war of independence; now Erdoğan is leading our second. Even to my jaded insider-ish ears, their responses got to the heart of the ideological flexibility and importance of personal magnetism in Turkish popular politics that I found too often missing from international representation. In that case, Michael as a relative outsider was able to see an opportunity to draw out the timbre of our sources in way that I was not as a relative insider. The quotations did not make it into his articles, but Michael and I discussed the men's views at length, and they influenced his writing.

Likewise, fixers become outsiders as they learn to align with the global news industry at the cost of some of their transcoding capacities. There is a practical need for sub-fixers among fixers who have become closely tied to international news organizations, because the senior fixers no longer have as wide a range of contacts in some areas to maximize their wiggle room, and because they and are less able to present themselves to sources as aligned to the latter's norms.

Turnover

Epistemological and ontological proximity are coupled, but only loosely. When Burcu was promoted to producer, she did not immediately lose her source-friends in working class neighborhoods or her ability to convince them she was on their side, even as she grew ontologically closer to *XYZ*. She could convince foreign colleagues that she was one of them epistemologically, but still had good contacts because of her past ontological proximity to sources from her days working in the field as a fixer. There was a lag period when she had the cultural tools and social capital to unify sources' and reporters' worlds, but because of her trajectory toward status in the world of international journalism, that period did not last forever.

This argument is a compression, into the span of a person's career, of classical political theories from the Muslim and Chinese world about dynastic rule and turnover. 14th-century scholar Ibn Khaldun observed in North African history successive dynasties of fierce desert nomads conquering indolent sedentary civilizations, only to be seduced by civilization themselves and weaken until the next nomad-dynasty swept in:

> [T]he duration of the lift of a dynasty does not as a rule extend beyond three generations. The first generation retains the desert qualities, desert toughness, and desert savagery. . . Under the influence of royal authority and a life of ease, the second generation changes from the desert attitude to sedentary culture, from privation to luxury and plenty. . . People become used to lowliness and obedience. But many of (the old virtues) remain in them, because they had had direct personal contact with the first generation and its

> conditions, and had observed with their own eyes its process and striving for glory and its intention to protect and defend (itself). They cannot give all of it up at once, although a good deal of it may go. They live in hope that the conditions that existed in the first generation may come back, or they live under the illusion that those conditions still exist.
>
> The third generation, then, has (completely) forgotten the period of desert life and toughness, as if it had never existed. . . Luxury reached its peak among them, because they are so much given to a life of prosperity and ease. They become dependent on the dynasty and are like women and children who need to be defended (by someone else). (Ibn Khaldun 1978:137)

Ibn Khaldun was squarely on the side of the charismatic nomads and viewed sedentary civilization as effeminizing and corrupting. Status-oriented Confucian scholars of approximately the same era noted that same cycle of decline and turnover, but by contrast lamented the inevitable return of barbarians from China's outskirts to power. For scholars like Yeh Shih, fleeting golden ages came after nomads had settled down and assimilated into Chinese civilization, so acquiring the virtue to govern well (Crone 1980:89-91).

Rather than taking either Ibn Khaldun's or Yeh Shih's side, we might think of the conquering grandfather and the third-generation grandson (these were all men) as each good at very different things, respectively, fighting and governing. It is the son, though, who is most interesting for our purposes. The son is still tough enough to fight but has become civilized enough to govern. Even as he is ontologically distant from the desert, he keeps up epistemological proximity to his nomad father in the form of desert toughness.

In both Ibn Khaldun's and the Confucian accounts, then, there is an idea of a lag between conquest and corruption when the dynasty has the cultural tools to bridge nomadic and settled societies. The son knows how to navigate both the harsh desert life and the hierarchical sedentary life. But both status and charisma cannot be maintained forever: by the time of the grandson, the dynasty needs a defender, a middleman buffer from the dangerous outside world of fierce nomads. Ibn Khaldun does not mention it in that passage, but historically, the nomadic tribe that

eventually deposed the dynasty was more often than not the very one initially paid off to defend it.

There is similarly a lag period, as fixers rise in status, when they can convince foreign colleagues that they are trustworthy, not biased by over-exposure to the world of sources, yet still have the social capital among sources and cultural capital/tools to recruit new ones by presenting themselves as local to serve as direct brokers. After a certain point, though, their social networks become more connected to the global than to the local, though they may still be able to present themselves (or maintain the illusion, to paraphrase Ibn Khaldun) to foreign colleagues that they are ontological insiders who can connect them to and coach them on their interactions with locals. They must depend more and more on sub-fixers as they become more globally oriented, both because they lack the cultural and social capital needed at the bottom rungs of the chain of contributors and because they need a buffer to protect them epistemologically from the contaminating bias of local-ness. And so, they find themselves becoming meta-fixers and subcontracting much of the work they used to do themselves. They are now better equipped to unify sub-fixers or even reporters' worlds with the world of the faraway news organization headquarters than they are to unify sources' moral worlds with those of reporters.

However, continuing to work in your country of origin can be a powerful stigma, signaling to colleagues that you are not truly global and so limiting your prospects of upward mobility within journalism. That is not to say the stigma is insurmountable: Turkish citizens do become high status correspondents in the international press; foreign educational credentials and fluent biculturalism are vital tools of self-presentation in this regard. Nonetheless, some fixers respond to perceived stuck-ness and the restrictions of story templates by leaving the field of international journalism altogether. But their ascent in journalism and their departure open up

gaps for the next cohort of fixers, just as the dynasty's sedentarization creates a gap for the rise of a new tribe bridging city and desert, initially as the preceding dynasty's defender.

Fixer advocates have proposed bringing them more closely into the fold of journalism, whether by providing them more public credit in the form of bylines or by hiring them on official contracts and providing them benefits (Bossone 2014; Klein and Plaut 2017). Doing so may be a boon for existing fixers, but it will simultaneously generate a gap tying those fixers more closely to news organizations' moral worlds and so limiting their capacities to fix. This gap will be filled by paid and unpaid sub-fixers of ambiguous affiliation to journalism like Jimbo who can fill the blanks that staff fixers can no longer fill due to their changed social position. Jimbo could find, or invent, local sources and absorb immorality outsourced to him without contaminating the news organizations he assisted.

José's trajectory was in the opposite direction. As fixers like Ayşe coached him and catalyzed his relationships with sources, his social ties and moral world changed, and he came to be an insider in ways that made him less fit for the position of outsider reporter. After a certain point, both news organizations and he needed a turnover. They needed a fresh pair of outsider eyes; José needed a new country. This cycle of foreign reporters in turn provides the opportunity for stability among non-upwardly-mobile fixers: sales-oriented fixers like Can can routinize their work by recycling the same contacts, coaching, and story ideas in ways impossible without turnover in the Turkish foreign press corps.

Emergent Fields

This last point about stability among fixers leads us to the cases of Karim and Habib. Each of them converted charisma into status by becoming the centers of emergent social networks, respectively of Syrian conflict reporting and of the Afghan refugee industry. Those

emergent fields developed their own orders and routines, which Karim in particular had a hand in creating in the image of his own moral ambivalence.[100] He coached new fixers on how they should work and used his high status within the world of Syrian conflict reporting to discipline those oriented toward adjacent fields, such as intelligence work as we saw in Chapter 4, and so enforced the moral autonomy of the emergent field.

Karim held high status because of his central location in Syrian conflict reporting. Between the start of his involvement in media in Syria in 2011 and the end of my fieldwork in 2016, Karim had, by catalyzing new connections among people around him and by establishing a strong tie with Sally who brought with her an expansive social network of her own, woven a web of social ties with the couple at the center. This conversion of a bridging position into a central position is referred to in network analysis as *closure*, as in, overlapping social ties closing in around a broker (Burt 2007):

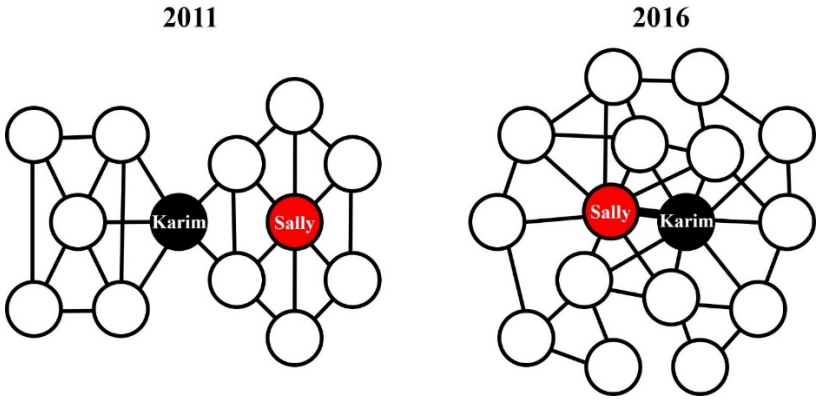

Figure 6.1: Simplification of change in Karim's social network, 2011-2016

[100]Peter Galison (2010) describes the same process in the academic world: new subfields like biochemistry emerge with moral worlds (standards, methodologies, vocabularies, and so forth) that are generated out of exchange between existing fields like biology and chemistry. These emergent subfields contain only thinned out versions of either parent subfield, yet this stripped-down combination, Galison (2010:48) argues "is not a lesser version of something else; rather, it is a register of scientific interaction that is supple and effective in its domain." Likewise, the moral order that Karim cobbled together was supple and effective at attaining the goal of facilitating reporter-source engagement while minimizing normative breach that would threaten future iterations of brokerage.

(Adapted from Burt 2007:96)

Karim's central location lent weight to his moral pressures on peripheral players because he enjoyed a reputation within the emergent field of Syrian conflict reporting. Everyone knew and could vouch for him, and if you breached his norms, he could badmouth you to everyone.

What makes some people move toward status in an existing field, others to carve out a new field, while others yet move laterally into different fields? To answer that question, we need to look at both the past--why people got into the business in the first place--and to the future--what they see as their potential prospects. Where upward mobility is possible in one of the fields a broker bridges and adoption of that field's moral world does not violate powerful transcendent norms of the fixer, it may make more sense for them to assimilate into an existing field. If by contrast they see themselves as blocked from status in one or multiple of the fields they bridge, brokers may instead take advantage of their ability to catalyze ties around them to create closure and thus a new field. Some people enter the journalism with strong transcendent norms that guide their trajectories: for Ayşe, political idealism, for José and Nikolous, a desire for charismatic connection to the foreign. When they found their relationship both to journalism and to local society changed by the apprenticeship they went through on the job, each side-stepped to a different broker position from which they hoped they could recapture a sense of service to those original transcendent norms.

It is important to point out, however, that marginality or centrality are more than objective measures of network position. They depend on where people draw the boundaries of fields and networks in their minds, on the way they categorize the world. Marginality is in this sense the perceptual manifestation of a mismatch between social position and moral world. Burcu, for instance, could be considered as central to the emergent field of Turkish reporting as

Karim was to the field of Syrian conflict reporting. But Burcu, having adopted the norms and aspirations of journalism, saw herself instead as marginal and limited within the field of international news making. Karim, by contrast, would I think agree with Leyla labeling him the "King of Fixers."

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

Strategic Ambiguity[101]

A chain of brokers creates the news, but often, especially in print journalism, a story is credited to just a single author. Usually this is the reporter who wrote the story, though sometimes a byline will go to whoever is in the location that best signals charismatically *being there*, even if that person contributed little (see also Zelizer 2007 on the importance of "eyewitnessing" for the legitimacy of journalists' claims to be representing reality).

When, for instance, Leyla worked on one newspaper article about the siege of a suburb in southern Syria, she corresponded with a staff reporter in New York, finding sources and interviewing several on her own, remotely, from her apartment in Gaziantep before sending along summaries. The reporter in New York wrote the article based on his and Leyla's interviews and research, but then the newspaper decided to give the byline to another staff reporter based in Beirut. The latter had been otherwise occupied and contributed to the story only by reading it over and making a couple of changes, but Beirut was closest to where the events had taken place. At the bottom of the article, Leyla and the New York reporter were at least acknowledged in an ambiguous way as having "contributed."

We have a habit, when making sense of everything from scientific progress to political change, of attributing the products of chained brokerage and negotiated compromise, among many people (and non-humans) with different moral priorities, to a single Great Man--it is

[101]In an influential argument about communication within organizations, Eric Eisenberg (1984) uses "strategic ambiguity" to mean signals that can be decoded in multiple ways, rather than transmitting a single clear message. I use strategic ambiguity in a related but distinct sense to refer to the unclearness of fixers' alignment to the norms of the parties they broker and participation status in the fields they bring together as brokers.

usually a high status man who gets the credit, not a woman or a machine (Latour 1988b:13-16). Things happen and products are created because Great Men will them into being.

For those who get to be Great Men, the virtues of this simplified representation of social process are obvious. For those who do not get credit, anonymity has both a downside and an upside.

It may seem that the lack of public acknowledgement of many fixers' contributions is bad for them, a way of keeping them subordinate to foreign reporters. Indeed, shared bylines can be important to fixers, a recognition of their role and a signal to colleagues of respectable status that they are to be trusted to fill in template blanks at a broader level than uncredited fixers. Many of the people I interviewed recalled their bylines at prominent publications with pride and complained about cases of reporters contributing little to and/or understanding little about a story but getting full credits for the knowledge and labor of others.

There is also an argument to be made for crediting fixers' contributions in the interest of allowing the public a greater ability to interpret the news, to identify and correct for the timbre of particular fixers. An important difference between reporter José and fixers Can and Jimbo repeatedly reselling stories in the same template was that only in José's case was a single contributor's repetition traceable by readers. When Can and Jimbo resold stories and reused sources, the effect for readers was rather that the stories and sources were important enough and representative enough of the big picture in Turkey and Syria that multiple news organizations had independently chosen them. It appeared to readers that multiple sources (as a reader thinks of sources: multiple news outlets) were amplifying or corroborating a story, when actually the story came from the same sub-source: the fixer who contributed to multiple outlets.

But credit can also be dangerous and encourage self-censorship. Credited authors and publishing news outlets are the ones targeted when stories generate blowback. By contrast, fixers' lack of public credit and ability to shift from person and non-person, journalist to mere translator, in their interactions with sources, has enabled them to avoid unwanted credit while maintaining the appearance of close affiliation to the international media when it serves a defensive function.

When reporting on the Turkish domestic media, I routinely had to schedule interviews around journalist sources' court appearances. They were hit by a steady flow of criminal and civil suits in retaliation for their reporting, most of which would be dropped after wasting many hours their time. Enough charges stuck, though, that Turkey has been the world's leading jailer of journalists off and on since 2012. The Committee to Protect Journalists even started a special weekly "Turkey Crackdown Chronicle" blog series in 2016 to keep up with legal and other attacks on the opposition media. After the coup attempt, the crackdown intensified further (Beiser 2016; Över 2017:330-335).

Fixers, despite being mostly Turkish citizens, largely avoided this legal trouble. To my knowledge, the only case of a fixer facing prosecution for their work in recent years was when two British *Vice News* reporters and their Iraqi Kurdish fixer Muhammad Rasool were detained in the southeast while covering the Kurdish conflict. Rasool was held in custody far longer than his foreign colleagues before being released on bail (Hanrahan 2015).

The relative absence of legal action against fixers was particularly striking during the period that the State of Emergency Law was in effect: from July 2016, after the coup attempt, until July 2018, after Erdoğan's reelection as president with greatly expanded constitutional

authorities (Hurtas 2018). Part 5, Article 25, Clause 2 of the State of Emergency Law contained provisions that could be weaponized against fixers:

> Anyone who spreads or conveys false or exaggerated news or information with intent to create panic among the public shall. . . be liable to additional punishment of imprisonment for between three months and one year and a minimum fine of five thousand Turkish liras. If such crime is committed by a person in association with a foreigner, the additional term of imprisonment shall not be for less than one year together with a fine of thirty thousand liras. If the crime involves publication and/or the use of broadcasting media, the penalty shall be double and imposed on both the person primarily responsible for the crime and anyone else connected with its commission. (Republic of Turkey 1983)

To my knowledge, no fixers were prosecuted for spreading "false or exaggerated news or information with intent to create panic among the public. . . in association with a foreigner," despite state officials' frequent complaints that the international media were doing just that.

I have not asked any representatives of the Turkish state why they have not been arresting more fixers, but I can speculate that the reason has much to do with the ambiguity of fixers' relationships to foreign news organizations and to stories. As we have seen, fixers have leeway to present themselves either as closely affiliated to news organizations or as mere translators carrying out a mechanical function, not really journalists themselves.

Playing the close-affiliation-to-powerful-foreigners card is useful in making the state more hesitant to target fixers for fear of provoking an international outcry. Indeed, when Rasool was jailed in 2015, his lengthy pre-trial detention prompted unusually vocal condemnation from the international press and civil society organizations, as compared to most cases of jailed Turkish journalists (*Vice News* 2015). Despite souring relations with the United States and European Union, Turkey is not entirely indifferent to diplomatic pressure and international public opinion. Erdoğan and other AKP leaders routinely disparage foreign reporters and publications (e.g. Hughes, Glanville, and Deloire 2014), but have stopped short of using the judicial system to harass them to the extent they have domestic journalists. For the most part,

foreign reporters informally enjoy relative immunity. There have been exceptions including the detention of a Dutch-Turkish columnist for insulting the president and a German-Turkish correspondent for spreading terrorist propaganda, along with the deportation or denial of entry into Turkey of several non-dual-citizen foreign reporters, but overall it is far safer to be a member of the international than the domestic media today, at least if you intend to be a government watchdog (*BBC* 2016; Lepeska 2016; Shalal 2017).

Playing the mere-non-person-translator card meanwhile allows fixers to fly under the radar of government retaliation. The state might as well blame the reporters' computers for the negative coverage, if fixers are likewise mere tools. The lack of authorial credit usually attributed to fixers enables this strategy of self-presentation. Burcu, for one, told me that she avoids posting anything political on social media. Her impression is that getting into arguments, especially on Twitter, with government supporters or officials was the surest way to attract unwanted attention (see also Arnaudo 2018 on the army of online pro-government trolls in Turkey). Whereas she could distance herself from *XYZ* reports, for instance by responding to phone calls from angry sources by joining them in trash-talking the channel and commiserating about its bias, she would have had more difficulty distancing herself from the authorship of her own personal tweets.

When fixers are officially credited with authorship, though, the ambiguity of their status in relation to stories erodes, and with it some of their flexibility of self-presentation. That loss of flexibility can itself deter fixers from upward mobility in news organizations. Elif did not want to report with her own byline on Turkey because of possible legal consequences, perhaps not directly for her if she was under *XYZ*'s aegis, but for her family's business interests. Instead, she elected to use what she had learned as a fixer to report elsewhere, a place where she could adopt the publicly critical stance without the vulnerability of an insider.

Future Directions: Cyborg Journalism

If, you might think, anyone is able to keep a low profile, it is the non-human brokers who have been quietly at work throughout all the events I have described. Cameras, cellular towers, motor vehicles, search engine algorithms, and social media platforms, to name just a few, all broker between sources and reporters, and for that matter between everyone else on the chain of (human) contributors to which I have referred throughout this study. We tend to discriminate against the non-humans, assuming them also to be non-persons without agency (Latour 1988a), and label them differently: the humans are brokers and the nonhumans are media. But both human and non-human media compress space and time, transcode and buffer between mediated parties in ways that affect the content of the news.

It is important to consider non-human fixers in comparison to our protagonists, because year by year more fixing tasks are being delegated to the former. Technology has already encroached on human fixers' jobs. Back in the 1990s, for instance, Burhan had to transport film from the field back to a city where it could be processed and transmitted to new organizations' headquarters; now photojournalists can electronically transfer them on their own. Reporters can now use social media to find and contact sources, auto-translate to transcode sources' linguistic signals, ride-share applications to bring themselves into the same physical spaces as sources. Technology also increasingly provides alternative bridges to information that can be used to check fixers' work and break their control over information. Online search engines can broker background information to reporters about the sources whom fixers put forward. From a reliance on word of mouth for fixer recruitment, non-human meta-fixers have arisen, such as private

Facebook groups on which journalists ask for referrals and the site worldfixer.com,[102] on which reporters can shop for and rate the performance of fixers. For that matter, it is not only the fixers' and meta-fixers' jobs that are threatened: news writing is being handed over to machine brokers. Articles about events that fit into a predictable template, for instance sporting events and developments in the stock markets, are increasingly outsourced to robot writers (Kedhane 2017).

Is technology making fixers and other human media along the chain of news production obsolete? And will that be a good thing? Indeed, much of the hype of new media is that it will eliminate the need for human brokers and thus free media production from the undemocratic gatekeeping of professionals (Pariser 2011; Shirky 2008:81-108).[103] Surely nonhuman fixers can be unbiased and objective, conveying information from sources with optimal signal fidelity in ways human media could only dream.

