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**Public Relations of a Strike:
A Case Study on the “Turkish Airlines
305 Resistance and Strike”**

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Abstract

Going on strike, which is considered to be a legitimate right in democratic societies and is briefly defined as a temporary stoppage or slowdown of work by employees, is an important issue usually discussed and studied from the perspective of law, politics, economics and sociology. The studies performed in the field of public relations indicated that most scholars heavily focused on strikes from the perspective of corporations in the context of crisis or issue management. However, not only corporations, but also organized labor effectively benefits from public relations activities in order to achieve public sympathy, have media coverage, and influence policy-makers in the process of strike action that occurs between employees, employer and the government.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate strikes from the perspective of public relations and to identify the public relations activities used by organized labor. Within this context, the “Turkish Airlines 305 Resistance and Strike” was examined as a sample case. The research method employed is an examination of the media news coverage of the dates between 29th May 2012, when 305 employees were dismissed after they had participated in protest action against a draft law that would make strikes illegal in aviation sector, and 19th December 2013, when the Turkish Civil Aviation Union (Hava-Is) reached an agreement with Turkish Airlines (THY) that would enable 305 former employees to return to their jobs. Additionally, related web pages and social media coverages on this subject were also examined. The data obtained from the examination were evaluated according to the public relations theory developed by Grunig.

Keywords: Strike, Resistance, Public Relations, Turkish Airlines, Reinstate the 305

Introduction

The Industrial Revolution led to change being experienced rapidly, and the relationship between employers and workers became more complex than ever before. Recognizing that their individual efforts against unfair practices of big businesses would result in failure, workers began to organize and form labor unions, so that they could gain power and a voice. The most effective tool to help organized labor was strikes. At the present time, the right to strike is an integral part of the democratic order. Therefore, the governmental law draft in Turkey to limit the right to strike for the aviation workers caused the reactions of THY (Turkish Airlines) employees and then the process of “Turkish Airlines 305 Resistance and Strike”, that took place between 29th May 2012 and 19th December 2013, began.

This study attempts to examine the following questions from an historical perspective and through qualitative analysis of the case study:

1. What is the historical background of strikes in Public Relations?
2. How are strikes positioned in the Public Relations literature?
3. How and in what way does organized labor benefit from Public Relations in strikes?

Literature Review

Definition of Strike

Although associated with industry, the “strike” predates industrialization (Tarrow,1998,p.99). The first recorded strike in history took place in the 12th century, B.C., in Egypt when builders of the royal necropolis of Ramses III, laid down their tools because of insufficient rations (Brenner,2009,p.3). The examples of strikes found throughout the history are, however, individual cases. The spread of strikes across large masses and, correspondingly, the formation of relevant regulations developed with the Industrial Revolution (Makal,1987,p.16).

There are several definitions of strike action, some of which are as follows:

“Strike takes place when a majority of employees, in an attempt to change their work conditions in their favor and gain new rights and advantages, premeditatedly stop work in a workplace or in a line of work for a definite or indefinite period of time” (Talas, 1997,p.347).

“A temporary stoppage of work by a group of employees to express a grievance or enforce a demand” (Brecher,1997,p.396).

“Most legal systems regard a strike as the organized or coordinated full or partial stoppage of work by a group of workers in order to exert pressure on the employer for fulfilment of certain demands” (Birk,1982,p.298).

All of the components of these definitions are important in differentiating strikes from other forms of opposition and conflict. The following common aspects are found in a typical definition of a strike (Giddens,2006,p.748):

- a) A strike is *temporary*, since workers intend to return to the same job with the same employer; where workers quit altogether, the term strike is not appropriate.
- b) As a *stoppage* of work, a strike is distinguishable from an overtime ban or slowdown.
- c) A *group* of workers has to be involved, because a strike involves collective action, not the response of individual workers.
- d) Involvement of *employees* serves to separate a strike from protests such as may be conducted by tenants or students.
- e) A strike involves seeking to make a grievance known or to press a *demand*.

