ANALYSIS OF EMOTIONS IN POLITICS:
ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS OF THE INCUMBENT PARTY IN TURKEY
FROM 2002 TO 2019

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ABSTRACT

ANALYSIS OF EMOTIONS IN POLITICS:
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The study of emotions has become a prominent area of research, reflecting the significant increase in attention to this topic over the past decades. The prevailing view among contemporary scholars is that emotions constitute a fundamental aspect of human experience and that their influence cannot be ignored. While the impact of emotions has been the subject of considerable scrutiny, the strategic deployment of emotions has also been the focus of investigation from various perspectives. In light of this understanding, this research posits that the place, role and use of emotions can be well taken as objects of study in the context of the AKP – thereby contributing to the understanding of Turkish politics in the contemporary period. This study employs qualitative content analysis to illuminate the deployment and manipulation of appealing emotions as a distinctive communication strategy in election campaigns. It utilises a software programme (MAXQDA) as an analytical instrument with the assistance of a well-structured codebook. In light of the findings from the analysis, this dissertation argues that emotions, as a pivotal component of its mode of governance, constitute a salient instrument employed by the AKP to galvanise its

mass base. It further argues that the management of emotions reflecting the AKP's political strategy has made Turkey a notable example of an emotional regime under the AKP rule.

Keywords: AKP, electoral campaigning, emotional appeals, politics of emotion, qualitative content analysis

ÖZ

SİYASETTE DUYGULARIN ANALİZİ: 2002'DEN 2019'A TÜRKİYE'DE
İKTİDAR PARTİSİNİN SEÇİM KAMPANYALARI

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Duyguların incelenmesi, son yıllarda bu konuya olan ilgideki kayda değer artışı yansıtan önemli bir araştırma alanı haline gelmiştir. Çağdaş akademisyenler arasında hâkim olan görüş, duyguların insan deneyiminin temel bir yönünü oluşturduğu ve etkilerinin göz ardı edilemeyeceği yönündedir. Duyguların etkisi önemli ölçüde inceleme konusu olurken, duyguların stratejik kullanımı da çeşitli perspektiflerden araştırmaların odağı haline gelmiştir. Bu anlayış ışığında, bu araştırma, duyguların yeri, rolü ve kullanımının AKP bağlamında iyi bir çalışma nesnesi olarak ele alınabileceğini ve böylece çağdaş dönemde Türk siyasetinin anlaşılmasına katkıda bulunabileceğini öne sürmektedir. Bu çalışma, seçim kampanyalarında ayırt edici bir iletişim stratejisi olarak, duyguların çekicilikler yoluyla kullanımını ve manipülasyonunu aydınlatmak için nitel bir içerik analizi kullanmaktadır. İyi yapılandırılmış bir kod kitabı yardımıyla bir yazılım programından (MAXQDA) analitik bir araç olarak faydalanmaktadır. Analizden elde edilen bulgular ışığında bu tez, yönetim biçiminin önemli bir bileşeni olarak, duyguların AKP tarafından kitle tabanını harekete geçirmek için kullanılan belirgin

bir araç olduğunu savunmaktadır. Ayrıca, AKP'nin siyasal stratejisini yansıtan duygu yönetiminin, Türkiye'yi, AKP yönetimindeki duygusal rejimin dikkate değer bir örneği haline getirdiğini iddia etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: AKP, duygu siyaseti, duygusal çekicilikler, nitel içerik analizi, seçim kampanyaları

In cherished memory of my beloved grandmother,
Lütfiye,
who sadly didn't live long enough to see me get my PhD.

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This study has witnessed so many tears, sometimes of happiness, sometimes of sadness and grief, and sometimes of outrage. During the research and writing process, I went through tough times, but the hardest was the loss of my beloved grandma, who eagerly looked forward to see me succeed. Now, I can do nothing but dedicate my study to her memory.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Anadolu Ajansı (Anadolu Agency)
AIT	Affective Intelligence Theory
AKP	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party)
ANAP	Anavatan Partisi (Motherland Party)
AP	Adalet Partisi (Justice Party)
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BBP	Büyük Birlik Partisi (Great Unity Party)
BDP	Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi (Peace and Democracy Party)
CAQDAS	Computer-assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
CHP	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People's Party)
CNN	Cable News Network
GONGO	Government-Organised Non-Governmental Organisation
DHKP-C	Devrimci Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi (Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front)
DP	Demokrat Parti (Democratic Party)
DSP	Demokratik Sol Parti (Democratic Left Party)
DTP	Demokratik Toplum Partisi (Democratic Society Party)
DYP	Doğru Yol Partisi (True Path Party)
EP	European Parliament
ESP	Ezilenlerin Sosyalist Partisi (Socialist Party of the Oppressed)
EU	European Union
FP	Fazilet Partisi (Virtue Party)
FETÖ	Fethullah Gülen Terör Örgütü (Fethullah Gülen Terrorist Organisation – FETO)
GP	Genç Parti (Young Party)
HDP	Halkların Demokratik Partisi (Peoples' Democratic Party)
HSK	Hakimler ve Savcılar Kurulu (Council of Judges and Prosecutors)

HSYK	Hakimler ve Savcılar Yüksek Kurulu (Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors)
HÜDA PAR	Hür Dava Partisi (Free Cause Party)
IHH	İnsan Hak ve Hürriyetleri ve İnsani Yardım Vakfı (Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISIS	The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
İYİ Party	İYİ Parti (Good Party)
KCK	Koma Civakên Kurdistanê (Kurdistan Communities Union)
MAXQDA	MAX Qualitative Data Analysis
MGK	Milli Güvenlik Kurulu (National Security Council)
MHP	Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (Nationalist Movement Party)
MNP	Milli Nizam Partisi (National Order Party)
MP	Memleket Partisi (Homeland Party)
MSP	Milli Selamet Partisi (National Salvation Party)
MİT	Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı (National Intelligence Organisation)
NVM	National Vision Movement (Milli Görüş Hareketi)
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PDY	Paralel Devlet Yapılanması (Parallel State Structure)
PKK	Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê (Kurdistan Workers' Party)
RP	Refah Partisi (Welfare Party)
SGDF	Sosyalist Gençlik Dernekleri Federasyonu (Socialist Youth Associations Federation)
SME	Small and Medium Sized Enterprises
SP	Saadet Partisi (Felicity Party)
TKP	Türkiye Komünist Partisi (Communist Party of Turkey)
TOKİ	Toplu Konut İdaresi Başkanlığı (Mass Housing Development Administration of Turkey)
TRT	Türkiye Radyo Televizyon Kurumu (Turkish Radio and Television Cooperation)
TSK	Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri (Turkish Armed Forces)
TV	Television
USA/US	United States of America

VP	Vatan Partisi (Patriotic Party)
YRP	Yeniden Refah Partisi (New Welfare Party)
YSK	Yüksek Seçim Kurulu (Supreme Board of Elections)
YTL	Yeni Türk Lirası (New Turkish Lira)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

As Demirer conveys, "in our country, where the ratio of "experts," "innocents," "victims," and "morals" per square kilometre is at the highest levels, the place of political psychology research is important in the context of political decision-making and social consensus" (A. Bora & Dede, 2018, p. 12). He emphasises that political psychology research, as an "*interdisciplinary scientific field of inquiry concerned with the study of political processes from a psychological perspective*" (Hızlı Sayar et al., 2020, p. 2), allows looking at contemporary political problems from a different perspective, not only through actors and institutions but also through specific dynamics between them (A. Bora & Dede, 2018, p. 10). Relatedly, the field of emotions in politics has been the subject of reputable research and studies, mainly related to elections and campaigns in the global academy. However, there is also a relatively new academic interest in this field in Turkey. Within the framework of emotions, many studies in and about Turkey focus on elections, political campaigns, political communication strategies, media and framing, propaganda, political advertising, social media strategies in politics, gender studies, public opinion, social movements, symbolic politics, and sociology of emotions. As a candidate dissertation for one of these studies, this research brings together emotions and elections through campaigns in contemporary Turkey. Accordingly, this dissertation claims to re-read Turkish politics from a perspective that includes emotions. Therefore, it will contribute to the literature on Turkish politics and to the burgeoning research on the political relevance of emotions through a detailed analysis of election campaigns that "embody" emotions based on the fact that what is told can tell something new – which makes it a unique and original study.

As Gürpınar (2020) argues, politics is not only about positioning oneself according to rational choices but also (perhaps more importantly) about satisfying the

mechanisms of emotional self-satisfaction and self-fulfilment based on a moral framework. People (or "flesh and blood citizens" in Gürpınar's words) exist in the public sphere not only with their minds but also with their emotions, and what they expect is the satisfaction of both their material and spiritual needs – feelings and value chains. In a similar vein, Barbalet (2006a, p. 51) stresses that emotions are necessary for any human behaviour, including acting with a sense of commitment, being committed or convinced, having a goal or direction, and being able to make decisions. With this in mind, I argue that politics is necessary to form an aggregation, to live in a society; thus, not implicitly but explicitly, politics is not free from the aforementioned "ability," i.e., from emotions. Put simply, "*emotions are part of a social regulation process*" (Plutchik, 2001, p. 348) – in parallel with the social-constructivist approach to emotions that I will mention in the following chapters. When thinking about everyday politics, anyone encounters numerous "expressions of emotions/emotional expressions" that have become familiar and not found bizarre, in a way becoming buzzwords, such as "*municipalism of the heart*"[1] and "*İstanbul, first love*"[2] (Pektaş, 2019). Or Ekrem İmamoğlu's race in the 2019 İstanbul local elections cannot be interpreted without paying attention to his enthusiasm ("*Gençliğimiz var, heyecanımız yüksek*"[3]) and its reflection on the voters. As these examples are obvious, there is a need to focus more on the lack of understanding politics as a domain that is only involved with the mind/reason and determined by motivations such as interest and rent (Uzun Avcı, 2020, p. 108).

The emotional-political context created by the Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP – Justice and Development Party) during its incumbency is not a fixed but a dynamic process of social relations – i.e., the accumulation of emotional capital. Given the lack of satisfactory explanations for the complex dynamics of the AKP's two-decade incumbency in existing studies, i.e., the factors behind its electoral successes, the exploration of overlooked or under-analysed factors could provide deeper insights. Based on the understanding that emotions function as an essential part of the AKP's mode of governance (Uzun Avcı, 2020, p. 107), this dissertation, therefore, opts for

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[1] Gönül belediyeciliği.

[2] İlk aşk, İstanbul.

[3] His famous statement is, "*We are young; our excitement is high*."

electoral campaign videos as the research material and emotions as the phenomena to be explained.

The main research question is, among others, "*How has the AKP shaped, materialised, and translated emotions in its electoral campaigns on its way to consolidate its power?*" Thus, this thesis focuses on how emotions are captured and materialised in the AKP's election campaigns.

In the same vein, this dissertation questions how political parties capture and valorise emotional relations for the sake of power relations and how, on the one hand, they direct and provoke constituents' feelings associated with publicness, sociality and politics and, on the other hand; generate, circulate, aggregate, and commodify these intensities (feelings and emotions) and transform them into measurable quantities – namely, ballot box records. At the same time, an attempt is made to determine whether the AKP's approach to the materialisation of emotions in election campaigns has evolved over time. In line with these interrogations, the objectives of this dissertation are to identify how emotions are captured and targeted as campaign tactics for desired electoral ends, to demonstrate the materialisation of emotions in politics through electoral campaigns in Turkey, to find out the change and cycle of emotional references by the AKP for more than 20 years, to uncover the AKP's approaches to voters in terms of touching, reviving, encouraging, manipulating, triggering, provoking, and demoralising their feelings and emotions, and to find out whether there are analogies or contradictions in the AKP's approach and methods over time. Accordingly, it attempts to map out the socially and culturally constructed emotions as a part of the AKP's political communication toolkit. Thus, this dissertation posits that understanding the role of emotions can enhance the understanding of politics. In simple terms, It, therefore, focuses on how emotions are materialised in the AKP's campaigns.

The study of emotions encompasses not only the observation of their outward manifestations but also an investigation into their underlying mechanisms and the ways in which they are shaped, directed, or influenced. The study of emotion from a physiological perspective, akin to that of a physiologist, and the examination of emotional expression and its absence, akin to that of a psychologist, are both beyond the scope of my academic expertise. Accordingly, I will concentrate on the management and manipulation of emotions within the political sphere, which is a

worthwhile area of investigation and analysis, given the difficulty and complexity of incorporating the other themes into my dissertation. I begin with the assumption that politics can be understood "*as a struggle* for *happiness, joy, compassion, and sincerity*" rather than as a conflict between "*good and evil*" (Özçıtak, 2019). I argue that focusing on the role of emotions in politics, from this perspective, has the potential to not only render the subject matter more accessible but also to enhance our comprehension of the underlying processes. I posit that focusing on emotions as an attempt to interpret and comprehend the genesis of the social and the political is contingent upon the premise that emotion/affect is intrinsic to the formation of the social, in conjunction with the individual (Günay et al., 2017, p. 119). I concur with Günay and her colleagues (2017, p. 120) that one can only pursue the domain of emotion/affect, where it is not feasible to ascertain its essence, as a method of analysis in terms of its effects and consequences.

The literature notes that the experience of emotions such as fear, anxiety, enthusiasm, and anger is primarily studied in terms of voters' motivations to engage in politics through increased information-seeking, consideration of forms of political participation, and engagement in voting, protesting, and donating to political parties or candidates (Burge, 2020). Burge (2020) contends that the scholarly focus has generally been on how people experience emotions, namely how emotions influence voter behaviour. However, the operationalisation of such emotions by political campaigns is also essential for understanding the impact of emotions on and for politics. As Szabó (2020, p. 5) conveys, there has also been a growing scholarly interest in emotions and political discourse, with a focus on the institutional and strategic ways in which emotions are used and communicated in politics. Accordingly, one can assess the links between emotions and strategies in electoral campaigns by examining the emotional-political messages of campaigns, i.e., by observing their expressions, communications, and evaluations. As noted in Ridout and Searles' (2011, p. 442) contributions to the field, the lack of a laboratory setting in the real world of campaigns leads to shortcomings in understanding when and under what circumstances emotional appeals are made, and the public does not experience emotional campaign messages in a controlled environment. For this reason, studying when, why, and how the campaigns evoke emotions would be a notable contribution to the field.

Based on these approaches, electoral campaigns as a setting of politics in which emotions occupy an enormous space provide a valuable basis for research on the other side of emotions – I mean not from the point of view of those who feel, but from the point of view of the objects and phenomena that cause feelings and emotions, as I argued above, embracing emotions as an intrinsic component of the formation of the social as well as the individual. Thus, the primary purpose of this research is to find out the long-term cycle of emotions in the election campaigns of Turkey's incumbent party, the AKP. In fact, the aim is to re-read Turkish politics under the AKP rule from a perspective that includes emotions. In order to understand the politics of Turkey in the last decades under the AKP rule, emotions and their place in politics can be treated as objects of research. I do not claim to explain the electoral successes or the place of emotions in Turkish politics in a one-sided way, i.e., from a single perspective; however, this research effort can help to understand the underlying factors that have contributed to the AKP's long-term existence in office. It is obvious that the AKP – more than ever – has injected emotions into the political arena, i.e., victimhood over piety or expressions of emotions such as "municipalism of the heart" or "beautiful-hearted Turkey." It engages in highly intensive campaigns during each electoral period, irrespective of whether the campaigns are emotional or rational in nature. In recent years, it has become evident that emotional baggage has been brought into play in almost all political issues. For example, the politics of emotions can immediately appear in a foreign policy move that opens up to war, or harsh political debates on electoral strategies can rely on specific emotions such as loyalty and resentment (Can, 2019). Thus, one can claim that emotions are one of the tools contributing to the AKP's long-term political existence and its consolidation of power through electoral success.

For this dissertation, the primary sources – the backbone of the analysis – are the election campaign advertisements (only videos as visual materials) of the AKP. I have focused only on campaign videos and not on the other channels of campaign advertising, such as printed or auditorial political communication (leaflets, flyers, radio spots, and so on). This is because the video advertisements contain the combination of text-audio-visual, which facilitates the occurrence of emotionality. These videos constitute the dataset for this research and are described in detail in the methodology chapter. The secondary sources on which the research is based are

mainly various academic books and articles, newspaper reports and online columns, blog posts and opinion records, and documentary videos.

This dissertation is structured as follows: The opening chapter, *Exploring Emotions: A Comprehensive Review of Emotions in Politics and Electoral Campaigns*, provides a compact literature review of emotions in politics and electoral campaigns. It has two broad headings: "*Emotion in Politics*" and "*Electoral Campaigns and Emotions.*" The former includes six subtitles, including the definition of "emotion" as the fundamental concept of the study, a brief glimpse at approaches to classifying emotions, the debates on the dualism between reason and emotion, the place of emotions in political thought texts, the social constructivist approach of emotions and its psychological link, and the emphasis of "turn" in political sociology. The latter consists of a general overview of emotional appeals in electoral campaigns, emotional campaigning as part of populist politics in which emotions are an important source of populism, and finally, the background of the Turkish case in terms of intense emotional campaigning.

For the purpose of creating a relation between emotional politics and the AKP context, the third chapter, entitled *The Emotional-Political Panorama of Turkey during the AKP Rule and Elections of the AKP*, gives information about the social and political developments that Turkey has gone through. It contours the framework according to the election periods. The subtitle "*Public Conscience: 2002 and 2004*" introduces the socio-political atmosphere after the twin crises of 2000 and 2001 in the country and the effort to portray the AKP's ideology of "conservative democracy." The second part, entitled "*e-Memorandum: 2007*," draws attention to the perennial labels of conservative vs secular, ordinary vs elite, and civilian vs military when the fuse was lit again for the debates on social cleavages, the establishment and military tutelage in Turkey. The sections "*One Minute: 2009*" and "*After the Judicial Reform: 2011*" show the political picture of the country under the debates of tutelage and in the shadow of the Ergenekon, Balyoz, and KCK cases. The section "*Point of Departure for Power Consolidation: 2014*" represents the path to the elections by covering the previous turning points in Turkish social and political life, the Gezi Park Resistance and the corruption scandals of 17-25 December 2013. The next part, entitled "*Double General Election Year: 2015*," covers two separate elections in 2015 under the shadow of fear and anxiety of so-called "instability" in the country. Later, the section titled

"*The First Election of the "New Turkey": 2018*" gives place to the period of the shift/transition to the presidential system in line with the constituent developments of the failed coup on 15 July 2016 and the Turkish constitutional referendum of 2017. Finally, this chapter deals with the AKP's relative electoral failure under the title "*Loss of Metropoles: 2019.*"

The *Method and Methodology* chapter, the fourth section of the study, is intended to show how to find answers to the political manipulation of emotions. This chapter has four subheadings that explain the scientific approach of the dissertation, the research method and the analytical framework, as well as the dataset construction and coding processes. In terms of the analytical framework, I adopt Brader's typology of how emotional appeals work in political advertising. Brader (2006, pp. 18, 148) sought to test the role of emotion through a systematic examination of contemporary advertising campaigns on television, where emotional appeals are most prominent. Based on this systematic analysis, I intend to adapt it to the case of the AKP in Turkey to examine the role of emotion in the political campaigns of the party, which is a complementary factor for its long-term existence both in politics and in power for more than 20 years in Turkish politics.

The following chapter presents the results of the analysis and discussion after examining the campaign videos as analytical materials under the title *Decoding Emotions: Unravelling AKP's Electoral Campaign Videos through Content Analysis*. The subtitles of this chapter focus on the presence or absence of specific emotions in the AKP's campaign videos, scrutinise them in accordance with the ascribed emotional appeals, and discuss and link the insights gained from the content to the AKP's electoral strategies. Finally, the dissertation claims that emotions, as a pivotal component of its mode of governance, constitute a salient instrument employed by the AKP to galvanise its mass base. It further argues that the management of emotions reflecting the AKP's political strategy has made Turkey a notable example of an emotional regime under the AKP rule. Thus, it concludes by arguing that emotions could provide deeper insights for satisfactory explanations alongside the existing research objects, such as economic, political and socio-cultural dynamics and drivers for understanding contemporary Turkish politics.

CHAPTER 2

EXPLORING EMOTIONS: A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF EMOTIONS IN POLITICS AND ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS

In recent years, the intersection of emotions and politics has received increasing scholarly attention. While the discipline of political science, and especially research on political participation and voting behaviour, has for many years conducted analyses under the assumption of "rational choice theory" borrowed from economics, studies in political philosophy have mixed emotion and reason (E. Erdoğan & Uyan-Semerci, 2019a, p. 53). Brader (2006, pp. 48–49) notes that people are seen as hot-hearted or cold-hearted citizens, respectively, as children of the behavioural school (rooted in social psychology) and of political psychology and rational choice theory, and in both traditions, emotion is seen "*as an idiosyncratic facet of life that is best excluded from efforts at systematic explanation.*" Today, however, recent studies provide political science with a basis for rethinking the role of emotion (Yates, 2016, p. 7). Given the framework that makes sense of political decisions, choices, behaviours and movements, my aim in this chapter is to present the existing approaches and debates on the relationship between emotions and politics and their reflection in the election campaigns as one of the most substantial parts of political communication.

This chapter has been split into two parts in order to provide an overview of the existing literature on the role and place of emotions in political science: *Emotions in Politics* and *Electoral Campaigns and Emotions*. The first section includes the definition of "emotion", the categorisation of emotions, references to the dichotomy between emotion and reason, how the texts of political thought capture emotions, the constructivist approach and links to psychology, and the emotional turn perspective of political sociology. The second section focuses on election campaigns, one of the inherent parts of political communication for political parties to make propaganda, and its relationship with emotional politics. It includes subtitles on emotional appeals in

campaign advertisements, emotional campaigning in populist politics, and the case of Turkey in terms of political campaigning through emotions.

2.1. Emotions in Politics

World politics shows that without raw *emotions*, *passionate* struggles, *suffering*, *hopeful* rhetoric (i.e., Martin Luther King Jr.'s "*I Have a Dream*" speech) and *courageous* imaginations, etc., it would not have been possible to abolish slavery, win suffrage, defeat the apartheid regime in South Africa or fight against colonisation (Jenkins, 2018, p. 8 - *emphasis added*). It also proves the role, place, and importance of emotions (hopeful expressions or agonising struggles) in galvanising politics that are not safe from everyday life (Jenkins, 2018, p. 8). In line with this connection, it is plausible from a simplistic perspective to emphasise that "*marketing professionals usually try to associate their brands with positive emotions; however, when it comes to politics, the tricky use of negative emotions becomes highly significant*" (Özçıtak, 2019). Özçıtak (2019) claims that it is possible to see that the use of the emotions of fear and anger is one of the most important tools for designating "us," – which can be commented on as part of a political party's electoral strategy or populist repertoire. When considering persuasion, one of the characteristics of any political party, the importance of emotions is evident, as emotions become more than tools or tricks and are fundamental to people's thoughts, beliefs, ideas, and actions (Mercer, 2010, p. 19). As Pektaş (2019) highlights, emotions in politics are a form in which emotions are more important than ideas, how they are said is more important than what is said, and attitudes and positions are more important than facts (post-truth). For this reason, I pay attention to the works of literature that refer to emotions because my dissertation aims to draw a more nuanced picture with broad dimensions to understand the place of emotions in politics.

2.1.1. Definition of the key term: what is "emotion"?

The concept of *emotion* has hundreds of different definitions. It is derived from "*emovere*," and the literal meaning in Latin corresponds to movement, action, mobilisation and being in a place in the moving world (Çeper, 2021). The literature shows that behaviours, feelings, speech, cognitive components, linguistic rules, etc., contribute to the definition of emotions (Engelken-Jorge et al., 2011, p. 11). As Çeper

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(2021) conveys, the Encyclopaedia Britannica defines emotion as "*a roughly subjective, behavioural and physiological reaction that occurs suddenly when a person encounters a situation of great importance to her/him.*" On the other hand, beyond the behavioural psychology (the Freudian and Jamesian approach), which treats emotions as subjective feelings and spontaneous reflexes in the typical approach, the literature shows that emotions correspond to sociality and culture and that even immediate reflexes and behaviours are based on history, some learned behavioural patterns and experiences (Çeper, 2021). Similarly, Thamm (2006, p. 16) underlines that *"from a sociological perspective, emotion concerns the way the body responds to environmental conditions."* Plutchik (2001, p. 347) emphasises that emotions are feedback processes rather than linear events, and he also acknowledges that they are reactions to situations, such as a change in a social relationship.

By all means, it is plausible and necessary to look at the definitions in the literature to understand why emotions have a remarkable place in politics. Turner (2009, p. 341) points out that the definitions of emotions vary according to researchers' aspects. Namely, constitutive elements of emotions that Turner and Stets (2005, pp. 9–10) focus on, such as "the biological activation of key body systems," "the overt expression of emotions through facial, vocal, and paralinguistic moves," and "the application of linguistic labels to internal sensations," etc., interact in complex ways. Nevertheless, none of them has an exclusive place in defining emotions (Engelken-Jorge et al., 2011, p. 11).

It is, of course, well known that emotions are biological states related to neurophysiological changes in the nervous system. Emotions are associated with feelings, thoughts, behaviours, and pleasure/displeasure. Cabanac (2002, p. 69) defines emotions as *"any mental experience with high intensity and high hedonic content (pleasure/displeasure)."* Accordingly, the common understanding of emotions underlines bodily feelings and sensations such as fear, anger, joy, love, etc. This joint approach leads to a view of emotions as involuntary and disruptive processes in which people are confused and alienated from their proper and moral concerns and activities – here, the emphasis is on reason (Barbalet, 2006a, p. 51). Barbalet (2002, p. 1) defines the concept of emotion as an experience of involvement which is *"not the subject's thoughts about their experience, or the language of self-explanation arising from the experience, but that immediate contact with the world the self has through*

involvement." He emphasises that all human action requires emotions, such as acting in accordance with a sense of involvement, having commitment or conviction, having purpose or direction, and having the ability to choose between alternatives. Hence, emotions are implicated in all human action rather than being optional extras as opposed to rational action (Barbalet, 2006a, p. 51). In other words, emotions are inextricably linked to action and are central to how people think, reason, and act (Crigler & Hevron, 2014, p. 664).

Among the scholars contributing to the literature on the definition of emotion(s), Arteta suggests that only three aspects of emotions are sufficient for political analysis (Engelken-Jorge, 2011, p. 11). These aspects include the positivity-negativity of emotions, their motivational strength and their cognitive components. On the other hand, Nussbaum proposes a more complex concept of emotion, claiming that it is not necessary to consider bodily processes when defining emotions, as there would be no difference (Engelken-Jorge, 2011, p. 11). She asks, *"Are there any bodily states or processes that are constantly correlated with our experiences of emotion, in such a way that we will want to put that particular bodily state into the definition of a given emotion-type?"* (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 58). To illustrate with the example of crying, one can cry by feeling sadness, anger, fear or happiness/joy. Brader (2006, p. 51), on the other hand, clarifies several terms related to the role of emotions. He regards emotions as "specific sets of physiological and mental dispositions" and highlights the distinction between emotions, feelings – which "*are the subjective awareness and experience of emotions*", moods – which "*are diffuse positive and negative states*", and affect – which "*is an umbrella term referring to an entire class of phenomena*" (Brader, 2006, pp. 50–51).

Here, I would like to draw particular attention to my interchangeable usage[4] of the terms of emotion, affect, sentiment, feeling, mood, etc., in my dissertation. I use them as synonyms both to avoid the relative "structural" neglect of the affective dimension of politics and to be able to refer to the "reality" of 'the personal is political' (Walby, 1990), namely, the belief that the political, which belongs to and is constituted by human beings, cannot be independent of its subject and its components – i.e.,

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[4] Crigler and Hevron (2014, p. 681) footnotes that "*Affect and emotion are often used interchangeably in the political communication literature.*"

emotions. In Maiz's words (2011, p. 52), *"politics is a personal experience that is guided by emotional perceptions."* Echoing the premise of my work, Nussbaum (2001, p. 133) acknowledges that it is not easy to distinguish between emotions and moods. She asserts that emotions always have an object – vague or not – that is endowed with value, i.e., a hope for a sound/good event or a fear of perceived danger, etc.; on the other hand, moods (gloom, irritation, equanimity, etc.) lack such kind of characteristics. For instance, *"one may have highly general joy about how one's life is going, or how the world is, and that will be an emotion with a very general object; on the other hand, joy may be moodlike and truly objectless, a kind of euphoria that doesn't focus on anything"* (Nussbaum, 2001, pp. 132–133). Because of this vagueness, I prefer not to make a clear distinction between the concepts.

Similarly, scholars such as Verhulst and Lizotte (2011, p. 74) underline the interchangeable use of such terms, defining "affect" as an all-encompassing umbrella term but also recommending not to overemphasise the differences between emotions and moods – even if the former is intense and the latter is diffuse – as they share some key features, namely the implications for information processing, i.e., for certain political situations such as an election. Thus, as Engelken-Jorge (2011, p. 11) points out, what I need for my work is a definition of emotion that is useful for political analysis rather than a representation of emotion *per se*, and I aim to specify and refer to *the elements of emotions that are relevant for political analysis* in the context of my dissertation. In fact, the codebook of the study, as the analytical tool of the research, depends on this point.

2.1.2. Categorising emotions

As the study of emotions has gained prominence in the social sciences in recent decades, the categorisation of emotions as a unit of analysis has also become a significant issue in this field of study. In political science research, there are three broad approaches: discrete emotions, dimensional models, and affective intelligence theory. Erişen (2018, pp. 51–54) observes these approaches as appraisal theories, valence approach, and neural process theories. Basically, the first perspective is the classification effort that emotions exist in discrete categories such as happiness, anger and sadness and are identified as basic emotions (e.g., Ekman, 1999; Ekman & Cordaro, 2011; Russell, 2003; Russell & Feldman Barrett, 1999) (S. Demir, 2022a, p.

6). Researchers often adopt the discrete emotion approach in studies of the emotions that trigger and influence political attitudes and behaviours. For example, Valentino et al. (2009, p. 311) find that anger is often associated with mobilising political action and increasing participation because it reduces perceptions of risk and promotes a sense of urgency. On the other hand, Brader (2006, pp. 58–59) conveys the implications of empirical studies on fear-arousing communication that fear can lead people to follow recommended actions to avoid the risk and danger under discussion; moreover, people are more likely to resort to defensive behaviours such as denial or avoidance when they experience intense fear and do not perceive themselves as capable of effectively facing and responding to the threat. Another example from the communication discipline is the work of Nabi (2003, p. 224), who finds that the discrete emotion perspective is important in persuasive contexts and that emotions such as fear and anger can significantly influence policy preferences, information seeking, and information access, although they are likely to be context-dependent.

The second classification effort is the belief in a variation of emotions according to some dimensions, referring to the classification of emotions in the context of valence and arousal (S. Demir, 2022a, p. 6). This dimensional model categorises emotions along continuous scales, typically focusing on valence (positive-negative) and arousal (high-low), just as Russell's (1980, p. 1161) framework of the circumplex model of affect in the discipline of psychology provides different combinations of emotions by claiming that affect dimensions are interrelated rather than varying independently of each other. In terms of methodological considerations, the valence model provides political communication research with a strong analytical foundation that has a high degree of reproducibility and comparability, which means using the positive-negative categorisation offers direct expressions to be easily recognised (Szabó, 2020, pp. 9–10).

The final approach, Affective Intelligence Theory[5] (AIT), also posits that emotions play a critical role in guiding political behaviour through dual emotional systems. What this approach theorise is that "*emotions complement reason by signalling to the brain when to rely on heuristic processes and when to expend greater*

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[5] Affective Intelligence Theory (AIT) was set forth by George E. Marcus, W. Russell Neuman and Michael MacKuen (2000).

cognitive effort" (Groenendyk, 2011, p. 456). This is a two-dimensional approach used in several areas, such as political campaigns, interest in learning, and attention to politicians (Hızlı Sayar et al., 2020, p. 11). Essentially focusing on the consequences of emotions rather than their antecedents, the AIT categorises emotional responses into the dispositional system and the surveillance system; the former is associated with enthusiasm and habitual behaviour, while the latter is aroused by anxiety and fear (Crigler & Hevron, 2014, p. 671; Ridout & Searles, 2011, p. 442). Put another way, whereas the dispositional system is associated with routine, habitual responses driven by positive emotions such as contentment/satisfaction and enthusiasm, leading to support for familiar policies and candidates, the surveillance system is activated when individuals encounter novel and threatening information, triggering emotions such as fear and anxiety that cause individuals to reassess their political preferences and become more open to new information. Furthermore, the dual processing system of the AIT argues that emotions have significant indirect effects, e.g., anxiety triggers learning, enthusiasm triggers participation, and aversion triggers avoidance (Marcus et al., 2011, p. 331).

Apart from these three perspectives, emotions have traditionally been classified in the literature as negative and positive valences by classical authors such as Hobbes and Spinoza (Engelken-Jorge, 2011, p. 14). Other scholars, however, focus on more specific and differentiated (sets of) emotions. For example, one approach prefers to identify and focus only on "political emotions" such as anger, fear, anxiety, etc. (Engelken-Jorge, 2011, p. 14). As Ben-Ze'ev (2001, pp. 49–78) notes, emotion has four components, which are cognitive, evaluative, motivational, and feeling components; the last two of these components have a crucial position in indicating the character of emotions as positive or negative in terms of the nature of the emotion by contributing the classification of emotions (Ben-Zeʾev, 2001, p. 68).

Furthermore, within the constructivist approach, the debate on whether emotions are natural or socially constructed leads to the controversy/question of the classification of emotions. For example, the cultural variation of emotions leads some scholars to divide emotions into primary and secondary or higher-order emotions (Engelken-Jorge, 2011, p. 16). At this point, one of the controversial issues about emotions in political analysis is how to classify emotions. Thamm (2006, p. 11) quotes two scholars to show the tendencies in the literature:

"As Kemper (1978:24) has pointed out, 'we have no general statements concerning either a full range of emotions or a full range of interaction conditions that might produce emotions.' Optimistically, de Rivera (1977:98) postulated that 'it should be possible to specify relations between various emotions and to create a language for emotional life much the same way chemistry reveals necessary relations between atoms and elements...'"

Consequently, the literature on emotions in politics outlines some particular points, namely: (1) the cognitive dimension of emotions due to the rational difference between emotion and knowledge, (2) the invalidity of the mind-body dichotomy since both reason and emotion are interconnected, (3) the non-independence of reason from emotion, due to its dependence on memory and prior learning, in which the latter plays a crucial role in the processes, and due to the role of emotion in determining problems that should be solved by reason, (4) the construction and transmission of emotions through cultural and socio-structural factors and emotional socialisation processes, which explains that the cognitive dimension of emotions is conditioned not only by bodily/genetic factors but also – at least partially - by social construction (Maiz, 2011, p. 46). In this direction, it is reasonable to define emotions as relatively short-term or longer-term characteristics of individuals, consisting of physiological/neurological, cognitive or evaluative, expressive, enduring and behavioural components (Crigler & Hevron, 2014, p. 666).

As it is seen, the categorisation of emotions is the best strategy for integrating emotions into the analysis. It is about recognising and identifying how many emotions would be relevant to political analysis. In terms of this dissertation, the issue of classifying emotions has come to the fore in order to create a codebook for robust analysis. It is precisely for this reason that, inspired by Ben-Ze'ev (2001), I prepared the codebook on the positivity-negativity attributions of the emotions – which I utilise in the analysis chapter of this research, alongside the adoption of Brader's (2006, pp. 147–176) typology on how emotional appeals work in political advertising. I should point out, however, that the core of the codebook consists of the basic emotions/affections, pleasure and pain, and their derivatives or variations, put forward by Spinoza (2020, pp. 129–196), which I mention in the following pages and in the methodology chapter.

2.1.3. What the literature says: the dualism of reason-emotion?

Regarding the place of emotions in the literature – especially in the social sciences – emotions are an integral part of politics, from ancient political philosophy to interdisciplinary research between neuroscience, psychology, sociology, and political science (Crigler & Hevron, 2014, p. 664). Hogget and Thompson (2012, p. 1) draw attention to this point by saying: "*It seems odd that, while acceptance of the role of the emotions in public and political life was once commonplace, it is only now being rediscovered after decades of neglect*." It is more than possible to encounter the classical texts' emphasis on emotions in social and political life. Tokdoğan (2018, pp. 25–26) emphasises that when looking back at the classical texts of political philosophy, it is surprising to see how emotions have an explicit place in the works of Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Hume, and Rousseau, even though emotions in politics have been neglected in political science studies, especially in the modern period (Hoggett & Thompson, 2012, p. 1). This disposition is conceptualised as "*emotion-proof,*" depending on various assumptions and presuppositions.

The debates in the literature have been shaped around the question of whether emotions are intrinsic to human beings as a part of human existence or whether they are socially constructed and learned patterns of behaviour (Tokdoğan, 2018, p. 26) – to which I will return to discuss and explain my philosophical position on social constructivism with regard to emotions. On the other hand, the debates in the political science literature are mainly based on reason/emotion duality. As Groenendyk (2011, p. 455) highlights, political science has frequently seen passion as the adversary of reason, and while theorists, like Habermas (1979, 1984) and Rawls (1971), has often sparked the idea that emotion taints democratic deliberation, positive political theorists, such as Downs (1957), have mostly shied away from talking about emotion in favour of concentrating on "cold" voter calculus.

It is not within the scope of this dissertation that I have already adopted the approach of debunking the antagonism between reason and emotion, but it is plausible to make room for the discussion in order to clarify the hinge of the dissertation. It is not surprising that emotions were neglected as a unit of analysis where modernity created binary oppositions such as male-female, agent-structure, individual-society, civilised-uncivilised, soul-body, and culture-nature (Tokdoğan, 2020, p. 389). On the

other hand, Pektaş (2019) comments that what is called "the politics of emotions" is not a phenomenon that can be understood with modernist political concepts and their rigid dualities such as reason-emotion, enlightenment-illiteracy, science-superstition, public-private.

The dichotomy between reason and emotion as an untenable approach is generally dominant in the fields of political science and political theory, which are concerned with the *bios politikos* and the *vita activa*. However, there is awareness of the presence of emotional appeals in political campaigns and the relevance of emotional elements in voting behaviour (Maiz, 2011, p. 31). Furthermore, it has been *psychologically* and *neurologically* proven that emotions underlie rational actions, alongside irrational and non-rational actions, which refer respectively to actions that are meaningful to the end, reflect self-destructive behaviour and gratuitous cruelty, etc. and are related to erotic and aesthetic concerns (Barbalet, 2006a, p. 51). This scientific reality renders it plausible to mention the conventional understanding of the opposition between emotion and reason.

It is clear that the Western tradition pays considerable attention to emotion (Marcus, 2000, p. 221). However, for over a thousand years, the dominant understanding of the opposition between emotion and rationality in Western thought depended on the rejection of emotion as an appropriate category of analysis. This dichotomisation of emotion and rationality was "*based fundamentally upon Cartesian mind-body dualism, and largely unquestioned since the Scottish Enlightenment*" (Prior & Van Hoef, 2018, p. 49). This position ignored that all actions and reason itself require the engagement of appropriate emotions (Barbalet, 2002, p. 1, 2006a, p. 51). Massumi (2015, p. 86) also gives way to the assumption of the individuality of emotion in the literature. He stresses that emotion is simply irrational, the opposite of rational. This approach contains a very traditional, even a duly "bourgeois," assumption, which argues that acting in accordance with one's interests (self-interests) means acting rationally. The primary motivating force for everyone is self-interest. However, this perspective pushes rationality into a pragmatic, interest-dependent framework and causes blindness to emotions, affective states, and relationships. In short, the reason/emotion dichotomy is derived from the (mis)interpretation of Enlightenment thought, but *reason and emotion are concepts that have mutually constructed each other* (Erdoğan & Uyan-Semerci, 2019, pp. 233–234; Maiz, 2011, pp. 29–30).

The origin of this dichotomy/opposition goes back to Plato, who suggests that emotion is separate from thought or knowledge but still related to pleasure or pain, which means it belongs to the body. Later, Aristotle developed this account by going beyond physical sensation to show that emotion contains a cognitive element (Barbalet, 2006a, p. 51). Research confirms that emotions influence explanations, as in Aristotle's intuition (Mercer, 2010, p. 9). Crigler and Hevron (2014, p. 664) quote from Aristotle's *Rhetoric,* stating that emotions are the feelings that influence and change people's judgments, and note that there is also a plenitude of examples in current political events and developments, such as Obama's campaign relying on the discrete emotion of hope, or Clinton's "Love and Kindness" ads, which demonstrate how emotions are utilised as political tools during the 2016 US election process (Hoggett & Thompson, 2012, p. 2; Prior & Van Hoef, 2018, p. 49).

Moreover, Maiz (2011, p. 30), who defines emotions as "the other" of the political mind (Erdoğan & Uyan-Semerci, 2019, p. 233), emphasises that while classical readings have been viewed through blue glasses (*emotional blindness* in a sense) in order to set reason against emotion through a reductive approach, some theoretical resources such as those of Spinoza, Fergusson, Tocqueville, and Hume have been misread or rejected. As a result, politics has been theoretically placed in the realm of rationality as an achievement of reason rather than taking into account emotions. Relatedly, while reason is seen as the only possible solution, emotion is always conceptualised as a problem, depending on the assumption that emotion is unpredictable, partial, subjective, debilitative, and dependent and should be kept out of the public sphere and confined to the private sphere (Maiz, 2011, p. 36). Namely, emotions have been depicted pejoratively in this dichotomy as irrational, uncontrolled, substandard, inferior, and feminine (Malewska-Szałygin, 2020, p. 62).

In other respects, Maiz (2011, p. 45) conveys de Sousa's (1987) argument that emotion complements reason by making up for its deficiencies/shortcomings. In fact, he proposes the idea of an "adequate emotional response," which depends on the fact that the complex intentionality of emotions allows them to play a crucial role in rationality – at least by complementing the formal rules that are often considered as critical to the practice of rationality; therefore, the absence of such a response not only weakens the rationality of decisions but also hinders decision-making itself (Maiz, 2011, p. 45). Jenkins (2018, pp. 1, 5, 8, 18) acknowledges that citizens' emotions and

their orientation towards politics are significant for political thinking and engagement because people are not automatons "*persuaded by the most rational political arguments and principles*" and "*it is the combination of thought and emotion, which provides much political direction and motivation*," rather than just understanding how citizens *think* but *feel* about politics. This means that emotions are *part of* rationalisation. Hall (2007, p. 82) is another scholar who researches and writes on the dichotomy between reason and emotion, placing emotions at the centre of reasoning while breaking down deliberation as a process of passion and reason.

As the debates in the literature show, the social and the political are not immune from emotional engagements and stacked into rationalisation. As such, emotions are not the distinct other of the reason, as I will indicate by depending on Spinoza's holistic account in the next section. Overall, the ground of this research relies on the refutation of the reason/emotion dichotomy and the need to refer to emotion as an appropriate category of analysis.

2.1.4. Emotions in political thought texts

When discussing the place of emotions in the literature of political thought, it is as certain as death and taxes[6] to focus on Spinoza, who thought and wrote profoundly about emotions both as a concept and as a social phenomenon. In the 17th century, Spinoza put forward ideas that can be seen as the starting point of the school based on relational, social, and political facets of emotions (Tokdoğan, 2018, p. 30). *Ethica* (1677), his masterpiece, contains his ideas on the origin, nature, and power of emotions, and for Spinoza, since mind and body share the same essence, they are identical. Spinoza states that emotions are the different states of the body or opinions about these states – which increase or decrease its potency and support or hinder this potential power (Spinoza, 2020, p. 131; Tokdoğan, 2018, p. 30). According to Spinoza, the idea of anything that increases or decreases the action capacity (*potentia agendi*) of the body, or the idea of anything that reveals or hinders this potential, also increases or decreases the thinking capacity of the mind; consequently, the body and mind or emotion and reason are not mutually contradictory concepts (Kisner, 2018, p. *xxvi*; Tokdoğan, 2018, p. 30).

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[6] It is an idiom commonly referencing a famous quotation by Benjamin Franklin.

It is the most classical point, namely Spinoza's monism, that body and mind (*mens*) are the same. The mind is both the power of understanding and the *modus,* including all the effervescent components, enthusiasms, experiences, memories, and thus emotions (Baker, 2014, pp. 103–104). Hardt (2007, p. x) also accentuates that Spinoza maintains the argument of the autonomy and development of mind and body. More clearly, body and mind are presented as a representation of a single reality, of the same entity understood in two different ways, not as a unity of two different degrees of the same entity (Atmaca, 2021a). *"Spinoza rejected any clear-cut distinctions between knowledge and passion, between soul and body and altruism and self-interest"* (Maiz, 2011, p. 59).

In the philosophy of Spinoza, affect/emotion is understood to correspond to an increase or decrease in the power of existence and action, which he terms *potentia agendi*. Nadler (2006, pp. 200–201, 2021, p. 288) states that "*he* [Spinoza] *defines affect as 'the modifications of the body whereby the active power of the said body is increased or diminished, aided or constrained, and also the ideas of such modification' (Spinoza, 130).*" He identifies *cupiditas* (desire), *tristitiae* (pain/sorrow) and *laetitiae* (pleasure/joy) as fundamental emotions, derives others from them, and exposes pain-based and pleasure-based emotions in *Ethica* (*Ethics*) (Kalaycı, 2014, p. 22). All emotions are variations of three fundamental emotions: The first of these is *cupiditas*, a wish/desire that is a person's understanding of their existence. It is not necessary for the individual to be aware of *it*; it is sufficient that it exists. The second emotion is pleasure/joy, which occurs when the lifeline is raised. It is the emotion experienced in situations that help one's *conatus* or effort to survive. The third emotion is the opposite of the second, pain/sadness. It occurs when the lifeline is lowered. It is the emotion experienced in situations that hinder and separate one from one's effort to continue one's existence. These are not discrete entities; instead, they are part of a unified emotional flood/fluctuation. All other emotions can be considered proportions of these three primary emotions or their amalgamations (Baker, 2014, pp. 97; 199; Spinoza, 2020, p. 140). The term "derivatives" is perhaps the most appropriate way to describe this relationship. In other words, the primary emotions that serve to reduce and increase the agency (or acting power) of the body and the mind are pain/sadness and pleasure/joy. Spinoza claims that all emotions derived from these primary emotions, such as hope, trust, anger and hatred, which are assumed to occur

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spontaneously, have specific underlying causes and only become perceptible through these causes (Robinson & Kutner, 2019, p. 115; Tokdoğan, 2018, p. 30). For example, the notion that love is a pleasure is evident in Spinoza's philosophy, as when individuals love, their power or force of existence would increase physically, mentally, and spiritually. Conversely, hate would limit or decrease one's power of action (*potentia agendi*) (Baker, 2014, p. 97). Baker (2014, p. 99) stresses that according to Spinoza, love is not something valuable in itself; love or hate is always a *by-product* of another affective state, of another strategy.

For this reason, emotions such as hope and fear are derived from the emotions mentioned above. Atmaca (2021b) remarks that it is noteworthy that hope and fear are essential for political powers to govern their subjects, contrary to the common understanding of hope and fear as negative emotions. Here, for Spinoza, these emotions feed each other; any political power makes its subjects governable by making them unbalanced, indecisive, and uncertain between these two emotions (Atmaca, 2021b). Spinoza builds his political philosophy on the passive emotion, which is *passion*, like fear; even the state systems are the formations that demand passive emotions and prefer to produce and process them; accordingly, he knows that no state can be maintained by mere fear (Baker, 2014, p. 171). In this respect, this description of Spinoza's conceptualising power proposes an emotionally/affectively manipulative power (Atmaca, 2021b). From this point of view, I argue that the political parties that seek to govern a state by competing for electoral victory – through their campaigns, which I have chosen as the research objects for this dissertation – can be presumed to be means, instruments or tools of this manipulative power.

Going back in time, it is inevitable to find that Machiavelli's *The Prince* (1532) emphasises emotions such as being feared, loved, and hated; on the contrary, coming back to the recent past, the context of Gramsci's *The Modern Prince* is what castles, cannons, artillery and rifles are not enough, the heart of the population/people has to be conquered (N. Erdoğan, 2018; Hoare & Smith, 1971; Machiavelli, 2014). Referring to the need for fear in the relationship between ruler and ruled, Machiavelli (2014, p. 101) says: "*Since people are attached to themselves when they love and to the prince when they fear, what a wise prince should do is to create a structure that depends on himself and not on others.*" Over again, to Gramsci, the importance of feeling is obvious: "*The popular element "feels" but does not always know or understand; the*

intellectual element "knows" but does not always understand and in particular does not always feel" (Hoare & Smith, 1971, p. 418).

Moreover, the 20th-century philosophers also seriously discussed affective action. For example, one of Weber's ideal types of social action is emotional or affective action. He assigns a marginal place to affective action, which means that emotion has an irrational and pre-modern role (Barbalet, 2006b, p. 53). On the other hand, some philosophers did not regard emotions as an irrelevant unit of analysis, as I noted in the previous section. Tokdoğan (2018, p. 31) points out that even if it is assumed that the discipline of political science focused on emotions and discovered them as an appropriate unit of analysis for understanding the social and the political in the second half of the 20th century, it is possible and plausible to interpret this process as a "re-discovery." Barbalet (2006a, p. 53) quotes Mills (1951), whose remarks on emotions are worth highlighting here: "*White-collar people get jobs, they sell not only their time and energy but their personalities, … their smiles, and their kindly gestures, and they must practice the prompt repression of resentment and aggression.*" It is not nonsense to articulate Marx and Engels' structural theory of the alienation of labour, which is particularly emotionally relevant in relation to inequalities in the distribution of rewards (Illouz, 2007, p. 6; Thamm, 2006, p. 29). Marx is not content to say that the capitalist identifies with the capitalist social structure and that the worker is emotionally attached to this structure; he also emphasises the *personification* of the capitalist relation by both actors (Massumi, 2015, p. 89).

Furthermore, the fascist atmosphere of the post-war period in the 20th century also led thinkers to work on the emotional aspects of the political, leading to an increase in the questioning of Enlightenment rationality and debates about the end of reason, along with anti-positivist approaches. For example, Adorno, the leading figure of the Frankfurt School of critical theory, et al. (2019) conducted *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950) to understand the individual's support for authoritarian leaders/regimes (Erdoğan & Uyan-Semerci, 2019, pp. 7–8). Indeed, it is not surprising to refer to emotions in the 20th century, defined as the "*Age of Anxiety*" (Auden & Jacobs, 2011; Salecl, 2004), which was filled with two world wars, the Cold War, numerous proxy wars, various religious conflicts, economic depressions, and so on.

The classical texts of political thought demonstrate that it is theoretically impossible to determine what people think and feel. In practice, however, it is likely

to influence, dictate, limit, manipulate, trigger, provoke, or even punish what people think and feel. Nevertheless, all the powers at each level and the ideological claims of the resources of these powers aspire to exert control over people's emotional and cognitive realms (Can, 2019). Ideas and thoughts are generated in response to and in conjunction with emotions, with each thought or idea inherently linked to an emotional response. Given that people's ideas and thoughts, and indeed images, have the capacity to evoke a range of emotional responses, it follows that each idea or thought would also correspond to an emotion (Baker, 2014, p. 124). Baker (2014, p. 167) proposes that, according to Spinoza, an emotion is determined by ideas, and any object or concept about which an individual does not possess an opinion, image, or idea would be incapable of eliciting either pleasure/joy or pain/sorrow. From this perspective, human beings cannot form ideas or thoughts or experience emotions or feelings about anything without interacting with their environment, namely the social context. In other words, any explanation, interpretation or assessment inevitably incorporates the beliefs of the addresser, the addressee or third parties. It would be erroneous to assume that beliefs are devoid of emotional content. Accordingly, even when individuals have access to the same data, their inferences may differ according to their beliefs or disbeliefs or their emotions or feelings (Mercer, 2010, p. 16). This is particularly evident in what some have termed the "*emotional atmosphere*" or zeitgeist. In light of the aforementioned considerations regarding the contextual nature of interpretive research, the subsequent chapter of this dissertation will concentrate on the emotional capital accumulated by the AKP in Turkey during its tenure, the emotional habitus and emotional-political context it has established – which, of course, is not a fixed/static but a dynamic/flowing process of social relations.

All in all, emotions occupy a considerable place in research, even though emotions are a unit of analysis that has been rediscovered in modern times in various disciplines of the social sciences. However, there are disciplinary differences in approaches to the study of emotions. Since I accept that emotions are socially constructed, the following section mentions the constructivist approach to emotions, which draws its foundations from the sociology of emotion.

2.1.5. Constructivist approach and links with psychology

While I problematise the use of emotions as appeals in the AKP's campaign advertisements, depending on how they materialise emotions in ad videos – I also take emotions as the phenomena to be explained and ad videos as the research material – I adopt social constructivism in understanding the social and the political, and the position that takes emotions as socially constructed. Here, I try to present analytical positions by referring from time to time to the interactions between the relevant disciplines.

Although the disciplines of psychoanalysis and psychology have long ascribed a causal role to emotions such as anger, fear, shame, and pride in individual and collective human behaviour, it is notable that the most extensive research on emotion began in the 1970s within the field of sociology (Çelik et al., 2017, p. 9; Stets & Turner, 2006, p. 1). The concept of "sociology of emotion" was developed based on the work of Cooley. This field of study examines a range of emotions, including shame and pride, love and hate, fear and curiosity, boredom and melancholy. It also considers the ways in which these emotions are culturally shaped, experienced, acquired, transformed, transferred to everyday life, and legitimised through narratives (Çeper, 2021).

The common models of analysis in the sociology of emotions include *a.* the interactionist position – which interprets emotions as a function of the interaction between the body and the environment, as Thamm (2006, p. 16) points out; *b.* the organismic approach – which views individuals as dynamic wholes interconnected with physical, cognitive, emotional and social aspects – regarding emotions as arising within human beings, experienced in the body and then interpreted; and finally *c.* the constructivist position – which claims that emotions are socially constructed, not seen in the inner states of individuals, and reflect the cultural meanings attributed to emotions – sometimes with very different meanings (Çeper, 2021).

In fact, Durkheim already addressed this issue by asking, "*We do not develop most of our ideas and tendencies ourselves, they come to us from outside. How can they become a part of us without imposing themselves on us?*" and thus, for him, emotion is not what comes from the individual body, but what unites and holds together the social body. The socio-cultural structure has an impact on human perception, body and preferences, and that's why emotion is not subjective (Çeper,

2021). Based on this, emotions are not only about individual experiences because social context and political environment continually shape people's perceptions, experiences, prejudices, learning opportunities, moral standards and comparisons and determine social relations and power structures (Çelik et al., 2017, p. 9). Similarly, McCarthy (1994, pp. 276–277) emphasises that emotions are "*neither strictly personal features of individuals nor universal natural objects*" but are "*pre-eminently cultural*;" thus, they are "*subject to social and political forces that render them natural*."

As Çelik et al. (2017, p. 9) highlight, the social sciences, in general, have seriously considered how important emotions can be for participation in political processes. In a similar vein, Demertzis (2013, p. 2) stresses that it is not possible to maintain "emotion-proof" research and underlines the need and necessity to develop a political sociology of emotions, while the sociology of emotions has already grown as a generic discipline. He presents the political sociology of emotions and political psychology as two different perspectives on the politics-emotions nexus. While the former uses conceptualisations from history, culture, and social psychology and bases its findings mainly on the macro level, the latter – together with political neuroscience – suggests a micro-analytical and individual-level investigation, such as voting behaviour and public opinion (Demertzis, 2013, p. 3). When considering the place of my dissertation, it is plausible to place it within the field of political sociology of emotions, as this research does not focus on what individuals feel but on the materialisation of emotions during election campaigns.

In addition to approaches which can be broadly categorised as premodern and modern, which I have attempted to address above, there is a growing body of knowledge concerning the physical structures and processes associated with emotions. Barbalet (2006a, pp. 51–52) acknowledges this point and cites Damasio's *Descartes's Error* (1994) and LeDoux's *The Emotional Brain* (1998) as key sources in this field. Moreover, there has been a notable advancement in the comprehension of the cognitive and cultural facets of emotions over the past centuries. As I have stated above, the argument of "*social constructivism regarding emotions*" forms the basis of my dissertation. It is noteworthy that the field of sociology demonstrates that emotions are embodied in culture and possess institutional and cultural manifestations in addition to being individually experienced phenomena (Hoggett & Thompson, 2012, p. 2). The existing literature on the subject presents a number of opposing views on the

reductionist approaches that attribute the origin of emotions to biology and individual phenomena. Conversely, the argument posits that emotions are learned behavioural patterns acquired through socialisation in the culture in which humans are born (Tokdoğan, 2018, p. 27, 2020, p. 389).

The constructivist theory sees emotions as culturally constructed and claims that the basis of emotional experiences is values, norms, belief patterns, and linguistic practices (Barbalet, 2006a, p. 52). McCarthy (1994, p. 269) reports that a number of constructionist approaches oppose or reject emotions as physiological and natural objects, but alternatively, they view emotions or emotional processes, including experiences, meanings of experiences, expressions, etc., as acts or types of symbolic acts and as social performances or cultural performances which involve both cognitive and physical (bodily) processes. In other words, they see "*emotions as inextricably social or cultural, precisely because they are emergent properties of social relations and sociocultural processes*" (McCarthy, 1994, p. 269).

Ahmed (2014, p. 8), who views and studies emotions within a social-constructivist framework, also states that emotions are relational, essentially social and cultural practices. For Ahmed (2004, pp. 13–20, 2014, pp. 5–8), emotions are not intrinsic to the individual but rather manifest on the surfaces and around the boundaries of the objects to which the individual is attracted with their bodies. Rather than focusing on the nature of emotions or their belonging to particular individuals, they should be analysed with the question of their function and impact (Ahmed, 2014, p. 4; Tokdoğan, 2018, p. 32, 2020, p. 391). She employs the metaphor of an "*atmosphere*" to illustrate the notion of emotional sharing in a social context. This metaphorical representation suggests that emotions circulate through social interactions, becoming attached or saturated within the social environment (Ahmed, 2014, p. 10).

Williams (1992, p. 132) is another scholar who states that the structures of emotions are the phenomena through the historically and socially constructed meanings and values, emphasising that the structures of emotions are embedded in social relationships even if they are not actually recognised as social (Hoggett & Thompson, 2012, p. 4; Tokdoğan, 2018, pp. 32–33). Illouz (2007, p. 7) also argues that emotions are undoubtedly a psychological concept, but they are also more cultural meanings and social relations where there is a compact compression between them

(Özdemir, 2014, p. 14). Thus, these approaches refer to the social constructivism of emotions.

Similarly, LeDoux (2015) establishes a significant connection between psychological perspectives that reduce emotions to physical responses and sociological perspectives that emphasise the constructed nature of emotions (E. Erdoğan & Uyan-Semerci, 2019a, pp. 59–60). Feldman Barrett and Russell (2017; 2015; 2003; 1999) provide a justification for the psychological construction of emotions. Their approach is similar to that of Spinoza, who noted the existence of a "core affect," which can be defined as the mental representation of the physical changes in the body that range from pleasure to displeasure. The object of change in the core affect allows for the conceptualisation, categorisation and naming of feelings. This process of meaning-making is not independent of the social (E. Erdoğan & Uyan-Semerci, 2019a, p. 60). In conclusion, emotions are socially aroused. It is, therefore, evident that the context and circumstances are of paramount importance in understanding emotions. For example, individuals may experience happiness at weddings but sadness at funerals. Indeed, the culturally defined requirements of a given situation determine the emotions experienced (Barbalet, 2006a, p. 52).

In another respect, Barbalet (2006a, p. 52) emphasises that emotions – for example, those arising from being subject to the power of others or having power over others – are always socio-structural. Here, it is important to stress that it is possible to encounter the presence of emotions at all stages of politics, i.e., decision-making processes, political judgment, political choice, elections, campaigns, etc. Accordingly, it is possible to claim that emotions are involved in reasoning. Thanks to the advances in the literature, it has been demonstrated that *"human action is triggered by processes of decision-making in which both emotion/sentiment and reason concur"* (Maiz, 2011, p. 43). This approach is also supported by Damasio (2004), who focuses on physiological structures and processes of emotions: decision-making is not possible without emotions (Erdoğan & Uyan-Semerci, 2019, p. 58). Consequently, in addition to being biological states with psychological and neurological dimensions, emotions are socially, culturally, and even politically constructed, just like the construction of rationality through a dynamic process of message and meaning construction (Crigler & Hevron, 2014, p. 665).

2.1.6. The emphasis of "emotional and/or affective turn" in political sociology

It is accepted in the literature that there has been a cultural turn in political sociology, also known as the postmodern turn – which has paved the way for political sociology to be understood along two lines: classical and contemporary political sociology. For the latter, scholars and theorists have coined or referred to many concepts such as post-industrialism, post-structuralism, post-modernism, hyper-modernity, disorganised capitalism, late-capitalism, post-capitalism, post-materialism, risk society, trans-politics, micropolitics, micropower, and so on, to identify and understand issues in politics. Together with the cultural turn, the studies presented have shown that the struggles over cultural codes, identities and ways of life are crucial factors in understanding society, alongside the political and economic power relations (Goodwin & Jasper, 2006, p. 616). In other words, young activism and the proliferation of protest movements in the late 1960s led to an academic focus on informal political participation, which resulted in the traditional approach of emotion-rationality dichotomy being increasingly problematised; however, the recent decades have witnessed the scholarly interest and emphasis on issues such as civic engagement, postmaterialist values, and issue politics (Prior & Van Hoef, 2018, p. 49). Thus, emotions have been studied as an inevitable unit of analysis, particularly in social movements literature and collective action studies (Tokdoğan, 2018, p. 29, 2020, p. 390). However, this has created the risk of stigmatising *"movements as less rational than formal politics. ... official ('normal') politics understandable in the language of interests and rationality, versus movement ('abnormal') politics where emotions remain key"* (Ost, 2004, p. 236) – the basis of this labelling can be found in Le Bon's work *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (Le Bon, 2002 - initially published in 1895).

Barbalet (2006b, p. 32) underlines that the emotionality of politics has typically been considered only as a segment of the political masses, even though politics always own an emotional element. Indeed, rationality is attributed to the enthusiasm of the political elite, while emotional enthusiasm is associated with the political masses. Miller (2011, p. 575) states that scholars and commentators regard emotion as a potentially harmful force that has the power to influence "the unsophisticated masses

towards undesirable end." For example, political decision-making theories, like deliberation subtly oppose reason and emotion, portraying emotion as a less desirable and useful component of political conduct (Szabó, 2020, p. 6). Emotions are, therefore, considered unnecessary for serious political analysis (Barbalet, 2006b, pp. 31–32). Nevertheless, Wahl-Jorgensen (2019a, pp. 167, 172) claims that since the "unspoken presence" of emotions can be found anywhere, even in politics itself, its omnipresence is adequate to be treated "as an integral part of any explanation of what it means to be engaged by, participate in and make decisions about politics," and she implies a clear departure from the deliberative democracy idea, which holds that the decisions are always made rationally and never take emotional dimension into account. In this direction, Ost (2004, pp. 230, 237) argues that emotions are central to the pursuit, exercise and sustainability of power in both democratic and authoritarian regimes because power survives by causing the mobilisation of the masses through production, suppression, or provocation of certain emotions in the electorate, as well as the portrayal of power as manipulative – a point that fits very well with one of the research questions of my dissertation: *"How are emotional and affective relations captured and valorised by the political parties for the sake of power relations?"*, or as Massumi's definition of power as the calculable part of emotions (Massumi, 2019, p. 34).

Since the issues addressed in the literature are related to ideology and ideology critique, the role and place of emotion/affect are also discussed within the framework of ideology. While it is emphasised that the cultural turn appeared together with the loss of reputation of the concept of ideology (N. Erdoğan, 2018), Massumi (2015, p. 32) overrefines that the direct modulation of emotion replaces the old-style ideology. He emphasises that the concept of ideology does not set aside the concept of emotion; on the contrary, the former stimulates the latter in a particular way (Massumi, 2015, p. 85). In this regard, he discusses that "*what was once mass affect has now entered into the micropolitical realm, where it proliferates*" (Massumi, 2015, pp. 33, 47–82). From my point of view, these theoretical discussions bring the debates on the "emotional turn" that occupy space in the literature, especially in the 1990s (Sangar & Clément, 2018, p. 7). As Moss et al. (2020, p. 838) put forward, since at least the early 2000s, an "affective turn" in political science has been occurring in which political scientists, used to compare affective cues, feelings, to cognitive cues, or thoughts, has been

recently paid attention to the interplay between feelings and thoughts to comprehend how affective mood influences individuals' judgements.

Clough (2008, pp. 1, 15) notes that when cultural and critical theorists discussed the limits of post-structuralism and deconstructionism alongside discussions of culture, identity, bodies and subjectivity, they were invited to turn to affect and emotion in the early mid-1990s. On the other hand, the literature emphasises that the discipline of political science has gradually challenged the dichotomy between the "rational" public sphere and the "emotional" private sphere by coining and referring to broader concepts of politics. Therefore, the "emotional turn" has increasingly received scholarly attention within the social sciences (Prior & Van Hoef, 2018, p. 48; Wahl-Jorgensen, 2019b, p. 2). Furthermore, the robust focus on the role that emotions play in the creation, processing, and reception of political information feeds the research in political discourse, political communication and political participation in terms of emotional turn (Szabó, 2020, p. 5).

Tokdoğan (2018, pp. 29–30) claims that Clough conceptualises the "affective turn" as the product of intellectual efforts. Clough (2007, p. 1) sees critical theory's analytic studies on and of war, terrorism, counter-terrorism, massacre, etc., as coinciding with a significant increase in the importance of affect/emotion as a unit and focus of analysis in both disciplinary and interdisciplinary fields. In this respect, she argues that the affective turn points the way to a transdisciplinary approach to scholarly and critical analysis and to identifying changes in the world in the political, economic, cultural, and even social spheres – as Massumi pinpoints (Clough, 2007, pp. 1–3). On the other hand, there are accounts/interpretations in the literature which claim that the "affective turn" is misleadingly referred to in social sciences and that the concepts of emotion and affect should be distinguished, even if they are not mutually exclusive but overlapping (Hoggett & Thompson, 2012, p. 2). However, it is widely accepted that a "turn," whatever it is called: discursive, cultural, post-modern, emotional or affective, has occurred along with curiosity and attention to meaning, language and discourse in the 1980s and beyond – after the theoretical and methodological winds of the post-World War II period, when positivism and behavioralism were dominant (Hoggett & Thompson, 2012, p. 1).

To put it simply, Massumi (2019, p. 47) states that the tendency of the post-cultural turn (I understand it as the 'emotional turn') shows that emotions are more

important than concepts such as ideology for understanding power, even state power. To clarify, Massumi (2015, p. 84) explains the basic assumptions of ideology that *society is a structure* in which *the mechanisms of power defend and reproduce*, and the structure consists of the whole, whose general interests are served, which creates a certain form of rationality; however, the specific interests of subordinated working groups (classes) do not correspond to the "general interest," because it is a "dominant interest." He asks why the subordinate groups do not see the euphemism of the interests of the dominant class, which derive from the rationality embodied in the structure. He also advocates the inclusion of emotions in the analysis (Massumi, 2015, p. 85). According to Massumi (2015, p. 85),

> "The reigning rationality must be transmitted, but occulted, hidden, distorted. To do this, it must pass through another medium: it must be translated onto an affective register. The dominated classes must be induced to mistake their own interests for the mirage of the 'general' interest – and do so with passion. They must be duped into affectively investing in the mechanisms of power that oppress them, without ever noticing the contradiction. They must become the willing instruments of their own domination. This is most efficiently done by weaving ways of feeling and acting that are in consonance with the power structure of society into the habitual fabric of everyday life, where they go on working unexamined. Ideology works best when its structure of ideas is lived – acted out in the everyday, without being thought out (as in Bourdieu's 'habitus')."

Nussbaum (2001, pp. 152–153) is another scholar who focuses on the cultural aspect of emotions, emphasising "inter-societal differences in emotional life" when talking about the factors that influence the behavioural manifestations of emotions. Her constructivist conception of emotions proposes that emotions are determined by cultural elements, language, social norms and social structure (Maiz, 2011, p. 61). Engelken-Jorge (2011, p. 16) conveys that Calhoun acknowledges Nussbaum's emphasis on inter-societal variation in emotions but also recognises intra-societal variations through the idea of an "*emotional habitus*." Calhoun (2001, p. 53) himself states that this notion, introduced by Kane (2001, p. 254) (by borrowing from Elias, Bourdieu and de Sousa), can help to understand that people have different ways of relating emotions to each other and to cognition and perception – namely that *"the way emotions are displayed in a society varies over time and there are also differences among individuals"* (Engelken-Jorge, 2011, p. 16; Henderson, 2008, p. 31).

Furthermore, Calhoun (2001, p. 53) emphasises sociology's instruction on social relations, where he contextualises emotions with the concept of habitus; namely, both habitus and emotions are produced in interpersonal relations. Likewise, habitus indicates a process that is repeatedly constructed through the use of various emotional, cognitive, and symbolic elements (Tokdoğan, 2018, p. 45).

In fact, for Bourdieu, the concept of "habitus" can be defined as "*knowledge without consciousness*" (N. Erdoğan, 2018). Bourdieu mentions that each social class has/creates its own habitus while considering the social classes and the positions they occupy in social life; in this regard, "class habitus" refers to the schemes of thinking directed towards the relationship that each social class establishes with the material conditions of existence (N. Erdoğan, 2018). In Bourdieu's view, social classes are formed in a hierarchical-unequal field, where the discussions of "habitus" and "class culture" take place in relation to the positions taken in the cultural field and how these positions are perceived. In considering class habitus, he mentions the dualities within the cultural field, which he highlights as "high culture" vs mediocrity. In this regard, he passes judgment on the fact that the lower classes embrace the so-called "cultural power" that excludes them – similar to Massumi's questioning of the unquestioning of dominant groups' euphemism by the subordinate classes (Bourdieu, 2002, p. 454; N. Erdoğan, 2018).

Bourdieu's notion of the "symbolic capital," which connotates cultural capital, is economic capital in disguise, allowing profit-based relations to appear as non-profit occupations. Namely, it legitimises power relations through symbolic politics in which dominant groups gather trust for legitimacy (Tokdoğan Kartal, 2018, pp. 20–21). The so-called cultural power of dominant classes not only has the task of disguising the oppressive facet of capital but also embraces "*emotional capital*" while manifesting itself as symbolic capital, which is not in the form of power. In this respect, emotional capital is a form of *embodied* cultural capital (Cottingham, 2016, p. 452 - *emphasis added*). As Cottingham (2016, pp. 451–452) conveys, the literature has already conceptualised emotions as embodied cultural capital, highlighting the unequal and uneven distribution of emotional capital in society, just like economic capital. In this context, considering the definitions/descriptions of emotion above, "*emotion in its embodied and symbolic forms influences and reflects the interests of individuals within everyday interaction while, at the same time, (re)producing the broader structural and*

cultural conditions in which such interactions occur" (Erickson & Stacey, 2013, p. 179).

From the perspective of the term "habitus," Virkki (2007, p. 278) conveys that "*emotional capital exists in the form of long-lasting dispositions of both mind and body – in other words, in the form of habitus, and it is as much unconscious as conscious*." Cottingham (2016, p. 452) emphasises the concept of an individual's "habitus" as "*the product and productive force of social relations*." This underscores the idea that emotional capital is conceptualised as part of this habitus, including its accumulation, embodiment, and activation. As Virkki (2007, p. 275) explains, Bourdieu states that the possession of capital by some necessitates the deprivation of others, as capital formation hinges on social exclusion. In consequence, the distribution of emotional capital is contingent upon the stratification of social classes, which denote distinctions, power hierarchies, and social boundaries within society (Cottingham, 2016, pp. 453, 465; Erickson & Stacey, 2013, p. 179). In light of these perspectives, one can conceptualise emotional capital with its inherent feature towards unequal distribution within a societal context, wherein emotional habitus emerges as a product of intra-societal variations and interpersonal relations. To elucidate further, emotional habitus influences the manner in which one's emotions are expressed physically and verbally and are subsequently employed in the course of social interactions (Illouz, 2008, p. 214). Tokdoğan (2018, p. 45) employs the term "national habitus", while her contribution to the field is an analysis of the AKP's Neo-Ottomanism[7] as a foreign policy that is characterised by conquest and utopianism. This is a vision, but it is also an element of symbolic politics that has a counterpart in everyday life and aims to become a national habitus that influences the aesthetics, rituals, desires and architecture of cities (Uzun Avcı, 2020, p. 108). In this context, I endeavour to stretch

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[7] As a political ideology that can be found in literature, Neo-Ottomanism could be described as an irredentist and imperialist political perspective that supports greater political engagement between the Republic of Turkey and regions that were once ruled by the Ottoman Empire, the former state that included the territory of modern Turkey. See for further debates: Yavuz, M.H. (1998). Turkish identity and foreign policy in flux: The rise of Neo-Ottomanism. *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies*, *7*(12), 19–41.; Wastnidge, E. (2019). Imperial Grandeur and Selective Memory: Re-assessing Neo-Ottomanism in Turkish Foreign and Domestic Politics. *Middle East Critique*, *28*(1), 7–28.; Uzer, U. (2020). Conservative Narrative: Contemporary Neo-Ottomanist Approaches in Turkish Politics. *Middle East Critique*, *29*(3), 275–290.; Ahmad, T. (2020). *Erdogan's neo-Ottomanism a risky approach for Turkey*. Arab News.; Yavuz, M. H. (2022). The motives behind the AKP's foreign policy: Neo-Ottomanism and strategic autonomy. *Turkish Studies*, *23*(5), 659–680.; Meakem, A. (2024). Turkey's Year of Living Dangerously. *Foreign Policy*.

the concept of habitus to the domain of emotion. Based on Bourdieu's understanding of political sociology, which focuses on political practice, I concentrate on election campaigns, which are political practices in which emotions constructed within social culture are reflected as political material.

"Emotional regime" is another concept explored in Lemmings and Brooks' (2014) edited volume within the context of the emotional turn, examining the intersection of emotions and social change, historically and in contemporary contexts. Reddy (2001, p. 129) coins the term, defining it as the collection of normative emotions and the formal rituals, practices, and expressions that convey and instil them – an essential foundation for any stable political regime. He conceptualises a framework that highlights the importance of emotional management, distinct from emotional construction, and argues that this framework facilitates the political differentiation of various management styles based on the notion of "emotional liberty," and enables the articulation of notable historical transformations in these management styles (Reddy, 1999, p. 266). According to Reddy (2001), the management of emotions in societies is inherently related to power and politics, and transformation occurs when individuals and groups challenge and attempt to alter prevailing emotional regimes that restrict their emotional freedom (Lemmings & Brooks, 2014, p. 5). Emotional regimes refer to the system of emotional norms, expectations and rules that dominate a society during specific historical periods (Reddy, 2001, pp. 323–324). In other words, they represent structures of norms and values that dictate how individuals should experience, express or suppress emotions in a given social, political or cultural context (Moss et al., 2020, pp. 841–842). This concept thus underscores the significance of emotions in historical and political processes.

In a political context, an emotional regime can often function as a system where the state or power structures determine the emotions that its citizens are expected to feel and express (Reddy, 2001, pp. 126–128). For example, a regime may promote emotions like fear, pride, anger, or enthusiasm in support of a particular ideology. In authoritarian regimes, emotions such as fear, loyalty and gratitude are often encouraged and emphasised, while emotions like anger and discontent, which may inspire demands for freedom, are suppressed. Consequently, the manipulation of society's collective memory and individual behaviour can shape political attitudes

(e.g., Duffy & Yell, 2014). In this context, the control and direction of emotions in politics become essential tools for maintaining power and preserving social order. Moreover, various mechanisms, including propaganda, media and popular culture, facilitate the reproduction of emotional regimes (Boler & Davis, 2018, p. 81; Mazzoleni, 2014, p. 49). This reproduction spans a wide range of domains, from the emotional bonding techniques employed by leaders to the efforts aimed at influencing the public's emotional disposition in line with specific ideological objectives, as seen in the case of Trump's emotional appeal through populist discourse (Hidalgo-Tenorio & Benítez-Castro, 2022, pp. 87, 89; Reddy, 1999, p. 271, 2001, p. 121; van Stokkom, 2012, p. 55). Emotional regimes, therefore, constitute an important component of power relations and social structures (Lemmings & Brooks, 2014, p. 5). Understanding the emotional norms that govern a society in a given period facilitates the analysis of the political climate and social dynamics of that period, as illustrated by the various chapters in Lemmings and Brooks' edited volume (Lemmings & Brooks, 2014, p. 9)).