But non-humans have norms too, and those norms can lead to either rogue or conformist fixing. In the pre-internet days of yore, if a foreign reporter wanted an alternative source of information for a story that circumvented their fixer, they could look at domestic newspapers and televisions. Those media in local languages would demand the reporter align to their coding norm of communication in those languages, dramatically changing the reporter's receiving capacity, and even the English-language media that most metropolis's offer would feature stories mostly unrelated to the reporter's existing interests/template. In short, those analog non-human

[102]Facebook and worldfixer.com are of course human-run. Just as every apparently autonomous human broker is aided by non-human assistants like phones and cars, every apparently autonomous non-human broker has humans behind it designing and maintaining in ways often invisible to users.

[103]Cheerleaders of citizen journalism and social media as a public sphere for an informed citizenry tend to ignore the way non-human fixers shape the content of those media, as well as the continued importance of human brokers in directing and impeding web traffic. Online platforms whose programming shapes the expression of ideas (e.g., Twitter's 140 characters), search algorithms, and content moderators, whether human or automated, all broker between citizen journalists and audiences (see also Andén-Papadopoulos and Pantti [2013] on the work of humans—media-savvy diasporic Syrians—in brokering citizen journalism in the early years of the Syrian civil war).

fixers provided a very low signal-to-noise ratio, exposing the reporter to much information that was useless to them for their immediate purposes but which could perhaps sow the seeds of new ideas.

The signal-to-noise ratio that the latest non-human fixers can provide is much improved. The transcendent norm of these non-human fixers like social media platforms and search engines is, first and foremost, to keep you using them in order to make money for corporations. They increase your exposure to advertisements and encourage you to give them personal data that can be sold to advertisers. That transcendent norm fits nicely with the reporter's immediate need for information that can fill the blanks of their story template. These algorithmic fixers retain their customers' loyalty by leading them to the information they seek while filtering out the noise of contradictory or irrelevant information. As they learn from experience what someone like the reporter is most likely to click on when searching, they can continually improve the signal-to-noise ratio of what they show that reporter, insulating them in a filter bubble from noise, and thus from creativity (Pariser 2011). Increasing reliance on non-human fixers may thus contribute to the homogenization of the news.

Furthermore, algorithmic fixers may use the wiggle room afforded them to direct the reporter toward information that avoids breaching the strategic norms of the states in which the reporter is working. The pattern of human fixers, at least in the cases of Turkey and Syria, is that they tend to be recruited from the ranks of opponents of the dominant political faction, which in each of these countries not only controls the state but has also captured the domestic media (Schiffrin 2017). In Turkey, Erdoğan's growing monopolization of the domestic media has driven former domestic reporters like Can into fixing. It has also made fixing more attractive than work in the domestic media to other government critics. Those fixers use their wiggle room

in accordance with their transcendent norms--that the government ought to be criticized--adding to the pluralism of news about Turkey.

By contrast, states are increasingly working to control non-human fixers through censorship and cooptation. A transcendent strategic norm, subsidiary to the interest in profit, of corporate algorithmic fixers is to avoid putting the standing of their parent companies at risk in countries of operation. Sometimes that means filtering or removing information sources that displease states threatening to block those corporations' access to their countries' markets (Morozov 2011:211-218). Since the Gezi Park protest movement and corruption scandal of 2013, Turkey has issued thousands of requests to Twitter to remove content and shut down user accounts, in many cases for criticism of the government, and intermittently blocked access to the site itself, among thousands of other websites (Sozeri 2016; Twitter 2018). Public tweets are also readily visible to the state, which encourages its citizens to report subversive social media posts under the guise of counter-terrorism efforts. The Turkish state has made Twitter a dangerous place to express opposition viewpoints, leading the world in jailing its citizens for social media posts (Human Rights Watch 2018).

The state has also worked to scrub the internet of inconvenient information through its control of mass media: after seizing *Zaman*, for instance, state "trustees" deleted the newspaper's entire online archive (Sozeri 2016). The Turkish state has had limited success with these and other tactics to control the internet, but nonetheless, the information about Turkey that online algorithmic fixers can connect a reporter to, particularly if that reporter is inside the country without a means to bypass website censorship, has been systematically modified by state intervention to conform to the state's strategic norms.

These are not absolute differences between human and non-human news brokers, but depend on particular circumstances that can make different kinds of brokers more or less visible and vulnerable to state attention. Elif, for instance, had to similarly consider her (biological) parents' companies' interests when connecting news organizations to politically sensitive information. Some states, notably Iran and China, have made efforts to control the human fixer sector along with the social media sphere, turning fixers likewise into a tool for surveilling and influencing on the states' behalf (French 2016; Niknejad 2014).

Non-human fixers have not been a particular focus of this study, and I do not pretend to be providing here an authoritative account of how they are changing the brokerage of news production. The purpose of this section has rather been to illustrate that the concepts and vocabulary developed in this study may be fruitfully used for future comparisons, for instance with corporations and algorithms as brokers, that are not limited to humankind.

Vocabulary for an Emergent Field

From chapter to chapter I have shifted my vocabulary for concepts, using terminology from different academic sub-fields to talk about the same things. I did so, at risk of adding to the difficulty of reading my argument, both to point out that these different sub-fields are talking about the same things and because each of those subfields has created a vocabulary useful for answering the question that interest it.

The vocabulary of symbolic interactionist sociology was useful for talking about status within journalism. The language of anthropology was useful for talking about cultural conceptions of belonging and purity. The vocabulary of information and communications technology was useful for talking about how fixers affect the content of stories. A non-

exhaustive thesaurus of terms that have been borrowed from different academic fields for use in this study:

Charisma = Disorder = Noise = Contamination = Danger = Rogue Action

Status = Order = Signal = Purity = Routine = Structure

Expertise = Capacity = Wiggle Room = Constrained Agency

Broker = Medium = Translator

Catalyst = Non-Person = Mere Transcoder

Middleman = Person = Buffer

My intention in using these terms interchangeably to stress different aspects of fixers' worlds has been to show that the problems these various fields are interested in are interconnected. How one transcodes depends on one's status in brokered fields, which depends on one's proximity to social contamination, which is signaled in the transcoding process. The distinction between whether information is signal or noise depends on the social status of that information's originator, which is signaled by their label, which has been negotiated based on an evaluation of their expertise and purity. My broader aim is to help form a hybrid, interdisciplinary, emergent field of brokerage studies, with its own interlanguage cobbled together from those parent fields and relying upon thinly understood insights from each to make novel arguments (Galison 2010).

Filling the Blanks of Grand Theory

To claim that this study is useful for brokerage studies as a field is to claim I could have studied brokers anywhere, involved in any kind of production, and reached many of the same abstract conclusions:

- The background (called socialization for humans and design for non-humans) of a broker affects their capacity to satisfy the expectations of the parties they broker.

- Brokers are morally ambivalent: to greater or lesser extent, they are subject to conflicting normative expectations.
- Brokers weigh brokered parties' normative expectations of them, together with their own transcendent norms, in their understandings of the right way to act.
- The weight of different normative expectations on brokers is determined by their past, present, and expected future social positions in relation to brokered parties.
- Brokers act to reduce normative conflict between the parties they broker.
- Brokers' management of moral ambivalence transforms the objects of exchange between brokered parties.

These are generalized claims, but also claims demanding that to understand why any particular product turned out the way it did, we must look at the specific circumstances and cases of brokerage through which it was produced. General though my bullet-pointed claims may be, I thus fall short, in my insistence that we heed the details, of theories that offer explanations of general patterns in products.

Grand theories of capitalism and imperialism offer these more general explanations. The financial power of Capital and/or cultural power of Orientalism, which serves to legitimize geopolitical domination, are said to determine the general pattern of, in the case at hand, news making (Said [1978] 2003; Said 1981; Herman and Chomsky 1988). Corporate and/or imperialist interests dictate what is newsworthy and how stories are framed in the international media. Stories that fail to fit that mold are the product of forces resistant to corporate and/or imperialist interests.

I am not refuting (or corroborating, as I only looked at news production at the level of sources, fixers, and reporters) these grander theories so much as filling in the lower-order blanks left in their templates. The grand theorist might point out the subservience of the broadest templates of coverage to capitalist and geopolitical interests, but those templates leave wiggle room and must dismiss--as noise interfering with the greater signal identified in their theory--journalism that does not conform to the hegemony-or-resistance binary signal they identify.

Journalism about the Syrian conflict might indeed have an Orientalist leaning, but does that Orientalism express itself in condemnation of the barbarism of the Assad regime, or the barbarism of the rebels fighting the regime? Which specific rebel group, among many involved in similar activities, does a news story single out as hero or villain? The grand theorist is silent on these mere details and lacks the tools to explain the variation in heroizing and vilifying even within mainstream corporate and public media. Those details may be unimportant from the abstract perspective, but for the people and groups cast as heroes or villains, they can be enormously important. A rebel group with a good media image is more likely to attract foreign patronage, particularly from democracies that need to worry about the optics of funding villains.

The theoretical model presented in this study also offers the possibility of going rogue from those grand theories, forcing the grand theorist to see that the disorderly outlier stories that do not fit their templates have an order of their own, an order that exists at the level of the moral worlds of the stories' contributors. Those moral worlds are patterned by local specifics with no place in grand theories. The specifics of who becomes a fixer (and a source, a reporter, an editor, and so forth), to what end, with what capacities, and under what conditions, changes the news.

REFERENCES

Abbott, Andrew. 1981. “Status and Status Strain in the Professions.” *American Journal of Sociology* 86(4):819-835.

Akarçeşme, Sevgi. 2016. “Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s Despotic Zeal.” *The New York Times*, March 8.

Al Ghazzi, Omar. 2014. “’Citizen Journalism’ in the Syrian Uprising: Problematizing Western Narratives in a Local Context.” *Communication Theory* 24(4):435-454.

Alloul, Houssine and Roel Markey. 2016. “’Please Deny These Manifestly False Reports’: Ottoman Diplomats and the Press in Belgium (1850-1914).” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 48:267-292.

Alsaafin, Linah. 2015. “Syria’s Eastern Ghouta: The Latest Casualty of War.” *Middle East Eye*, February 6.

Altınay, Ayşe Gül. 2004. *The Myth of the Military-Nation: Militarism, Gender, and Education in Turkey*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Amnesty International. 2015. “’We Had Nowhere to Go’: Forced Displacement and Demolitions in Northern Syria.” Index No. MDE 24/2503/2015, October 13.

Andén-Papadopoulos, Kari and Mervi Pantti. 2013. “The Media Work of Syrian Diaspora Activists: Brokering Between the Protest and the Mainstream Media.” *International Journal of Communication* 7:2185-2206.

Arjomand, Noah. 2015. “The Folly of Double Government: Lessons from the First Anglo-Afghan War for the 21st Century.” *Afghanistan Analysts Network* Discussion Paper 02/2015.

Arjomand. Noah. 2016. “Inside Turkey’s Media Crackdown.” *Dissent*, April 28. Retrieved June 1, 2018 (https://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/inside-turkeys-media-monopoly).

Arjomand, Noah. 2017. “Every Turk Is Born a Soldier.” *Public Culture* 29(3):418-432.

Arnaudo, Daniel. 2018. “A New Wave of Censorship: Distributed Attacks on Expression and Press Freedom.” Center for International Media Assistance Digital Report, May 24. Retrieved August 1, 2018 (https://www.cima.ned.org/publication/new-wave-censorship-distributed-attacks-expression-press-freedom/).

Asaro, Peter M. 2013. “The Labor of Surveillance and Bureaucratized Killing: New Subjectivities of Military Drone Operators.” *Social Semiotics* 23(2):196-224.

Aydin, Hasan and Burhan Ozfidan. 2014. “Perceptions of Mother Tongue (Kurdish) Based Multicultural and Bilingual Education in Turkey.” *Multicultural Education Review* 6(1):21-48.

Baban, Feyzi, Suzan Ilcan, and Kim Rygiel. 2016. “Syrian Refugees in Turkey: Pathways to Precarity, Differential Inclusion, and Negotiated Citizenship Rights.” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 43(1):41-57.

Baer, Marc David. 2013. “An Enemy Old and New: The Dönme, Anti-Semitism, and Conspiracy Theories in the Ottoman Empire and Turkish Republic.” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 103(4):523-555.

Baker, Mona. 2006. Translation and Conflict: A Narrative Account. New York: Routledge.

Barthes, Roland. 1989 [1968]. “The Reality Effect.” Pp. 141-148 in *The Rustle of Language*, translated by Richard Howard. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Bateson, Gregory. 1972. *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*. New York: Ballantine.

Bartunek, Robert-Jan. 2016. “Turkey Government Seemed to Have List of Arrests Prepared: EU’s Hahn.” *Reuters*, July 18.

BBC. 2016. “Dutch Journalist Detained in Turkey for Erdogan Tweet.” April 24. Retrieved August 1, 2018 (https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36124329).

Bearman, Peter. 2005. *Doormen*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Becker, Howard. 1997 [1963]. *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*. New York: The Free Press.

Beiser, Elana. 2016. “Turkey: A Prison for Journalists.” Committee to Protect Journalists Special Report, December 13. Retrieved July 1, 2018 (https://cpj.org/reports/2016/12/journalists-jailed-record-high-turkey-crackdown.php).

Bernet, Brigitta. 2006. “Assoziationsstörung. Zum Wechselverhältnis von Krankheitsund Gesellschaftdeutung im Wek Eugen Bleulers (1857-1939).” Pp.169-193 in *“Moderne” Anstaltpsychiatrie im 19. Und 20. Jahrhundert – Legitimation und Kritik.* Edited by Heiner Fangerau and Karen Nolte. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag.

Bishara, Amahl. 2013. *Back Stories: U.S. News Production & Palestinian Politics*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Bleuler, Eugen. 1950 [1911]. *Dementia Praecox, or The Group of Schizophrenias.* Translated by Joseph Zinkin. New York: International Universities Press.

Bloodsworth, James. 2013. “Steer clear of Russia Today if you are serious about human rights.” *Left Foot Forward*, December 31. Retrieved April 1, 2018

(https://leftfootforward.org/2013/12/steer-clear-of-russia-today-if-you-are-serious-about-human-rights/).

Bonacich, Edna. 1973. “A Theory of Middleman Minorities.” *American Sociological Review* 38(5):583-594.

Bossone, Andrew. 2014. “The Thankless Work of a ‘Fixer.’” *Columbia Journalism Review*, April 30.

Brekhus, Wayne. 1998. “A Sociology of the Unmarked: Redirecting Our Focus.” *Sociological Theory* 16(1):34-51.

Burt, Ronald S. 2007. *Brokerage & Closure: An Introduction to Social Capital*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Carr, E. Summerson. 2010. “Enactments of Expertise.” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 39:17-32.

Catar, Sabina. 2015. “Kurdish Political Parties in Syria.” Pp. 112-138 in *The Kurds: History – Religion – Language – Politics.* Published by Wolfgang Taucher, Mathias Vogl, and Peter Wedinger. Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior,

Çiçek, Nazan. 2006. “The Turkish Response to Bulgarian Horrors: A Study in English Turcophobia.” *Middle Eastern Studies* 42(1):87-102.

Clarke, Bruce. 2010. "Communication." Pp. 131-144 in *Critical Terms for Media Studies*, edited by W. J. T. Mitchell and Mark B. N. Hansen. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Collett, Elizabeth. 2016. “The Paradox of the EU-Turkey Refugee Deal.” *Migration Policy Institute*, March. Retrieved March 1, 2018 (https://www.migrationpolicy.org/news/paradox-eu-turkey-refugee-deal).

Corke, Susan, Andrew Finkel, David J. Kramer, Carla Anne Robbins, and Nate Schenkkan. 2014. “Democracy in Crisis: Corruption, Media and Power in Turkey.” *Freedom House* Special Report.

Crone, Patricia. 1980. *Slaves on Horses: The Evolution of the Islamic Polity*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Daily Sabah. 2016. “Erdoğan Expressed Regret for Downing of Russian Jet in Letter to Putin: Kremlin.” June 27.

Dick, Murray. 2011. “Search Engine Optimisation in UK News Production.” *Journalism Practice* 5(4):462-477.

Diriker, Ebru. 2004. *De-/Re-Contextualizing Conference Interpreting: Interpreters in the Ivory Tower?* John Benjamins.

Douglas, Mary. [1966] 2001. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. New York: Routledge.

Driessen, Henk. 2013. "Mediterranean Divides and Connections: The Role of Dragomans as Cultural Brokers." Pp. 25-38 in *Agents of Transculturation: Border-Crossers, Mediators, Go-Betweens*. Edited by Sebastian Jobs and Gesa Mackenthun. New York: Waxmann.

The Economist. 2001. "Turkey's Real Crisis." May 15.

EF. 2018. "English Proficiency Index: Turkey." Retrieved August 1, 2018 (https://www.ef.edu/epi/regions/europe/turkey/).

Eisenberg, Eric M. 1984. "Ambiguity as Strategy in Organizational Communication," *Communication Monographs* 51(3):227-242.

Evrensel. 2017. "Vice News Muhabirlerinin Yargılanmasına Başlandı." February 27.

Eyal, Gil. 2006. *The Disenchantment of the Orient: Expertise in Arab Affairs and the Israeli State*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Filkins, Dexter. 2014. "When Bombs Aren't Enough." *The New Yorker*, October 10.

Fisher, Max. 2013. "What's the Matter with Egypt's Liberals?" *The Washington Post*, August 12.

Fishman, Mark. 1980. *Manufacturing the News*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Frankfurt, Harry G. 2005. *On Bullshit*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Frantz, Douglas. 2001. "Financial Crisis Is Taking a Heavy Toll on Turkey's Media," *The New York Times*, April 2.

Freely, Maureen. 2006. "Cultural Translation." Pp. 145-151 in *Writing Turkey: Explorations of Turkish History, Politics, and Cultural Identity*. Edited by Gerald MacLean. London: Middlesex University Press.

French, Piper. 2016 "Unbylined: A Q&A with a Chinese Fixer." *Roads & Kingdoms*, September 13. Retrieved August 1, 2018 (http://roadsandkingdoms.com/2016/unbylined-a-qa-with-a-chinese-fixer/).

Friedman, Matti. 2014. "What the Media Gets Wrong About Israel," *The Atlantic*, November 30.

Galison, Peter. 2010. "Trading with the Enemy." In *Trading Zones and Interactional Expertise: Creating New Kinds of Collaboration*, edited by Michael E. Gorman, 3-52. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Gambetta, Diego and Heather Hamill. 2005. *Streetwise: How Taxi Drivers Establish Their Customers' Trustworthiness*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Gans, Herbert J. [1979] 2004. *Deciding What's News: A Study of* CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek, *and* Time. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.

George, Alan. 2003. *Syria: Neither Bread nor Freedom*. New York: Zed Books.

George, Ella. 2018. "Purges and Paranoia." *London Review of Books* 40(10):22-32.

Gieryn, Thomas F. 1983. "Boundary-Work and the Demarcation of Science from Non-Science: Strains and Interests in Professional Ideologies of Scientists," *American Sociological Review* 48:781-795.

Gill, Denise. 2016. "Turkey's Coup and the Call to Prayer: Sounds of Violence Meet Islamic Devotionals." *The Conversation*, August 10. Retrieved May 1, 2018 (https://theconversation.com/turkeys-coup-and-the-call-to-prayer-sounds-of-violence-meet-islamic-devotionals-63746).

Gill, Rosalind C. 2007. "Critical Respect: The Difficulties and Dilemmas of Agency and 'Choice' for Feminism." *European Journal of Women's Studies* 14(1):69-80.

Glaser, Barney G. and Anselm L. Strauss. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies of Qualitative Research*. New York: Aldine.

Goffman, Erving. 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Anchor Books.

Goffman, Erving. 1961. *Asylums: Essays on the Condition of the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*. Anchor Books.

Goffman, Erving. [1963]1990. *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. New York: Penguin.

Goffman, Erving. 1969. *Strategic Interaction*. New York: Ballantine Books.

Goffman, Erving. 1974. *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. New York: Harper & Row.

Goffman, Erving. 1981. *Forms of Talk*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Goffman, Erving. 1983. "The Interaction Order: American Sociological Association, 1982 Presidential Address." *American Sociological Review* 48(1):1-17.

Göle, Nilüfer. 2013. "*Gezi* - Anatomy of a Public Square Movemen." *Insight Turkey* 15(3):7-14.

Güneş, Murat Tezcür, and Clayton Besaw. 2016. "Violence in Turkey Is Increasingly Resembling Violence in Syria – Here's Data to Show Why." *Political Violence @ a Glance*, September 23. Retrieved May 1, 2018 (https://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2016/09/23/violence-in-turkey-is-increasingly-resembling-violence-in-syria-heres-data-to-show-why/).