In order for a movement to qualify as a strike, it must have all of the above aspects. Situations other than these do not constitute a strike. But in addition to the traditional form of strike (characterized by the complete stoppage of work) and its variants (such as the wildcat and sympathy strikes), there are several forms of industrial action that might also be included in the definition, such as the partial stoppage of work, the go-slow, the work to rule, the sit-down strike and the repeated walk-out (Craven,1998,p.257). Ultimately, no matter how it happens, each strike is a kind of struggle for rights.

Strike action was considered a "crime" or an "unlawful act" in terms of law in several western countries until very recently. Besides, the recognition of a strike as a "right", or at the least, as "a freedom", in almost all western democracies, especially after the World War II, is an indication of a significant development in social and political thinking (Sur,1987,p.1). In legal sense, both concepts have different contents and practices. The freedom to strike means that the strike is legally permitted, but no special privilege is granted: a strike is tolerated, but not privileged, and the legal limits of the strikes are dictated by the general legal order. The right to strike, by contrast, means that the legal order of the state must take precautions to ensure the exercise of the right, and so the strike is privileged (Barnard,2006,p.772).

In brief, participating in a strike, during its historical development process, was first regarded as *a crime*, later as *a freedom*, and eventually as *a right* (Narmanlioğlu,1990,p.22). It was pointed out that the right to strike was mentioned in the legislation of many countries, and had become a social reality that had to be recognized (Craven,1998,p.257). The first constitutional basis for strike action in Turkey was the 1961 Constitution. Several developments that occurred until then, gained a legal ground only by the said Constitution (Guler,2008,p.24). The 1982 Constitution passed after the military intervention of 12th September 1980, re-granted the right to strike. The 2821 Trade Unions Act that regulates the exercise of this right, and the 2822 Collective Labor Agreement, Strike and Lock-out Act inured in 1983 to remain in effect for

approximately 30 years (Gerek,2013,p.1). The 6356 Trade Unions and Collective Labor Agreement Act of 7th November 2012 re-regulated the concept of strike.

At the present time, article 54 of the Turkish Constitution states, "Workers have the right to strike if a dispute arises during the collective bargaining process. The procedures and conditions governing the exercise of this right ...shall be regulated by law," thus, at the constitutional law level, rendering a strike lawful only if disputes arise during the collective bargaining process and allowing exercise of this right within the boundaries of law. A strike conducted under the conditions contrary to the foregoing is regarded unlawful. Article 58 of the Trade Unions and Collective Labor Agreement Act also adopts the same principle and also provides that "a strike shall be executed in compliance with applicable provisions of law only for purposes of protecting and improving workers' economic, social and working conditions", and regards a strike unlawful if the decision to go on strike is taken without compliance with these provisions (Ulucan,2013,p.276).

In essence, the right to strike is an intention to draw closer to social justice. In fact, the balance of powers between workers and employers is secured by trade unions, collective bargaining and strike rights, and labor exploitation is considerably minimized by achieving these rights as a whole in democratic political regimes (Güven,2009,p.118). However, as all other rights, the right to strike must be exercised within the boundaries of law. While every right provided by law assures its holder of enjoyment and exercise of that right, it also poses some restrictions. The considerable extent of limitations imposed by the constitution and the laws not only on the right to strike, but also on the trade union and collective labor agreement rights, leads to various criticisms and discussions (Ulucan,2013,p.277).

Strikes in the Field of Public Relations

Cutlip (1994,p.1) pointed out that "the rise of powerful monopolies, the concentrations of wealth and power, the rough-shot tactics of the robber barons in exploiting human labor and the nation's resources had brought a wave of protest and reform in the early 1900s. Contemporary public relations had emerged out of the struggle between the opposing forces in this period". But as stated by some researchers (Hansen-Horn,2005; Miller,1995; Cutlip et al.,1994), most scholars of public relations pay little or no attention to organized labor's public relations activities, and heavily focus on the strikes from the perspective of corporations. Literature about the late 19th and the early 20th century public relations dwells on the practices of early pioneers in the U.S. who were hired by corporations to cope with organized labor and strikes. For example, Okay & Okay (2005,p.110) attributes Ivy Lee's success to the activities shown in strikes which are widespread in his era. Especially, his Declaration of Principles, issued during the Anthracite Coal Strike of 1906, had a deep effect on the transition of press agency into publicity and publicity into public relations (Cutlip,1994,p.45). In addition, Ivy Lee's role, on behalf of the Rockefellers, in the aftermath of the Colorado Coal Strike of 1913-1914