As has been previously stated, the study of emotions is experiencing a resurgence in interest within the field of political science, despite having been a subject of study for a considerable period of time. Political scientists have increasingly acknowledged the role of emotions in political life. However, they often regard them as stable signifiers of instantly identifiable experiences (Moss et al., 2020, p. 838). For example, while some studies on emotion employ experimental analyses to examine the influence of emotion on micro-level political behaviour, as Huddy et al. (2015), Erişen (2013, 2016), or Neyazi and Kuru (2024) do, others depend on extensive public opinion surveys to compile and explain the relationship between emotions and personal attitudes. For example, Miller (2011) conducts a study in this vein, or Lipsitz (2018), by combining content analysis and surveys, investigates moral political rhetoric as a form of emotional appeal to voters. From an anthropological perspective, Malewska-Szałygin (2020, pp. 61, 63) employs ethnographic methods, including in-depth interviews and participant observation, to examine the manner in which political matters emerge and evolve within the context of everyday conversations in a rural district in southern Poland. The study focuses on the influence of emotions and civility on the content and conduct of political conversations. It examines the personal experiences, opinions, and emotional expressions of participants in such conversations. This research is an example of a study in which the subjects (and their

emotions, in a sense, the manner in which they express their feelings through languages and bodily gestures) are the central unit of analysis.

Furthermore, the practice of analysing individuals' emotional experiences as the primary unit of analysis is evident in political sociological studies. For instance, Kleres and Wettergren's (2017) article examines specific emotions like fear, hope, anger, and guilt as key motivators and mobilising strategies for climate activists. Manning and Holmes (2014) also highlight the concept and role of affinity in shaping individuals' engagement with politics, political parties, and politicians. Conversely, however, as the preceding section illustrates, there are studies on the history of emotions, philosophy and social theory of emotions, including those by Ahmed (2004, 2014), Barbalet (2006a), Hogget and Thompson (2012), Illouz (2007), McCarthy (1994), Nussbaum (2013), Stets and Turner (2006; 2005), and Williams (1992), as well as psychological ideas such as those put forth by Feldman Barrett (2017), Feldman Barrett and Russell (2015), and LeDoux (2015) adopt a socially constructed and culturally contingent approach to emotions, which extends beyond the understanding of emotions as a fixed biological and cognitive processes which views emotions as measurable independent variables (Moss et al., 2020, pp. 839, 841). In light of this distinction, this research effort, which is a political supply-side analysis of the role and place of emotions in politics, does not seek to establish general conclusions from the research material investigated in this dissertation regarding how receivers/audiences (namely, individuals) receive and perceive emotional cues, and are affected by them in relation to their political position, ideological stance, or voting decision during the elections. In other words, it does not measure people's emotions and examine how they internalise emotional norms and values through communicated appeals, while accepting that emotions in public and political life are culturally, historically, and ideologically constructed.

Overall, the study of emotions has become a prominent area of research in recent decades, with a significant increase in attention from scholars (Searles & Ridout, 2017). As Erişen (2013, p. 117) points out, "*the overall message from the current literature on emotions is that we cannot deny the strength of emotions.*" Although the impact of emotions has been the focus, by and large, the strategic use of emotions by political actors and campaigns has also been studied through different country-specific examples and from different perspectives (e.g., Brader et al., 2008;

de Castella et al., 2009; Kaid & Johnston, 2001). In light of this, Heaney (2019, p. 18) posits that the strategic deployment of emotional capital can be conceptualised as an emotional practice in the pursuit of power. This suggests that emotion can be regarded as a form of power functioning within the political sphere. Consequently, emotional competence, as embodied in the habitus of professional politicians, becomes an increasingly significant factor. I must now turn to the literature on political campaigns before demonstrating the materialisation of emotions in politics through an authentic case study from Turkey. In the following part, I will present the studies and literature on election campaigns and their extent on emotions.

2.2.   Electoral Campaigns and Emotions

As I previously stated, election campaigns represent a valuable domain for examining the emotional dimensions of politics. Election campaigns and their associated phenomenon, political advertising, are intrinsic to the realm of politics and political communication. The statement that "politicians' efforts to come to power are realised through communication" reveals that communication has become an indispensable element in the political process (Topbaş, 2018, p. 90). Furthermore, the political campaign process can be viewed as an extension of the political communication process, particularly during election periods. This is because the periods in which the media are most watched and read with political focus are election periods (Öztay, 2022, pp. 102, 105). Political parties benefit from or resort to political campaigns with the objective of winning elections or strengthening their organisations and positions. This is related to the preparation and publication of messages developed by political parties or candidates for the purpose of influencing the attitudes, behaviours, and opinions of voters by purchasing space and time in the media and disseminating the messages to the public through the media (Vodinalı & Akıncı Çötok, 2015, p. 503). The primary objectives of a political campaign are to increase voter turnout, enhance the profile of the party, develop its identity, inform the electorate and influence their voting intentions. Campaign advertising plays a pivotal role in achieving the aforementioned objectives within the context of political communication. It is of the utmost importance for political parties to acknowledge that political campaigns have the potential to manipulate people through emotionally charged advertising. The existing literature demonstrates that negative (attack) and

positive advertisements, replete with rational and emotional appeals, are pervasively utilised across the world, as illustrated in the following section.

2.2.1. Appeals in electoral campaign ads: emotions

The most prominent part of a political campaign is the political advertising that captivates advertising agencies (Vallance, 2016). As Brader (2006, pp. 4, 10, 30) puts it, campaign advertising is produced not only to convey a message but also to provoke voters emotionally on an individual level. For example, whenever campaign advertising and emotions are discussed together, the classic and now infamous "Daisy Girl" advertisement comes to mind, which was aired during Lydon Johnson's political campaign in 1964 and showed images of a nuclear explosion with the intention of increasing voter anxiety and voting for Johnson (Barry, 1997, pp. 287–288; Brader, 2006, pp. 6, 8; Searles & Ridout, 2017, p. 1; Weber, 2013, p. 414). Another definitive advertisement from British politics, "Labour Isn't Working," brought Thatcher victory by raising fear (Vallance, 2016). Ronald Reagan's "Morning in America" is another example of positive advertising that was part of his 1984 campaign. Reagan's campaign ads imply that the president successfully revived American optimism by restoring the economy after a prolonged period of high inflation and unemployment, with the scenes of productivity and suburban life touching on positive and naïve sentiments (Brader, 2006, p. 5; Green, 2016; NBC News, 2016). As these illustrations suggest, messages are often loaded with emotions and/or emotional appeals that occupy an important place in election campaigns (Crigler & Hevron, 2014, p. 668). Brader (2006, p. 69) defines emotional appeals as "*any communication that is intended to elicit an emotional response from some or all who receive it*." In addition, Lipsitz (2018, pp. 61–62) mentions about other forms that emotional appeals can take, for example, words and short phrases with symbolic meanings can act as emotional cues, triggering various associations in the brain and serving as emotional cues. This means that substantive and emotional messages are important for perceptions of the methods, strategies, tactics, and effects of campaign advertising (Ridout & Searles, 2011, p. 440).

Advertising is seen as the bridge of communication between those who want to say something and those who want to be told something, and a set of messages that carry hopes and expectations, desires or fears (Elden & Bakır, 2021, p. 18). Many

elements in an advertisement convey messages related to the content of the advertisement. Elements such as a photo, a location, a colour or symbol, the text of the ad, and the title of the ad can convey information and emotions to the target audience in a positive or negative way (Elden & Bakır, 2021, p. 20). In addition to designating political advertisements as positive or negative, as the examples above show, they are also evaluated in terms of the type of appeals used in the content of the advertisements. Appeals function as a message base, a persuasion tool that appeals to the physical, psychological and social needs of the receiver; draws attention to the advertised product, service or even the ad itself; creates interest; enables the receiver's attitudes/behaviours to be influenced; and follows rational and/or emotional persuasion processes (Elden & Bakır, 2021, p. 7). In that sense, they refer to the elements that make up the essence of an advertising message, that appeal to the mind and/or heart of the consumer, and that attempt to meet their emotional and rational needs in the context of persuasive communication (Elden & Bakır, 2021, p. 75).

Çalapkulu and Bozdemir (2019, pp. 1712–1714), in their study in which they conducted a semiotic analysis of the prominent television advertisements of political parties in Turkey for the 2018 general election within the framework of persuasion, convey that the concept of appeal belongs to persuasive communication in which Aristotle first classified the modes of persuasion as *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*, referring to different types of messages that appeal to the mind or the emotions. According to Aristotle, it is necessary to be able to present convincing, logical reasons on the subject (*logos*), to show a personal character that makes them convincing (*ethos*), and to evoke the audience's solid feelings or enthusiasm (*pathos*) (Elden & Bakır, 2021). Accordingly, as Çalapkulu & Bozdemir (2019, p. 1713) render, appeals are classified as rational and emotional according to their qualities. While rational appeals specify those appeals that target the personal interests of the audience by presenting evidence-based persuasive messages and claiming that the party or candidate will bring particular benefits in the political sense, emotional appeals indicate those appeals that aim to arouse emotions such as happiness, goodwill, patriotism, anger, etc. in the target audience (Bekiroğlu & Bal, 2014, p. 154). In other words, rational appeals do not only target the mind but also include analytical and pragmatic features and rational reasoning, while emotional appeals aim to reveal the positive and negative emotions of the audience through specific images and music (Çalapkulu & Bozdemir, 2019, p. 1713).

Research also supports the fact that emotions and/or emotional appeals in political advertising stimulate attention, political learning and information processing, facilitate persuasion, activate existing loyalties, increase interest, and motivate participation in politics, which is considered desirable for the democratic process (Brader, 2005, pp. 388, 394; Marcus & MacKuen, 1993, pp. 672, 681, 683). Crigler and Hevron (2014, p. 667) also note that "*emotionally expressive content in political communications fundamentally affects how people pay attention to politics, how they appraise people and issues, and how they behave*." In short, political campaigns, and especially election campaigns, appeal to the emotions of voters in societies – democratic or authoritarian – where emotions are central, as Ost (2004, p. 230) points out.

Weber (2013, p. 414) argues that political advertisers evoke many emotions, but academic research has rarely focused on the specific emotions elicited in political campaigns. Most studies have relied on two main approaches in the campaign advertising literature to study emotional appeals, namely the effects of emotional valence: (i) positive and negative ads, and (ii) ads that evoke two dimensions of affect, which are anxiety and enthusiasm (Ridout & Searles, 2011, p. 440; Weber, 2013, pp. 415–416). On the other hand, Ridout and Searles (2011, p. 440) also state that recent studies cover other distinct emotions, such as anger, fear, hope, etc. and build approaches that view campaigns as purposeful manipulation mechanisms of emotions.

Campaign strategies appeal to emotions as part of their widely accepted practices to generate support for a candidate or opposition to a challenger (Brader, 2006, pp. 15, 166, 175, 184). Campaigns embody both positive and negative emotions in order to influence the party grassroots. For instance, they get in touch with hope and enthusiasm in order to trigger political participation by voters in support of a particular part. At the same time, they evoke fear and anxiety about the dissenting parties (Marcus et al., 2000). Searles and Ridout (2017, p. 5) emphasise that "*campaign professionals recognise the importance of speaking to potential voters at an emotional level*." They convey author Shenkman's opinion on Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign, highlighting Trump's ability to drill into the sensitive nerves of American voters, adding that this situation is not only valid/accurate for Trump; all politicians do the same (Searles & Ridout, 2017). Namely, as Shenkman says, "*they are all pushing emotional buttons in the hope of drawing a strong response*" (Searles & Ridout, 2017, p. 5).

Regarding the affective components of political advertising, Crigler and Hevron (2014, p. 673) highlight many scholarly debates by Ansolabehere et al. (1994), Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1997), Goldstein and Ridout (2004), Krupnikov (2011), and so on. The studies by these scholars show, depending on the experiments and survey data, that some concluded that negative advertising makes people less likely to vote, but others found that negative advertising is associated with higher voter turnout on the one hand, and studies using the AIT show that appeals to enthusiasm in ads increase people's interest and involvement in voting on the other. They rightfully point out that more precise conceptions of emotion and negativity could be used to reconcile these conflicting findings (Crigler & Hevron, 2014, p. 673). Their warning is crucial not only for political practitioners (parties, leaders, and campaign professionals) who seek to shape public opinion but also for academic concerns.

In terms of methodological approaches, when studying the emotional aspects of political campaigns, it is found that content analysis is the most studied facet of campaign advertising in political communication (Neuendorf & Kumar, 2016, p. 7). For instance, in his book, Brader (2006) conducted a comprehensive content analysis of 1,425 political advertisements, evaluating negative appeals, informational appeals and visual/nonverbal elements that indicate emotional tone. Another notable contribution is the study by Kaid and Johnston (2001), which focuses on the analysis of political advertisements for US presidential campaigns, namely contrasting the components and logical, ethical and emotional methods of the videos between the runners of the campaigns – i.e. the winners and losers of the elections. In this sense, inspired by the existing literature, and as the fourth chapter will show and discuss in detail, this dissertation adopts qualitative content analysis to carry out an in-depth analysis.

As the field of emotions in politics (political communication, in particular) continues to expand, new and contemporary research, studies, surveys, and experiments gradually contribute to the field with each passing day. It is evident that each study has concentrated on disparate aspects of the subject matter from an idiosyncratic perspective. The following studies serve as illustrative examples. Grüning and Schubert (2022, pp. 1, 5) conducted an experimental study of eight videos that they showed to participants to examine the emotional side of political advertising and to test the fact that political ads influence voting turnout but are less effective in

changing people's preferences. Grüning and Schubert (2022, p. 5) also state that they preferred to stay in the same political and cultural sphere that Seibt et al. (2018) conducted their research in order to be able to provide the validity of replication. The study of Seibt et al. (2018, p. 197) is another example that focuses on the emotional content of political advertisements, and they show that some contemporary political advertisements used in the 2016 US election evoked strong emotional responses by moving voters to tears and that this response is able to increase their support for candidates and voting intentions.

Chou and Lien (2010, 2011) lean over the effects of negative political advertising in their two pieces. They conducted an experimental study to investigate whether candidates who are ahead in the polls can use negative political ads more effectively and the effects of these ads on voters' cognitive responses (Chou & Lien, 2010, p. 815). They also examine the effects of negative political ads across the dimensions of appeal content, appeal importance, and evidence presentation. They found that unimportant claims in ads that do not provide evidence are more beneficial to the ad sponsor, while ads that do provide evidence lead to complex interactions between appeal content and appeal importance (Chou & Lien, 2011, p. 281).

Although quantitative content analysis method remains dominant on the one hand, and experimental research has been progressively expanded in political communication studies on the other, qualitative content analyses among other approaches of linguistic and discourse analyses are also prevalent in researching electoral campaign communication – especially for studies that focus on emotional contexts, contents, and appeals. For instance, Kascian and Denisenko's (2020) study employs qualitative content analysis to explore the emotional context of political messages in Lithuania during the 2019 European Parliament (EP) campaign. Firstly, the authors examine the emotional patterns conveyed in electoral slogans and promises, with the aim of understanding the linkage between the messages and their impact on voters. Secondly, they analyse personal factors, charisma, and expressivity, focusing on the personification of political strategies. The objective is to identify the strategies employed by representatives of political groups to ascertain the relationship between the personalities of the message senders (politicians) and the impact of emotionally charged messages (Kascian & Denisenko, 2020, pp. 48, 51). Although this research is limited to the context of the EP elections as analysed level of the

political system compared to that of Lithuanian domestic politics, it is nevertheless important in terms of demonstrating the role of emotions in the context of electoral campaigns. It also sheds light on the involvement of personalities (politicians and political groups) in the strategic use of emotionally charged messages to attract and gain support from voters.

In the context of the European Parliament election in 2019, Türksoy (2020) assesses the Cyprus case and investigates the strategic use of both emotional and rational appeals in political advertisements. This is achieved through the utilisation of a multi-method approach, which incorporates qualitative content analysis and visual analyses (Türksoy, 2020, p. 27). By focusing on the political advertising campaign of a single political party, the left-wing Progressive Party of Working People and its candidate Niyazi Kızılyürek for the EP representation, Türksoy (2020, p. 22) provides valuable insights into the targeting of both the hearts and minds of the electorate and the combination of emotional and rational appeals used to craft persuasive messages and influence voters. While this study does not seek to examine the impact of the campaign on voters and their voting preferences, in line with its stated objective of filling a gap in literature, it is nevertheless significant in terms of attempting to question the nature of political ads, namely the information that political parties and figures aim to communicate to voters, in contrast to the common tendency in quantitative studies on emotional appeals through experiments and surveys – as stated in the previous section (Türksoy, 2020, p. 27). Together with the resemblance of this study to my dissertation's approach towards campaign advertising from a political supply-side perspective, its election-specific time frame, the quality of the election in terms of level of the political system (a supranational one different from focusing on domestic politics – either national or local), and incorporation of rational appeals to the analysis differ from what I intent and focus in my research study.

This overview of current research in the field of political advertising demonstrates the increasing significance of the examination of emotions within the context of political communication. Moreover, a number of studies have been conducted from a variety of perspectives, including the incorporation of political parties that utilise populist rhetoric in their political communication or are populist, in essence, into the analysis. For this reason, the following section will examine the role

of emotional campaigning as part of populist politics, with a particular focus on the importance of emotions as a source of populism.

2.2.2. Emotional campaigning and populist politics

Even though the purpose of this study is not to detect and identify the populist nature of the AKP through its campaign ads, which is beyond the scope of this research, it is plausible to give some space to the cross-cutting relationality between populism and electoral practices over emotions. This is so much so that Canovan (1999, p. 2) indicates that populists see themselves as the true representatives of the people by voicing their grievances. Müller (2016) points out that the reality of populism emerged as a manifestation of the confrontation between the elites and the people and the suppressed feelings of the people (Sarıkaya, 2022, p. 213).

For emotions are a significant source for populist politics, and so the political practices associated with campaigning during election periods are fertile ground for populism. As cited in Caiani and Di Cocco (2023, p. 351) and in Erçetin and Erdoğan (2023, p. 4), emotions and populism have a unique relationship (Nguyen, 2019); populist parties and leaders incorporate an additional emotional ingredient into their political communication strategies (Canovan, 1999, p. 6). For example, populism studies address the harmful effects of negative emotional expressions in politics becoming more visible, i.e., the deep source of negativity appears with the conflictual logic of populism of "friends vs foes" where emotions play key role in increasing outgroup hostility, or this literature bears that populists may take advantage of victim mentality, nostalgia, and anxious times through deliberately expressing their anger which may heighten the emotional response to policy issues (Mudde, 2004, p. 544; Nguyen, 2019; Szabó, 2020, p. 7; Wahl-Jorgensen, 2018, p. 771).

Likewise, political communication conveys to electorates that if they vote for the party in question, they will be happy; however, if they vote for the other party, they will feel regret. As such, Wirz (Wirz, 2018, pp. 1114, 1118, 1131) characterises this specific type of political communication as "emotion-eliciting appeals rather than rational argument" due to its generally more persuasive feature (Caiani & Di Cocco, 2023, p. 352). Moreover, populist political parties mobilise emotions through traumatic events experienced by the masses, i.e., economic crises, and make them part of their communication (Çelik et al., 2017, p. 10). Thus, political advertisements,

propaganda and public service announcements try to influence the masses and change their attitudes and behaviours via emotionally charged messages (S. Demir, 2022b, p. 571).

The vast literature on populism deals with populist communication in news media coverage, press releases, party publications and manifestos, and social media networks, as well as the increasing digital presence of political parties, among many other research topics and approaches. It also embodies the studies on the nexus of emotion and populism in relation to electoral campaigning. To illustrate, Shyu (2008, p. 130), following Canovan's conceptualisation of populism, presents that populist grievances embodied in emotion-laden campaign issues, i.e., popularised and polarised by the populist appeals, were the most effective means of winning votes in Taiwan. "*These appeals*", according to Shyu (2008, p. 132), "*are those hot, soft and valence issues in electoral studies* that *are easy, emotion-laden and overwhelming appeals by which politicians can quickly, efficiently and directly mobilise their supporters.*" As another example, Oliver and Rahn (2016, p. 189) look at Donald Trump's 2016 campaign speeches, which they see as distinctive in their populist appeal, where Trump utilised simplistic, anti-elitist and collectivist populist rhetoric and his supporters had a unique combination of nationalist, anti-elitist and anti-expertise feelings (such as anger measured on a five-point scale).

In her thesis study, Triantafyllou (2018, p. i), who focuses on populist political communication, presents an example of a Hungarian context by analysing political campaign materials of ten political parties for the 2018 national elections. Despite not focusing exclusively on the emotional aspects, Triantafyllou (2018, pp. 19–20) provides valuable insights into the fact that populists employ specific rhetorical and emotional communication strategies, i.e., the triggering of negative emotions. She links the approaches outlined in the literature to the populist elements in the materials of the Fidesz's campaign. This is achieved by referencing Wodak's (2015, p. 1) assertion that "right wing populist parties *successfully construct fear*"[8] and the statement made by Boukala and Dimitrakopoulou (2017, p. 40) that populists seek to instil fear in people through by developing their rhetoric "*on the basis of a politics of*

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[8] According to Wodak (2015), populists construct group-based boundaries and divide "victims" from "threatening evils" in articulating a "politics of fear"(*cited in* Erçetin & Erdoğan, 2023, pp. 4–5).

fear and a politics of hope" (Triantafyllou, 2018, p. 54). Triantafyllou (2018, p. 76) ultimately asserts that the Fidesz campaign was driven by fear and hatred.

From a different angle, in a study published in 2019, Blassnig et al. (2019) address the use of informal fallacies in press releases and print media coverage by right-wing populist politicians in Western Europe during election campaigns. They take the Swiss People's Party and the United Kingdom Independence Party as comparative cases for the 2015 elections and conduct a quantitative content analysis (Blassnig et al., 2019, p. 109). The study reveals that populist politicians can strategically use fallacies to appeal to their target audience, including their emotions (Blassnig et al., 2019, pp. 119, 130).

Gerstlé and Nai (2019, p. 410) examine comparatively negative campaigning, emotional campaigning and populist rhetoric driving the media coverage in a comprehensive study covering 43 elections worldwide. They also scrutinise the 2017 French presidential election as a case study to highlight the importance of these three dimensions (negativity, emotionality, and populism) in campaigning. Their analysis shows that while both enthusiasm and fear appeals work to attract attention and increase the chances of electoral success, more positive campaigns and the use of enthusiasm appeals increase media attention, but personal attacks and fear appeals have the potential to steer media coverage to the condition of lower competing candidates. Furthermore, they reveal that populist rhetoric or communication, accompanied by negative and offensive content, does not work as effectively as negativity and emotionality in terms of attracting media attention and influencing election outcomes (Gerstlé & Nai, 2019, pp. 416, 419, 423, 431).

By the same token, Bonansinga (2020, pp. 83–84, 100), in her multi-level analysis of relationship between emotion and populism, draws attention to the progress of systemic evidence on the concerted functioning of emotion and cognition in the disciplines, debunking the century-old idea of "rationality vs emotionality," and explores the intersection of populist appeals, the mobilisation of emotions and political narratives, unpacking the importance of emotion for the emergence, spread and success of populism by drawing on subjective, structural and communicative dimensions.

From the perspective of unpacking the mobilisation of emotions in the political discourse, Caiani and Di Cocco (2023, p. 352) focus on political parties, whether

populist or not, and if so, of different populist types, in order to detect an empirical connection between populism and emotions and to investigate whether the use of emotional appeals by populists in their political communication is similar in the case of Italian parties. Their findings figure that there is a growing trend in the use of (predominantly negative) emotional appeals in Italian politics, that populist parties tend to employ more and a more comprehensive range of emotional appeals compared to non-populist parties, and that while right-wing populism relies mainly on negative emotional appeals, left-wing or hybrid populism emphasises positive emotions, although emotional appeals vary depending on the communication context (Caiani & Di Cocco, 2023, pp. 362–363).

More recently, Cruz et al. (2024, p. 4), in their working paper for which they conducted a field experiment during the 2019 Philippine elections, show that while positive emotional appeals led to an increase in voter engagement in the campaign in the short-run, the appeals that provided direct information about proposed policies were more effective in terms of knowledge about the party, its quality and policies through the learning and persuasion channels.

As the existing literature shows, populist rhetoric is intrinsic to election campaigns. In the context of this dissertation, in Turkish politics, for example, the leader of the Genç Parti[9] (GP), whom I mention in the following section, preferred to design and conduct his campaign through the distinction between "us and them" when he defined his party as "us," who were anti-IMF policies, and the mainstream political elements as "them," who were pro-IMF (Sarıkaya, 2022, pp. 227, 228; Taşçıoğlu, 2007, p. 146). While the leader Cem Uzan[10] used nationalist and populist language in his speeches, the GP built its advertising discourse on the distinction between "friend and foe." They ran an emotional campaign by instilling hope in people who were in economic and social crisis by prioritising mainly future-oriented projects that were

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[9] Young Party.

[10] He is the eldest son of the Uzan Family, one of Turkey's wealthiest families. From a peasant background, the Uzan family made its fortune in the construction business, notably by winning several licences for dam construction in the 1980s. In 1991, Uzan created the first commercial television channel: The Magic Box. He became one of the richest families in the country, with a business network ranging from media and banking to energy and telecommunication company. Uzan also has a history of disputes with minority shareholders, business partners and government regulators and has been the subject of hundreds of lawsuits. He has been living in France since his request for political asylum was recognised (Akın, 2011, p. 107).

attractive and irresponsible populist promises, such as the delivery of 200 square metres of state-owned land to each family and cheap loans for families to be repaid in 30 years (Akın, 2011, p. 107; Engin, 2006, p. 93; Sarıkaya, 2022, pp. 225, 226). This populist campaign was not safe from other emotions as well. For instance, while Uzan made promises without offering any evidence to substantiate them, he initially predicated on the exploitation of fears surrounding the IMF, Europe, and the West (Tunalıgil, 2005, p. 225).

A comparable instance from Turkish politics is presented subsequently, and this time from the research universe of my dissertation. Dinç (2008, pp. 9–10), who conducted field research for her study analysing the 2007 general election in Turkey, points out that the AKP's discourse of being "close to the people" – a hallmark of populist parties – was reflected in its activities and close contacts with voters in provincial districts, both during the election campaign and after the election, which became a constant mode of campaigning for the party. She emphasises that the interaction between party officials and their rank-and-file also shows a populist connection through the language of ordinary people, who embrace the party leaders as "beloved sons," showing their love and emotional attachment to the party (Dinç, 2008, p. 10). In addition, the constant and recurrent emphasis by the party leader, Erdoğan, on the issues of "the people" and "national will," claiming to be the voice of the nation by the "language of love" within the framework of Islamic tradition, appears as a populist characteristic in nature (Dinç, 2008, pp. 13, 14). Similarly, Yılmaz (2021, p. 10) presents Erdoğan's transformed populism as a shift from a victimised political figure to an authoritarian populist one, which has been further developed into an Islamist populist style by appealing to the grievances, resentfulness and hopes of the conservative Turkish Sunni masses.

Türk (2018, p. 307) also highlights one of the defining features of Erdoğan's populism as not being predicated on a populist platform of promises. He minimises this form of politics based on promises as populism, becoming more visible at election times, and he calls the nation to be vigilant against those who "scatter promises around." However, he does not refrain from utilising all rhetorical techniques associated with populism, given his passionate love for the nation. Erçetin and Erdoğan's (2023, pp. 2, 16) article exemplifies the use of populist discourse and the reproduction of emotion and *fear* in this study, in the AKP's campaign speeches of the

2015, 2017, and 2018 elections and/or referendum. They focus on two framings of victimisation and blame blended with perceptions of threat and insecurity, which appeal to fear and thus reinforce an "us vs them" distinction. The analysis reveals that the AKP employs a combination of constant fear-based narratives and adaptable threats, in line with the political climate of the time, exploiting people's fears and threat perceptions to maintain support while keeping the distinction of "*blameless us*" against "*evil them*" as a primary frame (Erçetin & Erdoğan, 2023, pp. 2, 16–18).

In a more recent contribution to the literature on the connection between populism and emotions in Turkey, a polarised country, Erişen (2024, pp. 1, 10) adopts a supply-side perspective and focuses on the individual level of analysis through face-to-face interviews. The study scrutinises the interactions of two emotional appraisals, anger and enthusiasm, with right-wing and left-wing political ideologies (Erişen, 2024, pp. 6, 9). The findings reveal a substantial correlation between emotions and adherence to populist attitudes. The paper uncovers how anger and enthusiasm affect populist preferences, demonstrating that anger is positively associated with populist attitudes, while enthusiasm is weakly associated (Erişen, 2024, pp. 11-12,18). Furthermore, it highlights an ideological asymmetry whereby anger exerts a greater influence on the political right than enthusiasm (Erişen, 2024, p. 19).

As can be observed, the studies focusing on the nexus between populism and emotions adopt a variety of perspectives and employ diverse methodologies. The case of Turkey, with its politics and political parties that exhibit populist characteristics, is also a prominent subject of investigation in these studies. In other respects, Turkey represents a valuable case study for research on election campaigning, including the use of emotional appeals. For this reason, the following section presents a brief overview of the context of campaigning in Turkey before introducing the contextual framework for the AKP case in the subsequent chapter (Chapter 3).

2.2.3. The case of Turkey: campaigning over emotions

Turkey has not lagged behind in the active use of advertising in election campaigns. Although Topuz stated that political advertising started in Turkey in 1977[11]

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[11] In the 1977 general election, for the first time, an advertising agency (Cenajans) took part in the election campaign of a party (AP). Again, although it was not legal, for the first time, political advertising was used in the printed media (Taşçıoğlu, 2007; Topbaş, 2018, pp. 93–94).

with the initiative of the Adalet Partisi[12] (AP), and before that, political parties carried out their promotional and advertising activities with a practice of passive communication (*cited in* Balcı, 2006, p. 142), political advertising has been legally[13] used in election campaigns in Turkey with newspaper political advertisements since the 1983 general election. In addition to newspaper political advertisements, a similar practice was started in television political advertisements to be presented to the voters in the 1987 general election (Tokgöz, 1991, pp. 13–14). Obviously, Turgut Özal,[14] as a leader who knew the importance of the concept of "*marketing*" in the words of Özkök (*cited in* Türk, 2018, p. 127), paved the way for the trend of the mediatisation of politics by resorting to the professional and mediatised advertising techniques for the first time used in ANAP's[15] election propaganda since the 1980s. In Turkey, this party was a pioneer for other political parties in conducting political advertising activities in a professional manner (Tokgöz, 1991, p. 14; Uzun, 2008, pp. 1–2, 153).

Along with the 1983, 1987, and 1991 general elections, the collaboration between political parties and advertising agencies was a significant contributing factor in the evolution of campaign strategies and techniques in Turkey. The process of professionalisation commenced with the ANAP's contractual agreement with Manajans and Birikim Agency for the 1983 and 1987 elections, respectively. This marked the inaugural instance of these agencies employing the American-style political campaign for Özal in the elections (Balcı, 2006, p. 144; Başdemir, 1996, pp. viii, xii; Taşçıoğlu, 2007, p. 220; Tokgöz, 1991, pp. 18, 20). Tokgöz (1991, p. 22) observes that the ANAP's 1987 campaign advertisements targeted and promised a diverse demographic, including "safe youth, *happy* children, *peaceful* and healthy people, workers, farmers" (*emphasis added*). Additionally, for the 1991 elections, the party, under the leadership of Mesut Yılmaz, collaborated with a political campaign

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[12] Justice Party.

[13] The National Security Council (MGK) adopted the principle that "political parties may place advertisements in the press in order to promote their programmes and statutes and to explain their activities" with its decision published in the Official Gazette on 7 July 1983. This decision legalised the practice of political advertising initiated by the AP in Hürriyet Newspaper during the 1977 general election (Tokgöz, 1991, p. 14).

[14] Turgut Özal was the 26th prime minister and 8th president of Turkey.

[15] Motherland Party.

professional from abroad, Jacques Séguéla, for the first time. Séguéla had previously campaigned for the then-French President François Mitterand, and one of his ten golden advice/tips was that people vote for hope, not for a programme (Balcı, 2006, p. 145; Başdemir, 1996, p. xiv; Engin, 2006, pp. 73–74; Taşçıoğlu, 2007, pp. 130-1,221; Topuz, 1991, p. 44). It seems that the use of emotional appeals has been a consistent feature of campaigning.

During and after the lost decade of the 1990s – not only in economic but also in political terms – Özal's communication strategies and tradition continued in Turkish political life. After the highly volatile and unstable political scene of the 1990s[16], the first election of the new millennium in Turkey welcomed not only the AKP as a newly-born political party but also the Genç Parti, founded by prominent businessman Cem Uzan just five months before the 2002 general election (Türk, 2024, p. 54). The conventional wisdom is that Uzan was the leader who effectively implemented a new style of political campaigning after Özal (Engin, 2006, p. 89). Tunalıgil (2005, p. 222) evaluates that the emergence of the "Cem Uzan Phenomenon" led a significant turning point in the history of political campaign communication in Turkey. Taşçıoğlu (2007, p. 137), who claims that electoral campaigns in Turkey have become "Americanised", argues that the 2002 general election was an election in which elements of "Americanisation" became increasingly visible.

Although the GP lacked political arguments and was ideologically superficial, it obtained 7.5% of the votes, a higher percentage than several long-established and organised political parties in the country (Akın, 2011, p. 107; Sarıkaya, 2022, pp. 224, 225; Türk, 2024, p. 54). Its campaign included many controversial methods and was also one of the most colourful campaigns compared to the previous unexciting ones in the past (Akın, 2011, p. 107). The party's remarkably sophisticated campaign blended with "eclectic ultra-nationalism" or "pop ultra-nationalism," according to the literature (T. Bora, 2002, pp. 53–60), with harsh rhetoric motivated mainly by anger towards the IMF, the World Bank, or the EU (Akın, 2011, p. 107; Bacık, 2004, p. 825). In other words, Uzan aimed to attract disadvantaged people by effectively using a nationalist discourse and channelling voters' anger through a diffuse communication strategy that

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[16] Türk (2024, p. 13) conveys that coalition governments marked this decade with eleven different governments and their average duration of terms in power was one year, two months and eight days.

relied on a one-way flow of information with constant repetitions, simple and direct emotional messages despite having no solid political base or arguments (Akın, 2011, pp. 108, 109; Bacık, 2004, p. 825; T. Bora, 2002, p. 55; Taşçıoğlu, 2007, p. 140). The GP's campaign often emphasised a happy and hopeful future awaiting the people in political advertisements that included promises and targeted the unhappy and hopeless people in line with Séguéla's golden tip of voting for hope (Taşçıoğlu, 2007, p. 144). As the GP's share of the vote dropped to 3% in the subsequent 2007 general election and its existence and activities disappeared, its effectiveness in communication methods – even if only for a single election – left its mark on politics (Akın, 2011, p. 109). Akın (2011, p. 109) stresses that its emergence was not accidental, as its predecessors in the 1980s laid the foundations for the image-based diffuse communication methods, and variants of such approaches are still common practice in the Turkish political scene.

As will be discussed in detail in the following chapter, the AKP worked with a professional advertising agency in the 2002 election, which marked the beginning of its long-lasting incumbency. It is no exaggeration to say that the AKP – while building a field of politics of emotions through its political manoeuvres in the field of governance and legislation, creating an endless wave of anxiety and fear (Türk, 2024, p. 19; Z. Yılmaz, 2022, p. 18) – has become the flag bearer in the field of political advertising, which was introduced to the Turkish political scene during the ANAP period. Even today, Koru, a Turkish journalist and columnist, recalls the ANAP's 1989 local election campaign in the context of the AKP's campaign for the 2024 local elections and criticises the campaign's main slogan, which implies that the central government and the local administrations should work hand in hand, as not original and plagiarised from the ANAP's campaign, in which the ANAP cadres had received ideas from foreign advisers (Koru, 2024).

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, many studies in this area measure the impact of political advertising on voter behaviour. In addition to these, there are also many studies that examine issues such as what the parties conducting political campaigns emphasise in their advertisements, the issues they bring to the forefront, the areas where the advertisements are aired, and the frequency with which they are aired. With this in mind, my main aim in this study is to focus on how the AKP as a political party uses emotions (which are found in the literature in the context of emotional appeals) through political (audio-visual) advertising.

As the exemplary studies cited above from both the Turkish and international academies show, even if research is contextual or geographically bound, studies are adaptable to each other in terms of their methods and/or theories adopted. While the characteristic of a study to be context-bound means having coexistence and harmony with its context, what makes research an academic study requires cohesion and coherence within itself and other standards of textuality (intentionality and acceptability, informativity, situationality, and finally, intertextuality). However, since research is context-bound, which I will also touch upon and try to justify in the fourth chapter below, I need to outline the emotional-political context of Turkey under the AKP's incumbency before referring to how this research is conducted and how the answers are arrived at, shaped by the questions that problematise the authentic case in Turkey, and before presenting the details of the method and the methodological rationale of this dissertation. Therefore, the following chapter presents Turkey's social and political developments and the emotional atmosphere that they created according to the election periods of the last two decades.

CHAPTER 3

THE EMOTIONAL-POLITICAL PANORAMA OF TURKEY DURING THE AKP RULE AND ELECTIONS OF THE AKP

The last two decades in Turkey have been passed in an environment filled with devastating political and social turmoil. As one of the essential components of qualitative content analysis is the contextualisation of data and findings (Erişen et al., 2013, p. 25), this chapter presents the emotional-political atmosphere of Turkey during the AKP rule in order to complement the content analysis data with information about the electoral processes and the emotional-political context in which the campaign advertisements were aired (Brader, 2006, p. 164).

In fact, as Yılmaz (2022, p. 20) rightly points out, the structures and relationships that deepen and broaden the political, social and economic psychology of the country have a long history, i.e., it goes back to the 1980 coup d'état in the sense of anxiety. However, due to the scope and limitations of this dissertation, this chapter will only focus on the AKP period for the purpose of relating between emotional politics and the AKP context. Since its establishment on 14 August 2001, the AKP has taken part in seven parliamentary and five local elections – except for the three referendums and Erdoğan's personal participation as the party leader in three presidential elections. With 49.8% of the vote, the party is one of the five parties[17] in Turkish political history to win more than 40 per cent of the vote (Kayaalp, 2021). This electoral success has made the party remain in power "through elections" for the longest period in Turkish political life, 21 years (Ekiz & Çimen, 2023). In other respects, the rise of the AKP is not just a political movement or a religious uprising but a cultural story (Kozanoğlu & Cabas, 2018, p. 222). This phenomenon, as might

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[17] The others are the Democratic Party (DP) (57.6), the Justice Party (AP) (52.9), the Motherland Party (ANAP) (45.1) and the Republican People's Party (CHP) (41.4) (Kayaalp, 2021).

be expected, makes the party the case of research in several studies. As I stated in the previous chapter, since I want to conduct a study on the nexus of emotions and politics by taking emotions as the phenomena to be explained for research, I chose the AKP as the case of this dissertation due to both this "electoral success" perspective of the party and its very intensive election campaigns. However, since this dissertation is not intended to be an in-depth study of the AKP and its position within the Turkish political spectrum, I will only briefly look at developments that indicate the emotional-political landscape of Turkey before, during, and after the party's election campaigns. According to Türk (2024, p. 19), what helped the AKP to build a field of emotional politics that the party overemphasised was the psychology of the country's population, which was brought back from the 1990s. In addition, this chapter includes the positioning of opposition parties, with a particular focus on the CHP, the main competitor of the AKP. This is done in order to gain insight into the prevailing emotional climate ("regime" in a sense) in the country.

This chapter proceeds with eight subtitles according to the list of elections (Table 1) below. First, I have presented the atmospheres of the 2002 general and 2004 local elections, when the AKP came to power as a newly established party after the twin crises that hit Turkish society hard. The "conservative democracy" was the key term that characterised the first years. The second subtitle presents the social and political cleavages in Turkey and refers to the tensions in line with the e-memorandum and the deepening of narratives of victimhood on piety before the 2007 general elections. In the third and fourth subtitles, I draw the emotional-political picture of the country on the way to the 2009 local election and the 2011 parliamentary election, under the debates of tutelage (both military and judicial) and in the shadow of the Ergenekon, Balyoz, and KCK cases. In the fifth and sixth subtitles, I convey the turning points in Turkish social and political life between 2013 and 2017, as postulated in the literature and defined as the point of departure for the consolidation of power. The former section touches on the Gezi Park Resistance and the corruption scandals of 2013 before the local elections of 2014. The latter covers two separate general

elections in 2015 when Turkish society witnessed several bombing attacks,[18] and passed through an age of anxiety in between and after.

Table 1. List of Elections

Election	Election Type	Voting Rate[19]
3 November 2002	General	34.28%
28 March 2004	Local	41.67%
22 July 2007	General	46.58%
21 October 2007	Referendum	68.95%
29 March 2009	Local	38.80%
12 September 2010	Referendum	57.88%
12 June 2011	General	49.83%
30 March 2014	Local	43.14%
10 August 2014	Presidency	51.79%
7 June 2015	General	40.87%
1 November 2015	General	49.50%
16 April 2017	Referendum	51.41%
24 June 2018	General and Presidency	42.56% and 52.59%
31 March 2019	Local	44.33%
14/28 May 2023	General and Presidency (2 rounds)	35.62% and 1st round: 49.52% / 2nd round: 52.18%
31 March 2024	Local	35.48%

Seventh, I give space to the change in the system of government and the increasing emphasis on "*New Turkey*" after the 2017 constitutional referendum and the echoes of the failed coup attempt of 15 July. This subtitle essentially covers the

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[18] 20 July 2015 Suruç, 10 October 2015 Ankara, 12 January 2016 İstanbul-Sultanahmet, 17 February 2016 Ankara-Çankaya, 13 March 2016 Ankara-Kızılay Güvenpark, 19 March 2016 İstanbul-Beyoğlu, 12 May 2016 Diyarbakır, 7 June 2016 İstanbul-Vezneciler, 28 June 2016 İstanbul-Atatürk Airport, 21 August 2016 Gaziantep, 9 October 2016 Hakkari, 10 December 2016 İstanbul-Beşiktaş, 17 December 2016 Kayseri, and 19 December 2016 İstanbul-Beşiktaş (E. Erdoğan, 2019, p. 78; Köker, 2016).

[19] Sources: https://ysk.gov.tr/tr/secim-arsivi/2612, https://acikveri.ysk.gov.tr/secim-sonuc-istatistik/secim-sonuc, https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/politika/ak-partinin-secim-karnesi/2897999, https://secim.hurriyet.com.tr/

AKP's victory in the 2018 general elections, which were held for both the presidential election and parliamentary elections. Finally, I mention the AKP's relative failure in 2019, when it lost the mayorships of Ankara and İstanbul, which have always been seen as the party's reservoir of votes and backbone of economic support.

3.1. Public Conscience: 2002 and 2004

Turkey went to the polls in November 2002 after the twin economic crises of 2000 and 2001 (Bedirhanoğlu & Yalman, 2013, p. 116; Berument et al., 2009, p. 23; Yalman & Göksel, 2017, p. 26). The electoral environment was full of allegations of siphoning off funds in the banking sector, restrictions on freedoms (especially religious freedoms), and grievances of people experiencing poverty due to the economic crisis. In addition, the 1999 earthquake caught Turkey unprepared immediately after the 1999 elections, and there were massive human and material losses that revealed the weakness of the political power of the time (Bostan Ünsal, 2023; Türk, 2024, p. 53). Economic woes were blended with social and political misery, and the public's trust in the political power and existing politicians was eroded. The world press reports that Turkish voters are angry and undecided due to the deterioration in economic, political, and social realms (BBC - BBC News Türkçe, 2018).

The debates on religious reactionism and the 28 February process[20] – one of the few founding moments that led to the birth of the AKP (Türk, 2024, p. 23) – also left their mark on the politics. The closure of the RP (Welfare Party) following the

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[20] Also known as postmodern coup. For more detailed analyses, see: Cizre-Sakallıoğlu, Ü., & Çınar, M. (2003). Turkey 2002: Kemalism, Islamism, and Politics in the Light of the February 28 Process. *The South Atlantic Quarterly 102*(2), 309-332; Yavuz, M. H. (2003). *Islamic political identity in Turkey*. Oxford University Press; Çakır, R. (2005). Milli Görüş Hareketi. In Y. Aktay (Ed.), *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce, Cilt: 6—İslamcılık* (2. baskı, pp. 544–575). İletişim; Cindoglu, D., & Zencirci, G. (2008). The Headscarf in Turkey in the Public and State Spheres. *Middle Eastern Studies, 44*(5), 791–806; Grigoriadis, I. N. (2009). Islam and democratization in Turkey: secularism and trust in a divided society. *Democratization, 16*(6), 1194–1213; Gümüşçü, S., & Sert, D. (2009). The Power of the Devout Bourgeoisie: The Case of the Justice and Development Party in Turkey. *Middle Eastern Studies, 45*(6), 953–968. Taşkın, Y., & Cop, B. (2019). The Justice and Development Party (AKP). In E. Özyürek, G. Özpınar, & E. Altındiş (Eds.), *Authoritarianism and Resistance in Turkey* (pp. 75–80). Springer International Publishing.

process in which the Milli Görüş Hareketi (National Vision Movement- NVM)[21] was deemed politically objectionable, the establishment of the FP (Virtue Party), the disintegration within the party between reformists and traditionalists on the one hand, and the emergence of the AKP as 'not a separate party but a new party,' as party leader Erdoğan put it, on the other, are the nuances that sum up the political outlook of the period for the AKP (Aras, 2022; Dağı, 2023; Tombuş, 2013, pp. 6–7; Türk, 2024, p. 54).

In addition to the 28 February process, the founding process of the AKP was prepared both by Erdoğan's ban for reciting a poem that he read during his time as mayor of Istanbul and that was considered offensive and by the split in the FP between the reformists (including Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Abdullah Gül, who would later found the AKP) and the traditionalists (Recai Kutan as the formal leader and Necmettin Erbakan as the natural leader – because of his political ban, who would later establish the SP) (32. Gün, 2020b; Alpan, 2010, p. 253; Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, p. 468; Baykan, 2018, p. 94; Bostan Ünsal, 2023; Dağı, 2005, p. 29; Y. Taşkın, 2008, pp. 58–59; Yeşilada, 2016, pp. 20–21; İ. Yılmaz, 2021, pp. 7, 8). The AKP was founded on 14 August 2001 by the reformists who severed their ties with the tradition of the national vision. Referring to the secular-religious cleavage[22] in Turkey, Aras (2022) frames that during the founding of this new party, while the religious conservatives were hopeful, excited and cheerful, the secularists were afraid of Erdoğan's every move. She points out that Erdoğan, who was ousted from his post as mayor of Istanbul and who was religious and not considered elite enough, became the hope of the oppressed and humiliated people not only of Istanbul but also of Turkey (Aras, 2022; Yavuz, 2003, p. 248). These people remembered the injustices done to them whenever Erdoğan was tried to be crushed, and they drew an analogy between their own fate and

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[21] The MNP, the MSP, the RP, the FP, the SP and the YRP have been the political face of the NVM respectively. For details, see: Çakır, R. (2005). Milli Görüş Hareketi. In Y. Aktay (Ed.), *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce, Cilt: 6—İslamcılık* (2. baskı, pp. 544–575). İletişim, and pages 279, 282 and 283 in Baykan, T. S. (2018). *The justice and development party in Turkey: Populism, personalism, organization*. Cambridge University Press.

[22] Mainstream literature analyses Turkish politics over social cleavages of centre-periphery and secularism-Islamism; Kurdish-Turkish and Alevi-Sunni cleavages are accepted as secondary. For detailed analyses, see: Özbudun, E. (2013). *Party Politics and Social Cleavages in Turkey*. Boulder, USA: Lynne Rienner Publishers.; Mardin, Ş. (1973). Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics? *Daedalus, 102*(1), 169–190.

the victimisation[23] of this man, who was humiliated like all religiously conservative segments of the country (Aras, 2022).

Indeed, the psychological turning point for conservative Muslims was Erbakan's prime ministry in June 1996, which marked the end of their exclusion from the public sphere and the recognition of their identity by the state. However, it was interrupted by the 28 February process that would lead to the resignation of Erbakan's government and this time, they placed their hopes in this newly formed political party – which, in a way, was a continuation of the same tradition, but in a way broke with it by claiming to take off the shirt of national vision and not to be an Islamist party (Aras, 2022; Bacık, 2004, pp. 823–824; Bostan Ünsal, 2023; Tombuş, 2013, p. 7; Yavuz, 2003, pp. 241, 243–244). For the AKP, political power meant having the power to do what the NVM had not been able to do in the 1990s, and whatever had to be done to obtain and maintain this power had to be done (Türk, 2024, p. 10). The party's primary position, as expressed by Dağı (2023), was that the condition for doing politics in the current secular constitutional order was to move closer to the centre, which had become empty, to reach out to all segments of society and to march to power instead of being a small party and appearing marginal by receiving only the votes of the religious. In this regard, Aydın and Taşkın (2014, p. 471) posit that the AKP's assertion of being a pivotal choice that exemplifies its objective as a partner of the centre-right tradition, which originated with the DP in Turkish political history, is a reasonable assumption.

Erdoğan, with his popularity and youthful charisma, rose to prominence by appearing at party rallies despite his political ban and singing the famous song "*We*

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[23] Here, I would like to add as an annotation that Erdoğan was also successful about reflecting 'what happened to him', his victimisation and grievances to the people via various propaganda tools. Türk (2018, pp. 291–293) provides an excellent illustration of this concept, as follows: "... *In this regard, one of the functional aspects of Erdoğan's perception of the enemy is that it serves to reinforce the rhetoric of victimhood and persecution that Erdoğan frequently employs. Erdoğan consistently seeks to consolidate his and his party's position of power through the utilisation of a discourse of victimisation. The enemy serves to perpetuate the discourse of victimisation. Victimisation serves as a conduit for legitimacy in Erdoğan's worldview. Those with opposing political views are discredited by invoking their own history of persecution. Erdoğan is perpetually engaged in a process of reiteration, whereby he repeatedly revisits the historical experiences of both his movement and his own subjective history, which he characterises as a series of challenges, restrictions and penalties. His justification is derived from his status as a victim. The act of victimisation serves to foster a sense of identification between the leader and the masses. Given his own experiences of suffering, Erdoğan is arguably the most suitable candidate to empathise with the feelings and emotions of a nation that has endured similar hardships. The language of the oppressed is commonly used, and Erdoğan's perception of the enemy is, therefore, also conveyed through the practice of "sacred oppression".*"

walked these roads together / We got wet together in the rain / Now in all the songs I listen to / Everything reminds me of you"[24] (Aras, 2022). This approach has already been discussed in the literature, and Lazar (2004, p. 236) conveys from the ideas of various scholars (Auyero, 2000; de la Torre, 1992; Durkheim, 2008) that;

> "…political rallies have high entertainment value; ... reinforces feeling of solidarity… evoke feelings… Through shouting slogans, singing songs, listening to passionate speeches, politics becomes oral and aural, … feeling part of the crowds and the performance."

Thus, these kinds of occasions represent Erdoğan's attempt to create an emotional bond with the electorate and to become the interlocutor between the oppressed people and politics. The following statement by Erdoğan also confirms the emotional atmosphere of the term: "*We have no right to waste time by making mistakes in the face of the outstretched arms, the hopes pinned on us and the prayers offered to us*," with his emphasis on the emotional term of 'hope' (Aras, 2022).

One of the important names for the AKP was Erol Olçok.[25] He was the head of the Arter Advertising Agency,[26] which played an active role in the preparation of all political communication activities of this new party, from its logo and slogans to songs and strategies, and planned the AKP's campaigns until 2018 (İşler & Dalp, 2021, p. 96). He was also a close friend of Erdoğan and lost his life on the night of the 15 July coup attempt. In an interview, he described the 2002 election campaign and the emotional-political landscape in Turkey as follows;

> "In 2002, we ran a campaign that appealed not to public opinion but to public conscience. Because people were already ready to vote for Mr Erdoğan. They had been waiting for him for years. We just created the climate for him; maybe we even designed it... We ran an emotional campaign that appealed to the public conscience; we did not run a rational campaign because that was necessary at that time, and the masses were already waiting for Mr Prime Minister" (Olçok - 32. Gün, 2022).

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[24] Beraber yürüdük biz bu yollarda / Beraber ıslandık yağan yağmurda / Şimdi dinlediğim tüm şarkılarda / Bana her şey sizi hatırlatıyor.

[25] Previously, he had worked for the DYP and its leader Tansu Çiller, when Erdoğan was in jail as a political detainee (İşler & Dalp, 2021, pp. 91–93).

[26] Advertising agency's website: https://www.arter.com.tr/

He always emphasised that the AKP has changed the direction of electoral communication channels during the election campaigns and repeated this in 2015:

"When the AK Party adopted a new style of politics, it changed all forms of communication and discourse. Since its establishment, the AK Party has always maintained consistent, regular and effective communication, not only in election campaigns, so the impact of our campaigns is relatively better recognised than other parties" (Aras, 2022; Ülke TV, 2015).

As it is clear from the above, Erdoğan stood out in this environment as a popular, successful and young leader who was being victimised because he was tried to be blocked. Moreover, he had a very disciplined, loyal and deep-rooted party organisation that saw and felt this victimisation as its own victimisation.[27] He identified the problems of the time with proper determination and sloganised the fight against corruption, poverty and prohibition as the "Fight against the three Ys"[28] (Bostan Ünsal, 2023; Kozanoğlu & Cabas, 2018, p. 275; Türk, 2018, p. 332). Therefore, the election campaign was conducted under the banner of fighting against the three Ys in order to appeal to the largest possible demographic (Saetov, 2015). On the other hand, as mentioned by Olçok (32. Gün, 2022), as the political communication consultant of the party's campaigns, the first slogan of the AKP was "open to light, closed to darkness."[29] This slogan symbolises the departure from the NVM, so while the slogan during the protests that led to the fall of the Erbakan government and other political crises such as Susurluk at the end of 1996 and prepared the 28 February process was "one minute of darkness for permanent light,"[30] Erdoğan indicated that he had not forgotten the people's demand both by implying his 'victimhood' with this slogan and by choosing the light bulbs as the logo of the AKP (Aras, 2022; Türk, 2024, pp. 20–21). Therefore, it is commonly accepted that the main reason of the AKP's decision to include the light bulb in its logo is to signal that the

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[27] Aslan (2021, p. 3) claims that Erdoğan's emotional image was constructed with a degree of intentionality and propaganda videos often include his emotional and tearful appearances.

[28] The letter Y is the first letter of the Turkish words for corruption (yolsuzluk), poverty (yoksulluk) and prohibition (yasak).

[29] Aydınlığa açık, karanlığa kapalı.

[30] Sürekli aydınlık için bir dakika karanlık.

party has come to meet some specific expectations and is committed to fighting corruption, because the unidentified murders, corruption and economic crises experienced in Turkey between 1985 and 2000 have created a climate of expectations in society, particularly with regard to the need for justice and accountability (Tunalıgil, 2005, pp. 218–219).

At the same time, the party distinguished itself ideologically from the NVM. The party's ideology was defined and declared as conservative democracy or democratic conservatism (Dağı, 2005, p. 30; Y. Taşkın, 2008, p. 61; Tombuş, 2013, p. 7). As Dağı (2005, p. 30) points out, the AKP departed not only from the leadership of the movement but also from its ideology. An attempt was made to define a new ideology or party identity for the AKP, which is called conservative democracy. Namely, conservative democracy was the key term that characterised the first years, where the party's promises included membership in the European Union (EU), the settlement of the Cyprus dispute and comprehensive political and economic reforms that would attract the support of liberals and conservatives (Dağı, 2005, p. 31; Yeşilada, 2016, p. 21). Akdoğan became one of the ideologues and published *AK Parti ve Muhafazakâr Demokrasi* (2004), which was hailed by Erdoğan as an attempt to theorise the party's claim to embrace conservative democracy despite its Islamic origins.[31] Yavuz (2003, p. 250) suggests that the party has succeeded in redefining itself as a dynamic force that attracts centre-right voters by emphasising its liberal and conservative Muslim-Turkish project rather than as a "splinter group" within the NVM.

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[31] First of all, the AKP tried to distance itself from the anti-systemic, anti-westernisation discourse of the political Islam, and secondly, the bad performance of centre-right parties in coalition governments during the 1990s; thus, it adopted conservative democracy which is thought as more universal and more neutral as the counterpart of Christian democracy in the west. For detailed debates on conservative democracy, see: Akdoğan, Y. (2004). *AK Parti ve Muhafazakâr Demokrasi* (1. basım). Alfa; Akdoğan, Y. (2005). Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi. In Y. Aktay (Ed.), *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce, Cilt: 6—İslamcılık* (2. baskı, pp. 620–631). İletişim; Yılmaz, N. (2005). İslamcılık, AKP, Siyaset. In Y. Aktay (Ed.), *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce, Cilt: 6—İslamcılık* (2. baskı, pp. 604–619). İletişim; Dağı, İ. D. (2005). Transformation of Islamic political identity in Turkey: Rethinking the West and westernization. *Turkish Studies, 6*(1), 21–37; Şimşek, S. (2013). Conservative Democracy as a Cosmetic Image in Turkish Politics: The Semiology of AKP's Political Identity. *Turkish Studies, 14*(3), 429–446; Akça, İ. (2014). Hegemonic Projects in post-1980 Turkey and the Changing Forms of Authoritarianism. In İ. Akça, A. Bekmen, & B. A. Özden (Eds.), *Turkey Reframed: Constituting Neoliberal Hegemony*. Pluto Press; Hoşgör, E. (2015). The Question of AKP Hegemony: Consent without Consensus. In N. Balkan, E. M. Balkan, & A. F. Öncü (Eds.), *The neoliberal landscape and the rise of Islamist capital in Turkey* (pp. 201–234). Berghahn Books.

The road to the 2002 elections was paved with tensions caused by the political crisis brought about by the decisions[32] of the National Security Council (MGK) and the poor economic policies of the ANASOL-MHP government[33] after the 1999 election (Bacık, 2004, pp. 821–822). The tension reached its peak when the then-President Ahmet Necdet Sezer threw the Constitution booklet at the then-Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit (140journos, 2018; İşler & Dalp, 2021, p. 100). After this political tension, the markets turned upside down, daily interest rates rose to astronomical figures,[34] the stock market experienced a historic 15 per cent drop, the Turkish lira was devalued, and corruption was rampant. This, together with Ecevit's deteriorating health and the dissolution of the coalition government, led to the decision to hold elections 18 months early (Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, p. 459; BBC - BBC News Türkçe, 2018; Bostan Ünsal, 2023; İşler & Dalp, 2021, p. 100). While the AKP's election campaign was in full swing, a closure lawsuit was filed against the AKP nine days before the election (Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, p. 47). People go to the polls under this stress (Aras, 2022). Türk (2024, p. 12) states that, in general, "*the politics of Turkey in the 1990s is the original medium of political actors who succeeded in enraging the voters with every step they took; therefore, the results of the 2002 election essentially reflect this anger and boredom.*"

As a one-year-old political party, the general election of 3 November 2002 was the first in which it participated. While some sections of the public, in the midst of economic and social depression, perceived the AKP as a potential remedy for the uncertainty and insecurity pervading the country, other sections of the public regarded the AKP as a source of hope and voted for it to assume power in its inaugural election. As Çalışkan (2014, p. 5) observes, "*the AKP represented a new breath in Turkish politics, pushing all political parties and the Kemalist establishment to negative politics.*" The centre-left CHP, led by the nationalist Deniz

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[32] The 28 February process.

[33] A coalition government composed of ANAP, DSP and MHP.

[34] 6200 per cent according to Bostan Ünsal (2023) and 7500 per cent according to İşler and Dalp (2021, p. 100).

Baykal,[35] which would become the main competitor of the AKP from that point on, found itself in a position close to negative politics by telling the people what the CHP would prevent the AKP from doing, while the AKP ran a campaign focused on increased democracy, pro-European Union politics, and economic wellbeing (Çalışkan, 2014, p. 5). The negative campaign strategy of the CHP against its rivals included soft and hard negative political advertising. The former is exemplified by the slogans and related visuals, such as "Don't let ruin your family"[36] and "Don't be left holding the bag,"[37] and the latter by a pragmatic message of "No Left, No Right"[38] and "Fateful Choice"[39] with ideological content (Sun İpekeşen & Duman, 2015; Tunalıgil, 2005, pp. 264, 269, 271, 310–311). The CHP's strategy was designed to convey to the public that the AKP, which was then perceived as a competitor, might potentially mislead the public after the elections. However, by adopting this strategy, the party eschewed making any commitments regarding the potential actions of the party upon assuming power or presenting an optimistic outlook on the future (Tunalıgil, 2005, pp. 264, 267). In other respects, a columnist stated that the CHP merely issued a warning to voters against the AKP; that is, with its slogans, it acknowledged that the one in front is different, and "positioned" itself in the second place (*cited in* Tunalıgil, 2005, p. 282).

Meanwhile, the ANAP's campaign employed a negative advertising strategy, utilising the slogan "This light bulb will darken your life; vote for the ANAP, not for darkness,"[40] which featured the light bulb, the symbol associated with the AKP. During the course of the electoral campaign, the ANAP positioned the AKP as a rival party, which was the leading party in public opinion polls, and no negative advertisements were broadcast against any other party. The objective was to influence undecided voters and foster a sense of scepticism towards the AKP. By utilising a

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[35] Former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1990s, and the leader of the main opposition party, the CHP, as the fourth leader between 2002-2010.

[36] Ocağınıza incir ağacı dikilmesin.

[37] Kabak başınıza patlamasın.

[38] Sağı-Solu Yok.

[39] Kader Seçimi.

[40] Bu ampul sizin hayatınızı karartacak; karanlığa değil, ANAP'a oy verin.

black light bulb and the phrase "this bulb will darken your life," the ANAP sought to associate the AKP with "darkness" and portray itself as "light" (Tunalıgil, 2005, pp. 214, 242–243). Olçok asserts that the ANAP's negative campaign strategy significantly contributed to the promotion of the newly established AKP and its logo. In an interview, he stated the following:

> "By the time the Motherland Party entered the election, it had already become a party with a reputation for being associated with darkness. The question thus arises as to the extent to which it would have been feasible to position a nascent political party in Turkey as embodying darkness and to present itself as representing light. This strategy proved effective for us in the following manner: we were a new party, we were participating in the electoral process, and we had reservations regarding the extent to which our emblem was recognisable. It is conceivable that the Motherland Party provided us with support through its negative campaign" (Olçok - 32. Gün, 2022).

In the election held 3 November 2002, of the eighteen political parties that participated in the election, only two were represented in parliament, while the remainder failed to meet the electoral threshold – which at the time was 10%. The conservative AKP won 363 seats, thereby becoming the ruling party. The main opposition party, the CHP, which was supported by the secularist voters, won 179 seats (Bacık, 2004, pp. 821, 826; Cop, 2016, p. 213; Türk, 2024, p. 55; Yavuz, 2003, p. 256). The AKP's electoral success was welcomed by those who believed that a single-party government would ensure stability in foreign and economic affairs (Bacık, 2004, p. 826). However, Erdoğan was unable to be elected to parliament due to his political ban and, therefore, was not assigned the role of forming the new government and becoming the prime minister. Instead, Abdullah Gül formed the 58th government of Turkey until Erdoğan's ban was lifted with the support of the CHP (essentially, of Deniz Baykal). Subsequently, Erdoğan was elected as a deputy from Siirt, where the election was cancelled by the Supreme Board of Elections (YSK) and renewed on 9 March 2003 (Aras, 2022, 2023a; Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, p. 471; İşler & Dalp, 2021, p. 101). In the midst of these developments, Erdoğan had travelled to meetings in Europe and the USA without any official qualifications, effectively acting as the country's de facto ruler.[41]

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[41] In a two-week period in 2001, Erdoğan visited to twelve member states of the EU and held a meeting at the White House with President George W. Bush (Saetov, 2015).

The government sought to reassure the public while simultaneously challenging the secular elites in a controlled manner. To illustrate, Bülent Arınç, the speaker of the parliament, bade farewell to the President accompanied by his wife wearing a headscarf, something that had never been seen before. As a result of such outbursts, this 15-month-old political movement garnered the admiration of the majority of conservative individuals (Aras, 2022).

The first year of the government, 2003, was marked by the 1 March Memorandum. The content of this memorandum was to authorise the government to send the Turkish armed forces abroad and to allow the deployment of US troops on Turkish soil for the invasion of Iraq. Erdoğan, who had not yet been elected as an MP, stressed the necessity of ratifying the memorandum on the one hand while simultaneously monitoring the process of his election on the other. Prior to the by-election in Siirt on 9 March and his inaugural statement as prime minister on 14 March, the memorandum was rejected in parliament on 1 March 2003. Despite there being more votes in favour of the memorandum (264) than against (250), the absolute majority (267) required by the constitution was not achieved (Aras, 2023a; Güvenç, 2023). Upon assuming the role of prime minister, Erdoğan promptly completed this unfinished task. The government resolution was submitted to parliament on the night of 19 March, passed on 20 March and published in the Official Gazette on 21 March. Thereafter, the USA commenced military action against Iraq, leading to the outbreak of war (Aras, 2023a; Dikmen Caniklioğlu, 2007, pp. 33–34; Göztepe, 2004, pp. 94–99; Milliyet, 2003).

Meanwhile, one of the most discussed topics of the period was the reunification of the island of Cyprus and the plan proposed by the then-UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan for a peace process with the objective of resolving the conflict in Cyprus.[42] Erdoğan and the AKP officials consistently advocated for a solution (Eroğlu, 2002, p. 788). Additionally, Erdoğan endorsed the implementation of the plan despite a media dispute with the leaders of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. The ongoing conflict in Iraq and the evolving situation in the Cyprus dispute gave rise to concerns

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[42] For more details, see: Milne, (2003). One state or two? Political realism on the Cyprus Question. *Round Table*, *368*, 145–162; Hoffmeister, F. (2006). *Legal aspects of the Cyprus problem: Annan plan and EU accession*. Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.; Attalides, M. (2014). The Cyprus Problem after the 1999 Helsinki European Council. *Mediterranean Quarterly, 25*(1), 22–53; Aydın & Taşkın (2014, p. 474).

among the general public, including those who traditionally espoused conservative views (Aras, 2023a).

Following the turbulence of 2003, the year 2004 was relatively calm, although it was an election year for Turkey. The government and Turkish society were preoccupied with a number of critical issues, including economic recovery, debates about the religious character of the ruling elite, and foreign relations with the international community, particularly the United States. Those of a conservative disposition sought to practise their religion without being subjected to discrimination and to maintain their existing way of life. The government, or the AKP, articulated its policies towards disparate oppressed segments of society and minorities.[43] It relied on the idea that conservatism did not necessarily mean being religious and gave the impression of a liberal outlook. Without abandoning its religiosity, it ruled by making decisions with a rational mind and established relations with the West, which the NVM had portrayed as anti-religious and ogre-like. The government allied with the US and aligned itself with that country in its dispute with Iraq, which is also a Muslim country. In this managerial approach to governance, the vehement objections of the secularist factions were rendered moot as economic and social prosperity grew within the country. In essence, the AKP dilutes religion like a solution (Aras, 2023b).

The local elections were regarded as a referendum on the outcome of the 3 November 2002 elections. For the AKP, the 2004 elections represented a continuation of service with "full power," as evidenced by their victory in the local elections. For the opposition parties under the electoral threshold, except for the CHP, constituted a competitive race against the AKP with the objective of increasing their vote rates. For instance, the MHP's objective was to regain the confidence of the electorate by winning 10% of the votes cast in local elections across Turkey (Erciyas & Baykal, 2018). The primary emphasis of the political parties was on the provision of services and economy-oriented discourses; the addressed issues were infrastructure, unemployment, resource management, and environmental pollution. The AKP was the only party to emphasise the necessity of strengthening and restructuring local governments. In contrast, although the CHP's primary objective, as the main

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[43] These policies were about the Alevi initiative, the status of djemevis, the curriculum of religious education, the Kurdish initiative, the state TV channel broadcasting in Kurdish language, and the mother tongue-based education denoting the Kurdish language.

competitor, was to win electoral victory in major urban centres, particularly İstanbul, and to enhance its vote share, it structured its campaign around the slogans such as modernity and secularism, which would later be associated with the tutelage regime (Erciyas & Baykal, 2018). Indeed, the CHP ran a caricaturised electoral campaign supported by humour with the adaptation of a cartoon film (32.Gün, 2024). Nevertheless, the focus of the criticisms was two-folded: first, the lack of the CHP's narrative on the promotion of the candidates for municipalities and local administrations and their qualities; and second, its political stance about the domestic politics and foreign relations. Such that the CHP adopted a position of opposition to the Cyprus negotiations within the context of the prevailing agreements and articles at the time. Concurrently, the party conveyed an ambivalence towards the EU and demonstrated minimal engagement with EU-oriented policies (32.Gün, 2024).

The contentious issue of Cyprus remained unresolved, and a week prior to the local elections, Turkey and Greece were scheduled to engage in negotiations regarding this matter (32. Gün, 2023). Concurrently, the AKP initiated the implementation of novel practices, particularly within the domain of healthcare, while simultaneously pursuing its electoral campaign. One of the primary focal points of the campaign was the Health Transformation Programme, which was the subject of considerable criticisms and complaints and continues to be a topic of considerable discussion (Aras, 2023b). The local elections were held on 28 March 2004, and the AKP demonstrated its efficacy, securing victory in 12 of the 16 metropolitan cities and becoming the first party to attain 47.67% of the votes. The following section provides an account of subsequent developments in the context of the country's pathological tensions and dichotomies.

3.2. e-Memorandum: 2007

Following the local elections of 2004, the AKP assumed control of the majority of the municipalities, a development that generated considerable enthusiasm among the general public, particularly among the children of conservative families. This is because an increase in the number of municipalities under the control of the AKP would result in an expansion of employment opportunities for individuals aligned with its ideological stance. Additionally, it would lead to an influx of tenders from conservative contractors and merchants seeking to conduct business with these municipalities. These local developments had a significant impact on numerous

households, as did the AKP's radical economic decisions (Aras, 2023c). In the period following the local elections, the AKP implemented a series of policies, particularly in the economic sphere, drawing upon its privatisation policy inherited from the Özal (ANAP) era (Aras, 2023c).

The year 2005 commenced with the decision to remove six zeros from the Turkish lira, resulting in the circulation of the New Turkish Lira (YTL) on 1 January (Aras, 2023c; Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, p. 49). With regard to domestic policy, the recently enacted Turkish Penal Code, which introduces and covers regulations in a multitude of areas, including from illegal construction to drunk driving, came into effect on 1 June. The AKP's foreign policy also underwent notable developments in the year under review, particularly with regard to its aspiration to become part of the EU. On 3 October, the EU accession negotiations commenced, which subsequently reached a stalemate in the near future (Aras, 2023c; Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, pp. 49–50). The inauguration of the Blue Stream gas pipeline took place on 17 November with the participation of Russian President Putin, Italian Prime Minister Berlusconi and Prime Minister Erdoğan. This event was of significant geopolitical importance, as well as being important for the AKP to be featured in the same photograph as world leaders in terms of reputation-building (Aras, 2023c).

In the initial month of 2007, Turkey witnessed the assassination of Hrant Dink, the editor-in-chief of the Agos Newspaper, and a subsequent funeral attended by thousands of individuals. The perpetrators of the murder planned to have a 17-year-old boy held responsible for the crime. This uneducated boy was sent to prison by the Turkish police with a flag on his back as if he had been drafted into the army, causing public outrage (Aras, 2023d; Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, pp. 51, 483).

The 2007 presidential elections represented a significant turning point in the previous, more moderate and more liberal AKP rule[44] (Akça, 2014, p. 36; Kalaycıoğlu, 2012, p. 2; Yeşilada, 2016, pp. 23–24). From the outset of 2007, the

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[44] It is beyond the scope of this dissertation, but one can look at the literatures of authoritarianism of the AKP rule and polarisation in Turkey which indicate that the 2007 and 2010 referendum processes add fuel the flames of authoritarianism of both the AKP, Turkish-type so-called presidential system, one-man regime of Erdoğan, and democratic backsliding of the country.

presidential elections[45] in Turkey began to unfold in a manner that precipitated a crisis. The seven-year term of the then-rigidly secularist President Ahmet Necdet Sezer was due to expire in May, and the then-Prime Minister Erdoğan contributed to the prevailing uncertainty and tension by refraining from announcing his party's candidate (Bacık, 2008, p. 377; Dinç, 2008, p. 4). The name of the candidate was announced to the public at the last possible moment, just 30 hours before the deadline (Alpan, 2010, p. 189).

When the nomination of Foreign Affairs Minister Abdullah Gül as the AKP candidate for the presidential election, the Chief of the Turkish General Staff made a statement at a press conference on 12 April, he asserted that the new president should demonstrate "a commitment to Atatürkism, secularism and the fundamental principles of the republic in substance, not in rhetoric." Two days later, on 14 April, the inaugural "Republic Protests"[46] were held by civil society organisations and opposition parties in front of Anıtkabir[47] in Ankara, two weeks prior to the presidential election in parliament (Aras, 2023d). The primary objections to Gül's candidacy originated from his previous statements regarding secularism and the fact that his wife wears a headscarf. Additionally, her presence in the presidential residence would be in contravention of the law due to the prohibition of headscarves in public spaces (Dinç, 2008, p. 5).

The first round of the presidential elections was held in parliament on 27 April but was boycotted by the main opposition party, the CHP. The AKP's candidate, Gül, received 357 votes out of a total of 361. However, due to the two-thirds quorum requirement, namely the presence of 367 deputies in parliament during the election, the CHP appealed to the Constitutional Court (Aras, 2023d; Bacık, 2008, pp. 378, 380; Cop, 2016, p. 213; Dinç, 2008, p. 5; Hendrick, 2015, pp. 235–236; İşler & Dalp, 2021,

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[45] At that time, Turkey had almost centennial parliamentary system experience and the President was elected by the Parliament, not elected by the people as it is now under the presidential executive system.

[46] The impetus behind these demonstrations was the possibility of any politician with an NVM orientation or Islamist roots running for the presidency; in other words, the idea of an AKP president would mean the "ultimate Islamisation" of state institutions and led to anxiety in society that secular republican values would be under threat (Alpan, 2010, p. 266; Bacık, 2008, p. 377). They were held in major cities such as Ankara, İstanbul, İzmir, Çanakkale and Manisa between April and May 2007 with the message of protecting the republic.

[47] Atatürk's mausoleum.

p. 114). At midnight on the same night, a statement, popularly known as an e-memorandum, was published on the General Staff's website. In this electronic memorandum, the TSK (Turkish Armed Forces) declared its position on the presidential election, asserting its commitment to secularism (depicting itself as an absolute defender of secularism). This declaration created an atmosphere in which the memories of the "old" Turkey and Kenan Evren[48] came to people's minds (Aras, 2023d; Dinç, 2008, p. 5; Hendrick, 2015, p. 235). Subsequently, on 1 May, the Constitutional Court cancelled the first round of the election, ruling it unconstitutional at the request of the CHP. In summary, a profound systemic crisis emerged due to the heightened sensitivity of secular groups to the potential for the "ultimate Islamisation" of state institutions.

This political crisis and the failure to elect a president resulted in the AKP calling for early elections in July 2007 – initially scheduled for November. This was done in order to gain a parliamentary majority and pave the way for the election of Gül as president (Bacık, 2008, p. 377; Dinç, 2008, p. 4). During this period, there was a notable increase in tensions between those who espoused secular and those who espoused religious views. The religious people perceived and felt a renewed sense of injustice and alienation. The seculars persisted in their efforts to safeguard the state, which they perceived as vulnerable to shifting towards a more religious form of governance from the conservatives. They also continued to organise the republican protests that started on 14 April in various cities. The term of office of President Ahmet Necdet Sezer expired on 16 May, but as a new president could not be elected, he continued in office (Aras, 2023d; Bacık, 2008, p. 377).

As a consequence of the Constitutional Court's decision on the presence of 367 deputies, the AKP proposed a package of constitutional amendments, which were passed by parliament on 10 May with the support of the ANAP, which was concerned with preventing military interference. The package included articles on a five-year presidential term instead of seven years, popular election, re-election of the same person as president no more than twice, reduction of the parliamentary election period from five to four years, and abolition of the 367-majority requirement for opening

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[48] Military officer who led the 1980 military coup, and acted as the President both the junta regime and between 1982-1989.

parliamentary debates (Aras, 2023d; Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, p. 480; Dinç, 2008, p. 5). However, the incumbent president, Sezer – given that no new president could be elected – exercised his right of veto on the grounds that the proposed amendments would create problems for the regime (Aras, 2023d; Dinç, 2008, p. 5). Upon the second approval of the package by parliament, Sezer, no longer able to veto it, decided to submit the amendments to a referendum, which was held on 21 October 2007. Meanwhile, both President Sezer and the main opposition party, the CHP, sought the Constitutional Court's intervention to annul the package. However, the court ruled in favour of the AKP government (Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, p. 480; Cop, 2016, pp. 213–214; Dinç, 2008, p. 5).