Gürakar, Esra Çeviker. 2016. *Politics of Favoritism in Public Procurement in Turkey: Reconfigurations of Dependency Networks in the AKP Era*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gürsel, Zeynep Devrim. 2016. *Image Brokers: Visualizing World News in the Age of Digital Circulation*. University of California Press

Gutman, Roy. 2017 (a). "Have the Syrian Kurds Committed War Crimes?" *The Nation*, February 7.

Gutman, Roy. 2017 (b). "America's Favorite Syrian Militia Rules With an Iron Fist." *The Nation*, February 13.

Hakyemez, Serra. 2017. "Turkey's Failed Peace Process with the Kurds: A Different Explanation." Brandeis University Crown Center for Middle East Studies, Middle East Brief No. 111.

Hall, Stuart. 1973. *Encoding and Decoding in Television Discourse*. Birmingham, England: Centre for Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham. Pp. 507-517.

Hanioğlu, M. Şükrü. 2008. *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Hannerz, Ulf. 2012. *Foreign News: Exploring the World of Foreign Correspondents*. University of Chicago Press.

Hanrahan, Jake. 2015. "100 Days and a Lawyer Shot Dead: Turkey Still Won't Let Our Journalist Go." *Vice News*, December 5. Retrieved July 15, 2018 (https://news.vice.com/article/100-days-in-prison-and-a-lawyer-shot-dead-turkey-still-wont-let-our-journalist-go).

Hendrick, Joshua D. 2013. *Gülen: The Ambiguous Politics of Market Islam in Turkey and the World*. New York: New York University Press.

Heritage, John. 1984 *Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology*. Cambridge, MA: Polity.

Herman, Edward and Noam Chomsky. 1988. *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Human Rights Watch. 2011. "Turkey: Arrests Expose Flawed Justice System." November 1. Retrieved June 1, 2018 (https://www.hrw.org/news/2011/11/01/turkey-arrests-expose-flawed-justice-system).

Human Rights Watch. 2018. "Turkey: Crackdown on Social Media Posts." March 27. Retrieved August 1, 2018 (https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/03/27/turkey-crackdown-social-media-posts).

Hurtas, Sibel. 2018. “Is Turkey’s State of Emergency Really Over?” *Al Monitor*, July 19. Retrieved August 1, 2018 (https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/07/turkey-state-of-emergency-really-over.html).

Hürriyet Daily News. 2013. “Timeline of the Gezi Park Protests.” June 6. Retrieved December 10, 2017 (www.hurriyetdailynews.com/timeline-of-gezi-park-protests--48321)

Ibn Khaldun, Abd al-Rahman ibn Muhammad. 1978. *Muqaddimah*. Translated by Franz Rosenthal. Routledge & Kegan.

İnce, Adem. 2018. *Turkey’s Kurdish Question from an Educational Perspective*. New York: Lexington Books.

İneli-Ciğer, Meltem. 2015. “Implications of the New Turkish Law on Foreigners and International Protection and Regulation No. 29153 on Temporary Protection for Syrians Seeking Protection in Turkey,” *Oxford Monitor of Forced Migration* 4(2):28-36.

İnsan Hakları Derneği. 2016. “2015 İnsan Hakları İhlalleri Raporu.” March 9. Retrieved July 1, 2018 (http://www.ihd.org.tr/2015-insan-haklari-ihlalleri-raporu/).

International Crisis Group. 2016. “The Human Cost of the PKK Conflict in Turkey: The Case of Sur.” Crisis Group Europe Briefing No. 80, March 17.

Irwin, Will. 1909. *The Confessions of a Con Man*. New York: B. W. Huebsch.

J.A.R. 2014. “Displaced Again,” *The Economist*, April 8. Retrieved May 1, 2018 (https://www.economist.com/pomegranate/2014/04/08/displaced-again).

Jackson, Louis E. and C.R. Hellyer. 1914. *A Vocabulary of Criminal Slang: With Some Examples of Common Usages*. Modern Printing Company.

Jenkins, Gareth. 2011. “The Fading Masquerade: Ergenekon and the Politics of Justice in Turkey.” *Turkey Analyst* 4(7), April 4.

Jenkins, Gareth. 2012. “The Snake That Doesn’t Touch Me: Turkey’s Special Authority Courts.” *Turkey Analyst* 5(5), March 5.

Johnson, Glen. 2015. “For Syrian Armenians, Exodus Evokes Flight from Genocide a Century Ago.” *Los Angeles Times*, March 1.

Karaveli, Halil M. 2012. “The Coalition Crumbles: Erdogan, the Gülenists, and Turkish Democracy.” *The Turkey Analyst* 5(4), February 20.

Kawakibi, Salam. 2010. “The Private Media in Syria.” Working Paper 11, Knowledge Programme Civil Society in West Asia, University of Amsterdam and Hivos.

Kedhane, Joe. 2017. “What News-Writing Bots Mean for the Future of Journalism.” *Wired*, February 16.

Keshishian, Vahakn. 2015. “Between Anticipation and Misery: The Syrian-Armenian Refugees of Lebanon.” *The Armenite*, January 13. Retrieved July 15, 2018 (http://thearmenite.com/2015/01/anticipation-misery-syrian-armenian-refugees-lebanon/).

Khoury, Philip Shukry. 1987. *Syria and the French Mandate: The Politics of Arab Nationalism, 1920-1945*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Klein, Peter W. and Shayna Plaut. 2017. “’Fixing’ the Journalist-Fixer Relationship.” *Nieman Reports*, November 15. Retrieved May 1, 2018 (http://niemanreports.org/articles/fixing-the-journalist-fixer-relationship/).

Klockers, Carl B. 1974. *The Professional Fence*. New York: The Free Press.

Kurt, Mehmet. 2017. *Kurdish Hizbullah in Turkey: Islamism, Violence and the State*. London: Pluto Press.

LaPierre, Patrick. 2013. “Max Weber and American Political Modernity.” *Intellectual History Review* 23(2):225-242.

Latour, Bruno (under pseudonym Jim Johnson). 1988 (a). “Mixing Humans and Nonhumans Together: The Sociology of a Door-Closer.” *Social Problems* 35(3): 298-310.

Latour, Bruno. 1988 (b). *The Pasteurization of France*. Translated by Alan Sheridan and John Law. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Latour, Bruno. 2005 (a). “From Realpolitick to Dingpolitick.” In *Making Things* Publics, edited by Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel. MIT Press. Pp. 14-44.

Latour, Bruno. 2005 (b). *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Leifer, Eric M. 1992. “Denying the Data: Learning from the Accomplished Sciences.” *Sociological Forum* 7(2):283-299.

Lepeska, David. 2016. “How I Became Another Victim of Erdogan’s Press Crackdown.” *Foreign Policy*, May 2.

Letsch, Constanze. 2014. “’Their Fight Is Our Fight’: Kurds Rush From Across Turkey to Defend Kobani.” *The Guardian*, September 26.

Levi, Margaret. 2015 “Trust, Sociology of.” Pp. 15922-15926 in *International Encyclopedia of Social & Behavioral Sciences*, 2nd edition, edited by Neil J. Smesler and Paul B. Boites. Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Lewis, Bernard. 2004. *From Babel to Dragomans: Interpreting the Middle East*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Lichter, S. Robert and Stanley Rothman. 1982. “Just Who Are the Media Elite?” *Human Events*, January 16.

Lohr, Steve. 2006. “This Boring Headline is Written for Google,” *New York Times*, April 6.

Lord, Ceren. 2017. “Rethinking the Justice and Development Party’s ‘Alevi Opening.’” *Turkish Studies* 18(2):278-296.

Mahmood, Saba. 2004. *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Mahoney, Robert. 2015. “A Year After James Foley and Steven Sotloff Murders, More Awareness of Risks.” *Syria Deeply*, August 19. Retrieved May 1, 2018 (https://newsdeeply.com/syria/community/2015/08/19/a-year-after-james-foley-and-steven-sotloff-murders-more-awareness-of-risks).

Marcus, Aliza. 1996. “Should I Shoot You?: An Eyewitness Account of an Alevi Uprising in Gazi.” *Middle East Report* 199:24-26.

Mauss, Marcel. 1967. *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*. Translated by Ian Cunnison. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Marder, Murray. 1998. “1998: This Is Watchdog Journalism.” *Nieman Reports*.

McClelland, Mac. 2014. “How to Build a Perfect Refugee Camp.” *The New York Times*, February 13.

Mears, Ashley. 2015. “Working for Free in the VIP: Relational Work and the Production of Consent.” *American Sociological Review* 80(6):1099-1122.

Mechanic, David. 1962. “Sources of Power of Lower Participants in Complex Organizations.” *Administrative Sciences Quarterly* 7(3):349-364.

Merton, Robert K. 1976. *Sociological Ambivalence and Other Essays*. New York: The Free Press.

Miller, Owen. 2015. “Sasun 1894: Mountains, Missionaries and Massacres at the End of the Ottoman Empire.” PhD dissertation, Department of History, Columbia University.

Morozov, Evgeny. 2011. *Net Delusion: The Dark Side of Internet Freedom*. New York: PublicAffairs.

Murrell, Colleen. 2015. *Foreign Correspondents and International Newsgathering: The Role of Fixers*. New York: Routledge.

National Public Radio. 2012. “NPR Ethics Handbook.” May 2. Retrieved January 1, 2018 (http://ethics.npr.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/NPR-Ethics-Handbook-5.2.2012-Final-Edition.pdf).

New York Times. 2004. “Ethical Journalism: A Handbook of Value and Practices for the News and Editorial Departments.” September. Retrieved January 1, 2018 (https://www.nytco.com/wp-content/uploads/NYT_Ethical_Journalism_0904-1.pdf).

Niknejad, Kelly Golnoush. 2014. “This Is How Tehran Bureau Covers Iran.” *Columbia Journalism Review*, September 30.

Openshaw, Tobie. 2009. “What makes a good fixer?” Lightstalkers, December 19. Retrieved May 2013 (http://www.lightstalkers.org/posts/what-makes-a-good-fixer).

Över, Defne. 2017. “Political Destabilization in Turkey: The Case of Journalism, 1980-2013. Doctoral dissertation.” PhD dissertation, Department of Sociology, Cornell University.

Oweis, Khaled Yacoub. 2011. “Syria’s Assad Ends State of Emergency.” *Reuters*, April 20.

Palmer, Lindsay. 2017. “Lost in Translation: Journalistic Discourse on News ‘Fixers.’” *Journalism Studies*, January 13.

Palmer, Jerry and Victoria Fontan. 2007. “’Our Ears and Our Eyes’: Journalists and Fixers in Iraq.” *Journalism* 8(1): 5-24.

Pariser, Eli. 2011. *The Filter Bubble: What the Internet Is Hiding From You.* New York: Penguin.

Pedelty, Mark. 1995. *War Stories: The Culture of Foreign Correspondents*. New York: Routledge.

Pfeffer, Jeffrey and Gerald R. Salancik. [1978] 2003. *The External Control of Organizations: A Resource Dependence Perspective*. Stanford: Stanford Business Books.

Popp, Maximillian. 2017. “Revisiting Turkey’s Failed Coup Attempt.” Spiegel Online, July 6. Retrieved May 1, 2018 (http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/turkey-coup-a-chronology-of-events-a-1155762.html).

Rabinow, Paul. 1977. *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Rawnsley, Gary D. 2015. “To Know Us Is to Love Us: Public Diplomacy and International Broadcasting in Contemporary Russia and China.” *Politics* 35(3-4): 273-286.

Remnick, David. 2015. “The Death of Two Syrian Journalists.” *The New Yorker*, October 30.

Reporters Without Borders. 2017. “Fixers - Field Reporting’s Unseen Facilitators.” October 4. Retrieved January 1, 2018 (https://rsf.org/en/new/fixers-field-reportings-unseen-facilitators).

Republic of Turkey Official Gazette. 1983. *Act No. 2935: State of Emergency Law*. October 25. Published in Official Gazette 18204, October 27, 1983.

Reuters. 2014. “Turkey’s Erdogan Threatens to ‘Ban the Ban’ on His Electoral Film.” March 20.

Reuters. 2016. “Turkey Names Custodian to Replace Detained Kurdish Mayors.” November 1.

Rios, Lorena. 2018. “The Disappearance of an Alevi Village.” *Medium*, March 27. Retrieved May 1, 2018 https://medium.com/@lorenarios/the-village-of-terolar-in-the-province-of-kahramanmaraş-in-southeastern-turkey-looks-idyllic-a9ff1213ee51).

Sacco, Joe. 2009. *The Fixer and Other Stories*. Montréal: Drawn & Quarterly.

Said, Edward. [1978] 2003. *Orientalism*. New York: Penguin.

Said, Edward. 1981. *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Sanjek, Roger. 1993. “Anthropology’s Hidden Colonialism: Assistants and Their Ethnographers.” *Anthropology Today* 9(2):13-18.

Scalbert-Yücel, Clémence. 2009. “The Invention of a Tradition: Dikarbakır’s Dengbêj Project.” *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 10:1-25.

Schanberg, Sydney. [1980] 2013. *The Death and Life of Dith Pran*. Kindle Edition.

Schechter, Jerrold. 2012. “The Jones Project.” Locations 2482-2591 in *Albest: Untold Stories from the Correspondents for the Legendary Time-Life New Service*. Edited by John Stacks. Xlibris. Kindle Edition.

Schiffrin, Anya, ed. 2017. *In the Service of Power: Media Capture and the Threat to Democracy*. Washington D.C.: Center for International Media Assistance.

Schudson, Michael. 1989. “How Culture Works.” *Theory & Society* 18(2):153-180.

Schudson, Michael. 2003. *The Sociology of News.* New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Serres, Michel. 2007. *The Parasite*. Translated by Lawrence R. Schehr. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Shafak, Elif. 2006. “Women Writers, Islam, and the Ghost of Zulaikha.” Pp. 153-156 in *Writing Turkey: Explorations of Turkish History, Politics, and Cultural Identity*. Edited by Gerald MacLean. London: Middlesex University Press.

Shalal, Andrea. 2017. “Jailed German-Turkish Reporter Sees Turkey Drifting Toward Fascism.” *Reuters*, November 10.

Shirky, Clay. 2008. *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations*. New York: Allen Lane.

Simmel, Georg. [1903] 1971. “The Metropolis and Mental Life.” Pp. 324-339 in *On Individuality and Social Forms*, edited by Donald N. Levine. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Simmel, Georg. [1908] 1971. “The Stranger.” Pp. 143-149 in *On Individuality and Social Forms*, edited by Donald N. Levine. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Simmel, Georg. 1950. “The Triad.” Pp. 145-169 in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, edited and translated by Kurt H. Wolff. New York: The Free Press.

Simon, Joel. 2014. “Is It Time to End Media Blackouts?” *Columbia Journalism Review*, September 3.

Sinclair-Webb, Emma. 2014. “Turkey’s Human Rights Rollback: Recommendations for Reform.” *Human Rights Watch*, September.

Snyder, Benjamin H. 2016. *The Disrupted Workplace: Time and the Moral Order of Flexible Capitalism*. Oxford University Press. Kindle Edition.

Sönmez, Mustafa. 2014. “Conflict Between Gülen Movement and Turkey’s Ruling AKP Reflected in Business World.” *Hürriyet Daily News*, January 11.

Sozeri, Efe Kerem. 2016. “The Reality of Life Under Turkey’s Internet Censorship Machine.” *The Daily Dot*, July 5. Retrieved August 1, 2018 (https://www.dailydot.com/layer8/turkey-censorship-real-life/).

Stein, Aaron. 2014. “ISIS in Turkey: Using Open Source to Find Out.” *Bellingcat*, October 1. Retrieved April 1, 2018 (https://www.bellingcat.com/resources/case-studies/2014/10/01/isis-in-turkey-using-open-source-to-find-out/).

Stovel, Katherine and Lynette Shaw. 2012. “Brokerage.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 38:139-158.

Swidler, Ann. 1986. “Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies.” *American Sociological Review* 51:273-286.

Swidler, Ann and Susan Cotts Watkins. 2017. *A Fraught Embrace: The Romance & Reality of AIDS Altruism in Africa.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Taub, Ben. 2015. “Whom Can You Trust on the Syrian Border?” *The New Yorker*, September 1.

Tavory, Iddo and Stefan Timmermans. 2014. *Abductive Analysis: Theorizing Qualitative Research*. University of Chicago Press.

Terry, Don. 2011. “The Fixer.” *Columbia Journalism Review*, April 11.

Teukolsky, Rachel. 2012. “Novels, Newspapers, and Global War: New Realisms in the 1850s.” *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 45(1):31-55.

Tol, Gonul and Omer Taspinar. 2016. “Erdogan’s Turn to the Kemalists.” *Foreign Affairs*, October 27.

Toronto Star. 2011. “Toronto Star Newsroom Policy and Journalistic Standards Guide,” December 7. Retrieved January 1, 2018 (https://www.thestar.com/opinion/public_editor/2011/12/07/toronto_star_newsroom_policy_and_journalistic_standards_guide.html).

Tumber, Howard and Jerry Palmer. 2004. *Media at War: The Iraq Crisis*. London: Sage.

Turner, Victor. 1967. *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. New York: Cornell University Press.

Twitter. 2018. “Removal Requests.” Transparency Report. Retrieved July 1, 2018 (https://transparency.twitter.com/en/removal-requests.html).

Vaughan, Diane. 1990. “Autonomy, Interdependence, and Social Control: NASA and the Space Shuttle Challenger.” *Administrative Science Quarterly* 35(2):225-257.

Vaughan, Diane. 1999. “The Dark Side of Organizations: Mistake, Misconduct, and Disaster.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 25:271-305.

VICE News. 2015. “Free Rasool: VICE News Staff on the Journalist Now Imprisoned for a Month in Turkey.” September 27. Retrieved July 1, 2018 (https://news.vice.com/article/free-rasool-vice-news-staff-on-the-journalist-now-imprisoned-for-a-month-in-turkey).

Vosoughi, Soroush, Deb Roy, and Sinan Aral. “The Spread of True and False News Online.” *Science* 359:1146-1151.

Vronskaya, Jeanne. 1992. “Obituary: Viktor Louis,” *The Independent*, July 20.

Wadensjö, Cecilia. 1998. *Interpreting as Interaction*. New York: Longman.

Weaver, Warren. 1949. “Recent Contributions to the Mathematical Theory of Communication,” *The Mathematical Theory of Communication* 1:1-12.

Weber, Max. 1946. “The Sociology of Charismatic Authority.” Pp. 245-252 in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. Translated and edited by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills. New York: Oxford University Press.

Weber, Max. [1921] 2010. “The Distribution of Power Within the Community: Classes, Stände, Parties.” *Journal of Classical Sociology* 10(2):137-152.

Weir, Peter, director. 1982. *The Year of Living Dangerously*. Australia, United States: McElroy and McElroy, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Weise, Zia. 2016. “In Erdogan’s Turkey, Everyone Is a Terrorist.” *Foreign Policy*, March 24.

White, Jenny. 2013. *Muslim Nationalism and the New Turks*. Princeton University Press. Kindle Edition.

Whitney, Craig R. 1992. “Victor Louis, 64, Journalist, Dies; Conduit for Kremlin to West.” *The New York Times*, July 21.

Yablokov, Ilya. 2015. “Conspiracy Theories as a Russian Public Diplomacy Tool: The Case of *Russia Today (RT).*” *Politics* 35(3-4):301-315.

Yackley, Ayla Jean. 2007. “Turkish Media Assets Seized.” *Bloomberg News*, April 3.

Yassin-Kassab, Robin and Leila Al-Shami. 2016. *Burning Country: Syrians in Revolution and War*. London: Pluto Press. Kindle Edition.

Yeşil, Bilge. 2016. *Media in New Turkey: The Origins of an Authoritarian Neoliberal State*. University of Illinois Press. Kindle Edition.

Zaloom, Caitlin. 2006. *Out of the Pits: Traders and Technology from Chicago to London*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Zelizer, Barbie. 2007. “On ‘Having Been There’: ‘Eyewitnessing’ as a Journalistic Key Word.” *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 24(5):408-428.

Zeydanlıoğlu, Welat. 2012. “Turkey’s Kurdish Language Policy.” *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 217:99-125.

Zorza, Victor. 1971. “The Khrushchev Memoirs: Who Forged What.” *The Guardian*, January 21.

HISTORICAL APPENDIX: The Broker's Place in Turkish and Syrian History

From Dragomans to Fixers

The term fixer is a recent invention, but brokers between local societies and outsiders are nothing new.[104] Regional history can be fruitfully revisited using the theoretical framework I have proposed for studying today's fixers, and I offer here an initial foray historical brokerage studies. This history is also relevant to this study because it shapes present-day gaps in social contact and in trust that fixers are hired to bridge between news organizations and communities in Turkey and Syria. History also shapes fixers' strategies of self-presentation as catalysts or as middlemen, as ambivalent or as biased, because, for historical reasons, it is sometimes advantageous and sometimes dangerous to be in the middle and to be seen as an active participant in inter-cultural interaction.