was considered a milestone in early public relations by Hallahan (2002,p.265). However, as mentioned by Hansen-Horn (2005,p.477) as below, organized labor and corporate public relations have been affecting each other's historical development since industrialization.

“The beginning of the Industrial Revolution brought with it the beginnings of organized labor. Unions were formed with leadership often provided by those formerly trained in the ways of Communism, in direct response to the treatment workers received from industrialists. The time was riddled with violence both within the factories and around strikes and strike-breaking activities. Within union activity, however, public relations strategies and tactics were used to rally workers to organize, to gain community support, and to communicate pro-labor messages to factory owners and representatives of the United States government. At the same time, public relations strategies and tactics were used by industrialists to rally support within communities and among representatives of the government against organized labor and its goal. Public relations led the way as industrialist learned to communicate with the press and union representatives and as union representatives learned to communicate with the press and industrialists, among themselves, and with their membership”.

By now, the strike has become a virtual part of the institutions of collective bargaining, with its own jurisprudence, rituals and expectations among both challengers and opponents (Tarrow, 1998,p.99). Once a strike begins, it involves a tremendous amount of activity, including picketing; countering employer and government violence; providing food, healthcare, and other vital needs of strikers; coordinating activity; and setting strike strategy. If the strike seriously affects the population, the strikers often find it necessary to continue part of their usual work to show their social responsibility and keep public sympathy (Brecher,1997,p.281). Strikes are not activities with harmful intentions. However, it is a process that ultimately negatively impacts the employer whose production line is completely stopped or significantly hindered, the worker who is not paid his/her wages, as well as the consumer who is used to the regular flow of goods and services (Kumbul Guler, 2012, p.114). Despite the inconveniences and costs involved, the strike weapon is considered essential to labor's success (Cutlip et al.,1994,p.541). It is important in terms of gaining public sympathy and support to execute this process with social responsibility awareness and get it over and done with, with minimum damage. But labor has problems developing and sustaining a broad base of sympathetic support from the nonunion lay public (Cutlip et al.,1994,p.541).

The media plays a significant role in the emergence of this problem. Because, according to scholarly literature (Visser,2004; Vliegthart & Walgrave, 2012; Davis,2002), media coverage often shows strikes negatively, and is therefore characterized as hostile in nature. Vliegthart & Walgrave (2012,p.388) who studied mass media and social movements noted, “Social movements are interested in getting their message out. Their aim is to direct the media's (and the public's) attention to an issue. Journalists often do not focus on the problem or the issue the movement is signaling, but rather considers

other things newsworthy”. They, for example, usually highlight the consequences of strike action for the general public more, but the causes of strike action are rarely explained (Davis, 2002, p.110). Strike action, as a social movement, needs the news media for three major purposes: mobilization, validation, and scope enlargement (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993, p.116). First, with regard to the purpose of mobilization, various kinds of information and public enlightenment are important. Media can have an impact on the direct sympathizers and exert an influence on a wide variety of actual forms of participation, from attending the action to making financial donations. Secondly, media is essential and important for validation. Because it legitimizes the existence of the action and its claims, media coverage is a requirement to affect politicians, policy makers, and the political agenda and decision-making processes. Finally, a strike action needs the media to broaden the scope of conflict (Vliegenthart & Walgrave, 2012, p.392). All movements depend on the news media to bring third parties into the conflict. Wolfsfeld (1997,p.77) claimed that only outside support could alter the tremendous inequality that characterized the political balance of power between movements and the authorities. Briefly, favorable coverage can generate public sympathy, mobilize reference groups, increase and maintain membership, stimulate financial support, help the issue to be placed on the policy agenda, legitimize the movements and its demands, and influence policy-makers in its favor (Paletz & Entman, 1981, p.124).