As can be seen, the agenda turned out to be the early elections, in which the country proceeded to the polls under the emotional context of a renewed secular-religious tension (Tuncer, 2007, p. 137). The 2007 general elections assumed considerable significance as a consequence of the political involvement of the army, the controversial decision of the Constitutional Court and the inability of the parliament to elect a new president (Bacık, 2008, p. 380). In consequence, the election campaigns of the political parties were conducted in a highly contentious political climate in the run-up to the 2007 parliamentary elections. The AKP's electoral strategy during the campaign period was focused on two key issues. One was, as expected, the "quorum of 367" issue, which was utilised as a campaign tool, and the other was the emphasis on stability and development, which is a fundamental advertising strategy employed by ruling parties (Bacık, 2008, p. 379; Dinç, 2008, p. 13; Uztuğ, 2007). As Bacık (2008, p. 379) notes, "*the AKP used '367' shrewdly; it quickly became the symbol of the struggle against the 'elitist oligarchy' with AKP managing to present the election as a referendum on democracy.*" In accordance with the aforementioned strategy, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and presidential candidate Abdullah Gül made appearances at all the party's significant election rallies (Bacık, 2008, p. 379; Dinç, 2008, p. 13).

The military's response and the opposition's reaction to the candidacy in question enabled the AKP to portray the situation in a manner that would resonate with its supporters. Erdoğan repeatedly emphasised and expressed discontent at the rallies, claiming that Gül's election had been impeded and that he had been treated unjustly by those he perceived as the defenders of the regime. In essence, Erdoğan's actions

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served to further reinforce the narrative of victimhood on piety, particularly in the context of the presidential election crisis. The e-memorandum thus assisted the party in framing the elections as a referendum for the general public, presenting the choice between supporting either a military or a civilian government as a populist struggle between the elites (connotating the main opposition party) and the people (connotating the AKP as the representative of the people) (Dinç, 2008, pp. 13–14).

In the rallies, Erdoğan frequently employed emotional rhetoric drawn from populist politics and the Islamic tradition, utilising the "language of love" to connect with supporters and make overt religious references. He repeatedly informed the audience that: "*We love you very much, we have great love for Turkey, we do not discriminate between regions.*" Namely, he articulated sentiments of profound affection and attachment to the Turkish people, emphasising the absence of any discrimination. He also invoked the Sufi poet Yunus Emre, who is known for his adoration of the entire human race: "*We love the created because of the Creator*"[49] (Dinç, 2008, p. 14). Dinç (2008, p. 14) argues that "*it is undeniable that the leader of the AKP, Erdoğan, has developed an affective bond with the electorate*" through the language he uses, through the utilisation of religious allusions for political gain.

As was the case in the initial years of its rule, the AKP was readily positioned at the centre-right end of the political spectrum due to the tensions that emerged in 2007. The historical and traditional DP position was shaped by a number of dichotomies, including those between the state and the nation, between a coup and democracy, between the civilians and the bureaucracy, and between secularism and religious fundamentalism (Uztuğ, 2007). Uztuğ (2007) observes that the party did not utilise this position in its political advertising in the form of videos. This may have been due to a lack of perceived necessity or responsibility regarding its polarising effect, with a preference instead reflecting a more moderate stance through film posters featuring side-by-side photographs of Menderes, Özal and Erdoğan with the words "Stars of Democracy." Indeed, the poster was distributed as part of the election campaign by certain foundations with close ties to the AKP government (Gülten, 2009; Sertoğlu, 2007; Yaşlı, 2013). In conclusion, the AKP was able to

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[49] "Yaratılanı severiz, Yaratandan ötürü."

capitalise on the opportunity to consolidate its position in relation to the legacy of the DP.

In regard to the second axis of the campaign, as Uztuğ (2007) elucidates, the AKP did not neglect any issue and made the electorate observe a plethora of advertisements on a multitude of subjects, including health, education, economy, and transportation. This approach was deemed an optimal strategy for ruling parties, as it involved showcasing their deeds, actions, and practices. Accordingly, the campaign placed an emphasis on the achievements and the continuation of stability under the AKP rule (Dinç, 2008, pp. 15–16). Another significant factor that influenced the campaign process was the series of bombings that occurred prior to the elections. These included the bombing of a shopping centre in the capital city of Ankara in May and several attacks in the eastern region of the country.[50] The funerals of the martyrs constituted an important item on the political agenda, and debates about the practice of making politics through funerals were intense (Uztuğ, 2007). Such occurrences prompted the party to address matters pertaining to security and nationalism in its campaign (Dinç, 2008, p. 5).

The AKP campaign's primary slogan, "No Stopping, Keep Going,"[51] aligned with these two core axes. According to the advertising agency Arter, this slogan was identified as one of the most impactful slogans in the global arena. Olçok, the campaign strategist and communication consultant, who emphasises emotion in election campaigns, films and songs, provided a first-hand account of the genesis of the slogan:

> "It was a process like this at that time: 367 was invented, and the president could not be elected. A decision was taken to hold a referendum. At that time, [the Ak Party] was clearly being treated unfairly. What had to be done at that time was: 'We will continue on our way!' This feeling had to be followed up. That's why this was the slogan of this campaign..." (İşler & Dalp, 2021, p. 114).

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[50] Source: https://www.mazlumder.org/tr/main/yayinlar/yurt-ici-raporlar/3/2007-mayis-ihlal-raporu/799

[51] Durmak yok, yola devam.

The underlying idea was that the motif of the slogan should reflect the government's commitment to continuing Turkey's development without deviating from its established trajectory (İşler & Dalp, 2021, pp. 114–115).

On 22 July 2007, the AKP secured a decisive victory, winning 46.58% of the vote and 341 parliamentary seats (Alpan, 2010, p. 269; Aras, 2023d; Bacık, 2008, p. 380; Hendrick, 2015, p. 236). The main opposition party retained its position, securing 112 seats, even though it lost its status as the sole opposition party (Erciyas & Baykal, 2018). In this election, a third party was eligible to win 71 parliamentary seats by passing the 10% electoral threshold. This was the MHP (Aras, 2023d; Bacık, 2008, p. 380; Türk, 2024, p. 55). Despite having been eliminated in the previous election of 2002, the party appears to have capitalised on public discontent towards the AKP and the CHP, who were embroiled in electoral tensions. Aras (2023e) claims that for those of a conservative disposition, religion and nationality are inextricably linked, and thus, the MHP represents a second, alternative address to which one may cast one's vote.

Despite the high level of voter turnout, the number of AKP deputies was insufficient for the party to elect the new president alone (Bacık, 2008, p. 380). Following the finalisation of Gül's candidacy on 11 August, this right-wing opposition MHP participated in the electoral process, anticipating a political backlash (Hendrick, 2015, p. 236). In the third round of the presidential election on 28 August 2007, Gül was elected as the 11th president with 339 votes, thus concluding the stalemate on this issue in favour of the government. Subsequently, a constitutional referendum was held in October 2007 with the objective of amending the presidential election process (Sözen, 2016, p. 201). In the early hours of the day of the referendum, an armed conflict occurred in Dağlıca, resulting in deaths, injuries, or abduction of a number of soldiers. Once again, the Turkish people went to the polls in a state of anxiety, and the proposed constitutional amendment was approved by a majority of 68.95% of the votes cast (Aras, 2023d). These electoral victories imbued the AKP government with a sense of security and enabled it to cultivate self-confidence (Kalaycıoğlu, 2012, pp. 2–3).

The AKP's policies between 2002 and 2007 resulted in a significant reduction of health-related issues. This was achieved by the integration of diverse hospitals under a unified state hospital insurance scheme, facilitating access to private healthcare facilities, the establishment of primary care clinics and the provision of free medical

care up to the age of 18. Furthermore, the distribution of food and coal to low-income groups, the provision of free textbooks for primary and secondary education, and the facilitation of homeownership for the lower and middle classes through the Mass Housing Development Administration of Turkey (TOKİ)[52] contributed to the AKP's popularity (Akça, 2014, p. 31; Erkmen, 2017, p. 917). Moreover, the government placed significant emphasis on democratisation in line with the EU accession negotiations (Erkmen, 2017, p. 917).

Conversely, the general public became aware of the Ergenekon trial, which commenced in June 2007 following the discovery of explosive ammunition in a residence in Ümraniye (Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, p. 475; Hoşgör, 2015, p. 231). The subsequent year was characterised by a series of high-profile trials and investigations, including those of Ergenekon and Balyoz,[53] which led to accusations of the establishment of a secret organisation with secularist intentions and of plotting against the Turkish government. In 2008, a significant number of retired generals, along with active low-ranking military officials and civilians, including journalists, intellectuals and academics, were subjected to legal proceedings in the Ergenekon and Balyoz trials (Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, p. 475; Hoşgör, 2015, p. 231; Yeşilada, 2016, p. 23). Furthermore, Erdoğan assumed the role of the prosecutor in the Ergenekon trials, while Baykal, the leader of the CHP, presented himself as the defendants' lawyer. Kalaycıoğlu (2012, p. 4) characterises this dispute and the subsequent trial as a political football.

As Aras (2023d) observes, the year 2007 saw a further intensification of polarisation and the incorporation of the Gülen community into state institutions, which were identified as a priority target for the removal of the secular elites. At this juncture, when the Turkish political elites were increasingly viewing each other as "friend and foe" engaged in a "relentless struggle", the local elections scheduled for March 2009 were to be held (Kalaycıoğlu, 2012, p. 4). This topic will be elaborated upon in the following section.

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[52] Toplu Konut İdaresi Başkanlığı.

[53] Sledgehammer in English.

3.3.   One Minute: 2009

The ongoing religious-secular conflict over the headscarf in the country continued in 2008. In a statement released on 14 January, Prime Minister Erdoğan asserted that "even if the turban is a political symbol, it is not a crime" (Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, p. 52). The opposition, particularly the CHP – which has regarded itself as fulfilling a mandate to safeguard secularism since its foundation once again positioned itself as an advocate[54] of secular ideology when it targeted the AKP as a party that "had become the centre of activities contrary to the principle of secularism." (Aydın, 2022; Tever, 2023, p. 40).

On 27 February, the opposition parties submitted an application to the Constitutional Court requesting the annulment and suspension of the constitutional amendment that provides for the "liberalisation of the headscarf in higher education." On 14 March, the chief prosecutor of the Supreme Court of Appeals filed a case for the closure of the AKP with the Constitutional Court. However, on 30 July, the decision was not to close the party but to cut off half of its state aid in 2008 for creating a focus contrary to secularism. On 5 June, the Constitutional Court ruled to overturn the amendment that permitted the free wearing of headscarves in universities. On 25 July, the Ergenekon indictment, which had been submitted on 14 July after almost a year of preparation, was accepted, marking the official commencement of the trial process (Aras, 2023e; Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, p. 52).

The year 2009 also saw the inauguration of the state television channel TRT 6, a 24-hour Kurdish language channel that was renamed TRT Kurdî in 2015 (Aras, 2023f; Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, pp. 53, 485). In a country where it was previously prohibited to speak Kurdish in everyday life, the broadcasting of a Kurdish television channel, the use of Kurdish in election propaganda, addressing voters in Kurdish from the podium, and even the establishment of Kurdish Language Departments[55] at

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[54] After a while, the party's stance on the headscarf issue changed as the party underwent a transformation under the leadership of Kılıçdaroğlu. For example, the new CHP did not oppose the headscarf in parliament in 2013; Kılıçdaroğlu defined the CHP as a "defender of the freedom of religion and conscience" in 2017; and it also has members who wear headscarves (Aydın, 2022; Çalışkan, 2014, p. 7).

[55] Kurdish education at universities came to the agenda in the 2010s. Mardin Artuklu University became the first university to admit students for the Kurdish Language and Literature undergraduate programme in the 2011-2012 academic year (BBC News, 2011).

universities in the following years represented tangible steps towards the government's Peace Process policy, which was officially known as the Kurdish initiative[56] (Musluk, 2010, p. 314). In other respects, the establishment of the channel provoked unease among nationalist and chauvinist groups. However, this initial discomfort was necessary for the process of societal adjustment and acceptance (Aras, 2023f). Another component of the AKP's democratisation policy, or democratic opening process, was the Alevi initiative,[57] which commenced in 2009. The democratisation policies of the AKP government towards minorities, such as the Alevi initiative and the Kurdish initiative, are also evaluated in the literature as political tools of the regime's authoritarian nature (Akça, 2014, p. 43).

The AKP government did not act as an isolated entity on matters pertaining to minority rights and the headscarf ban. Instead, it sought to foster alliances with liberal and leftist groups, aiming to secure their support. One notable example is the Council of Ministers' decision on 10 January 2009 to reinstate Nazım Hikmet[58] as a Turkish citizen (Aras, 2023f; Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, p. 53). On 29 January, the Prime Minister,

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[56] It was also named after Kurdish opening. The Kurdish initiative was a part of the National Unity and Fraternity Project, commonly known as democratic initiative which aimed respect for and improve human rights, democracy, and freedoms was started in 2009 (Öney & Selck, 2017, p. 773). The negotiations between the parties of the process – the PKK and the MİT, in 2009 and 2010 took place as Oslo negotiations in the media and public opinion. These negotiations were leaked to the press. The meeting of the undersecretary of MİT with Öcalan, who is a founding member of the PKK and political criminal, on the island of İmralı caused great repercussions, especially among nationalist groups (Aras, 2023f; Görmüş, 2019, pp. 30–31). At the end of December 2012, AKP leader Erdoğan re-launched the so-called Peace Process, an initiative aimed at solving the Kurdish problem through democratic means (Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, pp. 486, 490). The process included three stages: the PKK would disarm, withdraw, and combatants would be reintegrated; there would be constitutional and legislative amendments; and there would be political negotiations and normalisation process (Hoşgör, 2015, p. 230). It was over after the Kurdish side's announcement of ending ceasefire in 2015 (Görmüş, 2019, pp. 50–51). For further details, see: Kayhan Pusane, Ö. (2014). Turkey's Kurdish Opening: Long Awaited Achievements and Failed Expectations. *Turkish Studies, 15*(1), 81–99; Alpay, N., & Tahmaz, H. (Eds.) (2015). *Barış açısını savunmak: Çözüm Süreci'nde ne oldu?* (İlk basım). Metis Yayınları; Özhan, T. (2015). *Normalleşme sancısı: Açılım'dan Çözüm Süreci'ne Kürt meselesi (2008-2015)*. Özgür Yayınları; Öney, B., & Selck, T. J. (2017). What was the 'Kurdish opening' all about? A qualitative text analysis of parliamentary group speeches in Turkey. *Ethnicities, 17*(6), 771–791; Çiçek, C. (2018). *Süreç: Kürt çatışması ve çözüm* arayışları (1. baskı). İletişim Yayınları; Görmüş, A. (2019). *Efforts to solve the Kurdish question: The standpoints of the parties and the opposition (2002-2019)* [Assessment Report]. Democratic Progress Institute.

[57] This overture did not reach to nowhere because until the end of 2015, the AKP government did not make any executive and legal stride regarding the status of djemevis, dedes, curriculum of related religious education, equal citizenship and discrimination; therefore, this was a symbolic step (Genç, 2016; Kalaycıoğlu, 2012, p. 4).

[58] Turkish poet and novelist, who was deprived of Turkish citizenship because of his leftist identity and revolutionary ideas.

Erdoğan, participated in a meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos entitled "Gaza: The Case for the Middle East Peace." He reacted strongly against the statements made by Israeli President Shimon Peres regarding the Gaza operation, subsequently departing from the meeting, stating, "I will never come to Davos again,"[59] and he asserted that he had not been afforded sufficient opportunity to express his views. This incident, which came to be known in public opinion as "one minute," occurred two months prior to the 2009 local elections (32. Gün, 2020a; Aras, 2023f; Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, p. 53; E. Erdoğan, 2013, pp. 43–44; World Economic Forum, 2009). Upon his return from Davos, Erdoğan was greeted by a large number of supporters at the airport, which almost turned into a rally. In his speech, Erdoğan once again resorted to emotional rhetoric for political purposes, stating that "*it is the noble values of this noble society that have brought you here day and night, with love and excitement.*" He also touched people's sore points by describing himself and his party as "the voice of the voiceless masses, the person of the orphans" (Anadolu Ajansı, 2009; E. Erdoğan, 2013, p. 44; Türk, 2024, p. 73).

The 2009 local elections were notable for the primacy accorded to general political considerations over and above local dynamics. In the context of the local elections, the CHP sought to position itself as the opposition party in relation to the AKP. The CHP adopted a discourse that emphasised unemployment and corruption. It defined its local government vision with an emphasis on the "Contemporary and Social Democratic Municipalism Approach."[60] In contrast, the MHP attempted to retain its voter base by pursuing a strategy predicated on the notion of a potential division of the country, in alignment with the party's prevailing stance at the time. In its seventh year in power, the AKP persisted in developing its service-oriented discourse in response to arguments from the opposition. The AKP revised its vision for local governments, which was articulated in the 2004 local elections with the slogan "Local Development Begins,"[61] and adopted the concept of "Brand Cities" (Erciyas & Baykal, 2018). The

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[59] For the evaluation of the Davos crisis from a domestic policy perspective and its impact on the public opinion, see: Erdoğan, E. (2013). Dış Politikada Siyasallaşma: Türk Kamuoyunun "Davos Krizi" ve Etkileri Hakkındaki Değerlendirmeleri. *Uluslararası İlişkiler Dergisi, 10*(37) 37–67.

[60] Çağdaş ve Sosyal Demokrat Belediyecilik Anlayışı.

[61] Yerel Kalkınma Başlıyor.

AKP's campaign slogans were designed to reflect the party's emphasis on "service" alongside the values of unity and solidarity. The campaign slogans were as follows: "We are all one, we are together, we are brothers,"[62] "Our work is service, our strength is the nation,"[63] and "No stopping, continue to serve."[64] The final slogan was a slight modification of the well-known "No Stopping, Keep Going" (AK Parti Kartal İlçe Başkanlığı, 2009; Gürcanlı & Alp, 2009; Haber7, 2009).

While the agenda was dominated by foreign political developments and their repercussions at home, Turkey was engaged in preparations for the local elections scheduled to be held on 29 March. Four days prior, on 25 March, Muhsin Yazıcıoğlu, the leader of the BBP,[65] perished in a helicopter crash in a rural area (Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, p. 53). The circumstances surrounding his death were controversial, with some commentators suggesting that it was more akin to an assassination rather than an accident. This view was based on the perception that Yazıcıoğlu had implicitly threatened certain individuals with his statements, indicating that he would take action at a later point in time. Furthermore, his actions were seen to have triggered a sense of unease and distress by mobilising public opinion (Aras, 2023f; Arpacık, 2023). His statements prior to the elections were noteworthy: "*I was handed over such images that all hell would break loose in Turkey*" (Aras, 2023f). The probability of occurrence of political assassinations contributed to the gradual establishment of a climate of fear within the country.

The local elections were held on 29 March 2009, with a total of nineteen political parties participating. One salient feature of these elections was the prevailing atmosphere of concern and rising unemployment, which had been exacerbated by the global economic crisis since 2008. As a consequence of the economic crisis, the Turkish economy experienced a contraction and unemployment increase for the first time during the tenure of the AKP government. Therefore, the AKP experienced a three-point decline in this election compared to the previous local elections in 2004,

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[62] Hepimiz biriz, beraberiz, kardeşiz.

[63] İşimiz hizmet, gücümüz millet.

[64] Durmak yok, hizmete devam.

[65] Büyük Birlik Partisi.

receiving 38.80% of the votes. However, this was not a significant decline that had a notable psychological impact. The party lost approximately 8% of the votes cast in the 2007 general election and approximately 3% of the votes cast in the 2004 local elections. In the 2009 local elections, the party won 10 out of 16 metropolitan municipalities, a decline from its 2004 performance when it won 12 out of 16 metropolitan municipalities. In other words, the party lost votes for the first time, which led to a shift in the perception of "AKP's invincibility" (Aras, 2023f; Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, p. 483).

In the subsequent process following the local elections, 1 May was designated as an official holiday and was named "Labour and Solidarity Day" on 22 April (Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, p. 53). To make an analogy, a prudent and benevolent authority does not act contrary to the will of the subjects but rather guides their will towards their own interests. It is more persuasive than punitive and attempts to elicit positive emotions and exploit them for its own benefit (Han, 2020, p. 24). In accordance with Han's (2020, p. 24) observation, it can be stated that the AKP, adopting a stance that was antithetical to its previous actions prior to the local elections, succeeded in persuading and/or hypnotising the "intellectuals" who had previously aligned with its political agenda. These individuals included liberals who had previously expressed support for the lifting of the headscarf ban and those who had been identified as wise people during the Kurdish initiative (Aras, 2023f). In other words, the AKP government attempted to adopt a conciliatory "*approach to the subject (agent) rather than opposing it*" (Han, 2020, p. 24).

The AKP government, seeking to maintain its unchallenged authority in the wake of the local elections, introduced a new case into the ongoing Ergenekon investigation, which was linked to allegations of involvement in a coup. In January 2010, the Balyoz case was brought to public attention when an alleged coup plot was leaked to the press under the name "Balyoz Action Plan," as detailed in a report published in the Taraf Newspaper. On 19 July, the indictment was accepted, and the trial commenced. The trial was observed with varying degrees of interest and concern by different segments of the public. Some watched the trial with eagerness, while some expressed concern about the veracity of the documents that had been leaked (Aras, 2023g; Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, p. 494). The public was divided in opinion, and societal polarisation began to intensify as a result of the emotional swings.

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In May 2010, a change of leadership occurred within the main opposition CHP following the resignation of Deniz Baykal. This was prompted by the publication of some obscene images, which were alleged to belong to him (Çalışkan, 2014, p. 5). Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu was elected as leader on 22 May (Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, pp. 54, 291; Türk, 2024, pp. 156–157). He pledged to implement a significant transformation int the party's political strategy during his tenure. His primary objective was to facilitate rapprochement between the two ideological factions of the CHP, namely the Nationalists and the Social Democrats, with a view to achieving unity within the party. While the Nationalists, influenced by Baykal's legacy, pursued a negative policy towards the AKP, the Social Democrats rallied around Kılıçdaroğlu's leadership and advocated for a more democratic party structure (Çalışkan, 2014, p. 5). Despite Kılıçdaroğlu's calls for reform, which resulted in an increase in the CHP's number of seats in parliament in the 2011 general elections, which is the subject of the subsequent section, the election results demonstrated that the AKP's dominant position and popularity remained unchanged (Çalışkan, 2014; Tever, 2023, pp. 43–44).

On 31 May, the Humanitarian Relief Foundation[66] (IHH) set sail with the Mavi Marmara ship with the intention of delivering humanitarian and medical aid to Gaza, Palestine. However, the ship was raided by the Israeli military in international waters, with the accusation being made that the ship had violated the Israeli embargo. The operation resulted in the loss of Turkish lives, and on 4 June, the Turkish Grand National Assembly issued a condemnation of the attack (Aras, 2023g; Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, p. 55). Meanwhile, in the domestic politics, following the arrests in the KCK[67] operations, in which thousands of individuals were detained between April 2009 and October 2010, the PKK[68] initiated attacks in numerous cities across the country. On 31 May, a rocket-propelled grenade attack was organised against a naval unit in İskenderun; on 22 June, a military service vehicle was bombed in Istanbul; on 26 July, a police vehicle was attacked in Hatay; on 31 October, a suicide bomber attacked a police vehicle in Istanbul's Taksim Square (Aras, 2023g; Aydın & Taşkın,

[66] It is a conservative Turkish government-organised non-governmental organisation (GONGO).

[67] It is a Kurdish political organisation committed to implementing the ideology of democratic confederalism, and characterised as an urban organisation of the PKK.

[68] It is the armed wing of the Kurdish movement (Sözen, 2019, p. 298).

2014, p. 486). It can be argued that the climate of fear has turned out to be a constant feature of the social and political life of the Turkish people.

During the tenure of the AKP government, discussions pertaining to judicial reform were a recurring topic on the political agenda. The initial phase of the tutelage debate was concluded with the referendum following the 2007 presidential election crisis, which was instigated by the military's intervention in politics. The second phase, now, was the tutelage of the judiciary and the assertion that it was undermining both the existing AKP government and the EU process of democratising politics.[69] The government was able to secure the passage of a package of constitutional amendments in parliament despite opposition from the MHP and the boycott of the CHP and the BDP.[70] However, the total number of votes cast was 336, which fell short of the required majority of 367. Consequently, President Abdullah Gül proceeded to hold a referendum on the matter, scheduled for 12 September 2010 (Aras, 2023g; Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, p. 486). This date was selected as a result of Erdoğan's revanchist attitude, with an allusion to the 1980 coup d'état. It was subsequently transformed into a campaign of "fighting coups and juntas" (Aras, 2023g; Coşar, 2014, p. 74). The package of amendments included a number of changes to the structure of the Constitutional Court,[71] including alterations to the number of members, their term of office and method of appointment, the voting rates of the members of the court for the annulment of constitutional amendments and party closure cases, the introduction of an individual petition right to the Constitutional Court, and changes to the structure of the HSYK (Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors), and modifications to the

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[69] The approach of "strong-state tradition" in the mainstream literature argues that tutelage regime stems from the fact that appointees have always had a superior position over representatives of the people as of the formation of the Republic. Hence, there has been a bureaucratic tutelage over civilian politics, and this situation has continuously hindered democratic development. It also claims that excessive state intervention is not only the main cause of the permanent instability of political and economic life in Turkey, but also it prevents development of the Western type; a progressive bourgeoisie (Akçay, 2014). For various opinions, see: *Yargı vesayeti sistemi kilitliyor | Gündem Haberleri*. (2010). Yeni Şafak; Ilıcak, N. (2012). *Yargı vesayeti*. Sabah; Aytekin, E. A. (2014). *Bu vesileyle kurtulmamız gereken kavramlar (1): 'Vesayet'*. soL.; Yalman, G. L. (2014). AKP İktidarında Söylem ve Siyaset: Neyin Krizi? In S. Coşar & G. Yücesan-Özdemir (Eds.), *İktidarın Şiddeti: AKP'li Yıllar, Neoliberalizm ve İslamcı Politikalar* (pp. 23–46). Metis Yayınları.

[70] Peace and Democracy Party, established in 2008 to replace DTP (Democratic Society Party), banned in 2009.

[71] The AKP believed that the court was constantly putting obstacles in front of its executive power in the governance of the country.

jurisdiction of the military judiciary and the opening of a judicial remedy for its decisions (Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, pp. 486–487). In essence, the amendments were designed to transform the judiciary. However, they simultaneously expanded the executive's control over the judiciary while significantly undermining the constitutional checks and balances (Kalaycıoğlu, 2012, p. 6; Sözen, 2016, p. 201, 2019, p. 290; Tombuş, 2013, p. 11).

In the run-up to the referendum, the AKP presented this package as an exceptionally comprehensive judicial package and characterised those who would vote against it as supporters of the bureaucratic oligarchy. Consequently, the AKP was able to garner the support of both liberal and nationalist factions. This period, which was characterised by a lack of sufficient reform, saw liberals supporting the AKP government. The "yes, but not enough"[72] campaign suggested that Turkey would become a more democratic country. They believed that democratisation steps would be easier to take after the referendum, while they accused the "No" camp, the left, of being status quoist. The opposition organised significant demonstrations in Ankara and Istanbul, as well as prominent campaigns utilising slogans such as "We accept neither the 12 September Constitution nor the AKP Constitution" and "No to the Gülenists[73] on 12 September" (BirGün Politika Kolektifi, 2022). The referendum resulted in a majority in favour of the amendments, with 57.88% voting in support and 42.12% voting against them (Aras, 2023g; Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, p. 487). Erdoğan was able to emerge from the referendum as the dominant figure and "triumphed in another war," as Aras (2023g) observes. However, subsequent developments pointed to criticisms and rumours that the judicial structure (the HSYK, the Constitutional Court, the Council of State, and the Supreme Court of Appeals) had been transferred to individuals with close ties to the Gülen movement. The CHP was one of the major actors who argued that the constitutional amendment would result in the politicisation of judiciary, especially with reference to the changes in the structures of the HSYK

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[72] "Yetmez ama evet." This slogan has gone down in history as one of the most controversial and tragic positions of the Turkish left. The supporters claimed that the referendum should be seen as a constructive and positive, albeit incomplete, step towards revenging the fascist 12 September coup and its anti-democratic and authoritarian mentality (BirGün Politika Kolektifi, 2022).

[73] As Gülenists refers to the supporters of the Gülen movement, the adjective of "gülen" corresponds to "laughers" in Turkish, and those supporters are implied as contented with the developments.

and the Constitutional Court (Anbarlı Bozatay, 2011, p. 125). Besides, the common understanding was that these changes resulted in a new form of tutelage, whereby the cadres were merely replaced (Akçay, 2014; Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, p. 487; Gürcan & Peker, 2015, p. 22; Kalaycıoğlu, 2012, p. 6; Yalman, 2014, p. 37). This situation would have revealed that the tension between the judiciary and the executive during the corruption allegations in December 2013, which are presented in the following pages, was, in fact, between the Gülen movement and the AKP (Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, p. 487).

Aydın and Taşkın (2014, p. 475) argue that the demilitarisation and dilution of the military's political control in the context of the Ergenekon process and trials between 2007 and 2010 precipitated significant developments and engendered profound discussions on the civilisation of politics. The elections of 2007 and 2009, along with the referenda of 2007 and 2010, which proposed constitutional amendments, took place within a political context characterised by these debates and with the assistance of the AKP's growing influence over the media[74] (Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, p. 475; Kozanoğlu & Cabas, 2018, p. 464). In other words, the concentration of power through control of the judiciary has been accompanied by a progressive narrowing of the space for opposition, together with the government's exemplary control of the media, which has silenced opposition media and imprisoned or forced journalists to resign. This has caused Turkey to regress significantly in key press freedom rankings (Sözen, 2016, p. 201). Türk (2024, p. 26) also illustrates this situation as follows: whereas the RP lacked robust media support during the 28 February process, the AKP's stance in the 27 April e-memorandum does not indicate such a deficiency. It is, however, important to note that this was a period when the AKP not only gained significant influence within the media but also penetrated into

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[74] For details on the AKP's control expansion over the media, see: pages 291-2 of Sözen, Y. (2019). Competition in a Populist Authoritarian Regime: The June 2018 Dual Elections in Turkey. *South European Society and Politics, 24*(3), 287–315; Mavioğlu, E. (2012). *Cenderedeki Medya, Tenceredeki Gazeteci* (1. baskı). İthaki Yayınları; Yeşil, B. (2018.) Authoritarian Turn or Continuity? Governance of Media through Capture and Discipline in the AKP Era. *South European Society and Politics, 23*(2), 239–257; Demir, V. (2021). Freedom of the Media in Turkey Under the AKP Government. In H. Aydın & W. Langley (Eds.), *Human Rights in Turkey: Assaults on Human Dignity* (pp. 51–88). Springer International Publishing. In later years, the AKP's power over the media continued to increase, for instance, Aydın Doğan, the boss of Doğan Holding, which owned 30% of the media sector, exited the media sector in March 2018 following tensions with Erdoğan. The magazines, newspapers and television channels held by Aydın Doğan were sold to Demirören Group, which is close to the government, with a loan from a state bank (Aras, 2023p).

the political climate (Kozanoğlu & Cabas, 2018, p. 464). As Yılmaz (2022, p. 28) notes, this was a period when individuals were aligned mainly with specific opinions and, therefore, perceived their own views as inherently correct. This led to the ascendance of negative emotions, such as resentment and revenge, in the political sphere.

3.4.   After the Judicial Reform: 2011

In the wake of the 2010 referendum, the political environment shifted away from the democratisation process, namely the consolidation of democracy. It became an environment in which prosecutors, journalists, and even ordinary citizens were arrested, and their right to freedom of expression was curtailed. Furthermore, the conservative (traditional Islamic) values, norms, attitudes, and lifestyles were embraced as the sole true ones (Sayarı & Hasanov, 2008, p. 359; Tombuş, 2013, p. 13). In alignment with these problematic "truths/rights," there was an increase and intensification of interventions in people's lives, including the prohibition of alcohol consumption, the near-verification of the killings of women, the discussions about women's rights and their daily lives, and condemnation of the relationship between women and men. Ultimately, in addition to the secular communities, the liberals who initially pinned their hope on the AKP expressed their concern, fear and anxiety about the ongoing developments under the AKP rule (Akçay, 2014; Hoşgör, 2015, p. 213; Kalaycıoğlu, 2012, p. 19; Kumbaracıbaşı, 2016, p. 244; Tuğal, 2013).

In April 2010, several amendments were made to the electoral law, including the liberalisation of campaigning in the Kurdish language and the lowering of the age of candidacy to 25. In the lead-up to the general elections of 12 June 2011, the general election period was reduced from five years to four years in accordance with the 2007 constitutional amendment. During this period, numerous defendants in the Ergenekon and Balyoz trials assumed candidacy for parliamentary seats. Concurrently, prominent journalists such as Ahmet Şık and Nedim Şener were subjected to prosecution as part of the Ergenekon investigation (Aras, 2023h; Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, p. 55).

Accordingly, the constitutional amendment resulted in a shift in focus for political parties, whereby the efficacy of their campaigns was measured by their performance in elections. This situation compelled the parties to pursue votes from segments other than their traditional base, to nominate candidates in accordance with

this strategy, and to organise their election manifestos accordingly (Ete, 2011, p. 18). In terms of the main opposition party, the CHP, while the party adopted a campaign strategy aligned with the government's, the AKP's, position, disseminating messages that were perceived as negative by some observers in the context of the referendum process, an effort was made to cultivate a leader profile that was more accessible to the general public and a party image that was more aligned with the interests of the people during the 2011 general elections campaign (Karataş, 2019, pp. 80, 82). Indeed, this attempt of party to realise a transition from a party dominated by its members (a cadre party) to one with a broader base of support (a mass party) was in line with the new set of policies that the CHP adopted following Kılıçdaroğlu's election as party leader (Karataş, 2019, p. 82).

The CHP was the first political party to commence its electoral communication campaign in advance of the 12 June general elections. The party, contracted the Grey Agency for its campaign, sought to leverage the advantage of initiating the campaign at an early stage. Its election manifesto emphasised the social democratic character of the CHP and the transformation undergone in accordance with the demands of the contemporary era. The overarching slogans employed consistently throughout the campaign were "CHP for Everyone"[75] and "Turkey will breathe a sigh of relief."[76] Therefore, the campaign was characterised by the use of positive and rational language with the aim of espousing inclusivity and providing a sense of ease and comfort for all. In this respect, the CHP compiled reports on a range of topics, including family, youth, children, civil society, the eastern and south-eastern regions, new economy program, and published brochures and booklets on diverse subjects, such as women, tradesmen, and farmers (Bölükbaşi & Macar, 2019, pp. 954, 955, 957; Sun İpekeşen, 2012, p. 95).

The AKP proceeded to the polls with considerable advantages, having surmounted the obstacles posed by civilian and military bureaucracy and begun to observe indications of economic improvement. Prime Minister Erdoğan campaigned with the slogans "We are now entering a period of mastery" and "Our vision for 2023 is ready" (Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, p. 487). The AKP reflected its power in the phrase

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[75] Herkes için CHP.

[76] Türkiye rahat bir nefes alacak.

"What we have done is the guarantee of what we will do," and two prominent slogans were "Turkey is Ready, Target is 2023"[77] and "Dreams have come true,"[78] which evinced a positive and emotional campaign approach (Çınar, 2011, pp. 108, 111; Sun İpekeşen, 2012, p. 90).

The AKP's electoral strategy for the general election was to deliver "advancing democracy." This was an ill-defined and unsubstantiated promise, as outlined by Çınar (2011, pp. 110, 117). It was accompanied by a populist language that monopolised the democratisation of the country. This was achieved by presenting the party as the only eligible and capable political force to do so. The party presented its material deliveries and concrete improvements made during its nine-year term in office, such as better infrastructure and public services, improvements in daily life and democratisation in the form of civilianisation of politics. This was done both in the election manifesto and during the campaign, under the banner of "dreams have come true," implying that such services and improvements were a dream during the previous unsuccessful governments but came true thanks to the AKP (Çınar, 2011, pp. 110, 118, 123).

In a departure from its previous rhetoric, the AKP refrained from portraying itself as a "victim" during this campaign. This was because, according to the party, all its "enemies" had been vanquished, and no new ones had emerged (Saetov, 2015). However, the election was characterised by a polarisation of politics and society, with the AKP promoting the election as a struggle between its "new politics" – which would meet the real hopes and demands of the people – and the "dirty old politics" of the other political parties and groups – which depended on deceiving people with exaggerated and false promises (Çınar, 2011, p. 123). Ultimately, the AKP retained its position as the dominant political force in Turkey, securing the highest vote share in its history at 49.83% (Aras, 2023h; Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, p. 487; Cop, 2016, p. 214). This result has been interpreted as indicative of the party's emergence as a political brand that evinces the qualities of a highly trustworthy and competent political party and which is perceived as being more likely to meet the demands of the electorate than any of its rivals (Çınar, 2011, p. 108).

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[77] Türkiye Hazır Hedef 2023. The slogan of the 2023 general election was indeed determined by the AKP (Kentel, 2023).

[78] Hayaldi gerçek oldu.

Nevertheless, the elevated political temperature remained unabated. Following the elections, a crisis emerged in parliament concerning the oath of office, which is a constitutional requirement for participation in the legislative process. Some opposition deputies did not attend the oath-taking ceremony, while others, although present, did not take the oath in protest against the non-release of arrested deputies who were eligible to take up parliamentary seats. Additionally, they claimed that the judiciary had violated the sanctity of the ballot box, allegedly under the strong influence of the AKP (Aras, 2023h; Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, pp. 55–56; Çınar, 2011, p. 125).

In March 2012, the number of Syrians arriving in Turkey as a result of the Syrian civil war that began in March 2011 reached approximately 15,000 (Aras, 2023i). This migration issue, which later became known as the refugee crisis, was added to the already-heated debate surrounding daily political discourse alongside academic research (Türk, 2024, p. 105). The Kurdish question, one of the most pressing political issues in the country, was again placed on the political agenda towards the end of 2012. The initiative was relaunched under the name of the Peace Process, with the aim of resolving the issue through democratic means (Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, p. 490). Conversely, the KCK operations persisted with the apprehension and persecution of Kurdish politicians, attorneys, journalists, human rights advocates, and representatives of civil society organisations. Once more, the AKP's governance was marked by inconsistency as the KCK trial cast a shadow of uncertainty over the future of Kurdish politicians (Aras, 2023h).

Furthermore, in October 2011, a Constitutional Reconciliation Committee was established by each political party with a parliamentary group that pledged to draft a new constitution in advance of the 2011 general elections. While the aforementioned committee was making progress in the process of drafting a new constitution, the AKP initiated the debates on a presidential system. In fact, these discussions had commenced much earlier, with Turgut Özal and Süleyman Demirel[79] advocating for a stronger presidential or semi-presidential system with an emphasis on a powerful executive during their tenure. The AKP deputies submitted their proposal for a "Turkish Type Presidential System" to the commission in February 2012 (Arato & Tombuş, 2013, pp. 4–5; Aslan Akman & Akçalı, 2017, pp. 577–578, 583–585, 586;

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[79] Süleyman Demirel served as the prime minister seven times and was 9th president of Turkey.

Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, pp. 491–492; Boyunsuz, 2016, p. 68). Following a series of political and judicial ups and downs, including the failed coup attempt in 2016 and the constitutional amendment referendum in 2017, these discussions ultimately culminated in a systemic transformation that the AKP, particularly Erdoğan, had anticipated and sought to achieve. I will present this transition in detail under the following subtitles.

During this period, Turkish society witnessed a number of political, social and judicial developments that facilitated the AKP government's consolidation of power and had a significant impact on an already divided society, intensifying emotional polarisation. While Turkey's societal and emotional façade was characterised by polarisation between AKP supporters and segments of society expressing anxiety about the government's policies, the political landscape was, in Coşar's (2019a) words, in a state of constant fluctuation between authoritarian measures and democratic proclamations. On the one hand, efforts were made to resolve the Kurdish question through a peace process in 2013. On 21 March 2013, the leader of the PKK sent a letter to the Newroz festival[80] requesting support for the process. On the other hand, there were bomb attacks, for example, in Reyhanlı on 11 May; government interventions in people's lifestyles, for example, restrictions on the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages, the sale of which was prohibited by law after 10 p.m. on 24 May; statements about donating at least three children[81] to the nation on 8 August, and the repeated emphasis on abortion and Caesarean sections in the official discourse on the family on 18 June; and aggressive urban gentrification policies, for example, the removal of some trees in Taksim Gezi Park, which prompted public demonstrations on 27 May (Akça, 2014, p. 45; Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, p. 57; Bedir et al., 2022, p. 135; Coşar, 2019b; Daloğlu, 2013; Gürcan & Peker, 2014, pp. 82–83; TRT Haber, 2013).

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[80] In Kurdish culture, it is a celebration of the arrival of spring and the new year.

[81] The population policy of the AKP encouraged birth rates by advising women to have at least three children to counter the potential threat of an ageing population in the medium term. It also made an attempt to include a ban on abortion alongside the anti-abortion discourse as an extension of its population policy. This approach has attempted to colonise the demands of women's rights, and anti-feminist language has become entrenched in the field of women's rights. Therefore, women in general and the feminist movements in particular have reacted strongly to the neoliberal conservative policies of the AKP government, whose purpose is to control the woman body (Akça, 2014, p. 45; Akçay, 2014; Coşar, 2019b).

In a nutshell, in the aftermath of the 2010 referendum and with the confidence of a landslide victory in the 2011 elections, the AKP government moved away from the values and principles of modern Western state systems, including the rule of law, human rights and freedom of expression. The Gezi Park Protests, which commenced at the end of May 2013 and continued into June 2013, represented a critical turning point for the AKP. Social tensions reached a crescendo with the corruption investigations of 17-25 December. This resulted in a rift between the AKP and its leader Erdoğan and the Gülen community, which proved pivotal in the context of the failed coup attempt on 15 July 2016 (Yeşilada, 2016, p. 23).

3.5. Point of Departure for Power Consolidation: 2014

Yılmaz (2022, p. 95) identifies three main turning points in Turkey's political history under the AKP rule and its efforts to reorganise and mobilise its extraordinary power. These include the Gezi Park Protests of 2013, the failed coup of 15 July, and the constitutional referendum of 2017. The Gezi resistance began in late May 2013 in a small green space called Gezi Park in İstanbul. This location subsequently became the symbol of the protests, which continued with a snowball effect in June 2013. Indeed, the impetus for the protests was the pedestrianisation project of Taksim Square, which formed part of a larger urban transformation initiative. In 2012, the AKP-dominated İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality initiated a pedestrianisation project of Taksim Square, which appeared to be designed with the objective of reserving additional space for pedestrians. As part of this urban transformation project, the reconstruction of a mosque in Taksim Square and the revival of the Ottoman-era artillery barracks in Gezi Park were planned, and the park was to be transformed into a shopping mall. On 27 May 2013, a group of environmentalists, with the support of the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects and the Union of Chambers of Urban Planners, took action to halt the construction vehicles and protect the green space (Topal, 2016, pp. 1, 15–16; Yörük & Yüksel, 2014, p. 104; M. Yüksel & Yörük, 2015, pp. 132–134).

Some of the environmental activists erected temporary structures, including tents, with the intention of preventing the continuation of the demolition work. This resulted in the formation of a campsite. Subsequently, in the initial hours of 29 May, the police forces intervened with considerable force on the orders of the state

authorities, which served to consolidate and intensify the wave of protest. This led to a snowball effect, with the resistance being supported by the major cities across the country, not only in terms of physical and spatial spread but also in terms of ideological and political positions. The protests continued for over a month in 2013. The protests reached their zenith on 1 June. Following the police intervention, the previous night, the police forces withdrew from Taksim Square at noon, thereby allowing the protesters to take control of the square. It is noteworthy that the crowds that arrived at Taksim Square and Gezi Park had already congregated in significant numbers prior to the withdrawal of the police. On that day, the square and the park were transformed into a commune, thereby establishing a liberated zone in the Weberian sense (Gürcan & Peker, 2014, p. 83, 2015, pp. 78–79; Topal, 2016, pp. 1, 16; Yörük & Yüksel, 2014, pp. 104–105; M. Yüksel & Yörük, 2015, pp. 132–135).

The resistance developed and spread as a result of the attitude adopted by Prime Minister Erdoğan, who insulted the demonstrators and persisted in his determination to proceed with the reconstruction of the area, regardless of the wishes of the city's inhabitants. At the ground-breaking ceremony for the Yavuz Sultan Selim Bridge, the third bridge in İstanbul, Erdoğan made the following statements regarding the construction, which has caused several discussions: "*Some people come to Taksim Square, they will demonstrate in Gezi Park, this and that. No matter what you do. We have made the decision and we will carry it out as we have decided*" (Aras, 2023j). Furthermore, Erdoğan's stance towards the demonstrators became increasingly hostile, with the AKP and its affiliated intellectuals resorting to labelling them as "*looters*" (çapulcular),[82] "alcoholics," "extremists," and "terrorists" (Aras, 2023j; E. George, 2018; Hoşgör, 2015, p. 224). The AKP's rule was observed by both domestic and international press and academic circles to have contributed the deepening of societal polarisation in the country.

In mid-June 2013, the umbrella organisation Taksim Solidarity presented a series of demands to the government. Some representatives of Taksim Solidarity subsequently engaged in negotiations with Erdoğan. However, when these initiatives

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[82] On 2 June, Erdoğan uttered: "*We will not allow a few looters to come to that square and provoke our people by misinforming them.*" ("Biz birkaç tane Çapulcunun o meydana gelip, insanımızı, halkımızı yanlış bilgilendirmek suretiyle tahrik etmesine, pabuç bırakmayız.") (Aras, 2023j; Küçükaydın, 2013, p. 23).

proved ineffective, the police forces proceeded to clear Gezi Park on 15 June, employing excessive force. Nevertheless, the demonstrations persisted for a period of time across the country through the formation of people's assemblies and neighbourhood forums (Atvur, 2014, p. 33; Gürcan & Peker, 2014, p. 71; Topal, 2016, pp. 16–17; Yörük & Yüksel, 2014, p. 105; M. Yüksel & Yörük, 2015, p. 134).

One aspect of the Gezi demonstrations was the insistence on religious values and norms, as well as the encroachment upon people's lives through misguided judgments of their way of life. The state authority made a number of stigmatising statements and suggestions or imposed restrictions on people's daily lives. They included abortion, the three-child policy, Caesarean section, alcohol consumption, and public kissing, among other things. Gürcan and Peker (2014, p. 83) articulate this point that "*the Islamic social interventionism of the AKP government contributed to the further escalation of Gezi Events.*" Aras (2023j) narrates that the political climate in 2013 fostered a perception of societal harassment akin to that of a submissive nation, a scenario that the AKP governments and their supporters sought to perpetuate. In essence, the Gezi demonstrations served to reveal the authoritarian nature of the government in an irreversible manner (Z. Yılmaz, 2022, p. 220).

As previously stated, the calls for freedom and democracy propelled the Gezi Park Resistance to the forefront during the Gezi period. Initially, the protests were initiated due to environmental concerns and awareness-raising protests. However, during this time, the authoritarian discourse and conservative lifestyle policies of the AKP rule permeated every aspect of life (Atvur, 2014, p. 32; Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, p. 469; A. Ö. Yüksel, 2019, p. 88). In other words, the Gezi Park Protests or Resistance brought together different groups with anti-government sentiments and provided a platform for them to legitimise their position and articulate demands that were either directly or indirectly related to the protests. Conversely, following the Gezi Resistance's shift towards a macro-scale perspective encompassing a broader range of concerns, the tone of politics and the AKP leader's approach underwent a notable transformation. This stands in stark contrast to the campaigns conducted by the party in the subsequent electoral cycles (A. Ö. Yüksel, 2019, p. 88).

Towards the end of 2013, as previously mentioned, social tensions that have been unearthed explicitly with the Gezi Resistance escalated with the corruption

investigations[83] that took place between 17 and 25 December. The main actors in these investigations were AKP cabinet ministers and deputies. The allegations, which were made in tape recordings, reached Erdoğan and his family (Aras, 2023j; E. George, 2018). Indeed, upon assuming power in 2002, the AKP began to challenge the secular dominance of key government positions. In this context, the Gülen community emerged as a natural ally, becoming the primary alternative candidates for these positions, effectively replacing the Kemalists. However, a series of public disagreements occurred as a result of either the AKP no longer felt requiring the support of Gülenists or Erdoğan perceiving a threat from their dual loyalty. The presence of Gülenists in key positions, such as the judiciary, could potentially pose a risk to the AKP's rule (E. George, 2018).

Consequently, the Gülen community, which had for an extended period targeted and purged opposition figures and former state cadres with the support of the AKP, initiated action to disqualify the AKP itself, utilising the cadres of the police and judiciary under its own control. The anti-government movement sought to harness the energy generated during the Gezi protests for its own "cause," disseminating the tapes on social media, where individuals could follow the events unfolding during the Gezi protests in real time (Aras, 2023j). On the morning of 17 December 2013, an operation was conducted to raid the properties of over fifty AKP members and business people with connections to the party (E. George, 2018). Thirty-seven individuals, including the children of AKP ministers, were detained as part of an investigation into allegations of corruption and bribery (Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, p. 58). Despite the fact that some of the tapes were of conversations between Erdoğan and his son Bilal regarding the transfer of tens of millions of dollars, only four AKP deputies and ministers resigned (Aras, 2023j; E. George, 2018). On 25 December, the ministers in question (Muammer Güler, Zafer Çağlayan, Erdoğan Bayraktar and Egemen Bağış) announced their resignations, and Bayraktar also announced his resignation from his parliamentary seat, stating that "the prime minister should also resign"[84] (Aydın &

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[83] Sources close to the AKP government define these investigations as a "Security and Judiciary Coup," for more details, see: Haber228. (2019). *Gönül Adamı Recep Tayyip Erdoğan*, Minute: 03:45; Ülke TV. (2016). *17 – 25 Aralık FETÖ'nün Emniyet Ve Yargı Darbesi—Ülke TV Belgesel.*

[84] In February 2014, Erdoğan Bayraktar announced that he took back his resignation and apologised to the prime minister Erdoğan (Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, p. 58).

Taşkın, 2014, p. 58). The government, which had become a subject of intense criticism and hatred during the Gezi protests, was now grappling with the implications of the corruption allegations (Aras, 2023j).

Ultimately, the corruption scandals resulted in a significant deterioration in Erdoğan's relationship with Fetullah Gülen, the prominent religious leader of the Gülen movement. The Gülen movement, including thousands of police officers, soldiers, judges, and prosecutors, was declared to constitute a parallel state structure and accused of plotting to overthrow the AKP government (E. George, 2018; Yeşilada, 2016, p. 23). In other words, following the corruption scandals connected to the Gülen movement, it was designated a terrorist organisation,[85] with Gülen identified as its leader (The Economist, 2016). Similarly, a schism has emerged within society along antagonistic lines. While some, predominantly the AKP's core supporters, subscribed to the notion of infiltration by the Gülen community into the state apparatus, others offered a contrasting perspective: "*Mr Erdogan's furious persecution of this "enemy within" is a way of deflecting attention from the AK party's own plans for capturing the state*" (The Economist, 2016). Consequently, those who defended the Gezi protests and raised the accusations regarding the 17-25 December operations were labelled a threat to the state's survival. Prior to the 2016 coup attempt, any individual who had expressed criticism of the government was considered a potential coup plotter (Aras, 2023j). As a result, this confrontation assumed a distinct character after 15 July 2016, which is the subject of the following subtitle of this chapter.

The two major issues of 2013 contributed to the social, political and emotional cleavages in the country and had an impact in the run-up to the local (March) and presidential (August) elections of 2014 (Cop, 2016, p. 214). According to Aras (2023k), the atmosphere created in 2013 compelled the AKP voters, who had significant stakes in the outcome, to make a choice: either ignore the government's transgressions and condone the violence, or confront the transgressions and begin to reclaim their consciousness. She claims that Erdoğan, who had previously relied on opportunities and favours for his people and attempted to silence dissenting voices until 2014, subsequently ceased to view convincing critics as a futile exercise and "promised" a more authoritarian approach to conservatives and a more liberal one to

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[85] This labelling of terrorist organisation was officially declared in June 2016 (E. George, 2018).

pragmatists (Aras, 2023k). In consequence, the 2014 local elections were the most affected by the general political atmosphere and the most distanced from local dynamics of the previous local elections in 2004 and 2009. This was due to a number of factors, including the government's attitude during the Gezi protests, corruption scandals, and the stance of the Gülen community resulted in anti-AKP collaboration and positioning of opposition political parties. In contrast to previous elections, the CHP abandoned its propaganda against the AKP, which had previously been characterised as anti-secular, and developed a discourse based on these factors (Erciyas & Baykal, 2018).

Furthermore, the majority of political parties that participated in the elections, including the CHP, frequently referenced the issue of infrastructure and made commitments to voters in this regard. The CHP's electoral programme included a commitment to address urban aesthetics. However, the CHP was subjected to criticism for its electoral strategy, given that, although it encompassed unplanned urbanisation, liveable cities, social municipalism and transparency in its manifesto, it did not explicitly delineate its intended actions in this domain (Erciyas & Baykal, 2018). Nevertheless, in the 2014 local elections, the promises of the parties were eclipsed by broader political considerations on the one hand, while on the other, candidate discussions largely shaped the election agenda. In comparison to the two preceding local elections, the candidates assumed a more prominent role in this election. In an effort to effect a transformation within his party, Kılıçdaroğlu made a pragmatic move by nominating popular political figures who were not even party members, namely Mustafa Sarıgül and Mansur Yavaş, as candidates for the mayoralty of İstanbul and Ankara, respectively (Çalışkan, 2014, p. 7; Erciyas & Baykal, 2018; Tever, 2023, p. 44). The decision to field external candidates for the mayoral positions in İstanbul and Ankara was indicative of Kılıçdaroğlu's intention to expand the party's appeal and cultivate a more inclusive and diverse image (Tever, 2023, p. 44). In other respects, the MHP pursued a strategy of entering the elections with unassuming candidates in Ankara and İstanbul through an agreement with the CHP (Erciyas & Baykal, 2018).

The *sui generis* character of the local elections is evident in the conduct of the incumbent party, the AKP. Following the corruption scandals that emerged between 17 and 25 December 2013, the AKP altered the strategy and concept of its campaign for the 2014 local elections. This resulted in the development of a new political

communication strategy. Erdoğan's friend and political communication advisor, Erol Olçok, also addressed this issue (Ülke TV, 2015). In fact, Erdoğan was preparing for two elections concurrently, as he was a candidate in the presidential elections scheduled for August 2014. Unlike in previous elections, he involved the entire party management in the campaign preparation process, working alongside Olçok. This was because the campaign was presented as a new independence struggle, with the intention of creating the impression that the driving force behind the Gezi Park Protests and the corruption operations of 17-25 December were foreign powers. Moreover, the AKP leader Erdoğan started his campaign with a rally in Sivas, invoking the Sivas Congress as a symbolic site of Turkey's War of Independence (Aras, 2023k; TRT Haber, 2014). Despite the local nature of the election, Erdoğan was positioned at the centre of the campaign rather than the mayoral candidates. This strategy employed the message "you are not only making a choice for local municipalities, you are deciding our future" to influence conservative (AKP) voters (Aras, 2023k). In consequence, the AKP and Erdoğan sought to exploit the societal schism through the populist framing of an "us vs them" dichotomy.

The local election campaign evolved into a general election campaign, characterised by the slogans "Always Forward,"[86] "Always Nation, Always Service,"[87] and "Unbowed Nation, Invincible Turkey."[88] These slogans conveyed the message that the AKP would provide an increased level of "service" if elected. During the course of the campaign, Erdoğan unveiled a series of new initiatives, including the construction of city hospitals, the development of a new airport in Istanbul, and an increase in pensions for people with disabilities and older people. These developments were presented as a means of modernising and improving the quality of life in Turkey (Aras, 2023k). The advertising agency Arter prepared and distributed the campaign song *Dombra*[89] with Erdoğan as the central figure. This coincided with the patriotic sentiments and nationalist discourse that the AKP had adopted at that time. However,

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[86] Daima İleri.

[87] Daima Millet Daima Hizmet.

[88] Millet Eğilmez Türkiye Yenilmez.

[89] Arslanbek Sultanbekov is the composer of the original song which is a Nogai folk music (Aras, 2023k; Diken, 2014; T24, 2014).

the song was used without permission, as the composer of the original version stated that he had not given permission for it to be used (Aras, 2023k; T24, 2014; Ülke TV, 2015).

The elections were held on 30 March 2014, with the AKP once again emerging as the leading party, securing 43.14% of the vote and claiming victory in 18 out of 30 metropolitan municipalities. The strategies of the opposition parties were not sufficient to prevent defeat that the CHP experienced in İstanbul and Ankara, together with the debates on the election safety (Tever, 2023, p. 44). As Aras (2023k) notes, these results transformed Turkey into a giant conservative house, with Erdoğan's public endorsement. Conversely, on 13 May 2014, the most catastrophic and significant mining disaster in Turkey's history occurred in the town of Soma, Manisa. This resulted in the deaths of 301 miners due to the inadequate safety precautions in place. The disaster prompted a public outcry, and Erdoğan was met with protests and disapproval at the site of the accident (Aras, 2023k; Sancar, 2021). Thereafter, Erdoğan opted to portray the tragedy as an inevitable aspect of "fate," drawing parallels with similar disasters in 19th-century Britain. This was done to demonstrate that mining disasters were a "typical" occurrence and to circumvent criticisms of the government's alleged negligence (Bedir et al., 2022, pp. 136–137; Sancar, 2021). This attitude not only exacerbated the situation but also fuelled anger (Sancar, 2021). So much so that when Erdoğan was confronted with intense protests, his bodyguards resorted to physical violence, striking demonstrators, and even one of them[90] kicked a mine worker (who was also a relative of one of the miners who lost his life) with all his might. The photograph, which rapidly gained significant online attention, depicted the citizen who had been promised to be honoured in the recently concluded election campaign, now being kicked on the ground and subjected to a public display of disrespect (Aras, 2023k; Sancar, 2021).

In the context of the presidential elections that same year, Erdoğan initiated his campaign in Samsun, invoking Atatürk's landing in Samsun, which is widely regarded as the de facto commencement of the War of Independence. Erdoğan stated, "*Today we are embarking on a new historical journey from Samsun; we are taking the first step of a new beginning, a great beginning from Samsun, the city of great beginnings*"

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[90] It was soon realised that it was Yusuf Yerkel, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Prime Ministry.

(Anadolu Ajansı, 2014). The principal slogan of the campaign was "Erdoğan, the Man of the Nation"[91] and a logo was selected whose symbolism evoked the light at the end of the tunnel. This logo was similar to the one used by Barack Obama during his 2008 campaign for the presidency of the US (Akkuş, 2014; Anadolu Ajansı, 2014; Aras, 2023k). Additionally, the *Dombra* song was reposted during this campaign (BBC News Türkçe, 2014).

In the period preceding the first direct presidential elections in Turkey, the rhetoric of a "new war of independence" against the "parallel government" – which was attributed to the Gülen movement and its affiliated prosecutors, judges, and police officers who had betrayed their motherland, pervaded – filled the political atmosphere as well as the atmosphere of hatred within the country (Bardakçı, 2016; Saetov, 2015). As human rights violations increased, including the persecution of journalists and the imposition of censorship,[92] the majority of voters adopted a nuanced position, justifying the actions of the government by resorting to the discourse of "well, they may steal, but they also do a good job"[93] and acknowledging the existence of corruption, even if they were aware of the truth of the matter (Saetov, 2015).

In the first round of the 10 August 2014 elections, Erdoğan received 51.79% of the total vote, which equates to an absolute majority, with a turnout of 74.13%. His rivals, Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu,[94] the joint candidate of the CHP and the MHP, received 38.44% of the vote, while Selahattin Demirtaş,[95] the co-chair of the HDP, received 9.76%. Erdoğan was elected as the 12th president of Turkey and the first president to be elected by direct popular vote (Aras, 2023k; Aslan Akman & Akçalı, 2017, p. 578; Aydın & Taşkın, 2014, p. 469; Bardakçı, 2016, p. 6; Sözen, 2016, p. 201).

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[91] Milletin Adamı Erdoğan.

[92] In reaction to both the Gezi events and corruption operations, the AKP government tightened its control over the police and judiciary and resorted to restrictions of public access to social media platforms such as Twitter and YouTube (Bardakçı, 2016, p. 5).

[93] "Çalıyorlar ama çalışıyorlar."

[94] Professor İhsanoğlu, who was politically conservative figure and the former Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (Cop, 2016, p. 214).

[95] A lawyer and human rights activist before entering politics, he is a left-wing, young and energetic political figure. A former member of parliament, he has been in prison since November 2016 (Cop, 2016, p. 214).

Aslan Akman and Akçalı (2017, p. 578) highlight that the post-2014 presidential election period resulted in an unprecedented and crisis-ridden position, indicating the coexistence of a president with stronger democratic legitimacy due to the popular mandate and the absence of a constitutional amendment regarding the powers of the presidential executive to define their authority. Erdoğan had previously indicated his intention to serve as a distinctive president, an executive president, and had reintroduced the discourse surrounding the presidential system (Ümit, 2015, p. 176). Consequently, Erdoğan needed to replace the leadership of the AKP and sought to identify viable avenues for transitioning from the parliamentary system to the presidential system, in which he would serve as the sole executive actor. The political-emotional environment has begun to shift, not only among conservative segments of society, who continue to place their hopes in the AKP rule but also among secular and dissident groups, who perceive and fear that Turkey is transforming into a "one-man regime."

3.6.   Double General Election Year: 2015

Following Erdoğan's election as president, a change of leadership occurred within the AKP. On 27 August 2014, Ahmet Davutoğlu, the former minister of foreign affairs, assumed the role of party leader (Cop, 2016, p. 214; Ümit, 2015, p. 176). During the period of the AKP rule, with Davutoğlu as prime minister and Erdoğan as president, the government exhibited a notable shift towards authoritarianism. In February, a legislative package designated the "Internal Security Package" was proposed in parliament, giving rise to impassioned debate and ultimately passing in March despite the opposition's rejection and objections. The package stipulated that the police would be able to use weapons against those who attack or attempt to attack with explosives, Molotov bombs, flammable, incendiary or injurious weapons; that they would be able to use water to disperse illegal demonstrations; and that participants in such meetings and demonstrations would be sentenced to prison (for a period of 3-5 years) if they covered and hid their faces entirely or partially in order to conceal their identity (Aras, 2023l). Apparently, the government enacted these regulations in order to prevent a recurrence of the events that occurred during the Gezi Park protests, while the package prompted a public outcry on the grounds that it would result in the country becoming a "police state."

Following the challenging years of 2013 and 2014, the general elections – the inaugural election of Erdoğan's presidency and Davutoğlu's tenure as leader of the AKP – approached amidst a climate of heightened political polarisation (Aras, 2023l; Saetov, 2015). The AKP's election campaign once again highlighted the achievements of the AKP government (Saetov, 2015). It is, therefore, reasonable to conclude that the campaign was uninspiring due to the focus on achievements, deeds, and actions presented under the slogan "They Talk Ak Party Acts."[96] In addition to advocating for a new presidential system, the AKP's campaign discourse centred on the concept of a "parallel government." Party officials levelled accusations against FETÖ/PDY,[97] claiming that it attempted to stage a coup over corruption allegations. This discourse identified the parallel government as the cause of the rising exchange rate, fragile economic indicators, and the atmosphere of insecurity caused by corruption (Saetov, 2015; Türk, 2018, p. 214).

In terms of the main competitor of the government, the CHP demonstrated a comprehensive and meticulous approach to the planning the electoral campaign process. This campaign had a two-stage road map, including firstly, the slogan "We applaud as a nation"[98] to subject the incumbent administration to significant scrutiny and criticism, and secondly, the slogan "A Turkey to live in"[99] to elucidate the election promises, particularly by blending economic issues through social projects. In this process, the objective was to emphasise a positive campaign instilling hope, fostering enthusiasm, and bolstering confidence (TRT Haber, 2015). In line with this purpose, the CHP conducted the election campaign with the assistance of a professional team, and entered into an agreement with advertising executive Ali Taran (T24, 2015a). The election manifesto sought to delineate a four-pronged strategy, composing "Participatory Republic, Accountability of the State, Transparency,"[100] "A Turkey

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[96] Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar.

[97] Fethullah Gülen Terör Örgütü/Paralel Devlet Yapılanması (Fethullah Gülen Terrorist Organisation/Parallel State Structure).

[98] Milletçe alkışlıyoruz.

[99] Yaşanacak bir Türkiye.

[100] Katılımcı Cumhuriyet, Devletin Hesap Verebilirliği, Saydamlık.

with a Competitive Power in the World,"[101] "Social State,"[102] and "Sustainable Restructured State."[103] The projects corresponding to these strategies prioritise economic considerations over political ones and engage with the electorate directly through the medium of the economy (T. Tosun, 2015, pp. 22–23; T. Tosun & Gökmen, 2015, p. 195). Besides, Zabun (2018, p. 103), who analyses the electoral campaigns of political parties in Turkey in the June elections, states that the CHP's advertisements were all economy-related and the campaign was prepared on the basis of economic considerations and designed within a framework that offered tangible benefits to the electorate. With these politics, the party intended to present a forward-thinking, action-oriented endeavour. In addition, it sought to differentiate itself from the government by avoiding the implementation of policy initiatives that mirrored the government's rhetoric (Karataş, 2019, p. 104). Consequently, the CHP engaged with the electorate in a more assertive manner (T. Tosun, 2015, p. 23).

The general elections were held on 7 June 2015, in the wake of a series of incidents, including attacks on the courthouses, police headquarters, and the HDP rally in Diyarbakır just two days before the scheduled elections (Aras, 2023l; Köker, 2016). The AKP, under the leadership of Davutoğlu, secured 40.87% of the votes, thereby becoming the first party. However, the party failed to attain a majority in parliament, and this rate did not correspond to an adequate number of parliamentary seats to form a government on its own (Aras, 2023l; Bardakçı, 2016, pp. 5, 8; Saetov, 2015; Tombuş, 2015). This was the first occasion since 2002 on which the AKP was unable to retain its parliamentary majority. This marked the end of the AKP's dominance, which had lasted since 2002. The catalyst for this outcome was the representation of Kurdish politicians in parliament.[104] The HDP, a pro-Kurdish party that succeeded the BDP, achieved the historic milestone crossing the 10% electoral threshold for the first time in Turkish history, receiving 13.12% of the votes (Aras, 2023l; Bardakçı, 2016, p. 16;

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[101] Dünya ile Rekabet edebilen Türkiye.

[102] Sosyal Devlet.

[103] Sürdürülebilir Yeniden Yapılandırılmış Devlet.

[104] In the previous two general elections in 2007 and 2011, the pro-Kurdish deputies were elected as a result of the strategy of running as independent candidates (Cop, 2016, p. 214; Sözen, 2016, p. 201).

Evci & Kaminski, 2021, p. 483; Saetov, 2015; Şenyuva, 2018, p. 3; Sözen, 2016, pp. 200–201; Tombuş, 2015).

In the aftermath of the election, President Erdoğan granted Davutoğlu the authority to establish a coalition government. However, despite engaging with opposition parties, Davutoğlu was unable to reach an agreement. The process concluded with the decision to hold a snap election, in accordance with the Constitution, which vests the authority in the president to call new elections in the case that parliament is unable to form a new government within the prescribed period of 45 days. Davutoğlu was thus entitled to form an interim election government (Aras, 2023l; Bardakçı, 2016, p. 12; Evci & Kaminski, 2021, p. 483; Sözen, 2016, pp. 200, 202; Tombuş, 2015). The decision to hold snap elections in November constituted a turning point in terms of the emotional atmosphere of the country, resulting in the creation of a climate of fear in the political and social life of citizens (Sözen, 2016, p. 201). Aras (2023l) analyses this decision and the subsequent events, noting that Erdoğan once again sought to consolidate his authority by emphasising the imminent elections by making people feel beholden to him until the renewed elections; thus, the election campaign was written in blood. In addition, Saetov (2015) presents that the incidents were the result of an internal conflict initiated by the AKP before another full-scale confrontation with the PKK and highlights the role of the "bond of fear" in shaping the dynamics of the electoral process. In brief, the increased threat of terrorism, political and social instability, a conflict environment, and uncertainty regarding the future were the defining characteristics of the political and social processes that followed the June elections in the country (Erişen & Erdoğan, 2019, pp. 7, 15).

In the period preceding the November re-elections, a series of terrorist attacks and armed clashes occurred. Two days following the June elections, an armed attack was perpetrated in Diyarbakır against an association with close ties to the HÜDA PAR,[105] a minor fundamentalist Kurdish party (Aras, 2023l). Approximately six weeks later, on 20 July 2015, ISIS[106] organised a suicide attack in Suruç, the district of Şanlıurfa. The attack resulted in the deaths of 34 individuals and injuries to a further

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[105] Free Cause Party.

[106] The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria.

104. The majority of the casualties were college students who, as members of the SGDF[107] and the Socialist Youth Wing of the Oppressed Party,[108] were holding a press conference about the rehabilitation of Kobani[109] (Aras, 2023l; Bardakçı, 2016, p. 12; Sözen, 2016, p. 202). In the same month of July, there were multiple instances of violence against security forces in various cities across the country[110] (Aras, 2023l). In response to these incidents, the TSK initiated military operations, designated the Hendek[111] Operations,[112] on 8 August 2015. These operations, which were conducted against PKK, DHKP-C, and ISIS militants in Şırnak, Hakkari, Diyarbakır, and Mardin, continued until 9 March 2016. In some of these areas, curfews were imposed, for example, in Cizre on 4 September. Turkey experienced a period that bore resemblance to the days of a coup d'état. These operations were perceived as a form of intimidation directed towards the Kurdish electorate in the region (Aras, 2023l; Tombuş, 2015).

Two explosions occurred in front of the Ankara Central Railway Station on 10 October 2015 during the "Labour, Peace and Democracy" rally. This event contributed to the prevailing climate of fear and mourning in the lead-up to the general elections scheduled for November. The deadliest attack in Turkish history resulted in the deaths of more than 100 people and injuries to approximately 250 individuals (Aras, 2023l; Bardakçı, 2016, p. 14; Saetov, 2015; Şenyuva, 2018, p. 3; Sözen, 2016, p. 202). The following lines also serve to illustrate the prevailing emotional climate in the country. One of the defence lawyers in the trial of the bombings, İlke Işık, states that "*the 7 June and 1 November elections were changed by this massacre. This is the period and day when political power won, and the climate of fear was created for the*

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[107] Sosyalist Gençlik Dernekleri Federasyonu (Socialist Youth Associations Federation).

[108] ESP – Ezilenlerin Sosyalist Partisi.

[109] The Syrian border town, which was besieged by ISIS in 2014.

[110] Such as: on 22 July in Şanlıurfa-Ceylanpınar, on 23 July in Diyarbakır-Yenişehir, on 23 July in Kilis-Elbeyli, on 26 July in Diyarbakır-Lice, on 26 July in İstanbul-Sultanbeyli, and on 27 July in Muş-Malazgirt.

[111] *Trench* in English.

[112] The Constitutional Court rejected the applications filed by the relatives of the deceased regarding the operations and resulted in the deaths of more than 100 people, for details, see: Independent Türkçe. (2022). *AYM: 'Hendek Operasyonları'nda güvenlik güçlerinin ölümcül güç kullanmalarının mutlak zorunlu olduğu kanaatine varılmıştır*.

establishment of power" (Aras, 2023l). In a single sentence, Saetov (2015) encapsulates the official discourse of the AKP government at the time: "*If you want the bloodshed to stop, vote for the ruling party.*" The message conveyed was that the AKP was positioning itself as the sole source of power capable of restoring order in the prevailing climate of unrest (Sözen, 2016, p. 202). Similarly, the continuation of economic and political stability could only have been achieved through the maintenance of a strong AKP government in power (Bardakçı, 2016, p. 13). In other words, the AKP sought to persuade the public that the party's one-party government was the sole means of ensuring stability, deftly exploiting the political turmoil in the country (Tombuş, 2015).

Meanwhile, the AKP continued its election campaign with slogans such as "There is no you and me, there is Turkey,"[113] and "Back to work alone."[114] These slogans can be interpreted in two ways. First, they may be seen as an attempt to avoid polarisation in the country where the party was suffering. Second, they may be seen as an attempt to scare and manipulate the entire electorate into voting for them (Saetov, 2015). As I will demonstrate in the analysis and discussion chapter of this research, the content of the 2015 campaigns and the AKP's actions and discourses represent two distinct phenomena within the context of contemporary Turkish politics.

In contrast, the CHP employed a strategy that bore notable resemblance to that deployed in the June elections. While the party continued to place significant emphasis on addressing economic issues and social projects, namely the daily challenges faced by disadvantaged societal groups, it also placed an emphasis on the importance of unity and reconciliation in its campaign. The party presented both a continuity in its priorities and also a holistic vision of the future with its slogan "Turkey First."[115] Furthermore, the CHP emphasised its conciliatory approach during the negotiations about coalition government that followed the June election. It was emphasised that the party is capable of engaging with a diverse array of stakeholders and societal groups, which represents a significant distinguishing feature (Altunoğlu, 2015, p. 11; T. Tosun & Gökmen, 2015, p. 199).

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[113] Sen Ben Yok Türkiye Var.

[114] Tek Başına İş Başına.

[115] Önce Türkiye.

It is evident that the AKP government exercised considerable control over the media for an extended period. The pro-AKP media facilitated the construction of a narrative in which the party and Erdoğan were portrayed as victims of developments since June 2015 (Tombuş, 2015). Tombuş (2015) notes that the pro-AKP media did not report on the government's apparent negligence in the Suruç attacks and the October massacre in Ankara. However, claims by Erdoğan and Davutoğlu linking the suicide bombings to both ISIS and the PKK, and obliquely to the opposition, without any evidence, received extensive media coverage. This was an attempt to discredit the HDP before the November elections. The security-based narratives of the AKP targeted the HDP as the responsible agent and its negative portrayal as separatist and destructive (Erçetin & Erdoğan, 2023, p. 9). The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) evaluated the security environment surrounding the re-run elections as challenging, coupled with a high number of violent incidents. This hindered the ability of dissidents to campaign freely and led to restrictions on media freedom through criminal investigations of journalists and the closures of social media accounts (OSCE, 2016, p. 1). In essence, Erdoğan and the AKP employed a multifaceted strategy comprising media restrictions, political arrests, and heightened police and mob violence, with the objective of deterring opposition and ensuring their return to power in November elections (Tombuş, 2015). In conclusion, the November elections occurred in the context of ongoing bloodshed in the country. The atmosphere was markedly distinct, as Şenyuva (2018, p. 3) observes, with the electorate seeking stability and security beyond change.

The AKP, under the leadership of Davutoğlu, secured a majority in parliament this time, with 49.50% of the total votes (Aras, 2023l; Saetov, 2015). The AKP's parliamentary seats increased as a result of the decline of the country's nationalist parties. The number of deputies for the Turkish nationalists' MHP dropped from 80 to 40, while the number for the Kurdish nationalists' HDP dropped from 80 to 59. The AKP did not cede the field of nationalism to other actors, instead employing a nationalist discourse in its election campaign while also seeking to polarise the political landscape in a manner that targeted the HDP (Aras, 2023l; Bardakçı, 2016, p. 15; Sözen, 2016, p. 202; Tombuş, 2015). This was achieved by the rhetoric exhibiting an aggressive condemnation of external and internal "evils" perceived as a threat to national will and unity (Erçetin & Erdoğan, 2018, p. 395). Additionally, the strategy

of targeting emotional instability through fear appeared to be effective in the two election rounds of 2015 (Şenyuva, 2018, p. 3).

As 2015 drew to a close and 2016 commenced under the leadership of the 'new' AKP in sole authority, the bombings, shootings and clashes persisted. In the months of January and February 2016, İstanbul, Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, and Ankara were the sites of attacks (Aras, 2023m). Moreover, the Academics for Peace initiative[116] published a petition in January 2016 to denounce the violations perpetrated during curfews and military operations in the Southeast Anatolia region and to contribute to the processes and practices of peace-building in relation to the Kurdish issue. The petition, entitled "We will not be a party to this crime!" revealed the AKP government's authoritarian policies and practices. Such an attitude also symbolises that the occasional finger-pointing at well-established educational institutions or their members may be perceived as a form of revenge on some sections of the rank-and-file (Kozanoğlu & Cabas, 2018, p. 284). Meanwhile, the government initiated legal proceedings against the Gülen movement, resulting in the seizure of the community's media outlets, including the Zaman Newspaper and Samanyolu TV, which began to disseminate criticism of the government. Furthermore, the government assumed control of the Bank Asya, a financial institution with ties to the Gülen movement (Aras, 2023m). These actions reflected the intensifying rift between the AKP and the Gülen movement, which ultimately contributed to the failed coup attempt.

In May 2016, the AKP underwent another significant transformation following Davutoğlu's resignation. This marked the first instance in Turkey's political history where a prime minister vacated their post without the necessity of a no-confidence motion, electoral defeat, or military intervention. Instead, Binali Yıldırım, a close associate of Erdoğan and former minister in previous AKP governments assumed the role of party leader and formed the new AKP government (the 65th cabinet) (Aras, 2023m, 2023n).