In the centuries of Ottoman imperial rule over modern-day Turkey and Syria, "dragomans" (an Anglification of the Arabic word *tarjuman*, meaning translator--*tercüman* in modern Turkish) facilitated trade, diplomacy, and cultural exchange with Europe. A variety of Mediterranean "in-between people" with cosmopolitan cultural orientations served as dragomans: Jewish immigrants and refugees from European persecution, sailors and mercenaries who had converted to Islam, Ottoman Christian elites referred to as Levantines (Driessen 2013:30-33; Lewis 2004:24-25).[105] Dragomans became powerful brokers profiting from the

[104]Once again, I plead guilty to Eurocentrism and reproducing the idea that Westerners are the only outsiders who have been interested in learning about this region. Similar brokers must have existed facilitating the Ottoman Empire's relations with its neighbors to the east and south, but the (English-language) historical literature I have relied upon is overwhelmingly focused on contact between Muslim and Christian worlds, whether following or reacting to a long and problematic scholarly tradition that has held these worlds to be distinct units.

[105]The so-called Levantines were largely Catholic, of mixed Italian, Greek, and other origins, and by the 17th century increasingly sent their children to Europe for education. Their intercultural orientation made them both valuable and derided, as Lewis (2004) describes: "Levantine came to be something of a term of abuse; it came to mean people who are European but not really European; who have a veneer and a smattering of European ways and education but are really local; and yet who don't possess the real local culture" (25).

financial transactions they mediated and gaining political influence through their role in high-level diplomacy, yet were always plagued by suspicions of disloyalty from all sides. Indeed, the last of the Greek grand dragomans was hanged for treason (Lewis 2004:28). For their part, Orientalist Bernard Lewis (2004) writes,

> [T]he [European] embassies almost all agreed that [Levantine dragomans] were far too scared of the Turkish authorities to deliver any unpalatable message honestly. Thus for example when the British or the French or the Austrian ambassador wanted to deliver a severe message, the severity disappeared entirely. The severe message as transmitted by the dragoman to the. . . Ottoman official he dealt with became a humble supplication. (P. 26)

This quotation highlights the active role dragomans played not just in bringing different groups into contact or straightforwardly translating between them, but in smoothing over conflict. Lewis (2004) provides another example:

> From the Ottoman point of view, the Ottoman Sultan was the ruler of the world; outside there were enemies or vassals. . . [W]hen the Sultan writes a friendly letter to the Queen of England, the purport of what he says is that he is happy to add her to the vassals of his imperial throne, and hopes, in the formal phrase, that she will 'continue to be firm-footed on the path of devotion and fidelity.' None of this appears in the translation, which was made for the English ambassador in Italian and communicated by him to London in English. In these the language is one of equal negotiation between sovereigns. Thus, for example, in the berat (diploma) granted by Murad III to Queen Elizabeth authorising English merchants to trade in the Ottoman lands, the Sultan speaks of the Queen having 'demonstrated her subservience and devotion and declared her servitude and attachments'. . . The contemporary Italian translation renders this 'sincera amicia' [sincere friendship]. (P. 28-29)

Dragomans did not just translate mechanically, but recoded and redacted messages in order to simultaneously re-affirm the consciousnesses of both Ottoman and European parties. The sultan could address the queen as a vassal without challenging the queen's view of herself as a sovereign. Lewis notes that such elegant mediation could be the source of dangerous misunderstandings, and in the interest of mutual clarity, the ritualist dragoman was gradually pushed out for bureaucratized and (intendedly) machine-like translators professionally trained by both sides (Lewis 2004:29-31; Driessen 2013:33).

As Western Europe and Russia became geopolitically dominant rivals competing for influence in the Middle East in the 19th century, they became increasingly interventionist in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire, which had come to be viewed as a decaying "sick man of Europe." They claimed special protective relationships to the empire's Christian subjects (along sectarian lines: Russia asserted itself as protector of the Eastern Orthodox, France as protector of the Roman Catholics, etc.), dispatching missionaries and demanding reforms to protect Christians (Hanioğlu 2008). These missionaries, particularly second-generation missionaries who grew up in the Empire, became Ottoman-Western cultural hybrids and served as a new generation of brokers of information to and from the far-flung provinces where they served.

Newspapers as independent businesses came into existence during this same period. The Crimean War of 1853-1856, in which Britain and France, in alliance with the Ottomans, went to war against Russia, marked a turning point for foreign correspondence, as journalists used the new technologies of the telegraph and steam-powered transportation to rapidly relay gruesome frontline reports back to Europe (Teukolsky 2012:32-42). Although 1850s British journalism presented the Ottomans as victims of Russian aggression, European media increasingly focused on the brutality of Ottoman attempts to suppress insurrection in the Balkans. The British press's harsh reporting coincided with and justified, on humanitarian grounds, the British Empire's growing interventionism.

Missionaries, dispersed through the empire with linguistic skills and close ties to local Christian populations, often served as sources and proto-fixers of the news. It was American missionaries, for instance, who reported and fed stories to British and American journalists and embassy staff of an 1894 massacre of Armenians, to the outrage of the Ottoman authorities (Miller 2015:52-55, 172-192). In that case and others, the Ottoman state officials attempted to

counter damning, and sometimes outlandishly exaggerated and racist, reports with their own press releases and diplomatic outreach. By and large, these efforts failed to sway foreign perceptions in their favor (Alloul and Markey 2016; Çiçek 2006; Miller 2015).

The high water mark of imperial intervention came at the end of World War I. The war's British and French victors divided up territories of the defeated Ottoman Empire, from the Arabian Peninsula to Syria, into ostensibly temporary protectorates under their control. The violent stereotypes of Muslims perpetuated over the previous century by Western media helped to justify this tutelary rule of enlightened Europeans over backward Arabs (Said [1978] 2003).

France, Italy, Greece, and newly-created Armenia also attempted to partition Anatolia and what remained of the Ottoman Balkans, but were defeated by the Mustafa Kemal Atatürk-led Turkish National Movement. Atatürk went on to found the Republic of Turkey rooted in a secular national identity. The state may have been secular, but the pure citizen was a Sunni Muslim ethnic Turk. Religious and ethnic minorities have since the inception of the republic, with varying degree of intensity over time, been suspected of split loyalties and of serving as potential fifth columns for foreign plots (White 2013:loc.1930-2192).

In the heyday of Ottoman imperial power, the charismatic potential of minorities' cultural heterogeneity to create new connections and reconcile differences as dragomans and other brokers was foregrounded. In the age of nationalism, the dangerous side of that same heterogeneity came to the fore as a breach in the national rampart. This breach, through which contaminating "foreign" (although these minorities had resided for centuries or even millennia in the territory of now-Turkey) influence could sneak in and compromising information could sneak out, could be used for nefarious foreign uses (see also Bonachich 1973:589-593 on the problem of host hostility for middleman minorities in general).

Brokers in Syria: From Protectorate to Nation

Following the Ottoman defeat in World War I, Syria came under the "trusteeship" of France, which had already been actively intervening in regional affairs on the premise of protecting Lebanon's then-majority Christian population. During the French Mandate period that ended with World War II, new intermediaries were empowered to broker between Syrian society and the outside world, now in the overwhelmingly important form of a colonial administration.

The fear of nationalist uprising, given credence by a large-scale revolt in 1925-1927, was an over-riding concern for the French. France sought to divide and conquer along sectarian lines by elevating Christians and, in the military, Alawi and Druze religious minorities as the intermediaries through which they ruled, at the expense of the Sunni Muslim majority and landowners who had held much power under the Ottomans and whom the French identified as the greatest threat to their rule. The relatively few French officials stationed in Syria cultivated a bicultural elite in the largest cities of Damascus and Aleppo that served as their bridge to the broader society (Khoury 1987:66-94). With post-mandate Syrian politics contested through military coups rather than democratic elections, it is no coincidence that Alawis became politically dominant or that the Syrian civil war has since 2011 taken on a sectarian character: Christian, Druze, and Alawi minorities have largely sided with the Assad regime, and rebels are mostly Sunni.

The Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party came to power in Syria though a 1963 coup d'état. The Ba'ath Party wrote a constitution protecting freedom of expression and then promptly declared a state of emergency law that included provision for state control of print media, radio and television "until further notice" (Kawakibi 2010). The state of emergency continued until 2011, when President Bashar al-Assad officially but meaninglessly ended it in an attempt to defuse a

growing protest movement (Oweis 2011). Despite token policies signaling greater tolerance of plural and critical media when Hafez al-Assad come to power in 1970 and when his son Bashar succeeded him in 2000, the Syrian state maintained tight control over news media and journalism training (Kawakibi 2010; George 2003:121-138).

When protests began in spring 2011 that would lead, in response to a brutal crackdown by security forces, to armed insurrection, there was no opposition journalism to speak of beyond informal social media channels (Yassin-Khattab and Al Shami 2016:loc.807-859). The news brokers who would be instrumental to the state's loss of control of the war's narrative both inside and outside Syria were overwhelmingly starting from scratch without formal training or experience in those early days of revolt. None of the subjects of my study had any journalism experience before 2011, and only one of the dozen Syrians who form the characters of subsequent chapters described having any prior interest in journalism. Syrians who came to broker international news about their country came from a wide variety of backgrounds--students, athletes, teachers, officer workers--but not from established careers as journalists within Syria.

Foreign media initially embraced the concept of the Syrian "citizen journalist" serving as a watchdog of state abuses and a direct channel to the Syrian people. Those sympathetic to the regime have consistently called them terrorist propagandists. Foreign news organizations gradually began treating claims and imagery from these brokers with more caution with the understanding that they were not straightforwardly representing the Syrian public writ large, but rather particular special interests in what was becoming a bloodbath with few innocent factions (Al Ghazzi 2014; Andén-Papadopoulos and Pantti 2013). By 2015, when I started asking about journalism in Syria, nobody I spoke with was using the term *citizen journalism*: instead they

described themselves and Syrians who assisted their work as *activists*, *fixers*, or *journalists* (the use of such labels will be discussed further in Chapter 3).

Then and Now

The long history of cultural brokerage in the region feeds into perceptions that people, including fixers themselves, have of fixers today. When it comes to journalism in particular, there is a long history of critical foreign reporting of Turkish affairs deemed humanitarian watchdoggery by its proponents, imperialist propaganda by its antagonists. Paranoia about missionaries as a national security threat, despite their minimal presence, persists in Turkey, since missionaries both serve as and create new cultural hybrids threatening the purity of the national order (White 2013:loc1838-1906). Such paranoia contributes to difficulties foreign reporters face in interacting with sources to this day.

Who brokers between cultures at any time depends on historical contingencies. Some contingencies produce local strangers, like the Spanish expulsions of Jews to the Ottoman Empire in 1492 that created a population of highly educated, bicultural Ottoman Jews to serve as dragomans. Other contingencies create a vacuum that must then be filled with a new cohort of local strangers when brokerage is demanded. The Syrian state monopolization of the national press left the foreign media without a ready pool of independent Syrian journalists to serve as local brokers in 2011.

Finally, historical examples from the last Greek dragoman to Syrian Alawi military officers show how high the stakes are of the mediation game: some brokers are attacked as disloyal; others use their position between powerful outsiders and local societies to convert their charisma into status in newly emergent fields (like post-independence national politics).

METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX: SOCIOLOGICAL FICTION

Introduction

This appendix addresses possibilities for deploying a particular kind of fiction: the use of composite characters to narrate ethnographic research.[i] Anonymization beyond mere name changes is in some cases necessary to protect research subjects. In recent years, journalists and some ethnographers have pointed out the problems with fictionalizing the details or chronology of research subjects' lives, arguing that such obfuscation of reality makes it more difficult for readers to evaluate truth claims. However, the lemon of anonymization-through-fictionalization can be turned into lemonade if researchers use the fictionalization process itself as a tool for thinking through the causal logics of their arguments and the relevance of variation observed across cases and over time. I propose ways in which ethnographers may take advantage of the protective and literary benefits of a composite character methodology, as well as use the process of creating narratives of composites to methodically address problems of sampling, selection, and sequence in ways that aid their analyses and the building of theory. In making this argument, I will draw hypothetical examples from the topic of fixers in Turkey.

Despite its problems, anonymization is necessary in cases such as that of fixers in Turkey. The rigor of anonymization becomes important when 1) informants' actions as documented in the study could bring harm to them and 2) informants are easy to find. My own research informants are news media workers and meet both criteria: 1) there are numerous cases in which things they said or things I observed them doing could get them into trouble with the Turkish or Syrian state, with violent non-state organizations, or with colleagues, and they depend upon their reputations and social connections for their livelihoods; and 2) they maintain public profiles as the work they produce is publicly available.[ii]

Part I of this appendix addresses the relationship with truth that differentiates social science from journalism and literature, as well as the ways in which social scientific authority has been deployed to protect authors from interrogation of their truth claims. I review practices of anonymizing informants in social science as compared with other fields and how anonymization relates to problems of truth claims and authority. I then go on to discuss the *de facto* usage and rightful place of fiction in both quantitative and qualitative sociological methods. Finally, I describe two past uses of composite characters in ethnographic writing and how they failed to draw important lessons from other subfields of sociology on how to use the fictionalization process itself as an aide to theory building.

In Part II of this appendix, I draw on examples from my own research to propose an abductive methodology (Tavory and Timmermans 2014) for creating composite characters that aides the author in analyzing causality, sequence, and the relative importance of biographical and situational factors in research subjects' behaviors. Using techniques borrowed from sequence analysis and qualitative comparative analysis, I construct composites based on the degree of similarity in sequences of events in research subjects' careers. Multiple real-life subjects are clustered into each composite character. I then select data from among clustered subjects to attribute to those composites based on logical inference and in order to provide a range of outcomes useful for analysis. In addition to outlining this composite narrative method, I discuss its utility for theory building and its other advantages, including the ability to compress data into intelligible sequences and the self-conscious undermining of social scientific authority in a way that invites debate and verification of truth claims beyond mere fact-checking.

PART I: On Anonymization and Fictionalization

Truth vs. Reality

Didier Fassin draws the following distinction between "truth" and "reality": “the real [is] that which exists or has happened and the true [is] that which has to be regained from deception or convention. Reality is horizontal, existing on the surface of fact. Truth is vertical, discovered in the depths of inquiry.” (41)[iii] Fassin goes on to argue that a major part of what differentiates sociology from journalism is the focus on truth rather than on reality.

Unlike in journalism, social scientists reading their peers’ work do not consider it sufficient to be reporting “just the facts” to provide empirical evidence for sociological arguments.[iv] Reality can be selected from in order to create sensational arguments that distort truth.[v] Details can be deployed simply to create a rhetorical “reality effect” that convinces us that a story is true to life (Barthes 1989). Not just reality but the method by which it is selected for representation backs the truth claims of sociology.

Even if not *sufficient* to make a truth claim, stating the facts is generally viewed as a necessary stepping-stone toward such a claim. Even as ethnographers claim to be able to reach a point of “saturation” in interviewing or observing informants such that they know more or less what those informants will say or do in response to a given prompt before they say or do it (e.g. Small 25-27), ethnographers very rarely admit to writing imaginary utterances or actions that could have but in reality didn’t take place (cf. Sennett and Cobb 1972). Instead, ethnographers will scour their notes and recordings for something that actually did happen that fits as best as possible with the argument they are trying to make, although they have more leeway to be creative when they are unable or neglect to record audio from interviews or interactions and are thus given license to reconstruct events and utterances as best they remember. Using real data

has more than just rhetorical benefits, but explanation of ethnographers' adherence to reality must also acknowledge the power of citing facts for convincing readers of truth claims beyond those facts and for black boxing the process by which inputs of data are turned into outputs of theory.

Even a sociologist as far on the end of the spectrum of experimental ethnographic methods as long-time "auto-ethnography" advocate Carolyn Ellis has been wary of losing the authority of reality through fictionalized composites. In *The Ethnographic I*, her "methodological novel about autoethnography," Ellis has a student character ask about using composite characters, to which Ellis's instructor character replies,

> The power of the story is that it happened to you...If you make a composite character you lose that power, you've written something different...With a personal story, you are saying 'This is my experience. I present it as a true story.' If you make a composite character, you have to create an imaginary world in which to place this experience, losing the power of the true story. Then you raise other questions about using fiction and who are you to write this story, and the response gets away from the topic of the story. (175)

Yet it is precisely this "power of the true story" (or *real* story in Fassin's terms) and ability to avoid hard questions about the construction of narrative and theory that is problematic, given that ethnography seeks not just to describe accurately individuals' real experiences but to identify true patterns of behavior across individuals.

What makes the authority of reality problematic in ethnography is precisely the problem mentioned above that *real* data can be selected from in ways that make *untrue* claims, coupled with the opacity with which the ethnographer selects data. Quantitative researchers often draw on publicly available data sets or make their data sets public, as well as follow standardized procedures for rejecting data, whether as statistically insignificant, random noise or as caused by another variable that can be controlled for. Ethnographers, by contrast, do not typically publish the fieldnotes that form their main data sets, which may contain data that they are rejecting and

that readers could use to critique their arguments (nonetheless, there are cases in which ethnographers' works have been sharply critiqued as misrepresentative of their cases using data that *is* included within or that is conspicuously absent from their monographs; see Wacquant 2002, Duneier 2006, Duneier 2011). Even if their fieldnotes were publicly accessible, all that they observed in the field and did not write down is still missing.

Checking the Reality and Truth of Ethnography

If the opacity of ethnographic methods is a problem for truth claims, it is equally a problem for reality claims, as evident in recent criticism of ethnographic research by journalists. In summer 2015, several journalists and a law professor accused sociologist Alice Goffman of writing fiction in her book *On the Run* (Lubet 2015, Neyfakh 2015). Journalists who criticized Goffman argued that the difficulty in fact-checking some of her claims was symptomatic of a broader problem of accountability in ethnography, which often combines claims to be reporting real events and life histories with anonymization and scrambling of chronology and facts that the ethnographer determined to be insignificant. This criticism was compounded when one journalist showed just how easy it was to actually identify and interview some of Goffman's informants in the space of several hours, armed with a photo of Goffman and a box of donut holes (Singal 2015).[vi] The journalist chose to keep the informants anonymous, but if he had not, then readers would have been able to deductively attribute everything Goffman wrote about specific characters in her book to those real-life individuals.

Journalists' criticisms that ethnographic works such as Goffman's 1) are difficult to fact-check because of their anonymization procedures, yet 2) fail to properly protect subjects' privacy anyway, are understandable given journalists' own norms for telling about society. The journalist generally uses the real names of her sources, which allows readers to hold the journalist

accountable by accessing data left out of the journalist's story.[vii] Readers are able to find data about those named sources with the ease of a web search, and other journalists can re-interview the same sources. Sources themselves who feel they are portrayed in an unrealistic light may be more likely to respond with their own accounts when they are mentioned by name. Verification of claims and of the validity of data selection, for journalists, generally rests on fact-checking, which is made possible by the ability of others to access data about the topic, for example by re-interviewing the same subjects that the media producer did not include in the finished piece.[viii]

A few ethnographers such as Mitchell Duneier have chosen to name their subjects in their ethnographic writings and even invite their subjects to join them on stage for discussions of those writings, arguing that the potential harm to subjects by breaching confidentiality is not enough to justify losing the check on the ethnographer's ability to ignore negative data that publishing real names allows. By and large, however, writings on ethnographic methods that deal with the problem of data selection have focused on the ethnographer's checking herself rather than on external accountability. In "How Not to Lie With Ethnography," Duneier (2011) suggests that once they have constructed an argument, ethnographers should conduct a thought experiment of subjecting themselves to an "ethnographic trial", asking themselves if there are any "witnesses," whether informants to their study or not, who could be brought forth to provide testimony containing inconvenient facts that would make the ethnographers change their arguments. Duneier suggests that ethnographers consciously seek out an "inconvenient sample" by asking themselves, "Are there people or perspectives or observations outside the sample whose existence is likely to have implications for the argument I am making? Are there people or perspectives or phenomena within the sample that, when brought before the jury, would feel they were caricatures in the service of the ethnographer's theory or line of argument?" (8) This is a

useful tool of self-accountability for the ethnographer, but does not help the reader, whose critique, based only on comparison with other cases and general knowledge, can only be that the observations the ethnographer describes are unrepresentative of the wider world.[ix] As for questions about whether the ethnographer excluded data that she collected in a way that skewed her findings, the reader must simply trust in her honor as a social scientist.