Based on the writings stated above, not all strikes are intended to support a demand toward an employer; some demands can be met only by the parliament or government (Birk, 1982, p.299). According to Friedman (2009,p.26) strikes involve at least three parties: labor, management, and the government, and variations in strike rates and strike outcomes therefore reflect changes in the behavior or attitudes of any of these three and in their interactions. At this point, public relations can be seen as a way of building understanding and trust between these different groups; and it can produce behavioral changes. Hansen-Horn (2005, p.477) reported that organized labor had used the power of public relations since the early beginning. Cutlip et al. (1994, p.544) asserted, “the challenges of public relations in the labor movement are basically the same as in all other settings: to establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with those upon whom success or failure depends. It is labor’s position that its success should be measured not on a barometer of public opinion of its “image”, but on results”.

Case Study: “Turkish Airlines 305 Resistance And Strike”

Problem

Because of a draft law presented by various members of the ruling AKP government to prohibit strike and lock-out action in the aviation sector, Turkish Civil Aviation Union, Hava-Is, organized a slow down action on Tuesday 29th May 2012 and called for a sick leave protest which was followed by large

proportions of the Turkish Airlines personnel. As they were unable to go on strike legally, due to the already incredibly strict Turkish laws, they took a day's sick leave in protest. Turkish Airlines responded by firing 305 workers who participated in action. They were fired via phone call, text message and e-mail (<http://industrialrelationsinturkey.com/2012/05/31/300-turkish-airlines-employees-fired-using-sms-due-to-strike-participation/>). On 30th May 2012, just a day after the protest action by workers at Turkish Airlines, the Parliament of Turkey passed an act that would ban strikes and lockouts in the country's aviation sector. Turkish Civil Aviation Union, Hava-Is immediately organized a resistance (with the participation of the former employees fired by Turkish Airlines), which was called *Reinstate the 305*, and launched campaigns both on the national and international platforms to achieve public sympathy, build alliances, attract media coverage etc., by using effective communication efforts. After a while, the AKP government was forced to withdraw the act banning strikes in the aviation industry on 19th October 2012. While the campaigning of Reinstate the 305 was continuing, 24th Collective Labor Agreement bargaining commenced between the Turkish Airlines Management and the Turkish Civil Aviation Union (Hava-Is). After there was no agreement reached in the negotiations on a collective agreement between parties, Hava-Is began an indefinite strike on 15th May 2013 against Turkish Airlines (THY). Hava-Is made a call to THY and the Turkish government (<https://www.itfglobal.org/campaigns/reinstate305.cfm>) as below:

1. Stop the use of strike breakers
2. Put health and safety first
3. Reinstate the 305 sacked workers and stop union busting

Purpose and Hypothesis

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the process of the resistance and strike from the perspective of public relations and to identify the use of public relations activities by organized labor. Within this context, the main hypothesis is, “organized labor uses strategies and tactics of public relations to improve the power and effectiveness of strikes”, and the sub- hypothesis is, “there is a positive relationship between public relations activities and a strike's success”.

Methodology

According to Turkish law; a lawful decision to strike shall be made only by a union that has the authority to execute collective labor agreement for the work place(s) where the strike is to be executed (Ulucan,2013,p.276). Therefore in Turkey, public relations activities relating to strikes are generally carried-out by unions. In this study, public relations activities of the sample case, “Turkish Airlines 305 Resistance and Strike”, were organized by the Turkish Civil Aviation Union, Hava-Is. The research method employed is an examination of the media news coverage of the dates between 29th May 2012, when 305 employees were dismissed after they had participated in protest action against a draft law that would make strikes illegal in aviation sector, and 19th December 2013, when the Turkish Civil Aviation Union (Hava-Is) reached

an agreement with Turkish Airlines (THY) that would enable 305 ex-employees to return to their jobs. Additionally, related web pages and social media coverages on this subject were also examined. The data obtained from examination were evaluated according to the public relations theory developed by Grunig. According to this theory, activist groups should practice public relations in five steps that combine both symmetrical and asymmetrical strategies (Grunig,2001,p.19).