As Yılmaz (2022, p. 157) characterises, another significant threshold and breaking point emerged during the summer of 2016. On 15 July, the Gülen movement, or FETÖ/PDY as it is designated, endeavoured to overthrow the AKP government and President Erdoğan (E. George, 2018). In a statement released on the night of the event,

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[116] For more details, see: https://barisicinakademisyenler.net/node/1

President Erdoğan asserted that a minority of Gülen movement members within the military had orchestrated the attempted coup. He then called on the Turkish people to respond by gathering in city squares. Similarly, the General Directorate of Security, via its official Twitter account, and the Directorate of Religious Affairs, through the mosques, called on people to take to the streets and confront the coup plotters. In response to the politicians' call to action, numerous individuals proceeded towards the Bosporus and Fatih Sultan Mehmet Bridges. Many of these individuals, including Erol Olçok and his son, perished amidst the clashes between military forces and civilian groups in Istanbul. In Ankara, the Turkish Grand National Assembly was the target of a bomb attack, while the group assembled outside the AKP headquarters was fired upon from a helicopter. While the security forces were able to neutralise the coup plotters through a series of operations until the following morning, the Istanbul and Ankara Chief Public Prosecutors' Offices initiated investigations into the plotters (Aras, 2023m).

The AKP government took prompt action within a few days, and on 20 July 2016, the parliament declared a three-month state of emergency in accordance with the constitution (E. George, 2018). A series of operations and transactions were initiated against those accused of involvement in the coup attempt, including detentions, arrests, dismissals from public service, confiscation of properties and bank accounts, and closure of newspapers, magazines, TV or radio stations (Aras, 2023m). As was the case in history, the state of emergency and the security policy implemented in the aftermath of the coup attempt involved the use of both legal and extra-legal violence against those who expressed dissent. This resulted in an atmosphere of insecurity, fear, threat, and existential anxiety for all political opponents (Z. Yılmaz, 2022, pp. 68–69, 111).

A study based on in-depth interviews conducted by the opinion research and polling company KONDA analysed the micro-dynamics of political polarisation and affective and normative aspects of citizenship after the failed coup attempt. The study described the coup attempt as an event that deepened the social drift that had existed in Turkey for some time (Çelik et al., 2017, pp. 7, 69). The research indicates that the lack of consensus regarding the interpretation of the event and the absence of a shared emotional response among social groups resulted in feelings of uncertainty and suspicion among dissident groups. Conversely, supporters of the AKP expressed their

feelings of anxiety and fear regarding the potential loss of the economic and cultural gains they had achieved, as well as concerns about "being victimised once more" and the prospect of "instability." However, the coup attempt subsequently became a source of pride for some segments of society, especially for the AKP voters (Çelik et al., 2017, pp. 69, 72, 74). This was accompanied by feelings of anger directed towards the attempt itself or the coup plotters associated with FETÖ/PDY (Günay et al., 2017, p. 70).

Additionally, it is possible to discuss the emotion of fear as it relates to the dissident groups from a different perspective. The fear experienced by these individuals was attributable to a number of factors. Firstly, there was the fear instilled by the violence perpetrated during the coup attempt. Secondly, there was the fear instilled by the religious groups who chanted *takbīr*[117] in the streets on the night of the event and during the subsequent demonstrations, which were labelled "Democracy Watch." This was due to the potential violence of these groups and uncertainty as to where their anger would be directed (Çelik et al., 2017, p. 73).

Consequently, in addition to the coup attempt, Turkey experienced another significant emotional-political transformation, characterised by a shift from a climate of fear to a society of anxiety.[118] However, the source of these emotions was distinct, making this situation one of the most crucial indicators of polarisation in the country (Çelik et al., 2017, pp. 69–73). Erdoğan adopted a more aggressive stance, and the AKP government was able to intensify its rhetoric against the Gülenists – and the dissidents as a whole – and implement authoritarian policies and practices (Evci & Kaminski, 2021, p. 483). In addition to the extension of the state of emergency for a period of two years[119] and the issued decrees, more than one hundred and fifty thousand individuals were detained, fifty thousand were arrested, and over one hundred and fifty thousand public servants were dismissed from their positions. Furthermore, two hundred and seventy students were expelled. The passports of nearly

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[117] "Allahu Akbar," meaning "God is the greatest."

[118] The study carried out in 2018 by KONDA Research and Consultancy also shows that the failed coup attempt caused a depressed mood in all segments of the society (supporters of both government and opposition) (KONDA, 2018, p. 28).

[119] It was going to last until 19 July 2018 with successive seven times extensions.

fifty thousand individuals were confiscated, two thousand seven hundred and sixty-one institutions and organisations were closed down, one hundred and thirty-one media outlets were closed down, and three thousand two hundred and thirteen people were stripped of their ranks (Aras, 2023m; Başkan et al., 2022, p. 328). In excess of one thousand academics who had signed the declaration "We will not be a party to this crime!" in opposition to the human rights violations occurring in the south-eastern region of the country were included in the purges resulting from the coup attempt and subsequently dismissed from their academic roles as part of the dismissal process initiated for FETÖ/PDY (Aras, 2023m; HRFT Academy, 2019, p. 17).

In essence, the proclamation of the state of emergency and its subsequent prolongation as government decrees – a phenomenon that the researchers of the KONDA survey conducted in 2017 aptly characterised as a manifestation of an "uncanny climate" (Günay et al., 2017, p. 7) – became a pivotal instrument in the hands of the AKP, particularly Erdoğan's authoritarian mindset. The AKP demonstrated a pattern of selective criminalisation through its use of unstable authoritarianism, as evinced by its actions during the Gezi Resistance and the 17-25 December corruption scandals in 2013. It is noteworthy that these instruments facilitated the transition to a presidential system in the country.

3.7. The First Election of the "New Turkey": 2018

For Erdoğan, as is the case with politicians who are adept at transforming crises into opportunities, the period following the failed coup held out the prospect of attaining certain gains. The question of Turkey's presidential system was once again the subject of debate. The 2007 constitutional amendment introduced the principle of direct election of the president by the people, resulting in the establishment of a distinctive hybrid system with a dual executive structure. This system has been evaluated as being more closely aligned with semi-presidentialism (Aslan Akman & Akçalı, 2017, p. 578). Following the 2014 presidential elections, in which Erdoğan was directly elected as president by the people, he proceeded to act in accordance with his stated intentions rather than serving as a mere ceremonial figurehead within the parliamentary system. Indeed, in 2014 he had explicitly stated that he would be active in the field (Aslan Akman & Akçalı, 2017, p. 588; Coşkun, 2017, p. 6; Ümit, 2015, p. 10) as the head of government and *de facto* leader of the

AKP during the double election year of 2015 and the politically turbulent year of 2016, despite the fact that any party affiliation of the president was constitutionally prohibited (Bardakçı, 2016; E. George, 2018). Erdoğan was adamant that the *de facto* situation must be transformed into *de jure* status through the introduction of a new constitution. Indeed, he utilised the campaign period preceding the 2015 general election to advocate for presidentialism (Aslan Akman & Akçalı, 2017, p. 588; Boyunsuz, 2016, pp. 69–70).

In fact, the concept of presidentialism can be traced back to 2011, when the Constitutional Reconciliation Committee was established with the mandate of drafting a new constitution. Erdoğan and the AKP advanced the argument for a Turkish-type presidential system on the grounds of strengthening executive powers. They considered the separation of powers between the executive and the legislature to be a destabilising and weakening factor for an effective government (Aras, 2023n; Aslan Akman & Akçalı, 2017, p. 590; Boyunsuz, 2016, p. 69; Coşkun, 2017, p. 5). In summary, Erdoğan and the AKP government exploited the polarised atmosphere between the two elections in 2015 and the failed coup attempt in 2016 to facilitate the transition to presidential rule. In essence, the conditions were established for a referendum on a pivotal constitutional amendment to alter the system despite concerns and objections regarding a perceived regression in democratic standards.

Although the opposition parties initially exhibited a lack of enthusiasm towards the proposed amendment, the evolving stance of the MHP following 15 July coup attempt paved the way for its eventual implementation (Başkan et al., 2022, p. 329; Coşkun, 2017, p. 6; Evci & Kaminski, 2021, p. 483). Subsequently, the AKP and the MHP initiated the parliamentary approval process that was required for the proposal to be put to a referendum in December 2016. On 20 January 2017, the proposal was passed by parliament with 339 votes, thereby determining the referendum. Even if the CHP caused public concern about the regularity of voting procedures in parliament, as the secrecy of the vote was breached and the process was limited and not fully transparent due to the absence of many HDP members, which had a negative impact on confidence in the reform process, the YSK announce the date for 16 April 2017 (Aras, 2023n; Coşkun, 2017, p. 6; OSCE, 2017, p. 4). The constitutional package, which provided for amendments to 18 articles of the constitution, included the abolition of the parliamentary system and its replacement with a presidential system,

the abolition of the office of prime minister, an increase in the number of members of parliament from 500 to 600, changes in the structure of the HSYK (later HSK), the transfer of power to the president to appoint one or more deputies (vice presidents), and the authority to declare a state of emergency – which would create serious gaps and crises in the constitutional order (Aras, 2023n; Evci & Kaminski, 2021, p. 484; Sürek, 2017).

The 2017 constitutional referendum was not conducted in a manner that ensured fairness and equal opportunity for all participants. Despite its status as the most significant and impactful constitutional change in the history of the republic, the referendum did not meet the standards of a fair and just process (E. George, 2018). In the context of the state of emergency, the governors and security forces imposed significant limitations on the fundamental rights of the opposition, including freedom of expression and the right to protest. Additionally, the AKP dominated the public sphere and the media while enjoying the full benefits of the state apparatus (Esen & Gümüşçü, 2017, p. 304). Conversely, those in favour of a "No" vote faced significant challenges and disadvantages, including physical attacks, intimidation and even detention[120] since January 2017 (Aras, 2023n; Esen & Gümüşçü, 2017, p. 314; E. George, 2018). The final report on election observation by the OSCE also outlines the lack of a level playing field during the campaign, as well as biased media coverage (with a clear dominance of the "Yes" campaign), unequal opportunities and undue restrictions on the freedom of campaigning of those supporting a "No" vote (OSCE, 2017, pp. 2, 11–13, 16). In consequence, an unparalleled level of fear and restrictions pervaded the atmosphere during the referendum, targeting opposition groups advocating a "No" vote (İ. Yılmaz & Bashirov, 2018, p. 1817). The majority of the Turkish population viewed this vote as a referendum on Erdoğan's authority, given the lack of access to an independent review of the amendments (E. George, 2018).

The constitutional referendum was held on 16 April 2017. The "Yes" votes, representing the approval of the constitutional amendment, constituted 51.41% of the valid votes in a highly controversial plebiscite conducted under the circumstances

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[120] For instance, some people were detained by the police in Antalya and İstanbul-Kadıköy while making propaganda for the "No" campaign. Also, a person hanging posters was attacked with a gun (Aras, 2023n).

of the state of emergency (Aras, 2023n; Aslan Akman & Akçalı, 2017, pp. 593–594; E. George, 2018; B. Taşkın, 2019; İ. Yılmaz & Bashirov, 2018, p. 1818). Indeed, Erdoğan and the "Yes" camp were on the verge of defeat and were only able to secure a victory through a decision by the YSK to allow unstamped ballots to be counted while voting was still underway. This decision, made on the day of the election, called into question the Board's impartiality. However, the Board justified its decision on the grounds that the unstamped ballots were objective and did not affect the election result[121] (E. George, 2018; Z. Yılmaz, 2022, p. 159; A. Ö. Yüksel, 2019, p. 108).

Despite the narrow margin of victory[122] over 51%, the referendum result permitted Turkish presidents to adopt a partisan stance and facilitated Erdoğan's role as both a member and leader of a political party, the AKP. At the extraordinary congress of the AKP on 21 May 2017, Erdoğan was re-elected as a member of the party and assumed the role of its leader (AK Parti, 2018; Sözen, 2019, p. 293). In order to overcome what he termed "metal fatigue" within the party organisation and among the party's mayors, he proceeded with his executive management and assumed control of the local governments by asking for the resignation of six mayors until October-November of the same year. The public was incensed by the fact that numerous AKP members or their immediate family members were not subjected to the purges in the state apparatus. This was particularly true given that ordinary citizens were dismissed from public service on the grounds of having a bank account in Bank Asya, which was known to be supported by the Gülen community (Aras, 2023n).

Meanwhile, on 25 October 2017, a new political party[123] was established on the right wing of the political spectrum following a split from the nationalist MHP.

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[121] In addition to the tension about the unstamped ballots, the fact that all the votes cast in 961 ballot boxes without a single waste were in favour of "Yes," the identification of ballot boxes with more votes than the number of voters, the use of block voting in Şanlıurfa-Viranşehir district based on the same voter signatures on the votes cast were some of the other allegations of fraud and violations (A. Ö. Yüksel, 2019, pp. 108–109).

[122] The three major cities of Turkey, Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir, as well as a significant part of the Kurdish southeast, voted "No." More than 60% of Turkey's GDP is concentrated in the regions that voted against it (E. George, 2018).

[123] One of the claims is that the party was founded to fill the vacuum of centre-right parties in the country caused by the corruption of the AKP (Aras, 2023n).

The party was founded under the leadership of Meral Akşener.[124] The name of this newly-emergent party was identified as the İYİ Party,[125] with reference to the tamga/seal of the Kayi tribe and its logo as a sun (Aras, 2023n; Evci & Kaminski, 2021, p. 483; E. George, 2018; Sözen, 2019, p. 296; B. Taşkın, 2019). While many assumed that the sole viable avenue for challenging the AKP was to pursue a right-wing strategy, Akşener pledged to challenge Erdoğan for the presidency (E. George, 2018; Sözen, 2019, p. 299).

The inaugural elections of the new Turkish system were held amidst a climate of oscillating sentiments within Turkish society, characterised by fluctuating between hope and anxious ambiguity (between fleeting hope and deepening pessimism, as articulated by Yılmaz (2022, p. 155)). This was due to the high level of unpredictability that the new system would bring. The new Turkish presidential system requires a minimum of 50 per cent +1 of the votes for a candidate to be elected as president. This threshold has resulted in the formation of electoral alliances among candidates and political parties (Adar & Seufert, 2021, p. 23; Aras, 2023o; Sözen, 2019, pp. 295–296). Furthermore, while proponents of the presidential system consistently emphasised the enhanced stability in politics resulting from the elimination of coalition governments, which had previously been a source of instability, particularly during the 1990s, Erdoğan was now compelled to rely on electoral coalitions to secure victory in the presidential elections held in June 2018.

The legislative proposal put forth by the AKP and the MHP, which sought to permit political parties to form electoral alliances, was passed by parliament on 13 March 2018. This paved the way for the advent of the *apparentement* system,[126] also known as pre-electoral alliances. The People's Alliance and the Nation Alliance were the first alliances to be formed (Aras, 2023o; Başkan et al., 2022, p. 328; Diken, 2018; Evci & Kaminski, 2021, p. 484; Sözen, 2019, p. 294; B. Taşkın, 2019, 2021, p. 464). In the context of the double parliamentary and presidential elections, the People's Alliance comprised the right-wing conservative and/or (ultra-)nationalist

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[124] Akşener was the minister of internal affairs during the 28 February process.

[125] Good Party.

[126] It explicitly permits political parties to create electoral alliances at the national level to count the votes of alliance partners (Evci & Kaminski, 2021, p. 482).

parties of the AKP, the MHP, and the BBP, with Erdoğan as their presidential candidate.

The Nation Alliance, on the other hand, comprised the ideologically diverse opposition parties. These included the secularist, social-liberal (according to some sources, a left-of-centre party) CHP, the Turkish nationalist (according to some sources, a centre-right or new right-wing party) İYİ Party, the Islamist SP and the liberal-conservative (according to some sources, a centre-right or Kemalist-conservative right-wing party) DP. Despite this, each party separately nominated their own candidate for the presidential election. These were Muharrem İnce[127] for the CHP, Meral Akşener for the İYİ Party, and Temel Karamollaoğlu[128] for the SP. It is noteworthy that both alliances excluded the pro-Kurdish socialist HDP, although the HDP occasionally supported the Nation Alliance from outside (Başkan et al., 2022, pp. 324, 328–329, 337; E. George, 2018; Sözen, 2019, pp. 287, 297; B. Taşkın, 2019, 2021, pp. 462, 465).

The initial and arguably most pivotal election of the "New Turkey,"[129] signifying a transition in the system of governance, namely the inaugural elections for both the parliamentary and presidential posts, was designated to occur on 24 June 2018 as an early election. However, the elections were initially scheduled to take place on 3 November 2019, at the conclusion of the legislative term. This was due to the fact that the AKP and the MHP were driven to implement the presidential system with a robust executive branch in order to address the persistent security concerns along the country's borders and the deteriorating economic conditions resulting from high unemployment, rising inflation, and declining economic growth. These circumstances could potentially lead to the loss of power for the AKP and/or the People's Alliance

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[127] İnce had been a member of parliament for the CHP since 2002. He resigned from the CHP in 2021 and formed the Memleket Partisi (MP – Homeland Party) which he initiated as a political platform called the Memleket Hareketi (Homeland Movement) in 2020.

[128] Karamollaoğlu is the chairperson of the SP, a former mayor of Sivas and a former MP from Sivas.

[129] Indeed, as Bora (2016) points out, the term "New Turkey" depends on the perception of the Western media, which refers to the heyday of the AKP government, under which the country was characterised by democratisation reforms as part of the European Union harmonisation process and close integration with the global market. The AKP government itself began to use the term after 2010, and especially in the 2014 presidential campaign of Erdoğan, who launched the campaign with a document entitled "On the Road to New Turkey" and announced that he would "become the president of New Turkey." In any case, the AKP government has never abandoned this rhetoric of "newness," by transforming the new into a "excuse" for legitimacy (T. Bora, 2016).

(Aras, 2023o; Başkan et al., 2022, pp. 324, 327; Sözen, 2019, pp. 287, 289, 296; B. Taşkın, 2021, p. 467).

The election was also conducted under the state of emergency, which was initiated following the failed coup attempt in July 2016. During this period, opposition parties and candidates were subjected to a series of challenges, including restrictions on their campaign activities and the dissemination of biased media coverage (Başkan et al., 2022, p. 338; Sözen, 2019, p. 296). The electoral campaign was conducted on an uneven playing field, with the incumbent AKP enjoying an unfair competitive advantage due to its control over the media and the instrumentalisation of the judiciary (Başkan et al., 2022, p. 325; Sözen, 2019, pp. 288, 291). In one instance, several pivotal figures from the HDP, including the party's presidential candidate Demirtaş, were incarcerated. Prior to the elections, there was a substantial risk of criminalisation for all opposition groups that were not already imprisoned (Sözen, 2019, p. 292).

Another illustrative example is that those who were unable to tolerate the prospect of Islamist and centre-right candidates competing against the AKP candidate resorted to attacking the Akşener and Karamollaoğlu signature collection stands[130] (Aras, 2023o). Furthermore, while the incumbent Erdoğan and the AKP received extensive coverage on Turkish official TV channels, amounting to nearly 68 hours, the CHP and İnce had just over six hours of coverage between 14 and 30 May during the election campaign. Conversely, the İYİ Party and Akşener were afforded less than thirteen minutes of airtime, while the SP and Karamollaoğlu received less than nine minutes. The HDP and Demirtaş were not afforded any coverage, while the HÜDA PAR, which supports Erdoğan, received 23 minutes of airtime, surpassing all opposition parties combined except for the CHP (Sözen, 2019, p. 298). Consequently, due to the restricted coverage of opposition candidates in both print media and TV channels, they were able to disseminate their message through online campaigns and large provincial rallies, which constrained their ability to reach a broader electorate and influence voters who might otherwise have shifted their allegiance away from the People's Alliance (Çarkoğlu & Yıldırım, 2018, p. 166).

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[130] Since the parties which do not have a group in the parliament should collect one thousand signatures to nominate candidates for the elections, three of the candidates – Akşener, Karamollaoğlu, and Perinçek – adopted this method (Aras, 2023o).

During the electoral process, the People's Alliance, particularly presidential candidate Erdoğan and the AKP, associated opposition actors with terrorism, labelled them as traitors to the state and securitised the majority of political issues by resorting to the argument of "external player and their domestic collaborators" conspiring against Turkey's interests at every turn. In contrast, the opposition parties and the Nation Alliance adopted a cooperative, competitive stance during their campaigns (Çarkoğlu & Yıldırım, 2018, p. 166; Sözen, 2019, pp. 295–300; B. Taşkın, 2021, p. 472). To illustrate, the social media campaign utilising the hashtag #Tamam (translated as "enough") proliferated, becoming a global trending topic and adopted by all major opposition parties to mobilise a collective opposition against Erdoğan. This unified opposition campaign was initiated following Erdoğan's statement that the AKP would step aside if the nation (people) said "enough" (E. George, 2018; Sözen, 2019, p. 297). However, the ruling wing responded to this campaign with accusations of terrorism, claiming that the majority of tweets under the hashtag were "*sent from countries where FETÖ and PKK are active*" and that they were the result of online bots (Sözen, 2019, p. 298). This approach was consistent with the stance of the People's Alliance, which sought to marginalise opposition actors by portraying them as linked to terrorism and framing issues through a nationalist-populist lens.

During the electoral campaign, Erdoğan and the AKP – which commenced collaboration with Yine Media[131] in the context of the 2018 parliamentary and presidential election campaign – employed a strategy of negative campaigning against the main opposition candidate, İnce, portraying him as a supporter of terrorism. However, this strategy was not limited to İnce; accusations of terrorism were also directed at the HDP on the grounds of support for the PKK and, subsequently, the İYİ Party on the grounds of alleged collaboration with the Gülenists (OSCE, 2018, p. 14; Sözen, 2019, p. 298). Consequently, the confrontational tone of the presidential campaign once again reflected the broader polarisation in society, as the incumbent frequently accused his rivals of being in favour of terrorism, while other candidates employed emotionally charged and more positive language in their discourse with each other (OSCE, 2018, p. 14).

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[131] Advertising agency's website: https://yinemedia.com/en/

In regard to economic matters, Erdoğan was able to diminish the gravity of the country's economic difficulties by espousing populist rhetoric and alluding to foreign conspiracies. Additionally, he appeared to maintain a focus on the war on terrorism, an approach that resonated with the nationalist electorate. In framing the debate on the economy in terms of security and external threats, Erdoğan continued to focus on the successful economic performance of his party in previous years. This discourse of securitising economic challenges precluded the opposition from attributing responsibility for the country's deteriorating economy to Erdoğan's one-party government (Çarkoğlu & Yıldırım, 2018, p. 166). In reference to the preceding period, Erdoğan and his party's campaign also highlighted societal grievances that had emerged prior to his tenure, as evinced by the campaign video advertisements bearing the hashtag #Remember,[132] which evoked sentiments of fear and anxiety among the electorate while appealing to satisfaction and trust by glorifying its own governments' policies. Typically, the AKP emphasised the economic and political instability that preceded its rule, discrediting the establishment's incompetency while legitimising its own policies (Erçetin & Erdoğan, 2023, p. 15).

In essence, the election campaign was characterised by an inclination towards emotional fear-based framing. This posed significant challenges for the opposition parties, which encountered obstacles including surveillance, harassment, restrictions on media access and politicised institutions (Başkan et al., 2022, p. 325; Şenyuva, 2018, p. 3). It is also noteworthy that, following the depreciation of the Turkish lira, pro-government circles disseminated and reinforced the perception that Turkey was facing a financial onslaught from external forces seeking to undermine the country. Consequently, voters were encouraged to unite and cast their votes in accordance with the leader's guidance (Çarkoğlu & Yıldırım, 2018, p. 166; Şenyuva, 2018, p. 3; Sözen, 2019, p. 298).

In the election, the People's Alliance received 53.66% of the total votes cast, while the Nation Alliance garnered 33.94%. The AKP secured a parliamentary majority with 42.56% of the votes despite a decline in its share of the electorate compared to the previous election. The pre-electoral alliance system enabled the smaller parties in the two electoral coalitions (the MHP, the BBP, the İYİ Party, the

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[132] See Chapter 5, Section 2 in this dissertation.

SP and the DP) to gain representation in parliament (Aras, 2023o; Başkan et al., 2022, p. 339; Evci & Kaminski, 2021, p. 485; Sözen, 2019, pp. 287, 304). Erdoğan, the candidate representing the People's Alliance, was elected for a second term as president of the "New Turkey," securing 52.59% of the votes (Aras, 2023o; Sözen, 2019, pp. 287, 300). The individual candidates of the Nation Alliance received the following votes: 30.64% for the CHP candidate İnce, 7.29% for the İYİ Party candidate Akşener, and 0.89% for the SP candidate Karamollaoğlu. Furthermore, the non-alliance candidates of the HDP and the VP,[133] Selahattin Demirtaş, who campaigned as a convicted prisoner, and Doğu Perinçek, received 8.40% and 0.20% of the votes, respectively (Aras, 2023o; Sözen, 2019, pp. 301–302).

As Aras (2023o) rightly points out, millions of individuals who had placed their hopes in the opposition leaders, particularly İnce, experienced a sense of betrayal and succumbed to profound despondency in the aftermath of İnce's remarks to journalist İsmail Küçükkaya: "He won," [134] which will be remembered long after this election. The Erdoğan government, which the opposition voters did not want to endure any longer, was entitled to another five years in office (Türk, 2024, p. 135). Following the election, the office of prime minister was abolished, and Erdoğan formed the first cabinet of Turkey's executive presidential system (Aras, 2023o). The new Turkey, with a new system of government, would proceed to hold the country's first local elections the following year, in 2019.

3.8.   Loss of Metropoles: 2019[135]

As 2019 began, Turkey was once again engaged in electoral preparations, marking the seventh such occurrence in the last seven years. Following the first election held under Turkey's new presidential system, this would be the first local election conducted under the apparentement system, which has recently become a prominent feature of the country's political landscape. The pre-election alliances that

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[133] Vatan Partisi (Patriotic Party).

[134] Adam kazandı.

[135] The results under this subtitle were taken from the YSK portal: https://acikveri.ysk.gov.tr/secim-sonuc-istatistik/secim-sonuc and Hürriyet: https://secim.hurriyet.com.tr/31-mart-2019-yerel-secimleri/secim-sonuclari/

had been formed the previous year were maintained for the 2019 local elections. Despite minor disagreements between alliance leaders Bahçeli and Erdoğan, the People's Alliance remained intact, while the Nation Alliance continued with only two parties (the CHP and the İYİ Party). Furthermore, the election campaigns were conducted with a high level of aggressive rhetoric and tensions between the electoral blocs, which served to fuel further societal polarisation (B. Taşkın, 2021, pp. 467–468).

The 2019 local elections were perceived as more than ordinary local elections due to the campaign strategies employed by the political alliances. The People's Alliance placed significant emphasis on the phrase "a matter of survival,"[136] while the opposition capitalised on the opportunity to challenge the AKP's increasingly authoritarian rule. As a result, the elections reflected a general election atmosphere, particularly in the major urban centres (Esen & Gümüşçü, 2019, pp. 320, 324; Öztay, 2022, p. 108). It was observed that the People's Alliance and the AKP leveraged polarisation and fear by mobilising identity politics through religious and nationalist discourses against the opposition during the campaign process and by ascribing existential significance to the local elections. However, the AKP defined its campaign theme and slogan as "municipalism of the heart" and "social municipalism," aiming to evoke an emotional response through the idea that city management is a work of the heart (*Gönül Belediyeciliği*, 2018; AK Parti, 2019; Esen & Gümüşçü, 2019, p. 324; Kavas & Taşöz Düşündere, 2019, pp. 2–5; Öztay, 2022, pp. 111–113).

In contrast, the opposition parties, despite their disparate ideologies, engaged in a unified campaign against the People's Alliance, as evinced by their actions during the 2018 general elections. Unlike the rival alliance's national security discourse, they eschewed divisive rhetoric and even attempted to appeal to pro-government voters by focusing on local issues and problems (Esen & Gümüşçü, 2019, pp. 326, 329). In essence, the CHP structured its campaign around the

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[136] In Turkish "beka meselesi" was one of the topics that the People's Alliance shaped its electoral campaign by implying the country's national security was at stake because of the opposition parties – as was the claims during the previous year's general election – which were allegedly in collaboration with the "enemies" of the nation, namely the PKK and the FETÖ or Gülenists. Besides, the economic crisis started in 2018 summer with the depreciation of lira caused an obstacle for the AKP to narrate its successful economic performances during the campaign (Esen & Gümüşçü, 2019, pp. 320–322, 324).

assertation that "municipalities should be the solution to people's problems," accompanied by the slogan "The end of March is spring"[137] (CHP, 2019; Esen & Gümüşçü, 2019, p. 326; Kavas & Taşöz Düşündere, 2019, pp. 5–8). In summary, the members of the People's Alliance placed an emphasis on national values and unity, while the Nation Alliance highlighted the need for hope and solutions to the challenges facing Turkish citizens (B. Taşkın, 2021, p. 471).

On 31 March 2019, Turkey held local elections. The election results were unexpected for the AKP despite the People's Alliance securing over 51.60% of the votes. Despite winning 15 metropolitan municipalities and 741 district municipalities with 44.33% of the votes, the party suffered significant losses in major cities, including the metropolitan municipalities of the capital city, Ankara and the finance capital, İstanbul, in the 2019 local elections. The National Alliance demonstrated considerable electoral strength in major urban centres.[138] The CHP was victorious in 11 out of the 30 metropolitan municipalities and secured 240 district mayorships. Despite failing to secure any metropolitan mayoral positions, the İYİ Party did succeed in winning 23 district mayorships. The minor party within the ruling alliance, the MHP, secured one metropolitan mayoralty and 233 district mayorships, while the BPP, the minor party, won 10 district mayorships. The pro-Kurdish HDP, which is not part of any alliance but supported the Nation Alliance by not nominating candidates in the big cities (a tactical decision in the western provinces), won three metropolitan mayorships and 58 district mayorships. The pro-Islamist SP secured 21 district mayorships, while the TKP,[139] a communist party, achieved a notable victory by winning the provincial mayorship of Tunceli for the first time in Turkish history (Aras, 2023p; Esen & Gümüşçü, 2019, pp. 321, 329, 331; Hızlı Sayar et al., 2020, p. 2; B. Taşkın, 2019, 2021, pp. 468–470). In

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[137] Mart'ın sonu bahar.

[138] The Nation Alliance this time consisted of only the CHP and İYİ Party for the 2019 local election and other parties did not act within the alliance. The SP strategically nominated candidates to reduce AKP's votes. The alliance took control of five of the six most populous and economically advanced cities in the country while it continued to hold the third most populous metropolitan city, İzmir (Aras, 2023p; Esen & Gümüşçü, 2019, pp. 317, 330; B. Taşkın, 2019, 2021, pp. 466, 469).

[139] Türkiye Komünist Partisi (Communist Party of Turkey).

conclusion, despite the difficulties posed by migration,[140] rising unemployment and economic recession, the People's Alliance was successful at the district level, although it did suffer losses in key metropolitan municipalities (B. Taşkın, 2021, p. 470).

Ultimately, despite the unequal campaign process and the counteraction of the AKP's othering and marginalising discourses, such as with the pun on the rival alliance's name as the "Contempt and Shame Alliance,"[141] the Nation Alliance was able to achieve considerable success in winning significant cities. (Bayaslan, 2019; Esen & Gümüşçü, 2019, p. 324; B. Taşkın, 2021, p. 467). The candidates representing the Nation Alliance, Mansur Yavaş and Ekrem İmamoğlu, respectively, for Ankara and İstanbul, were resoundingly successful. In accordance with the official results, İmamoğlu was elected mayor of İstanbul with 48.8% of the votes, compared to the People's Alliance candidate Binali Yıldırım, who received 48.55%. Consequently, following 16 years in power, Erdoğan experienced a defeat for the first time in 2019. However, while the results were being announced, the state-owned news agency Anadolu Agency (AA) ceased updating the results for the İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality for over ten hours (Aras, 2023p; BBC News Türkçe, 2019; Dağı, 2023; Esen & Gümüşçü, 2019, p. 334). Neither the Anadolu Agency nor pro-AKP television channels and newspapers reported that İmamoğlu was in the lead. In response to the allegations of false news and restricted media access, İmamoğlu accused the Hürriyet Newspaper and CNN Türk,[142] both part of the pro-government Demirören group, creating an uneven playing field (Aras, 2023p).

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[140] The public opinion about the economic decline has been in line with the Syrian refugees to which the AKP government allocated resources and this caused discontent and resentment among various segments in the society (Bardakçı, 2016, p. 10; Esen & Gümüşçü, 2019, p. 322).

[141] Their Turkish equivalents are "illet and zillet" which are phonetically similar to the world "millet" (nation).

[142] It is the affiliate of American channel CNN International.

As a consequence of the failure of the ruling party and its nationalist partner to accept the outcome of the İstanbul elections,[143] the deputy chairman of the AKP, Ali İhsan Yavuz, and the party's spokesman, Ömer Çelik, announced their intention to make an extraordinary appeal to the YSK. While Yavuz attempted to justify the rationale behind the call for a repeat of the İstanbul elections, he made the famous statement: "*Even if nothing happened, we say that something definitely happened.*"[144] Consequently, despite the questionable rationale behind this statement, the decision was taken to hold a repeat election in Istanbul on 6 May. The justification provided by the YSK for this decision was that "the chairmen and members of the electoral committees appointed for the original election were not civil servants." This decision was met with controversy, given that the YSK itself had appointed these committees several months prior to the election (Aras, 2023p; BBC News Türkçe, 2019; Ekiz & Tunç, 2019; Esen & Gümüşçü, 2019, p. 334; İleri Haber, 2019; *Kesinlikle Bir Şeyler Oldu*, 2019; B. Taşkın, 2021, p. 471; M. Tosun, 2019). As a continuation of the implementation of unfair media coverage, which the ruling party had resorted to on numerous occasions before, the majority of television channels did not broadcast İmamoğlu's press conference subsequent to the decision to cancel and re-run the İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality elections (Aras, 2023p).

The mayoral candidates for İstanbul resumed their electoral campaigns. The AKP reoriented its campaign strategy by affording Yıldırım greater autonomy to

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[143] It is both because that İstanbul is the economic heart of Turkey thanks to its share of one third of the country's GDP, and that the local governments are crucially important for the AKP owing to the large provincial and municipal budgets helping the party to provide social aid to 35% of the Turkish population and to maintain and foster patronage and clientelism/clientelist distribution (of municipal revenues and resources to Islamic foundations), which is accepted as one of the main source of its popularity (Esen & Gümüşçü, 2019, pp. 319–320, 335; B. Taşkın, 2021, p. 462). According to Yörük (2013), the AKP augmented poverty benefits not as a consequence of an increase in poverty, but rather as a result of an increase in the political mobilisation of the poor. In short, the AKP has instrumentalised the social municipalism understanding through these social aid policies (Türk, 2024, pp. 75–76). These social aid policy implementations are criticised within the context of "the state services which should be "right" of the citizens have become "aids" through neoliberal projects, and the AKP, as a neoliberal ruling, is responsible of making poverty sustainable rather than mitigating it. For the debates on the "sustainable poverty" created by neoliberal populism see: Yıldırım, D. (2010). AKP ve Neoliberal Popülizm. In İ. Uzgel & B. Duru (Eds.), *AKP kitabı: Bir dönüşümün bilançosu* (2. baskı, pp. 66–107). Phoenix Yayınevi; Çulha Zabcı, F. (2003). Sosyal Riski Azaltma Projesi: Yoksulluğu Azaltmak mı, Zengini Yoksuldan Korumak mı? *Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Dergisi, 58*(1), 215–239; Doğan, A. E. (2007). *Eğreti kamusallık: Kayseri örneğinde İslâmcı belediyecilik* (1. baskı). İletişim Yayınları. Urhan, G., & Urhan B. (2015). AKP Döneminde Sosyal Yardım. In M. Koray & A. Çelik (Eds.), *Himmet, fıtrat, piyasa: AKP döneminde sosyal politika* (1. baskı, pp. 229–258). İletişim Yayınları.

[144] Hiçbir şey olmasa bile biz diyoruz ki kesinlikle bir şeyler oldu.

pursue his own electoral strategy. Meanwhile, President Erdoğan, in his capacity as the party's leader, had engaged in active campaigning and maintained a prominent presence throughout the electoral process. Despite the fact that the election was local in nature and his image was displayed on all campaign banners alongside those of the candidates, Erdoğan had emerged as the public face of the campaign (Esen & Gümüşçü, 2019, pp. 323, 335; B. Taşkın, 2021, p. 467). Subsequently, in the second round of the contest, Erdoğan withdrew from the stage, thereby enabling Yıldırım to conduct a more voter-friendly campaign that resembled İmamoğlu's face-to-face interaction strategy with the electorate (Esen & Gümüşçü, 2019, p. 335; B. Taşkın, 2021, p. 471). Similarly, the junior ally, the MHP, also became less visible during the second campaign as Yıldırım needed votes from the HDP's conservative Kurdish constituency, and the People's Alliance gave weight to the religious/Islamic discourse rather than the nationalist one (Esen & Gümüşçü, 2019, p. 336; B. Taşkın, 2021, p. 471). However, the AKP government persisted in discrediting İmamoğlu as a religious and ethnic "other"[145] through the dissemination of disinformation via the pro-government media outlets, with the objective of instilling fear among conservative nationalist voters (Esen & Gümüşçü, 2019, pp. 335–336; B. Taşkın, 2021, p. 471).

Meanwhile, Yıldırım adopted the slogan, "We did what we said, we will do it again,"[146] while İmamoğlu campaigned with the slogan "If there is İmamoğlu, there is hope,"[147] in addition to "Everything will be alright"[148] (BBC News Türkçe, 2019; R. Doğan, 2019; Sabah, 2019; T24, 2019; Türk, 2024, p. 158). İmamoğlu, who had gained considerable support and was perceived to have been the victim of an unfair political campaign – similar to the circumstances surrounding Erdoğan's ban from politics when he was mayor of İstanbul – continued to organise local rallies and maintained his initial strategy of close contact with voters in both the AKP and the

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[145] Due to the fact that İmamoğlu is from Trabzon, some AKP politicians described the CHP candidate as "Pontus Rum" and said that "Greeks are aspiring" to İstanbul. This was interpreted by some observers as "an attempt to play the national identity card" (Kasapoğlu, 2019).

[146] Ne dediysek yaptık, yine biz yaparız.

[147] İmamoğlu varsa umut var.

[148] Her şey çok güzel olacak.

CHP strongholds. Despite the government's aggressive campaign, he was able to mount a successful defence due to his background as a local leader and his engagement with local issues and problems (and, on occasion, with the country's broader problems, such as the rule of law and democracy) (Esen & Gümüşçü, 2019, p. 336).

Consequently, the İstanbul elections were renewed on 23 June 2019. Ekrem İmamoğlu received 54.22% of the votes, while Binali Yıldırım received 45%. As a result, Yıldırım (in fact, Erdoğan) was defeated on two occasions in İstanbul. The difference of 14,000 votes between the candidates in the previous election was significantly amplified, resulting in an 800,000-vote differential in the current election. Erdoğan, who had previously asserted that "whoever takes İstanbul takes Turkey," was ultimately unsuccessful in his bid to retain control of the city, which he was devoted[149] and described as his "first love" (Aras, 2023p; BBC News Türkçe, 2019; *Kesinlikle Bir Şeyler Oldu*, 2019; B. Taşkın, 2019, 2021, p. 471). The results demonstrated that the electorate perceived the decision of the YSK to re-run the İstanbul elections as unfair, and their distrust of political parties and state institutions tragically increased (B. Taşkın, 2019, 2021, p. 471).

The AKP government did not halt its actions after the elections; instead, it persisted in its repressive policies by resorting to legal fraud (by bending the law) in regions with a high Kurdish population and where the pro-Kurdish HDP had secured mayoral positions. The government proceeded to dismiss the elected local administrators and replace them with appointed trustees. As was the case after the 2014 local elections, the government appointed trustees (state officials) to 48 of the 65 municipalities won by the HDP (Esen & Gümüşçü, 2019, p. 318; B. Taşkın, 2021, pp. 462, 470, 473). In particular, shortly after the election, the YSK annulled the mandates of several HDP mayors on the grounds that they had been removed from public service, and the municipalities in question were transferred to the AKP candidates who

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[149] In his remarks at the 2014 Election Declaration Programme, in which he presented the election manifesto entitled "On the Way to Great Civilisation: Human, Democracy, City," Erdoğan states, "*We worked for Istanbul with dedication and enthusiasm, and our efforts have resulted in a historical achievement. ...The condemnation was as a result of our unshakable place in the hearts of the nation, our shared language, direction and the fact that we walked arm in arm with the nation. ...We have already achieved our goals in Istanbul, and we are now doing the same in 81 provinces across Turkey*" (Türk, 2018, pp. 212, 317).

had lost the popular vote. However, it was the state institution that had previously endorsed the candidacy of these individuals prior to the election (Esen & Gümüşçü, 2019, p. 335). In addition, the appointment of trustees in Van, Diyarbakır, and Mardin in August 2019 resulted in the removal of elected mayors and the appointment of provincial governors as acting mayors (Anadolu Ajansı, 2019; B. Taşkın, 2021, p. 470). Furthermore, Erdoğan implemented measures to restrict the authority of elected mayors affiliated with the Nation Alliance, particularly in the capital cities of Ankara and İstanbul. This involved the transfer of municipal powers to the central government's ministries responsible for transport, infrastructure, the environment and urbanisation (Esen & Gümüşçü, 2019, p. 338). These implementations – the dismissal of elected mayors, the appointment of trustees, and the transfer of power to the central government – served to reaffirm the AKP's authoritarian tendencies, erode public trust in the popular vote, and reinforce the perception that elections in this country are unfair and that civil liberties are systematically violated (Esen & Gümüşçü, 2016, p. 1583, 2019, p. 317; B. Taşkın, 2021, p. 470).

The journey of the AKP's governance did not conclude with the completion of this study. Despite a decline in its vote share, the AKP and Erdoğan – despite the controversy surrounding his candidacy – were able to regain power in the 2023 dual presidential and legislative elections, which had been a key objective since 2011. In terms of local governments, the AKP suffered its most significant electoral defeat to date in the 2024 local elections. The main rival, the CHP, became the first party to win an election since 1977, with approximately 38% of the valid votes. As these elections occurred concurrently with the research process of this dissertation, namely after the research proposal had been accepted, they were excluded from the scope of this study. It is notable, however, that these recent electoral developments appear to signal a shift in the emotional mood of the country. Nevertheless, economic concerns continue to represent a significant concern for citizens, reflecting a prevailing sense of discontent, a source of their grievances, and hardship in Turkey.

Having presented the emotional-political landscape/atmosphere of Turkey in which I situate my research in context, as I have already mentioned in the introduction, this thesis questions how a political party incorporates emotions into the political scene through election campaigns/campaign advertisements. It also considers whether the approach taken has transformed over time. In order to identify an inconsistency

between theory and practice (the AKP's discourses and actions), in the following chapter, I explain the qualitative content analysis approach I adopted as a research method, the reasons behind my decision to adopt this approach, and the manner in which I collected the data, utilised a computer-assisted programme, and conducted an analysis with the assistance of a codebook, which I created depending on the existing accounts in the literature.

CHAPTER 4

METHOD AND METHODOLOGY

For Spinoza, there is no such thing as a miracle or a coincidence, which are supernatural events that violate nature and its laws. This is because people who do not have enough knowledge and understanding call certain events miracles due to their inability to discern the intrinsic explanations underlying these events or to comprehend them in principle. Thus, nature always obeys laws and truths that contain eternal necessity and truth, even if it is not necessary for people to know all of these truths (Nadler, 2006, pp. 111–112). In a similar vein, if the studies that explain the AKP's long-term political consolidation through elections by taking into account numerous (economic, social, etc.) dynamics in politics were to be deemed unsatisfactory, it would not be due to a coincidence or a miracle behind it. Such an outcome would be difficult to explain. The examination of the dynamics (drivers) that have been overlooked and require further analysis will facilitate the resolution of question(s) that remain unanswered. Accordingly, this dissertation opts for emotions as the object of explanation. The research material of this dissertation is electoral campaigns (video ads), and the phenomena to be explained is emotions.

To this end, in this chapter, I explain "how to do this study" and "how to arrive at the possible answers." I will present the backbone of my dissertation's analysis, namely the processes – and challenges during these processes – of collecting and preparing data for the study and the epistemological and methodological approaches I adopt. The method of data analysis is a qualitative content analysis. I carried out the analysis on the selected visual materials using MAXQDA, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) – the results of which are presented in the following chapter. This chapter has four subheadings: *qualitative approach, content analysis, data collection and selection procedures,* and *codebook*.

4.1. Qualitative approach

Since methodological approaches (quantitative and qualitative) are not independent of epistemological and ontological considerations, I found it necessary to touch on interpretivism, which I adopt as a scientific position, and then interface with qualitative content analysis. The interpretivist paradigm or approach seeks to interpret the social world by rejecting the objectivist view because it believes that the world is full of meanings; each component or part has its own meaning. Meaning is a construction (Atilla, 2022). This meaning has cultural and historical foundations. It is likely to be revealed by being interpreted through social constructions such as consciousness, language, shared meanings, and instruments. More importantly, this meaning can be reflected in different ways by using multiple methods (Dudovskiy, 2017; Hughes, 2003).

Unlike the scientific paradigm (positivism), the interpretive paradigm focuses ontologically on more than one truth or reality when conducting qualitative research. It argues that reality exists in the mental constructs. In other words, the concept of truth is not a singular entity but rather a construct that exists within the mind. Accordingly, the ontological position of the interpretative paradigm accepts reality as subjective and multiple (Dudovskiy, 2017) – which leads to relativity. Everyone has their own reality/realities, so different researchers address different realities; there are as many realities as there are people (Creswell, 2007, pp. 16–18; Scotland, 2012, p. 11). Therefore, from an epistemological perspective, one can deduce that reality is constructed individually and socially.

The primary purpose of the interpretative paradigm or the interpretivist approach is to understand the distinctive thoughts, beliefs, and perceptions of societies accordingly, the people who shape them (Hammersley, 2012). At this point, how they understand and interpret the world in which they live is not safe from or above their feelings, emotions, and affections. Society is made up of the interactions of individuals who, through their interactions between their consciousness and the world, attribute subjective meaning to their own actions. Their attributions also include their emotions. Accordingly, society, social relations, and social sciences cannot be "explained" from a single perspective with clear-cut concepts and categorisations but can be interpreted – which means that the interpretive paradigm accepts that reality is socially

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constructed, and this dissertation assumes that emotions are also socially constructed (Goodwin et al., 2001, p. 13; van Troost et al., 2013, p. 187). For all these reasons, I have adopted the interpretive paradigm throughout the analysis in terms of an epistemological approach.

As Schreier (2012, p. 28) summarises, qualitative research is interpretive, naturalistic, situational, reflexive, inductive, case-oriented, has emergent flexibility, and emphasises validity. It is interpretive in three ways: (1) it deals with symbolic material requiring interpretation, which requires an active effort on the part of the researcher; (2) it focuses on exploring personal and social meaning; and (3) multiple and different interpretations of the same data can be equally valid (attributiveness and constructiveness of the meaning) (Schreier, 2012, pp. 20–21). It is naturalistic because qualitative researchers take real-life contexts as research settings and remain faithful to them. It is situational because (constructed) meaning depends on context; context is part of meaning, and meaning is context-specific (Schreier, 2012, p. 22). It is reflexive because researchers try to make sense of the things that happen in life, and different responses to different people and situations make reflexivity rather than objectivity important. This means that a qualitative researcher is concerned with how s/he co-creates the data in line with reflexivity (Schreier, 2012, p. 23). It has emergent flexibility because while in quantitative research, the research process is linear and completed step by step (first data collection, then data analysis, etc.), in qualitative research, all steps are cyclically linked, which means its adaptability is high (Schreier, 2012, p. 24). It is inductive because the data analysis is done in an inductive, data-driven way, which means that critical concepts and codes are decided on how to go through the material; they emerge from the data itself (Schreier, 2012, p. 25). It is case-oriented because this type of research is holistic; it is concerned with the totality depth of the case (Schreier, 2012, p. 25). Finally, qualitative research focuses on validity – the criterion that refers to the overall quality of a study and the extent to which the method and instruments are appropriate and valid for capturing/understanding the related/questioned/researched phenomenon (Schreier, 2012, p. 27).

Before exploring the method and content analysis chosen for this dissertation and explaining how it is well suited to the study, it is plausible to make a few statements about the interpretivist approach to the method in question. Neuendorf and Kumar (2016, p. 4) state – in relation to interface with qualitative content analysis –

that "*interpreting symbolic construction of social and cultural meanings and emphasis in political messages in documents/texts*" has proliferated and qualitative scholars consider the written, verbal and visual content of texts as retrievable and storable, even though quantitative content analysis remains the dominant method in political communication. In support of this perspective, Krippendorff (2018, p. 21) already says simplistically that all texts[150] have a qualitative nature despite specific characteristics of texts that can be converted into numbers. Nevertheless, qualitative content analysis approaches propose a systematic exploration of the data (Krippendorff, 2018, p. 21).

With regard to the qualitative approaches to content analysis, Krippendorff (2018, p. 22) notes that qualitative approaches, which have their origins in literary theory, critical studies, and social sciences, are sometimes referred to as interpretative. The reason for this perception is that they share common characteristics, such as a general focus on and close reading of relatively small textual materials as data, involving the interpretation/rearticulation of these texts into analytical, critical, emancipatory or deconstructive accounts within intellectual communities, sometimes with anti-positivist positions. The scholars/analysts accept to study and act in their own socially and culturally interactive hermeneutic environment (Krippendorff, 2018, pp. 22–23).

4.2. Content analysis

It is well known that content analysis has been used as a methodology in many disciplines, ranging from communication studies, political science, cultural studies, and international relations to public opinion, public health, law and so on. Researchers in the social sciences have increasingly adopted content analysis as a method of social inquiry, for example, by focusing on the impact of communication to make sense of social and political life (Erişen et al., 2013, p. 23). According to Erişen et al. (2013, p. 23), content analysis is a systematic and replicable method that relies on specific coding rules to infer meaning from data. As they convey, political scientist Holsti

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[150] I use 'texts' in the broadest term (as a generic term) as Krippendorff (2018, p. 27) does: "*texts* (printed matter, recorded speech, visual communications, works of art, websites, and cultural artifacts)," in just the same way as many qualitative scholars mean all kinds of qualitative written, verbal, and visual content/material which can be retrievable and stored (Neuendorf & Kumar, 2016, p. 4; Schreier, 2012, p. 3).

(1969, p. 14) defines it as "*any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages*" (Erişen et al., 2013, p. 23). Similarly, Krippendorff's (2018, p. 24) one-sentence definition of what content analysis is: *"Content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use.*" Namely, it allows a researcher to infer meaning from the meaningful data/dataset. Krippendorff's approach is paraphrased as follows:

> "What goes under the common label of content analysis is not a single technique; rather, it is a collection of different approaches to the analysis of texts or, more generally, of messages of any kind – from the word counts to the simplest forms of syntactical analysis to thematic analysis, referential analysis, and prepositional analysis" (quoted in Franzosi, 2004, p. 186).

In the preface to the fourth edition of his work *Content Analysis*, Krippendorff states that:

> "Content analysis is one of the most important research techniques in the social sciences. It acknowledges that society is enacted in talk, texts, and other modalities of communication and that understanding social phenomena cannot be achieved without understanding how language operates in the social world. Content analysts inquire into social phenomena by treating data not as physical events but as communications that are created and disseminated to be seen, read, interpreted, enacted, and reflected upon according to the meanings they have for their recipients. Interpreting communications as texts in the contexts of their social uses distinguishes content analysis from other empirical methods of inquiry" (Krippendorff, 2018, p. xii).

My epistemological approach to this quote is as follows: My subject of study snaps into content analysis in the sense of inquiring about the communicative qualification of the components of the election campaigns and the understanding by being interpreted and inferring meaning within the scope of time and place (spatiotemporal framework). As Iyengar and Simon (2000, p. 164) stresses, content analysis helps researchers to discover characteristics of messages and their intended meanings. Likewise, Hermann (2008, p. 151) conveys from the book of Moyser and Wagstaffe (1987, p. 20) that content analysis is a method that is able to shed light on the use and manipulation of appealing symbols and the meaning attributed to specific communications. Alternatively, thanks to content analysis, it is possible to conduct an

analysis to observe real-life emotional receptions of politics without resorting artificial circumstances such as experiments, surveys and structured interviews (Szabó, 2020). Correspondingly, I use qualitative content analysis to examine and interpret the use and manipulation of emotions by political parties by seeking answers from electoral/political campaigns.

A wide range of written, visual, and audio materials are suitable for content analysis, such as books, articles, diaries, films, videos, speeches, interviews, commercials, advertisements, and cartoons (Erişen et al., 2013, p. 24). These are types of 'texts' (Krippendorff, 2018, p. 27), as mentioned in the previous section, and their types to be included in the analysis depend on the research question, as Hermann (2008) highlights. In view of this, the choice of campaign advertisements as the material for the content analysis of this dissertation draws its strength from this approach and the research question itself: "*How has the AKP shaped, materialised, and translated emotions in its electoral campaigns on its way to consolidate its power?*"

Although traditional content analysis, as Serafini and Reid (2023, p. 625) explain, has employed a quantitative methodology, characterised by a system of predetermined categories, statistical analyses of textual data, and an emphasis on the reliability and generalisability of its findings, in terms of the formal definition of content analysis, it has emerged that quantification is not a must (Franzosi, 2004, p. 186). On the other hand, for examining linguistic and visual content within various social scientific research contexts, qualitative content analysis is a versatile and flexible tool (Serafini & Reid, 2023, p. 625). Franzosi (2004, p. 187) states that the common concern of content analysis approaches is numbers, which is the distinguishing feature of the so-called methods, typically qualitative approaches such as discourse, conservation, and narrative analyses.

With regard to the types of content analysis, as this dissertation does not seek to achieve purely statistical/numerical results and relies on qualitative content analysis, the type of analysis carried out should, by definition, be asked/questioned. There are different approaches/techniques under the standard label of content analysis, such as relational content analysis (underlying frequency, evaluative assertion, contingency count), thematic, and referential. Relational content analysis is presented as a type that focuses on relationships, contingencies, and semantic connections between texts or

textual materials (Krippendorff, 2018, p. 411). Evaluative assertion analysis, for example, is distinguished from the more straightforward methods of frequency (counting words) in orientation towards *the intensity and direction of meaning* (Osborne & Reimer, 1973, p. 96). The literature suggests that thematic content analysis is the most common approach. However, it does not have universal coding schemes, as the same data will mean different things to different analysts/researchers. However, it both requires and enables a broad, deep, and intimate examination of the data in order to develop an excellent thematic analysis (Franzosi, 2004, p. 186). Franzosi (2004, p. 186) presents referential analysis as a tool to understand the complexity of language for inference better and is more appropriate than thematic analysis.

Krippendorff (2018, pp. 21–22) lists discourse, social constructivist, rhetorical, ethnographic, and conversational analyses as qualitative approaches to content analysis on the basis that "*proponents of qualitative approaches to content analysis offer alternative protocols for exploring texts systematically.*" Discourse analysis is concerned with the representation of phenomena that extend beyond the level of individual sentences, and its primary focus is on the interrelationship between social reality and language (Krippendorff, 2018, p. 21; Schreier, 2012, p. 45). As Wodak (2024, p. 32) highlights, discourse is *socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned*, thereby facilitating the production and reproduction of power relations and aligning with differing ideological forms and positions (Wodak & Meyer, 2016, pp. 5–6). Accordingly, discourse as social practice contributes to the construction of social reality through language, rather than merely representing it (Schreier, 2012, p. 45).

Social constructivist analysts, who also focus on discourse, conduct their analyses to understand how reality is constructed/conceptualised in social interactions – similar to discourse analysts, and they may address conceptualisation of emotions, construction of facts, exploration of evolving notions such as self, sexuality, etc. as well (Krippendorff, 2018, pp. 21–22). In contrast, rhetorical analysis researchers focus on identifying figures of speech in the texts/data under study to analyse how messages are conveyed and with what effects, and ethnographic content analysis is used to understand and document the communication of meaning by working with narrative descriptions and categories. Conversely, the incentive to read texts does not mean avoiding quantification (Altheide, 1987, p. 68; Krippendorff, 2018, p. 22). Finally, Krippendorff (2018, p. 22) presents a conversation analysis that is marked as

qualitative, corresponding to the analysis of recordings made in natural settings, with the aim of collaboratively constructing conservations.

In terms of the type of qualitative content analysis, the approach was indeed used for this dissertation due to the source materials of advertisement videos; the type is, by definition, not any of the discourse, rhetorical or conversational analyses. It is not an ethnographic one because it does not focus on the involvement of human actors/speakers in the situations and settings of the AKP's campaign video advertisements. It is also not a conversation analysis since, as a researcher, I am neither a receiver nor a participant but an observer who does not transcribe a recording showing the construction of conversations (Krippendorff, 2018, p. 22). As both my scientific standpoint as the author and the approach of the dissertation through the force of interpretivism denote social constructivism, the social constructivist approach to content analysis seems well suited to this research.

On the other hand, despite the different focus of discourse analysis and qualitative content analysis, it is possible to combine the two methods, which in itself makes sense because social constructivists include discourse in their analyses (Krippendorff, 2018, pp. 21–22). This combination also allows for categories (conceptualisation of categories) for analysis that do not refer to the textual content but instead to the way/form in which the message/utterance/expression is conveyed (Schreier, 2012, p. 50). Schreier (2012, p. 49) states that qualitative content analysis can be carried out with a critical-interpretive attitude, which is the basis of discourse analysis. Furthermore, this dissertation can be categorised as a thematic content analysis due to the topic of emotions in political communication/campaigns. In any case, as my research question indicates, I focus my analysis on selected aspects (the use of emotions) of campaign advertisements, as required by qualitative research analysis and as Schreier (2012, p. 8) says. Additionally, Serafini and Reid (2023, p. 628) highlight that researchers can expand their conceptualisations of the nature of the data, for instance, by taking into consideration of multimodal entities that the data under study may include such as visual, textual, audial, haptic, and digitally enhanced modes of representation and communication when adopting a qualitative approach to content analysis. In this respect, my analysis differs from other qualitative data analysis methods.

As Hermann (2008, p. 151) questions, the relevance of the research question to the extraction of meaning from communication, the types of materials as data as well as the unit of analysis and their representational or instrumental characteristics, the contextualisation of the subject in question, the qualitative or quantitative nature of the analysis, its replicability, reliability, and validity are important questions to understand whether a study fits with content analysis. In my case, I can briefly mention if and how qualitative content analysis fits my study. Firstly, due to the nature of the leading research question of this dissertation, it seeks to extract meaning from the communicative tools of a political party. Secondly, it is important to emphasise that "*anything that is intended to communicate a message is usable as material for content analysis. Moreover, the material does not need to involve words. Content analysis can also be used to examine nonverbal behaviour*" (Hermann, 2008, p. 152). Since a wide range of written or verbal textual materials is suitable for content analysis, and since election campaigns by their nature include a great deal of visual materials and advertisements, I focus my content analysis on the AKP's campaign videos in Turkey. For the videos, I built a dataset; the relevant materials, depending on my research question, are displayed on different TV channels, online websites, and video-sharing platforms. In my case, they are mostly available on the most popular video platform, YouTube. For the missing ones, it was possible to access them through the official channels of the political party itself (by contacting the AKP's Promotion and Media Department) and to collect them from different pages on YouTube by searching through hashtags. As I will explain in detail in the following section on data collection and selection processes, the dataset consists of more than 370 video advertisements on the AKP's official YouTube page and around 140 videos on various fan pages and news channels pages on YouTube.

Thirdly, I have chosen to conduct a qualitative analysis, despite the possibility of conducting a more quantitative analysis of numerical information, such as the duration and number of views of the ads that the campaign ads provide. This is because the focus of this dissertation, "emotions," is a relatively sensitive/delicate topic due to its qualification of subjectivity. In other words, it forms a thematic rather than a syntactic analysis (quantitative counting of words or units). Schreier (2012, p. 14) conveys from George (1959, p. 8), who preferred the term "non-frequency" rather than "quantitative," that "*we employ the term 'non-frequency' to describe the type of*

nonquantitative, nonstatistical content analysis which uses the presence or absence of a certain content characteristic or syndrome as a content indicator in an inferential hypothesis." In the same vein, this study is concerned with "*the absence or presence of certain characteristics of emotions*" rather than "*their degree*"[151] (Hermann, 2008, p. 156), and it is approached with an interpretivist approach. It is, therefore, more plausible to carry out a more qualitative analysis, accepting the increasingly blurred boundaries between quantitative and qualitative approaches thanks to theoretical/methodological developments, such as CAQDAS (Franzosi, 2004, p. 189).

Fourthly, as part of campaign rallies, election campaigns are tools for political parties on their way to winning elections, and campaign advertisements are instrumental in making propaganda. In particular, what is not said but implied sometimes becomes more important, and within these materials, I look for the emotions used/shaped/manipulated/triggered/translated. For this reason, I see the data as instrumental in understanding my research topic, the role of emotions in politics. Fifth, in terms of unit of analysis and coding rules and procedures, I again draw on Hermann's (2008, p. 157) guidance that "*units can range from words to phrases, sentences, paragraphs, themes, and whole documents.*" While I use campaign advertising videos as the level of analysis, I use each campaign video's related coded segment as a unit to be analysed, as I code and detect the presence or absence of emotions, their type and strength, to observe how campaign videos integrate emotions into the video itself. I have developed a kind of scale of analysis (codebook), which is presented at the end of this chapter, together with the coding patterns.

Sixth, I focus on the case of AKP in Turkish political history and culture by cherry-picking the video recordings of its election campaigns to identify the use and materialisation of emotions in terms of contextualising the study. As Krippendorff (2018, p. 29) specifies, I construct a meaningful context to answer my research questions because content analysis of any available data requires context, and context represents readable data and justifiable interpretation. For this reason, in order to describe the emotional-political atmosphere of each election, I tend to frame the

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[151] It is, of course, possible to use numbers when a phenomenon is present versus absent, but it is harder to judge the degree without the use of some quantification (Hermann, 2008, p. 156).

political context of Turkey. For example, the previous chapter provides a comprehensive account of the course of politics under the AKP government.

Seventhly, if there is a need to generalise and replicate the analysis, it is not so easy to explain society thoroughly because society or unity – composed of individuals – and every behaviour and conduct in society is full of meaning. It is not possible to fix knowledge for society. Therefore, any generalisation is not possible without any contextual, temporal, and spatial perspective in qualitative research. Moreover, it is not possible to even try to generalise events or phenomena (Özuğurlu, 2012). Accordingly, there can be no fixed or absolute knowledge about society and social reality; it can only be understood within a context. Any social reality or socially related phenomenon can be understood by filtering and interpreting it according to its time and place. In other words, research is contextual. However, there are correlations and interactions between social facts and their outcomes. Here, it is clear that qualitative studies do not claim to formulate laws and make absolute generalisations about the nature of society. However, although the possibility of repeatability in qualitative studies is low – making each study unique in its own way – it is possible to replicate the course of the study, i.e., to conduct content analysis with similar coding rules and procedures. For example, suppose a researcher is interested in understanding the role of emotions and their use or manipulation from the perspective of a political party. In this case, it is possible to replicate the codebook of any study to conduct a similar analysis, as I have done by adopting Brader's (2006) typology.

Finally, what makes the research valid draws its strength from the type of analysis. It is generally accepted that in quantitative studies, the focus is on reliability, but when it comes to qualitative approaches such as ethnographic content analysis, validity comes to the fore (Altheide, 1987, p. 67; Schreier, 2012, p. 16). As Franzosi (2004, p. 187) acknowledges, the validity of data in research stems from the sampling frame and sources adopted, as it indicates the basic correspondence between the concepts assessed and the findings obtained from the analysis. Therefore, for the case of validity of this dissertation, it can fill the bill that since the AKP's campaign advertisement videos as the data of this study encompass the political drivers and manoeuvres that use emotions as part of political instruments, the emotions assessed as concepts and the findings obtained from them demonstrate the validity of both the data and its analysis in this dissertation. Furthermore, the categories of my analysis are

data-driven, which is one of the key strengths of qualitative content analysis. Accordingly, this allows the large amount of qualitative data from my study to be meaningfully described and classified (Schreier, 2012, p. 33).

For all these reasons in eight points, and because "*qualitative content analysis is more about summarising what is there in the data and less about looking at the data in new ways or creating theory*" (Schreier, 2012, p. 41), I prefer to conduct a qualitative content analysis. In order to demonstrate the reliability and validity of my content analysis method, I place my study in the light of Krippendorff's (2018, pp. 27–31) six characteristics of texts. Firstly, according to Krippendorff (2018, p. 27), texts do not have objective qualities that are independent of the reader. "*The meanings of a text are always brought to it by someone*" because a text means nothing without its reader, a message that the text contains means nothing without an interpreter, and data that the text forms means nothing without an observer (Krippendorff, 2018, p. 28). Krippendorff (2018, pp. 27–28) implies that the text, message, or data emerge when someone engages with them conceptually, that is, makes sense of them. Thus, researchers who are familiar with their texts and seek to interpret them by coding and analysing textual elements are methodologically trained in content analysis.

Secondly, in parallel with the first feature, more than one meaning can be found, identified, or described in a text because there are numerous perspectives from which to read the text, and different studies can be conducted on the same data. These inferences can be completed within poetic, psychological, sociological, or political interpretations (Krippendorff, 2018, p. 28). In this direction, I know that my data is open to be read differently by different ordinary readers and analysts. Therefore, the backbone of this dissertation is the interpretivist paradigm adopted as a scientific approach.

Thirdly, Krippendorff (2018, p. 28) draws attention to the likely stuckness of content analysis in the mainstream communities or shared ground that *sees the world from a common perspective*. He states that content analysis would be worthless and meaningless if texts were not allowed to be read by different analysts from different perspectives; for example, the critical school would suffocate in a stereotyped environment where everyone thinks the same way. On the other hand, he emphasises that content analysts should not fail to expatiate the criteria for the validity of

research and recognise the multiplicity of uses of texts by particular readers (Krippendorff, 2018, p. 28).

In the fourth place, texts have several functions, such as informing *readers about events at distant locations, objects that no longer exist, ideas in other people's minds, symbols representing things in their absence, and stories passing through imagined worlds of listeners* (Krippendorff, 2018, p. 29). For Krippendorff (2018, p. 29), this stems from distinctive features of communication: informing recipients, appealing to emotions, or bringing about changes in behaviour. In my case, assuming that the videos of the AKP's campaign advertisements evoke feelings and emotions, as a content analyst, I should focus on more than the physicality of the texts, on what these texts, in a broader sense, say and promote perceptions and ideas of emotions. As Krippendorff (2018, p. 29) says, *meanings (contents) speak to something other than the given texts*.

Fifth, Krippendorff (2018, p. 29) stresses the importance of contexts in which the meanings of texts differ; particular purposes, particular situations, particular intentions and particular discourses cause meanings and messages to emerge differently for readers or recipients. Of course, different interpretations may still exist in a given/selected context; however, *the diversity of interpretations may well be reduced to a manageable number* (Krippendorff, 2018, p. 29). As any content analysis requires a context that is constructed in order to draw conclusions from the texts and answer the research questions, this study also requires a context in which campaign videos are transformed into readable texts in order to justify the findings and interpretations as reasonable. Therefore, as a study in the discipline of political science, this dissertation has been constructed within the political context of Turkey under the over two-decade rule of the AKP. It is evident that the more the context of this study is explained, the more the analysis will be replicable (Krippendorff, 2018, p. 30).

Finally, Krippendorff (2018, p. 30) points out that researchers engaged in content analysis seek answers to their specific research questions from their data (textual materials), and the inferences they make are inherently more systematic, explicitly informed, and ideally verifiable than what ordinary readers get from texts. For this reason, content analysts need to validate their findings, which can be used to make predictions, inform decisions, or help conceptualise realities (Krippendorff,

2018, p. 31). Accordingly, since texts, messages, and symbols do not speak for themselves, I intend to reveal what the visual materials speak for and operationalise the current emotional-political atmosphere (context) in order to re-read Turkish politics from the AKP's campaign videos.

4.3. Data collection and selection processes

The data route followed for this dissertation was designed in two stages: data collection and analysis. The data collection method was primarily determined as a purposive sampling method, as the study focuses only on the AKP within a certain time frame. The data obtained are the targeted and specific video advertisements of the AKP's campaigns. This collection phase was completed smoothly, and the data was eliminated within the scope and purpose of this study. This process was built around the AKP's official page,[152] on the most popular and accessible video platform, YouTube. The first step was to list the general and local elections held in Turkey since the 2002 general elections, in which the AKP participated for the first time and took over the incumbency until the 2019 municipal elections. As the AKP was registered on the YouTube platform and created its official YouTube page on 28 February 2014, there was a data accessibility problem for the elections between 2002 and 2014.[153] Therefore, different YouTube pages[154] were included in the data collection process. The data were retrieved from both the official party page and the aforementioned pages under the campaign slogans and hashtags shown in Table 2. The reason for referencing these slogans and hashtags was to select the related material among the 7,6 billion videos. Moreover, these slogans were widely used by the party during the election campaigns, both in mass meetings/rallies and other campaign channels such as billboards, brochures, and TV and radio advertisements.

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[152] https://www.youtube.com/@akparti

[153] The videos of election campaigns covering from 2002 to 2009 do not take place on any online video-sharing platform, and the ones from 2011 are reachable but not from the official pages, the numbers of views are either inaccessible (N/A) or not reliable.

[154] AK Parti Genel Merkez Gençlik Kolları, AK Parti Haber, AK Parti Sosyal Medya, Ak Parti Reklam, AkTanitim Medya, Akşam TV, anadolu1001, Başbakan Davutoğlu, Cihan, Dik Gazete, Erdoğan Dijital Medya, Evlâd-ı Vatan, İcraata Bakarım, genelsecim11, Milletin Adamı, Seninleyiz Erdoğan, Türkiye Vakti, YAKINDA…, Yine Media, 2010demokrasi (in alphabetic order).

Table 2. List of Slogans/Hashtags[155]

Original	*Translation*
#belediyeişigönülişi	#MunicipalismWorksWithHeart
#bizbirliktetürkiyeyiz	#WeAreTogetherTurkey
#bizimdekorkumuzyok	#WeHaveNoFearEither
#buyoldabendevarım	#I'mAlsoHereInThisJob
#çevreyeduyarlıkampanya	#EnvironmentFriendlyCampaign
#dönmemgeri	#NoReturningBack
#durmakoş	#DoNotStopAndRun
#durmakyokyoladevam	#NoStoppingKeepGoing
#durmakyokhizmetedevam	#NoStoppingContinueToServe
#eliniuzat	#BearYourHand
#gönülbelediyeciliği	#HeartfeltMunicipalism
#gönlügüzeltürkiye	#BeautifulHeartedTurkey
#hatırla	#Remember
#HatırlaÇocuk	#RememberChild
#hayaldigerçekoldu	#DreamsHaveComeTrue
#hazırıztürkiye	#ReadyTurkey
#hepimizbirizberaberizkardeşiz	#WeAreAllOneTogetherBrothers
#hızkesmedendevam	#ContinueWithoutStopping
#ilkgünküaşkla	#WithFirstDayLove
#işimizhizmetgücümüzmillet	#OurWorkIsServiceOurStrenghtIsTheNation
#lafadeğilicraatabakarım	#IJudgeByDeedsNotWords
#memleketişigönülişi	#HomelandWorksWithHeart
#onlarkonuşurakpartiyapar	#TheyTalkAkPartyActs
#senbenyoktürkiyevar	#ThereIsNoYouAndMeThereIsTurkey
#tekbaşınaişbaşına	#BackToWorkAlone
#tümkalbimleevet	#YesWithAllMyHeart
#türkiyevakti	#TimeForTurkey
#vakittürkiyevakti	#TimeIsTurkeyTime
#yaparsaakpartiyapar	#IfDoesItAKPartyDoesIt
#yazkocaseyyah	#WriteTheGreatTraveller
#yenitürkiyeyolunda	#OnThePathOfNewTurkey
#yenitürkiyeyolundadaimaileri	#AlwaysForwardOnThePathOfTheNewTurkey
#yükselentürkiye	#RisingTurkey

However, due to the fact that YouTube was launched in 2005, subsequent to the establishment of the AKP, and given that the utilisation of the Internet and the dissemination of YouTube videos were initially limited, the videos of campaigns prior

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[155] Originals are in alphabetic order.

to 2014 were not accessible via the official page.[156] I was able to overcome this challenge by contacting the AKP's Promotion and Media Department. The party officials provided me with 38 videos of the 2002,[157] 2007, and 2011 general elections, as well as the 2004 and 2009 local elections.

Furthermore, I conducted a search on YouTube using the relevant hashtags. However, I can only access data for the 2011 general election from the aforementioned YouTube pages. Ultimately, a total of 553 videos with an average length of 15 hours, 5 minutes, and 17 seconds were detected, encompassing the AKP's campaign videos for the 2002, 2007, 2011, June 2015, November 2015, and 2018 general elections, as well as the 2004, 2009, 2014, March 2019, and June 2019 (Istanbul) local elections and the 2017 referendum. Unfortunately, the videos of the 2007 and 2010 referendums could not be accessed. A total of 376 out of 553 videos are currently accessible via the AKP's official YouTube page. An additional 139 videos are accessible through various YouTube pages, while the remaining 38 videos[158] have been provided by the party itself. The total number of views is approximately one hundred fifty million. The campaign videos were classified according to the election year in which they were created. Subsequently, the data were classified according to the type and year of elections, as well as the number of views (at the time of data collection) of the videos, as shown in Table 3.

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[156] Indeed, this situation is interesting for the cases of 2007, 2009 and 2011, when internet usage was relatively widespread. The AKP registered to the YouTube on February 28, 2014; and the fact that it did not upload and keep the related videos and utilise YouTube as storage earlier can be read as a lack.

[157] It is important to note that during the elections held on 3 November 2002, the YSK prohibited political parties from broadcasting advertisements on television and radio in accordance with its decision no. 120, published in the Official Gazette dated 18 February 1999 (Tunalıgil, 2005, pp. 255–256). Notwithstanding the aforementioned prohibition, the AKP provided three video advertisements for the 2002 elections, which were subsequently included in the analysis. The videos in question are of a promotional nature and could be deployed in a variety of contexts including outdoor advertising, political rallies and online campaigning, even in the absence of a broadcast on television.

[158] The number of campaign video ads for the 2011 general elections provided by the party was twenty. One of them, lasting 1 hour and 6 minutes, is a merged version of other 19 videos given as subject-by-subject deeds. The total duration of these 19 videos is 1 hour 58 minutes and 10 seconds, and the same narration and images were used at the beginning and end of each video. For this reason, only the 1-hour-and-6-minute video titled "general deeds film" was included in the coding.

Table 3. Compiled Data[159]

Data Skeleton				
Election	**Election Type**	**Number of Videos**	**Length (Total)**	**Views (Total)**
November 2002	General	3	00:12:39	N/A
March 2004	Local	9	01:30:01	N/A
July 2007	General	4	00:36:31	N/A
October 2007	Referendum	-	N/A	N/A
March 2009	Local	2	00:15:09	N/A
September 2010	Referendum	-	N/A	N/A
June 2011	General	47	03:27:59	1.427.891
March 2014	Local	106	01:12:19	38.087.200
August 2014	Presidency	-	N/A	N/A
June 2015	General	61	01:00:12	1.466.970
November 2015	General	67	00:27:27	1.524.537
April 2017	Referendum	60	01:05:02	4.612.566
June 2018	General and Presidency	58	01:35:56	38.342.308
March 2019	Local	134	03:34:09	54.624.291
June 2019	Local (Istanbul)	2	00:07:53	1.807.688
Total		553	15:05:17	141.893.451

Source: Own collection.

Secondly, the data was narrowed down according to the relevance of the contents of the videos (as shown in Table 4). The referendums held in Turkey under

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[159] The dataset is also presented in Appendix A, with all details including the accession links of the videos.

the AKP rule were deliberately excluded for several reasons. The first and foremost reason is the issue of data accessibility.[160] However, the rationale behind this preference is that referendums express direct democracy differently from representative democracy. Unlike the election of representatives, they are held on a specific issue, a law, a proposal, or a new policy. They usually involve two camps, such as "yes" vs "no," "accept" vs "reject," and "remain" vs "leave," so they have a different atmosphere both technically and practically.

Table 4. Analysed Data[161]

Processed Data				
Election	**Election Type**	**Number of Videos**	**Length (Total)**	**Views (Total)**
November 2002	General	**3**	**00:12:39**	**N/A**
March 2004	Local	**3**	**00:17:23**	**N/A**
July 2007	General	**3**	**00:06:31**	**N/A**
March 2009	Local	**1**	**00:10:00**	**N/A**
June 2011	General	**27**	**01:26:55**	**1.418.084**
March 2014	Local	**41**	**00:32:04**	**969.562**
June 2015	General	**51**	**00:49:25**	**1.346.982**
November 2015	General	**22**	**00:13:17**	**16.274**
June 2018	General and Presidency	**53**	**01:07:46**	**38.281.070**
March 2019	Local	**25**	**00:31:33**	**25.328.738**
Total		**229**	**05:27:33**	**67.360.710**

Source: Own collection.