Katz (2015) calls for ethnographers to create a "triangular relationship [among] subject, reader and researcher" in which the reader is able to access the data on the subject. By including a rich variety of data in a monograph, Katz argues, ethnographers hold their arguments accountable to disconfirmation:

> By empowering the reader to detect contradictions, the web-like structure of data implications in an ethnographic monograph completes the triangular interaction. The researcher has effectively given up a monopoly on access to the subjects, at least for purposes of testing the author's explanation. (131)

Katz is correct to a certain extent: if the data fail to consistently match the theory, the reader *can* challenge the ethnography's argument. However, if the data *do* consistently match the theory, it is impossible for the reader to determine whether the ethnographer is right or just a careful writer. The reader, after all, does not actually have independent access to the subject: every contact with the latter is mediated through the researcher's writing; the ethnographer does not create an actual triangular relationship, just the appearance of one. What the reader is "testing," then, is not contradiction between the theory and the actual events that the researcher observed, but rhetorical efficacy, that is, the researcher's skill in spinning a web that includes just enough and just the right data to provide an effect of reality that *convinces* the reader that the reader is directly accessing the subject and the researcher's arguments hold up (see also Nichols 1991: 134-137 on rhetoric and evidence in documentary film).[x] Clifford similarly describes techniques of ethnographic writing that celebrate "giving voice" to informants as subscribing to a

"utopia of plural authorship" that cannot exist in a monograph ultimately constructed by a single writer, who in choices of how and where to quote and describe those voices can only present a "domesticated heteroglossia" and not a truly direct channel between reader and research subject, so long as the subject is anonymous or otherwise inaccessible to the reader (1983: 139-142).

Anonymity and Remixing Reality

Simply changing names may not be enough to protect anonymity. When you change a name but keep a character and chronology of events intact, a third party need only know one thing about that informant which is included in the study for the study to reveal much other private information about the informant. To deal with this problem of deductive unmasking, some ethnographers, like Alice Goffman, scramble details and chronology, usually with the unelaborated claim that their changes are not significant (Jerolmack and Murphy 9-11).[xi]

Compositing takes such scrambling to its logical conclusion: remixing reality at each step of the narrative. A third party reader may recognize an informant in the study, but that does not reveal anything else about the informant: the other actions attributed to that character could have been the deeds of other informants. This is particularly useful when the most probable and damaging harm to breached anonymity would come from an informant's identity being revealed to her own peers, rather than to the broader world.

Even if the benefits of composite characters for protecting subjects are recognizable, there is still the problem that I will be using fiction in a sub-discipline based strongly on its claim to describe empirical reality. Today's sociologist-ethnographers, with a few exceptions, are uncomfortable with explicitly using fiction, ironically, more so than branches of sociology that have been more successful in defending their arguments as *scientific*. The next section will outline more conventional forms of sociological fiction, on whose logics I draw in determining

how to cluster informants into composites and how to select data with which to create composites' narratives.

Sociological Fictions

I define fiction as media representing people and events produced from the author's imagination rather than as they are individually observed. Sociologists often work in fiction, although they rarely label it as such. Every sociological argument of causation employs, implicitly or explicitly, counterfactual "what if" fictions in which things happened differently at Time 1, leading to something different happening at Time 2 than the occurrence of interest to the sociologist (Griffin 1101). Regression analysis, long a method of choice of sociologists who consider themselves scientists, creates fictional average members of categorical groups to compare with one another, with precisely calculated differences between fictional averages not necessarily corresponding to any real individual's experience in the world. Fictions can indeed be more effective than--or essential complements to--descriptions of actual events and individuals for making arguments about patterns of social action, that is, for not just chronicling reality but making truth claims. Theorists of narrative such as Hayden White have even argued that the world can *only* be made coherent through fiction: "value attached to narrativity [and causal theorizing, he might have added] in the representation of real events arises out of a desire to have real events display the coherence, integrity, fullness, and closure of an image of life that is and can only be imaginary." (1980: 27) Without imposing meaning, order, and closure on events to draw them into a fictional unity, the historian or sociologist is writing a mere chronicle or annal (ibid 10-27).

Dramatic vs. Analytic License

If both fields peddle fiction, why even distinguish between social science and literature? Literature may align with social science in terms of goals, such as making the perspectives of others more comprehensible and encouraging reflection on patterns of human behavior or causes of change in individuals or institutions. In a fictional story, it is in part relatability, that is, the ability for readers to put themselves in fictional characters' shoes or think that given the situations that they wind up in (however foreign or fantastical those circumstances), characters' actions are comprehensible and plausible, that draws readers to keep turning the pages of a novel and to care what happens to the characters (Keen 214-216, Becker 247-251). Both literature and social science writers often find it useful to introduce apparent paradoxes and then demonstrate how seemingly paradoxical phenomena make sense in a particular context. Confronting a reader's initial assumptions about what should happen (based on what they think relatable/generally true) is a tried and true device for forcing the reader to refine her thinking about what truly causes a phenomenon or how seeming universals are in fact contingent upon particular causes (Katz 2001: 449-453; Tavory and Timmermans 122-126 point out that surprises, i.e. apparent paradoxes, are also useful focal points to researchers for rethinking theories).

We might set aside literature set under fantastical circumstances,[xii] instead limiting our comparison to stories that take place in contexts that are *objectively possible*[xiii], leaving works ranging from the novels of Emile Zola (whose literary "naturalism" was strongly influenced by 19th-century positivist social science [Langness and Frank 19]) to TV shows like *The Wire*. David Simon, creator of *The Wire*, defended the show as realistic in terms very similar to arguments about the permissibility of creating sociological fictions set in conditions of objective reality: "We staged *The Wire* in a real city, with real problems. It is governed and policed and

populated by real people who are everyday contending with those problems." (quoted in Fassin 47) Is there a difference between such naturalist/realist literature and sociology?

I argue that the difference between literature and social science lies in the criteria for inclusion of content into a narrative: literature selects or invents "data" based on dramatic rather than analytic license. "Drama," Alfred Hitchcock told fellow filmmaker François Truffaut, is "life with the dull bits cut out." (Truffaut and Scott 103) Social science might be said to be life with the causally irrelevant bits cut out. Both drama and social science provide selective narratives, yet criteria for selection (or invention) and arrangement differentiate the two forms (Becker 19-21).[xiv]

If Hitchcock were to make a film about NASA's Challenger disaster, he would almost certainly devote more time to the sensory experience of the astronauts inside the space shuttle than does Vaughan (1997), who ignores that dimension of reality because the astronauts' actions and feelings did not cause the erosion of o-rings in Challenger's solid rocket booster. Vaughan devotes more attention to the faxing of data charts than Hitchcock would have because the mode of transmission of information from Thiokol engineers to NASA headquarters, however dull, *did* have a causal effect on the launch decision that led to the disaster (ibid 287-326).

The social scientist's analytic license allows her to ignore some data and highlight others in order to create a world for the reader in which research subjects' lives are simplified to the point of existing to provide evidence for the scientist's argument. When social scientists discuss methodology, much of what they are debating concerns defining the boundaries of analytic license and questioning the assumptions that give legitimacy to that license and, furthermore, authority to the claims social scientists make about society.

How can narratives of composite characters be created according to analytic license? Before I answer that question in Part II, it is worth reviewing other forms of sociological fiction for later comparison with my method and to illustrate how my method borrows from and is in conversation with others. Reference to quantitative methods is particularly useful because quantitative methodologists are generally better than their qualitative counterparts both at making their reasons for combining individual subjects into groups explicit and at developing novel methodologies for inductively grouping those subjects.

Quantitative Fictions

Regression analysis creates fictional average members for different categories of people that the researcher constructs and compares with one another. The greater probability that categories of people constructed based on different values of a particular variable are more likely to experience something does not necessarily apply to any real person in the world. Results of regression analysis are meant not to report any individual reality (in Fassin's terminology) in the world but to help the reader imagine a truth about what factors significantly shape people's lives. The cost of the constructed clarity achieved by abstracting from reality to pen truth claims is richness of data: regression analysis must code diverse experiences into categories or numerical values, and in so doing deprives the reader of access to the phenomenon under study outside of the web of coding created by the author or embedded in survey response possibilities.

Hot deck imputation is a method used in survey studies to make up for missing data: values of variables for a "donor" respondent are used to replace missing values for a "recipient" non-respondent (Andridge and Little 40-41). In essence, this technique creates composite characters that combine attributes and responses of donor and recipient and are then analyzed as fictional research subjects. These composites are constructed based on either *a priori* assumption

or analysis that similarity between donor and recipient in some "adjustment variable(s)" (usually demographic categories) corresponds to similarity in the variable(s) with missing value for the recipient (ibid 42-44, 59-61). In its most basic form (cf. Andridge and Little discuss more sophisticated implementations 59-61) such imputation puts the cart before the horse: the researcher puts the donor's words in the recipient's mouth before analytically determining that the similarities between donor and recipient would cause the recipient to say those same words.

Cluster analysis, in its various forms, bears similarity to my composite character method in that it uses fictionalization as a means of inductively clustering individuals into groups that are not simply divided along *a priori* lines. Block modeling, sequence analysis, and similar methods use quantitative means to discover interaction patterns or structural equivalence among actors. In the case of block modeling, nodes (real people) in a network are clustered together based on similarities in their network positions into holders of particular, inductively determined roles (White et al. 1976). The role ascribed to a cluster may not be observable in pure form in any real individual, but is nonetheless analytically useful for dividing individuals into groups and assessing how they are significantly similar and different, rather than relying only on folk or macro categories such as class, race, gender, binary political allegiances, etc. Alternatively, individuals might be clustered together based on automorphic/role equivalence, that is, occupying analogous positions in networks of relationships (Burt 1990; NB this is essentially how I bound my research topic: I study individuals in similar roles as intermediaries between networks of journalists and of locals on the assumption that this similar network position will be occupied by similar people and/or cause occupants to behave similarly).

Sequence Analysis and Narrative

The clustering techniques from which my composite characters methodology draws the most lessons are those used in sequence analysis, more specifically what Abbott terms “whole sequence methods” that look for patterns among sequences or part of them, as opposed to “step-by-step methods” of sequence analysis that focus on explaining the change from one step to another within a sequence (Abbott 1995: 104-105). Heise gauges similarity among narratives by using software to inductively code and simplify multiple narratives into a single more basic sequence (ibid 106-107). Abbott (1992) clusters sequences of events rather than research subjects, measuring resemblance by how many occurrences would have to be (counterfactually) changed to make the sequences identical, allowing him to identify, for instance, different categories of careers and the typical occurrences that comprise those careers (449-450).

Sequence analysis, of which my method might be considered a qualitative subcategory, includes narrative, which historian Lawrence Stone (1979) defines as “the organization of material in a chronologically sequential order and the focusing of the content into a single coherent story, albeit with sub-plots." (3)[xv] A narrative explains what it includes later in a sequence by what happens earlier in that sequence; it justifies the inclusion of what happens early by its relevance to what happens later; events cannot occur later in the sequence that events earlier in the sequence prevent or for which they do not create conditions of possibility. The narrative is thus inherently embedded with a causal logic that does not defer explanation of a particular case to general “laws” of social action or to macro processes but rather must show how those laws or broader processes are actually experienced within the case at hand (Griffin 1098-1099). However, Griffin notes, a narrative has a certain rhetorical power (see also Abbott 2008: 41-44). When Event أ precedes Event ب in a narrative, author and reader alike may

unquestioningly assume a causal connection between أ and ب without any actual demonstration of causality:

> Even when narratives are avowedly causal in purpose (e.g., Fredrickson 1981), the criteria used to determine selection, causality, and significance remain tacit. Narratives too often lull readers into accepting the narrator's account as simply a "happening" (Abrams 1982, p. 307). Following, not verifying, the story is essential to successful narrative…The distinction between a temporal antecedent and a causal one is too often obscured in narrative. Narrative sequence, therefore, is but the "primitive" raw material of explanation and interpretation and must "itself undergo radical transformation" in the course of analysis (Thompson 1978, p. 29). (Griffin 1099-1100)

Griffin's work focuses on narratives of particular historical events, subtractive in the sense that he takes a real sequence and cuts out the causally irrelevant bits. But the author of an additive--that is, cobbling together elements of multiple real sequences into a general or composite sequence--fictional narrative must pay equal attention to the logical connections between precedent and subsequent events that the narrative connects.

TABLE 1 HERE

The author claims that A and B are both living out the same general sequence. If أ is a more useful datum to include in the narrative than ب, the author can defensibly use أ and then ج to illustrate the sequence only if أ is close enough to ب that, had B experienced أ instead of ب at Time 1, it would not have significantly changed ج.

Folklorist Vladimir Propp illustrates how causal logic can be applied to cluster data across multiple cases into interchangeable "functions" of a generalized sequence in his work classifying folktales based on structural features. Neither the particular personage who carries it out nor the particular story in which it occurs defines a function. Rather, when elements of multiple tales serve to advance the narrative in the same way (e.g. "a bear steals the oats" and "a brother demands his sister for a wife"), they are abstracted into a single function ("the villain causes harm or injury to a member of a family") that causes or permits the next function (e.g.

"the seeker agrees to or decides upon counteraction") (30-38). Propp then combines all sequences that are identical or at least do not contain any functions incompatible with functions of one another into a single type (19-23).

Counterfactual Reasoning in Qualitative Comparative Analysis and Analytic Narratives

Any argument of causal relevance includes, implicitly or explicitly, a counterfactual fiction that a significant event did *not* occur as in reality it did and, as a result, that things turned out differently. Creating a counterfactual fiction provides a way to isolate potential individual causes from the greater and more complex reality to understand their significance or lack thereof (Ringer 81-84). Analytic license to create a counterfactual fiction is generally based on a comparison with cases that the analyst judges to be similar *enough*[xvi] but different in terms of the variable under counterfactual interrogation. Did things turn out differently in those comparative cases?[xvii]

Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) is the sociological method that perhaps most explicitly uses comparisons to provide counterfactual data in order to group cases together and generate causal arguments. The QCA practitioner decides on variables that are theoretically likely to have a causal influence on a particular outcome, and assigns those variables values for each case included in the study. She then constructs a "truth table" listing all logically possible combinations of those variables and the number of cases that produced the outcome of interest.

TABLE 2 HERE

Row 1 is eliminated for lack of data; Rows 5 and 7 can be combined because these cases have revolutions whether or not there is an AE. Thus the practitioner determines that the combination of IP with DB causes revolutions. This argument is warranted because Rows 2, 3 and 8 provide the comparison to strengthen the counterfactual of what would have happened in Row 5+7

countries without IP, and Rows 2, 4 and 6 provide the comparison to strengthen the counterfactual of what would have happened in Rows 5+7 countries without DB.

One asset of QCA as a tool for thinking is that it encourages practitioners to abductively add and remove variables based on the data. For instance, the problem of the inconsistency of Row 4 (some cases experienced revolution, others did not), prompts the practitioner to return to her notes on those countries' history in search of a missing variable that differentiates the cases in the WITH column from those in the WITHOUT column, eventually realizing that among countries in Row 4, only those with revolutions have religious diversity. The practitioner then creates and analyzes a new truth table with Religious Diversity as a column and finds that the combination of either RD+AE+IP *or* of IP+DB causes revolutions.

Simple QCA like the example above lacks consideration of temporality, but deciding what to include in an analytic narrative, which strings together events with the implicit or explicit understanding that temporally prior events affect subsequent events, requires similar interrogation using counterfactuals at every step (Griffin 1098). If preceding Event A had occurred differently, would subsequent Event B have occurred differently? If not, the analyst has no reason to include Event A in her causal explanation of Event B.

Ideal Types

Like clusters, ideal types do not exist in the real world but are fictional thought experiments created by an author who uses them as bases of comparison for real world phenomena. Max Weber, as quoted by his biographer Fritz Ringer, writes,

> Whatever content the ideal type is given,...its only value...for empirical investigations lies in its purpose: to 'compare' empirical reality with it, so as to ascertain...the distance or degree of approximation between [reality and the type], and thus to be able to describe and causally to explain [reality] in terms of clearly understandable concepts. (Ringer 102)

Ideal types' utility to sociology is based precisely on their fictional nature. Their transparently fictional nature also makes ideal types (unlike interpretations of reality such as conventional ethnographic accounts which emerge from a black box of fieldwork that readers unfamiliar with particulars of the case can do little to question) open to readers introducing cases they are familiar with to argue that a typology should be changed to maximize its utility.

Ideal types differ from composite characters, in the way that the latter are usually constructed, in that they do not represent the average or collective characteristics of an empirically observed group of humans or phenomena and their creator makes no claim that ideal types could plausibly exist in the world. Indeed part of the sociologist's job is to explain why an ideal type, "deliberately constructed to project a hypothetical 'progression' of external behaviors that *could* be fully explained in terms of understandable motives and beliefs about means of action" (Ringer 101-102), is actually *never* realized in the world. The importance of this distinction will become clearer in Part II when I discuss the method of comparing composite characters with ideal types.

One problem with ideal types is commonplace confusion related to going back and forth between ideal type and real phenomenon. Ideal types point to what the theorist self-consciously decides, based on comparison across real cases, are the salient features or the extreme poles of a field onto which less extreme real cases can be plotted. Ideal types never exist in the real world yet they create a vocabulary and tend to take on a life of their own as they become lay categories for understanding phenomena and coding categories for large-N studies that do not incorporate the same subtleties in describing individual cases' particular characteristics. A composite character method avoids this problem because it does not create transposable categories but rather describes patterns of action observed across different kinds of cases that are embodied

through composite characters. The various patterns of action are ideal types that may be applied to other case studies (more on this in Part II), but the characters as a whole cannot be dropped into other studies. There is little possibility that a reader will take a composite character named Esra and then point to a case in the reader's own life and say, "that is the same as Esra," letting the reader get away with a sloppy interpretation of the new case. Instead, because characters as opposed to categories are understood as unique, the composite character method invites the reader to compare and contrast the patterns the author claims to have identified with other case studies, asking not "Is my case an example of [ideal type]?" but "Why is my case similar to and different from that of Esra?" (See also Jerolmack and Murphy 11-12 on the problem of ethnographers glossing over the "messiness" of their cases in the process of dressing those cases as ideal types).

Apocryphal Anecdotes

In theoretically oriented writings, sociologists such as Roger Gould (2003), Erving Goffman (1959), and Jack Katz (1977), have drawn on isolated anecdotes to illustrate the arguments they are making. An example from Gould's *Collision of Wills*:

> When the meanest, largest boy in the fifth-grade classroom discovers he can oblige a smaller child to give up his or her lunch money (at least when the teacher isn't looking) he is surely engaging in dominance over the latter. But...the bully is not terrorizing his victim on behalf or because of bullies in general but on his own account. (33)

Gould probably didn't actually observe a 5th-grade bully stealing lunch money when the teacher wasn't looking and then interview him about his motivation, but that does not really matter. The persuasiveness of Gould's use of the anecdote as evidence is that it prompts readers to consider the example with reference to cases that the reader is familiar with: does the same pattern hold up in those cases, and are the implications of Gould's point useful for understanding those cases in a different light?

As Jack Katz (2015) notes, the very shakiness of these anecdotes as evidence can be a strength insofar as it encourages readers to look beyond the text for verification of its claims and to not simply believe the author because of the rigorousness of his methodology:

> Erving Goffman's oeuvre is extraordinarily weak methodologically in that he rarely identified where, of whom, and how he made his observations, but also extraordinarily strong in discovering forms of social life that readers had already come to know...Goffman enfranchised his readers to make up their minds about the empirical validity of his analyses in the private voting booths of their own intimate experiences...The very lack of detail in his texts about how he did his research is a methodological strength. Readers can 'test' his analysis on their own experiences… (124)

This "testing" is in a sense the ultimate goal of public sociology: to make readers analyze their own worlds in light of sociological explanations and see if things make more sense.

In the same way, when I write about a particular fictional composite character adopting a certain strategy based on the possibilities afforded her, I invite readers to make comparisons with other cases of individuals mediating others' interactions, and to consider how their social position and interests shape the way they mediate. By saying forthright that I am selecting from and remixing reality (in Fassin's terminology), I immediately deprive myself the "this is just what happened" authority of conventional ethnography. Instead, my truth claims rely on the same thing as the arguments of Erving Goffman, Gould, or Katz in their theoretical work: utility for making sense of and replicability in other cases.

Implicit Composites

Decontextualized anecdotes can be found not only in theoretically-oriented work, but also in ethnography, which is in some cases narrated using implicit composite characters. What I mean by implicit composites is that authors paint a picture of a typical group member by trotting out illustrative anecdotes from various points in the lives of different individuals—who are individually identified but nonetheless whose individual life courses are not described in detail. Rather, they are assumed to not diverge too much from the typical, thus justifying inclusion of

anecdotes about them to illustrate the typical. These decontextualized anecdotes band together to create implicitly the context of one another, resulting in a composite image of a typical life course that does not necessarily resemble any one informant's experience.