Results and Discussion

Step One

Use the logic of situational theory of “publics” to identify potential “publics” that share problems. Organize those publics, usually using interpersonal communication given that members of these un-empowered “publics” seldom pay attention to mass-mediated messages. If constraint recognition limits the likelihood that these publics will organize, then emphasize the potential of collective action to reduce the effect of constraints on individual behavior (Grunig, 2001, p.19).

Promoted by James E. Grunig, the situational theory in public relations generally has the aim of pinpointing the “publics” of an organization according to the situational context and of finding the most efficient communication means with the respective “publics” (Cmeciu, Cmeciu & Manolache, 2009, p.762). For activist groups, in order to take action, must first be recognized the existence of the problem as well as the need to improve the situation. Second, any constraints that might limit their control over the situation must be taken into account (Peak et al,2010,p.432). In this study case, , the problem at the beginning was a draft law that would make strikes illegal in the aviation sector. Therefore on 29th May 2012 the employees of Turkish Airlines (THY) protested against that legislation. After that the THY fired 305 workers for participating in protest action and parliament passed the law limiting aviation workers' right to strike. Upon this, the Turkish Civil Aviation Union (Hava-Is) successfully organized a resistance movement called “Reinstate the 305” which had two major aims: to get the law back and to get the workers reinstated”.



They launched a big public relations campaign to build public support, both at the national and international level. They staged sit-in protests and made press statements in front of the Turkish Airlines sales offices around Turkey. Petition campaigns were organized in several squares and main centres of Istanbul. An online petition on Labour Start attracted nearly 7,000 protest

letters via emails in five days, to the Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan and Turkish Airlines CEO Hamdi Topcu (The book of Turkish Civil Aviation Union, 2013, p.49). Hava-Is also organised a demonstration in front of the ruling AKP (Justice and Development Party) Istanbul Provincial Branch. As part of the union campaign, leaflets were distributed all over the country to raise awareness. As a result of the success of the campaign, the “strike ban” law was withdrawn after five months. But the resistance continued to put pressure for the reinstatement of the 305 workers.

Step Two

If the organized public lacks power, then use strategic public relations planning and coalition building to identify other complementary activists, thus enlarging and empowering the original activist group (Grunig,2001,p.19).

Across Turkey, various associations, trade unions and chambers communicated their support for both the resistance and the strike action. For example on 8th September, 2012, a group of members of the Turkish Civil Aviation Union and leaders and members of other sister unions including TUMTIS, Deri-Is, TekGıda-Is and Tez-Koop-Is carried out a sit-in protest in front of the Turkish Airlines Office in Taksim Square which is one of the most popular destinations for both tourists and the native population of Istanbul. They repeated this protest every Saturday in the following weeks. The aim of these protests was to broaden the struggle of the aviation workers ([http:// www.itfglobal.org/news-online/index.cfm/newsdetail/7065](http://www.itfglobal.org/news-online/index.cfm/newsdetail/7065)). Additionally, Hava-Is successfully organized signature and leaflet distribution campaigns for citizens in many important places in Istanbul as a part of the resistance. Support activities were organized in many cities for THY workers, and the trade unions and non-governmental organizations made a statement to the press (The book of Turkish Civil Aviation Union,2013,p.43). Besides this, on 23th October 2013, the Union of Turkish Bar Associations (TBB) held a very important meeting entitled “Flight Safety and labour Peace in the Context of the Turkish Airlines Strike Symposium”. Speakers at the symposium included academics, lawyers, trade unionists, workers (cabin crew, technicians and air traffic controllers), journalists and high-ranking bureaucrats. Metin Feyzioglu, the TBB President, denounced the unlawful practices of the Turkish Airlines management and emphasised that the fundamental human rights of Turkish Airlines workers have been brutally violated (<http://www.havais.org.tr/eng/index.php?menu=8&content=508>).