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[160] Only the data for the 2017 referendum is accessible.

[161] Appendix B includes the list of 229 videos, which were only included into the analysis, with their release dates, names, and lengths.

For the local elections, it is clear that a large number of advertisements cover the videos of candidates running for the mayorship of 1391 municipalities in Turkey, including 30 metropolises, 51 cities, and 922 districts.[162] Due to the difficulty in reaching and extracting the data, the videos of the municipal election campaigns were also limited to those coordinated by the AKP's Promotion and Media Department rather than by the party's provincial organisation(s). Even though the videos on urban policies and practices, such as investments in infrastructure, highways, and municipal services in the cities, are relevant to the campaigns, they were also excluded because of their irrelevant content in terms of emotional politics. Regarding the local elections that were renewed in 2019 for Istanbul only, the AKP has only two videos between the two elections in March 2019 and June 2019. These videos cover the reasons of renewal, namely, try to explain why the elections were renewed, and they have informative characteristics that led to their exclusion from the analysis.

Finally, the videos – such as "observer training film" and "election training film" – that were intended to provide training on the conduct of voting and elections were also excluded. As Brader (2006, pp. 10–11, 154) in his research defines and labels some advertisements as "*unimpassioned ads*," which can also be described as "neutral" or "unemotional" because of the degree or absence of emotion, I follow a similar logic here and have excluded the videos that do not contain any emotional cues or appeals. In other words, since some videos contain only informative content telling electorates how to vote[163] ("do not waste your vote"[164]) or only infographics,[165] they were not included in the analysis.

After uploading the data to the data analysis software, the data were cleaned and renamed to make them ready for coding. Later, the trimmed data were labelled through

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[162] Source: https://www.e-icisleri.gov.tr/Anasayfa/MulkiIdariBolumleri.aspx

[163] Related video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uBVw1cLLsZg

[164] Related videos: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4zcnEmdeQTw & https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3pALoMZfDeE&list=PL4o0rsSEcQYJgHibw7OhBUXLpcFtGGMwq&index=152

[165] Related videos: https://youtu.be/5TskNNenyeI?si=2K-P8FCt_vG7IulO, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Epy-mLE9i3s, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A7LPfUFl7Vs, & https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LIdW5b0aoCg&list=PL4o0rsSEcQYJgHibw7OhBUXLpcFtGGMwq&index=264&t=4s

MAXQDA according to a well-structured codebook designed in accordance with the emotion categories that are the objects of explanation of this dissertation. Last but not least, although the data were in Turkish, the analysis was conducted in English, and the findings were presented in English. The rest of this chapter represents the codebook, which is the analytical framework of this study.

4.4. Codebook

In order to answer the research question, I need a coding framework to serve as a filter-like structure through which to analyse my data. A codebook (coding frame or coding scheme) is a filter-like structure or a way of structuring the research material, consisting of dimensions or main categories and, if necessary, several sub-categories for specifying the relevant meanings and aspects in the dataset in the light of the research questions (Schreier, 2012, pp. 61–63). The creation of an appropriate structure for answering the research question allows both to limit the diversity of interpretations within the content of the material to the distinctions determined by these categories and to facilitate the processing of large amounts of research material by making distinctions that are not covered in the codebook invisible (Schreier, 2012, p. 63). Codebooks are created either deductively or inductively. The deductive strategy refers to a concept-driven approach and is based on previous knowledge, such as previous research or a theory. Inductively creating (sub)categories means working in a data-driven way and is based on the research material itself (Schreier, 2012, pp. 60, 84–85, 87). More clearly,

> "Inductive analysis involves discovering patterns, themes, and categories in one's data. Findings emerge out of the data, through the analyst's interactions with the data. In contrast, when engaging in deductive analysis, the data are analysed according to an existing framework" (Patton, 2014, p. 792).

Since coding is an inductive and iterative method, as Schreier puts it (2012, p. 41), the coding framework of this thesis with qualitative content analysis was created in a data-driven way, which means that the codes are derived from my material, the AKP's election videos. The codes are also concept-driven, namely I apply a deductive content analysis, because both what I am looking at are emotions, and each emotion is a concept, such as hope and fear, and I adopt an already used framework for analysing

emotional appeals in campaign advertisements by Brader (2006) by depending on the fact that even in the psychology discipline it is not an easy task to categorise emotions, and there is not an existing consensus on this issue. In other words, I utilised from both a preestablished deductive strategy and additional inductive approach while progressing with the data analysis.

Furthermore, the focus is more on the conceptual level when defining the codes and categories and finding instances from the data in the next step (Schreier, 2012, p. 42). I provided definitions for each emotion to facilitate the recognition of instances of the categories in the data and to assign the appropriate categories to relevant data segments (Schreier, 2012, p. 42). The definitions of the codes should focus on the interrelationship between my categories (of emotions) and the data (election videos with emotional appeals); therefore, I have drawn on the psychology literature for the basic descriptions of emotions. The definitions and attributed meanings of the specific emotions listed in the codebook are briefly presented in Table 6 below.[166]

In terms of exclusivity, the same segments of the data unit can be assigned several codes at the same time; however, in qualitative content analysis, sub-categories exclude each other, which means that only one sub-code can be assigned to a given section of the material/unit of data in question (Schreier, 2012, p. 42). The rationale behind this is that, for example, the existence of two separate positive and negative emotions together is meaningless, even if the underlying reasons for a bodily state stemming from a single emotion can be different, as in the case of crying (one can cry by feeling sadness, anger, fear, or happiness/joy). So, there is a need for stratification between emotions. Furthermore, coding units are also particularly important in qualitative content analysis; dividing the data into units allows comparison between categories by two independent coders or at two points in time (Schreier, 2012, p. 42). Therefore, I have separate election videos from different

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[166] I benefited from following sources for these definitions: Cirhinlioğlu, F. G. (Ed.). (2020). *Duyguları Anlamak*, Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık, pages: 1-2, 28, 77-78, 84; İnan, E. & Yücel, E. (Eds.). (2022). *Psikoloji Penceresinden Duygular: Kuramdan Uygulamaya*, page: 6-7, 210, 240, 269, 305, 389; Elden, M., & Bakır, U. (2021). *Reklam Çekicilikleri: Cinsellik, Mizah, Korku* (2. baskı). İletişim Yayınları, pages: 277-8; Ekman, P. & Cordaro, D. (2011). What is Meant by Calling Emotions Basic. *Emotion Review, 3*(4), pages: 365-6.

election years as groups of analysis, and used and coded each video's related segments as unit of analysis.

Table 5. Codebook[167]

Presence of emotion	Negative
	Positive

Type of emotion	
Fear (Anxiety/Worry)	
Anger (Outrage/Disgust)	
Enthusiasm (Hope/Joy)	
Contentment	
Pride	
Arrogance/Contempt	
Sadness (Disappointment)	
Compassion (Sympathy)	
Amusement	
Trust (Loyalty)	
Surprise	

Music and Sound	
Not present/Only sound	
Uplifting/Sentimental/Patriotic	
Tense/Somber/Discordant	

Visual Cues		
Associated with Success and Good Life	Turkish Flag	
	Picturesque Landscapes	
	Beautiful Neighbourhoods	
	Historical Places and References	
	People Hard and Happy at Work	
	Celebration (Birth/Graduation/Wedding/Election)	
	Images of Children/Youth	
	Images of Elder People	Happy Family
		Happy/Glad People
	Images of Mass Meetings	
Associated with Death, Decay and Desolation	Suburbs/Slum/Desolate Landscape	
	Pollution	
	Images of Poor Children/Youth	
	Images of Poor People	Sick People
		Weary and Exhausted People
	No Images of People	
	Images/Sounds of War	
	Guns and Violent Crimes	Guns, Soldiers, Defence Equipment

With regard to the organisation of the codebook (Table 5), I was inspired by Spinoza's ideas on emotions when creating it. I construct my analytical framework (codebook) based on Spinoza's passive affects (*laetitiae* and *tristitiae* – pleasure and pain), which are two fundamental emotions brought about by external things and cause changes (improvement or degeneration/deterioration) in an individual's power or *conatus* (Nadler, 2006, pp. 201–202, 2021, pp. 288–289), in order to extract a consistent and standardised analysis. As mentioned above, Spinoza divides emotions into two categories: active and passive emotions. He says that people who experience any emotion are exposed to it (Nadler, 2006, p. 200). On the other hand, I focus on how these exposed emotions are introduced in election campaigns. Simply put, the

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[167] Adapted from Brader (2006, pp. 147–176, 213–217).

codebook consists of the emotions that the political parties touch, revive, encourage, hearten, manipulate, trigger, provoke, and demoralise during their election campaigns. Thus, I have prepared it via the positivity-negativity attributions of emotions (Ben-Zeʾev, 2001). Moreover, I appeal to the discrete emotion approach, as it focuses mainly on the "core," "basic," and "fundamental" emotions, as Kushner Gadarian & Brader (2023, pp. 195–196) argue.

While I focus on pleasure and pain as constitutive emotions under the two main labels of positive and negative emotions and identify others as certain derivative emotions (Nadler, 2006, p. 205, 2021, p. 294), I adopt and adapt Brader's coding scheme (2006, pp. 147–152) – in which he determines the division of positivity and negativity via emotional cues and focuses on one negative (fear) and one positive (enthusiasm) emotion (Brader, 2006, pp. 53, 148). I use his framework for two reasons. First, his study takes the approach of focusing on the emotion that the ads are intended to evoke and appeal to, rather than the emotion that the ads actually evoke, "*in order to learn more about how politicians use ads to target voter emotions*" (Brader, 2006, p. 150). Since I also focus on the emotional content of campaign ads but not on how emotions are received by the audience, I find it plausible to adapt his coding scheme in a different political setting, Turkey. The second reason is that the coding scheme, in addition to being an authoritative and highly cited work in the field, not only covers the presence or absence of emotional appeals but also focuses on colour, imagery, and music as other signifiers that are integral components of arousing emotions. In addition, as Brader (2006, p. 171) notes, Kern conducted a modest exploratory study of emotional appeals in 1989,[168] but until Brader's study and on the scale of his research, no other attempts had been made to examine the emotionality of campaign advertising. Here, following Brader's study as a model for my dissertation, I have conducted a similar systematic analysis in the context of Turkey, with some limitations explained throughout the study.

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[168] Kern, M. (1989). *30 Second Politics: Political Advertising in the Eighties*. New York: Praege.

Table 6. Definitions of Emotions in the Codebook

Negative emotions (PAIN)		Positive emotions (PLEASURE)	
Emotion	**Definition**	**Emotion**	**Definition**
Fear (Anxiety/Worry)	An unpleasant emotion as the physical or psychological response to a perceived threat of harm, danger, uncertainty or expectation of pain; often leads to anxiety and desire to avoid the source of fear. (A state of unease and concern about an imminent danger, difficulty, etc., accompanied by disturbing thoughts and physical symptoms such as restlessness or tension. / A disturbed state of mind causes anxiety or unease and is usually associated with concerns about future events or outcomes.)	**Enthusiasm (Hope/Joy)**	A strong, admiration, eagerness or excitement in something. (An optimistic feeling of expectation and desire for the future or a positive consequence, often accompanied by confidence and belief in the possibility of achieving it. / A vivid emotion of pleasure, an extreme feeling of gladness.)
Anger (Outrage/Disgust)	A strong emotional response characterised by feelings of irritation, frustration, and a desire to confront a perceived injustice or threat. (A fierce anger or resentment, accompanied by indignation or shock, also a desire for corrective action. / A strong aversion or distaste towards the sight, smell, or taste of something; also, be provoked by unpleasant or offensive actions or ideas.)	**Pride**	A positive feeling of satisfaction at achievements, accomplishments, or qualities that do one credit, and a proper sense of what befits one's position; self-respect.
Sadness (Disappointment)	A response to the loss of something or someone, causing unhappiness and sorrow linked to a sense of disappointment or grief. (A feeling of distress and sadness caused by unfulfilled expectations or hopes.)	**Compassion (Sympathy)**	A strong desire to relieve the suffering, or empathy and concern to provide well-being of others. (A state of being simultaneously affected with the same feeling as another, a feeling of pity or sorrow for someone else's hardship or suffering.)
Arrogance/Contempt	An attitude of superiority and disdain towards others, often rooted in an inflated sense of self-importance and a need for validation. A strong feeling morally superior to others, or perception of something or someone as unworthy or inferior.	**Amusement**	The feeling of being entertained or amused.
Surprise	A response to an unexpected or sudden event, leading to a brief, intense reaction.	**Contentment**	A feeling of happiness and peace with one's current situation or circumstances.
		Trust (Loyalty)	A firm belief or confidence in the reliability or truth of someone or something without fear, hesitation or doubt, often built through consistent behaviour and positive experiences. (A strong sense of allegiance, faithfulness, or commitment to a person, group, or cause.)

I am also inspired by Plutchik (2001, p. 349) and turn to Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions to identify the combinations of emotions and associated colours for stratification between emotions. Plutchik (2001, p. 349) refers to the parallelism between emotions and colours drawn by a social psychologist who wrote in 1921 that "*the colour sensations present, like the emotions, an indefinitely great variety of qualities shading into one another by imperceptible gradients*." The rationale behind the use of colour is that "*colour theory is the notion that when a person sees certain colours, it causes them to feel specific emotions*" (Press, 2020). Political campaigns use colour to sway people, so it is plausible to include colour in the analysis, and in this study's codebook, each emotion is represented by a colour; for example, red is attributed to *anger (outrage/disgust)*, while dark blue symbolises *fear (anxiety/worry)*, and bright green is attributed to *compassion (sympathy)*, while yellow to *enthusiasm (hope/joy)*.
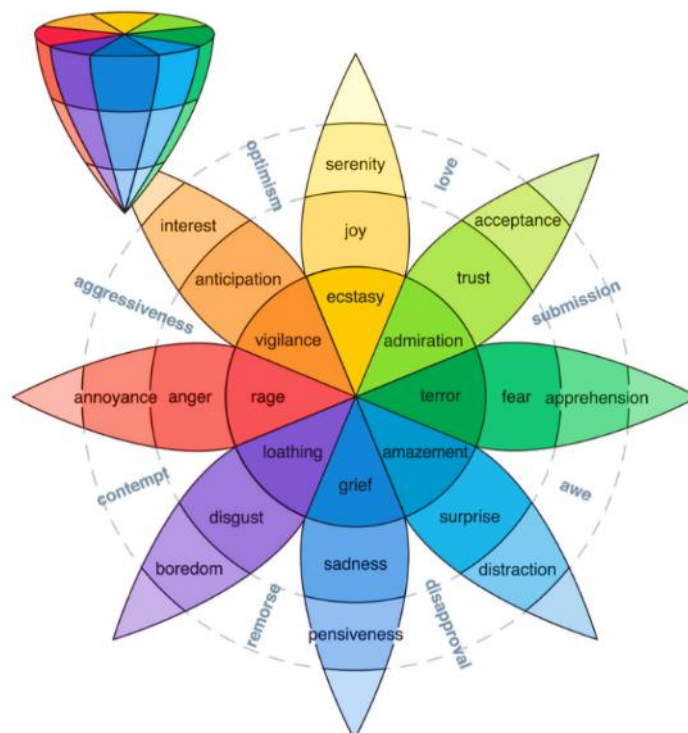
Source: Plutchik, R. (2001, p. 349). The nature of emotions: Human emotions have deep evolutionary roots, a fact that may explain their complexity and provide tools for clinical practice; Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions: Exploring the Emotion Wheel. Retrieved from https://www.6seconds.org/2022/03/13/plutchik-wheel-emotions/

Figure 1. Wheel of Emotions

Plutchik (2001, pp. 348–349) classifies emotions into eight basic categories: joy, trust, fear, surprise, sadness, disgust, anger, and anticipation. He further organises these eight core emotions into three distinct levels. Each of the petals on the wheel of fortune in the figure illustrates three different tiers of emotions (Bakırcı, 2018). He clarifies as follows;

> "I have found that the primary emotions can be conceptualised in a fashion analogous to a colour wheel – placing similar emotions close together and opposites 180 degrees apart, like complementary colours. Other emotions are mixtures of the primary emotions, just as some colours are primary and others made by mixing the primary colours. ... I have extended the circumplex model into a third dimension, representing the intensity of emotions so that the total so-called structural model of emotions is shaped like a cone" (Plutchik, 2001, p. 349).

From this colourful point of view, and as Crigler and Hevron (2014, p. 667) emphasise, since words, images, tone, facial expressions, sounds, music, and symbols should be examined in the content analyses, the narration of campaign ads and music/sound or directly the campaign songs used in the videos were included in the coding as they are considered significant in terms of expressing emotions. In addition, it is accepted that the human sense of sight makes the vivid images of videos an attractive subject of study (Brader, 2006, p. 159). With this information in mind, in the following section, I present how the coding process was completed and the points and nuances that I took into account.

4.4.1. Coding process and instructions

As Brader (2006, pp. 149–150) explains, there are several methods for coding the appeals (either rational or emotional) of an advertisement. For example, it is possible to measure the actual emotion triggered or provoked by an advertisement through experiments with people, or emotions can be studied psychologically through facial expressions, as shown in a series edited by Ekman and Rosenberg (1997, 2005, 2020). The approach taken by Brader (2006, p. 150) in his study to understand how politicians use advertising to target voters' emotions is to "*determine which emotion(s) the ad and its creators were trying to evoke*." Since my aim in this research is to

analyse how political parties capture, materialise and translate emotions in campaigns, I accept political advertising as a propaganda tool that includes intentions to use emotional appeals and to influence group and/or voter behaviour. Therefore, I completed the coding process by focusing on specific emotion categories in an attempt to identify the emotions that the campaign video ads appealed to at the time of their broadcast. In short, I focused on the emotions that a particular campaign video intended to elicit.

As Table 5 shows, I have divided the codebook for this analysis into four main groups. It comprises five dimensions with their own set of sub-categories. The presence of emotion in a campaign ad (either negative or positive), the type of emotion, music and sound, and imagery (visual cues) are the main codes/categories, and the sub-codes/sub-categories consist of the signifiers associated with each category. This feature of the codebook corresponds to the high complexity of coding frames in Schreier's (2012, pp. 67, 71) gradation. As Schreier (2012, pp. 96–97) points out, the category names provide descriptions of the characteristics of the related category and function as instructions as to whether the data should be coded with the category in question.

For the main code, *Presence of Emotion*, I aimed to detect the negativity and positivity of the emotional content of the ads. Secondly, I coded the *Type of Emotion* contained in each advertisement video. Since I have already mentioned which narration is considered significant for the expression of emotions, when coding emotions, I took into account whether the text messages or narratives of the ads – if any – contain connotations of, for example, fear, enthusiasm, anger, pride, etc. As non-verbal elements also act as signifiers to evoke and appeal to emotions, I observed visual objects and symbols such as posters with emotional words (e.g., hope) and musical cues with lively and cheerful, sentimental or tense, frightening connotations and/or campaign songs used in videos. Figure 2 and Figure 3 show examples from the analysed data. Accordingly, the third and fourth main codes/categories consist of *Music and Sound* and *Visual Cues*, respectively.

The contribution of the formal characteristics of the message is effective not only in visual but also in auditory advertising environments (Elden & Bakır, 2021, p. 47). Therefore, music has the ability to influence mood and emotional states and is thus a tool for eliciting emotions. For this reason, I tracked the positive and negative

connotations of chords under the code of *Music and Sound* (Brader, 2006, p. 157). The sub-categories are *Uplifting/Sentimental/Patriotic*, *Tense/Somber/Discordant*, and *No Music/Only Sound*. The third sub-code is essential for identifying sound effects that show enthusiasm and pride through applause, sadness through crying, fear through screaming, and anxiety through the sounds of bursting guns and fighter aircraft.

Figure 2. Examples from Ads Containing Positive Elements[169]

Figure 3. Examples from Ads Containing Negative Elements[170]

Finally, I read the videos through emotionally evocative images because, other than the informational features of images and symbols, they can also play an emotional

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[169] Screenshots are taken from election campaign ads of 2002, 2007, 2015, 2011, 2018, 2014 respectively (left-to-right).

[170] Screenshots are taken from election campaign ads of 2004, 2018, 2018, 2019, 2018, 2015 respectively (left-to-right).

role. Regarding the visual cues, the advertisements intend to attract the attention of the voters by using different scenes, symbols (i.e., *Turkish flag,* which means pride as a patriotic emotion), and images of people to appeal to emotions (i.e., association between hope and images of children), I used Brader's coding frame to name the categories of visual elements. They are mainly divided into positively associated imagery (*Associated with Success and Good Life*) and negatively associated imagery (*Associated with Death, Decay and Desolation*). As can be seen from the codebook itself (see Table 5), each of these has its own sub-codes that serve to label specific displays and images. In addition to sub-coding, I used these secondary codes when the advertisements included (or showed) the AKP actions, deeds, services and practices that are associated with success and good quality of life, such as improvements and developments in health, transport, and education services. Similarly, when the advertisements are associated with social corruption and decay but do not correspond to the sub-codes, for example, those of the failures of previous governments (crowds and queues in front of the hospital), I coded them with the sub-category *Associated with Death, Decay and Desolation*.

In terms of the coding process, since my personal judgments may reveal a subjectivity problem, I used a cross-coding method in order not to report only individual emotional responses to the data. In fact, this research required cross-coding for consistency and inter-coder reliability. The main reason for this is that the meaning of my material is not absolute and is open to interpretation from people of similar cultural backgrounds. As Erişen et al. (2013, pp. 26–27) highlight, when two or more researchers agree on how to apply coding on a large-scale basis, the internal validity of the conclusions is ensured. Here it is necessary to mention the independent coders. For my analysis, five other coders carried out a cross-coding process, providing an inter-subjectivity that approximates the objectivity of the dissertation. Each coder was assigned ten different video ads and treated as a control group. Thus, the results obtained are not just my understanding. Schreier (2012, p. 90) draws attention to this point as follows:

> "You cannot help but read the data through the filter of your own world view, your own preconceptions, and your own motives – and wanting to find evidence of certain events or processes in the data can be a compelling motive, clouding your

perceptions, although you may not be aware of this. The various perspectives that different people bring to the material can complement each other, highlighting different aspects of the data."

Secondly, the cross-coding process helped me to understand whether I needed to go back and revise the coding frame because if the rounds of independent coding do not differ systematically, which means that the codebook has clear definitions and sub-categories do not overlap, several independent researchers will end up with approximately the same results (Schreier, 2012, p. 34). The fact that coding was carried out at two different points in time by me alone, as the principal investigator and author of this dissertation, is another way of ensuring consistency. The coincidence of the two separate rounds of coding shows that my coding frame is reliable.

At this point, it is important to emphasise that the emotional impact of campaigns is highly variable from one individual to another. Each person's emotional response is shaped by their ideological or political stance and their cultural and social context. As Burkitt (2014, p. 51) posits in his argument, emotions are a complex combination of physical, social, and discursive elements experienced through living, feeling, and speaking in historical and cultural relations in which the social practices and communicative interactions shape emotions. While discursive elements provide a foundation for the articulation of emotion through language, it is not always a straightforward process. Consequently, emotions are often manifested through a range of non-verbal means, including signs, words, and performances. In other words, the emotions of fear, anger, hate, happiness, and love are not merely words; rather, they are feelings that are recognised and interpreted through the observation of the movements and gestures that accompany them. This is in accordance with the views of Ahmed (2004, pp. 13–20, 2014, pp. 5–8), who states that these emotions are manifested on the surfaces and around the boundaries of the objects. It is not necessary for a text to be read with a specific emotion for that emotion to be conveyed; emotions are constituted by signs and other elements in addition to the words denoting them. Consequently, the cross-coders and I, as the primary coder, did not devote particular attention to the presence of specific words, such as fear, anxiety, hope, or enthusiasm, in the advertisement videos.

Moreover, the study of emotional content and appeals from past campaigns has its own idiosyncratic limitations. For example, asking people to watch past advertisements would be experimental research on the emotions that advertising videos evoke in individuals, and a separate study might fall within the field of psychology. Asking people how they felt during the election campaign or when they voted in particular elections would not be relevant to research using content analysis as a method. Therefore, the cross-coders and I did not focus on and report how much the campaign videos made us feel these emotions. Ultimately, what is coded or labelled is the quality of the video and not of the coders/viewers (Brader, 2006, p. 245). The results and discussions of this analysis, carried out in light of all these instructions and directions, are visualised and presented in the following chapter (Chapter 5).
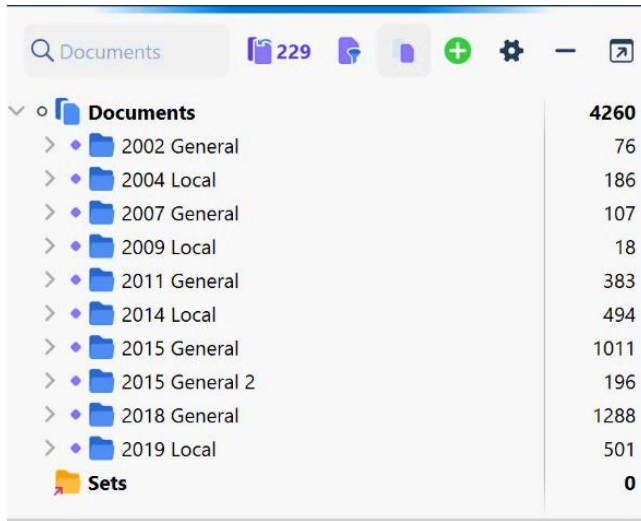
CHAPTER 5

DECODING EMOTIONS: UNRAVELLING AKP'S ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN VIDEOS THROUGH CONTENT ANALYSIS

As I have mentioned in the section of *Electoral Campaigns and Emotions* under Chapter 2, campaign advertising is one of the most significant elements of election campaigns. The progress in political advertising and political communication also leads to campaign ads becoming more effective in societies due to their content, visuals and timing (Öztay, 2022, p. 113). Again, as I have touched upon in the aforementioned section, political ads contain rational and emotional appeals to influence the electorate. Since my subject of inquiry focuses on emotions in politics materialised in elections campaigns, I focused on and analysed emotional appeals within the election campaigns of my selected case of the incumbent party, AKP, from 2002 up until 2019 in line with my methodological approach qualitative content analysis. In other words, this chapter analyses the AKP's election campaign videos between 2002 and 2019 and presents the results of the qualitative content analysis, which I carried out through coding using MAXQDA, the data analysis software program. As I stated in the methodology chapter (Chapter 4), my intention is to identify the contribution of emotions – among many other dynamics – to the party's long stay in power by making visual campaign materials speak for explanation.

The chapter is divided into two sections to present the analysis and its findings under subheadings *Emotional components of the AKP's campaign advertisements* and *Nexus between the AKP's politics and emotional appeals in its campaign ads*. The aim of these subheadings is to present the presence and absence of certain emotions in the campaign ads by means of visual analysis and graphs, to examine their relationships with auditory and visual content, and to place the findings in the emotional context of Turkey under the AKP rule. I also intend to identify any evolution or transformation in the AKP's approach to the use of emotions over time.

5.1. Emotional components of the AKP's campaign advertisements

As I mentioned at the end of Chapter 2 and detailed in Chapter 3, the AKP has been one of the most intense campaigning parties in Turkish political history. In these campaigns, besides the fact that it has resorted to rational appeals, both the leader and the party members and supporters have used the emphasis of "love" in their discourses and narratives. So much so that at every opportunity, including campaigns, mass meetings/rallies and press releases, it is stated that they are "in love with Turkey" and "in love with service." For example, in the 2004 local election campaign, Erdoğan enthusiastically said:[171] "We are lovers of our Turkey; we are lovers of every citizen living in Turkey."[172] In 2017, the then-party leader Binali Yıldırım[173] led a "Yes" campaign for the Turkish constitutional referendum with the slogan "Yes with all my heart." The party's campaign for the 2019 local elections was introduced on 31 January 2019 by the party's leader, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, around the election manifesto of "Municipalism of the Heart" (AK Parti, 2019). All these examples – and many others – prove that the AKP's emotional baggage in politics is reflected in its election campaigns as emotional appeals.

From this position, I looked for the existence of emotional appeals by referring to the primary rationale of my codebook, which is the passive affects of *pleasure* and

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[171] From the seconds between 16 and 26 in the video, titled *Belediyecilik ve 1 Yıllık İcraat Filmi,* one of the videos that was provided by the party itself for the 2004 campaign.

[172] In Turkish: "Biz Türkiye'mizin sevdalısıyız! Biz Türkiye'de yaşayan her vatan evladının sevdalısıyız!" Here, I want to emphasise that the phrase of "*vatan evladı*" – translated as "citizen" in the text – can be literally translated as "*son of the motherland*", which signifies the masculine and patriarchal rhetoric of Erdoğan and the AKP.

[173] The constitutional referendum in 2017 was the only campaign that Binali Yıldırım conducted during his leadership of the party. As explained in the Chapter 4, referendums are out of scope of this study and were not included into the analysis.

pain – corresponding to the positive and negative attributions of emotions. I have ten document groups, each consisting of at least one campaign video. 229 out of a total of 553 video ads (equivalent to 5 hours 27 minutes and 33 seconds out of 15 hours 3 minutes and 7 seconds) were designated as the data group to be analysed. I coded these videos twice and assigned a relevant code to 4260 segments.

From the very beginning, it is evident that the AKP's campaign advertisements are imbued with emotional content and/or appeals. The following graph (Figure 4) illustrates the presence of emotional appeals in the AKP's election campaign advertisement videos between 2002 and 2019, classified according to their attributions of positivity and negativity.
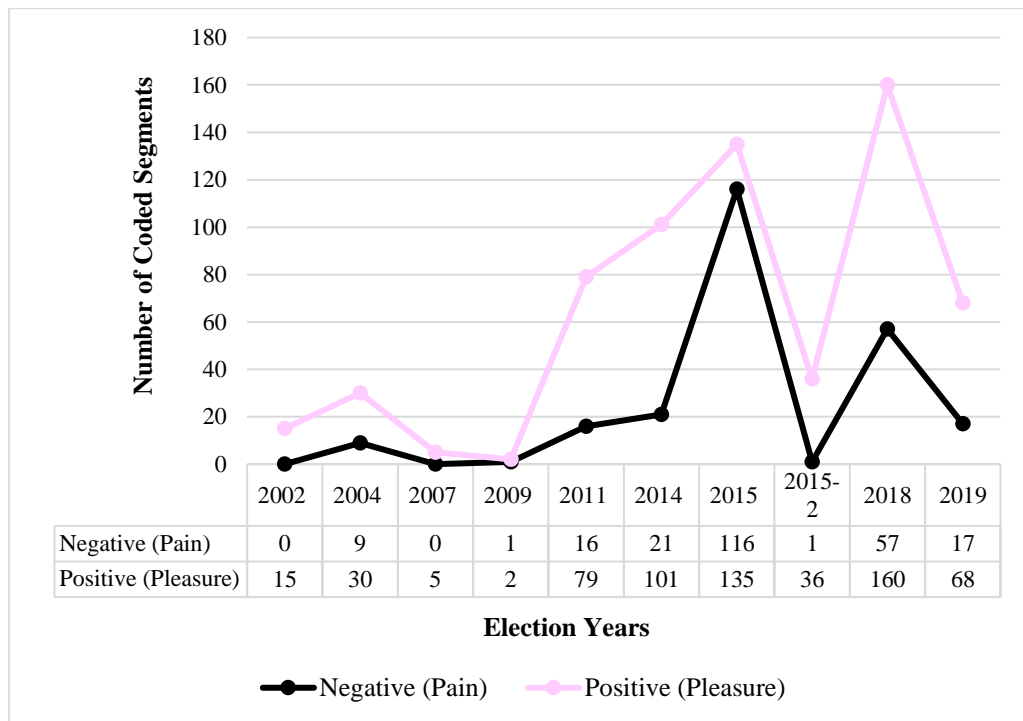

	2002	2004	2007	2009	2011	2014	2015	2015-2	2018	2019
Negative (Pain)	0	9	0	1	16	21	116	1	57	17
Positive (Pleasure)	15	30	5	2	79	101	135	36	160	68

Figure 4. Presence of Emotional Appeals (Positive & Negative) in Campaign Ads

This graph shows the numbers of coded segments within the category of *presence of emotion* with its subcategories *positive emotions (pleasure)* and *negative emotions (pain)*, in alignment with the codebook outlined in the preceding chapter. The distribution between *negative (pain)* and *positive (pleasure)* emotional appeals is noteworthy because it provides an opportunity to interpret that the *positive (pleasure)* components of the advertisements in the AKP's each electoral campaign are dominant

despite the existence of the *negative (pain)* components.[174] It reveals that there has been no significant change in the AKP's use of emotional appeals (whether more positive or more negative) in their advertising videos.

However, when each election campaign year is considered within itself, it is observed that there is an almost equal distribution of both the *positive (pleasure)* and *negative (pain)* emotional appeals in the coded segments. This means that positive emotional appeals are distributed in each campaign over 70% – as can be seen from Table 7, except for the two election periods of 2009 and November 2015,[175] whose percentages are 66,66% and 53,78% respectively. Even if the segments coded with *negative* in terms of emotional appeal for 2009 and November 2015 are high in percentage than other years, this distribution is not sufficient for interpreting these campaigns as part of negative campaigning strategy of the AKP.

Table 7. Existence of Emotional Appeals in Percentages According to Election Campaign Years

Election Years	*Positive (%)*	*Negative (%)*	*Total (Number of Coded Segments)*
2002	100	0	15
2004	76,92	23,08	39
2007	100	0	5
2009	66,66	33,33	3
2011	83,15	16,85	95
2014	82,79	17,21	122
2015	53,78	46,22	251
2015-2	97,29	2,71	37
2018	73,73	26,27	217
2019	80	20	85

Nevertheless, when considered in terms of the emotional dimension in politics, the emotional context of politics in Turkey and the narratives of politicians differ from

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[174] At this point, I should note that the available data for the 2009 local elections includes a single video, as indicated in the data collection section. The unequal number of available data for each campaign limits the scope of this dissertation, as it does not provide an opportunity to make comparisons between election years. Therefore, I primarily focused on the distribution of positive and negative emotional appeals within each campaign itself.

[175] 1 November 2015 general elections are indicated as 2015-2 in figures and tables throughout the thesis.

one occasion to another, from one rally to another, depending on the prevailing agenda and the most pressing debates of the time. For instance, when the political climate created by the 2013 Gezi protests and corruption scandals, which made the authoritarian face of the AKP government more visible, is contextualised (that is, considered together with what data presents), there is considerable use of emotional appeals in the 2014 local election campaign, but also there is a considerable difference between negative and positive emotional appeals.

As another example, for the 2015 general elections, an interesting and important finding can be derived from the distribution. When the June 2015 general election campaign is taken into consideration, it exhibits a pattern of almost equal distribution of positive and negative emotional contents, namely, it does not seem to contain predominantly negative or positive appeals. When compared with the second general election of November 2015, held in the same year, a considerable difference is salient. As Table 7 demonstrates, 53,78% of coded segments for the June 2015 election campaign point to positive emotional appeals and 46,22% to negative emotional appeals, while for November 2015, 97,29% of segments were coded with positively related emotional contents and 2,71% with negative contents. Thus, the closeness between positive and negative attributions in the June 2015 campaign differentiates and decreases in the November 2015 campaign. Suffice it to say that this result is related to the emotional climate of Turkish politics in 2015.

In other words, on the one hand, the negatively and positively related contents of the ads for the June 2015 election, when Ahmet Davutoğlu ran for the first time as prime minister, are very close. On the other hand, there is a sharp decline in the negatively related emotional ad contents of the November 2015 election campaign. As Chapter 3 presents in detail, in 2015 the political atmosphere in the country was full of uncertainties with the effect of claims on external powers targeting Turkey – i.e., interest rate lobbies, especially after the Gezi protests, claims on portraying the AKP government as a target with the corruption operations, the factual situation of popularly elected president and debates on presidential system so on and so forth. While this emotional-political climate created anxiety for some people, it caused enthusiasm for others, together with the renewed electoral success both in local and presidential elections in 2014. Therefore, there is a reverse relationship between the actions of the government and its campaigning in 2015.

As the type of music or sound used in an advertisement is an essential component of the advertisement's emotional content due to its ability to influence emotional moods and states of voters, I tracked the positive and negative connotations of chords during the analysis, as I noted in the coding process and instructions section. Figure 5 illustrates the use of music and sound in the videos, categorised into three sub-codes: *uplifting/sentimental/patriotic*, *tense/somber/discordant*, and *not present/only sound*.
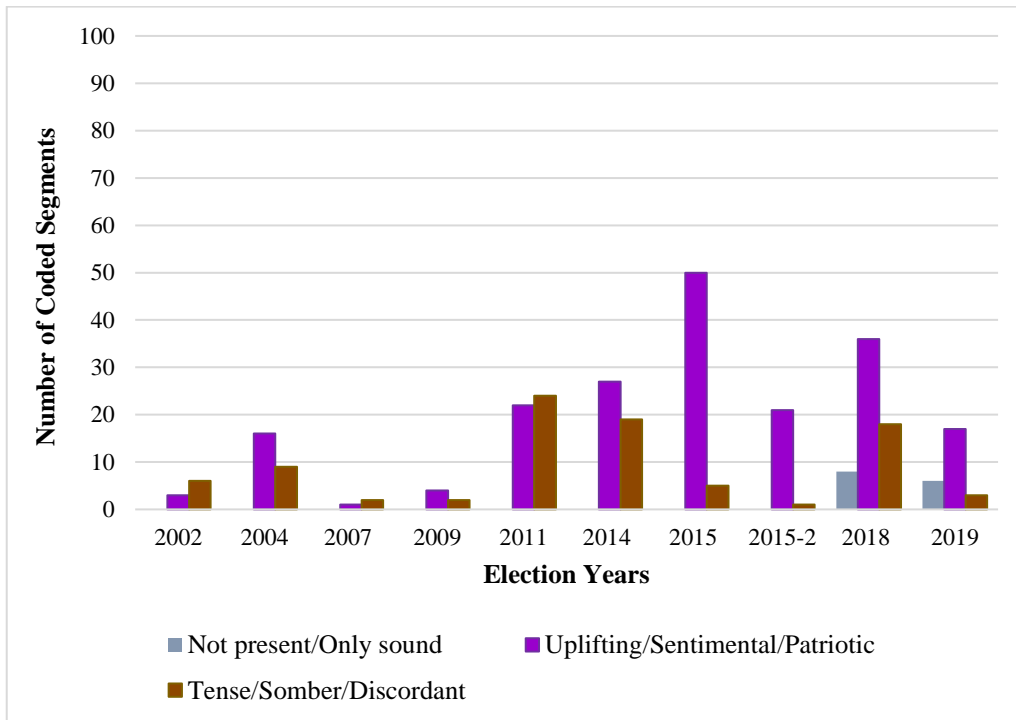

Figure 5. Music and Sound

For the AKP case, an examination of the individual campaigns reveals the prominence of the *uplifting/sentimental/patriotic* sub-code (65,67% of 300 coded segments in total), in line with the abovementioned presence of positively charged emotional content within each campaign (see Table 8 for the detailed percentages of the use of music and sound in individual campaigns). In terms of relationality with the positive and negative appeals, when campaigns are scrutinised one by one, again the general election campaigns in 2015 stand out as a prominent example, in which the use of music and sound are given in percentages in Table 8. Interestingly, the ratios over 90% stand by the emotional-political context of the country in 2015.

Both cultural influences and innate tendencies drive people to rely heavily on their sense of sight. Consequently, visual cues are recognised as an important element

in political advertising, as they enable the appeal to be made to people on both a rational and an emotional level (Brader, 2006, p. 159). The deployment of cultural and archetypal images and symbols in advertising and propaganda illustrates the capacity of such representations to exert a profound influence on the personal psyche, facilitating their consolidation and amplification (Barry, 1997, p. 300). In other words, visual cues can draw attention to or trigger certain emotion types.

Table 8. Use of Music and Sound in Percentages According to Election Campaign Years

Election Years	Uplifting/ Sentimental/ Patriotic (%)	Tense/ Somber/ Discordant (%)	Not present/ Only sound (%)	Total (Number of Coded Segments)
2002	33.33	66.67	0	9
2004	64.00	36.00	0	25
2007	33.33	66.67	0	3
2009	66.67	33.33	0	6
2011	47.83	52.17	0	46
2014	58.70	41.30	0	46
2015	90.91	9.09	0	55
2015-2	95.45	4.55	0	22
2018	58.06	29.03	12.9032	62
2019	65.38	11.54	23.0769	26
SUM	**65.67**	**29.67**	**4.66667**	**300**

In light of these considerations, I incorporated visual aspects of video materials in the analysis, as specific, vivid images in the advertisements appealed to voters' senses. I have separated positively and negatively charged images, scenes, and symbols, as Brader (2006, pp. 159–162) has done in his typology. Thus, Figures 6 and 7 present an examination of *visual cues* in the AKP's campaign ads, which can be taken as a reflection of the existence of predominant positive emotional content in the AKP campaigns.

Figure 6 shows the individual distributions of positively and negatively charged images in percentages. When each campaign is evaluated individually, the dominance of positive images is evident. The figure depicts that there is no reference to negative imagery in the two campaigns of 2007 and 2009; however, this situation

cannot be interpreted due to the preferences of the party to appeal only to positive imagery, because of the data scarcity until 2011. Consequently, when the overall distribution for these ten general and local election campaigns is read together, it can be observed that the percentages of segments coded with the *visual cues associated with success and good life* are dominant in each electoral campaign period, while those *associated with death, decay and desolation*, which are related to negative emotional appeals, have a low percentage in the total processed data. This situation again aligns with the overall approach of the AKP in terms of using emotions in campaign materials.
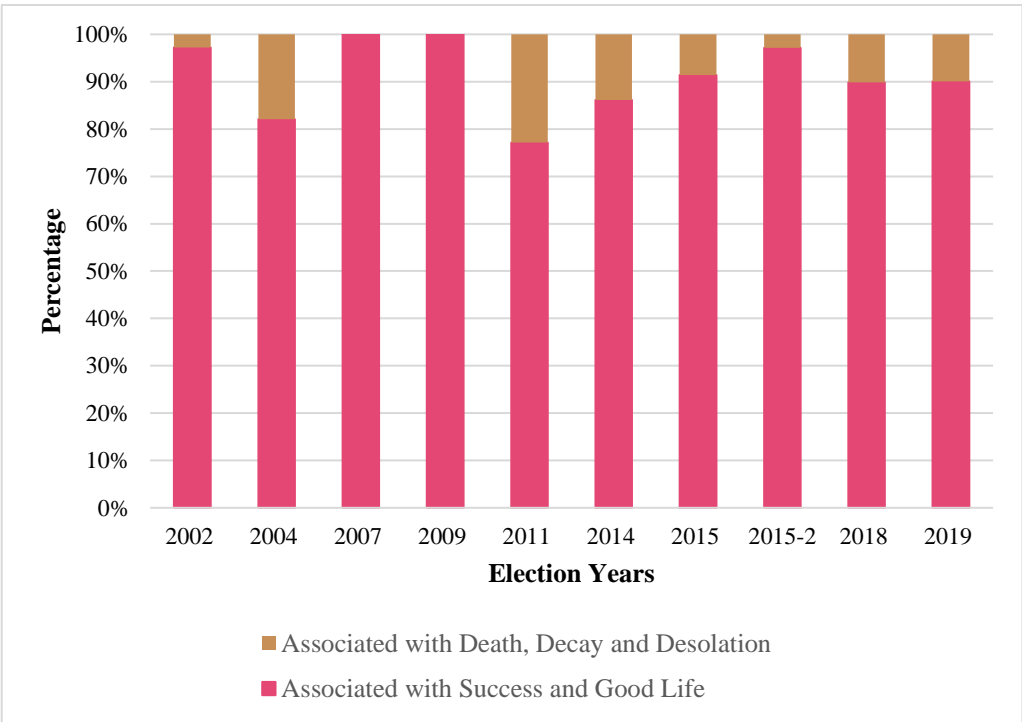

Figure 6. Distribution of Visual Cues *Associated with Success and Good Life* and Visual Cues *Associated with Death, Decay, and Desolation*

As can be seen in the figure above (Figure 7), the total percentage of positive visual cues (*Associated with Success and Good Life*) is 89% for the entire dataset, indicating a significant point in the overall processed data (1603 coded segments with visual cues in 229 video materials). In contrast, negative visual cues (*Associated with Death, Decay and Desolation*) have a relatively low percentage, with only 11% coded in the whole documents. As in the case of the *Music and Sound* category, this distribution of percentages is relevant in terms of the positively charged emotional content of the data. Moreover, in consideration of the emotional-political contexts that

pertain to each election period, the auditory and visual cues utilised in advertisements may vary and fluctuate in intensity, namely in a context-bound manner. This situation is exemplified by the use of the *Turkish flag* as an image, which is subsequently discussed.
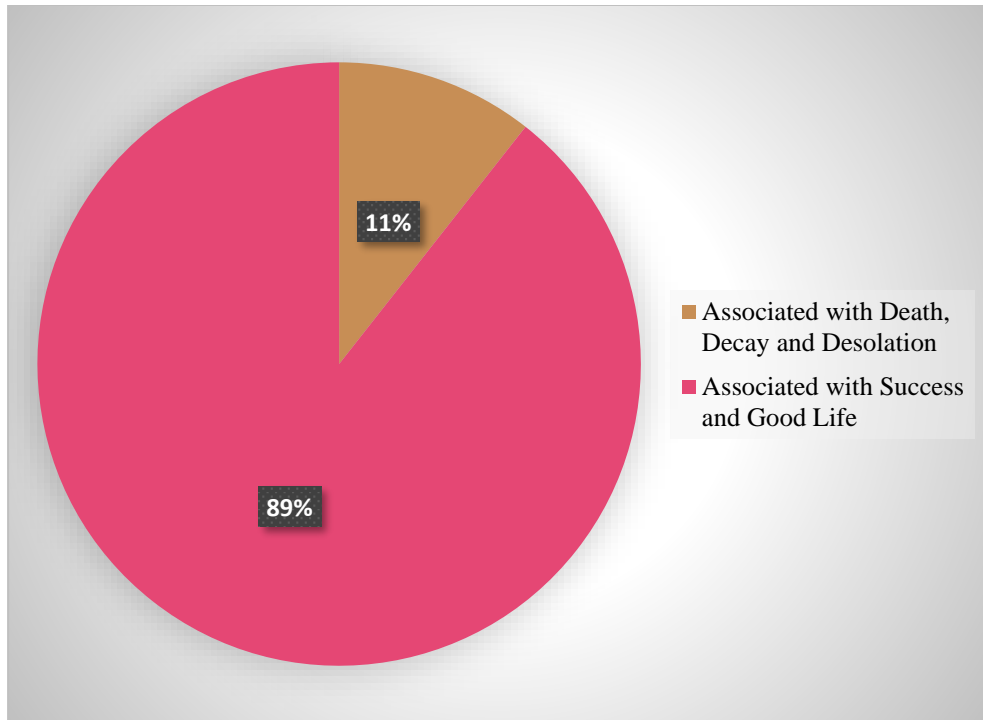

Figure 7. Percentages of Visual Cue Categories

When the visual cues are generally evaluated in terms of the sub-categories, including picturesque landscapes, beautiful neighbourhoods, historical places and references, glad people, happy families, people hard and happy at work, celebrations of certain occasions, mass meetings/rallies; the content of the ads has positive aspirations for the good life and tries to evoke positive emotions. On the other hand, when the ads have negative connotations, they contain images of guns, soldiers, defence equipment, warfare, suburbs, barren landscapes, and pollution. In this context, it is possible to draw general conclusions such as that the positive campaign ads focus on cueing positive emotional appeals such as *enthusiasm (hope/joy)*, *trust*, *compassion (sympathy)*, *contentment*, and *pride*, which signal togetherness and a good/decent life. However, even though the AKP's campaigns are mostly positively charged, they also

contain negative elements. In terms of negative content, the emotional appeals of *fear (anxiety/worry)*, *anger (outrage/disgust)*, *arrogance/contempt*, and *sadness (disappointment)* are characterised by death, decay, misery, and conflict.

5.2. Nexus between the AKP's politics and emotional appeals in its campaign ads[176]

> "As we are told today, 'the ballot box is not everything,' go, read and research, and you will find that the same was said of the late Menderes. Just as some impudent people say to us today, 'Even, we cannot save you,' you will see that the same thing was said to the late Menderes. Those who take their shrouds and set off do not need a saviour. We are not looking for a saviour. Those who accuse us should look for those who will save them."[177]

– Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 12 September 2013

These statements by Erdoğan prove how much importance the AKP attached to the electoral processes. When this attribution is considered alongside Erdoğan's assertion that he has connections with people through the language of love and that he is in love with his nation, as well as being the lover of every citizen living in Turkey, the object of this dissertation's research emerges through the emotional meaning attributed to the elections. In this section, I aim to trace the qualitative aspect of the content analysis, employing an interpretivist approach to contextualise the findings.

As I have argued throughout the thesis, my aim is to question how the AKP shapes, materialises and translates emotions in the campaign advertisements and to uncover whether there are analogies or contradictions in the AKP's approach over time. In line with these questions and objectives, since I have chosen emotions as the phenomena to be explained, it is also important to show the types of emotion appealed to, in addition to identifying the presence of emotional appeals with their attributions

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[176] The active links to advertisement videos, mentioned as examples under this title, can be found in Appendix B.

[177] "Bugün bize nasıl, 'sandık her şey değildir' deniliyorsa, gidin okuyun, araştırın, merhum Menderes'e de aynısını söylediler. Bugün bize nasıl, bazı densizler çıkıp da 'Sizi biz bile kurtaramayız' diyorlarsa, aynı şeyin merhum Menderes'e de söylendiğini göreceksiniz. Kefenini alıp yola çıkanlar için kurtaracak insana ihtiyaç yoktur. Biz, kurtarıcı aramıyoruz. Bize bu ithamı yapanlar, kendilerini kurtaracak olanları arayıp bulsunlar" (Türk, 2018, p. 23).

of negativity and positivity. Therefore, in this section, I present what my analysis means in terms of the emotion types appealed to in the AKP's campaign videos.

The distribution of emotions for each individual electoral campaign is presented in the section of Appendix C, and Appendix D provides the graphs of individual emotion types according to election years. However, as it is important to contextualise the overall assessment of the general and local elections in terms of the distribution of emotional appeals, I give space to the corresponding graphs below.
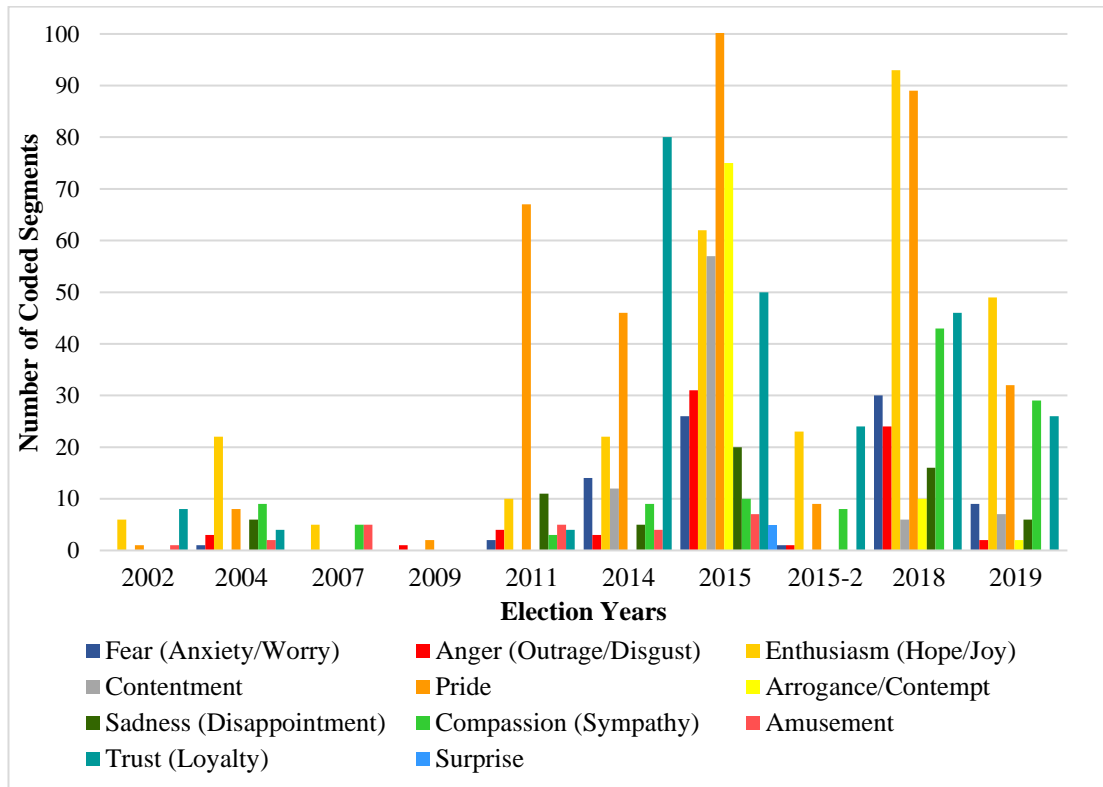
Figure 8. Distribution of Type of Emotion over the AKP's Election Campaign Ads

The graph above (Figure 8) shows the distribution of the segments which I coded with related subcodes – such as *fear (anxiety/worry)*, *anger (outrage/disgust)*, and *enthusiasm (hope/joy)* – under the main category of *type of emotion* that the AKP appealed to in its advertisements during the election campaigns between 2002-2019. However, what the graph displays should not be interpreted as an indication that the AKP has used emotional appeal more frequently in recent years, as access to data from the early years is limited. Nevertheless, it may be a significant finding in itself that there may be a direct relation with the increase in the number of ads based on

developments in the digital world and in line with the fact that laws regulating election propaganda in Turkey have eased restrictions on campaigns.
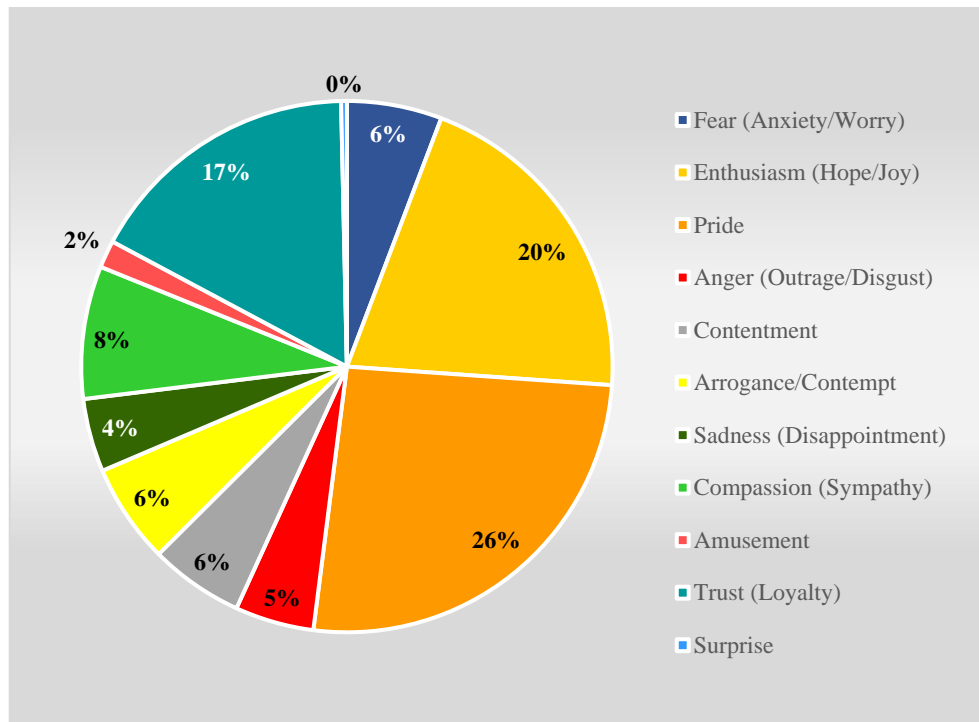

Figure 9. Distribution of Type of Emotion in Percentages in AKP's Election Campaign Ads

To better understand the distribution of coded segments as type of emotions in Figure 8, it is plausible to look at Figure 9. This graph shows the intensity of type of emotion in every election year, and that the sub-code *pride* is at the top of the overall distribution, followed by *enthusiasm (hope/joy)* and *trust (loyalty)*. This result can be interpreted as the AKP's preference to appeal to some certain positive emotions while running in electoral races. The intensity of the sub-code *pride*, and *enthusiasm (hope/joy)* as part of its extension with the nationalistic feelings, can be evaluated within the framework of the AKP's nationalist stance. For instance, the government always resorts to historical, nationalist and religious references and reconstructs itself whatever the political issue is on the agenda, as the common reference points of the flag,[178] azan (call to prayer), homeland, and nation among the society displays.

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[178] One of Erdoğan's speeches in which he often referred to these themes is: "*The flag will remain intact, the call to prayer will persist, the country will remain unified, and the nation will not kneel. It is my hope that this state of affairs will endure indefinitely.*" In Turkish "*Bu bayrak inmez. Bu ezan susmaz.*

Besides, the government seeks to instil *trust (loyalty)* in voters, not only during election campaigns but also regarding broader political manoeuvres. It has been observed that this emotion is employed in political campaigns with the objective of fostering confidence between voters and the AKP.

A review of the data for each election campaign individually reveals a paucity of information for the initial four campaigns, which took place in 2002, 2004, 2007, and 2009. For these campaigns, only ten advertising videos in total have been included in the analysis, as I explained in the section on data collection and selection processes. Despite the limited data (3 videos) in the 2002 general election, the existing literature and available statements of the political figures affiliated with the party provide an opportunity to make comments on the campaign in question. Given that the AKP was a newly established party that participated in elections for the first time in 2002, it is not surprising that it organised its campaign to explain itself. As a result, it is more likely that it focused on rational rather than emotional appeals in its campaigning and advertising in the early years. However, as mentioned above, it is not possible to determine which appeal is more dominant due to the limited data. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify emotional content in the AKP's first campaign if one takes into account the emotional atmosphere of the time – the public outrage against the existing political figures and the economic crisis and the enthusiasm of and towards the AKP's young cadres – that I presented in Chapter 3.

Olçok's own statements – who was the political communication consultant playing a pivotal role in the establishment of the AKP and was a party member – that they ran a campaign appealing to public conscience rather than public opinion, that is, an emotional campaign rather than a rational one, as well as the song that Erdoğan sang in the rallies (*We walked these roads together*) confirm that the campaign aimed to evoke the feelings of the voters. The strategy was to perform the role of interlocutor between the victimisation of the leader and the discontented people due to corruption, poverty, and prohibition (three Ys), which were problematised and sloganised by Erdoğan and the party as pressing problems of the country. Therefore, the party

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Bu ülke bölünmez. Bu Millet diz çökmez. Bu devlet, inşallah ilelebet payidar kalır."
https://x.com/RTErdogan/status/1191762099980120065?lang=en

promised to bring the country out of darkness and into the light with the slogan "open to light, closed to darkness."

Once again, the lack of sufficient data hinders any comprehensive analysis of the 2004 local election campaign. The existing data is minimal, with only three out of nine ads included in the analysis. Nevertheless, in light of the observations outlined in the relevant literature, it can be argued that the initial local elections held in 2004 proceeded without significant incident, largely due to the effective policies and implementation skills demonstrated by the AKP, particularly in the health sector. In this regard, even though only 55 segments out of 186 are directly related to emotion types, the highest proportion within the distribution is that of *enthusiasm (hope/joy)*, which can be associated with the AKP's effort to reflect its novel and efficacious style of governance positively to the electorate.

In the context of the second general election that the AKP participated in 2007, the prevailing view was that it was a democratic and liberal party that respected the rights of all individuals to live their lives according to their own preferences. However, the inability to elect a president in parliament resulted in a highly contentious political climate for the parties' election campaigns and an opportunity for the AKP and its leading figures to voice their discontent with the stalemate in front of the public, thereby furthering the narrative of victimhood on piety. In his capacity as the party's leader, Erdoğan employed rhetoric characterised by frequent religious and emotional references. These included statements such as "*We love you very much, we have a great love for Turkey, we do not discriminate between regions*," and "*We love the created because of the Creator*."[179]

In contrast, an analysis of campaign advertisements reveals that the AKP's campaign strategy focused on highlighting divergent issues related to health, education, transportation, and other sectors. As a ruling party, the AKP sought to portray its actions as achievements and to emphasise its commitment to the continuation of stability – meaning its incumbency – as the slogan "No Stopping, Keep Going" implies. However, despite the limited dataset which does not permit a comprehensive analysis, the 2007 campaign materials provided by the party itself show that only three particular types of emotion are reflected in the advertisements in

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[179] "Yaratılanı severiz, Yaratandan ötürü."

terms of emotional appeals. Of the four videos obtained, three were subjected to content analysis and coded with 107 segments, with only 15 segments falling into the category of emotion types: *enthusiasm (hope/joy)* (five times), *compassion (sympathy)* (five times) and *amusement* (five times).

Although these videos do not provide sufficient information to claim that they appealed to security-related fear or patriotic sentiments such as pride – despite the poster's analogy of three right-wing politicians (Menderes, Özal, and Erdoğan), which could display the emotion of ressentiment – according to the sources reporting on the environment at the time (Aras, 2023d; Dinç, 2008; Uztuğ, 2007), the campaign was also designed to touch on issues of security and nationalism. It is, therefore, the case that the advertisement videos are observed as though they appeared isolated, not fully reflective of the broader emotional-political context of the period.

During the 2009 local elections, the political agenda was shaped by the everlasting religious-secular conflict over the headscarf, civil-military tensions surrounding the Ergenekon trials, and the government's opening policies towards ethnic and religious minorities. Furthermore, foreign political developments and their domestic repercussions, such as the prime minister's outburst at the World Economic Forum meeting, and general political considerations beyond local dynamics, such as rising unemployment due to the effects of the 2008 global economic crisis, corruption, and indivisibility of the country, which the opposition parties highlighted, influenced the campaign process. In addition to these issues, the AKP continued to emphasise its role as a "service" provider to local governments in its campaign materials (election manifesto, pamphlets, slogans, etc.) and party discourse. In consequence, the sole advertisement video prepared and provided by the party for the campaign attempts to appeal to the electorate rationally, yet yields no significant results in terms of emotional appeal. In other words, the available campaign video does not reflect the excitement, enthusiasm, and pride generated by the AKP among voters as nationalistic emotions after Davos, nor does it reflect other emotions that could be used to garner support for the government's policies (i.e., its 'initiatives'), such as anger over existing discrimination against minorities.

Although the AKP started to use actively and officially the YouTube platform since 2014, its campaign advertisements can be accessed through various newspaper pages and those of AKP supporters and rank-and-file on YouTube as of 2011. From

this point onwards, even if the number of campaign advertisements is not distributed evenly according to the election years, the data can provide further insight into emotional appeals and facilitate a greater number of interpretations. The 2011 campaign occurred in an environment following the 2010 constitutional referendum, which curtailed freedom of expression, prioritised conservative norms and values, and prompted concerns from secular and liberal communities. In contrast, the 2011 campaign process, which Erdoğan referred to as "the period of mastery," addressed the general public rather than a specific demographic. The messages of unity and solidarity were exemplified in the advertisement entitled "Come on, one more time"[180] (alternatively, "Let's do it again"). This advertisement was publicly known as "We have travelled the same road."[181] It features a diverse array of individuals from varying socioeconomic backgrounds and regions, including those from affluent, impoverished, proletarian, peasant, conservative, and secularist backgrounds. This is done to evoke pluralistic optimism and project an image of an all-inclusive party while appealing to emotions such as *enthusiasm (hope/joy)*, *compassion (sympathy)*, and *amusement*.

Furthermore, the prominent slogans of the campaign – "Dreams have come true"[182] and "Turkey is Ready, Target is 2023"[183] – demonstrate that the party employed a positive emotional campaign approach despite the inclusion of intended negative connotations, such as incompetence towards previous governments. Figure 8 (also the individual graph for 2011 in Appendix C) illustrates that *pride* is the most prevalent emotional appeal, occurring 67 times out of 106 segments that were coded with emotions in 25 out of 27 videos that were included in the analysis (the total number of coded segments is 383 for the 2011 campaign). This indicates that the party is expressing pride in their actions, and attempts to evoke a similar sentiment in voters through the use of pride-inducing advertisements. The advertisements feature a diverse range of individuals and scenarios, including citizens boarding a plane for the first time, aunts discussing the merits of high-speed rail, truckers expressing their gratitude for the Bolu Tunnel, investors constructing their dream milk factory with the support

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[180] Haydi bir daha.

[181] Aynı yoldan geçmişiz biz.

[182] Hayaldi gerçek oldu.

[183] Türkiye Hazır Hedef 2023.

of grants and initiatives from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, and many others (Türk, 2018, pp. 216–217). Accordingly, the party utilises emotional appeals to create and maintain *enthusiasm (hope/joy)* and satisfaction (*contentment*) in the electorate that the aforementioned services and similar ones would continue, should the party regain power. This is done in order to ensure that the public would be satisfied (*contentment*) and confident (*trust/loyalty*) about the current AKP administration, thereby continuing to support the party by voting for it.

While the campaign rarely evoked negative emotions (only twice evoking *fear (anxiety/worry)*, four times evoking *anger (outrage/disgust)*, and eleven times evoking *sadness (disappointment)*), the overall evaluation of the 2011 campaign demonstrates that positive emotional appeals constituted a significant aspect of the campaign ads. In light of these findings, it is noteworthy that the AKP, for the first time, did not portray itself as a "victim" and conducted a campaign that was markedly distinct from the emotional-political ambience that pervaded the period following the 2010 referendum.

In examining the 2014 local election campaign, the data collection process reveals that the AKP placed particular emphasis on performance-based advertisements, featuring deeds, services, and practices, in 81 separate provinces. However, in addition to these purely informational and rational appeals, the AKP also disseminated a considerable number of storified and sometimes caricatured local election campaign ads. Therefore, the videos in question contain emotionally expressive/evocative content. As illustrated in Figure 8, the 2014 campaign appeals predominantly to *trust (loyalty)* and *pride*. It can be observed that this is due to the fact that the party is proud to showcase its work and achievements, which it consistently claims to be "in love with service."

In terms of contextualising the campaign within the prevailing political atmosphere, the 2014 local election campaign was conducted in a more challenging environment for the government. This was due to the social unrest that occurred during the Gezi process and the corruption allegations that emerged against the government during the period between 17 and 25 December. These developments contributed to a climate of uncertainty and mistrust within society. As defined in the literature on Turkish politics, these turning points led the AKP government to reveal its authoritarian and interventionist rule and to resort to a deepening polarisation (Gürcan & Peker, 2014, pp. 70, 82, 2015, p. 7; Tuğal, 2013). Moreover, these occurrences

influenced the campaign strategy and concepts in 2014, as Olçok elucidates.[184] Indeed, as the campaign progressed, a perception of a nascent independence struggle for the nation emerged. The electorate was informed that their votes would have a significant impact on the future of the nation; thus, they would determine the future.

Moreover, the content of the campaign implies that it was not merely a local election but rather represented as a general election. The slogans "Always Forward,"[185] "Always Nation, Always Service,"[186] and "Unbowed Nation, Invisible Turkey"[187] serve to exemplify this situation. To illustrate, it would be reasonable to suggest that in terms of indicating patriotic feelings, the most critical advertisement is related to the symbolic use of the *Turkish flag* (coded as a sub-category under *visual cues*). The advertisement, entitled "The Nation is Invincible,"[188] was released on 18 March 2014, coinciding with the anniversary of the Çanakkale victory.

Indeed, the legislation governing elections in Turkey expressly prohibits the utilisation of the Turkish flag emblem in campaign materials, as it is regarded as a common symbol of the nation that cannot be appropriated by discrete political entities. The pertinent legislation is Law No. 298 on the Basic Provisions of Elections and Voter Registration. Article 58 of this legislation delineates the prohibitions on propaganda as follows: "It is forbidden to use the Turkish flag and religious expressions on leaflets and all other forms of press materials employed for the purpose of propaganda" (Seçimlerin Temel Hükümleri ve Seçmen Kütükleri Hakkında Kanun, 1961).

Consequently, the advertisement in question was prohibited by the aforementioned article of the law due to its association with the Turkish flag. Two days later, on 20 March 2014, the AKP broadcast an updated version of this advertisement. The Turkish flag was modified by the removal of the crescent and star,

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[184] "*When 17 and 25 December happened, we threw away the whole campaign we had prepared*" (Ülke TV, 2015).

[185] Daima İleri.

[186] Daima Millet Daima Hizmet.

[187] Millet Eğilmez Türkiye Yenilmez.

[188] Millet Eğilmez.

and the substitution of the words "Unbowed Nation, Invincible Turkey,"[189] and was kept to be broadcast. In addition, the advertisement was subsequently re-broadcast on multiple occasions by the AKP, including in metro stations following the failed coup attempt on 15 July 2016,[190] and via the official YouTube page of the Presidency during the propaganda for the constitutional referendum in 2017.[191]

In addition to the use of the Turkish flag as propaganda material despite its legal prohibition, the campaign song, *Dombra*, which was adapted to praise and emphasise the leadership of Erdoğan, demonstrates the party's capacity for emotional manipulation through the evocation of patriotic sentiments among the electorate. Given that *pride* can be harnessed to influence and translate nationalistic sentiments, this appeal occupies a considerable place within the array of emotional appeals employed in the 2014 campaign, comprising 46 segments.

Furthermore, one of the most salient slogans referenced in the advertisements of the 2014 campaign was "I judge by deeds, not words."[192] This slogan conveys the notion that an individual's assessment is based on observable actions and behaviours rather than on verbal assertions. The advertisements, in which this slogan is used, are intended to foster a sense of *trust (loyalty)* in the audience, as well as *pride*. Through this emphasis on actions, the AKP's approach to politics can be perceived as encompassing all societal groups and addressing tangible concerns pertinent to their lives. This outlook is designed to ensure that the party's voice is directly heard by all segments of the non-privileged population (Türk, 2018, pp. 216–217). To illustrate, the advertisement entitled "The headscarf ban is lifted"[193] draws attention to the policy change and its real-life application while predominantly containing positive emotional appeals. It also indicates that AKP did not refrain from referencing the headscarf issue to sustain conservative support, even though the election in question was a local one.

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[189] Related news: https://arsiv.turkiyegazetesi.com.tr/gundem/ak-parti-reklam-filmi-neden-yasaklandi-erdogan-ne-dedi-video-142626, https://www.trthaber.com/haber/gundem/ak-partinin-turk-bayrakli-reklami-yenilendi-121770.html

[190] Related news: https://www.star.com.tr/guncel/bu-millet-egilmez-haber-1126612/, https://www.haber7.com/guncel/haber/2050684-o-reklam-filmindeki-seferberlik-gercek-oldu

[191] Related re-released video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yOD68FrTr9Y

[192] Lafa değil, icraata bakarım.

[193] Başörtüsü yasağı kalktı.

Rather, the appealed issues during this campaign were about the high politics of the country, in a sense. Consequently, *trust (loyalty)* emerged as the most intensively invoked emotion throughout the course of this campaign. Notably, 80 out of 195 segments were coded with this *type of emotion* (see Figure 8 and Appendix C).

In light of these findings, it can be inferred that the AKP pursued a positive campaign strategy in 2014. However, in an effort to re-establish confidence in the electorate aftermath of the Gezi protests and corruption allegations, the party also employed negative emotional appeals. For example, the advertisement videos, entitled "A Morning in Hakkari,"[194] "Children's Voices,"[195] "Henna Night," [196] and "Çelikkuş Comes for Help,"[197] feature images from the Kurdish regions, specifically Hakkari-Yüksekova, Mardin-Midyat, Bitlis-Hizan, and Şırnak. The initial tone of these advertisements is characterised by a negative sense, conveyed through the use of *tense/somber/discordant* music, as well as *images/sounds of war* as if there was an armed conflict or scenes of screaming in fear and crying with pain. They are accompanied by appeals to *fear (anxiety/worry)* and *sadness (disappointment)*. However, the tone subsequently shifts towards a more positive and optimistic direction, employing *uplifting/sentimental/patriotic* music from the midway point of the videos onwards.

It is crucial to identify the sound effects utilised in the advertisements, as they have the ability to capture the audience's attention and evoke a spectrum of emotions. For example, the sounds of crying, screaming, and the firing of guns and fighter aircraft can evoke feelings of sadness, fear, and anxiety, respectively. As a result, the 2014 local election campaign is two-dimensional. Firstly, it encompasses the intended meanings of security concerns, namely that if the AKP had lost power in local administrations, the anticipated emergence of grievances would have appeared nationwide. Secondly, the AKP government sought to portray itself as the architect of a contented society, with a narrative that was bolstered by its policies. The first approach is inextricably linked to the exploitation of the concept of "loss" through

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[194] Hakkari'de Bir Sabah.

[195] Çocuk Sesleri.

[196] Kına Gecesi.

[197] Çelikkuş Yardım İçin Geliyor.

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advertisements that predominantly evoke fear, as Elden and Bakır (2021, p. 291) point out for the cases of ruling political parties' electoral strategies.

The year 2015 was characterised by exceptional circumstances, both in terms of the administrative crisis that followed the June elections – which resulted in a snap election in November – and in consideration of the prevailing emotional-political atmosphere in the country. Thus, the 2015 campaigns were conducted within a distinct political environment, characterised by the election of a popularly elected and performer president, as well as the change of the AKP's leader and cadres. A comparative analysis of the electoral campaigns for the regular general election in June 2015 and the snap election in November 2015 reveals that the number of campaign advertisements accessible online is almost equal. The June campaign comprises 61 videos while the November campaign consists of 67 videos in total. As outlined in Chapter 4, when the data was refined in terms of emotional components, a total of 51 out of the 61 videos collected for the June 2015 campaign were deemed suitable for coding. This resulted in 461 segments being coded with *type of emotion* out of the 1011 total segments. However, only 22 out of the 67 videos collected for the November 2015 campaign were included in the content analysis, as they were deemed to contain sufficient emotional content for analysis. The second campaign comprises 66 segments coded with *type of emotion* out of the 196 total segments.

An analysis of the June 2015 campaign indicates a notable prevalence of positive emotional appeals. The coded segments in the videos place greater emphasis on *pride,* featuring prominently in 118 coded segments, *enthusiasm (hope/joy)* in 62, *contentment* in 57, and *trust (loyalty)* in 50 coded segments. In contrast, the AKP did not refrain from utilising negative emotional appeals, as observed by the presence of 75 segments of *arrogance/contempt*, 31 segments of *anger (outrage/disgust)*, 26 segments of *fear (anxiety/worry)*, and 20 segments of *sadness (disappointment)* in the coded materials. A more detailed examination of the data reveals that the use of emotions such as *fear (anxiety/worry)*, *anger (outrage/disgust)*, and *sadness (disappointment)* in advertisements is employed to address issues related to the headscarf ban and security (terrorism). These emotions are used to evoke concerns among the general public. This is exemplified by the advertisements "'Headscarf Ban

Lifted' advertisement by AK Party,"[198] dated 28 April 2015, and "Only Five Letters,"[199] dated 31 May 2015, which evokes a sense of contention and unease.

Furthermore, the June campaign demonstrates a relationship between *pride* and the evocation of *arrogance/contempt*. The AKP and its components are always used to proudly present their achievements in a self-congratulatory manner. It is not uncommon for the incumbent government to take pride in its achievements during its tenure. However, the advertisements bearing the slogan "They Talk AK Party Acts"[200] appeal to *pride*, but are recurrently accompanied by a sense of *arrogance/contempt*. Therefore, there is a shift in perspective leading to the government displaying disdain towards the public.

An examination of Olçok's discourses can shed light on the party's approach and the attitudes of its leading figures. Olçok oftentimes referred to the concept of electoral psychology, underscoring that the electoral processes (which can be regarded as campaign processes in the pre-election period) are primarily an exercise of influencing voters' emotions rather than a means of conveying information. In addition, he employed emotional terminology, including references to "spring," "beauty," and "sensation," and notably integrated emotional elements into the campaign strategies he devised. As a result, his statements provide insights into the AKP's campaign processes. In the context of the June 2015 election, Olçok placed significant emphasis on the psychological aspects of the electoral period. He also made reference to the existence of contingency plans for the campaign, which include alternative approaches and concepts that could be deployed in response to changing circumstances. This is evident in his remarks: "*If other conditions arise in Turkey or if other options emerge in the political arena, we undoubtedly have many alternatives at our disposal.*" In his own words, Olçok identified the last ten days before the election date as a crucial period in shaping the electoral psychology of the time (Ülke TV, 2015). It can, therefore, be stated that the timing of the broadcasting of advertisements forms part of the AKP's electoral campaign strategy, which is designed to materialise and translate voter emotions.