The danger of such compositing is that its implicit nature allows data selection processes to go unexamined. This black boxing of selection effectively allows ethnography to proceed more deductively: it is even easier for ethnographers to find what they initially expected to find when combining multiple cases without attention to problems of selection. With a wealth of data that can be cherry-picked to support an initial hypothesis, ethnographers are less likely to notice and be challenged by inconvenient data and surprises that Duneier, with his ethnographic trial, along with proponents of analytic induction and abductive analysis, have argued provide the best impetus for rethinking their assumptions and constructing new theories (Tavory and Timmermans 1-8, 70-72, Katz 2001, Katz 2002, Vaughan 2014: 64-67).

Unfortunately, sociologists using explicit composite characters *also* have failed to explain satisfactorily their methods, both for clustering informants and for selecting data, or to provide sufficient theoretical justification for those methods.

Examples of Composite Characters in Sociology

In general, sociologists using composite characters have discussed the ethical advantages of anonymization, the aesthetic benefits of avoiding a confusing number of characters, and the rhetorical benefits of fictionalization,[xviii] but few have discussed how they construct their composites, that is, how they decide whom to cluster together and which of the informants' actions/experiences to attribute to the composite character.

In this section, I briefly discuss the examples of two qualitative works by sociologists using composite characters: Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb's 1973 *The Hidden Injuries of*

Class and Marion Goldman's 1999 *Passionate Journeys*. Sennett and Cobb, whose book examines how working-class Americans value themselves and explain what they perceive to be their low position in social hierarchy, explain their method as follows:

> We have taken certain liberties beyond those necessary to protect anonymity: in various instances we have condensed remarks people made; when statements two people made on an issue were very similar, we have portrayed them as coming from one person. In a few instances we have put words in people's mouths, words they were struggling for, we felt, but couldn't find. Twice we have combined elements from several life histories into one. We hope that the people interviewed will forgive us for pushing the presentation of their lives so close to the boundaries of fiction. It is for clarity and art that we have done so, though we hope it guards their privacy all the more. (42-43)

Sennett and Cobb argue that their work ought to be held to different standards of truthfulness than conventional sociology: "This raises a question for you, the reader: how believable is what you read? Art creates a different truth from the recitation and interpretation of facts." (43) Ending the discussion as they do with the appeal that their truth claims be assessed as would Art's, we know nothing of the nuts and bolts of how they created composites; they do not explain their criteria for deciding which elements of which life histories to combine or for judging what words to put into which people's mouths. Nonetheless, and despite criticism of the book on epistemological grounds (Goldman 2002: 159), *The Hidden Injuries of Class* has endured in the sociological canon because of the utility of its arguments for thinking about the experience of the working class American experience and because subsequent studies have fruitfully tested those arguments.

Marion Goldman's *Passionate Journeys*, on women who joined a spiritual community/cult in Oregon called Rajneeshpuram in the 1980s, also utilizes a compositing methodology, transforming 46 research subjects into three characters. Goldman describes her turn toward using composite characters as a way of getting around the limitations of writing methods in which informants exist only in anecdotes to illustrate theoretical points: "The taken-

for-granted sociological conventions of presenting specific themes and isolating examples of those themes through brief quotations or descriptions protect confidentiality at the price of full understanding." (2002: 146) Goldman also cites a concern for protecting her still-living subjects who might be harmed by knowledge of their involvement with Rajneeshpuram.[xix]

Goldman is more explicit about her methods for clustering informants into composite characters than are Sennett and Cobb. At the end of the book she includes tables showing the number of informants comprising each composite and some demographic information about those composites (1999: 272-274). In a methodological piece reflecting on the book, she explains that she decided inductively, and after conducting research, on the demographic categories that would form the basis for her to cluster informants into composites:

> I did not group the women into composites by some predetermined criteria, such as their ethnicity, age, social class, religion of origin, former occupation, or role at Rajneeshpuram. Instead, I read transcripts and listened to tapes in order to discover how they should be combined. My decision to organize the composites in terms of women's ages reflected the strongest thread linking particular sets of women…I was surprised at how much women in each of the three groups forming the composites sounded like one another, using the same words and articulating similar concerns, even compared to women in the other two composites. (2002: 155)[xx]

Goldman then presents a theoretical defense about American women's worlds in general changing significantly in the decades between which her different composites came of age, differences significant to the reasons they chose to go to Rajneeshpuram and the way that they interpreted their experiences there, the central issue in which Goldman was interested (1999: 2-3). This method of clustering informants makes sense insofar as Goldman first looked at similarities in what informants said and did as a basis for combination into the same character; however, the advantage of clustering informants on the basis of a single variable (age cohort) that serves as a proxy measure for discovered similarity, as opposed to actually clustering them on the basis of that similarity, is unclear. What became of individuals who did not conform to

their cohort? Were their nonconformities ignored, or was data from their lives included in composite narratives despite their nonconformity? Goldman seems to have adopted the former method, as she states that she attributed major events to a composite's life based on their occurrence in the lives of a *majority* of the informants clustered into that composite (2002: 160). In effect, this limits the range of data she selects and makes it impossible for her to address variation *within* age cohorts.

Additionally, adopting a "majority rule" strategy for data selection can lead to problems in the logical progression of character narratives. This latter point will be discussed more illustratively in Part II.

Checking the Truth of Fiction

Composite character methodologies do not fix ethnography's problem of unaccountability to negative data that may freely be excluded from any write-up.[xxi] However, using composite characters does, I contend, self-consciously undermine ethnographic authority by increasing transparency of authorial creativity and inviting questions about what got left out in the fictionalization process.[xxii] Transparently framing my work as a work of sociological fiction opens up the black box of data selection that *just the facts* authority claims to keep sealed.[xxiii] Reality-constrained ethnography may not only gloss over problems of how data are chosen and sequenced, but also preoccupy lay readers with fact-checking rather than interrogating the broader truth claims of the ethnography, as they would a novel or a work of theory lacking empirical data. How, then, can a reader check the truth of fiction?

Duneier, writing critically of Wacquant's ethnography *Body and Soul*, asks how we can evaluate the latter's claims when fact-checking is impossible and his honor as a social scientist is questionable:

> [Wacquant is] an ethnographer who writes about people and places that are either completely anonymous or have disappeared by the time he publishes his work. If he does not quote or characterize reliably in a scholarly review, when the text under consideration is available for others to check against, how can we be expected to have faith in representations that come from the gym depicted in his ethnography of boxers, *Body and Soul* (Wacquant 2004), which no longer exists?" (Duneier 2002: 1573)

My answer is to ask readers to "truth-check" claims through replication in other, comparable cases. Truth claims are tools to help make sense of patterns of relations. Tools are "checked" by their utility in application to the user's problems.[xxiv] I mean not only that sociologist readers should carry out formal comparative research to verify my theories. Rather, any reader for whom my research is of any use will be able to find analogies in their own experience or in other media they consume against which to test my claims (if they cannot, it means my research is irrelevant to their lives and it matters little whether my claims are true or not). Cases of the processes that my research addresses, that is, of mediation of social interaction, of indirect communication through a broker, of the reformulation of information as it passes between institutions, of moral ambivalence when engaging with interlocutors with divergent expectations, are commonplace. Cases for comparison need not be similar overall to that of fixers in Turkey, in terms of substantive historical context, individuals involved, or level of analysis; they need only be comparable to my case on a particular axis of interest, much as prisons, boarding schools, and monasteries could all be fruitfully compared by Erving Goffman to the mental hospital in which he conducted fieldwork because, despite vast differences among them, those institutions all socialized members in a similar way relevant to the theory that Goffman was developing (Vaughan 2014: 62).

The Value of Reality and Tradeoffs of Compositing

If representation of society is always a creative process, why not simply make up evidence that best illustrates my argument--the most surefire way to "cut out the causally

irrelevant bits" of reality--since verification of a theory ultimately depends not on the evidence's facticity but on the theory's utility for understanding and reproduction across other cases?

One answer is that one is unlikely to be surprised by data invented by oneself, and a methodology that seeks out surprises by comparing and looking for non-obvious logical connections and incompatibilities among real data is more likely to transcend *a priori* assumptions in order to build new and truthful theory. Another answer is that people do not read ethnography only for the formal theory. Thus far, the goal advocated for ethnography has been to build theories that explain more the case at hand. But ethnography can also serve as a primary source on which others build their own theories or as a rough draft of a theoretical argument to be refined by future sociologists.

Generations of debates over how to write ethnography and social science more generally have pitted chroniclers against theorists. Whereas the ideal chronicler records simply everything without prejudice to its importance, that is, without reference to theory (Danto 152-155), the ideal theorist includes only what references to the world support her theoretical argument. From the theorist's camp, Evans-Pritchard attacked Malinowsky's "haphazard" documentation of a jumble of data, asserting that "facts can only be selected and arranged in light of theory." (quoted in Clifford 126) From the chronicler's camp, historians attacked Hegelian "philosophy of history" for creating just-so stories that coerce readers into their limited and ideologically driven interpretation. The writing of Hegel and his intellectual descendants, they charged, "consists of nothing but plot; its story elements exist only as manifestations, epiphenomena, of the plot structure, in the service of which its discourse is disposed. Here reality wears a face of such regularity, order and coherence...presenting an aspect of such wholeness and completeness that it intimidates rather than invites to imaginative identification." (White 1980: 24)

I have thus far situated my methodology in the camp of the theorist, but it is worth considering the concerns of the chronicler and how a bit of the chronicle might be productively included even in a narrative of fictional characters. In counterpoint to Evans-Pritchard, Clifford points out a possible value of the chronicle of reality:

> [Malinowski] published much data that frankly he did not understand. The result was an open text subject to multiple reinterpretations...In the modern, authoritative monograph there are, in effect, no strong voices present except that of the writer. But, in *Argonauts* and *Coral Gardens* we read page after page of magical spells, none in any essential sense the ethnographer's words. (136)

Thus the very messiness of Malinowsky's writing makes it a resource for readers creating their own theories.

As discussed above, Katz (2015) recommends ethnographers create a "triangular relationship" among author, reader, and research subject in which readers can challenge the author's argument using rich data the author provides about the research subject. This practice is unsatisfactory as an external check on the ethnographer because the reader only sees the research subject through the author's mediation; nonetheless, including rich data that extends beyond an ethnography's particular arguments can make it more useful to readers with their own agendas.

What is critical to readers' abilities to read against the grain or orthogonally is the provision of *excess*, that is, a sampling of reality that does nothing to provide evidence for the presented theory.[xxv] Film scholar Bill Nichols writes, with reference to documentary film,

> Narrative is like a black hole, drawing everything that comes within its ambit inward, organizing everything from decor and clothing to dialogue and action to serve a story...Excess is that which escapes the grasp of narrative and exposition. It stands outside the web of significance spun to capture it. (1991: 142)

Data are excessive from the perspective of the theorist: they do nothing to strengthen her argument. If the author does not think a subject's gender is causally relevant, to mention it, perhaps to liven up a scene or flesh out a character, is to introduce excess. From the perspective

of the reader, however, this excess can be as interesting as the argument itself for analysis that considers the case outside of the web of significance that the author has spun. The reader can use this offhanded mention to question whether the author has made a mistake by ignoring gender as a variable in her analysis, or can use it as evidence for an argument unrelated to the author's (example drawn from Jerolmack and Murphy 10-11). Jerolmack and Murphy note,

> What [one] ethnographer considers 'distractions' [read: excess] might be considered by others to be part of the ongoing social scientific dialogue in which the reader can consider alternative explanations by independently exploring additional points of access into the setting or group— points that may not have even been considered by the ethnographer, given his or her particular theoretical interests or social position. (10)

In other words, one man's noise is another man's signal (see also Serres 2007), and sociology is not a one-off exercise in theory building but a communal and ongoing effort in which scholars reexamine and reinterpret one another's cases and claims (see also Tavory and Timmermans: 111-114 and 118-120, Clifford 141, Vaughan 2014: 68-83). Research, according to this argument, should be disseminated in a way that includes excess in order to make it most valuable to the scholarly community. This may be particularly valuable in ethnographies in which researchers manage to collect data on difficult-to-access subjects and situations, providing comparative data to others who cannot travel to such far-flung places (in perhaps the most famous example of putting others' empirical work to use in ways they did not anticipate, Durkheim (1996 [1912]) built his theory of religion by mining for data in ethnographic accounts from around the world without leaving Europe).

The indexical quality of film (Nichols 1991: 149-155) makes a greater proportion of excess inevitable in documentary: objects always appear in the camera's frame and act, or are open to interpretation, in ways beyond the documentarian's control (see also Tavory and Timmermans 22-30 on the object's ability to connect directly with the interpretant and defy the sign in a semiotic chain). Unless digital manipulation or cropping is used, excessive objects in

the raw footage are inseparable from evidence, that is, objects that contemporaneously appear on the film and serve to advance the narrative. When transforming raw field notes into ethnographic writing, the researcher can, by contrast, relatively effortlessly exclude excess.

Nonetheless, some forms of ethnographic writing are more prone to excess than others. Direct speech more tightly bonds excess to evidence than does paraphrasing; prose description more so than classification in a chart; descriptions of real situations more so than fictional situations sifted through the filter of the author's theorization.[xxvi] Sennett and Cobb's *Hidden Injuries of Class*, for instance, is not a very useful source of excess that can be turned into evidence for a different argument, because they put words in characters' mouths and make it unclear where reality ends and fictionalization begins.

Compositing does not in itself prevent the inclusion of situation-level excess. *Remixing* real situations and quotations rather than fictionalizing them outright offers a compromise in which *situational* excess is allowed into writing, even as the compositing process by its nature excises *biographical* excess. Compositing makes it impossible to track data on individuals over time; this is precisely how the method prevents the deductive unmasking of research subjects. This reduction of potentially valuable biographical excess should be acknowledged as a trade-off to readers. As Nichols notes,

> The attempt to probe an individual both to understand that person and to use that person to reveal larger patterns or socially representative practices always produces excess. Aspects of the person elude the frame within which he or she is placed. Dimensions of their behavior reveal a resistance to or subversion of patterns that could be seen as typical. (1991: 144-145)

The problem with compositing is that biographical excess is not simply removed but *replaced* with biographical data from other sources, which can affect our interpretation of situational excess. A theorist of gender might, for instance, take my account in Chapter 4 of Geert mocking Gül for her emotional connection to a source as evidence of misogyny and of

stereotypically female responses among fixers signaling pro-source bias to client reporters. In reality, however, that account is based on a *female* reporter mocking a *male* fixer. That remixing of biographical information in my composite narrative substantially changes the way the reader would interpret situational data.

An additional caveat: in this appendix's discussion of "checks" on ethnographic work, I largely ignore the possibility of outright lying, that is, presenting fictional events as real, in order to focus on problems of misrepresentation of real data. Presenting a work as fully fictional would resolve this matter, but taking the compromise position of claiming to be fictionalizing narratives but describing real situations reintroduces the possibility of lying, with the added weakness that fact-checking is impossible. In a sense, this method shifts the implicit request that the reader trust in the honor of the sociologist from the level of truth to the level of reality, from the level of formal theory to the level of substantive theory.

Strauss and Glaser, as described by Vaughan (2012: 4), distinguish between "substantive theory, achieving an explanation of the case under investigation, and formal theory, achieving general explanation that encompassed not only the case at hand but other cases of similar phenomena." In terms of formal theory generation, I argue that a rigorously conducted composite characters methodology is at least as good as conventional ethnography. In terms of producing data that can be reinterpreted as a primary source, I contend that even as compositing prevents biographical excess, using real situational data and real quotations as the building blocks for a fictional narrative offers the best compromise between empirical richness and the protection of anonymity.

The major weakness of the composite characters method lies at the level of substantive theory. I want to make an argument to readers not just about how the brokerage of knowledge *is*

done, but about how journalism *was* done in Turkey in the 2010s. Whereas I can ask readers to check my formal theory by examining analogous cases that they can access data about without my mediation, I cannot ask readers to do so with my substantive theory unless they were part of the world of international news making in Turkey that I describe. Thus, for readers interested in verifiable substantive explanation of how and why a specific event happened, or for that matter in allocating responsibility in specific individuals or organizations, my composite character methodology will be unsatisfying.

These trade-offs acknowledged, I now proceed to propose, drawing on other forms of sociological fiction, how composite character narratives can most fruitfully be constructed, when required in order to protect research subjects.

PART II: Building Theory and Narrative with Composite Characters

Compressing Informants into Composites

All media that represent society in one way or another compress complex social realities into manageable forms and select based on particular epistemologies, organizational routines, and levels of access to data (Becker 2-10 and 15-18; cf. Ginzburg and Davin 1980 on non-generalizing "conjectural" or "divinatory" knowledge that does not abstract from reality). This compression has been variously described as a social science research methodology: for example Vaughan notes that processes of *dissection* (bounding off entities under study from the larger world of which they are a part) and *abstraction* (selecting only the parts of those bounded entities most relevant to an explanation of the phenomenon under study) are essential to any project of analytic ethnography: "It is the complexity of detailed descriptive data, often unwieldy and difficult to sort into patterns, that makes dissection and abstraction essential tools for

explanation." (2012, 18) Without compressing data, it is impossible to form intelligible causal arguments, to make comparisons across cases, or to create a formal theory that explains more than the case at hand (Danto 1962; Becker 17-25).

Fictionalization allows a further compression of data into a neatly expressible story or table of statistics by combining individual experiences. Forms of fictionalization that are meant not to prove representativeness but to illustrate patterns of social interaction are furthermore afforded greater use of literary techniques for elucidating causal relationships by selecting the most exaggerated cases (see Small 2009 on the difference between quantitative approaches interested in *empirical* generalizability and qualitative approaches interested in *theoretical* generalizability).[xxvii]

The question is how the compression of multiple informants into composite characters can be done in a way that enriches rather than impoverishes analysis. The risk is that clustering informants based on unexamined *prima facie* decisions about who seem similar can effectively strip down the richness of data by squeezing informants into received stereotypes or categorizing them by demographic criteria that are not necessarily causally significant to the research questions under study. Furthermore, compositing introduces an additional transformation of ethnographic data, already filtered through and transformed by limitations of memory and fieldnotes, the ethnographer's interpretations, etc. that can introduce yet greater misrepresentation by putting potentially mutually excluding attributes and experiences together in the same imaginary character.

The best way to cluster informants into characters may vary from project to project; the important thing is that they are clustered in a way that brings together individuals who are similar in a way that is relevant to the study's theoretical questions. Using abductive strategies for

clustering can help avoid tautologically producing composites who fit into *a priori* categories suggested by initial research questions and so are inherently geared toward creating the just-so story that the researcher expected to find when entering the field.

QCA offers one model for clustering cases into groups and systematically abstracting from details to more general variables present across cases (Ragin 2008). However, QCA is not a narrative method. QCA cases have static attributes, unlike the individual media workers whose changes and inconsistencies over time I want to understand. And unlike QCA, ethnographers (myself included) are not always interested in one particular outcome (in my research, Time 1's outcome may be Time 2's cause [see Tavory and Timmermans 21-34]) and thus cannot compress cases together based on the determination through comparison that dissimilarities between cases are inconsequential to a single outcome.

Instead, I draw on Propp's methodology for typologizing folktale sequences[xxviii] and on Abbott's sequence analysis methods that cluster cases by the degree to which sequences resemble one another, replacing QCA's *truth table* with a *sequence table* in which I list in chronological order the events that my fieldwork and theoretical readings have suggested are significant to subjects' careers.

TABLE 3 HERE

The entries in this sequence table are drawn directly from the coding I apply to my data based on their hypothesized causal relevance to the variable outcomes that I am interested in: fixers shaping the news in different ways and using fixing to do different things. Depending on how abstract the codes inputted are, it may be that initially no sequence much resembles another. The codes then need to be refined to generate similarity (after all, there must be some basic forms of similarity, unless I have made a mistake in bringing together these cases into a single

study). The sequence table is not only a tool for determining similarity, but also a visual aide for transitioning from open to selective coding; codes and table mutually refine each other.[xxix]

For example, "raised in Germany" (D1) and "raised in France" (C1) might be abstracted to a coding category of "raised in Europe" if, upon analyzing the two cases side-by-side, I decide that the particular country of childhood is not significant enough to merit differentiation beyond the continent of childhood. This coding might be contingent upon a change in another code, e.g. the abstraction of "worked for German media" and "worked for French media" together into "worked for media of country of childhood." The codes become further abstracted through conscious choices about what data are causally similar enough to be coded the same way and about the balance the ethnographer wishes to strike between abstraction and detail.[xxx]

Differences analyzed are, as opposed to the QCA model, not only what happened, but what order they happened in. For example, A first socialized with expats and then became a fixer. B first became a fixer and then got to know foreigners. The sequence table encourages me to consider whether or how this difference matters, as opposed to a less formalized method of only coding but not visually sequencing data, which might let this difference slip by unnoticed.