International support for the strike was meanwhile mobilized. Several protests supporting the resistance were conducted in several cities across the world. On 5th July 2012, Andrej Hunko, a deputy of the German Bundestag from Germany’s left-wing party Die Linke and member of the parliamentary assembly of the Council of Europe, visited Ataturk International Airport in Istanbul to show solidarity with the workers. Austrian and German MEPs also raised the issue at European level when they tabled a question in the European Parliament on 14th June 2012. The ITF (The International Transport Workers' Federation) launched an international campaign in June 2012 to support the

workers and their union (<http://www.itfglobal.org/news-online/index.cfm/newsdetail/7622>). To provide awareness and support extensively as possible, the ITF prepared a one minute campaigning video, titled “Brutally Yours” and this was shared on social media platforms. This video, a critique of the prohibition of the right to strike as a universal fundamental human right, was watched by about 4000 people in the first 48 hours it was published (<http://www.itfglobal.org/campaigns/campaigns-3584.cfm>). The protest, organized by The International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) was part of a series of rolling actions around the world. The iconic Empire State Building was the scene of a strong and vocal protest against Turkish Airlines rights abuses, and was held in New York on 8th November 2013. The action was in support of 305 Turkish Airlines workers dismissed in 2012 for exercising their right to strike (<https://www.itfglobal.org/campaigns/IUF-members.cfm>). German trade unions together with migrant worker and community groups organized a demonstration in Dortmund on 23th November 2013 ahead of the BvB Borussia Dortmund/FC Bayern München football match, with placards reading "A Real Scandal; Turkish Airlines: Anti-worker and hostile towards the union; 305 people were dismissed by SMS; It can't go on like this!" (<http://cms.iuf.org/?q=node/2978>). Other actions at the international level included visits by unionists in Poland and Thailand to the Turkish embassy to raise their concerns and submit protest letters and a petition-signing drive across Austria, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland. Elsewhere, unionists in countries such as Germany, Brazil, Ethiopia and Germany were arranging approaches to Turkish government representatives locally (<http://www.itfglobal.org/news-online/index.cfm/newsdetail/7622>). Between the 7th and 20th October 2013 Hava-Is launched a leaflet campaign. During this campaign unionists around the world leafleted THY passengers at the airports. The Turkish Civil Aviation Union (Hava-Is) also produced a bilingual brochure, entitled "Dismissed Turkish Airlines workers speak" to mobilize further solidarity. The brochure consists of one-to-one interviews with some of the 305 former workers (<http://www.havais.org.tr/eng/index.php?menu=4&content=469>).

Step Three

When the public or coalition has been organized, make an attempt to communicate symmetrically with the organization causing the problem or having the potential to solve the problem. If the organization responds symmetrically, then use principles of conflict resolution to negotiate with the organization. This symmetrical initiative makes subsequent asymmetrical techniques more ethical (Grunig,2001,p.19).

Although they had attempted to start a negotiation process on a number of occasions, the union Hava-Is could not get a positive response from the THY management. They continued to put pressure with national and international campaigns against the disagreeable attitude of THY. For example; on 8th August 2012, ITF general secretary David Cockroft wrote to the chief executive of Manchester United and the president of FC Barcelona, two

football clubs sponsored by Turkish Airlines, urging them to help persuade Turkish Airlines to negotiate with the union with a view to reinstating the 305 workers dismissed for participating in a protest (<https://www.itfglobal.org/campaigns/Germanpoliticians.cfm>). As a result of these pressures, the first round of collective negotiations (The 24th Collective Bargaining Agreement) between Turkish Airlines and Turkish Civil Aviation Unions (Hava-Is) were held on 16th January 2013 at the company's headquarters in Istanbul. The negotiations were aimed at ending the seven-month dispute following the dismissal by Turkish Airlines of the 305 workers. Atilay Ayçin, president of Hava-Is, said (<http://www.itfglobal.org/news-online/index.cfm/newsdetail/8334>):

“This is the perfect opportunity to establish a civilised, modern social dialogue between two sides. We are ready for this. Our only prerequisite is the reinstatement of our 305 colleagues who were unfairly sacked”.