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[198] AK Parti'den 'Başörtüsü Yasağı Kalktı' reklamı.

[199] "Sadece Beş Harf" Deme.

[200] Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar.

In order to substantiate the abovementioned claim and to gain insight into the emotional drivers of the campaign, I have examined the periodicity of the ad releases in terms of emotional appeals. The periodicity represents a crucial element of political campaigning, particularly with regard to the temporal framework within which campaign advertisements are broadcast. It enables the identification of the specific emotional stimuli that resonate with voters, whether positive or negative. However, it is not possible to determine whether there is a periodicity in the release of campaign advertisements for the 2015 campaigns. This is due to the fact that the campaign videos for the Davutoğlu term are only accessible via social media or news/newspaper pages, rather than the official websites of the political party. Moreover, the release dates of these videos do not provide reliable information. Notwithstanding, the aforementioned advertisement, entitled "Only Five Letters" and available on the AKP's official YouTube page, employs negatively charged emotional appeals and was released a mere week before the elections. The advertisement features five-letter Turkish words, namely "mermi – bullet," "*bomba* – bomb," "*mayın* – mine," "*namlu* – barrel," "*hedef* – target," and "*terör* – terror," which are combined with images of grieving people. The timing of the advertisement suggests that Olçok was aware of the unfavourable trend in the election results and sought to influence voter sentiment.

It is of considerable importance to evaluate the snap elections in November 2015 with consideration of the emphasis placed on the psychology of the electoral period. The following pages present contextualisation of the November campaign within an emotional-political atmosphere of the period, with a comparison to the June campaign. However, regarding the research material, the November campaign comprises 67 advertising videos. The analysis includes 22 videos, while the remaining 45 advertisements are characterised by an emphasis on electoral promises. Therefore, the campaign can be considered to comprise mainly informational content and rational appeals. For this election, in order to explain its commitments in the event of being elected as the ruling party once more, the AKP constructed the campaign through the use of repetitive advertisements.[201] The campaign places an emphasis on the pledges and promises made to specific demographic groups, including young people, students,

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[201] This indicates that certain advertisements, utilising the promises accompanied by infographics, were replicated and depicted with images of the intended audience (e.g., farmers, tradespeople, youth) of the advertisements in question, conveyed through Davutoğlu's voice with identical wording.

pensioners, entrepreneurs, women, tradesmen, SMEs, police officers, farmers, subcontracted workers, newlyweds and low-income families. Nevertheless, the campaign also employs emotional appeals, albeit to a limited extent. Moreover, the intensity of these appeals is markedly different from that observed in the June campaign, which took place approximately five months ago. Of the 66 segments coded with regard to the *type of emotion* present in the November campaign, only two were found to contain negative emotions that diverge from the prevailing political atmosphere. The remaining 64 segments were found to contain positive emotional appeals. Consequently, the campaign is distinguished by a pronounced emphasis on positive emotional appeals, as shown by the coded segments that encompass indications of *enthusiasm (hope/joy)*, *pride*, *compassion (sympathy)*, and *trust (loyalty)*.

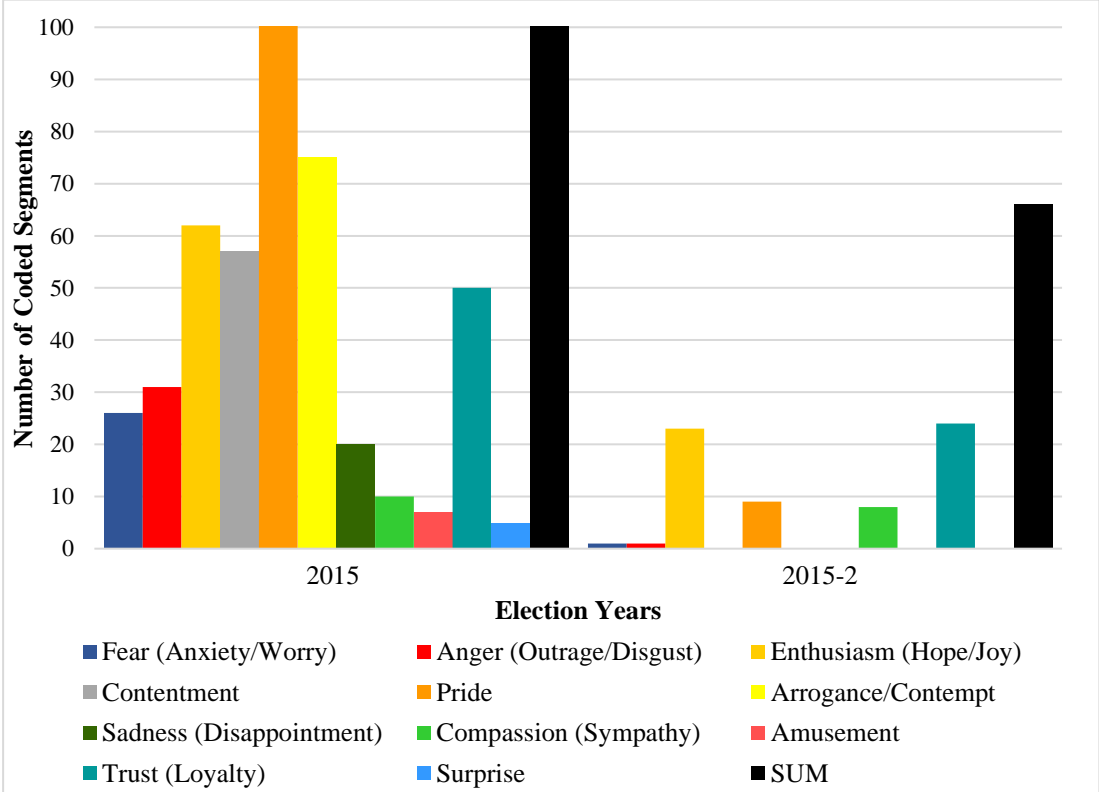**Figure 10. Distribution of Emotions in the Two General Election Campaign Ads in 2015**

In conjunction with the reduction in the number of videos in two campaigns that feature emotional elements, the number of coded segments also declines. Figure 4, presented in the preceding section, illustrates a notable differentiation between the two campaigns with regard to the presence of emotions and their positive or negative

attributions. This is demonstrated by the observation that the proximity between the positive and negative emotional content of the June 2015 campaign advertisements (53,78% positive and 46,22% negative) increases in the November 2015 campaign ads (97,29% positive and 2,71% negative).

In examining the two general election campaigns in 2015, the above chart (Figure 10), which illustrates the distribution of emotional appeals, is worthy of particular attention in accordance with the emotion types. It is evident that the June campaign employed a greater proportion of emotions, with *pride* (26%), *arrogance/contempt* (16%), *enthusiasm (hope/joy)* (13%), *contentment* (12%), and *trust (loyalty)* (11%) being prevalent. In contrast, the November campaign demonstrated a greater emphasis on *trust (loyalty)* (36%), *enthusiasm (hope/joy)* (35%), and *pride* (14%) as dominant emotions. While the June campaign, the inaugural campaign of Davutoğlu's tenure, includes each emotion included in the codebook at least once at least once, the November election campaign does not employ the use of *contentment*, *arrogance/contempt*, *sadness (disappointment)*, *amusement*, and *surprise*. In terms of the relation between *pride* and *arrogance/contempt*, it is worth noting that the November campaign displays a notable absence of self-praise because the advertisements do not contain any direct references to the implications of "we did this" or "we achieved that," in contrast to the June campaign. Moreover, the November campaign utilised negative emotional appeals to *fear (anxiety/worry)* and *anger (outrage/disgust)* in a single segment for each. Accordingly, it appears that the government moved away from the perception that was previously characterised by condescension towards the general public, particularly in light of the inability to form a single-power government following the June elections. In conclusion, the proportion of emotional appeals differs between the two 2015 general election campaigns.

Furthermore, while election campaign advertisements during the Davutoğlu period employed the aforementioned emotional appeals, it is evident that there is a distinction in the degree of visual elements utilised to construct and accompany these appeals. For example, the use of flags as visual cues is an important strategy in political campaigns because they are symbols of independence and national sentiment in all nation-states. Accordingly, the codebook for this research includes the image of the *Turkish flag* as a sub-category under the main code of *visual cues*. The analysis demonstrates that the symbolic image of the *Turkish flag* is employed in conjunction

with other codes or emotions in the advertisements. In the wake of the 2014 local election campaign, which saw the introduction of a legal prohibition on the use of flag-themed advertisements, it is crucial to examine the AKP's inclination to leverage the flag as a propaganda tool. The analysis of campaign advertisements during the Davutoğlu period indicates that the Turkish flag was featured on only two occasions in the June 2015 campaign. One example depicts the flag situated atop a flagpole observed from a bird's-eye view of a cityscape. The second instance occurs on a flagpole, where the Turkish flag is visible, though the crescent and star are not, and a red banner is displayed (see Figure 11). In contrast, the November campaign in 2015 did not make use of any images of the flag. It is questionable whether this is a consequence of the prohibition of the advertisement, entitled "The Nation is Invincible," in 2014.

AK Parti – Gel Yine Beraber Bir Olalım

Yeni Türkiye için #DurmaKoş

Figure 11. Examples for Flag Usage from the June 2015 Campaign Ads

Contextualising these findings within the political landscape of Turkey in 2015 suggests that the AKP's relative failure (the decline in the voting share) on 7 June 2015 and the subsequent competition may have prompted the party to employ a more *fear*- and *anxiety*-charged advertising strategy, due to the prevailing climate of fear in the country's politics. As previously stated, observers of the political climate of 2015 characterised the November campaign as "written in blood," "pointed to a bond of fear," and noted the challenging security environment. The sentiments evoked by the political atmosphere in society were not contingent on individuals' positions on the

secular-conservative spectrum within the societal cleavage. It is, therefore, reasonable to posit that the AKP government's intimidating and anxiety-inducing political approach, as articulated in the AKP supporters' narratives, would be reflected in the election campaign. To illustrate, as I previously stated in Chapter 3, the statement "*If you want the bloodshed to stop, vote for the ruling party*," was perceived as a means of instilling fear and creating a climate of mourning in order to consolidate power. Furthermore, President Erdoğan's rhetoric, despite not being officially and legally at the helm of the AKP during that period (Tombuş, 2015), provides an illustrative example of the emotional-political atmosphere. His statement, "*Give 400 parliamentary deputies and let this matter be resolved peacefully*"[202] (Cumhuriyet, 2015; T24, 2015b), which was perceived as threatening when he uttered it prior to the 7 June 2015 election, was reiterated again with the remark, "*If 400 parliamentary seats had been taken, the situation would be very different today*"[203] (Diken, 2015).

In consideration of the aforementioned factors, it seems reasonable to suggest that the advertisements of the period were characterised by a pervasive atmosphere of fear and anxiety. In contrast, the campaign for the November election does not substantiate the assumption that AKP's positioning in the political landscape, which was underpinned by authoritarian policies and practices, would have been reflected in the language of the campaign, in terms of the scale and linguistic style. Precisely, the emotional-political atmosphere, which was defined by a pervasive fear and anxiety due to a series of bombings and terror attacks in various districts across the country, is not reflected in the content of the advertisements. Despite the government's general political messages to the electorate in rallies and through other communication channels, which were characterised by a sense of urgency and implied that a lack of support would result in chaos, there is no advertising material that reflects this approach. This is in contrast to the examples provided above from the 2014 local and the June 2015 general election campaigns. In consequence, the campaign is comprised primarily of either optimistic (positively charged) or occasionally *unimpassioned* – or promise-focused – advertisements. In other words, the ad videos in question are characterised by a general tendency to make promises, and both lack emotional appeals

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[202] "400 milletvekilini verin ve bu iş huzur içinde çözülsün."

[203] "400 milletvekili alınsaydı durum bugün çok farklı olurdu."

and contain mainly rational appeals in terms of issues related to the promises themselves.

In light of the observation, it seems reasonable to conclude that the AKP government's relative failure in the June 2015 election prompted a strategic shift, moving towards a more positive approach, despite the party leader and officials maintaining a harsh stance in the lead-up to the snap election in November 2015. For instance, while the then Prime Minister Davutoğlu made a reference to "White Taurus"[204] in October prior to the 2015 re-election (BBC News Türkçe, 2015), a series of advertisements was concurrently broadcast under the name "There is no you and me, there is Turkey."[205] Additionally, the campaign video featuring the song "This Country Belongs to All of Us,"[206] broadcast on 27 October 2015, also appealed to positive emotions, including *pride*, *compassion (sympathy)*, *enthusiasm (hope/joy)*, and *trust (loyalty)*. This approach can be evaluated in the context of the intention of reducing societal polarisation on the one hand. Conversely, this serves to illustrate an inconsistency between the AKP in reality and the AKP in the fictional world of campaigns. Consequently, while it may be feasible to follow/detect the spirit of each period through the advertisements in which it is reflected – as Kozanoğlu (2018, p. 119) states – this is not always the case in the context of election campaigns, as the observation from the examples of 2015 November shows. Alternatively, it may be posited that the advertisements reflect a desire for change in the spirit of the period at the end of 2015, at least in the best-case scenario.

A noteworthy aspect of the 2015 general election campaigns, which coincide with Ahmet Davutoğlu's tenure as prime minister, is the absence of comprehensive coverage on the AKP's official YouTube page. That is, not all campaign advertisement videos can be found on the page in question. A more detailed examination reveals that not all videos featuring Davutoğlu's voice and photograph as an element of the advertisement during his tenure as the party's leader are available on the page. Of the 61 videos collected for the 7 June 2015 election campaign, 18 can be accessed from the party's official page. Of the 18 videos, only nine contain Davutoğlu's either voice

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[204] Renault car model, having the connotation of 1990s political turmoil in Turkey.

[205] Sen ben yok, Türkiye var.

[206] Bu memleket hepimizin.

or image. The remaining nine videos lack both musical accompaniment and spoken voice, and the images are limited to infographics that do not evoke any emotional appeal.

Furthermore, the election campaign of 1 November 2015 yielded exclusively infographic videos devoid of musical accompaniment or voiceovers. As previously stated in both the aforementioned paragraphs and the methodology chapter, the total number of videos collected from various YouTube pages is 67. A total of 26 out of 67 videos pertaining to the November campaign are accessible on the AKP's official YouTube page. Of the 26 videos, 23 consist solely of infographics, devoid of any accompanying imagery, audio, or narration. Notably, none of these ad videos feature Davutoğlu in either a visual or auditory capacity as the leader. The period during which the 26 videos were published ended on 9 October 2015. Following this, no further videos were uploaded to the page until the party spokesperson's video, dated 11 February 2016. In other words, since 9 October 2015, either no videos have been uploaded to the AKP's official YouTube page or those that were uploaded have been removed. On the one hand, the atmosphere of grief and anxiety in the country following the explosions near Ankara Central Railway Station on 10 October 2015 is likely to reinforce the first claim. On the other hand, the availability of videos of the campaign and Davutoğlu's rallies with references to "White Taurus" on various YouTube pages and video-sharing websites lends support to the claim/probability that these videos were subsequently removed from the party's page. I interpret the underlying intention of the party as to negate the Davutoğlu term as a result of internal challenges to the party's historical narrative. This is because the AKP seeks to create a divide between itself and the circumstance in question, based on its enduring aspiration for success and its need to leverage the emphasis on success for the continuation and consolidation of its power.

Following the 2015 elections, Turkey passed through major thresholds. The failed coup attempt in 2016, which became the indicator of the AKP's complete separation from the Gülen community, the constitutional referendum in 2017, which led to the country being transformed into a one-person regime, and the state of emergency that covered this period and ended after the 2018 general elections, paved the way for the AKP's further consolidation of power. In other respects, the new presidential system resulted in increased political polarisation within the context of

party politics, as it gave rise to pre-election alliances, while an uneven and unfair playing field dominated the electoral processes conducted under the state of emergency. In such an environment, the AKP continued to employ a highly active electoral campaign strategy, utilising a range of emotional appeals in its campaign advertising. An analysis of the 2018 campaign, based on 53 available advertising videos, reveals that positive emotional appeals, specifically *pride* and *enthusiasm (hope/joy)* are the most prevalent. These are represented by 89 and 93 coded segments, respectively, out of a total of 357 segments, as illustrated in Figure 10. With regard to the negative emotional appeals, although they are not dominant, the prominent emotions are *fear (anxiety/worry)* and *anger (outrage/disgust)*, which are represented in 30 and 24 coded segments, respectively, corresponding to 8% and 7% of the total distribution in the 2018 campaign.

As Elden and Bakır (2021, p. 96) observe, advertisements frequently incorporate elements of the surreal, effectively transporting the viewer to an alternative environment and way of life. This may take the form of characters of those typically found in cartoons, puppets, talking animals, angels or fairies. The prominent "Phoenix" advertisement released during the 2018 general elections provides an illustrative example of this phenomenon. The depicted phenomenon is presented as miraculous, originating from an entirely distinct realm and exhibiting unconventional characteristics. Kozanoğlu (2018, p. 421) highlights the widely acknowledged understanding that the phenomenon of fantasy manifests in two distinct socio-cultural contexts. Firstly, during periods of reduced problems and in societies where reality becomes less problematic and therefore less engaging, the fantastic becomes a popular refuge, promising excitement and tension. Alternatively, during periods of significant social unrest, individuals may turn to fantasy as a means of evading the challenges of reality.

The advertisement in question, which features a phoenix – a mythological/fantastic character that rises from the ashes and attains immortality – can be interpreted in this context as a representation of the enduring nature of the AKP. The individual content analysis of this advertisement demonstrates that the visual cues, including the icons and symbols employed, evoke *historical places and references*, *picturesque landscapes* and the *Turkish flag*. Furthermore, the advertisement attempts to elicit specific emotions, including *enthusiasm (hope/joy)*, *trust (loyalty)* and *pride*. On the one hand, the text evokes a sense of *pride* through the use of historical

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references and boasts about past achievements. Conversely, the advertisement stirs *enthusiasm (hope/joy)* by portraying the beginning of Turkey's most influential era – the new presidential system, for the party and its supporters – and referencing the "successes" of the AKP government, including images of the new Istanbul airport, the Yavuz Sultan Selim Bridge (the third in Istanbul), new highways and dams. In an environment characterised by prevailing unpredictability regarding the new presidential system, the advertisement sought to instil excitement and hope within society. This was achieved by portraying fantasy as a source of pride despite the presence of dissident segments experiencing anxiety and/or deepening pessimism in the country (Z. Yılmaz, 2022, p. 155).

While mentioning the appeals through visuals, as previously stated in the context of the 2014 local and 2015 general elections, despite the legal restrictions on the use of national symbols as propaganda tools in political campaigns, the analysis of the 2018 general election campaign advertisements reveals a notable intensity in the use of the *Turkish flag* (91 out of 146 coded segments, corresponding to 62%). I argue that this transformation is a consequence of the transition to the presidential system of government in Turkey, which has been accompanied by a consistent emphasis on the mantra/mark "New System-New Turkey." The developments that occurred following the 2015 elections, the failed coup of July 2016, the constitutional referendum of April 2017, and the AKP's sense of rule under the state of emergency resulted in a significant transformation in the principles of the rule of law. Consequently, not only have the electoral laws been amended, but the democratic logic on which elections are based has also been altered. In light of these observations, the pervasive use of the flag image, despite the legal restrictions, can be interpreted as a reflection of a one-person regime that disregards the established laws, regulations, and prohibitions.

In other respects, the legal arrangements for campaigning in languages other than Turkish permitted the AKP to incorporate Kurdish advertisements into its campaign. For example, the advertisements in Kurdish, entitled "Time for Turkey,"[207] and "We are strong together! #LendAHand,"[208] evoke sentiments of unity and solidarity, employing appeals to *enthusiasm (hope/joy)*, *compassion (sympathy)*, and

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[207] Wexta Türkiye – Türkiye Vakti.

[208] Biz birlikte güçlüyüz! #EliniUzat.

pride. These appeals are conveyed through visual elements such as *images of children/youth*, *happy/glad people*, and *picturesque landscapes*. Similarly, the advertisements "We are off to a good start"[209] and "Our story of unity begins again"[210] elicit similar emotional appeals through the use of similar visuals and optimistic melodies. In addition, the conjunction of appeals to *enthusiasm (hope/joy)* and *images of children/youth*, evident in 2018, indicates that the party attempts to appeal to younger generations and the general public, who are concerned about the future of their children, in a positive manner.

Conversely, as the election day on 24 June approaches, it is observed that the AKP incorporates both positive and negative appeals into its campaign strategy. An analysis of the periodicity of the advertisements released during the 2018 general election campaign, which commenced on 30 April 2018, reveals that the "Remember"[211] advertisement series released on 6 and 7 June 2018 appeal to *fear (anxiety/worry)*. The advertisements bearing the hashtag #Remember to address a number of issues with the intention of attacking the past governments and bureaucrats over their perceived inability to administer effectively. The headscarf issue is once again employed as a means of evoking emotional responses in the example entitled "Remember the days when the faith and identity of our people were ignored."[212] The remaining advertisements in the series evoke *fear (anxiety/worry)* by invoking memories of past experiences, including instances "when individuals without financial resources were unable to access medical care, students lacked access to educational materials, people endured lengthy wait times for medical care and for their salaries in queues at the banks, and infrastructure development lagged."[213] These recollections are employed to highlight the collective grievances associated with the past.

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[209] 24 Haziran'da Güzel Bir Başlangıç yapmaya hazırlanıyoruz.

[210] Birlik Hikayemiz yeniden başlıyor.

[211] Hatırla.

[212] İnsanımızın inancının, kimliğinin yok sayıldığı günleri #Hatırla.

[213] Parası olmayanın tedavi olamadığı günleri #Hatırla; Öğrencilerin kitap bulamadığı, sınıflara sığamadığı, kara tahtaya mahkûm olduğu günleri #Hatırla; Hastanede doktor, bankada maaş kuyruğu beklediğin günleri #Hatırla; and Dağların kolayca aşılamadığı, bitmeyen yolların yolcusuz bırakıldığı günleri unutmadık #Hatırla.

As Türk (2024, p. 29) notes in the context of the TV series that evoke the past while simultaneously reconstructing it, this reconstruction activity presents history as an occasion for pride. This "Remember" ad series employs a similar strategy, but rather than evoking collective nostalgia, it reconstructs the history of the AKP as a matter of pride while simultaneously denigrating the previous governments. If the appeal of *pride* is not employed in a comprehensive manner, encompassing the entire nation, it is likely to manifest as an appeal of *arrogance/contempt*. A comparable tendency is observed in the series of advertisements under discussion. However, in the 2018 campaign, while *pride* is present in 25% of the segments (89 in total), *arrogance/contempt* is only present in 10 segments (3% of the total). Consequently, it can be observed that the shift towards *arrogance/contempt*, when employing pride, is limited to this ad series and not reflected in the overall campaign.

As a result, the 2018 campaign revolved around the tendency towards hope for a promising beginning with the presidential system on the one hand, and fear and/or anxiety-based framing, albeit of a relatively low intensity, on the other. However, given the dominant rhetoric that I have attempted to render in Chapter 3 laconically, the association of the dissident voices with terrorism, othering, and labelling them as traitors from a nationalist-populist perspective, were at odds with the predominantly positive tone of the campaign.

Turkey had an intense electoral calendar with a series of referendums, general elections and local elections. In 2019, the first local elections under the new presidential system and alliance politics were held, preceding a four-year interval without going to the polls until the 2023 general elections. As was the case with the 2014 local elections, it was often asserted that the 2019 local elections had the atmosphere of a general election, particularly in metropolitan cities. While the national security discourse of the AKP and the People's Alliance was reflected in the pre-election climate with the "matter of survival of the state," only 25 out of 134 campaign advertising videos were included in the analysis when assessing the content in terms of emotional references. This was due to the fact that the majority of the remaining videos were about the deeds and actions in the context of municipal services, rather than making emotional appeals.

As I previously stated, the AKP characterised the campaign for the 2019 local elections as "Municipalism of the Heart." In contrast to the AKP's stance and despite

the unequal contest with the opposition, which was insulted as the "alliance of contempt and shame," the central theme of its campaign was based on "municipalism of the heart" and "social municipalism." In terms of the concept of "municipalism of the heart," the discourses of the party officials were about not distinguishing between service municipalism and heart municipalism, although they combined and mixed the two, as the party has claimed to have done so far. For the AKP, service municipalism, which is a tangible form of service delivery, entails the construction of infrastructure such as roads, pavements, and the provision of essential services like garbage collection and cleaning. However, heart municipalism, as conceptualised by the party, entails a more emotional and empathetic approach to governance, emphasising the importance of connecting with citizens on a personal level and demonstrating care, i.e., touching the citizens, sharing their *happiness*, *sorrow*, and *grief*, and showing the *smiling face*, *interest*, and *attention* (*Gönül Belediyeciliği*, 2018- *emphasis added*). In addition to the positive emotional references made by party members in alignment with the local election manifesto, the campaign advertisements also reinforce the sub-codes of *pride*, *enthusiasm (hope/joy)*, *trust*, *compassion (sympathy)*, and *contentment* under the main category of *type of emotion*, as illustrated in Figure 10.

An analysis of the names of advertisements and their content in the 2019 local election campaign reveals a notable emphasis on the concept of "heart," which aligns with the election manifesto. In line with the party's conceptualisation of heart-municipalism and as asserted by the party's then-deputy chairperson for human rights, this campaign's strategy is to evoke, invigorate, encourage, hearten, and stimulate people's emotions and share their emotional states. Such sentiments are sometimes patriotic or nationalistic, reflecting the prevailing atmosphere of the time that the People's Alliance fuelled, and at other times, they are exclusively focused on references to love. For example, the hashtag #WriteTheGreatTraveller, also known as "Tell many more centuries about those who say we, not you and me,"[214] calls for recording the government's achievements in the context of historiography. This approach entails the utilisation of historical references to glorify the nation, thereby foregrounding *pride* as a hegemonic emotional appeal. Furthermore, the intention of this advertisement is to inspire *enthusiasm* and *hope* among the electorate by

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[214] Sen ben değil biz diyenleri, anlat daha nice asırlara… Türkiye için ileri, daha ileri.

invigorating and triggering their nationalistic sentiments and providing them with the opportunity to draw parallels between the perceived greatness of the nation and the incumbent party, the AKP.

Another example is the advertisement entitled "Our homeland, Our nation, Our beloved,"[215] which employs a poem consisting of love lyrics, including the words "love," "lover," "hope," and "darling," delivered by Erdoğan. The poem is notable for its use of emotionally charged language, which is designed to evoke a strong emotional response from the audience. The deployment of these words and the evocation of *enthusiasm (hope/joy)* in the poem serve to emphasise the appeal to voters' emotions. With regard to differentiation from the prevailing style of advertising, the "Choose Your Future"[216] advertisement portrays a young man's decision to vote or not to vote in two scenarios in order to attract the country's youth demographic. The advertisement conveys a negative message, suggesting that Turkey would face significant challenges, including street incidents, civil unrest, fuel shortages, and unemployment, if the character in question did not exercise his right to vote. However, it also presents a positive scenario, indicating that if he did vote, positive developments in the country would ensue. This indicates that the AKP, despite being the incumbent administration, has retained its confrontational stance towards the previous grievances of the populace in its electoral campaigns. Moreover, the AKP's appeal to young people as the future of the nation in this advertisement indicates that the party continues to prioritise *images of children/youth* when evoking *enthusiasm (hope/joy)*, as was the case in the 2018 campaign. In conclusion, the 2019 local election campaign appears to prioritise positive emotions, and a focus on addressing the broader issues facing the country.

In general, the AKP has not pursued a course of action that differs from which might be anticipated of a ruling political party. As previously stated at the outset of this chapter, the policies espoused by the AKP are, in fact, incongruous with the campaign rhetoric. This situation allows the AKP government to be interpreted as creating an alternate reality of its own at each given election period. This is likely to result from the AKP's long-standing engagement in the construction of an alternate

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[215] Vatanımız, milletimiz, sevgilimiz bizim.

[216] Geleceğini Seç.

reality for its constituents. This includes, for example, the creation of narratives concerning internal and external threats to Turkey and the AKP's rule, with the objective of retaining and consolidating power. This can be evaluated as a process of strategic communication as well.

As previously stated in the conclusion of Chapter 3, the journey of the AKP's governance did not conclude with the 2019 local elections. Two further elections were held prior to the completion of this thesis. The first of these elections was the general election of 2023, which, like all elections in Turkey, was unique in its context. The election coincided with the centenary of the founding of the Turkish Republic and marked the final occasion on which AKP leader Erdoğan would be eligible to stand for election. Since the 2007 general election campaign, the AKP had been targeting this election, which had been shaped by a series of constitutional amendments and legal adjustments. Furthermore, the country's existing constitutional structure and other legal arrangements would be subject to substantial modification in the event of AKP leader Erdoğan participating in this election. It is, therefore, likely that this would be the last election in which Erdoğan would be able to run, unless he were to identify a new solution, such as a new constitution, amendments to electoral law, or an early election decision by parliament, which would enable him to maintain his power. The other election is the local elections of 2024, which have become synonymous with the party's most significant electoral defeat in its political history.

The campaigns of these elections – which will undoubtedly be the focus of future studies – were not included in the analysis due to time constraints. However, as a citizen of this country, I would like to express my observations as a witness of the entire process, as well as a subject who is exposed to and involved in the process. In this case, my position can be considered as that of a participatory researcher. Without undertaking a detailed examination of the AKP's 2023 election campaign, it is possible to interpret the extensive use of emotional attributions by reference to the campaign song, "*For Those Who Can't Hear*."[217] The lyrics of this song, which is imbued with a profound emotional resonance, proceed as follows: "To those who hear and don't hear, to those who ask and don't ask, I love him, I love him very much" (İşbaşaran, 2023). The song was employed by the party as a strategy to appeal to voters and to

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[217] Duyanlara Duymayanlara.

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garner voters, with the objective of underscoring allegiance (loyalty) to the leader and the party, urging them not to abandon Erdoğan and the AKP, and simultaneously exalting the leader and the party. It is evident that the formation or maintenance of an emotional bond represents a key objective in this context.

As the 2024 local election campaign progressed, the vision of the Turkish Century,[218] which was first articulated in the 2023 election campaign, remained a central tenet. However, the emphasis on "real municipalism" suggests that the AKP may have adopted a more rational approach to its campaign strategy. An analysis of the distribution of vote rates and the number of municipalities won by the parties in the local elections reveals a significant loss, particularly for the ruling party. While it is evident that no single factor can account for the AKP's electoral defeat, which marked the first time the party had lost an election in its political history, it is crucial to consider the interplay of various dynamics. While the type of the 2024 local election campaign and its emotional elements can be addressed in a separate study, it should be noted that this doctoral research does not claim that the success or failure in the elections can be measured by the type of campaign (rational or emotional) and does not aim for such a measurement.

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[218] Türkiye Yüzyılı.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The study of emotions has become a prominent area of research, reflecting the significant increase in attention to this topic over the past decades. The prevailing view among contemporary scholars is that emotions constitute a fundamental aspect of human experience and that their influence cannot be ignored. Furthermore, the literature indicates that it is imperative to incorporate the emotional repertoire into the social science research agenda alongside the populist characteristics of political forces. When persuasion is considered one of the characteristics of a political party, emotions become more than mere tools or techniques; they are fundamental to people's thoughts, beliefs, ideas, actions, and emotions alike. While the impact of emotions has been the subject of considerable scrutiny, the strategic deployment of emotions has also been the focus of investigation from a range of perspectives.

In this research, I argue that the place, role and use of emotions can be well taken as objects of study in the context of the AKP – thereby contributing to the understanding of Turkish politics in the contemporary period. I argue that emotions are one of the tools that contribute to the AKP's long-term political existence and power consolidation, as emotions have always functioned as a crucial component of its mode of governance. The prevailing view, substantiated by numerous academic studies, is that the AKP gained power by appealing to revenge and resentment and claiming victimhood and grievances on behalf of the nation because it portrayed itself as the conservative alternative to Turkey's secular elites and cliques. Furthermore, throughout its tenure, the party has amassed a significant emotional capital, mainly due to its strategic exploitation of an emotional-political context shaped by a dynamic process of social relations. Additionally, the AKP has ensured its incumbency by carefully cultivating a specific emotional landscape within society. This landscape is characterised by polarisation, with the party adeptly leveraging emotions such as

loyalty, trust, compassion, and contentment ("us") to reinforce its position while simultaneously stoking emotions of humiliation, anxiety, hatred, and fear ("them"). Consequently, the example of Turkey – and the case of the AKP – demonstrates how the neoliberal jungle has created an atmosphere in which emotions have been instrumentalised. Furthermore, this atmosphere also mobilises what might be termed "counter-emotions" from time to time, regardless of intentions and positions, as evinced in the cases of Demirtaş, İnce, and İmamoğlu. In light of these circumstances and the notion that factors that have been insufficiently analysed or overlooked should be investigated in order to gain deeper insights, I have chosen to focus on electoral campaign videos as a means of examining the role of emotions in politics, with a particular emphasis on the materialisation of emotions in the case of the AKP.

One rationale for investigating the materialisation and translation of emotions within the electoral campaigns is the significance that the AKP and its affiliates attributed to the elections. The AKP regards elections as a reflection of the nation's collective will, which it considers to be above the representative dimension of liberal democracies. In other words, the AKP does not regard elections as a mere procedural aspect of representative democracy that occurs at regular intervals. Instead, for the AKP, each election represents a pivotal moment in determining the legitimacy of its political existence (Türk, 2024, p. 66). Consequently, it is not averse to acting in contravention of the law in pursuit of electoral outcomes. In view of the pivotal role assigned to electoral processes by the AKP, I have incorporated, in this study, an examination of election campaigns as a significant and comprehensive phase of politics. Another rationale for this decision was the AKP's multifunctional role as an electoral apparatus. This implies that the AKP is the subject of a continuous political campaign, and its perspective that each post-election period represents the inaugural phase of the subsequent election campaign has led the party to be in a constant campaign mode (Dinç, 2008; Türk, 2024, p. 67). Furthermore, in order to streamline a comprehensive and systematic analysis, I have focused exclusively on advertisement videos, which cover a substantial period of time and facilitate the reflection of emotionality through their text-audio-visual combination.

In terms of methodological aspects, my subject of study has snapped into a content analysis approach, which is able to shed light on the use and manipulation of appealing emotions alongside the symbols and meaning attributed to specific

communication qualifications of the components of election campaigns. I have employed qualitative content analysis by focusing on the combination of textual, visual, and audial elements, contributing to the construction process of emotions in the research material, namely, the campaign advertisements. This analysis is approached with an interpretivist lens, adopting a social constructivist perspective on the subject matter of emotions. Subsequently, I employed a software programme as an analytical instrument and constructed a codebook, after which I proceeded to code and analyse the data in accordance with the codebook and cross-checked it with a second round of coding and cross-coders.

The rationale behind the interpretive approach lies in the understanding that the audial and visual elements in the campaign videos, along with emotional content, contribute to the socially constructed reality that political parties, like the AKP, present to the audience through carefully curated emotional narratives. Moreover, through this interpretive approach, it is possible to grasp that the emotional narratives, visuals, and audial elements are not isolated components, but rather interconnected tools used by political parties to craft and reinforce a collective social and emotional reality. In this context, the emotions communicated in the campaign videos are analysed not only for their immediate effect but for their role in constructing a long-term ideological narrative that aligns with the party's broader political strategy.

By employing qualitative content analysis within this interpretive framework, I sought to reveal how the AKP, over time, has constructed its relationship with the public through emotionally charged, nationalistic, and religious references. These references do more than merely evoke emotions – they actively construct a shared sense of political identity and belonging, further reinforcing the ideological ties between the party and its constituents. Thus, while content analysis is often viewed as a categorisation tool, in this research, it functions as a means to uncover deeper socio-political meanings embedded within the AKP's campaign videos. Consequently, this methodological approach – rooted in the interpretivist paradigm and social constructionism – demonstrates that political parties, particularly the AKP, do not merely use emotions as communicative tools. Instead, emotions are intricately woven into their ideological frameworks, serving as a vehicle for the social construction of political reality. This process highlights the dual function of emotions: they serve both

as tools for political messaging and as mechanisms that shape the electorate's perceptions of the party, its core values, and its broader vision for the nation.

In terms of the relevance of the concept of "emotional regime" that I touched on in Chapter 2, to the subject of this dissertation, it is possible to relate the AKP's long-standing rule because it is evident that the political strategies throughout its time in power have played a significant role in managing political dynamics and societal emotions. As Chapter 3, which aims to contextualise this research, illustrates, the party has succeeded in creating a robust sense of identity and belonging among a considerable segment of the population. The party has sought to mobilise emotional loyalties around a conservative, religion-based ideology, with recourse to nationalism on a cyclical basis. The AKP has often employed fear-mongering tactics, invoking external threats, coup attempts and terrorism, to create a sense of danger and/or insecurity in society, consolidate power and present itself as the unrivalled dominant force. Conversely, the party has cultivated feelings of gratitude and loyalty among the population through economic prosperity and achievements in public services such as health and infrastructure. These emotions have played a key role in sustaining political support and fostering emotional attachment to the party. In addition, populist rhetoric has also functioned to appeal to emotions, especially in Erdoğan's speeches, which are in line with the emotional regime established during the AKP's tenure. Finally, social polarisation has both created and amplified feelings of hostility and anger, especially between secular and conservative segments of society, further entrenching emotional divisions during the AKP rule. These elements suggest that the management of emotions has become a pivotal aspect of the AKP's political strategy, making Turkey under its rule a concrete example of an emotional regime in the contemporary political landscape.

In addition to these general inferences, the data analysed for this dissertation lends support to the proposition that emotions represent a contributory factor in the perpetuation of the AKP's incumbent status. It is obvious that the AKP actively uses emotions as political currency and has a capacity to bridge the divide between *logos* and *ethos* through the utilisation of *pathos*. In other words, the AKP is capable of employing rhetorical devices designed to persuade, espousing moral and logical positions (*logos*), presenting itself as a reliable and credible entity (*ethos*), and translating feelings in a way that resonates with the public (*pathos*). However, the data

reveals inconsistencies between the AKP's approach to politics and its methods of campaigning. While the AKP's fear-based and intimidating narratives adapt to the prevailing political atmosphere, its campaigns do not appear to be directly coherent with the prevailing political context. To illustrate, if the two elections in 2015 and the developments between them are considered, it would be anticipated that the renewed campaign would include a greater number of negative advertisements evoking strong emotions. However, this did not occur, which represents an intriguing finding worthy for further investigation. The AKP can be seen to manifest as two markedly disparate entities, as evinced by its campaigns, actions and discourse.

The data indicate that the AKP has problems in establishing an emotional connection and maintaining contact with the general public, with the exception of its electoral base. This implies that the AKP has accumulated an unequal emotional capital, whereby its advertisements address issues and elicit emotions as if the country is comprised solely of its own voters and disregards the dissidents. In addition, the AKP has distributed an uneven emotional capital, whereby they process emotions by denigrating and disdaining the dissidents while lauding and uplifting its own "fifty per cent." As mentioned earlier, this situation appertains to what Cottingham (2016, pp. 451–452) emphasises on how dominant classes disguise their oppressive facet by embedding emotional capital in the cultural and symbolic capital of society.

Furthermore, the data demonstrate that the AKP experiences internal challenges, including an effort to negate the Davutoğlu era within the party's historical narrative. This approach is evidenced by the selection of campaign advertisements included or excluded from the repository on the party's official YouTube page. In the event that any circumstance is perceived as a potential hindrance to the continuation or consolidation of the AKP's power, the party will seek to create a divide between itself and the circumstance in question. Subsequently, the party proceeds to navigate its own existence, transforming the negativity directed against it into a positive force while simultaneously capitalising on positive sentiments to portray itself as the optimal alternative. Therefore, despite the apparent inconsistency in the AKP's approach to the use of emotions over time, it can be argued that volatility or flexibility is a necessary condition for expanding or maintaining electoral support, which is of primary importance for the party and for sustaining success.

In light of the above, it is evident that the AKP's adept campaign strategy is a crucial factor contributing to its capabilities in political advertisements. The party's highly subjective and culturally specific campaign advertising follow a value-based approach to politics, which is beyond the impact on the rationality of voters since it transcends individual material benefits and puts their shaped, manipulated, and translated emotions into play. It can also be argued that as Kovács (2020, p. 102) states, since "*emotions are not just 'for themselves'*," the emotional components and appeals employed in the advertisements serve to legitimise the political engagement of the voters. In conclusion, emotions and/or emotional appeals represent one of the current instruments employed by the AKP to galvanise its mass base.

Overall, this research effort demonstrates that the AKP reflects its assertion of a romanticised relationship with the nation in its election campaign advertisements. Such portrayals of positive emotions are designed to create an image of the country under the AKP's governance as a utopian environment, appealing to its own electorate. However, when it perceives any challenge to its position of power, it also effectively conveys negative emotions, particularly fear, anxiety, anger and humiliation/contempt, in its advertisements. In conclusion, as previously stated in Chapter 5, the AKP has created an alternate reality of its own, which it reproduces cyclically with socially, culturally, and politically constructed emotions in order to retain and consolidate its power.

As with all academic studies, this dissertation is subject to certain limitations. There are in excess of one hundred registered and active political parties in Turkey.[219] Not all of them possess the requisite competence to participate in elections. Indeed, the numbers of parties participating in each election is subject to change. At the time of writing, fifteen parties are represented in the Turkish Grand National Assembly.[220] Inclusion of the represented parties during the period of 2002-2019 into the analysis would be feasible, but would require a significant investment of time and resources. Accordingly, this dissertation focuses on a single party as a case study, on the grounds that the AKP has retained its incumbent status for over two decades and has

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[219] *Yargıtay Cumhuriyet Başsavcılığı - Faaliyette Olan Siyasi Partiler*, https://www.yargitaycb.gov.tr/kategori/37/faaliyette-olan-siyasi-partiler

[220] TBMM, https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/sandalyedagilimi

consistently engaged in intensive and active campaigning. However, the disparate number of available data for each campaign constrains the scope of this dissertation, as it does not allow for comparisons between election years. Consequently, this study primarily focuses on the distribution of positive and negative emotional appeals within each campaign.

A further limitation is inherent in the dynamism of human emotions, whereby it is only possible to focus on subjects' emotions through experimentation, as I stated previously in the Chapter 4. Since this study covers a specific but a long-time frame, asking people "what or how did they feel" for their past experiences would entail its own limitations, or at least these experiences are invariably coloured by their present emotional states. Since people's emotions are so dynamic that remembering what they felt when they were exposed to advertisements or during a specific election would not be independent of the mood and state of mind they are in today. In parallel, in a political climate where numerous elections have been held in recent times, as has been the case in Turkey, the distinctive characteristics of the elections are obscured, and the emotions associated with these disparate elections become blurred, indistinct, and challenging to recall.

With regard to the classification and typology of emotions, there is no consensus in the existing literature. The discipline of psychology, along with its related fields of political psychology, the politics of emotions, and the sociology of emotions, each have their own distinct considerations, approaches, and methods for the study and measurement of emotions. Nevertheless, while there are differences between the disciplines in question, it is also necessary to make certain choices in order to create a coherent framework for academic studies. The number of emotions analysed in this study is limited by two factors. Firstly, the extensive time span of the research and the considerable number of research materials required a focused approach. Secondly, it was observed that the emotions employed in political communication are, to a large extent, similar across all country contexts. In light of the fact that not all emotions are explicitly referenced in the campaign materials under examination, and given the difficulty of identifying certain emotions, this can be regarded as a reasonable decision. Furthermore, as I adopted an approach that is already widely recognised in the literature and adapted a codebook of this research to my own study, some emotions were not included in the scope of my thesis. Consequently, this thesis concentrates on

emotions that have been identified as being of particular significance and/or frequently addressed in the existing literature.

Upon examination of the studies, which employ a political supply-side analysis of the role and place of emotions in political communication through a qualitative content analysis, it becomes evident that there is a notable absence of visual representation of research outputs. For this reason, this dissertation presents a novel methodological research initiative through the utilisation of computerised analysis tools (MaxQDA), which are currently underrepresented in the field of political communication. This field is primarily concerned with the analysis of campaign advertising, examining the content of communication elements through the lens of semiotics. The use of computerised analysis tools enables the visualisation of the results derived from the data. Furthermore, the codebook used in this study can be replicated for application in other cases from different countries or regional contexts, thus facilitating further research. Moreover, future research may wish to extend the scope of the study to encompass all political parties represented in parliament, or alternatively, to narrow the time frame and/or extend it, thus enabling comparative analyses.

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APPENDICES

A. DATASET

Election	Number	Date of Release	Title (with embedded hyperlink)	Length	Views
2002 General					
	1	N/A	Güveniyorum	00:07:33	N/A
	2	N/A	Karar milletin	00:04:00	N/A
	3	N/A	Yüzakı	00:01:06	N/A
			Total	**00:12:39**	
			Analysed	**00:12:39**	
2004 Local					
	1	N/A	Animasyon, Oy Pusulası, Mühür, Herşey Türkiye İçin, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan RTE İmza, Aydınlığa Mührü Bas	00:00:40	N/A
	2	N/A	Hayatım İstanbul Sinema Filmi	00:01:12	N/A
	3	N/A	İstanbul Kampanyası, Hayatım İstanbul Klibi	00:05:36	N/A
	4	N/A	Müşahit Eğitim Filmi	00:26:25	N/A
	5	N/A	Seçim Eğitim Filmi	00:32:27	N/A
	6	N/A	Teşekkürler İstanbul	00:06:18	N/A
	7	N/A	Belediyecilik ve 1 yıllık icraat filmi	00:05:43	N/A
	8	N/A	İstanbul Yerel Seçim Startı	00:06:23	N/A
	9	N/A	Şafak Sökerken Lider İmaj Filmi	00:05:17	N/A
			Total	**01:30:01**	
			Analysed	**00:17:23**	
2007 General					
	1	27.06.07	Müşahit Eğitim Filmi	00:30:00	N/A
	2	N/A	Söz Verdik	00:05:31	N/A
	3	N/A	Türkiye'nin Lideri	00:00:30	N/A
	4	N/A	Türkiye'nin Partisi	00:00:30	N/A
			Total	**00:36:31**	
			Analysed	**00:06:31**	

Election	Number	Date of Release	Title (with embedded hyperlink)	Length	Views
2009 Local					
	1	N/A	Müşait Konuşması	00:05:09	N/A
	2	N/A	Türkiye'nin Partisi Filmi	00:10:00	N/A
			Total	**00:15:09**	
			Analysed	**00:10:00**	
2011 General					
	1	N/A	Ekonomi	00:07:23	N/A
	2	N/A	Eğitim	00:08:26	N/A
	3	N/A	Sağlık	00:08:36	N/A
	4	N/A	Tarım	00:08:10	N/A
	5	N/A	Çevre ve Orman	00:05:25	N/A
	6	N/A	Ulaşım Haberleşme	00:08:54	N/A
	7	N/A	Adalet	00:05:22	N/A
	8	N/A	İç İşleri	00:04:50	N/A
	9	N/A	Kültür ve TRT	00:05:52	N/A
	10	N/A	TOKİ	00:05:03	N/A
	11	N/A	Enerji	00:05:56	N/A
	12	N/A	Sosyal Yardımlar Engelli	00:05:40	N/A
	13	N/A	Kadın ve Aile	00:06:13	N/A
	14	N/A	Sosyal Güvenlik	00:05:43	N/A
	15	N/A	Dış Politika	00:06:03	N/A
	16	N/A	Vakıf Hizmetleri	00:04:30	N/A
	17	N/A	GapDapKop	00:05:11	N/A
	18	N/A	Gençlik ve Spor	00:05:26	N/A
	19	N/A	Demokratikleşme	00:05:27	N/A
	20	N/A	Genel İcraat Filmi	01:06:16	N/A
	21	01.05.11	3D Infographic Animation - AK PARTİ Tanıtım Filmi - Ulaştırma icraatları 01	00:02:54	9807
	22	16.05.11	1. Sağlık Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu	00:00:45	5340
	23	16.05.11	2. Sağlık Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu	00:00:44	8564
	24	16.05.11	1. Eğitim Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu	00:00:45	5442
	25	16.05.11	Ekonomi Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu	00:00:45	20933
	26	16.05.11	1. Tarım Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu	00:00:45	2827
	27	16.05.11	2. Tarım Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu	00:00:45	5209
	28	16.05.11	2. Sosyal Destek Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu	00:00:45	3156
	29	17.05.11	1. Sosyal Destek Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu	00:00:46	569

Election	Number	Date of Release	Title (with embedded hyperlink)	Length	Views
	30	17.05.11	1. Hava Yolları Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu	00:00:45	13432
	31	17.05.11	2. Hava Yolları Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu	00:00:45	8940
	32	17.05.11	Karadeniz Sahil Yolu Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu	00:00:45	18938
	33	17.05.11	Yüksek Hızlı Tren Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu	00:00:46	8836
	34	17.05.11	TOKİ Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu	00:00:47	3537
	35	17.05.11	Bolu Tüneli Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu	00:00:45	23621
	36	20.05.11	2. Eğitim Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu	00:00:46	5294
	37	22.05.11	3. Sağlık Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu	00:00:45	161124
	38	22.05.11	3. Eğitim Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu	00:00:45	3075
	39	22.05.11	3. Tarım Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu	00:00:46	4577
	40	24.05.11	4. Eğitim Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu	00:00:45	7472
	41	24.05.11	Kara Yolları Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu	00:00:46	13064
	42	31.05.11	AK Parti'nin Genel İcraatları Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu	00:00:59	5066
	43	03.06.11	1. 2023 Hedefleri Reklam Filmi - Türkiye Hazır Hedef 2023	00:00:45	12575
	44	04.06.11	2. 2023 Hedefleri Reklam Filmi - Türkiye Hazır Hedef 2023	00:00:45	24958
	45	06.06.11	3. 2023 Hedefleri Reklam Filmi - Türkiye Hazır Hedef 2023	00:00:45	48109
	46	09.06.11	Recep Tayyip Erdoğan'ın Aynı Şarkısını Şiir Olarak Okuduğu AK Parti Reklam Filmi	00:01:00	5382
	47	10.06.11	AK Parti 12 Haziran 2011 genel seçimleri klibi Has bahçenin gülüyüz bi daha	00:01:19	998044
			Total	**03:27:59**	**1427891**
			Analysed	**01:26:55**	**1418084**
2014 Local					
	1	02.03.14	Otel Konforunda Yurtlar - Lafa Değil, İcraata Bakarım	00:00:45	280
	2	02.03.14	Sağlık Hizmeti - Lafa Değil, İcraata Bakarım	00:00:45	403
	3	04.03.14	AK İCRAAT - ARTVİN	00:00:27	3137

Election	Number	Date of Release	Title (with embedded hyperlink)	Length	Views
	4	04.03.14	AK İCRAAT - ADIYAMAN	00:00:27	4613
	5	04.03.14	AK İCRAAT - BİNGÖL	00:00:27	6005
	6	04.03.14	AK İCRAAT- BİTLİS	00:00:27	6195
	7	04.03.14	AK İCRAAT - ADANA	00:00:42	6995
	8	04.03.14	AK İCRAAT - ANTALYA	00:00:42	7506
	9	04.03.14	AK İCRAAT - KIRIKKALE	00:00:27	7620
	10	04.03.14	AK İCRAAT - ELAZIĞ	00:00:27	8512
	11	04.03.14	AK İCRAAT - MALATYA	00:00:42	9921
	12	04.03.14	AK İCRAAT - ARDAHAN	00:00:27	422
	13	04.03.14	AK İCRAAT - ŞIRNAK	00:00:27	534
	14	04.03.14	AK İCRAAT - BAYBURT	00:00:27	622
	15	04.03.14	AK İCRAAT - YOZGAT	00:00:27	657
	16	04.03.14	AK İCRAAT - BOLU	00:00:27	685
	17	04.03.14	AK İCRAAT - AFYON	00:00:27	1027
	18	04.03.14	AK İCRAAT - SİVAS	00:00:27	1039
	19	05.03.14	AK İCRAAT - BALIKESİR	00:00:42	1102
	20	05.03.14	AK İCRAAT - DENİZLİ	00:00:42	1585
	21	05.03.14	AK İCRAAT - BATMAN	00:00:26	5368
	22	05.03.14	AK İCRAAT - HATAY	00:00:42	5760
	23	05.03.14	AK İCRAAT - AKSARAY	00:00:27	5931
	24	05.03.14	AK İCRAAT - SİİRT	00:00:27	7886
	25	05.03.14	AK İCRAAT - GAZİANTEP	00:00:42	8471
	26	05.03.14	AK İCRAAT - ESKİŞEHİR	00:00:42	8959
	27	05.03.14	AK İCRAAT - KAHRAMANMARAŞ	00:00:42	8941
	28	05.03.14	AK İCRAAT - MARDİN	00:00:42	9299
	29	05.03.14	AK İCRAAT - DİYARBAKIR	00:00:42	9593
	30	05.03.14	AK İCRAAT - ŞANLIURFA	00:00:42	13427
	31	05.03.14	AK İCRAAT - BURDUR	00:00:27	300
	32	05.03.14	AK İCRAAT - UŞAK	00:00:27	330
	33	05.03.14	AK İCRAAT - #Niğde - Son 13 yılda Yaptığımız Yatırımlar | AK İcraatlar	00:00:27	465
	34	05.03.14	AK İCRAAT - KÜTAHYA	00:00:27	577
	35	05.03.14	AK İCRAAT - MUĞLA	00:00:42	893
	36	06.03.14	AK İCRAAT - İZMİR2	00:00:42	1209
	37	06.03.14	AK İCRAAT - VAN	00:00:42	5213
	38	06.03.14	AK İCRAAT - RİZE	00:00:27	6372
	39	06.03.14	AK İCRAAT - AYDIN	00:00:42	6430
	40	06.03.14	AK İCRAAT - ÇANAKKALE	00:00:27	6945
	41	06.03.14	AK İCRAAT - AĞRI	00:00:27	6939
	42	06.03.14	AK İCRAAT - MERSİN	00:00:42	7108
	43	06.03.14	AK İCRAAT - MANİSA	00:00:42	8728
	44	06.03.14	AK İCRAAT - İZMİR	00:00:42	10632
	45	08.03.14	Gençlik ve Kültür Merkezleri	00:00:45	1678
	46	08.03.14	Ben Sağlığıma Bakarım	00:00:45	2602
	47	08.03.14	Annemin Rüyası	00:00:45	3193
	48	08.03.14	Tatile Çıkıyoruz	00:00:45	3275
	49	08.03.14	Bizim Türkülerimiz Çalıyor	00:00:45	3926

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Election	Number	Date of Release	Title (with embedded hyperlink)	Length	Views
	50	08.03.14	Tarihimize Sahip Çıktık	00:00:45	8900
	51	08.03.14	Aynı Ben	00:00:45	3385
	52	10.03.14	AK İCRAAT - İSTANBUL3	00:00:42	1383
	53	10.03.14	AK İCRAAT - MUŞ	00:00:27	5252
	54	10.03.14	AK İCRAAT - EDİRNE	00:00:27	5430
	55	10.03.14	AK İCRAAT - TEKİRDAĞ	00:00:42	6134
	56	10.03.14	AK İCRAAT - ERZURUM	00:00:42	7577
	57	10.03.14	AK İCRAAT - SAKARYA	00:00:42	10026
	58	10.03.14	AK İCRAAT - BURSA	00:00:42	13741
	59	10.03.14	AK İCRAAT - İSTANBUL	00:00:42	13508
	60	10.03.14	AK İCRAAT - OSMANİYE	00:00:27	490
	61	10.03.14	AK İCRAAT - İSTANBUL2	00:00:42	998
	62	14.03.14	Hakkari'de Bir Sabah	00:00:43	8386
	63	14.03.14	Çocuk Sesleri	00:00:39	5732
	64	14.03.14	Şehirde yaşadığımızı anladık	00:00:45	1468
	65	14.03.14	Efendi olduk	00:00:45	2252
	66	14.03.14	Ailece huzura kavuştuk	00:00:45	1259
	67	14.03.14	Yüksek hızlı tren	00:00:45	1811
	68	14.03.14	IMF'den kurtulduk	00:00:45	3086
	69	14.03.14	Kira öder gibi ev sahibi oldum	00:00:45	1688
	70	14.03.14	Kuskunkıran Tuneli açıldı	00:00:45	11865
	71	14.03.14	İki kıta dört dakika	00:00:45	5500
	72	14.03.14	Şimdi bir mesleğim var	00:00:45	3180
	73	14.03.14	Ben şampiyonum	00:00:45	3300
	74	14.03.14	Bahane yok	00:00:45	5255
	75	14.03.14	Engeller kalkıyor	00:00:45	2073
	76	14.03.14	Başörtüsü yasağı kalktı	00:00:45	14804
	77	14.03.14	Kına Gecesi	00:00:45	3107
	78	15.03.14	Yeni Nesiller Çok Şanslı - Lafa Değil, İcraata Bakarım	00:00:45	237
	79	17.03.14	AK İCRAATLAR -KAYSERİ	00:00:42	1362
	80	17.03.14	AK İCRAATLAR - ANKARA	00:00:42	8993
	81	17.03.14	AK İCRAATLAR - ANKARA - 2	00:00:42	1820
	82	17.03.14	AK İCRAATLAR - KASTAMONU	00:00:27	4898
	83	17.03.14	AK İCRAATLAR - KOCAELİ	00:00:42	7650
	84	17.03.14	Dev Liman	00:00:34	2456
	85	17.03.14	Kendi Uçağımız	00:00:31	13903
	86	17.03.14	Güçlü Savunma Sanayi	00:00:35	2588
	87	17.03.14	Hedef 500 Milyar Dolar İhracat	00:00:34	2998
	88	17.03.14	Yerli Uydu	00:00:36	3583
	89	17.03.14	KKTC'nin Hayali Gerçek Oldu	00:00:33	3530
	90	18.03.14	Halkın Adamı: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan | Dombra - Uğur Işılak	00:04:03	495333
	91	18.03.14	Millet Eğilmez	00:03:00	36789239
	92	20.03.14	Millet Eğilmez (yeni versiyon)	00:01:20	317555
	93	21.03.14	AK İCRAATLAR - TRABZON	00:00:42	5940

Election	Number	Date of Release	Title (with embedded hyperlink)	Length	Views
	94	21.03.14	AK İCRAATLAR - ORDU	00:00:42	8393
	95	21.03.14	AK İCRAATLAR - SAMSUN	00:00:42	7280
	96	26.03.14	#Karabük - Son 13 yılda Yaptığımız Yatırımlar | AK İcraatlar	00:00:26	1354
	97	26.03.14	AK İCRAATLAR - ZONGULDAK	00:00:26	521
	98	26.03.14	AK İCRAATLAR - DÜZCE	00:00:27	540
	99	28.03.14	AK İCRAATLAR - KONYA	00:00:42	1156
	100	04.04.14	Teşekkürler Türkiye	00:00:25	10663
	101	05.03.15	Çelikkuş Yardım için Geliyor Reklam Filmi - Yeni Türkiye Yolunda Daima İleri	00:00:42	680
	102	05.03.15	Yavuz Sultan Selim Köprüsü Reklam Filmi - Yeni Türkiye Yolunda Daima İleri	00:00:34	2177
	103	05.03.15	Dünyanın En Büyük Havalimanı Reklam Filmi - Yeni Türkiye Yolunda Daima İleri	00:00:34	2504
	104	05.03.15	İzmit Körfezi'ne Köprü Reklam Filmi - Yeni Türkiye Yolunda Daima İleri	00:00:33	2388
	105	05.03.15	Dev Şehir Hastaneleri Reklam Filmi - Yeni Türkiye Yolunda Daima İleri	00:00:34	3125
	106	05.03.15	Avrasya Tüneli Reklam Filmi - Yeni Türkiye Yolunda Daima İleri	00:00:34	3434
			Total	**01:12:19**	**38087200**
			Analysed	**00:32:04**	**969562**
2015 General					
	1	25.04.15	Kırkgeçit Tüneli Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:45	18010
	2	28.04.15	AK Parti'den 'Başörtüsü Yasağı Kalktı' reklamı	00:00:41	57599
	3	29.04.15	Özgürlüklerin Önü Açıldı Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:45	2345
	4	07.05.15	#Bingöl - Son 13 yılda Yaptığımız Yatırımlar | AK İcraatlar #BingölünKararıBüyümeninDevamı	00:02:38	26464
	5	07.05.15	Oy vermek artık çok kolay	00:00:35	34334
	6	08.05.15	Zihniyet değişti | Onlar Konuşur Ak Parti Yapar	00:00:43	293
	7	18.05.15	AK İcraatlar - Nevşehir #YenidenNevşehir	00:01:44	23693
	8	18.05.15	AK İcraatlar - Kırşehir #VarmısınKırşehir	00:02:21	22671
	9	18.05.15	İstanbul'a 3.Köprü	00:00:50	41968
	10	19.05.15	Yeni Otoyollar	00:00:53	40874
	11	19.05.15	150 Milyon Yolcu	00:00:54	32956
	12	19.05.15	34 Dev Şehir Hastanesi	00:00:57	31737
	13	19.05.15	Yeni Enerji Kaynakları | Yeni Türkiye	00:00:51	29606
	14	20.05.15	AK Parti 2001 Krizi Göndermeli TV Reklamı Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:46	2117
	15	27.05.15	İlk Oyum İlk Heyecan - #İlkOyumİlkHeyecan	00:02:16	806773

Election	Number	Date of Release	Title (with embedded hyperlink)	Length	Views
	16	31.05.15	Yeni Türkiye İçin #DurmaKoş	00:01:53	219092
	17	31.05.15	"Sadece 5 Harf" Deme	00:02:06	29743
	18	06.06.15	Yeni Türkiye İleri Teknoloji	00:00:36	3428
	19	06.06.15	Yeni Türkiye Yeni Anayasal Sistem	00:00:36	2101
	20	06.06.15	Yeni Türkiye'nin Gücü Eğitimli Nesiller	00:00:34	1476
	21	06.06.15	Yeni Türkiye Büyük Ekonomi	00:00:36	2012
	22	06.06.15	Yeni Türkiye Gençlerimiz Geleceğimiz	00:00:36	1994
	23	06.06.15	Güçlü Kadın Güçlü Türkiye	00:00:31	1815
	24	05.07.15	Ulaşımın Hızı Arttı Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:49	410
	25	05.07.15	Engeller Kalktı Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:49	138
	26	05.07.15	Sağlıkta Devrim Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:45	490
	27	05.07.15	Baba Olacağım Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:44	164
	28	05.07.15	2 Kıta 4 Dakika Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:45	335
	29	05.07.15	Konforumuz Var Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:45	151
	30	05.07.15	Her Şey Güzelleşti Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:44	107
	31	05.07.15	Turkuaz Sismik Araştırma Gemisi Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:45	133
	32	06.07.15	Üretenin Sırtı Yere Gelmez Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:43	262
	33	06.07.15	Hayallerimize Kavuştuk Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:45	220
	34	06.07.15	Doktor Evimize Geliyor Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:42	435
	35	06.07.15	Enerjimiz Büyüyor Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:39	168
	36	06.07.15	Çine Adnan Menderes Barajı Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:45	522
	37	06.07.15	Bu Topraklara Huzur Geldi Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:45	204
	38	06.07.15	Rahatım Yerinde Bursum Cebimde Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:49	298
	39	06.07.15	Hayatım Değişti Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:45	484
	40	06.07.15	Artık Okumak Çok Kolay Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:45	166

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Election	Number	Date of Release	Title (with embedded hyperlink)	Length	Views
	41	06.07.15	Uçağa Binen Var Mı Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:45	246
	42	06.07.15	Kimse Tutamaz Beni Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:41	148
	43	06.07.15	Amcaoğlu Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:45	1296
	44	06.07.15	Gurur Duyuyorum Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:49	599
	45	06.07.15	Şehrimize Yakışan Stad Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:44	150
	46	06.07.15	Konuşarak Çevreci Olunmuyor Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:43	148
	47	06.07.15	Özel Okul Mu Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:45	707
	48	06.07.15	Orhun Abideleri Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:45	210
	49	06.07.15	Artık Bir Evimiz Var Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:46	184
	50	07.07.15	Yerli Uydumuz Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:55	207
	51	07.07.15	Yeni Metro Hatları Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:50	791
	52	07.07.15	Türkiye'ye Yakışır Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:57	540
	53	07.07.15	Kendi Savaş Uçağımız Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:55	1036
	54	07.07.15	Destek Var Bereket Var Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:54	293
	55	07.07.15	AK Parti - Millet Geliyor	00:03:36	18055
	56	07.07.15	AK Parti - Canım Türkiyem	00:02:21	774
	57	07.07.15	AK Parti - Gel Yine Beraber Bir Olalım	00:01:29	500
	58	07.07.15	Doğunun Boğaz Köprüsü Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:59	718
	59	07.07.15	Anadolu'nun Âşıkları Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:01:04	526
	60	07.07.15	Memleketimize De Bu Yakışırdı Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:46	233
	61	07.07.15	Yeni Hızlı Tren Hatları Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:52	1821
			Total	**01:00:12**	**1466970**
			Analysed	**00:49:25**	**1346982**

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Election	Number	Date of Release	Title (with embedded hyperlink)	Length	Views
2015 Second General					
	1	04.10.15	Aile ve Çocuklara Vaatlerimiz	00:00:13	3046
	2	04.10.15	Aile ve Çocuklara Vaatlerimiz 2	00:00:16	1551
	3	04.10.15	Kadınlara Vaatlerimiz	00:00:13	3885
	4	04.10.15	Kadınlara Vaatlerimiz 2	00:00:05	1921
	5	04.10.15	Gençlere Vaatlerimiz	00:00:12	6008
	6	04.10.15	Gençlere Vaatlerimiz 2	00:00:08	3354
	7	04.10.15	Engelli Vatandaşlara Vaatlerimiz	00:00:11	2624
	8	04.10.15	Emekli ve Yaşlılara Vaatlerimiz	00:00:10	2294
	9	04.10.15	Esnaf ve Kobilere Vaatlerimiz	00:00:09	1834
	10	04.10.15	Çiftçilere Vaatlerimiz	00:00:09	2685
	11	04.10.15	Çiftçilere Vaatlerimiz 2	00:00:06	1890
	12	04.10.15	Yurt Dışında Yaşayan Soydaşlara Vaatlerimiz	00:00:09	1785
	13	04.10.15	Eğitim Vaatlerimiz	00:00:09	2059
	14	04.10.15	Eğitim Vaatlerimiz 2	00:00:05	1711
	15	04.10.15	Kültür ve Sanat Vaatlerimiz	00:00:09	1390
	16	04.10.15	Kültür ve Sanat Vaatlerimiz 2	00:00:07	1268
	17	04.10.15	Sağlık Vaatlerimiz	00:00:10	1361
	18	04.10.15	Sağlık Vaatlerimiz 2	00:00:04	1284
	19	04.10.15	Spor Vaatlerimiz	00:00:09	1346
	20	04.10.15	Çalışma Hayatı ve Sosyal Güvenlik Vaatlerimiz	00:00:10	2541
	21	04.10.15	İşletmelere Sağlanacak Vergisel Teşvik Vaatlerimiz	00:00:08	1719
	22	04.10.15	Çevre ve Şehir Vaatlerimiz	00:00:09	1849
	23	04.10.15	Çevre ve Şehir Vaatlerimiz 2	00:00:09	2024
	24	04.10.15	"Tek Sevdamız Türkiye" | Uğur Işılak	00:02:43	190011
	25	08.10.15	Haydi Bismillah	00:01:47	11564
	26	17.10.15	Bizimde Korkumuz Yok - #BizimdeKorkumuzYok	00:00:22	512
	27	17.10.15	Sen Ben Yok Türkiye Var I	00:00:12	899
	28	17.10.15	Sen Ben Yok Türkiye Var II	00:00:29	449
	29	18.10.15	Sen Ben Yok Türkiye Var III	00:00:30	301
	30	18.10.15	Sen Ben Yok Türkiye Var IV	00:00:28	497
	31	18.10.15	Sen Ben Yok Türkiye Var V	00:00:29	286
	32	19.10.15	Emek Yoğun Sektörlere Tam Destek #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:24	28
	33	19.10.15	Kadın Girişimcilere Tam Destek #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:23	118
	34	19.10.15	İşbaşı Eğitim ile Maaş ve SGK Bizden #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:27	126
	35	19.10.15	Polislerimize Ek Gösterge Artışı #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:18	107

Election	Number	Date of Release	Title (with embedded hyperlink)	Length	Views
	36	19.10.15	Taşeron İşçilere Kadro #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:18	521
	37	19.10.15	Öğrencilere THY ile İndirimli Seyahat #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:19	127
	38	19.10.15	Annelere Doğum Hediyesi #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:23	471
	39	19.10.15	İlk Kez İşbaşı Yapan Gençlerin Maaşı 1 Yıl Bizden #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:18	113
	40	19.10.15	Gübre ve Yemde KDV yi Kaldırıyoruz #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:18	114
	41	19.10.15	Gençlerimize Ücretsiz İnternet #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:16	152
	42	19.10.15	Gençler Artık Pasaport Harcı Ödemiyor #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:16	202
	43	19.10.15	İş Kuran Gençlerimize 100 bin TL Faizsiz Kredi #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:18	251
	44	19.10.15	Yeni İş Kuran Gençlere Gelir Vergisi Muafiyeti #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:19	174
	45	19.10.15	OSB lerle 1 Milyon Kişiye İş İmkanı #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:23	74
	46	19.10.15	Genç Çiftçimize 30 Bin TL Karşılıksız Destek #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:19	149
	47	19.10.15	Esnafımıza 30 bin TL Faizsiz Kredi #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:19	239
	48	19.10.15	Gençlerimize 50 bin TL geri ödemesiz destek #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:20	630
	49	19.10.15	Seçilme Yaşını 25 ten 18 e Düşürüyoruz #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:17	105
	50	19.10.15	Asgari Ücret 1300 TL #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:17	468
	51	23.10.15	Çiftçilere Taahhütlerimiz 1 #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:24	27
	52	23.10.15	Çiftçilere Taahhütlerimiz 2 #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:23	60
	53	24.10.15	Polislerimize Ek Gösterge Artışı #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:23	831
	54	24.10.15	Emeklilerimize Yılda 1200 TL Ek Ödeme #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:26	43
	55	24.10.15	Sosyal Yardım Taahhütlerimiz 1 #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:23	49
	56	24.10.15	Sosyal Yardım Taahhütlerimiz 2 #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:32	114
	57	24.10.15	Gençlere Taahhütlerimiz 1 #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:24	48
	58	24.10.15	Gençlere Taahhütlerimiz 2 #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:28	45

Election	Number	Date of Release	Title (with embedded hyperlink)	Length	Views
	59	24.10.15	Gençlere Taahhütlerimiz 3 #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:25	90
	60	24.10.15	Kadınlara Taahhütlerimiz 1 #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:33	58
	61	24.10.15	Kadınlara Taahhütlerimiz 2 #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:33	30
	62	24.10.15	Esnaf ve Kobilere Taahhütlerimiz 1 #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:31	48
	63	24.10.15	Esnaf ve Kobilere Taahhütlerimiz 2 #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:33	28
	64	24.10.15	Asgari Ücret 1300 TL #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:39	135
	65	27.10.15	Bu Memleket Hepimizin	00:02:23	160
	66	30.10.15	Oyunuz Boşa Gitmesin - #OyunuzBoşaGitmesin	00:00:26	218
	67	03.11.15	Haydi Bir Daha - AK Parti Seçim Şarkısı 2011	00:01:19	1262436
			Total	**00:27:27**	**1524537**
			Analysed	**00:13:17**	**16274**
2017 Referendum					
	1	09.02.17	Cumhurbaşkanlığı Hükümet Sistemi Kararımız Evet kitapçığının videosu	00:06:29	11398
	2	10.02.17	Seçimden mutlaka tek başına iktidar çıkacak. Siyasi istikrar kalıcı hale gelecek. #KararımızEVET	00:00:43	923
	3	10.02.17	Hızlı ve etkili yönetim; ekonomik büyüme, refah ve kalkınmanın garantisi olacak. #KararımızEVET	00:00:53	714
	4	11.02.17	Vesayet sistemi tamamen tasfiye edilecek. Meclis ve hükümet güçlenecek. #KararımızEVET	00:00:54	549
	5	11.02.17	Güçlü hükümet, huzurun, güvenliğin ve özgürlüğün teminatı olacak. #KararımızEVET	00:00:56	384
	6	12.02.17	Meclis asli işlevi olan yasa yapmaya odaklanacak ve hükümeti millet adına denetleyecek	00:00:49	383
	7	12.02.17	Cumhurbaşkanı yüzde 50'nin üzerinde bir oy ile seçileceği için siyasette birliktelik artacak	00:01:03	435
	8	13.02.17	Güçlü hükümet sistemi, ülkemizi daha etkili bir konuma yükseltecek. #KararımızEVET	00:00:56	356
	9	13.02.17	Cumhurbaşkanlığı Hükümet Sistemi #KararımızEVET	00:01:45	2941

Election	Number	Date of Release	Title (with embedded hyperlink)	Length	Views
	10	25.02.17	EVET İLE GÜÇLÜ TÜRKİYE	00:03:04	604824
	11	25.02.17	MİLYONLARCA EVET	00:03:03	1135130
	12	25.02.17	GÜCÜMÜZ MİLLET KARARIMIZ EVET	00:10:59	14797
	13	09.03.17	EVET DİYORUZ	00:02:17	61404
	14	18.03.17	Azimle, inançla, 2023 hedeflerimize ulaşmak için #TemelimizÇanakkaleKararımızEVET	00:01:30	953
	15	20.03.17	Cumhurbaşkanlığı ve Meclisin seçimi 5 yılda bir aynı gün yapılıyor	00:00:29	249485
	16	20.03.17	Cumhurbaşkanı'ndan Meclis'i fesih yetkisi alınıyor	00:00:33	76867
	17	20.03.17	Halkımızın Meclis'te temsili güçleniyor, Milletvekili sayısı 550'den 600'e çıkıyor	00:00:27	14684
	18	20.03.17	Seçme ve seçilme yaşı eşitleniyor 18 oluyor	00:00:29	34828
	19	20.03.17	Artık yasamaya ilişkin her türlü hak ve yetki Meclis'te	00:00:33	55402
	20	23.03.17	Kararnameler, Meclis'in ve Anayasa Mahkemesi'nin denetimine açık oluyor #TabiikiEVET	00:00:31	6338
	21	23.03.17	Hükümet'in başı Cumhurbaşkanı oluyor, siyasi sorumluluk alıyor #TabiikiEVET	00:00:23	6799
	22	23.03.17	Siyasi sorumluluk alan Cumhurbaşkanı çalışacağı ekipleri hızla belirliyor #TabiikiEVET	00:00:21	5295
	23	23.03.17	Cumhurbaşkanları Meclis ve yargı denetimine açık hale geliyor #TabiikiEVET	00:00:29	5079
	24	23.03.17	Sıkıyönetim tarih oluyor, Olağanüstü Hal yeniden düzenleniyor #TabiikiEVET	00:00:28	5055
	25	23.03.17	Yargıda tarafsızlık ilkesi anayasal hüküm haline geliyor #TabiikiEVET	00:00:28	4540
	26	23.03.17	Askeri yargı kaldırılıyor, sivilleşen yargıda birlik sağlanıyor #TabiikiEVET	00:00:26	4503
	27	23.03.17	Millet iradesi doğrudan Hükümet'e yansıyor #TabiikiEVET	00:00:29	4310
	28	23.03.17	Cumhurbaşkanlığı süresi 2 dönemle, 10 yılla sınırlandırılıyor #TabiikiEVET	00:00:26	4704
	29	27.03.17	5 yıllık kesintisiz istikrar	00:01:12	115238
	30	27.03.17	Gençlere güvenen Türkiye her zaman kazanır	00:00:51	51448
	31	27.03.17	Hem biz kazanıyoruz, hem gelecek nesiller kazanıyor	00:00:53	43181
	32	27.03.17	Yönetimdeki çift başlılık sona eriyor	00:01:02	26805
	33	27.03.17	Hükümet hizmet ve icraat, meclis kanunları yapıyor	00:00:45	26022