I may also stretch or shift one sequence right or left to better match another. For instance, C resembles early D; if their overlapping bits are similar I can combine the richer early-career data I have for C and the late-career data I can only have for D (because C has only been fixing for a few years) into one composite character who attends an elite university and eventually moves to Europe to become a TV producer.

Quite simply, I continue this process of abstracting, stretching, and shifting until I have identical sequences, one for each character. Where I decide to stop is both an analytic and an

aesthetic judgement: I want enough characters to provide variation for comparative analysis, but few enough characters that I can generalize and that readers can keep track of them.

Similar to QCA's use of "consistency" scores to prompt the researcher to add variables in order to differentiate cases that appear the same on a truth table despite having different outcomes, when two of my informants are made to appear identical on the sequence chart but I know them to be very different people, I am prompted to compare the two cases closely to determine what factors are significant in differentiating them and missing from my table. For instance, C seems too similar to D to me based on what I know of their respective fixing practices (D tries to work more behind the scenes and avoids social media or byline credit on news stories), causing me to review my data on each of them. Consequently, I add entries to their respective sequences that seem to me to help explain how they are different: for example, "served prison sentence for insulting the president" to D's timeline. I might have overlooked the causal significance of D's carceral history to the way she assists client journalists without the heuristic of the sequence table. Adding that difference makes it less likely for C and D to be combined into a single character.

The process of comparing rows can also lead me to novel theories to which my initial assumptions blinded me. I plot both foreign journalists and fixers, which I outlined as separate roles when I began my project, and discover that the sequence table fails to neatly divide journalists from fixers. This finding discourages me from accepting the divisions received from my informants' and my own initial categorization of the field and instead leads me to think about the porousness of those categories and how and why individuals can move between being labeled as one or the other.

Good ethnographers consider all of these issues of categorization, temporality, and relative importance of variables anyway. This coding and sequencing method is simply a thinking aide, a more formal way of organizing interrogation of the data and decisions about what constitutes relevant similarity and difference.

Now that we have our cast of characters, how can data collected from interviews and observation of numerous individuals be mixed and matched into a fictional narrative within the bounds of analytic license? Thus far, I have followed a form of regression analysis, bundling cases together based on similarity. I now depart from regression analysis, however, to break those bundles back apart to draw on data from individual subjects rather than relying on shared or average experiences of individuals who comprise fictional composites. *Remixing* instead of regressing will allow for the inclusion of rich and excessive (in Nichol's terminology) situation-level descriptions and quotations, a major strength of ethnography.

Narrative and Composite Characters

Composite characters differ from characters in illustrative anecdotes or data points in regression analysis in that the latter tend to exist only in particular situations with particular static attributes that they bring to the situations under study. Narrative ethnography, by contrast, must deal with temporality and sequence. Events in a character's life at Time 1 may be relevant to her actions at Time 2.

As discussed above, Griffin argues that social scientists using narrative must be careful in selecting from raw material for inclusion in a narrative and explicitly interrogate themselves about what is causally relevant. For users of *fictional* narrative, this problem expands beyond selecting from data of what actually did occur in a sequence of events in the real world to determining what is an objectively possible combination of data from multiple real sequences.

Griffin's solution, and that of other sociologists who experimented with "event-structure analysis" in the 1980s and 1990s, was to use a software program called ETHNO that forced him to consider explicitly the causal logic and relevance of each step of the narrative and each detail he provided rather than falling back on the crutch of reality (in Fassin's terminology) by including details that were not actually causally relevant (and thus distorting the argument) just because they *really* happened. ETHNO interrogated sociologists with a series of YES/NO questions about the causal connections between happenings they inputted, and in so doing "force[d] substantive and methodological questions otherwise easily not noticed or avoided." (Griffin 1105-1128) Sociologists' YES/NO answers to ETHNO's queries were based on counterfactual reasoning. I will follow a similar approach of using counterfactual reasoning to interrogate each step of my narrative. Before illustrating how this might work in practice, it is worth considering an alternative approach to constructing a narrative with composite characters.

Goldman writes in defense of the narrative composite character method used in *Passionate Journeys* as a legitimate form of sociological writing, "No major event such as marriage, divorce, or childbirth was recorded unless it was shared by the *majority* (emphasis added) of [informants] in a group." (2002: 160) This follows—without actually having a statistically significant sample size—a logic of "statistical" fiction, selecting the characteristics and experiences most common to the group without attention to whether the selected characteristics and experiences coincide in particular members of the group. The problem with this approach is that it ignores the logics of sequence and causal mechanisms (Small 22-23 makes a similar point about logical inference in imputing causal mechanisms that can apply in contexts beyond a case study, citing Mitchell 1983).

For example, imagine that of the 7 informants whom I cluster into the composite character Esra, 4 went to elite private high schools in Istanbul and 2 spent their teenage years in the US. I found that 4 of the informants (including the two who grew up partially abroad, one who lived almost all of her life in Turkey but whose mother is American, and one who has learned colloquial English through a many-year addiction to American TV) spoke English with what seemed to be a native accent and cracked jokes in a way that seemed comfortably American. The "statistical"[xxxi] approach would here dictate that I include the theoretically-relevant events that are roughly similar across the greatest number of informants composing Esra and include those in the narrative, because they are most representative of what her component informants actually did. Thus, I would write that Esra has two Turkish parents, spent her teenage years at private school in Istanbul and speaks English with a native-sounding American accent. This would be a problem for my narrative because someone who grew up entirely in Turkey without a foreign parent would be unlikely to have such bilingual fluency.

Instead of adopting a "statistical" approach to data selection, I based judgment on a datum's inclusion not on whether similar data exist in the lives of other informants who compose the same composite, but instead on causal inference (also referred to as *logical* inference in Mitchell 1983: 199-200) about how antecedent data limit the possibilities for subsequent data to be selected. This method allows me to determine what data I should *not* include, but may leave me with multiple data (that conflict only with one another but not with what happens at other points in the narrative) that I *can* include within bounds of objective possibility, analytic license, and causal reasoning. Since, as mentioned above in the discussion of sampling for range, I am interested in showing a variety of behaviors rather than in proving what sequence of behavior is most likely, I would select data that exaggerate differences among composite characters and so

illuminate different causal mechanisms at work in the careers of different fixers in the sharpest relief (Katz 2001, 467). Thus I would make Esra speak English fluently—because no informants who compose other characters could do so—and compose her teenage years accordingly, making her grow up in the US.

If I decided that it was essential to the story to have someone who speaks English fluently (according to a logic of "sampling for range": see Weiss 22-24), but that behavior failed to fit logically into Esra's character, then I could create a side character of limited importance and description who--like side characters in novels who are introduced to perform a necessary action that a main character logically would not perform--would speak English fluently and then do the fixer behavior(s) that I have reason to believe only a fluent speaker could do and that merits mention in my ethnography. Splitting off side characters is also a way to deal with the reality that the different cases comprising a composite are not necessarily independent of one another; in my case, many of my subjects know each other. Thus, I might want to describe a situation in which one subject included in a character interacted with another subject included in the *same* character. It would be senseless for the character interact with herself, so I add a side character.

In some instances, it might be the most illuminating to show seemingly different characters engaging in similar behaviors. For example, I might have Esra, seemingly despite her elite pedigree and cosmopolitanism, joining news sources in talking suspiciously about her journalist client, implying that all foreigners are spies. Such behavior, which I have evidence of only one of the informants composing Esra engaging in, might be more frequently noted among informants composing a different character named Aslan. Nonetheless, I might include the behavior in the narratives of both Esra and Aslan as a way of disconfirming a possible hypothesis that social status has a strict determining power over fixers' behaviors. My composite characters,

then, are not meant to be mutually exclusive in their characteristics and actions (as are ideal types) or to be internally consistent, as long as the inconsistency is deemed objectively possible through logical inference and comparison.

Comparing Fiction to Fiction and Calling It Science

Composite characters are similar to ideal types in that they are constructed by the analyst as tools for describing differences in existing social forms, although my claim is that the latter can, based on counterfactual reasoning as described above, be said to be objectively possible, whereas ideal types are never found in pure form in the real world.

In my own study, I find it most useful to construct a typology not of characters (cf. Weber's [1993: 20-31, 46-59] ideal typical magician, priest, and prophet) but of patterns of action. Constructing fictions based *both* on clusters of individuals *and* on kinds of action affords me the advantage of allowing identifying different kinds of individuals who work as fixers without ignoring the internal inconsistency that may exist within characters as mere "noise" interfering with the "signal" of the typical behavior of a given character. It may be significant if characters are inconsistent, pointing to complex strategic behavior and/or to the causal importance of situations that can occur to more than one character (as opposed to those characters' life histories and embodied dispositions) in determining behaviors.

Usually, ideal types are determined and then actual cases are compared with those ideal types with an explanation of why the actual cases diverge in various ways from the ideal types. Inconsistency within a case can only be illustrated if that individual case is shown over time and across situations to display different degrees of similarity to and dissimilarity from ideal types, introducing the risk of deductive unmasking of informants discussed above.

Here, ideal-typical *patterns of behavior* will be compared with composite *character*s. This comparison both protects informants' anonymity and allows an analysis of inconsistency, which is in essence an evaluation of the relative importance of situations and biographies. If composite characters and typical patterns of actions align, i.e. each character consistently follows one pattern of action different from the others, it points to the importance of their life histories and dispositions (either in determining their reactions to situations that other characters also experience, or in determining what kinds of situations they encounter in contrast to other characters); if ideal type and composite character do not correlate, a situational analysis is invited.

It might be that I find no correlation between composites and ideal types in relation to any dependent variable: in a similar situation, no character is more likely than any other to conform to a particular pattern of behavior. If this is the case, I can safely jettison the sequence table and composite freely or, for that matter, introduce characters who exist only in particular situations and do not need their life histories detailed. The important thing is that I reach the conclusion that it is appropriate to focus on situations rather than on careers through examination of the data and not as an *a priori* assumption that then prevents me from being surprised by the significance of variation in life histories.

By contrast, the usual ideal type method of reporting on fixers would be to bake together composite characters with typical patterns of behavior. The informants who compose Esra might be, according to my findings, much more likely than those who compose Aslan to display the behavior of allying with journalists against hostile local news sources. Thus the ideal typical "bicultural elite hobbyist" fixer whom Esra best embodies would be the ally of sources against journalists. However, such ideal type construction would paper over the degree to which Esra is

inconsistent. Under most circumstances she may ally with journalists against sources, but, as suggested above, there may be rarer circumstances in which she does the opposite behavior, allying with sources against journalists. Comparing composite characters to typical patterns of behaviors allows for greater attention to situational variance and allows for personal inconsistency. Thus I might write that when reporting on the Istanbul political elite, Esra allies with news sources, but in other cases, she allies with journalist clients. The distance (in Weber's terminology) from Esra's behavior to one typical pattern is measured as it possibly varies over the course of her career (perhaps as she expands her network of foreign journalist contacts and is socialized further into their world of professional ethics, she starts to care less about what local politicians think of her) and in different situations.

External Analogical Comparison

Thus far, the focus has been on building formal theory that explains not just the case at hand but also analogous social relationships. I have suggested that whereas ideal types are useful for comparison with the researcher's empirical data, composite characters--which incorporate rather than stand in comparison to the researcher's empirical data--are useful for external comparison with analogous cases.

To evaluate my arguments, readers can think back to cases when they dealt with or acted as a broker in the production of knowledge. I also invite further reading against which to test my theories' truth and utility through citations of and brief comparisons to other case studies, for instance of real estate brokers (Bresbis 2016), party organizers (Mears 2015), auxiliary security forces (Cherney and Chui 2011), black elites mediating between their communities and state bureaucracy (Pattillo 2007), local representatives of a multinational aid organizations (Watkins and Swidler 2017), native clerks in 19th-century colonial India (Raman 2012), or mixed-blood

elites in 16th-century Oaxaca (Yannakakis 2008), in which social relations analogous in some way to those of fixers are documented. Readers can evaluate whether my arguments help make sense of the data provided by those other authors, whether those other accounts contradict my arguments, and whether variations in the settings, historical trajectories, and/or particular configurations of relationships cause variations in patterns observed in the different cases.

Incorporating such comparisons not only invites truth-checking, but also provides another means for me to refine my theories. Much as first individual informants and then composite characters were scrutinized side-by-side in order to generate explanations of similarity and variation, comparative studies are placed beside the substantive theories of my own study. I ask what is significantly similar and different between what those other authors describe and what I observed, why, and thus whether I am overlooking important variables or including irrelevant ones. At each stage—clustering, narrating, comparing to my own ideal types, and comparing to other studies—a greater level of formality, that is, generalizability across cases (with "a case" consisting first of an individual, then of a composite character, and finally of fixers in Turkey) is pursued in the theory under construction. This final step of external comparison with other organizational forms and historical moments is essential for integrating my case study into a broader understanding of brokerage in knowledge production (Vaughan 1992, Vaughan 2014).[xxxii]

Conclusion

Any means of representing society incorporates trade-offs between empiricism and strength of theory. Journalism sacrifices truth for reality and literature does the opposite; quantitative methods sacrifice data richness for statistical generalizability and qualitative methods do the opposite. The trade-offs of fictionalization must be acknowledged: creating a

composite character narrative as outlined above sacrifices, as its central ethical justification, biographical excess for robust anonymization. The method also trades fact-check-ability for systemic attention to building theory.

Researchers using conventional ethnographic methods are also entirely capable of building theory. Nonetheless, framing research transparently as the author's imaginative interpretation encourages readers to think about theory utility instead of fact checking, and to verify theoretical claims through replication by analogical comparison rather than relying on the authority of facts. The combination of being forthright about writing fiction *and* claiming to be doing social science encourages an analytic rigor in deciding which data are included and which are excised from the narrative and characters' descriptions, as compared with ethnographic writing that draws various informants into a tacit composite picture of the *typical* and bases its truth claims on expert authority and on a claim to be chronicling reality. The purpose of such a rigorous methodology is not to salvage a claim to scientific authority for oneself as the authority of facticity crumbles, but to maximize the prospect of transcending one's initial assumptions and coming up with useful and possibly new ways of understanding social interactions (that is, theory) grounded in informants' lived experiences.

References to Methodological Appendix

Abbott, Andrew. 1992. "From Causes to Events: Notes on Narrative Positivism." *Sociological Methods & Research* 20(4):428-455.

Abbott, Andrew. 1995."Sequence Analysis: New Methods for Old Ideas." *Annual Review of Sociology* 21:93-113.

Abbott, H. Porter. 2008. *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*. Cambridge University Press.

Andridge, Rebecca R. and Roderick J. A. Little. 2010. "A Review of Hot Deck Imputation for Survey Non-response." *International Statistical Review* 78(1):40-64.

Barthes, Roland. 1989. "The Reality Effect." in *The Rustle of Language*, translated by Richard Howard. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Becker, Howard. 2007. *Telling About Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Berg, William J. 1992. *The Visual Novel: Emile Zola and the Art of His Times*. Pennsylvannia State University Press.

Bresbis, Max. 2016. "Romancing the Home: Emotions and the Interactional Creation of Demand in the Housing Market." *Socio-Economic Review* 14(3):461-482.

Bucholtz, Mary. 2000. "The Politics of Transcription." *Journal of Pragmatics* 32:1439-1465.

Burt, Ronald. 1990. "Detecting Role Equivalence." *Social Networks* 12(1):83-97.

Cherney, Adrian and Wing Hong Chui. 2011. "The Dilemmas of Being a Police Auxiliary--An Australian Case Study of Police Liaison Officers." *Policing* 5(2):180-187.

Clifford, James. 1983. "On Ethnographic Authority." *Representations* 2:118-146.

Colbert, Stephen. 2005. "The Word – Truthiness." *The Colbert Report*, October 17. Retrieved April 1, 2017. (http://www.cc.com/video-clips/63ite2/the-colbert-report-the-word---truthiness)

Cooke, Janet. 1980. "Jimmy's World." *The Washington Post*, September 28.

Danto, Arthur C. 1962. "Narrative sentences." *History and Theory* 2(2):146-179.

Duneier, Mitchell. 2006. "Ethnography, the Ecological Fallacy, and the 1995 Chicago Heat Wave." *American Sociological Review* 71(4):679-688.

Duneier, Mitchell. 2011. "How Not to Lie with Ethnography." *Sociological Methodology* 41(1):1-11.

Duneier, Mitchell. "What Kind of Combat Sport Is Sociology?" *American Journal of Sociology* 107(6):1551-1576.

Durkheim, Emile. 1996 [1912]. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Translated by Karen E. Fields. New York: Free Press.

Ellis, Carolyn. 2004. *The Ethnographic I: A Methodological Novel about Autoethnography*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Fassin, Didier. 2014. "True Life, Real Lives: Revisiting the Boundaries Between Ethnography and Fiction." *American Ethnologist* 41(1):40-55.

Finkel, Andrew. 2017. "Willing Accomplice." Pp. 87-96 in *Attacks on the Press: The New Face of Censorship* compiled by the Committee to Protect Journalists. Wiley.

Foucault, Michel. 1980. "Power and Strategies." Pp. 412-453 in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977.* New York: Pantheon Books.

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight." Pp. 412-453 in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books.

Ginsburg, Carlo and Anna Davin. 1980. "Morelli, Freud and Sherlock Holmes: Clues and Scientific Method." *History Workshop* 9:5-36.

Goffman, Alice. 2014. *On the Run: Fugitive Life in An American City*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Goffman, Erving. 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life.* Random House.

Goldman, Marion. 1999. *Passionate Journeys: Why Successful Women Joined a Cult*. University of Michigan Press.

Goldman, Marion. 2002. "Voicing Spiritualities: Anchored Composites as an Approach to Understanding Religious Commitment." In *Personal Knowledge and Beyond: Reshaping the Ethnography of Religion*, edited by James V. Spickard, Shawn Landres, and Meredith B. McGuire. New York: New York University Press.

Gould, Roger. 2003. *Collision of Wills: How Ambiguity About Social Rank Breeds Conflict.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Griffin, Larry J. 1993. "Narrative, Event-Structure Analysis, and Causal Interpretation in Historical Sociology." *American Journal of Sociology* 98(5):1094-1133.

Hall, Stuart. 1973. *Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse*. Birmingham, England: Centre for Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham, 507–17.

Harkin, James. 2014. "Evaporated." *Vanity Fair*, April 14. Retrieved April 1, 2017. (http://www.vanityfair.com/news/politics/2014/05/journalists-missing-in-syria)

Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 2016. *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*. New York: The New Press.

Jackson, Michael D. 1995. *At Home in the World.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Jerolmack, Colin and Alexandra K. Murphy. 2017. "The Ethical Dilemmas of Social Scientific Trade-Offs of Masking in Ethnography." *Sociological Methods & Research*, March.

Katz, Jack. 1977. "Cover-Up and Collective Integrity: On the Natural Antagonisms of Authority Internal and External to Organizations." *Social Problems* 25(1):3-17.

Katz, Jack. 2001. "From How to Why: On Luminous Description and Causal Inference in Ethnography (Part I)." *Ethnography* 2(4):443-473.

Katz, Jack. 2002. "From How to Why: On Luminous Description and Causal Inference in Ethnography (Part II)." *Ethnography* 3(1):63-90.

Katz, Jack. 2015. "Situational Evidence: Strategies for Causal Reasoning From Observational Field Notes." *Sociological Methods & Research* 44(1):108-144.

Keen, Suzanne. 2006. "A Narrative Theory of Empathy." *Narrative* 14(3):207-236.

Langness, L. L. and Gelya Frank. 1978. "Fact, Fiction and the Ethnographic Novel." *Anthropology and Humanism Quarterly* 3(1):18-22.

Lofland, John and Lyn H. Lofland. 2006. *Analyzing Social Settings*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Lubet, Steven. 2015(a). "Ethics on the Run." *The New Rambler Review*, May: 15-34.

Lubet, Steven. 2015(b). "Alice Goffman's Denial of Murder Conspiracy Raises Even More Questions." *The New Republic*, June 3.

Masi, Alessandria. 2017. "Where I've Never Set Foot." Pp. 7-14 in *Attacks on the Press: The New Face of Censorship,* compiled by the Committee to Protect Journalists. Wiley.

Mears, Ashley. 2015. "Working for Free in the VIP: Relational Work and the Production of Consent." *American Sociological Review* 80(6):1099-1122.

Mitchell, J. Clyde. 1983. "Case and Situation Analysis." *Sociological Review* 31(2):187–211.