But the negotiations were concluded without agreement. Following this disappointment, Turkish Civil Aviation Unions (Hava-Is) began an indefinite strike on 15th May 2013 against Turkish Airlines over the company's alleged failure to accept any of its proposals regarding collective bargaining and its refusal to reinstate 305 sacked workers. The strikers urged THY's management to reach an agreement with the union but were prevented on the first day from protesting at Istanbul's Atatürk Airport because of the heavy police presence. On 16th May they gathered in front of the THY headquarters, and said they would continue to protest there each day for the duration of the strike. Rather than negotiate with the union, Turkish Airlines tried to break the strike by hiring temporary staff, and by forcing inappropriate work on almost 700 Hava-Is members who were excluded by law from participating in strike action. On 8th July 2013, Istanbul's Labour Court ruled in favour of Hava-Is and found that Turkish Airlines had broken national law (<http://www.itfglobal.org/itfaviationblog/?p=2932>).

Step Four

If the organization does not respond to the symmetrical initiative, then use asymmetrical techniques to force the organization to consider the public's problem also to be its problem. Media advocacy, government lobbying, and litigation are the most common methods used to create this problem for the organization (although research might identify other ethical means of asymmetrical communication). These asymmetrical techniques will be ethical if the activist group discloses its persuasive intent at all times (Grunig, 2001, p.19).

Media Advocacy

The most radical research on industrial relations reporting in the UK has argued that the national media is inherently biased against trade unions, and therefore, union public relations can make only a marginal impact on news production (Davis, 2002, p.110). It is reported in the Regulation of Hava-Is Union that the legal entity of the Union is represented by the President at home

and abroad. The authority of holding press conferences and issuing a press statement on behalf of the Union belongs to the president. Also according to this regulation; publicity, public relations and media related jobs of the Union are fulfilled by the vice president. During the 305 resistance and strike, it was observed that press conferences and other meetings were carried out by Atilay Ayçin, the President of Hava-Is, while press statements related to the developments were issued by Mustafa Yagcı, the Vice President of the Union. This manner promoted an open and clear communication especially in terms of media to know who they communicate with and from whom they receive right information. Moreover, in order to prevent false or biased news coverage, all of the press statements were published on their own website of the Hava-Is Union. In addition, a web site, www.reinstate305.org, was established with the theme of "The right to strike is a human right!"; furthermore, "support the strike" groups were established on social media. All the information and materials including text of protest letters, petition and leaflets about the campaign of "305 resistance and strike" were distributed through these means.

Government Lobbying

Lobbying attempts to influence legislative and regulatory decisions in government (Cutlip et al.,1994,p.541). Therefore, Atilay Ayçin, the president of Hava-Is, went to Ankara, Turkey's capital city and conducted negotiations with dissident MPs to prevent the enactment of legislation that would ban strikes in the country's aviation sector at the beginning of the problem. Especially Süleyman Çelebi and Musa Cam, the deputies of Turkey's main opposition party CHP (The Republican People's Party) and many deputies protested against the ban on strikes in various ways. Süleyman Çelebi and Musa Cam took their place on chairs at Council bench with t-shirts written "NO! to strike ban at THY" to support the THY workers. The strike ban law for the aviation sector was withdrawn five months after having been passed in parliament. Hava-Is also continued their contacts with political parties incessantly after this development. Tens of thousands of signatures collected from citizens about the reinstatement of 305 workers and a detailed report on the subject were delivered to the General Secretary of Parliament. Additionally insurgent THY workers, which went to Ankara, met with the Republican People's Party (CHP) leader Kemal Kılıçtaroglu. In this meeting Kılıçtaroglu stated that they would stand by their side on every stage of the struggle of insurgent workers and he evaluated the relationship between democracy and seeking rights with the following words (The book of Turkish Civil Aviation Union,2013,p.50): "It is told that if you seek for right, then I am going to use my power and put an end to your work. It is not called democracy".