Election	Number	Date of Release	Title (with embedded hyperlink)	Length	Views
	34	27.03.17	Her türlü güvenlik tehdidine karşı hızlı önlem	00:00:59	24548
	35	30.03.17	Yargıda vesayet bitiyor	00:00:52	31459
	36	30.03.17	Sorumlu Cumhurbaşkanı	00:01:04	26007
	37	30.03.17	Çocuklarımızın yarınları daha güzel, daha güvenli oluyor	00:00:48	25953
	38	30.03.17	Hem meclisi, hem hükümeti seçmek için, torunlarım için, millet için, ülkem için #TümKalbimleEVET	00:00:34	163300
	39	30.03.17	Al bayrağımız için, güçlü ekonomi, büyük Türkiye için #TümKalbimleEVET	00:00:35	81157
	40	30.03.17	Hükümeti denetleyen Meclis için, büyük Türkiye için #TümKalbimleEVET	00:00:35	67719
	41	30.03.17	2023 hedefleri için, memleketimiz için #TümKalbimleEVET	00:00:35	52323
	42	30.03.17	Ülkem için, kalıcı istikrar için, askeri yargının kalkması için #TümKalbimleEVET	00:00:35	51925
	43	30.03.17	Gençlerimizin milletvekili olması için #TümKalbimleEVET	00:00:35	41638
	44	30.03.17	Tarafsız ve bağımsız yargı için, güçlü ve yetkili meclis için, milletimiz için #TümKalbimleEVET	00:00:35	39163
	45	30.03.17	Huzurlu yarınlar için, memleket için #TümKalbimleEVET	00:00:35	38171
	46	30.03.17	Terörün kökünü kazımak için, güzel ve huzurlu yarınlar için #TümKalbimleEVET	00:00:34	35781
	47	30.03.17	Çift başlılığın bitmesi yönetimde istikrar için #TümKalbimleEVET	00:00:35	27747
	48	30.03.17	Darbelerin son bulması için, yeniden diriliş, yeniden yükseliş için #TümKalbimleEVET	00:00:35	224342
	49	30.03.17	Devletimiz için, huzur ve güven için, Türkiye'nin gücüne güç katmak için #TümKalbimleEVET	00:00:35	57712
	50	30.03.17	Uyum ve uzlaşma için, birlik için, dirlik için #TümKalbimleEVET	00:00:35	45351
	51	05.04.17	Biz milletimize güveniyoruz, Türkiye'ye inanıyoruz. EVET MİLLET YAPAR	00:01:23	4081
	52	05.04.17	Biz milletimize güveniyoruz, Türkiye'ye inanıyoruz. EVET MİLLET YAPAR	00:01:42	829287
	53	07.04.17	Birlik için, güven için, istikrar için, engelsiz Türkiye için #TümKalbimleEVET	00:00:35	996
	54	09.04.17	GÜVEN İÇİN, İSTİKRAR İÇİN EVET	00:01:33	92635
	55	09.04.17	BİRLİK İÇİN, HUZUR İÇİN EVET	00:01:32	49652
	56	10.04.17	Haydi Bir Daha EVET	00:00:06	7154
	57	10.04.17	Haydi Bir Daha EVET	00:00:05	7126

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	58	10.04.17	Haydi Bir Daha EVET	00:00:05	4374
	59	10.04.17	Haydi Bir Daha EVET	00:00:05	3651
	60	10.04.17	Haydi Bir Daha EVET	00:00:04	3540
			Total	**01:05:02**	**4612566**
			Analysed	**00:00:00**	**0**
2018 General					
	1	08.05.18	Bir Liderin Hikayesi	00:22:32	9858
	2	13.05.18	Vakit, minnet vakti	00:00:44	1041
	3	24.05.18	Şimdi şahlanma vaktidir	00:02:09	4667
	4	25.05.18	Türkiye Vakti - Amerika	00:00:58	10870
	5	25.05.18	Türkiye Vakti - Fransa	00:00:58	6142
	6	25.05.18	Türkiye Vakti - Japonya	00:00:58	7993
	7	25.05.18	Türkiye Vakti - Hollanda	00:00:58	11011
	8	25.05.18	Türkiye Vakti - Almanya	00:00:58	8720
	9	25.05.18	Türkiye Vakti - Çin	00:00:58	7704
	10	25.05.18	Türkiye Vakti - Finlandiya	00:00:58	9045
	11	25.05.18	Türkiye Vakti - Rusya	00:00:58	8193
	12	25.05.18	Türkiye Vakti - Güney Kore	00:00:58	8719
	13	25.05.18	Türkiye Vakti - İspanya	00:00:58	9310
	14	31.05.18	Birlik Hikayemiz yeniden başlıyor	00:01:38	6936087
	15	05.06.18	24 Haziran'da Güzel Bir Başlangıç yapmaya hazırlanıyoruz	00:02:15	1822094
	16	06.06.18	İnsanımızın inancının, kimliğinin yok sayıldığı günleri #Hatırla	00:00:57	2087411
	17	06.06.18	Parası olmayanın tedavi olamadığı günleri #Hatırla	00:00:57	2762308
	18	06.06.18	Öğrencilerin kitap bulamadığı, sınıflara sığamadığı, kara tahtaya mahkum olduğu günleri #Hatırla	00:00:57	2584293
	19	07.06.18	Türkiye bize, biz Türkiye'ye emanetiz. #VakitTürkiyeVakti	00:01:18	1425
	20	07.06.18	Devletin malına deniz deyip, yetimin hakkına el uzatanları #Hatırla	00:00:57	1770855
	21	07.06.18	Hastanede doktor, bankada maaş kuyruğu beklediğin günleri #Hatırla	00:00:57	2367540
	22	08.06.18	Dağların kolayca aşılamadığı, bitmeyen yolların yolcusuz bırakıldığı günleri unutmadık #Hatırla	00:00:57	2082172
	23	08.06.18	Biz Ancak Rükuda Eğiliriz	00:00:48	15496
	24	10.06.18	Çocuk! Senin sinen; Anadolu kadar geniş, Akdeniz gibi sıcak, Ağrı Dağı kadar yücedir! #HatırlaÇocuk	00:02:02	862928
	25	12.06.18	Yerli otomobil üzerinde çalışmaya başlayan Türkiye, artık masaya oturuyor. #VakitTürkiyeVakti	00:01:10	987708

Election	Number	Date of Release	Title (with embedded hyperlink)	Length	Views
	26	12.06.18	Ulaşım, lojistik ve taşımacılık değerleri değişiyor. #VakitTürkiyeVakti	00:01:08	1162553
	27	12.06.18	Atatürk Havalimanı'ndan 7 kat büyük, dünyanın tek 7 pistli havalimanı olacak. #VakitTürkiyeVakti	00:01:00	1396821
	28	12.06.18	Özgün üretimlerin yerlilik oranı yüzde 65'in üzerine çıkmıştır. #VakitTürkiyeVakti	00:01:14	965210
	29	12.06.18	İstanbul'un farklı bölgelerinde 30 tane daha yeşil alan tesis edilecek. #VakitTürkiyeVakti	00:01:06	974551
	30	12.06.18	Biz birlikte güçlü, birlikte Türkiye'yiz. Vakit, geleceğe el ele yürüme vakti! #Eliniuzat	00:01:31	406077
	31	12.06.18	Maher Zain - Hasat Vakti	00:03:53	115145
	32	13.06.18	Biz birlikte güçlüyüz! #EliniUzat	00:01:24	443909
	33	15.06.18	İyi Bayramlar Türkiye	00:00:24	39186
	34	18.06.18	Biz çalıştıkça konuşacaklar Yıkılmadan dimdik dura dura Bizim gücümüzdür iman, dua dua	00:02:36	179061
	35	18.06.18	Şimdi elini uzat, en güçlü devir başlasın. #ZümrüdüAnka Türkiye için kanatlansın	00:02:50	2881737
	36	20.06.18	Biz Ege'den Karadeniz'e, Doğu'dan Marmara'ya, birlikte güçlü, birlikte güzeliz	00:01:21	1274
	37	20.06.18	En Doğru Şekilde Nasıl Oy Kullanılır?	00:01:22	6531
	38	20.06.18	Milli Teknoloji Hamlesini başlattık. 60 adet yerli İHA'mız, Hürkuş uçaklarımız semalarda	00:00:43	413835
	39	20.06.18	Milli Teknoloji Hamlesini başlattık. İlk Milli Haberleşme Uydu Projesini başlattık	00:00:36	340147
	40	20.06.18	Milli Teknoloji Hamlesini başlattık. Türkiye'nin ilk seyir füzelerini geliştirdik	00:00:33	416241
	41	20.06.18	AK'tır bizim davamız, ay yıldız gibi AK Vakit Türkiye Vakti! Haydi ayağa kalk!	00:02:21	514861
	42	20.06.18	Rehber tuttum yüreğimi Düştüm sevdanın ardından Göç eyledim gayrı durmam #DönmemGeri senin yolundan	00:02:24	483962
	43	21.06.18	WEXTA TÜRKİYE - TÜRKİYE VAKTİ	00:01:47	8125
	44	21.06.18	Milli Teknoloji Hamlesini başlattık. 150 yıldır yaptırılmayan milli piyade tüfeğimizi ürettik	00:00:38	335786
	45	21.06.18	Milli Teknoloji Hamlesini başlattık. AR-GE yatırımlarını 110 milyar TL'ye çıkardık	00:00:40	344573

Election	Number	Date of Release	Title (with embedded hyperlink)	Length	Views
	46	21.06.18	Milli Teknoloji Hamlesini başlattık. 110 yeni nesil Organize Sanayi Bölgesi kurduk	00:00:39	419802
	47	21.06.18	Milli Teknoloji Hamlesini başlattık. Teknopark sayısını 5'ten 77'ye çıkardık	00:00:39	369272
	48	21.06.18	Milli Teknoloji Hamlesini başlattık. Elektrikle çalışan yerli otomobilimiz 2021'de yollara çıkıyor	00:00:34	392454
	49	22.06.18	Hazırız Türkiye!	00:04:41	1320829
	50	22.06.18	Vakit ulaşımda da dünya lideri olma vakti! #HazırızTürkiye…	00:00:57	595
	51	22.06.18	Bizim mücadelemiz Türkiye mücadelesi #HazırızTürkiye	00:00:28	687
	52	22.06.18	Değişimi birlikte başlattık, birlikte sürdürüyoruz #HazırızTürkiye	00:00:56	923
	53	22.06.18	Meclis İçin Gençlik Vakti	00:01:04	1015
	54	22.06.18	Biz Birlikte Türkiye'yiz - #VakitKaradenizVakti	00:01:28	2564
	55	22.06.18	Hazırız Türkiye	00:03:08	4622
	56	23.06.18	Oyunlara karşı oyunu kullan!	00:00:39	2883
	57	24.06.18	Teşekkürler Türkiye! #TürkiyeKazandı	00:00:20	5802
	58	25.06.18	#VakitTürkiyeVakti Birlikte güçlü bu ülke, Teşekkürler Türkiye!	00:00:54	7685
			Total	**01:35:56**	**38342308**
			Analysed	**01:07:46**	**38281070**
2019 Local					
	1	31.01.19	Her şehir kendi sesiyle güzel. Çevreye duyarlı kampanyamız başlamıştır.	00:00:35	848883
	2	01.02.19	Gönlü güzel insanların ülkesidir burası.	00:01:01	907834
	3	02.02.19	Her şehir kendi sesiyle güzel. Çevreye duyarlı seçim kampanyamız başlamıştır.	00:00:36	804469
	4	03.02.19	Her şehir kendi sesiyle güzel. Çevreye duyarlı seçim kampanyamız başlamıştır.	00:00:36	724297
	5	04.02.19	Her şehir kendi sesiyle güzel. Çevreye duyarlı seçim kampanyamız başlamıştır.	00:00:36	708919
	6	04.02.19	AK Parti Benim	00:04:03	9668
	7	04.02.19	Birlikte Türkiye Olduk	00:01:30	3598
	8	04.02.19	Biz Size Söz Verdik	00:02:50	4418
	9	04.02.19	Biz Yaparız Onlar Konuşur	00:02:23	10706
	10	04.02.19	Bu Vatana Söz Verdik	00:02:18	3632
	11	04.02.19	Canı Canan	00:02:39	5236
	12	04.02.19	Canımın İçi Türkiyem	00:01:30	6044
	13	04.02.19	Cumhurun İttifakı	00:03:01	8017
	14	04.02.19	Gönülden Gönüle Bir yol	00:01:34	13315
	15	04.02.19	Hizmet Aşkı	00:02:53	14153
	16	04.02.19	İleri Daha İleri	00:03:47	2251

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	17	04.02.19	Nereden Nereye	00:03:25	16428
	18	04.02.19	Önce Millet	00:03:04	4998
	19	04.02.19	Plevne Marşı	00:02:29	79061
	20	04.02.19	Sevdamız Halk	00:01:32	4557
	21	04.02.19	Yola Devam	00:03:40	35850
	22	04.02.19	Zafer Bismillah	00:02:48	251544
	23	04.02.19	Bir işi gönülden yaparsan, gönüller kazanırsın.	00:00:58	1007383
	24	05.02.19	Her şehir kendi sesiyle güzel. Çevreye duyarlı seçim kampanyamız başlamıştır.	00:00:36	601751
	25	06.02.19	Gönlü güzel insanların ülkesidir burası	00:01:25	1013230
	26	09.02.19	Bir işi gönülden yaparsan, gönüller kazanırsın.	00:01:13	926236
	27	11.02.19	Bir işi gönülden yaparsan, gönüller kazanırsın.	00:00:46	1170344
	28	12.02.19	Bir işi gönülden yaparsan, gönüller kazanırsın	00:01:34	631172
	29	14.02.19	Vatanımız, milletimiz, sevgilimiz bizim.	00:00:54	1328
	30	15.02.19	Memleket sevdasıyla işini gönülden yaparsan, gönüller kazanırsın.	00:01:13	1183531
	31	19.02.19	Gönülden yapıp gönüller kazanınca, Sayın Başkan değil "Benim Başkanım" olursun	00:01:30	2659708
	32	20.02.19	İyi günde kötü günde hep yanınızdayız çünkü; Belediye İşi Gönül İşi	00:01:33	14596
	33	24.02.19	Şehir Planları	00:00:33	663
	34	24.02.19	Altyapı ve Ulaşım	00:00:30	830
	35	25.02.19	Kentsel Dönüşüm	00:00:27	585
	36	25.02.19	BENZERSİZ ŞEHİRLER	00:00:31	659
	37	26.02.19	Akıllı Şehirler	00:00:31	760
	38	26.02.19	Çevreye Saygılı Şehirler	00:00:35	496
	39	27.02.19	Sosyal Belediyecilik	00:00:34	572
	40	19.02.19	Gönülden yapıp gönüller kazanınca, Sayın Başkan değil "Benim Başkanım" olursun	00:01:30	2659708
	41	27.02.19	Yatay Şehirleşme	00:00:32	1096
	42	28.02.19	Halkla Birlikte Yönetim	00:00:29	493
	43	28.02.19	Tasarruf ve Şeffaflık	00:00:32	561
	44	01.03.19	Değer Üreten Şehirler	00:00:35	5586
	45	04.03.19	Bizim işimiz gönüllere köprü kurmaktır.	00:01:12	1801282
	46	05.03.19	İzmir İcraatları	00:01:38	897947
	47	05.03.19	Adana İcraatları	00:01:37	810305
	48	05.03.19	Adıyaman İcraatları	00:01:35	229770
	49	05.03.19	Afyon İcraatları	00:01:34	366832
	50	05.03.19	Ağrı İcraatları	00:01:24	151591
	51	05.03.19	Amasya İcraatları	00:01:36	185365

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	52	05.03.19	Ankara İcraatları	00:00:41	1040455
	53	05.03.19	Antalya İcraatları	00:01:41	808809
	54	05.03.19	Ardahan İcraatları	00:01:38	25243
	55	05.03.19	Artvin İcraatları	00:01:36	47999
	56	05.03.19	Aydın İcraatları	00:01:33	597892
	57	05.03.19	Balıkesir İcraatları	00:01:43	612880
	58	05.03.19	Bartın İcraatları	00:01:42	110800
	59	05.03.19	Batman İcraatları	00:01:35	303570
	60	05.03.19	Bayburt İcraatları	00:01:29	38767
	61	05.03.19	Bilecik İcraatları	00:01:45	184093
	62	05.03.19	Bingöl İcraatları	00:01:42	71174
	63	05.03.19	Bitlis İcraatları	00:01:38	74995
	64	05.03.19	Bolu İcraatları	00:01:39	237993
	65	05.03.19	Burdur İcraatları	00:01:40	51459
	66	05.03.19	Bursa İcraatları	00:01:43	947143
	67	05.03.19	Çanakkale İcraatları	00:01:43	329282
	68	05.03.19	Çankırı İcraatları	00:01:42	94593
	69	05.03.19	Çorum İcraatları	00:01:34	305081
	70	05.03.19	Denizli İcraatları	00:01:47	663843
	71	05.03.19	Diyarbakır İcraatları	00:01:32	750935
	72	05.03.19	Malatya İcraatları	00:01:35	473279
	73	05.03.19	Düzce İcraatları	00:01:37	256844
	74	05.03.19	Edirne İcraatları	00:01:43	289222
	75	05.03.19	Elazığ İcraatları	00:01:39	348434
	76	05.03.19	Manisa İcraatları	00:01:34	626131
	77	05.03.19	Erzincan İcraatları	00:01:51	127240
	78	05.03.19	Erzurum İcraatları	00:01:41	515857
	79	05.03.19	Mardin İcraatları	00:01:37	316704
	80	05.03.19	Eskişehir İcraatları	00:01:39	681467
	81	05.03.19	Gaziantep İcraatları	00:01:36	878863
	82	05.03.19	Mersin İcraatları	00:01:37	747761
	83	05.03.19	Giresun İcraatları	00:01:31	224022
	84	05.03.19	Gümüşhane İcraatları	00:01:30	50532
	85	05.03.19	Muğla İcraatları	00:01:33	556112
	86	05.03.19	Hakkari İcraatları	00:01:43	53073
	87	05.03.19	Zonguldak İcraatları	00:01:36	403335
	88	05.03.19	Muş İcraatları	00:01:44	64578
	89	05.03.19	Hatay İcraatları	00:01:38	788846
	90	05.03.19	Iğdır İcraatları	00:01:43	63171
	91	05.03.19	Yozgat İcraatları	00:01:42	232238
	92	05.03.19	Isparta İcraatları	00:01:36	339160
	93	05.03.19	İstanbul İcraatları	00:01:43	9121
	94	05.03.19	Kahramanmaraş İcraatları	00:01:44	472172
	95	05.03.19	Karabük İcraatları	00:01:39	217195

Election	Number	Date of Release	Title (with embedded hyperlink)	Length	Views
	96	05.03.19	Karaman İcraatları	00:01:36	171637
	97	05.03.19	Kars İcraatları	00:01:28	76330
	98	05.03.19	Kastamonu İcraatları	00:01:31	206102
	99	05.03.19	Kayseri İcraatları	00:01:34	723636
	100	05.03.19	Kilis İcraatları	00:01:38	113488
	101	05.03.19	Kırıkkale İcraatları	00:01:33	215292
	102	05.03.19	Kırklareli İcraatları	00:01:55	233896
	103	05.03.19	Kırşehir İcraatları	00:01:39	181082
	104	05.03.19	Kocaeli İcraatları	00:01:42	784955
	105	05.03.19	Konya İcraatları	00:01:39	827014
	106	05.03.19	Kütahya İcraatları	00:01:31	332572
	107	05.03.19	Nevşehir İcraatları	00:01:37	268384
	108	05.03.19	Niğde İcraatları	00:01:33	177733
	109	05.03.19	Şanlıurfa İcraatları	00:01:40	627964
	110	05.03.19	Ordu İcraatları	00:01:36	305099
	111	05.03.19	Sivas İcraatları	00:01:32	343434
	112	05.03.19	Osmaniye İcraatları	00:01:34	233941
	113	05.03.19	Sinop İcraatları	00:01:35	77159
	114	05.03.19	Rize İcraatları	00:01:39	215339
	112	05.03.19	Siirt İcraatları	00:01:32	108373
	113	05.03.19	Samsun İcraatları	00:01:37	735319
	114	05.03.19	Şırnak İcraatları	00:01:50	164808
	115	05.03.19	Yalova İcraatları	00:01:44	228397
	116	05.03.19	Van İcraatları	00:01:42	335753
	117	05.03.19	Uşak İcraatları	00:01:27	271009
	118	05.03.19	Tunceli İcraatları	00:01:44	35244
	119	05.03.19	Tekirdağ İcraatları	00:01:41	646093
	120	05.03.19	Trabzon İcraatları	00:01:39	465644
	121	05.03.19	Tokat İcraatları	00:01:33	249576
	122	05.03.19	Kastamonu İcraatları	00:01:31	206102
	123	05.03.19	Kayseri İcraatları	00:01:34	723636
	124	05.03.19	Kilis İcraatları	00:01:38	113488
	125	12.03.19	El ele, gönül gönüle Yükselen Türkiye	00:01:41	1843104
	126	14.03.19	Sakarya İcraatları	00:01:41	524970
	127	20.03.19	Yükselen Türkiye için #HızKesmedenDevam	00:01:35	1288074
	128	22.03.19	Gönülden yaparsan, gönüller kazanırsın. #DurmakYokYolaDevam	00:01:54	739
	129	26.03.19	Sen ben değil biz diyenleri, anlat daha nice asırlara… Türkiye için ileri, daha ileri.	00:02:14	2160754
	130	27.03.19	AK Parti'den İnteraktif Yerel Seçim Kampanyası Geleceğini Seç	00:00:57	1637
	131	28.03.19	Haydi Türkiye! Bir Daha Yeniden, Gönülden Hizmete Gönülden EVET	00:01:07	1355302

Election	Number	Date of Release	Title (with embedded hyperlink)	Length	Views
	132	28.03.19	#İleriDahaİleri	00:01:44	1331555
	133	29.03.19	Bugün aydınlık Türkiye için yeniden yollara düşme günüdür	00:02:31	1411963
	134	01.04.19	Canımın İçi Türkiyem!	00:01:32	930647
			Total	**03:34:09**	**54624291**
			Analysed	**00:31:33**	**25328738**
2019 Renewed Istanbul					
	1	08.05.19	Bir zarfta 4 pusula var neden 1'i iptal edildi de 3'ü iptal edilmedi?	0:01:28	1299732
	2	09.05.19	Tüm detaylarıyla İstanbul Seçimleri neden yenileniyor?	0:06:25	507956
			Total	**00:07:53**	**1807688**
			Analysed	**00:00:00**	**0**

Pivot table:

Election	Number of Videos	Length	Views
2002 General	3	0:12:39	N/A
2004 Local	9	1:30:01	N/A
2007 General	4	0:36:31	N/A
2007 Referendum	0	N/A	N/A
2009 Local	2	0:15:09	N/A
2010 Referendum	0	N/A	N/A
2011 General	47	3:27:59	1427891
2014 Local	106	1:12:19	38087200
2014 Presidency	0	N/A	N/A
2015 General	61	1:00:12	1466970
2015 Second General	67	0:27:27	1524537
2017 Referendum	60	1:05:02	4612566
2018 General	58	1:35:56	38342308
2019 Local	134	3:34:09	54624291
2019 Renewed İstanbul	2	0:07:53	1807688
Total	**553**	**15:05:17**	**141893451**

B. LIST OF ANALYSED VIDEOS

Election	Number	Date of Release	Title (with embedded hyperlink)		Length
2002 General					
	1	N/A	Güveniyorum		00:07:33
	2	N/A	Karar milletin		00:04:00
	3	N/A	Yüzakı		00:01:06
				Total	**00:12:39**
2004 Local					
	1	N/A	Belediyecilik ve 1 yıllık icraat filmi		00:05:43
	2	N/A	İstanbul Yerel Seçim Startı		00:06:23
	3	N/A	Şafak Sökerken Lider İmaj Filmi		00:05:17
				Total	**00:17:23**
2007 General					
	1	N/A	Söz Verdik		00:05:31
	2	N/A	Türkiye'nin Lideri		00:00:30
	3	N/A	Türkiye'nin Partisi		00:00:30
				Total	**00:06:31**
2009 Local					
	1	N/A	Türkiye'nin Partisi Filmi		00:10:00
				Total	**00:10:00**
2011 General					
	1	N/A	Genel İcraat Filmi		01:06:16
	2	16.05.11	1. Sağlık Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu		00:00:45
	3	16.05.11	2. Sağlık Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu		00:00:44
	4	16.05.11	1. Eğitim Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu		00:00:45
	5	16.05.11	Ekonomi Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu		00:00:45
	6	16.05.11	1. Tarım Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu		00:00:45
	7	16.05.11	2. Tarım Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu		00:00:45
	8	16.05.11	2. Sosyal Destek Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu		00:00:45
	9	17.05.11	1. Sosyal Destek Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu		00:00:46
	10	17.05.11	1. Hava Yolları Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu		00:00:45
	11	17.05.11	2. Hava Yolları Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu		00:00:45
	12	17.05.11	Karadeniz Sahil Yolu Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu		00:00:45

Election	Number	Date of Release	Title (with embedded hyperlink)	Length
	13	17.05.11	Yüksek Hızlı Tren Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu	00:00:46
	14	17.05.11	TOKİ Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu	00:00:47
	15	17.05.11	Bolu Tüneli Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu	00:00:45
	16	20.05.11	2. Eğitim Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu	00:00:46
	17	22.05.11	3. Sağlık Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu	00:00:45
	18	22.05.11	3. Eğitim Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu	00:00:45
	19	22.05.11	3. Tarım Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu	00:00:46
	20	24.05.11	4. Eğitim Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu	00:00:45
	21	24.05.11	Kara Yolları Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu	00:00:46
	22	31.05.11	AK Parti'nin Genel İcraatları Reklam Filmi - Hayaldi Gerçek Oldu	00:00:59
	23	03.06.11	1. 2023 Hedefleri Reklam Filmi - Türkiye Hazır Hedef 2023	00:00:45
	24	04.06.11	2. 2023 Hedefleri Reklam Filmi - Türkiye Hazır Hedef 2023	00:00:45
	25	06.06.11	3. 2023 Hedefleri Reklam Filmi - Türkiye Hazır Hedef 2023	00:00:45
	26	09.06.11	Recep Tayyip Erdoğan'ın Aynı Şarkısını Şiir Olarak Okuduğu AK Parti Reklam Filmi	00:01:00
	27	10.06.11	AK Parti 12 Haziran 2011 genel seçimleri klibi Has bahçenin gülüyüz bi daha	00:01:19
			Total	**01:26:55**
2014 Local				
	1	02.03.14	Otel Konforunda Yurtlar - Lafa Değil, İcraata Bakarım	00:00:45
	2	02.03.14	Sağlık Hizmeti - Lafa Değil, İcraata Bakarım	00:00:45
	3	08.03.14	Gençlik ve Kültür Merkezleri	00:00:45
	4	08.03.14	Ben Sağlığıma Bakarım	00:00:45
	5	08.03.14	Annemin Rüyası	00:00:45
	6	08.03.14	Tatile Çıkıyoruz	00:00:45
	7	08.03.14	Bizim Türkülerimiz Çalıyor	00:00:45
	8	08.03.14	Tarihimize Sahip Çıktık	00:00:45
	9	08.03.14	Aynı Ben	00:00:45
	10	14.03.14	Hakkari'de Bir Sabah	00:00:43
	11	14.03.14	Çocuk Sesleri	00:00:39
	12	14.03.14	Şehirde yaşadığımızı anladık	00:00:45
	13	14.03.14	Efendi olduk	00:00:45
	14	14.03.14	Ailece huzura kavuştuk	00:00:45
	15	14.03.14	Yüksek hızlı tren	00:00:45
	16	14.03.14	IMF'den kurtulduk	00:00:45
	17	14.03.14	Kira öder gibi ev sahibi oldum	00:00:45
	18	14.03.14	Kuskunkıran Tuneli açıldı	00:00:45
	19	14.03.14	İki kıta dört dakika	00:00:45
	20	14.03.14	Şimdi bir mesleğim var	00:00:45

Election	Number	Date of Release	Title (with embedded hyperlink)	Length
	21	14.03.14	Ben şampiyonum	00:00:45
	22	14.03.14	Bahane yok	00:00:45
	23	14.03.14	Engeller kalkıyor	00:00:45
	24	14.03.14	Başörtüsü yasağı kalktı	00:00:45
	25	14.03.14	Kına Gecesi	00:00:45
	26	15.03.14	Yeni Nesiller Çok Şanslı - Lafa Değil, İcraata Bakarım	00:00:45
	27	17.03.14	Dev Liman	00:00:34
	28	17.03.14	Kendi Uçağımız	00:00:31
	29	17.03.14	Güçlü Savunma Sanayi	00:00:35
	30	17.03.14	Hedef 500 Milyar Dolar İhracat	00:00:34
	31	17.03.14	Yerli Uydu	00:00:36
	32	17.03.14	KKTC'nin Hayali Gerçek Oldu	00:00:33
	33	18.03.14	Halkın Adamı: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan | Dombra - Uğur Işılak	00:04:03
	34	20.03.14	Millet Eğilmez (yeni versiyon)	00:01:20
	35	04.04.14	Teşekkürler Türkiye	00:00:25
	36	05.03.15	Çelikkuş Yardım için Geliyor Reklam Filmi - Yeni Türkiye Yolunda Daima İleri	00:00:42
	37	05.03.15	Yavuz Sultan Selim Köprüsü Reklam Filmi - Yeni Türkiye Yolunda Daima İleri	00:00:34
	38	05.03.15	Dünyanın En Büyük Havalimanı Reklam Filmi - Yeni Türkiye Yolunda Daima İleri	00:00:34
	39	05.03.15	İzmit Körfezi'ne Köprü Reklam Filmi - Yeni Türkiye Yolunda Daima İleri	00:00:33
	40	05.03.15	Dev Şehir Hastaneleri Reklam Filmi - Yeni Türkiye Yolunda Daima İleri	00:00:34
	41	05.03.15	Avrasya Tüneli Reklam Filmi - Yeni Türkiye Yolunda Daima İleri	00:00:34
			Total	**00:32:04**
2015 General				
	1	25.04.15	Kırkgeçit Tüneli Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:45
	2	28.04.15	AK Parti'den 'Başörtüsü Yasağı Kalktı' reklamı	00:00:41
	3	29.04.15	Özgürlüklerin Önü Açıldı Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:45
	4	08.05.15	Zihniyet değişti | Onlar Konuşur Ak Parti Yapar	00:00:43
	5	18.05.15	İstanbul'a 3.Köprü	00:00:50
	6	19.05.15	Yeni Otoyollar	00:00:53
	7	19.05.15	150 Milyon Yolcu	00:00:54
	8	19.05.15	34 Dev Şehir Hastanesi	00:00:57
	9	19.05.15	Yeni Enerji Kaynakları | Yeni Türkiye	00:00:51
	10	20.05.15	AK Parti 2001 Krizi Göndermeli TV Reklamı Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:46
	11	27.05.15	İlk Oyum İlk Heyecan - #İlkOyumİlkHeyecan	00:02:16
	12	31.05.15	Yeni Türkiye İçin #DurmaKoş	00:01:53
	13	31.05.15	"Sadece 5 Harf" Deme	00:02:06

Election	Number	Date of Release	Title (with embedded hyperlink)	Length
	14	05.07.15	Ulaşımın Hızı Arttı Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:49
	15	05.07.15	Engeller Kalktı Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:49
	16	05.07.15	Sağlıkta Devrim Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:45
	17	05.07.15	Baba Olacağım Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:44
	18	05.07.15	2 Kıta 4 Dakika Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:45
	19	05.07.15	Konforumuz Var Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:45
	20	05.07.15	Her Şey Güzelleşti Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:44
	21	05.07.15	Turkuaz Sismik Araştırma Gemisi Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:45
	22	06.07.15	Üretenin Sırtı Yere Gelmez Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:43
	23	06.07.15	Hayallerimize Kavuştuk Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:45
	24	06.07.15	Doktor Evimize Geliyor Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:42
	25	06.07.15	Enerjimiz Büyüyor Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:39
	26	06.07.15	Çine Adnan Menderes Barajı Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:45
	27	06.07.15	Bu Topraklara Huzur Geldi Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:45
	28	06.07.15	Rahatım Yerinde Bursum Cebimde Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:49
	29	06.07.15	Hayatım Değişti Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:45
	30	06.07.15	Artık Okumak Çok Kolay Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:45
	31	06.07.15	Uçağa Binen Var Mı Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:45
	32	06.07.15	Kimse Tutamaz Beni Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:41
	33	06.07.15	Amcaoğlu Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:45
	34	06.07.15	Gurur Duyuyorum Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:49
	35	06.07.15	Şehrimize Yakışan Stad Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:44
	36	06.07.15	Konuşarak Çevreci Olunmuyor Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:43
	37	06.07.15	Özel Okul Mu Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:45

Election	Number	Date of Release	Title (with embedded hyperlink)	Length
	38	06.07.15	Orhun Abideleri Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:45
	39	06.07.15	Artık Bir Evimiz Var Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:46
	40	07.07.15	Yerli Uydumuz Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:55
	41	07.07.15	Yeni Metro Hatları Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:50
	42	07.07.15	Türkiye'ye Yakışır Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:57
	43	07.07.15	Kendi Savaş Uçağımız Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:55
	44	07.07.15	Destek Var Bereket Var Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:54
	45	07.07.15	AK Parti - Millet Geliyor	00:03:36
	46	07.07.15	AK Parti - Canım Türkiyem	00:02:21
	47	07.07.15	AK Parti - Gel Yine Beraber Bir Olalım	00:01:29
	48	07.07.15	Doğunun Boğaz Köprüsü Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:59
	49	07.07.15	Anadolu'nun Âşıkları Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:01:04
	50	07.07.15	Memleketimize De Bu Yakışırdı Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:46
	51	07.07.15	Yeni Hızlı Tren Hatları Reklam Filmi - Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar	00:00:52
			Total	**00:48:40**
2015 Second General				
	1	08.10.15	Haydi Bismillah	00:01:47
	2	17.10.15	Bizimde Korkumuz Yok - #BizimdeKorkumuzYok	00:00:22
	3	17.10.15	Sen Ben Yok Türkiye Var I	00:00:12
	4	17.10.15	Sen Ben Yok Türkiye Var II	00:00:29
	5	18.10.15	Sen Ben Yok Türkiye Var III	00:00:30
	6	18.10.15	Sen Ben Yok Türkiye Var IV	00:00:28
	7	18.10.15	Sen Ben Yok Türkiye Var V	00:00:29
	8	23.10.15	Çiftçilere Taahhütlerimiz1 #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:24
	9	23.10.15	Çiftçilere Taahhütlerimiz2 #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:23
	10	24.10.15	Polislerimize Ek Gösterge Artışı #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:23
	11	24.10.15	Emeklilerimize Yılda 1200 TL Ek Ödeme #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:26
	12	24.10.15	Sosyal Yardım Taahhütlerimiz 1 #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:23
	13	24.10.15	Sosyal Yardım Taahhütlerimiz 2 #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:32
	14	24.10.15	Gençlere Taahhütlerimiz1 #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:24

Election	Number	Date of Release	Title (with embedded hyperlink)	Length
	15	24.10.15	Gençlere Taahhütlerimiz2 #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:28
	16	24.10.15	Gençlere Taahhütlerimiz3 #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:25
	17	24.10.15	Kadınlara Taahhütlerimiz 1 #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:33
	18	24.10.15	Kadınlara Taahhütlerimiz 2 #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:33
	19	24.10.15	Esnaf ve Kobilere Taahhütlerimiz 1 #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:31
	20	24.10.15	Esnaf ve Kobilere Taahhütlerimiz 2 #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:33
	21	24.10.15	Asgari Ücret 1300 TL #TekBaşınaİşBaşına	00:00:39
	22	27.10.15	Bu Memleket Hepimizin	00:02:23
			Total	**00:13:17**
2018 General				
	1	24.05.18	Şimdi şahlanma vaktidir	00:02:09
	2	25.05.18	Türkiye Vakti - Amerika	00:00:58
	3	25.05.18	Türkiye Vakti - Fransa	00:00:58
	4	25.05.18	Türkiye Vakti - Japonya	00:00:58
	5	25.05.18	Türkiye Vakti - Hollanda	00:00:58
	6	25.05.18	Türkiye Vakti - Almanya	00:00:58
	7	25.05.18	Türkiye Vakti - Çin	00:00:58
	8	25.05.18	Türkiye Vakti - Finlandiya	00:00:58
	9	25.05.18	Türkiye Vakti - Rusya	00:00:58
	10	25.05.18	Türkiye Vakti - Güney Kore	00:00:58
	11	25.05.18	Türkiye Vakti - İspanya	00:00:58
	12	31.05.18	Birlik Hikayemiz yeniden başlıyor	00:01:38
	13	05.06.18	24 Haziran'da Güzel Bir Başlangıç yapmaya hazırlanıyoruz	00:02:15
	14	06.06.18	İnsanımızın inancının, kimliğinin yok sayıldığı günleri #Hatırla	00:00:57
	15	06.06.18	Parası olmayanın tedavi olamadığı günleri #Hatırla	00:00:57
	16	06.06.18	Öğrencilerin kitap bulamadığı, sınıflara sığamadığı, kara tahtaya mahkum olduğu günleri #Hatırla	00:00:57
	17	07.06.18	Türkiye bize, biz Türkiye'ye emanetiz. #VakitTürkiyeVakti	00:01:18
	18	07.06.18	Devletin malına deniz deyip, yetimin hakkına el uzatanları #Hatırla	00:00:57
	19	07.06.18	Hastanede doktor, bankada maaş kuyruğu beklediğin günleri #Hatırla	00:00:57
	20	08.06.18	Dağların kolayca aşılamadığı, bitmeyen yolların yolcusuz bırakıldığı günleri unutmadık #Hatırla	00:00:57
	21	08.06.18	Biz Ancak Rükuda Eğiliriz	00:00:48

Election	Number	Date of Release	Title (with embedded hyperlink)	Length
	22	10.06.18	Çocuk! Senin sinen; Anadolu kadar geniş, Akdeniz gibi sıcak, Ağrı Dağı kadar yücedir! #HatırlaÇocuk	00:02:02
	23	12.06.18	Yerli otomobil üzerinde çalışmaya başlayan Türkiye, artık masaya oturuyor. #VakitTürkiyeVakti	00:01:10
	24	12.06.18	Ulaşım, lojistik ve taşımacılık değerleri değişiyor. #VakitTürkiyeVakti	00:01:08
	25	12.06.18	Atatürk Havalimanı'ndan 7 kat büyük, dünyanın tek 7 pistli havalimanı olacak. #VakitTürkiyeVakti	00:01:00
	26	12.06.18	Özgün üretimlerin yerlilik oranı yüzde 65'in üzerine çıkmıştır. #VakitTürkiyeVakti	00:01:14
	27	12.06.18	İstanbul'un farklı bölgelerinde 30 tane daha yeşil alan tesis edilecek. #VakitTürkiyeVakti	00:01:06
	28	12.06.18	Biz birlikte güçlü, birlikte Türkiye'yiz. Vakit, geleceğe el ele yürüme vakti! #Eliniuzat	00:01:31
	29	12.06.18	Maher Zain - Hasat Vakti	00:03:53
	30	13.06.18	Biz birlikte güçlüyüz! #EliniUzat	00:01:24
	31	18.06.18	Biz çalıştıkça konuşacaklar Yıkılmadan dimdik dura dura Bizim gücümüzdür iman, dua dua Şimdi elini uzat, en güçlü devir	00:02:36
	32	18.06.18	başlasın. #ZümrüdüAnka Türkiye için kanatlansın	00:02:50
	33	20.06.18	Biz Ege'den Karadeniz'e, Doğu'dan Marmara'ya, birlikte güçlü, birlikte güzeliz	00:01:21
	34	20.06.18	Milli Teknoloji Hamlesini başlattık. 60 adet yerli İHA'mız, Hürkuş uçaklarımız semalarda	00:00:43
	35	20.06.18	Milli Teknoloji Hamlesini başlattık. İlk Milli Haberleşme Uydu Projesini başlattık	00:00:36
	36	20.06.18	Milli Teknoloji Hamlesini başlattık. Türkiye'nin ilk seyir füzelerini geliştirdik	00:00:33
	37	20.06.18	AK'tır bizim davamız, ay yıldız gibi AK Vakit Türkiye Vakti! Haydi ayağa kalk!	00:02:21
	38	20.06.18	Rehber tuttum yüreğimi Düştüm sevdanın ardından Göç eyledim gayrı durmam #DönmemGeri senin yolundan	00:02:24
	39	21.06.18	WEXTA TÜRKİYE - TÜRKİYE VAKTİ	00:01:47
	40	21.06.18	Milli Teknoloji Hamlesini başlattık. 150 yıldır yaptırılmayan milli piyade tüfeğimizi ürettik	00:00:38
	41	21.06.18	Milli Teknoloji Hamlesini başlattık. AR-GE yatırımlarını 110 milyar TL'ye çıkardık	00:00:40
	42	21.06.18	Milli Teknoloji Hamlesini başlattık. 110 yeni nesil Organize Sanayi Bölgesi kurduk	00:00:39
	43	21.06.18	Milli Teknoloji Hamlesini başlattık. Teknopark sayısını 5'ten 77'ye çıkardık	00:00:39
	44	21.06.18	Milli Teknoloji Hamlesini başlattık. Elektrikle çalışan yerli otomobilimiz 2021'de yollara çıkıyor	00:00:34

| Election	Number	Date of Release	Title (with embedded hyperlink)	Length
	45	22.06.18	Hazırız Türkiye!	00:04:41
	46	22.06.18	Vakit ulaşımda da dünya lideri olma vakti! #HazırızTürkiye…	00:00:57
	47	22.06.18	Bizim mücadelemiz Türkiye mücadelesi #HazırızTürkiye	00:00:28
	48	22.06.18	Değişimi birlikte başlattık, birlikte sürdürüyoruz #HazırızTürkiye	00:00:56
	49	22.06.18	Meclis İçin Gençlik Vakti	00:01:04
	50	22.06.18	Biz Birlikte Türkiye'yiz- #VakitKaradenizVakti	00:01:28
	51	23.06.18	Oyunlara karşı oyunu kullan!	00:00:39
	52	24.06.18	Teşekkürler Türkiye! #TürkiyeKazandı	00:00:20
	53	25.06.18	#VakitTürkiyeVakti Birlikte güçlü bu ülke, Teşekkürler Türkiye!	00:00:54
			Total	**01:07:46**
2019 Local				
	1	31.01.19	Her şehir kendi sesiyle güzel. Çevreye duyarlı kampanyamız başlamıştır.	00:00:35
	2	01.02.19	Gönlü güzel insanların ülkesidir burası.	00:01:01
	3	02.02.19	Her şehir kendi sesiyle güzel. Çevreye duyarlı seçim kampanyamız başlamıştır.	00:00:36
	4	03.02.19	Her şehir kendi sesiyle güzel. Çevreye duyarlı seçim kampanyamız başlamıştır.	00:00:36
	5	04.02.19	Her şehir kendi sesiyle güzel. Çevreye duyarlı seçim kampanyamız başlamıştır.	00:00:36
	6	04.02.19	Bir işi gönülden yaparsan, gönüller kazanırsın.	00:00:58
	7	05.02.19	Her şehir kendi sesiyle güzel. Çevreye duyarlı seçim kampanyamız başlamıştır.	00:00:36
	8	06.02.19	Gönlü güzel insanların ülkesidir burası	00:01:25
	9	09.02.19	Bir işi gönülden yaparsan, gönüller kazanırsın.	00:01:13
	10	11.02.19	Bir işi gönülden yaparsan, gönüller kazanırsın.	00:00:46
	11	12.02.19	Bir işi gönülden yaparsan, gönüller kazanırsın	00:01:34
	12	14.02.19	Vatanımız, milletimiz, sevgilimiz bizim.	00:00:54
	13	15.02.19	Memleket sevdasıyla işini gönülden yaparsan, gönüller kazanırsın.	00:01:13
	14	19.02.19	Gönülden yapıp gönüller kazanınca, Sayın Başkan değil "Benim Başkanım" olursun	00:01:30
	15	20.02.19	İyi günde kötü günde hep yanınızdayız çünkü; Belediye İşi Gönül İşi	00:01:33
	16	04.03.19	Bizim işimiz gönüllere köprü kurmaktır.	00:01:12
	17	12.03.19	El ele, gönül gönüle Yükselen Türkiye	00:01:41
	18	20.03.19	Yükselen Türkiye için #HızKesmedenDevam	00:01:35
	19	22.03.19	Gönülden yaparsan, gönüller kazanırsın. #DurmakYokYolaDevam	00:01:54
	20	26.03.19	Sen ben değil biz diyenleri, anlat daha nice asırlara… Türkiye için ileri, daha ileri.	00:02:14

Election	Number	Date of Release	Title (with embedded hyperlink)	Length
	21	27.03.19	[AK Parti'den İnteraktif Yerel Seçim Kampanyası Geleceğini Seç](#)	00:00:57
	22	28.03.19	[Haydi Türkiye! Bir Daha Yeniden, Gönülden Hizmete Gönülden EVET](#)	00:01:07
	23	28.03.19	[#İleriDahaİleri](#)	00:01:44
	24	29.03.19	[Bugün aydınlık Türkiye için yeniden yollara düşme günüdür](#)	00:02:31
	25	01.04.19	[Canımın İçi Türkiyem!](#)	00:01:32
			Total	**00:31:33**

Pivot table:

Election	Number of Videos	Length
2002 General	3	00:12:39
2004 Local	3	00:17:23
2007 General	3	00:06:31
2009 Local	1	00:10:00
2011 General	27	01:26:55
2014 Local	41	00:32:04
2015 General	51	00:49:25
2015 Second General	22	00:13:17
2018 General	53	01:07:46
2019 Local	25	00:31:33
Total	**229**	**05:27:33**

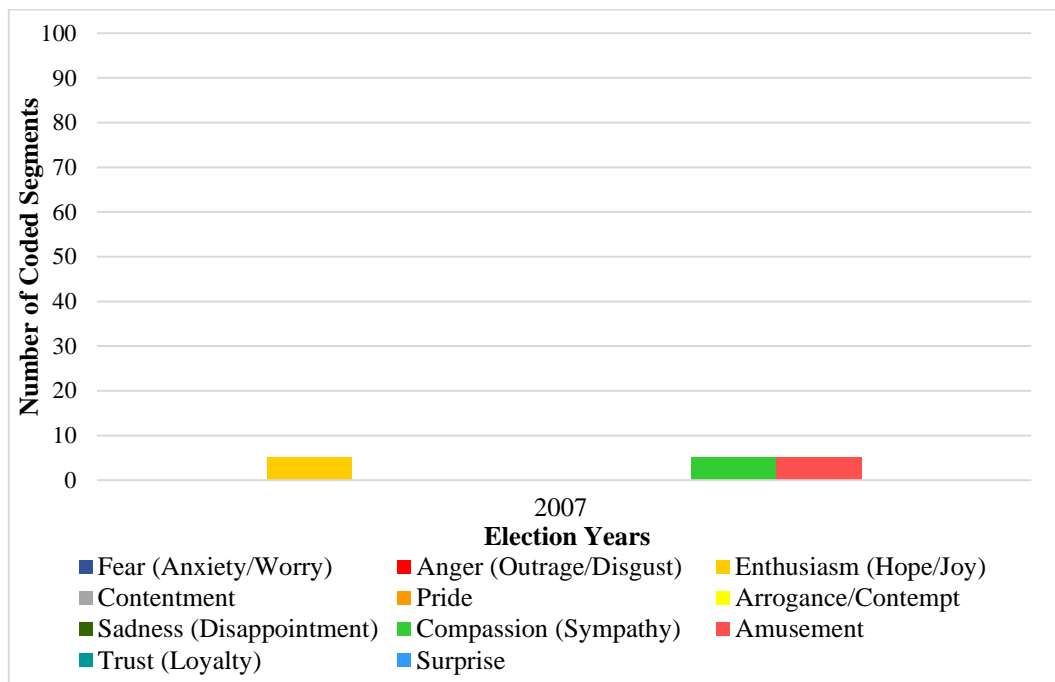# C. DISTRIBUTIONS OF EMOTIONS ELECTION BY ELECTION

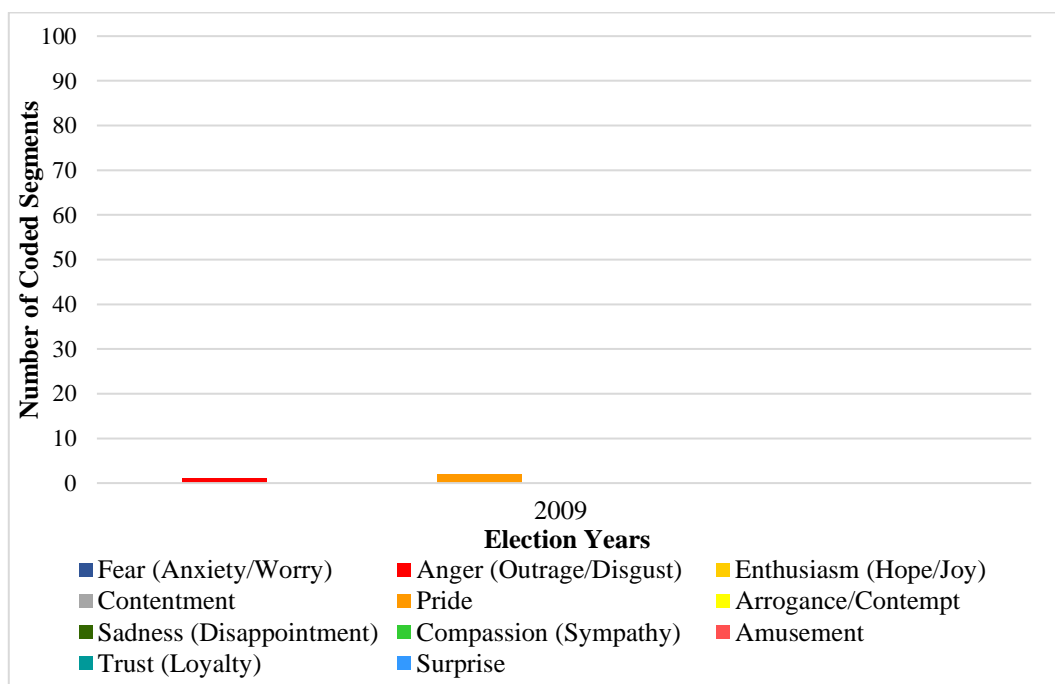## Distribution of Emotions in 2002 General Election Campaign Ads
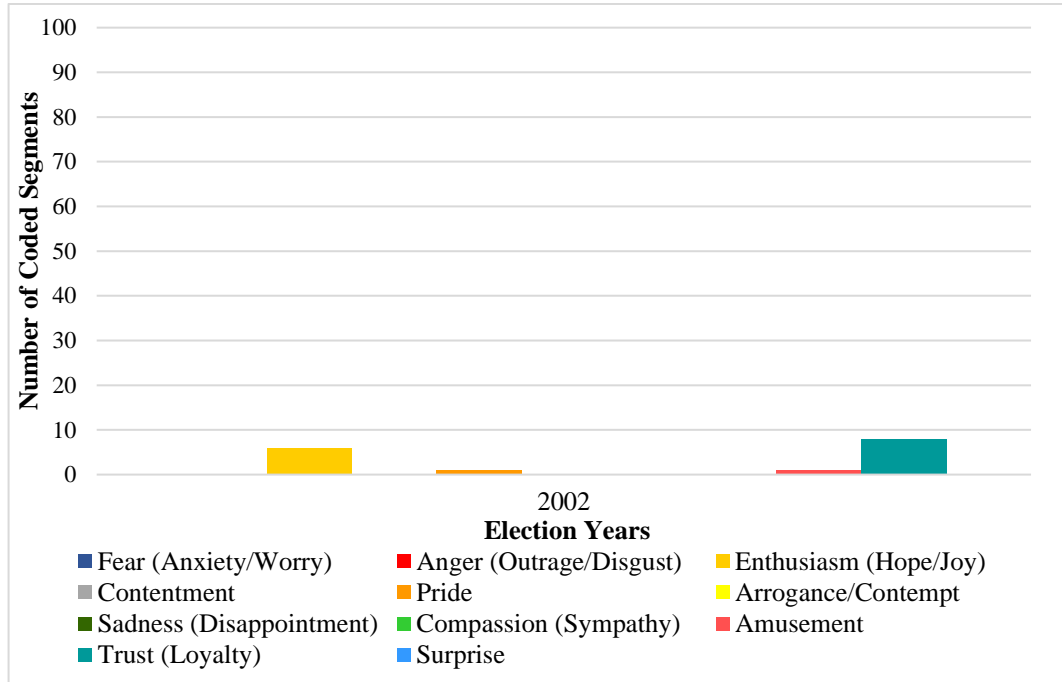
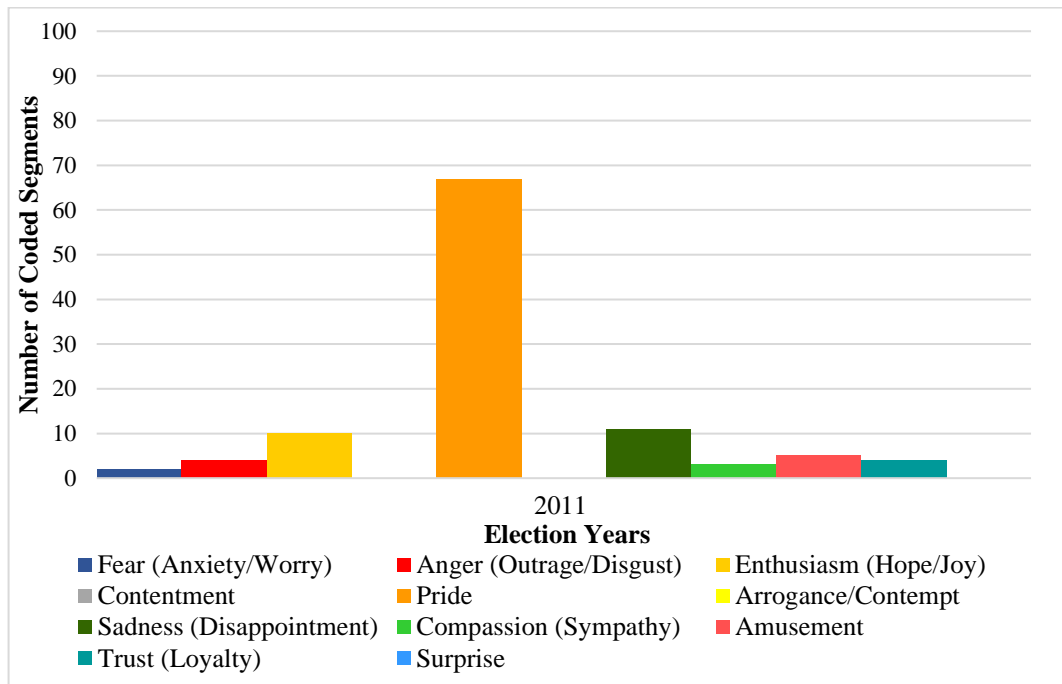## Distribution of Emotions in 2004 Local Election Campaign Ads
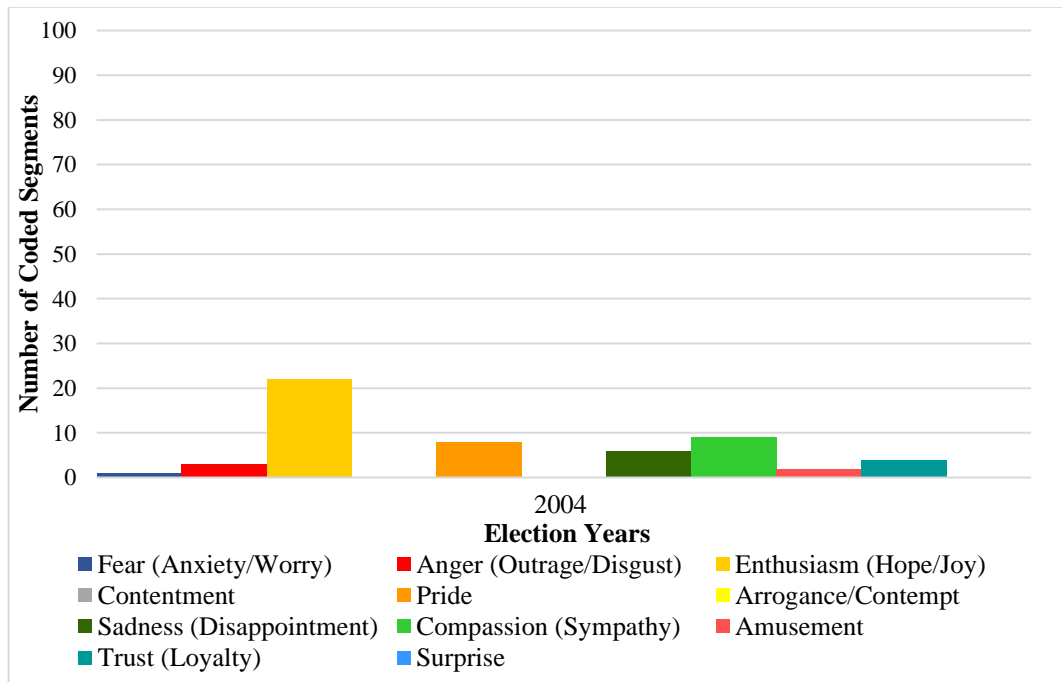
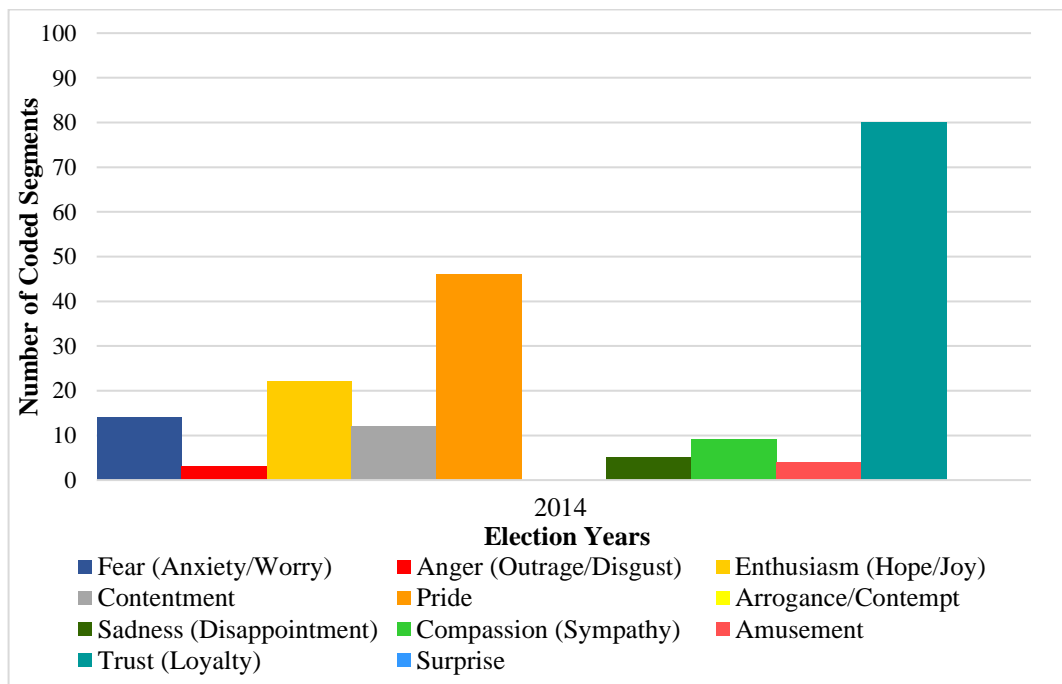## Distribution of Emotions in 2007 General Election Campaign Ads

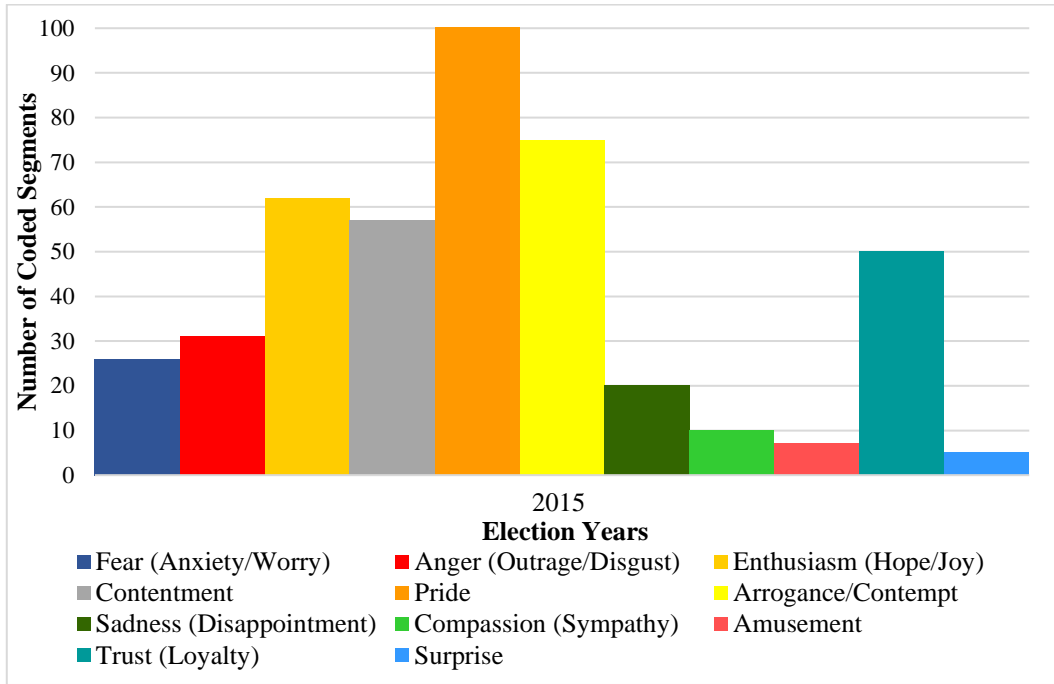## Distribution of Emotions in 2009 Local Election Campaign Ads

- Fear (Anxiety/Worry)
- Anger (Outrage/Disgust)
- Enthusiasm (Hope/Joy)
- Contentment
- Pride
- Arrogance/Contempt
- Sadness (Disappointment)
- Compassion (Sympathy)
- Amusement
- Trust (Loyalty)
- Surprise

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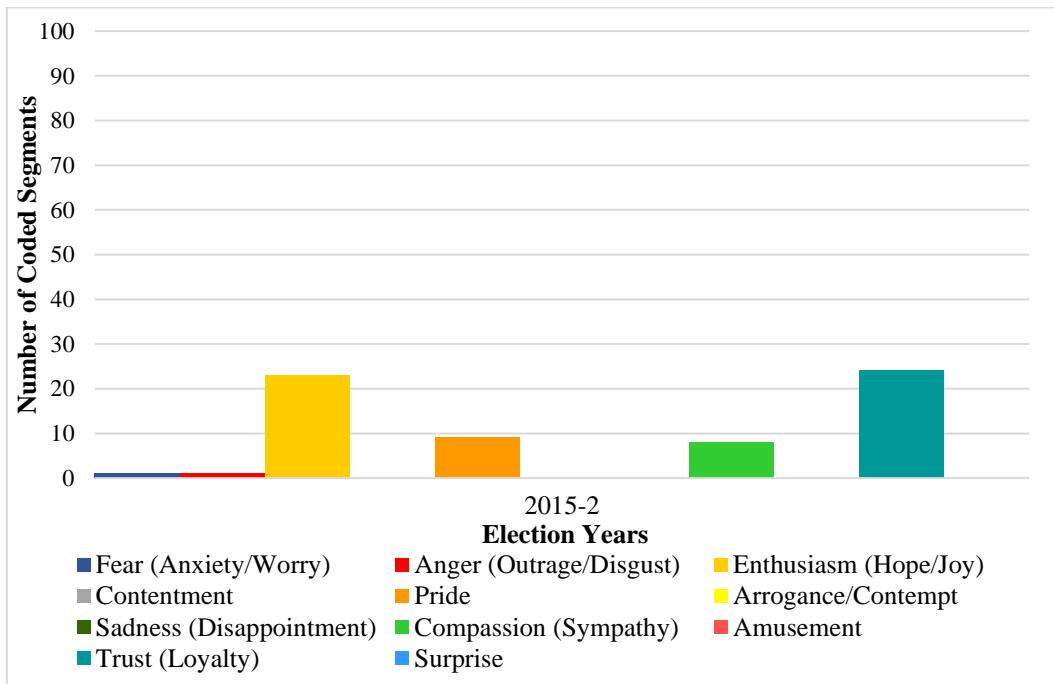## Distribution of Emotions in 2011 General Election Campaign Ads

Distribution of Emotions in 2014 Local Election Campaign Ads
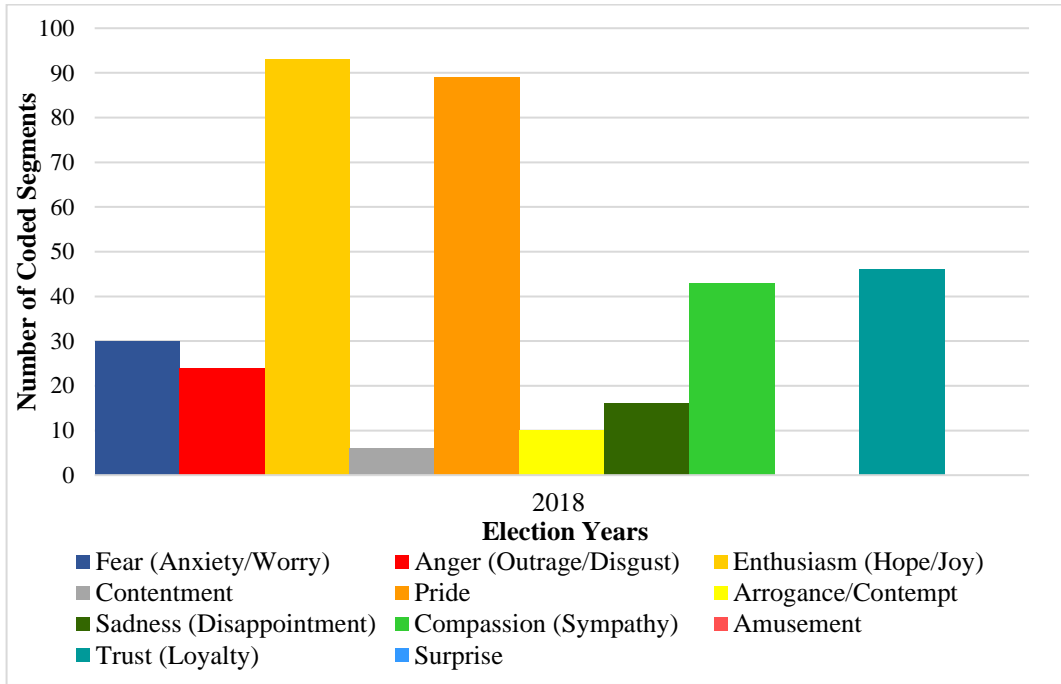

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Distribution of Emotions in June 2015 General Election Campaign Ads
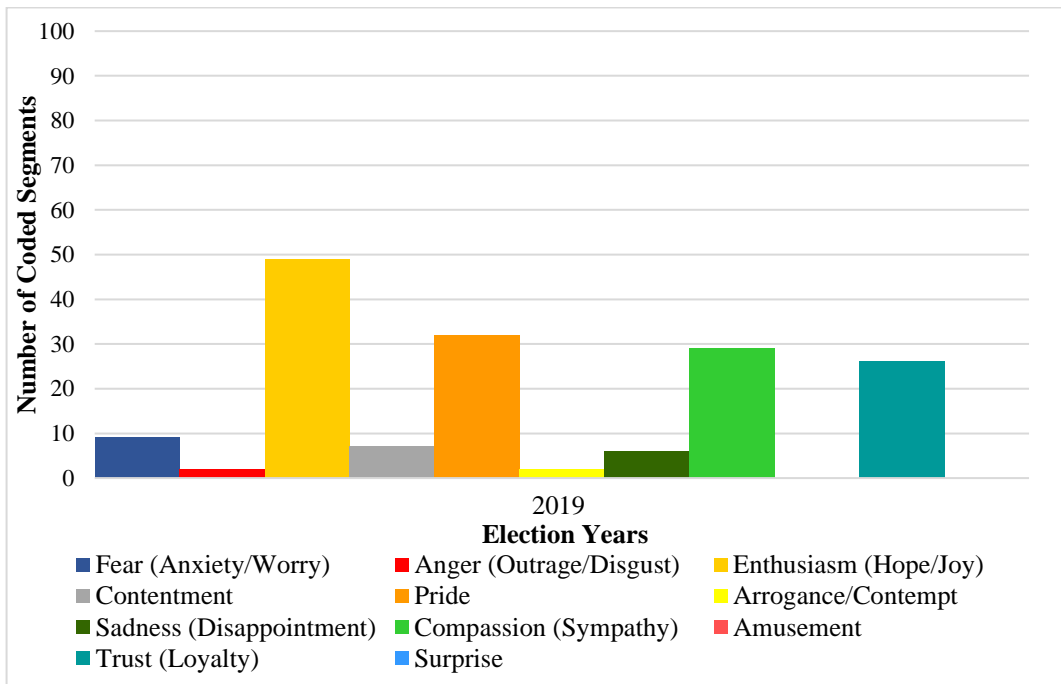

Distribution of Emotions in November 2015 General Election Campaign Ads

## Distribution of Emotions in 2018 General Election Campaign Ads

Distribution of Emotions in 2018 General Election Campaign Ads

Legend:
- Fear (Anxiety/Worry)
- Anger (Outrage/Disgust)
- Enthusiasm (Hope/Joy)
- Contentment
- Pride
- Arrogance/Contempt
- Sadness (Disappointment)
- Compassion (Sympathy)
- Amusement
- Trust (Loyalty)
- Surprise

Y-axis: Number of Coded Segments (0–100)
X-axis: Election Years — 2018

Distribution of Emotions in 2019 Local Election Campaign Ads

Distribution of Emotions in 2019 Local Election Campaign Ads

Legend:
- Fear (Anxiety/Worry)
- Anger (Outrage/Disgust)
- Enthusiasm (Hope/Joy)
- Contentment
- Pride
- Arrogance/Contempt
- Sadness (Disappointment)
- Compassion (Sympathy)
- Amusement
- Trust (Loyalty)
- Surprise

Y-axis: Number of Coded Segments (0–100)
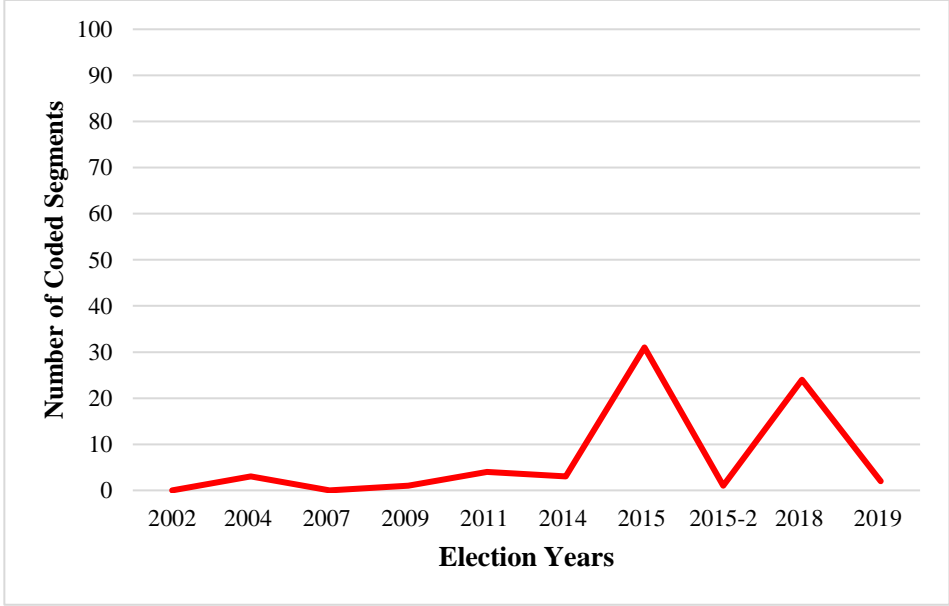X-axis: Election Years — 2019

D. DISTRIBUTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL EMOTION TYPES ACCORDING TO ELECTION YEARS
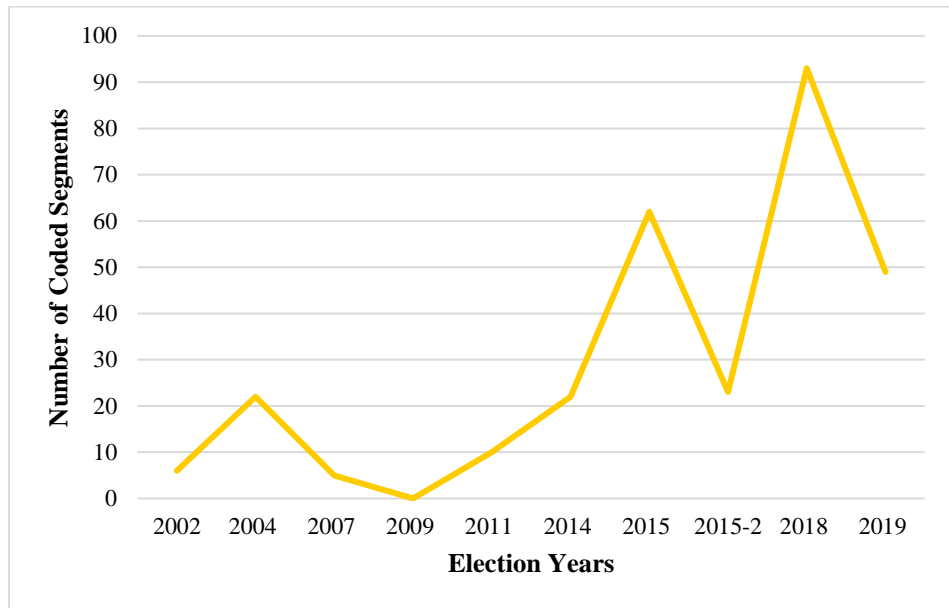
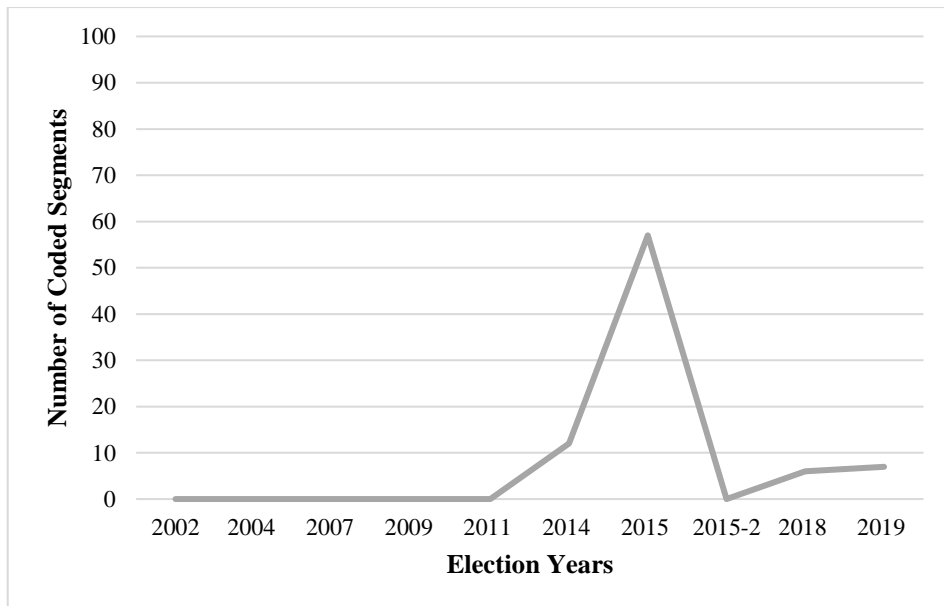**Distribution of Type of Emotion:** *Fear (Anxiety/Worry)*
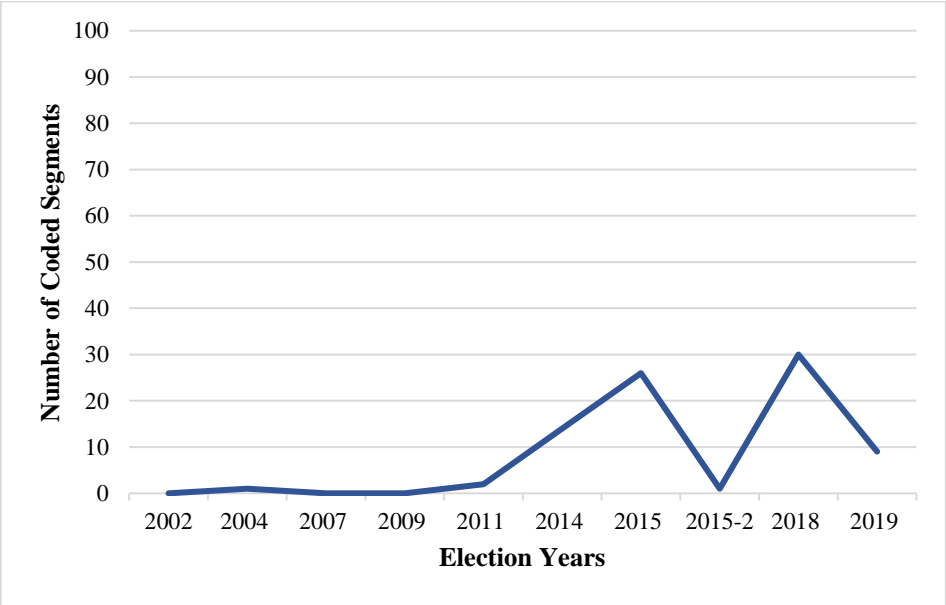
Distribution of Type of Emotion: *Anger (Outrage/Disgust)*
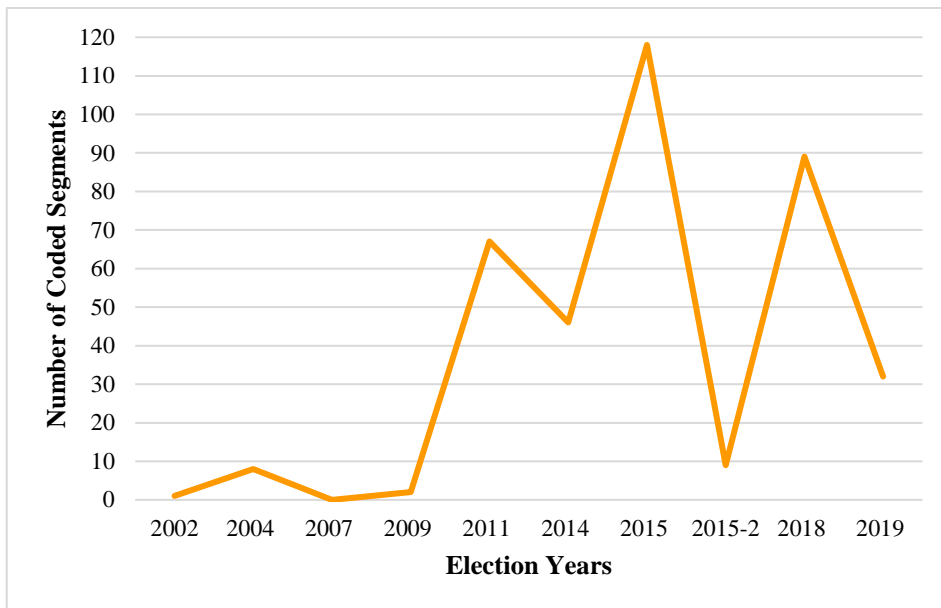
Distribution of Type of Emotion: *Enthusiasm (Hope/Joy)*