Neyfakh, Leon. 2015. "The Ethics of Ethnography." *Slate*, June 18. Retreived April 1, 2017. (http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/crime/2015/06/alice_goffman_s_on_the_run_is_the_sociologist_to_blame_for_the_inconsistencies.html)

Nichols, Bill. 1991. *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Nichols, Bill. 2017. *Introduction to Documentary*. Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press.

O'Farrell, Clare. 2010."Quotes of the Month (2004)." michel-foucault.com. Retrieved April 1, 2017. (http://www.michel-foucault.com/quote/2004q.html)

Pattillo, Mary. 2007. *Black on the Block: The Politics of Race and Class in the City.* Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Propp, Vladimir. 1970. *Morphology of the Folktale.* Austin: University of Texas Press.

Ragin, Charles C. 2008. "What is Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA)?" Retrieved April 1, 2017. (http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/250/1/What_is_QCA.pdf)

Raman, Bhavani. 2012. *Document Raj: Writing and Scribes in Early Colonial South India*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ringer, Fritz. 2010. *Max Weber: An Intellectual Biography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Sager, Mike. 2010. "The Fabulist Who Changed Journalism." *Columbia Journalism Review*, Spring. Retrieved March 1, 2017. (https://www.cjr.org/the_feature/the_fabulist_who_changed_journalism.php)

Schilit, Nicole. 2015. "Exiled: When the Most Dangerous Place for Journalists Is Your Country." Committee to Protect Journalists special report, June 17. Retrieved April 1, 2017. (https://cpj.org/reports/2015/06/exiled-when-most-dangerous-place-for-journalists-is-your-country-world-refugee-day.php)

Sennett, Richard and Jonathan Cobb. 1972. *The Hidden Injuries of Class.* New York: Vintage.

Serres, Michel. 2007. *The Parasite*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Singal, Jesse. 2015. "The Internet Accused Alice Goffman of Faking Details in Her Study of a Black Neighborhood. I Went to Philadelphia to Check." *New York Magazine*, June 18.

Skocpol, Theda. 1979. *States and Social Revolution: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Small, Mario. 2009. "'How Many Cases Do I Need?': On Science and the Logic of Case Selection in Field-Based Research." *Ethnography* 10(1):5-38.

Stone, Lawrence. 1979. "The Revival of Narrative: Reflections on a New Old History." *Past and Present*, 85:3-24.

Strauss, Anselm and Juliet Corbin. 1998. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Tavory, Iddo and Stefan Timmermans. 2014. *Abductive analysis: Theorizing qualitative research*. University of Chicago Press.

Truffaut, François and Helen G. Scott. 1985. *Hitchcock*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Trump, Donald J. 2017. Executive Order 13768 of January 25, 2017, "Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the United States." https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/01/25/presidential-executive-order-enhancing-public-safety-interior-united

Vaughan, Diane. 1997. *The Challenger Launch Decision: Risky Technology, Culture, and Deviance at NASA.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Vaughan, Diane. 2012. "Ethnographic Analytics," Paper presented, AJS Conference, "Causal Thinking and Ethnographic Research" University of Chicago, March 8-9.

Vaughan, Diane. 2014. "Theorizing: Analogy, Cases, and Comparative Social Organization." Pp. 61-84 in *Theorizing in Social Science: The Context of Discovery*, edited by Richard Swedberg. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014.

Vaughan, Diane. 1992. "Theory Elaboration: The Heuristics of Case Analysis." Pp. 173-202 in *What Is a Case? Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry*, edited by Charles Ragin and Howard S. Becker. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Wacquant, Loic. 2002. "Scrutinizing the Street: Poverty, Morality, and the Pitfalls of Urban Ethnography." *American Journal of Sociology* 107(6):1468-1532.

Weber, Max. 1949. "Objective Possibility and Adequate Causation in Historical Explanation." Pp. 164-188 in *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, translated by E. Shils and H. Finch. New York: The Free Press.

Weber, Max. 1993. *The Sociology of Religion.* Boston: Beacon Press.

Weiss, Robert. 1994. *Learning From Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: The Free Press.

White, Harrison C., Scott A. Boorman and Ronald L. Breiger. 1976. "Social Structure from Multiple Networks. I. Blockmodels of Roles and Positions." *American Journal of Sociology* 81(4):730-780.

White, Hayden. 1975. *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

White, Hayden. 1980. "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality." *Critical Inquiry* 7(1):5-27.

Yannakakis, Yanna. 2008. *The Art of Being In-Between: Native Intermediaries, Indian Identity, and Local Rule in Colonial Oaxaca*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Yeşil, Bilge. 2016. *Media in New Turkey: The Origins of an Authoritarian Neoliberal State*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Tables to Methodological Appendix

TABLE 1:

	Time 1	Time 2
Informant A	experiences آ	no data
Informant B	experiences ب	experiences ج

TABLE 2, loosely adapted from Skocpol (1979): The author wants to know the combination of factors that is likely to produce a revolution. Cases here are countries.

Row #	Agrarian Economy?	International Pressure?	Developed Bureaucracy?	Cases With Revolution	Cases Without Revolution	Consistency
1	no	no	no	0	0	?
2	yes	no	no	0	4	negative
3	yes	no	yes	0	2	negative
4	yes	yes	no	2	3	no
5	yes	yes	yes	5	0	positive
6	no	yes	no	0	2	negative
7	no	yes	yes	4	0	positive
8	no	no	yes	0	2	negative

TABLE 3 (invented to illustrate method; actual sequences will be longer):

Infor-mant	1	2	3	4	5	6
A	public school	elite university	office job	joins Gezi Park protests in 2013	foreign journalist in Gezi asks for assistance	gets to know other journos, fixes as hobby
B	private school	elite university	office job	socializes with expats through job	during Gezi protests, expat friend asks for assistance on behalf of a foreign journalist	quits office job to work fulltime as fixer
C	raised in France	elite university	journalist for Turkish media	covers 2013 Gezi protests	meets French journalist at Gezi who asks her for assistance	quits newspaper job to work fulltime as fixer for French media
D	raised in Germany	journalist for opposition Turkish paper	His paper is seized by state	starts fixing for German newspaper in 2008	transitions to fixing for German TV	moves to Germany for TV producer job

[i] I focus on the use of composite characters for what Diane Vaughan (2012: 2) calls *analytic ethnography*: "a realist approach to field observations of individual interaction that is science-based, assumes that evidence of causes and explanation can be found, and proceeds inductively to formulate an explanation," as opposed to *critical ethnography* that "rejects scientific positivism" and is more overtly meant as a political project to unmask and disrupt hegemony.
[ii] On the dangers to media workers in Turkey and Syria see Finkel 2017, Harkin 2014, Masi 2017, Schilit 2015, Yeşil 2016
[iii]This is the same distinction that Aristotle makes between "philosophical" or "universal truth" and merely factual "historical truth." (as explained in Abbott 2008: 153)
[iv] This is something of a caricature of journalism—many journalists do care about the context and representativeness of the fact they present—but it is a caricature that is useful for the purposes of this essay.
[v] For instance, a 2017 presidential executive order called for the Department of Homeland Security to, in weekly reports, "make public a comprehensive list of criminal actions committed by aliens." Even if factually listing crimes *really* committed by immigrants, a list lacking negative data on all the immigrants who do not commit crimes or comparison to crime rates among non-immigrants will *untruly* associate immigrants as a group with criminality (Trump 2017).
[vi] Such unmasking of ethnographic research subjects, most often by members of their own community, is a common occurrence (Jerolmack and Murphy 4-7).
[vii] Perhaps also contributing to journalists' criticisms is the legacy of infamous cases of journalists using the justification of preserving sources' anonymity to cover up misconduct, notably Janet Cooke, whose 1980 article "Jimmy's World" about an 8-year-old heroin addict won her a Pulitzer Prize. After the article was published, respondents including city government officials demanded that Cooke reveal Jimmy's full name and where he lived so that he could be helped; Cooke refused, citing her obligation to protect her sources. Finally, after being confronted over (fact-checkable) forgery of her academic credentials, Cooke broke down and confessed that Jimmy was fictional. The story did, however, shed light on broader truths about changes in the global narcotics supply chain and Washington D.C. drug trade. Cooke in fact pursued the story as a way to cover the actual introduction of a new form of heroin to the city and based on a tip from an outreach worker that an eight-year-old was receiving treatment for drug use--the problem was that she invented Jimmy when she failed to find the real eight-year-old (Cooke 1980, Sager 2016).

This points to a difference between sociology and journalism in terms of forms of incentivized misconduct. Journalists are rewarded for unique stories, while sociologists are rewarded for novel theories. Thus, journalists are incentivized to fabricate facts, to move from the general to the specific in fraudulent manner (e.g. taking the true general story of a growing drug trade and children affected and turning it into a false story about a particular boy), while sociologists are incentivized to fabricate theories, to move from the specific to the general in fraudulent manner (i.e. proposing a theory not supported by the evidence they collected). Of course, sociologists might fabricate facts to fit their theories, but misrepresenting real data is the more sophisticated approach.
[viii] Some journalists (particularly those in the "meta-news" business of reporting on the media, e.g. *FiveThirtyEight* and *On the Media*) also seek to verify the representativeness of stories. This form of verification of *On the Run* in fact became possible once Goffman's informants were found by a journalist, who quoted one in order to question the representativeness of Goffman's study: "The problem, as Josh saw it, was that Alice 'fell into a very rare particular group of individuals.' While 'most young black men aren't running around with guns,' the ones Goffman was hanging out with on 6th Street were." (Singal 2015)
[ix] In Duneier's article, he is only able to subject Clifford Geertz's ethnography of cockfighting in Bali to an ethnographic trial because Geertz wrote another book discussing the same individuals from which Duneier can draw data not included in the cockfighting article; in most cases, the only data readers can have about particular anonymized informants is that provided in the ethnography (Duneier 2011: 4-8).
[x] One common method to check ethnography without the author controlling access to data is to unite the roles of subject and reader by bringing ethnographic writing back to the community studied and asking research subjects to review it. From the perspective of the author, circulating drafts to insiders who intimately know the case under study can be a useful method for refining arguments (Vaughan 1992). From the perspective of outsider readers, though,

this is another tool of *self*- rather than *external* accountability unless research subjects discuss the ethnography not just with its author but with the wider world.

[xi] One criticism of renaming people and places in generic terms and changing particularities is that this results in texts abstracted from real times, places, and events, which not only can obscure relevant historical context but also makes an implicit and analytically indefensible suggestion of generalizability (Small 15-17, Jerolmack and Murphy 11-13).

[xii]On the other hand, many more children have learned a folk sociology of totalitarianism and discrimination through J.K. Rowley than respectively through Hannah Arendt or W.E.B. DuBois. Furthermore, fantasy and sci-fi can invite thinking about causal mechanisms perhaps all the more clearly because the genres *create* worlds, whose conditions they control entirely and where different social groups exist than in the real world, in which their characters interact; there is less chance of readers being seduced into categorical (identifying with a character as sharing a group identity with the reader) rather than situational empathy (identifying with a character in circumstances analogous to those familiar to the reader) when the characters of a story are not members of any groups in common with the reader, aside from perhaps gender (see Keen 215-218 on situational vs. categorical empathy).

[xiii] "Objective possibility" is meant rather vaguely to mean that they are situated in the real past without so much fictionalized as to unmoor the story from patterns of social relations that existed in that time and place (Griffin 1102-1102). This point is discussed further in the section below on counterfactual reasoning.

[xiv] The selections made according to the logics of dramatic vs. analytic license may often coincide. Selecting data based on aesthetic appeal can have analytic utility. In his two-part article "From How to Why," Jack Katz (2001, 2002) argues that the "neglected practical wisdom" embedded in gut feelings about what makes for a "luminous description" or poignant moments often reflects good causal reasoning. Drama may clue us in to relevance and provide useful windows for making causal claims. Within disciplines, meanwhile, criteria for selection and arrangement of elements into narrative may vary over time and among practitioners of rival tropes of emplotment, as White (1975) shows in the writing of history, or may be surprisingly homogeneous, as Propp (1970) shows in demonstrating that folktales originating from numerous cultures follow a logic of sequencing with little variation in their basic elements. Becker argues that an organizational perspective--"bureaucratic structures, budgets, professional codes, and audience characteristics all impinge on telling about society"--is essential to understanding differences among different forms of representation (2007: 15).

[xv] For my purposes, narrative need not be *told* in chronological order, but must just have actions situated at particular times in a sequential story.

[xvi] similar enough in terms of relevant factors *other than* the one under counterfactual interrogation

[xvii]Counterfactual arguments, as Weber argues (1949: 164), are only plausible when sticking to "objectively possible" imaginary changes to history; rewriting too great a swathe of reality reintroduces the complexity of multiple factors that counterfactuals are meant to avoid.

[xviii] The importance of rhetoric to the oft-cited goal of ethnography to make the strange familiar and the familiar strange should not be ignored. Part of early 20th-century ethnography's turn toward fiction was based on its greater ability (than what would later be called "thin descriptions" documenting that "whats" without "hows" or "whys") to produce empathy and thus get beyond readers' initial reactions of shock or disgust at described cultural differences and familiarize the unfamiliar (Langness and Frank 1978). In the late 19th century, after all, the bestselling "naturalistic," participant-observation based novels of Emile Zola thickly described lives of the lower classes to bourgeois readers, at least partly with the intention of having those readers put themselves in the shoes of those less fortunate and in consequence change their own political behavior (Berg 1992).

[xix] Whether critics of anonymization (e.g. Jerolmack and Murphy 2017) would be satisfied that potential harms truly outweighed benefits of identifying subjects is questionable. When Rajneeshpuram was operational, members certainly had reason to fear harm from the cult, which was stockpiling weapons and would go on to be implicated in arson, assault, and mass poisoning, and Goldman suggests that rigorous anonymization was not only ethical but a practical requirement for gaining consent from many subjects: "Because of their unspoken knowledge of internal surveillance and the continuing investigations and lawsuits by state and federal agencies some sannyasins [members of the cult] suggested that I take unusual precautions to protect them. I guaranteed complete anonymity…" (1999: 61) However, her book was published a decade and a half after the community collapsed and by that time, the potential harm that concerns Goldman seems to be of the more routine reputational variety: "Anonymity also became important in the aftermath of Rajneeshpuram, as some people had to patch together new resumes." (ibid 65)

[xx] I would argue that this method, as Goldman explains it, puts the cart before the horse by first clustering according to a single variable and then looking for similarity. It should not have been a surprise that clustered research subjects were similar: their similarity should have been the basis for their combination into a composite character.

[xxi] Identifying people, places and organizations as journalists do and as Jerolmack and Murphy (2017) recommend does address this problem and create the opportunity to realize the triangular relationship among author, subject, and reader that Katz envisions, but this article is meant to address that subset of ethnographic research in which such identification is dangerous to subjects.

[xxii] I am not the first to search for ways to undermine ethnographic authority through writing style. Clifford notes that the turn in anthropology from opaque claims of expertise and understanding of cultures possessing static characteristics to interpretive writing that portrays ethnography as a text subjectively constructed like any other of the texts and discourses that constitute culture: "interpretive anthropology, by viewing cultures as assemblages of texts, loosely and sometimes contradictorally united, and by highlighting the inventive poesis at work in all collective representations, has contributed significantly to the defamiliarization of ethnographic authority." (128-133)

[xxiii] Even stronger than a *just the facts* authority claim is what Clifford (1983) describes as the "I was there" or "experiential" claim to authority typical of ethnography through the mid-twentieth century. Citing "a kind of accumulated savvy and sense of the style of a people or place," (127-130) an author may not even feel the need to present the evidence to back it but only to assert that he has evidence, as does Geertz in his classic Balinese cockfighting article:

> Consider, then, as support of the general thesis that the cockfight, and especially the deep cockfight, is fundamentally a dramatization of status concerns, the following facts, which to avoid extended ethnographic description I will simply pronounce to be facts—though the concrete evidence-examples, statements, and numbers that could be brought to bear in support of them is both extensive and unmistakable… (Geertz 74)

A cruder appeal to "I was there" authority is evident in journalism in the form of metonymy when a correspondent is flown into a war zone at great expense to deliver a "standup" from the rooftop of their hotel, licensed by their physical proximity to speak authoritatively of the conflict (Nichols 2017: 61-62).

[xxiv] Anthropologist Michael Jackson, drawing on Pragmatist philosophy, makes a similar argument of his ethnography's value lying in its utility for helping to make sense of the world, rather than proving particular facts about objective reality:

> It seems to me that one might begin with something like John Dewey's test for adequacy in philosophy, and ask: 'Does it end in conclusions which, when they are referred back to ordinary life-experiences and their predicaments, render them more significant, more luminous to us, and make our dealings with them more fruitful? Or does it terminate in rendering the things of ordinary experience more opaque than they were before, and in depriving them of having in 'reality' even the significance they had previously seemed to have?'…Dewey's is a conception of knowledge that begins and ends within the lifeworld…Fieldwork may therefore be understood, not in the Baconian sense of putting reality on the rack until it reveals objective truth, but as a method for putting oneself in the place of another, and extending one's social capabilities. (163)

This point about "extending one's social capabilities" is a key part of what differentiates the fiction I recommend in this article from a "deep story" that consumers believe because it reaffirms and serves as a metaphor for what they already feel and think, regardless of the story's basis in reality (Hochschild 2016; see also Stephen Colbert [2005] on truthiness). See also Keen's distinction between "bounded strategic empathy" that stems from mutual experience with a group and "ambassadorial" or "broadcast strategic empathy" that cultivates outsiders' greater empathy toward previously unfamiliar experiences; the latter is of greater interest here (215-224). The post-structuralist conception of theory as a toolkit--Foucault writes, for instance, "I would like my books to be a kind of tool-box which others can rummage through to find a tool which they can use however they wish in their own area... I would like the little volume that I want to write on disciplinary systems to be useful to an educator, a warden, a magistrate, a conscientious objector. I don't write for an audience, I write for users, not readers" (as translated in O'Farrell 2004)--is similar but focuses more specifically on theory's role as a tool for constructing and challenging power relations (see also Foucault 143-145).

[xxv] In media theory terminology, possibilities for "negotiated" and "oppositional" decoding increase when messages are transmitted with a lower signal-to-noise ratio (Hall 1973).

[xxvi] Even when it comes to quotations, speech is not transformed into written quotations in neutral fashion but always transformed by the author. Decisions with analytic and rhetorical implications about not just *what* to quote but *how* to quote, for instance, whether to standardize colloquial and vernacular speech or to use nonstandard orthography to represent it, are inherent to the transcription process (Bucholtz 2000). Nonetheless, quoted speech is more likely to

contain data that does not advance the particular argument being penned than are indirect paraphrasing or description (Clifford 136-141).

[xxvii] Conventional ethnography may also focus on particularly exaggerated (which out of fears of losing authority among peer readers are generally not labeled as such, but rather as particularly "elucidating" or something to that effect) data as an intentional method. Jack Katz writes, "Ethnographic data *should* systematically over-dramatize the colorful character of people, their settings and their conduct, for reasons rooted in the logic of empirically grounding and testing causal explanation." (2001: 467)

[xxviii] The key difference from Propp's method is that he takes an atomistic Aristotelian approach of seeking to divide stories down into basic functions, without explanation of how different elements of stories (e.g. "a bear steals the oats" and "a brother demands his sister for a wife") are abstracted into the same function ("the villain causes harm or injury to a member of a family") beyond pronouncing that they serve to advance the story in the same way (20-21, 31-34). By contrast, I do not assume that I can divide my sequences down into indivisible elements, but rather take a consciously pragmatic approach of choosing a degree of abstraction of sequence entries based on the questions I wish to answer and the degree of comparability I need among data to be able to theorize.

[xxix]By selective coding, I refer to the assigning of variables to data that abstract from their details and form the basis of the ethnography's general argument, as opposed to the initial open coding, tentatively labeling passages of data without reference to broader theory, and axial coding, preliminarily identifying relationships among open codes (Strauss and Corbin 101-162).

[xxx]A pragmatic consideration in the degree of abstraction that must, in my method, be consciously made, is how many characters the ethnographer thinks readers can be expected to keep track of.

[xxxi] I use scare quotes to emphasis that I am using "statistical" as a foil in the manner of Mitchell [1983] and Small [2009] and to emphasize that I am not doing in this example what proper statisticians do.

[xxxii] Vaughan, citing Georg Simmel's call for sociology to separate social forms from the substantive content of particular phenomena, notes that comparability of diverse phenomena is the social fact at the root of the building of formal theory:

> Regardless of differences in size, complexity, and function, all organizational forms have characteristics in common. They share basic aspects of structure: hierarchy, division of labor, goals, normative standards, patterns of coming and going. Further, they share common processes: socialization, conflict, competition, cooperation, power, culture. This means we can compare them, generating theory based on analogies and differences that we find. (64)