Litigation

The involvement of the labor court and all other judicial bodies is among one of the most necessary and important struggle areas for unions and employees in labor disputes. So the legal counsel of the Turkish Civil Aviation

Union (Hava-Is), also launched a legal process regarding the dismissal of 305 workers who took industrial action on 29th May 2012 to protest the government's plan to ban strikes in the aviation sector. On 6th November 2012, a court in Istanbul ordered that a Turkish Airlines employee, fired for his involvement in a legal protest action, be reinstated. The court rejected Turkish Airlines management's official justifications for the dismissals and made the decision in favour of the worker. It was the first ruling. In the following days, identical decisions were made by other labour courts regarding the remaining unfair dismissal cases (<http://www.itfglobal.org/itfaviationblog/?p=2452>). Thus, by declared the dismissals void by the courts in reemployment lawsuits, revealed the rightfulness of both the workers and the union, and the unfairly dismissed 305 people were allowed to return to work (<http://www.havais.org.tr/hizli-ulasin/hakkimizda/tarihce/43/hava-is-sendikasinin-tarihcesi.html>).

However, despite the court rulings in favour of the workers, the airline repeatedly refused to reinstate any of them. In March 2013 the ITF and its Turkish affiliate Hava-Is together lodged a complaint against the Turkish government and Turkish Airlines, the national flag carrier, at the International Labour Organization (ILO). They argued that the carrier's conduct exposes several failures in Turkish law to protect the rights of workers and trade unions, for which the Turkish government was responsible, as a member of the ILO and a signatory of conventions 87 and 98 (<http://www.itfglobal.org/itfaviationblog/?p=2582>). In a response letter on 16th May 2013 Karen Curtis, Deputy Director of the ILO, reported that ILO had been in contact with Turkish authorities and requested a response from them on the issue. Curtes also noted that the response of the Turkish government and new observations and comments of the ILO that may arise on the issue would be forwarded to the union (The book of Turkish Civil Aviation Union,2013,p.22).

Step Five

Once media pressure, mental intervention, or the courts have forced the organization to consider the public's problem also to be its problem, return to symmetrical communication and conflict resolution to search for a win-win solution and to build a long-term relationship between the organization and the activist group (Grunig,2001,p.19).

Last of all, the negotiations started again and with the signature of the 24th Collective Labor Agreement, on 19th December 2013 between Turkish Airlines and Turkish Civil Aviation Union, the strike that continued for 218 days, as well as the resistance of 305 that continued for 568 days, were ended. After reaching an agreement, the 305 former employees of THY, who were fired because they had protested against the draft legislation banning strikes, were able to return to their jobs.

Conclusion

Historically, strikes are very common in the field of public relations. But on a scholarly level, strikes are mostly discussed in the context of crisis or issue management of corporations. Actually, it is observed that organized labor also effectively benefits from the public relation aspect in strikes, by achieving public sympathy, wide media coverage, and by influencing policy-makers. This paper discusses the use of public relations by organized labor in strikes. The Turkish Airlines 305 resistance and the Strike was examined as a case study and results showed that the public relations theory, as stated by Grunig, were performed step by step from organization to negotiation. Both two-way symmetrical and asymmetrical public relations practices were applied by organized former workers to create behavior change in response to demands. In this case study, while they were resisting the reinstatement of 305 former workers, they made an effort to get the strike action back at the same time. Finally by examining their success, it can be said that the public relations activities that were carried out during the campaign of “Turkish Airlines 305 Resistance and Strike” were goal-orientated and well-planned by the Turkish Civil Aviation Union, Hava-Is. Additionally, the role of international support and solidarity can be considered as important and influential on attaining the success.

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