Distribution of Type of Emotion: *Contentment*

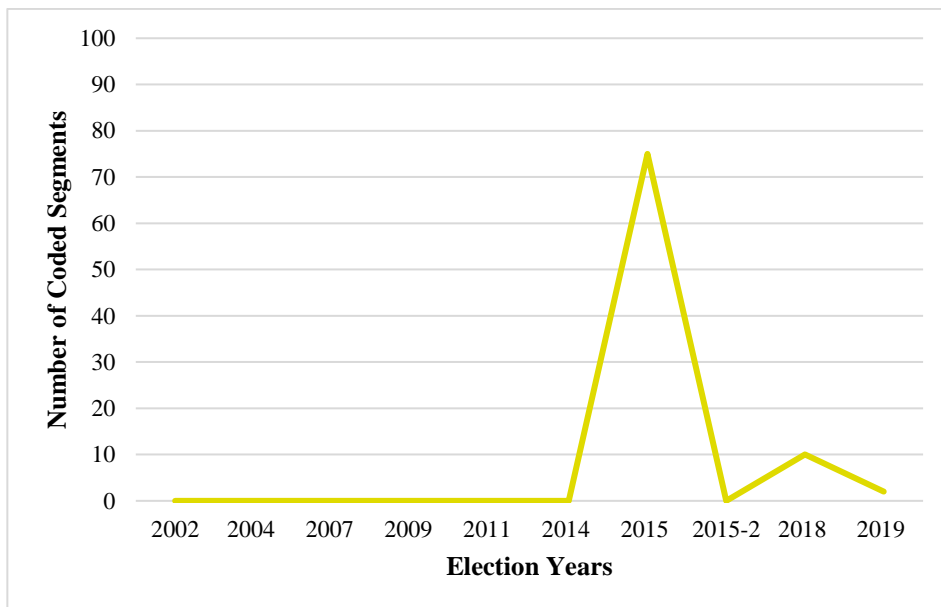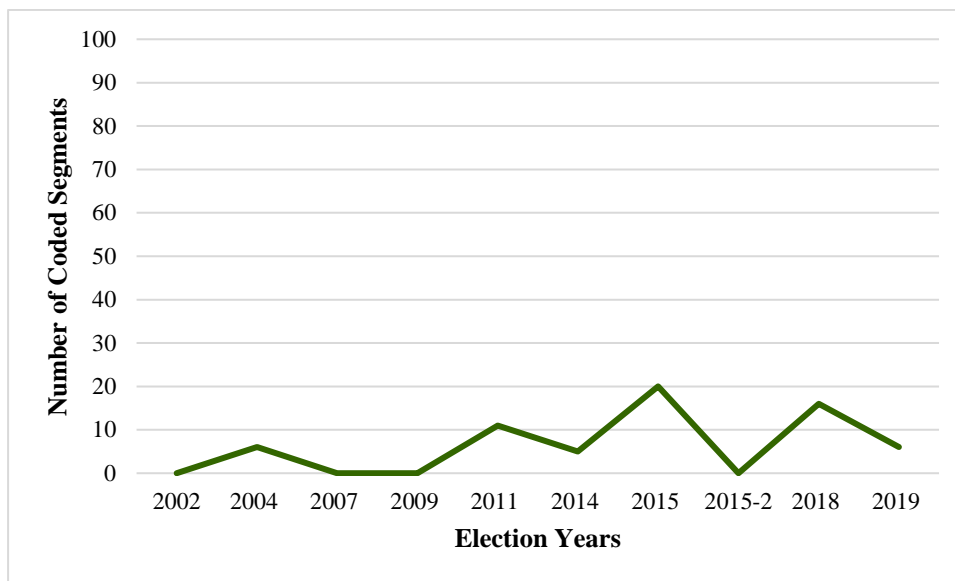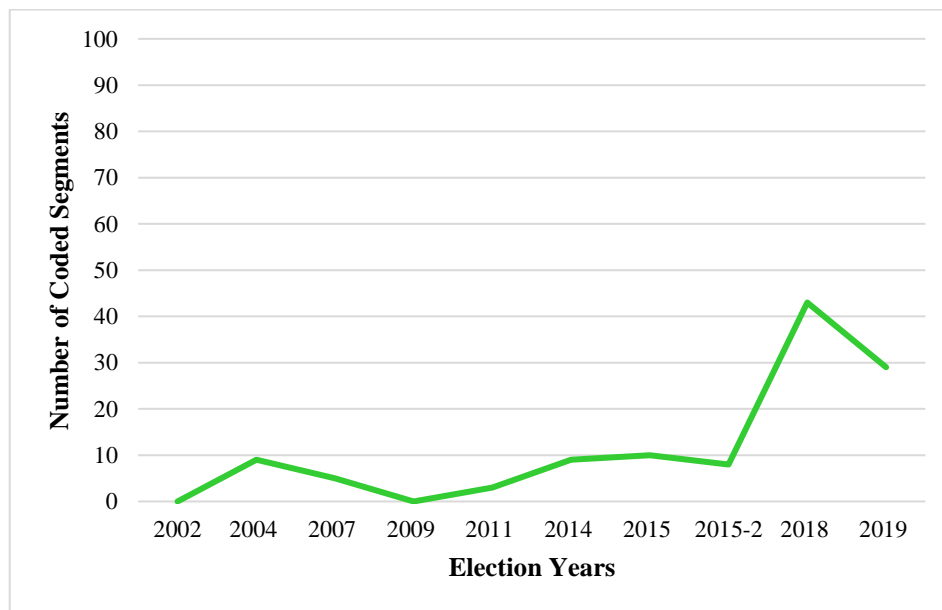## Distribution of Type of Emotion: *Pride*

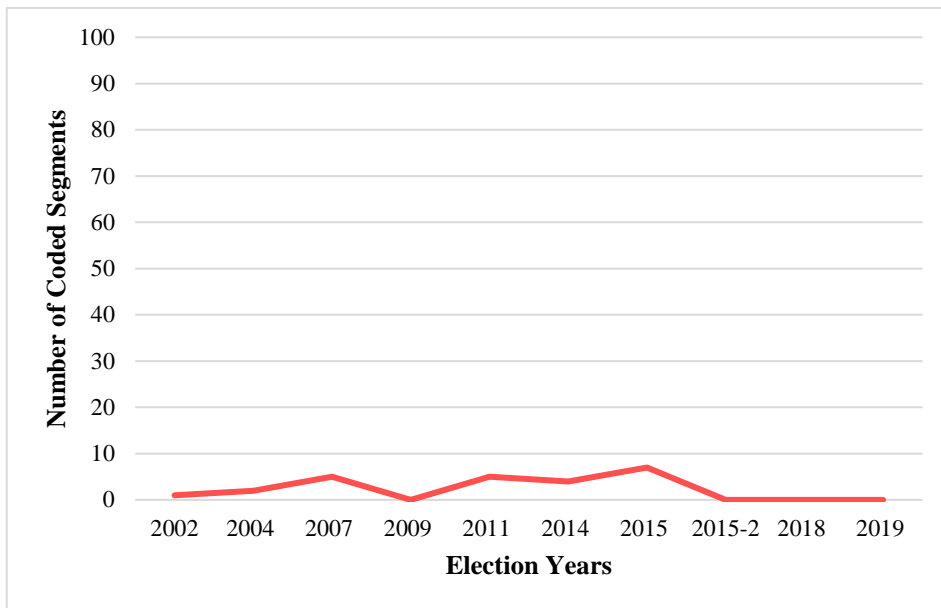
Distribution of Type of Emotion: *Pride*

Distribution of Type of Emotion: *Sadness (Disappointment)*
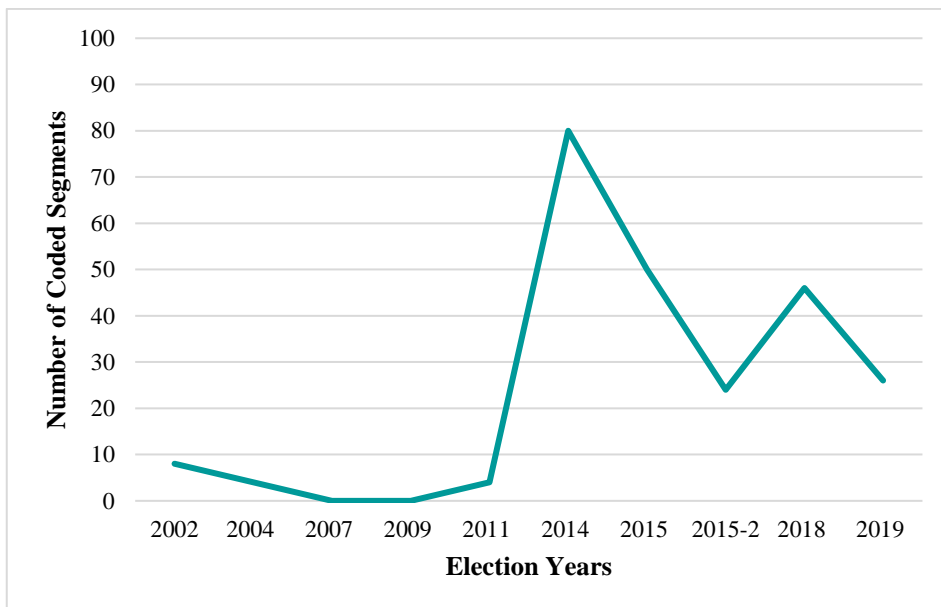

Distribution of Type of Emotion: *Compassion (Sympathy)*

Distribution of Type of Emotion: *Amusement*

Distribution of Type of Emotion: *Trust (Loyalty)*

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Distribution of Type of Emotion: *Surprise*
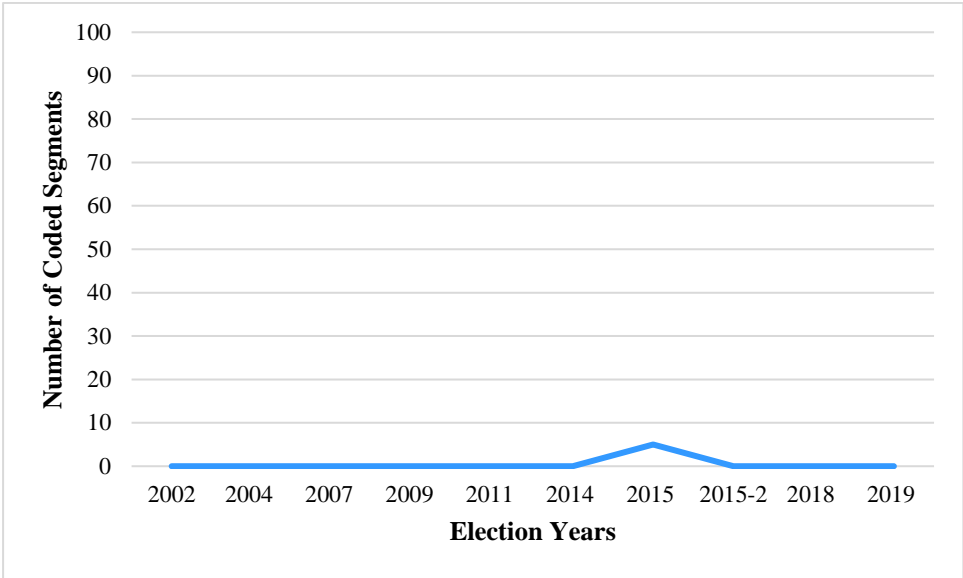
E. CURRICULUM VITAE

NURDAN SELAY BEDİR

Updated: 2025

CONTACT INFORMATION

EDUCATION

Middle East Technical University, Ankara, TURKEY

PhD, Political Science and Public Administration, 2025
- Concentrations: *Turkish Politics, Comparative Politics and Government,* and *Political Sociology*
- Advisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Başak Zeynep Alpan
- Dissertation Title: "Analysis of Emotions in Politics: Electoral Campaigns of the Incumbent Party in Turkey from 2002 to 2019"

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Berlin, GERMANY

Erasmus exchange student, Department of Social Sciences, 2023

Middle East Technical University, Ankara, TURKEY

M.Sc., European Studies, High Honor, October 2017
- Advisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Asuman Göksel
- Thesis Title: "Transformation of Social and Political Demands Through Ballot Box: From los Indignados to Podemos"

Ankara University, Ankara, TURKEY

M.A. (Non-Thesis), Latin American Studies, High Honor, June 2015
- Advisor: Prof. Dr. Metin Özuğurlu
- Term Project: "Latin Amerika'da Kadının Siyasi Süreçlere Katılımı" ("Woman's Participation in Political Processes in Latin America")

Atılım University, Ankara, TURKEY

B.A., International Relations, High Honor, June 2012
(Double Major)

Atılım University, Ankara, TURKEY

B.A., Translation and Interpretation, High Honor, June
2011

**RESEARCH &
TEACHING
INTERESTS**

Turkish Politics, Political Sociology, Emotions in Politics,
Social Movements, EU and European Politics, EU-Turkish
Relations, Spanish Politics.

**PAPERS/
WORKS IN
PROGRESS**

- Bedir, N. S., & Şenyuva, Ö. (2024). Exploring Turkish
youth perceptions of the European project: a periphery
perspective. In Alpan, B. Z. & Hoti, A. (eds.) *Imagining
Europe in times of war and crises: youth perceptions from
Balkans, Caucasus, and Turkey* (pp. 119-138). Cham:
Springer Nature Switzerland. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-68771-6_7

- Bedir, N. S., & Gianolla, C. (29 February 2024). From
populism to emotions in order to rethink democratic
processes. *Alice News*, https://alicenews.ces.uc.pt/?id=45325
(non-refereed publication).

- Bedir, N. S., Gedikli, A. Ö., & Şenyuva, Ö. (2022). So
Close Yet So Far: Turkey's Relations with Germany in
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Narratives (2003–2018). In *The
EU-German-Turkish Triangle Narratives, Perceptions
and Discourse of a Unique Relationship*. Nomos
Verlagsgesellschaft.

- Bedir, N. S. (2017) Avrupa'da Sol Populizm: İspanya ve
Yunanistan, *Yeni e Dergisi, 22*, (non-academic publication).

- Bedir, N. S., Eralp, A., Hauge, A. L., & Wessels, W.
(2016). Mapping milestones and periods of past EU-Turkey relations. *FEUTURE papers*.

**RESEARCH
EXPERIENCE**

Middle East Technical University, Ankara, TURKEY
Department of Political Science and Public Administration

Research Assistant (January 2015 – 2025)

Niğde Ömer Halisdemir University, Niğde, TURKEY
Department of Political Science and International Relations

Research Assistant (February 2014 – Present)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE **Public Procurement Agency, EKAP Call Center (Turkcell Global Bilgi),** Ankara, TURKEY

Customer Representative (December 2012 – January 2013)
Searching for solutions to customers' technical problems with the online procurement system.
http://www.ihale.gov.tr/default.aspx

Rodos Optik, Ltd. Şti., Ankara, TURKEY

Part-time Translator (January 2009 – June 2011)
Ordering and marketing ophthalmic glasses from abroad.

Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Directorate General of Cultural Assets and Museums, Ankara, TURKEY

Trainee (June 2010 – July 2010)
Translating the documents of the department and interpreting them to the representatives of Interpol.

GRANTS & SCHOLARSHIPS

- Erasmus+ Short-Term Doctoral Traineeship, the Centre for Social Studies (CES) of the University of Coimbra (UC), Portugal, January-February 2024.
- Erasmus+ European Mobility in Department of Social Sciences, Humboldt University of Berlin (HU), Germany, April-July 2023.
- METU Graduate Thesis Award for 2016-2017 Academic Year, Middle East Technical University, June 2018.
- Graduate Courses Performance Award for 2014-2015 Academic Year, Middle East Technical University, June 2016.
- Coming off second-best in the Faculty of Management, Atılım University, June 2012.
- Top scoring in the Department of International Relations, Atılım University, June 2012.
- Coming off second-best in the Department of Translation and Interpretation (Faculty of Arts and Sciences), June 2011.
- Successful Top 50 Students Programme, Certificate of Achievement for 2010-2011 Academic Year.
- The Secretariat General for the European Union Affairs, Certificate of Young Translators Competition, December 2010.
- 2007-2012 Scholarship for undergraduate education at the rate of 100% by ÖSYM.

PROJECTS

LEAP: Erasmus+, Jean Monnet Networks, "Linking to Europe at the Periphery" (September 2019 – September 2023)

Researcher & Administrative and Monitoring Coordinator

It is a Jean Monnet Network under the Erasmus+ programme, submitted to the 2019 call for proposals by the Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) of the European Commission. The LEAP aims to explore how the EU integration them is taught, learned, experienced and contested at the periphery of the EU. The project coordinator is Assoc. Prof. Dr. Başak Zeynep Alpan from Middle East Technical University/Center for European Studies. It is a network of 6 institutional partners from 5 different European countries.
http://www.leapjmnetwork.com/

FEUTURE: Horizon 2020, "Future of EU-Turkey Relations: Mapping Dynamics and Testing Scenarios" (April 2016 – March 2019)

Researcher & Financial Manager

It is an H2020-funded, international research project that examines EU-Turkey relations and develops scenarios for the future. The project coordinator is Dr. Funda Tekin from University of Cologne/Centre for Turkey and European Studies. Middle East Technical University/Center for European Studies is one of the fifteen project partners under the coordination of Assoc. Prof. Özgehan Şenyuva.
http://feuture.eu/

VIADUCT: Erasmus+, Jean Monnet Networks, "VIsibility of the Academic DialogUe on EU-Turkey CooperaTion" (2017 – 2020)

Researcher

It is a research partnership and networking activities between the Middle East Technical University/Center for European Studies and the University of Cologne/ Centre for Turkey and European Union Studies. Prof. Dr. Atila Eralp and Assoc. Prof. Özgehan Şenyuva from Middle East Technical University and Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Wessels from University of Cologne are coordinators.
http://www.viaduct.uni-koeln.de/

TRIANGLE: Stiftung Mercator, "Blickwechsel in EU/German-Turkish Relations Beyond Conflict – Towards a Unique Partnership for Contemporary Turkey?" (January 2016 – December 2019)

Researcher & Financial Manager

The research project TRIANGLE, a cooperation between the Centre for Turkey and EU Studies at the University of Cologne (Prof. Wolfgang Wessels) and the Middle East Technical University (Prof. Atila Eralp and Assoc. Prof. Özgehan Şenyuva), therefore, scrutinises EU/German-Turkish relations. By adopting a distinct academic approach, the relations´ institutional architecture, as well as the dominant narratives, shall be assessed.
http://www.blickwechsel-tuerkei.de/en/projects/current/Triangle/Team.php

PRIMO: 7th Framework Marie Currie Initial Training Network, "Power and Regions in a Multipolar Order" (2013-2017)

Role in the administration

It was a Marie Curie Initial Training Network funded by the European Commission within the 7th Framework Programme. The network consists of 11 partner institutions and three associated partners from the academic, business and think tank world. PRIMO included 12 PhD and 2 Post-Doc-Projects. Middle East Technical University/Center for European Studies is one of these partners.
http://www.primo-itn.eu/

ENERGY-HUB TURKEY: Stiftung Mercator, "Turkey's Potential as Future Energy Hub – Economic Developments and Political Options" (2014-2016)

Researcher

It was an interdisciplinary research project by the Institute of Energy Economics and the Jean Monnet Chair for European Politics at the University of Cologne in cooperation with the Middle East Technical University. Prof. Dr. Atila Eralp from Middle East Technical University and Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Wessels from University of Cologne were coordinators.
http://www.blickwechsel-tuerkei.de/en/projects/2014-2016/Project_Energy/

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CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS & TRAININGS

Conferences

- "Analysis of emotions in politics: electoral campaigns of the Incumbent Party (AKP) in Turkey" in the UNPOP International Colloquium – Emotions, Narratives and Identities in Politics, Populism and Democracy (January 24-26, 2024), Coimbra, Portugal. https://unpop.ces.uc.pt/en/coloquio-unpop/
- Synergy Creation in Emotions & Politics Research in Europe - Pre-Colloquium Conference (January 23, 2024), Coimbra, Portugal.
- LEAP Closing Conference, Session 4: Linking to "Europe" at the Periphery from the Eyes of the Youth: Research Findings by the LEAP Project-II, (September 1-2, 2023), Middle East Technical University, Ankara.
- LEAP Post-Graduate Conference: Bucharest, (May 13-14, 2021), Online.
- LEAP Kick-off Conference, (October 1-2, 2019), Middle East Technical University, Ankara.
- FEUTURE Young Leaders Conference, (February 14-15, 2019), Middle East Technical University, Ankara.
- "Liberal Demokraside Gerilimler: İspanya'da Toplumsal ve Siyasi Taleplerin Dönüşümü" in the 'Dönüşen Uluslararası Sistemde Devletlerin Dünyası Mülkiye Uluslararası İlişkiler Kongresi' (October 15-16, 2018), AÜ SBF Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü, Ankara, Turkey. http://mulkiyeircongress.org/
- "Neoliberalism and Argentine Tango? The perspective of Habermas's public sphere" in the '9th Political Economy Conference', (September 12-14, 2018), International Initiative for Promoting Political Economy (IIPPE), Juraj Dobrila University of Pula, Pula, Croatia. http://iippe.org/9th-annual-conference-political-economy/
- "Siyasi Taleplerin Sandık Aracılığıyla Dönüşümü: Los Indignados'tan Podemos'a İspanya Örneği" in the '15. Ulusal Sosyal Bilimler Kongresi', (November 29 – December 1, 2017),Türk Sosyal Bilimler Derneği, Ankara, Turkey. http://tsbd.org.tr/2017/11/15/guncel-15-ulusal-sosyal-bilimler-kongresi-programi/
- FEUTURE Mid-term Conference, (October 19-20, 2017), Barcelona, Spain.
- "How can be engaged in concrete struggles? Spanish example: From 15M to Podemos" in the '8th Political Economy Conference', (September 13-15, 2017), International Initiative for Promoting Political Economy (IIPPE), Berlin, Germany. http://iippe.org/8th-annual-conference-in-political-economy/

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- FEUTURE Kick-off Conference, (May 26-27, 2016) İstanbul, Turkey.

Workshops & Trainings

- LEAP Project Workshop: Contesting Europe (October 15-16, 2022), Eskişehir Osmangazi University, Eskişehir.
- LEAP Project Workshop: Experiencing Europe (March 29-30, 2021), Online.
- LEAP Project Workshop: Teaching and Learning Europe (March 26-27, 2020), Online.
- TRIANGLE İstanbul Workshop, (October 30-31, 2019), Sabancı University Istanbul Policy Centre (IPC), İstanbul.
- FEUTURE WP2 & WP4 Joint Workshop on Political and Security Drivers, (February 20-21, 2018), Middle East Technical University, Ankara.
- MAXQDA Training and Workshop, (December 2-3, 2017), METU CEC Ankara.
- FEUTURE Joint Workshop on "Economics, Energy and Climate Change Drivers" Work Packages, (September 26-27, 2016), Middle East Technical University, Ankara.
- PRIMO Methods Training Workshop: Network Analysis and Regional Power Studies, (June 15-19, 2015), Middle East Technical University, Ankara. (Organizing Committee).

LANGUAGES

Turkish–native language, English–fluent, Spanish–intermediate, German – beginner.

- Spanish Courses taken at **Atılım University in Ankara** (A1-A2) 2008-2010.
- Spanish Courses taken at **Ankara University in Ankara** (A1) in 2012.
- Spanish Course taken at **Maltepe Çankaya Evi İspanyolca Kursu** in Ankara (A2) November 2015 – February 2016.
- Spanish Courses taken at **Middle East Technical University in Ankara** (B1.1) in 2016 and (B1.1-B1.2) in 2017.
- German Course taken at **Language Centre of the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin** in Berlin, Germany (A1.1) in 2023.

SİYASETTE DUYGULARIN ANALİZİ: 2002'DEN 2019'A TÜRKİYE'DE İKTİDAR PARTİSİNİN SEÇİM KAMPANYALARI

Demirer'in aktardığı üzere, "kilometrekareye düşen "uzman," "masum," "mağdur" ve "ahlaklı" oranının en üst seviyelerde olduğu ülkemizde, siyasal karar alma ve toplumsal uzlaşı bağlamında politik psikoloji araştırmalarının yeri önemlidir" (A. Bora & Dede, 2018, s. 12). Demirer, "siyasal süreçlerin psikolojik bir perspektiften incelenmesiyle ilgilenen disiplinler arası bir bilimsel araştırma alanı" (Hızlı Sayar vd., 2020, s. 2) olarak siyaset psikolojisi araştırmalarının, güncel siyasal sorunlara yalnızca aktörler ve kurumlar üzerinden değil, aynı zamanda bunlar arasındaki belirli dinamikler üzerinden de farklı bir perspektifle bakmaya olanak tanıdığını vurgulamaktadır (A. Bora & Dede, 2018, s. 10). Buna bağlı olarak, siyasette duygular alanı, küresel akademide ağırlıklı olarak seçimler ve kampanyalarla ilgili saygın araştırma ve çalışmalara konu olmuştur. Ancak Türkiye'de bu alana yönelik akademik ilgi görece yenidir. Duygular çerçevesinde Türkiye'de ve Türkiye üzerine yapılan birçok çalışma seçimler, siyasal kampanyalar, siyasal iletişim stratejileri, medya ve çerçeveleme, propaganda, siyasal reklamcılık, siyasette sosyal medya stratejileri, toplumsal cinsiyet çalışmaları, kamuoyu, toplumsal hareketler, sembolik siyaset ve duygu sosyolojisi konularına odaklanmaktadır. Bu çalışmalardan biri olmaya aday bu araştırma, günümüz Türkiye'sindeki seçimleri ve kampanyalarda kullanılan duyguları bir araya getirmektedir. Bu doğrultuda bu tez, Türkiye siyasetini, duyguları da içeren bir perspektiften yeniden okuma iddiasındadır. Dolayısıyla, duyguları "somutlaştıran" seçim kampanyalarının detaylı bir analizi yoluyla, Türk siyaseti literatürüne ve duyguların siyasal önemi üzerine gelişmekte olan araştırmalara katkıda bulunacaktır.

Gürpınar'ın (2020) ileri sürdüğü gibi, siyaset sadece rasyonel tercihlere göre kendini konumlandırmak değil, aynı zamanda (belki de daha önemlisi) ahlaki bir çerçeveye dayanan duygusal öz-tatmin ve kendini gerçekleştirme mekanizmalarını

tatmin etmekle ilgilidir. İnsanlar, kamusal alanda sadece akıllarıyla değil, duygularıyla da var olurlar ve bekledikleri şey hem maddi hem de manevi ihtiyaçlarının tatmin edilmesidir. Bu bakımdan bir topluluk oluşturmak ve bu toplumda yaşamak için gerekli olan siyaset, duygulardan bağımsız değildir. Basitçe ifade etmek gerekirse, duygulara yönelik sosyal inşacı yaklaşıma paralel olarak, "duygular, toplumsalın düzenlemesi sürecinin bir parçasıdır" (Plutchik, 2001, s. 348). Odağımızı gündelik siyasete çevirdiğimizde, "gönül belediyeciliği," "ilk aşk İstanbul" (Pektaş, 2019) gibi kanıksanan ve tuhaf bulunmayan, bir bakıma moda sözcüklere dönüşen çok sayıda "duygu ifadesi" ile karşılaşılmaktadır. Veyahut, Ekrem İmamoğlu'nun 2019 İstanbul yerel seçimlerindeki zaferi, coşkusunu ("Gençliğimiz var, heyecanımız yüksek") ve bunun seçmene yansımasını dikkate almadan yorumlanamayacaktır. Bu örnekler ortadayken, siyasetin sadece akılla/rasyonel olanla ilgili, çıkar ve rant gibi motivasyonlarla belirlenen bir alan olarak anlaşılmaması üzerinde daha fazla durmak gerekmektedir (Uzun Avcı, 2020, s. 108).

Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi'nin (AKP) iktidarı boyunca yarattığı duygusal-siyasal bağlam sabit değil, dinamik bir toplumsal ilişkiler süreci, yani duygusal sermaye birikimidir. Mevcut çalışmalarda AKP'nin yirmi yıllık iktidarının karmaşık dinamiklerine, yani seçim başarılarının ardındaki faktörlere ilişkin tatmin edici açıklamaların eksikliği göz önüne alındığında, gözden kaçan veya yeterince analiz edilmemiş faktörlerin araştırılması daha derin iç görüler sağlayabilir. Duyguların AKP'nin yönetim tarzının önemli bir parçası olduğu anlayışından hareketle (Uzun Avcı, 2020, s. 107), bu tezde araştırma materyali olarak seçim kampanyası videoları, açıklanması gereken olgu olarak ise duygular seçilmiştir.

Ana araştırma sorusu, diğerlerinin yanı sıra, "AKP, iktidarını pekiştirme yolunda seçim kampanyalarında duyguları nasıl şekillendirmiş, somutlaştırmış ve aktarmıştır?" şeklindedir. Dolayısıyla bu tez, AKP'nin seçim kampanyalarında duyguları nasıl dönüştürdüğüne ve somutlaştırdığına odaklanmaktadır.

Aynı şekilde bu tez, siyasal partilerin iktidar ilişkileri uğruna duygusal ilişkileri nasıl değerlendirdiklerini ele almaktadır. Bir yandan seçmenlerin kamusallık, toplumsallık ve siyasetle ilişkili duygularını nasıl yönlendirip manipüle ettiklerini; diğer yandan da bu yoğunlukları (hisleri ve duyguları) nasıl ürettiklerini, dolaşıma soktuklarını, bir araya getirip metalaştırdıklarını ve ölçülebilir niceliklere, yani sandık tutanaklarına dönüştürdüklerini sorgulamaktadır. Aynı zamanda, AKP'nin seçim

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kampanyalarında duyguların somutlaştırılmasına yönelik yaklaşımının zaman içinde değişip değişmediği de tespit edilmeye çalışılmaktadır. Bu sorgulamalar doğrultusunda, bu tezin amaçları, duyguların nasıl dönüştürüldüğünü ve arzu edilen seçim amaçları için kampanya taktikleri olarak nasıl hedeflendiğini belirlemek; Türkiye'deki seçim kampanyaları aracılığıyla siyasette duyguların somutlaştırılmasını göstermek; 20 yılı aşkın süredir AKP'nin duygusal referanslarının değişimini ve döngüsünü ortaya çıkarmak; duygularına ve hislerine dokunma, canlandırma, cesaretlendirme, manipüle etme, tetikleme, kışkırtma ve yıldırma açısından AKP'nin seçmenlere yaklaşımlarını tespit etmektir. Bu doğrultuda, AKP'nin siyasal iletişim alanında toplumsal ve kültürel olarak inşa edilen duyguların bir haritasını çıkarmaya çalışmaktadır. Dolayısıyla bu tez, duyguların rolünü anlamanın siyaseti anlamayı geliştirebileceğini de öne sürmektedir. Bu nedenle, basit bir ifadeyle, AKP'nin kampanyalarında duyguların nasıl somutlaştırıldığına odaklanmaktadır.

Burge (2020), akademik odağın genellikle insanların duyguları nasıl deneyimlediği, yani duyguların seçmen davranışını nasıl etkilediği üzerinde olduğunu iddia etmektedir. Bununla birlikte, duyguların siyasal kampanyalar tarafından işlevsel hale getirilmesi, duyguların siyaset üzerindeki ve siyaset için etkisini anlamak için de önemlidir. Bu doğrultuda, seçim kampanyalarında duygular ve stratejiler arasındaki bağlantılar, kampanyaların duygusal-siyasal mesajlarını inceleyerek, yani ifade, iletişim ve değerlendirmelerini gözlemleyerek değerlendirilebilir. Kampanyaların gerçek dünyasında bir laboratuvar ortamının olmaması, duygusal çekiciliklerin ne zaman ve hangi koşullar altında yapıldığını anlamada eksikliklere yol açmakta ve halk duygusal kampanya mesajlarını kontrollü bir ortamda deneyimlememektedir (Ridout & Searles, 2011, s. 442). Bu nedenle, kampanyaların duyguları ne zaman, neden ve nasıl uyandırdığının incelenmesi alana önemli bir katkı sağlayacaktır.

Bu yaklaşımlardan hareketle, duyguların muazzam bir yer kapladığı bir siyaset ortamı olarak seçim kampanyaları, duyguların öteki yüzünü -yani hissedenlerin bakış açısından değil, duyguları bireysel olduğu kadar toplumsalın oluşumunun da içsel bir bileşeni olarak kabul ederek, hislere ve duygulara neden olan nesnelerin ve olguların bakış açısından- araştırmak için değerli bir temel sağlar. Dolayısıyla, bu araştırmanın temel amacı, Türkiye'nin iktidar partisi AKP'nin seçim kampanyalarındaki uzun vadeli duygu döngüsünü ortaya çıkarmaktır. Seçim başarılarını ya da duyguların Türkiye siyasetindeki yerini tek taraflı, yani tek bir perspektiften açıklama iddiasında

olmamakla birlikte; bu araştırma çabası, AKP'nin uzun süre iktidarda kalmasına katkıda bulunan temel faktörlerin anlaşılmasına yardımcı olabilecektir. Dolayısıyla, duygular ve duyguların siyasetteki yeri araştırma nesnesi olarak ele alınabilmektedir. AKP duyguları siyasal arenaya enjekte ederken, dindarlık üzerinden mağduriyeti ya da "gönül belediyeciliği" veya "gönlü güzel Türkiye" gibi duygu ifadelerini kullanmaktan çekinmemektedir. Bunula birlikte, AKP, duygusal ya da rasyonel olmasına bakılmaksızın her seçim döneminde oldukça yoğun kampanyalar yürütmektedir. Son yıllarda neredeyse tüm siyasal meselelerde duygusal bagajını devreye soktuğu da görülmektedir. Örneğin, duyguların siyaseti, savaşa yol açan bir dış politika hamlesinde hemen ortaya çıkabilmekte ya da seçim stratejilerine ilişkin sert siyasal tartışmalar sadakat ve kızgınlık gibi belirli duygulara yaslanabilmektedir (Can, 2019). Dolayısıyla, duyguların AKP'nin uzun vadeli siyasal varlığına ve seçim başarısı yoluyla iktidarını pekiştirmesine katkıda bulunan araçlardan biri olduğu iddia edilebilecektir.

Bu tez için analizin belkemiğini oluşturan birincil kaynaklar, AKP'nin seçim kampanyası reklamlarıdır (yani, yalnızca videolardan oluşan görsel materyallerdir). Sadece kampanya videolarına odaklanmakta ve basılı ya da işitsel siyasal iletişim (broşürler, el ilanları, radyo spotları vb.) gibi diğer kampanya reklam kanallarını dışarıda bırakmaktadır. Bunun nedeni, video reklamların duygusallığın ortaya çıkmasını kolaylaştıran metinsel-işitsel-görsel kombinasyonunu içermesidir. Bu videolar, bu araştırmanın veri setini oluşturmakta ve metodoloji bölümünde ayrıntılı olarak açıklanmaktadır. Araştırmanın dayandığı ikincil kaynaklar temel olarak çeşitli akademik kitaplar ve makaleler, gazete haberleri ve çevrimiçi köşe yazıları, blog yazıları ve kanaat raporları, belgeseller ve çeşitli videolardır.

Bu tez aşağıdaki şekilde yapılandırılmıştır: *Duyguları Keşfetmek: Siyasette ve Seçim Kampanyalarında Duyguların Kapsamlı Bir İncelemesi* başlıklı açılış bölümü, siyasette ve seçim kampanyalarında duygulara ilişkin kapsamlı bir literatür taraması sunmaktadır. Son yıllarda, duygular ve siyasetin kesişimi, giderek artan bir akademik ilgi alanı haline gelmiştir. Siyaset bilimi disiplini ve özellikle siyasal katılım ve oy verme davranışı üzerine yapılan araştırmalar, uzun yıllardır ekonomiden ödünç alınan "rasyonel tercih kuramı" varsayımı altında analizler yürütürken, siyaset felsefesindeki çalışmalar duygu ve aklı harmanlamıştır (E. Erdoğan & Uyan-Semerci, 2019a, s. 53). Brader (2006, s. 48–49), davranışçı okul ve siyasal psikoloji geleneklerinin her

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ikisinden de araştırmacıların, duyguları, "sistematik açıklama çabalarının dışında tutulması gereken, yaşamın kendine özgü bir yönü olarak" gördüğünü belirtmektedir. Ancak bugün, son çalışmalar duygunun rolünü yeniden düşünmek için siyaset bilimine bir temel sağlamaktadır (Yates, 2016, s. 7). Siyasal kararları, seçimleri, davranışları ve hareketleri anlamlandıran çerçeve göz önüne alındığında, bu bölümdeki amacım, duygular ve siyaset arasındaki ilişkiye ve bunların siyasal iletişimin en önemli parçalarından biri olarak seçim kampanyalarına yansımasına ilişkin mevcut yaklaşımları ve tartışmaları sunmaktır. Bu bölüm, iki geniş başlığa ayrılmıştır: "*Siyasette Duygular*" ve "*Seçim Kampanyaları ve Duygular*." İlk bölüm, çalışmanın temel kavramı olan "duygu"nun tanımı, duyguları sınıflandırmaya yönelik yaklaşımlar, akıl ve duygu arasındaki ikilik tartışmaları, duyguların siyasal düşünce metinlerindeki yeri, duygulara sosyal inşacı yaklaşımı ve psikoloji ile bağlantılarını ve siyaset sosyolojisindeki duygusal "dönüş" vurgusu olmak üzere altı alt başlıktan oluşmaktadır. İkinci bölüm, siyasal partilerin propaganda yapmak amacıyla siyasal iletişimin doğal uzantılarından biri olan seçim kampanyalarına ve bunun duygu siyaseti ile ilişkisine odaklanmaktadır. Kampanya reklamlarındaki duygusal çekicilikler, duyguların popülizmin önemli bir kaynağı olmasından hareketle popülist siyasetin bir parçası olarak duygusal kampanyacılık ve son olarak Türkiye örneğinin arka planından oluşmaktadır.

Duygusal siyaset ile AKP bağlamı arasında bir ilişki kurmak amacıyla, *AKP İktidarı ve Seçimleri Sürecinde Türkiye'nin Duygusal-Siyasal Panoraması* başlıklı üçüncü bölümde, Türkiye'nin son yirmi yılda içinden geçtiği çalkantılarla dolu toplumsal ve siyasal gelişmeler hakkında bilgi verilmektedir. Nitel içerik analizinin temel bileşenlerinden biri, veri ve bulguların bir bağlama yerleştirilmesi olduğundan (Erişen vd., 2013, s. 25), bu bölüm, içerik analizi verilerini seçim süreçleri ve kampanya reklamlarının yayınlandığı duygusal-politik bağlam hakkındaki bilgilerle tamamlamak için AKP iktidarı sırasında Türkiye'nin duygusal-politik atmosferini sunmaktadır.

Yılmaz'ın (2022, s. 20) belirttiği gibi, ülkenin siyasal, sosyal ve ekonomik psikolojisini derinleştiren ve genişleten yapıların ve ilişkilerin uzun bir geçmişi vardır. Ancak, bu tezin kapsamı ve sınırlamaları nedeniyle, bu bölüm duygu siyaseti ile AKP bağlamı arasında ilişki kurmak amacıyla yalnızca AKP dönemine odaklanacaktır. AKP, 14 Ağustos 2001'de kurulduğu günden bu yana, yedi parlamento ve beş yerel

seçime katılmıştır. Parti, %49,8 oy oranıyla, Türk siyasal tarihinde oyların %40'ından fazlasını alan beş partiden biridir (Kayaalp, 2021). Bu seçim başarısı, partinin Türk siyasal hayatında en uzun süre, 21 yıl, "seçimler yoluyla" iktidarda kalmasını sağlamıştır (Ekiz & Çimen, 2023). AKP'nin yükselişi sadece bir siyasal hareket veya dini bir ayaklanma değil, aynı zamanda kültürel bir hikâyedir (Kozanoğlu & Cabas, 2018, s. 222). Bu olgu, beklenebileceği gibi, partiyi birçok çalışmada araştırma konusu haline getirmektedir. Duygular-siyaset ilişkisini incelemek için araştırma nesnesi olarak duyguları; duyguların incelenebileceği örnek vaka olarak ise -hem partinin bu "seçim başarısı" perspektifi hem de çok yoğun seçim kampanyaları nedeniyle- AKP'yi seçtim. Ancak bu tezin amacı AKP'nin ve Türk siyasal yelpazesi içindeki konumunun derinlemesine bir çalışması olmadığı için, partinin seçim kampanyaları öncesi, sırası ve sonrasında Türkiye'nin duygusal-politik manzarasını gösteren gelişmelere sadece kısaca bakmaktayım. Ayrıca bu bölümde, CHP başta olmak üzere muhalefet partilerinin konumlandırılmasına da kısaca yer vermekteyim. Bunun sebebi, ülkedeki hâkim duygusal iklimi (bir anlamda "rejimi") bütünlüklü şekilde kavramaktır.

Söz konusu bölümün çerçevesi ise seçim dönemlerine göre çizilmektedir. "*Kamu Vicdanı: 2002 ve 2004*" alt başlığı, 2000 ve 2001 yıllarında yaşanan ve Türk toplumunu sert bir şekilde vuran ikiz krizlerin ardından ülkede oluşan sosyo-politik iklimi ve yeni kurulan bir parti olan AKP'nin iktidara geldiği 2002 genel ile 2004 yerel seçimlerinin atmosferini -ilk yılları karakterize eden anahtar terim olan "muhafazakâr demokrasi" ile birlikte- sunmaktadır. "*e-Muhtıra: 2007*" başlıklı ikinci bölümde ise Türkiye'deki toplumsal ve siyasal yarılmalara, müesses nizam ve e-muhtıra doğrultusundaki askeri vesayet tartışmalarının fitilinin yeniden ateşlendiği gerginliklere ve muhafazakâr-laik, sıradan-elit, sivil-asker gibi ezeli etiketlere dikkat çekilmektedir. Ayrıca, 2007 genel seçimleri öncesinde ve sonrasındaki dindarlık üzerinden mağduriyet anlatıları derinleşmesine atıfta bulunulmaktadır. "*One Minute: 2009*" ve "*Yargı Reformu Sonrası: 2011*" bölümleri ise (hem askeri hem hukuki) vesayet tartışmaları ve Ergenekon, Balyoz ve KCK davalarının gölgesinde 2009 yerel seçimlerine ve 2011 genel seçimlerine giden yolda ülkenin duygusal-siyasal tablosunu ortaya koymaktadır. "*İktidar Konsolidasyonu için Sapma Noktası: 2014*" bölümü ise, literatürde varsayılan ve iktidarın konsolidasyonu için hareket noktası olarak tanımlanan 2013-2017 yılları arasındaki Türkiye'nin toplumsal ve siyasal yaşamındaki dönüm noktalarını, Gezi Parkı Direnişi ve 17-25 Aralık yolsuzluk

skandallarını, ele alarak 2014 yerel seçimlerine giden süreci aktarmaktadır. "*Çifte Genel Seçim Yılı: 2015*" başlıklı bir sonraki bölümde, 2015 yılında Türk toplumunun birçok bombalı saldırıya tanık olduğu ve ülkenin bir kaygı çağından geçtiği iki ayrı genel seçim ele alınmaktadır. "*Yeni Türkiye'nin İlk Seçimi: 2018*" başlıklı bölümde ise 15 Temmuz başarısız darbe girişiminin yankılarına ve 2017 anayasa referandumu gibi kurucu gelişmeler doğrultusunda başkanlık sistemine geçiş sürecine yer verilmektedir. Son olarak, "*Büyükşehirlerin Kaybı: 2019*" başlığı altında, AKP'nin her zaman partinin oy deposu ve ekonomik desteğinin omurgası olarak görülen Ankara ve İstanbul belediye başkanlıklarını kaybetmesiyle yaşadığı göreceli seçim başarısızlığına değinmektedir.

Çalışmanın dördüncü bölümü olan *Yöntem ve Metodoloji* bölümü, araştırma sorusuna/sorularına yanıtların nasıl bulunabileceğini göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır. Duyguları kendisine açıklama nesnesi olarak seçen çalışmanın bu bölümü, tezin bilimsel yaklaşımını (*Nitel yaklaşım*), araştırma yöntemini ve analitik çerçevesini (*İçerik analizi*), ayrıca veri seti oluşturma (*Veri toplama ve seçme prosedürleri*) ve kodlama (*Kod kitabı*) süreçlerini dört alt başlıkta açıklamaktadır. Bu amaçla, "bu çalışmanın nasıl yapılacağı" ve "olası cevaplara nasıl ulaşılacağı" bu bölümde aktarılmaktadır. Tezin analizinin omurgasını, yani çalışma için veri toplama ve hazırlama süreçleri ve bu süreçlerdeki zorluklar ile benimsenen epistemolojik ve metodolojik yaklaşımlar sunulmaktadır.

Metodolojik açıdan, çalışmada, seçim kampanyalarının bileşenlerinin belirli iletişim niteliklerine atfedilen semboller ve anlamlarla birlikte duygu çekiciliklerinin kullanımı ve manipülasyonuna ışık tutabilen içerik analizi benimsenmiştir. Araştırma materyallerindeki, yani kampanya reklamlarındaki, duyguların inşa sürecine katkıda bulunan metinsel, görsel ve işitsel öğelerin birleşimine odaklanarak nitel içerik analizinden faydalanılmıştır. Analitik çerçeve açısından, Brader'in siyasal reklamcılıkta duygusal çekiciliğin nasıl işlediğine dair ortaya koymuş olduğu tipoloji benimsenmiştir. Brader (2006, s. 18, 148), duygusal çekiciliklerin en belirgin olduğu çağdaş reklam kampanyalarının sistematik incelemesi yoluyla duyguların rolünü test etmeye çalışmıştır. Bu sistematik analize dayanarak, Türk siyasetinde 20 yılı aşkın bir süredir AKP'nin hem iktidarda hem de siyasetteki uzun vadeli varlığının tamamlayıcı bir faktörü olarak siyasal kampanyalarında duyguların rolünün incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Bu nedenle, bu tezin araştırma materyalleri seçim kampanyalarında

kullanılan video reklamlarıyken açıklanan olgu da duygulardan oluşmaktadır. Araştırma konusu, seçim kampanyalarında somutlaşan duygular olduğundan, AKP'nin 2002'den 2019'a kadar olan kampanya videolarında yer alan duygusal çekiciliklere odaklanılmıştır.

Seçim kampanyalarında duyguların somutlaştırılması ve aktarılmasını araştırmamın bir gerekçesi, AKP ve iştiraklerinin seçimlere atfettikleri önemdir. AKP, seçimleri, liberal demokrasilerin temsili boyutunun üzerinde ve ulusun kolektif iradesinin bir yansıması olarak görmektedir. Başka bir deyişle, AKP, seçimleri, temsili demokrasinin düzenli aralıklarla usulen gerçekleşen bir unsuru olarak görmemektedir. Bu tercihin bir diğer gerekçesi de AKP'nin bir seçim aygıtı olarak çok işlevli rolüdür. Bu durum, AKP'nin sürekli bir siyasal kampanyanın öznesi olduğu anlamına gelmektedir. Bu nedenle, AKP'nin seçim süreçlerine atfettiği merkezi rolü göz önünde bulundurarak, siyasetin önemli ve kapsamlı bir aşaması olan seçim kampanyaları - metinsel-işitsel-görsel öğelerin bir aradalığıyla duygusallığın yansıtılmasını sağlayan reklam videoları- araştırmaya dahil edilmiştir. Seçilen görsel materyaller üzerinde, nitel veri analizi yazılımı MAXQDA'den faydalanarak analiz gerçekleştirilmiştir. Önce bir kod kitabı oluşturulmuş, ardından veriler kod kitabına göre kodlanıp analiz edilmiş, ikinci bir kodlama süreci ve çapraz kodlayıcı yöntemiyle de kontrole tabii tutulmuştur. Duygular konusunda sosyal inşacı bir bakış açısı benimseyerek, bu analize yorumsamacı bir mercekle yaklaşılmıştır.

Yorumsamacı yaklaşımın ardındaki mantık, kampanya videolarındaki işitsel ve görsel unsurların, duygusal içerikle birlikte, AKP gibi siyasal partilerin duygusal anlatılar aracılığıyla seçmenlere sunduğu ve toplumsal olarak inşa edilmiş gerçekliğe katkıda bulunduğu anlayışında yatmaktadır. Dahası, bu yorumsamacı yaklaşım yoluyla, duygusal anlatıların, görsellerin ve işitsel unsurların izole bileşenler değil, siyasal partilerin kolektif bir toplumsal ve duygusal gerçeklik oluşturmak ve güçlendirmek için kullandıkları birbirine bağlı araçlar olduğunu kavramak mümkündür. Bu bağlamda, kampanya videolarında iletilen duygular yalnızca anlık etkileri açısından değil, aynı zamanda partinin daha geniş siyasal stratejisiyle uyumlu uzun vadeli bir ideolojik anlatı oluşturmadaki rolleri açısından da analiz edilmektedir.

Bu yorumsamacı çerçeve içinde nitel içerik analizinin kullanımı, AKP'nin halkla ilişkisini zaman içinde nasıl duygusal olarak yüklü, milliyetçi ve dini referanslar aracılığıyla inşa ettiğini ortaya koymayı amaçlamıştır. Bu referanslar yalnızca

duyguları uyandırmaktan daha fazlasını yapmakta, aktif olarak paylaşılan bir siyasal kimlik ve aidiyet duygusu inşa edip parti ile seçmenler arasındaki ideolojik bağları daha da güçlendirmektedir. Bu nedenle, içerik analizi genellikle bir sınıflandırma aracı olarak görülse de bu araştırmada, AKP'nin kampanya videolarına gömülü daha derin sosyopolitik anlamları ortaya çıkarmanın bir yolu olarak işlev görmektedir. Sonuç olarak, yorumsamacı paradigmaya ve sosyal inşacılığa dayanan bu metodolojik yaklaşım, siyasal partilerin, özellikle AKP'nin, duyguları yalnızca iletişim araçları olarak kullanmadığını göstermektedir. Bunun yerine, duygular, ince nüanslarla ideolojilere gömülü halde siyasal gerçekliğin sosyal inşası için bir araç görevi görmüştür. Bu süreç duyguların ikili işlevini vurgular: hem siyasal mesaj iletimi için araç olarak hem de seçmenlerin parti, partinin temel değerleri ve ulusa/ülkeye yönelik vizyonu hakkındaki algılarını şekillendiren mekanizmalar olarak hizmet etmektedirler.

Analizden elde edilen bulgular ise *Duyguların Şifresini Çözmek: AKP'nin Seçim Kampanyası Videolarını İçerik Analizi ile Çözümleme* başlığı altında sunulmaktadır. Bu bölümün alt başlıkları, AKP'nin kampanya videolarında belirli duyguların varlığına/yokluğuna odaklanmakta, bu videoları atfedilen duygusal çekiciliklere ve işitsel-görsel içerikle ilişkilerine göre incelemektedir. Elde edilen bulgular, görsel analiz ve grafikler aracılığıyla sunulmakta ve AKP iktidarı altındaki Türkiye'nin duygusal bağlamına yerleştirilerek ve AKP'nin seçim stratejileriyle ilişkilendirilerek tartışılmaktadır. Ayrıca, AKP'nin duyguların kullanımına yönelik yaklaşımında zaman içerisindeki dönüşüm potansiyeli tespit edilmektedir.

Her bir seçim kampanyasının verileri ayrı ayrı incelendiğinde, 2002, 2004, 2007 ve 2009 yıllarında gerçekleşen ilk dört kampanyada veri yetersizliği ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bu kampanyalar için toplamda sadece on reklam videosu analize dahil edilmiştir. Her ne kadar 2002 genel seçimine ait veriler sınırlı olsa da (3 video) mevcut literatür ve partiye bağlı siyasal figürlerin açıklamaları söz konusu kampanya hakkında yorum yapma fırsatı sunmaktadır. Yeni kurulmuş bir parti olarak AKP'nin kampanyasını kendisini anlatmak için düzenlemesi ve reklamlarında duygusal içeriklerden ziyade rasyonel içeriklere odaklanmış olması daha muhtemel olsa da sınırlı veri nedeniyle hangi çekiciliğin daha baskın olduğunu belirlemek mümkün değildir. Yine de üçüncü bölümde sunulan dönemin duygusal atmosferi göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, AKP'nin ilk kampanyasındaki duygusal içerik tespit edilebilir. AKP'nin siyasal iletişim danışmanı ve parti üyesi Olçok'un kamuoyundan ziyade

kamu vicdanına hitap eden, yani rasyonel olmaktan ziyade duygusal bir kampanya yürüttüklerine dair açıklamaları ve Erdoğan'ın mitinglerde söylediği şarkı (*Beraber yürüdük biz bu yollarda*), kampanyanın seçmenlerin duygularını harekete geçirmeyi hedeflediğini doğrulamaktadır. Kampanya stratejisi ise Erdoğan tarafından sloganlaştırılan yolsuzluğu, yoksulluğu, yasakları ve hoşnutsuz halk ile arasındaki muhatap rolünü ön plana çıkarmaktır. Bu nedenle parti "aydınlığa açık, karanlığa kapalı" sloganıyla ülkeyi karanlıktan aydınlığa çıkarma sözü vermektedir.

Bir kez daha, yeterli veri olmaması 2004 yerel seçim kampanyasının kapsamlı bir şekilde analiz edilmesini engellemektedir. Mevcut veriler asgari düzeydedir ve dokuz reklamın yalnızca üçü analize dahil edilmiştir. Bunula birlikte, ilgili literatürdeki gözlemler ışığında, yerel seçimlerin, AKP adına -özellikle sağlık sektöründe sergilediği etkin politikalar ve uygulama becerileri sayesinde- büyük ölçüde sorunsuz geçtiği söylenebilmektedir. Bu bağlamda, duygu türleriyle kodlanan analiz birimlerinde en yoğun rastlanan duygunun coşku (umut/neşe) olması, AKP'nin yeni ve etkin yönetim tarzını seçmenlere olumlu bir şekilde yansıtma çabasıyla ilişkilendirilebilir.

AKP'nin 2007'de katıldığı ikinci genel seçimlerde hâkim olan görüş, tüm bireylerin kendi tercihlerine göre yaşama haklarına saygı duyan demokratik ve liberal bir parti olduğu yönündedir. Ancak, mecliste cumhurbaşkanının seçilememesi, partilerin seçim kampanyaları için oldukça çekişmeli bir siyasal iklim yaratmış, AKP için söz konusu çıkmazdan duydukları hoşnutsuzluğu kamuoyu önünde yakınma ve mağduriyet söylemini dindarlık üzerinden derinleştirme fırsatı doğurmuştur. Partinin lideri sıfatıyla Erdoğan, sık sık dini ve duygusal referanslarla karakterize edilen bir retorik kullanmıştır. Buna karşılık, AKP'nin kampanya stratejisinin sağlık, eğitim, ulaşım ve diğer sektörlerle ilgili farklı konuları vurgulamaya odaklandığı görülmektedir. İktidar partisi olarak AKP, icraatlarını başarı olarak lanse etmeye ve istikrarın -yani iktidarının- devamına olan bağlılığı vurgulamaya çalışmıştır. Ancak, kapsamlı bir analize olanak sağlamayan sınırlı veri setine rağmen, partinin kendisi tarafından sağlanan 2007 kampanya materyalleri, duygusal çekicilikler açısından reklamlarda yalnızca üç olumlu duygu türünün yansıtıldığını göstermektedir: coşku (umut/neşe), şefkat (sempati) ve keyif. Söz konusu videolar güvenlik ile ilgili korkular veya gurur gibi vatansever duygulara başvurulduğunu iddia etmek için yeterli bilgi sağlamasa bile, dönemin siyasal atmosferini aktaran kaynaklara göre (Aras, 2023d;

Dinç, 2008; Uztuğ, 2007), kampanya aynı zamanda güvenlik ve milliyetçilik konularına da değinmek üzere tasarlanmıştır. Ek olarak, bu kampanyadaki reklam içeriğinde olumsuz imgelere hiçbir atıfta bulunulmamış; tümü başarı ve iyi yaşamla ilişkili olarak kodlanmıştır. Bu nedenle, reklam videolarının, dönemin daha geniş duygusal-siyasal bağlamını tam olarak yansıtmayan, izole bir şekilde ortaya çıkmış olduğunu gözlemlemek mümkündür.

2009 yerel seçimlerinde siyasal gündemi, başörtüsü üzerinden süregelen din-laik çatışması, Ergenekon davaları etrafındaki sivil-asker gerilimi ve hükümetin etnik ve dini azınlıklara yönelik açılım politikaları şekillendirmiştir. Ayrıca, dış politikadaki gelişmeler ve bunların iç siyasetteki yansımaları ile muhalefet partilerinin öne çıkardığı işsizlik, yolsuzluk ve ülkenin bölünmezliği gibi siyasal değerlendirmeler de kampanya sürecini etkilemiştir. Bu konuların yanı sıra AKP, kampanya materyallerinde ve parti söyleminde yerel yönetimlere "hizmet" veren bir parti olduğunu vurgulamaya devam etmiştir. 2009 kampanyasına dair parti tarafından tarafıma sağlanan tek reklam videosu, seçmenlere rasyonel bir şekilde hitap etmeye çalışsa da duygusal çekicilik açısından kayda değer bir sonuç vermemektedir. Diğer bir deyişle, mevcut kampanya videosu, Davos'tan sonra AKP'nin seçmenlerde milliyetçi duygular olarak yarattığı heyecan, coşku ve gururu yansıtmadığı gibi, azınlıklara yönelik mevcut ayrımcılığa duyulan öfke gibi hükümetin politikalarına (yani "açılımlarına") destek toplamak için kullanılabilecek diğer duyguları da yansıtmamaktadır.

AKP, YouTube platformunu 2014 yılından itibaren aktif ve resmi olarak kullanmaya başlamış olsa da 2011 yılından itibaren kampanya reklamlarına YouTube'daki çeşitli gazete ve AKP destekçilerinin sayfalarından erişilebilmektedir. Bu noktadan itibaren, kampanya reklamlarının sayısı seçim yıllarına göre eşit dağılmasa bile, veriler duygusal çekicilikler hakkında daha fazla fikir verebilmekte ve yorum yapılmasını kolaylaştırabilmektedir. 2011 kampanyası, ifade özgürlüğünü kısıtlayan, muhafazakâr norm ve değerleri ön plana çıkaran, laik ve liberal çevrelerin endişelerine yol açan 2010 anayasa referandumunu takip eden bir ortamda gerçekleşmiştir. Buna karşılık, Erdoğan'ın "ustalık dönemi" olarak adlandırdığı kampanya süreci, belirli bir demografik gruptan ziyade toplumun geneline hitap etmiştir. Çoğulcu bir iyimserlik uyandırmak ve coşku (umut/neşe), şefkat (sempati) ve

keyif gibi duygulara hitap ederken her kesimi kapsayan bir parti imajı yansıtmak amaçlanmıştır.

Ayrıca, kampanyanın öne çıkan sloganının ("Hayaldi, Gerçek Oldu") kullanıldığı reklamlar -önceki hükümetlerin beceriksizliği gibi olumsuz çağrışımlar içermesine rağmen- partinin olumlu bir duygusal kampanya yaklaşımı kullandığını göstermekte, en yaygın duygusal çekicilik türünün gurur olduğu gözlemlenmektedir. Reklamlarda, ilk kez uçağa binen vatandaşlar, yüksek hızlı trenin faydalarını tartışan teyzeler, Bolu Tüneli için şükranlarını ifade eden kamyoncular, Tarım ve Orman Bakanlığı'nın hibe ve girişimlerinin desteğiyle hayallerindeki süt fabrikasını inşa eden yatırımcılar gibi çeşitli bireyler ve senaryolar yer almaktadır (Türk, 2018, s. 216-217). Bu doğrultuda parti, seçmenlerde benzer hizmetlerin partinin yeniden iktidara gelmesi durumunda devam edeceğine dair coşku (umut/neşe) ve memnuniyet (hoşnutluk) yaratmak için duygusal çekicilikleri kullanmaktadır. Bu, halkın mevcut AKP yönetiminden memnun (hoşnut) ve güvende (güven/sadakat) olmasını ve böylece partiye oy vererek desteklemeye devam etmesini sağlamak için yapılmıştır. Kampanya nadiren olumsuz duygular kullanırken, genel bir değerlendirmeyle, olumlu duygusal çekiciliklerin kampanya reklamlarının önemli bir yönünü oluşturduğu görülmektedir. Bu bulgular ışığında, AKP'nin ilk kez kendisini "mağdur" olarak sunmaması ve 2010 referandumunu izleyen dönemdeki duygusal-siyasal atmosferden belirgin biçimde ayrışan bir kampanya yürütmesi dikkat çekicidir.

2014 yerel seçim kampanyası, Gezi sürecinde yaşanan toplumsal huzursuzluk ve 17-25 Aralık sürecinde ortaya çıkan yolsuzluk iddiaları nedeniyle hükümet açısından daha zorlu bir ortamda yürütülmüştür. Bu dönüm noktaları, AKP hükümetinin otoriter ve müdahaleci yönetimini ortaya koymasına ve derinleşen bir kutuplaşmaya başvurmasına yol açmıştır (Gürcan & Peker, 2014, s. 70, 82, 2015, s. 7; Tuğal, 2013). Dahası, bu olaylar 2014'teki kampanya stratejisi ve kavramları üzerinde de etkili olmuştur. Olçok da "17-25 Aralık olduğunda hazırladığımız tüm kampanyayı çöpe attık" demiştir. Gerçekten de kampanya ilerledikçe, ulus için yeni başlayan bir bağımsızlık mücadelesi algısı ortaya çıkarılmaya çalışılmıştır. Seçmenlere iletilen mesaj, oylarının ulusun geleceğini belirleyeceği yönündedir. Ayrıca, kampanyanın içeriği bunun sadece bir yerel seçim değil, genel bir seçim gibi sunulduğunu da ima etmektedir. Kampanyanın en dikkat çekici ve tartışmalı reklamı ("Millet Eğilmez Türkiye Yenilmez"), hukuken yasak olmasına rağmen Türk bayrağını propaganda

malzemesi olarak kullanmaktadır. *Dombra* adlı kampanya şarkısı da partinin seçmenler arasında vatansever duyguları uyandırarak duygusal manipülasyona başvurduğunu göstermektedir. Gururun, milliyetçi duyguları etkilemek ve aktarmak için kullanılabileceği düşünüldüğünde, gurur çekiciliği, 2014 kampanyasında önemli bir yer tutmaktadır. Ayrıca, reklamlarda kullanılan en dikkat çekici sloganlardan biri olan "Ben lafa değil, icraata bakarım" ifadesi, bireyin değerlendirmesinin sözlü iddialardan ziyade gözlemlenebilir eylem ve davranışlara dayandığı fikrini aktarmaktadır. Örneğin, "Başörtüsü yasağı kalktı" başlıklı reklamın ağırlıklı olarak olumlu duygusal çekicilikler içermesi, AKP'nin muhafazakâr desteği sürdürmek için başörtüsü konusuna atıfta bulunmaktan kaçınmadığını, söz konusu seçim yerel bir seçim olsa da değinilen konuların bir anlamda ülkenin makro siyasetiyle ilgili olduğunu göstermektedir. Sonuçta, bu kampanya yoğun şekilde güven (sadakat) ve gurur duygularına başvurmaktadır.

Bu bulgular ışığında, AKP'nin 2014 yılında olumlu bir kampanya stratejisi izlediği sonucuna varılabilir. Ancak parti, seçmende yeniden güven tesis etmek amacıyla olumsuz duygusal çekiciliklere de başvurmuştur ve bazı reklam filmlerinde Kürt bölgelerinden görüntüler kullanılmıştır. Korku (kaygı/endişe) ve üzüntü (hayal kırıklığı) duygularını içeren reklamların ilk tonu, gergin/kasvetli/ahenksiz müziğin yanı sıra silahlı bir çatışma varmış gibi savaş görüntüleri/sesleri veya korku içinde çığlık atan ve acıyla ağlama sahnelerinin kullanımıyla aktarılan olumsuz bir duyguyla karakterize edilmektedir. Ancak, videoların ortalarından itibaren reklamların tonu, daha olumlu ve iyimser bir yöne doğru kaymakta ve canlandırıcı/hissi/vatansever müzikler kullanılmaktadır. Sonuç olarak, 2014 kampanyası iki boyutludur. İlk olarak, güvenlik kaygılarının kullanılmasıyla amaçlanan imaları -AKP'nin yerel yönetimleri kaybetmesi halinde ortaya çıkması beklenen mağduriyetleri- kapsamaktadır. İkinci olarak ise AKP hükümeti, kendisini müreffeh bir toplumun mimarı olarak göstermeye çalışmaktadır.

2015 yılı, hem Haziran seçimlerinin ardından Kasım ayında erken seçime gidilmesiyle sonuçlanan idari kriz hem de ülkede hâkim olan duygusal-siyasal atmosfer açısından istisnai koşullara sahiptir. Dolayısıyla, 2015 kampanyaları, halk tarafından seçilmiş ve icracı bir cumhurbaşkanının seçilmesinin yanı sıra AKP'nin liderinin ve kadrolarının değişmesiyle karakterize edilen farklı bir siyasal ortamda yürütülmüştür. Haziran 2015 kampanyasının analizi, olumlu duygusal çekiciliklerin

kayda değer bir yaygınlığına işaret etmektedir. Kampanya videolarında gurur, coşku (umut/neşe), memnuniyet ve güven (sadakat) duyguları daha fazla öne çıkmaktadır. Buna karşılık AKP, kibir/küçümseme, öfke (kızgınlık/iğrenme), korku (kaygı/endişe) ve üzüntü (hayal kırıklığı) gibi, olumsuz duygusal çekicilikleri kullanmaktan da kaçınmamıştır. Veriler daha detaylı incelendiğinde, reklamlarda korku (kaygı/endişe), öfke (öfke/iğrenme) ve üzüntü (hayal kırıklığı) gibi duyguların başörtüsü yasağı ve güvenlik ile terörizm gibi konuları ele almak ve halk arasında endişe uyandırmak için kullanıldığı görülmektedir. Ayrıca, Haziran kampanyası gurur ile kibir/küçümseme çekiciliği arasında bir ilişki olduğunu da göstermektedir. AKP ve bileşenleri her zaman başarılarını gururla ve kendini över bir şekilde sunmaya alışkındır. İktidardaki hükümetin görev süresi boyunca elde ettiği başarılarla gurur duyması alışılmadık bir durum değildir. Ancak, "Onlar Konuşur AK Parti Yapar" sloganını taşıyan reklamlar gurur duygusuna başvurmanın yanı sıra sürekli olarak bir kibir/küçümseme duygusunu da beraberinde getirmektedir. Dolayısıyla, hükümetin halka karşı küçümseyici bir tavır sergilemesine yol açan bir bakış açısı değişikliği söz konusudur.

Olçok'un söylemlerinin incelenmesi de partinin yaklaşımına ve tutumuna ışık tutabilir. Olçok sık sık seçim psikolojisi kavramına atıfta bulunarak, seçim süreçlerinin (seçim öncesi dönemde kampanya süreçleri olarak değerlendirilebilir) bir bilgi aktarma aracı olmaktan ziyade, öncelikle seçmenlerin duygularını etkilemeye yönelik bir faaliyet olduğunun altını çizmiştir. Kasım 2015'teki erken seçimlerini, seçim döneminin psikolojisine yapılan bu vurgu göz önünde bulundurarak değerlendirmek büyük önem taşımaktadır. Bu seçimde AKP, bir kez daha iktidar partisi olarak seçilmesi durumunda taahhütlerini aktarmak amacıyla kampanyayı tekrar eden reklamlar üzerinden kurgulamıştır. Dolayısıyla, kampanyanın ağırlıklı olarak bilgilendirici içerik ve rasyonel çekiciliklerden oluştuğu düşünülebilir. Bununla birlikte, kampanyada sınırlı da olsa duygusal çekicilikler de kullanılmaktadır. Üstelik bu çekiciliklerin yoğunluğu, yaklaşık altı beş önce gerçekleşen Haziran kampanyasından belirgin bir şekilde farklılaşmaktadır.

2015 yılındaki kampanyalara ait bulguları Türkiye'nin siyasal ortamıyla ilişkilendirmek gerekirse, AKP'nin 7 Haziran'daki göreceli başarısızlığı (oy oranındaki düşüşü) ve bunu takip eden rekabet, ülke siyasetinde hâkim olan korku iklimi nedeniyle AKP hükümetinin korkutucu ve kaygı uyandırıcı siyasal yaklaşımının seçim kampanyasına yansıdığını varsaymak makuldür. Ayrıca, dönemin siyasal

iklimini gözlemleyenlerin, Kasım kampanyasını "kanla yazılmış," "korku bağına işaret eden" ve zorlu güvenlik ortamına dikkat çeken bir kampanya olarak nitelendirdiği dikkate alındığında, kampanya reklamlarının yaygın bir korku ve endişe atmosferiyle karakterize edilebileceğini söylemek akla yatkın görünmektedir. Buna karşılık, Kasım seçimleri için yürütülen kampanya, AKP'nin otoriter politika ve uygulamalarla desteklenen siyasal konumlanışının, kampanyanın diline, ölçeğine ve üslubuna yansıdığı varsayımını doğrulamamaktadır. Hükümetin mitinglerde ve diğer iletişim kanalları aracılığıyla seçmenlere verdiği, aciliyet vurgusu taşıyan ve destek eksikliğinin kaosla sonuçlanacağını ima eden genel siyasal mesajlarının aksine, bu yaklaşımını yansıtan herhangi bir reklam malzemesi bulunmamaktadır. İlaveten, ülkenin çeşitli bölgelerinde meydana gelen bir dizi bombalama ve terör saldırısı nedeniyle yaygın bir korku ve endişe ile tanımlanan duygusal-siyasal atmosfer, reklamların içeriğine tam olarak yansımamıştır. Sonuç olarak, kampanya ağırlıklı olarak vaatlerde bulunma eğilimi göstermekte ve hem duygusal çekicilikten yoksun hem de vaatlerin kendileriyle ilgili konular açısından genel olarak rasyonel çekicilikler içermektedir.

Bu gözlem ışığında, Kasım 2015'teki erken seçim öncesinde parti liderinin ve yetkililerin sert tutumunu sürdürmesine rağmen, AKP'nin kampanya reklamlarında daha olumlu bir stratejik yaklaşım benimsediği sonucuna varmak makul görünmektedir. Bu durum da gerçekteki AKP ile kurgusal kampanya dünyasındaki AKP arasında bir tutarsızlık olduğunu göstermektedir. Sonuç olarak, Kozanoğlu'nun (2018, s. 119) belirttiği gibi, her dönemin ruhunu yansıtıldığı reklamlar aracılığıyla takip/tespit etmek mümkün olsa da 2015 Kasım örneklerinde gözlemlendiği üzere, seçim kampanyaları bağlamında bu durum her zaman geçerli değildir.

Başarısız 2016 darbesi, 2017 anayasa referandumu, olağanüstü hâl gibi önemli siyasal gelişmelerin ardından, AKP'nin 2018 kampanyası iktidarını pekiştirmeye odaklanmıştır. Seçim ittifaklarına yol açan yeni cumhurbaşkanlığı sistemi, artan siyasal kutuplaşma ve OHAL altında yürütülen seçim süreci döneme hâkim olmuştur. Böyle bir ortamda AKP, kampanya reklamlarında bir dizi duygusal çekiciliği kullandığı bir seçim kampanyası stratejisi uygulamıştır. Gurur ve coşku (umut/neşe) gibi olumlu duyguların hâkim olduğu reklamlarda, özellikle altyapı projeleri ve yeni cumhurbaşkanlığı sistemi gibi başarılar vurgulanmıştır. "Zümrüdü Anka" reklamında olduğu gibi fantastik öğe kullanımı da gurur ve umut duygusu yaratarak AKP'yi,

Türkiye'yi müreffeh bir geleceğe taşıyacak lider parti olarak konumlandırmıştır. Bu reklamla, yeni başkanlık sistemine ilişkin öngörülemezliğe rağmen topluma heyecan ve umut aşılanmaya çalışılmıştır. Diğer yandan, Türkçe dışındaki dillerde kampanya yürütülmesine ilişkin yasal düzenlemeler, AKP'nin Kürtçe reklamlarla birlik ve beraberliği vurgulayarak coşku (umut/neşe), şefkat (sempati) ve gurur duygularını işlemesine olanak sağlamıştır. Buna ek olarak, 2018'de gözlemlenen coşku (umut/neşe) ve çocuk/gençlik imgelerinin bir arada kullanılması, partinin genç nesillere ve çocuklarının geleceğinden endişe duyan genel kamuoyuna olumlu bir şekilde hitap etmeye çalıştığını göstermektedir.

Buna karşılık, seçim günü yaklaştıkça, AKP'nin kampanya stratejisine olumsuz çekicilikleri de dahil ettiği görülmektedir. Baskın olmamakla birlikte, öne çıkan olumsuz duygular korku (kaygı/endişe) ve öfke (kızgınlık/iğrenme) olmuştur. Örneğin, geçmiş hükümetlere ve bürokratlara etkili bir yönetim sergileyemedikleri imasıyla bir dizi sorun hatırlatılarak, korku ve üzüntü (hayal kırıklığı) uyandıran "Hatırla" reklam serisi yayınlanmıştır. Sonuç olarak, 2018 kampanyası hem başkanlık sistemiyle birlikte umut verici bir başlangıç hem de -nispeten düşük yoğunlukta da olsa- korku ve endişe temelli bir yaklaşım etrafında dönmüştür.

Yeni sistem altındaki ilk seçim olan 2019 yerel seçimleri, özellikle büyükşehirlerde bir genel seçim havasında geçmiştir. AKP ve Cumhur İttifakı'nın "devletin bekası" söylemi seçim öncesi iklime yansırken, AKP'nin kampanyası "gönül belediyeciliği" ve sosyal belediyeciliğe odaklanarak gurur, coşku (umut/neşe), güven, şefkat (sempati) ve memnuniyet gibi duygulara başvurmaktadır. Bu duygular bazen Cumhur İttifakı'nın körüklediği dönemin hâkim atmosferini yansıtan vatansever veya milliyetçi duygular olurken, bazen de yalnızca sevgiye yapılan atıflara odaklanmaktadır. Öte yandan, kampanya, seçimlere katılmanın önemine ilişkin mesajlarla genç seçmenleri de hedeflemiştir. AKP'nin ülkenin geleceği olarak gençlere seslenmesi, 2018 kampanyasında olduğu gibi coşku (umut/neşe) duygusu uyandırırken, çocuk/genç imgelerine öncelik vermeye devam ettiğini göstermektedir. Nihayetinde, 2019 yerel seçim kampanyasının olumlu duygulara öncelik verdiği ve ülkenin karşı karşıya olduğu daha geniş sorunlara odaklandığı gözlemlenmektedir.

AKP'nin tüm seçim kampanyalarındaki yaklaşımı değerlendirildiğinde, iktidardaki bir siyasal partiden beklenenden farklı bir hareket tarzı izlemediği görülmektedir. Reklamlarında tasvir edilen olumlu duygular, AKP yönetimi altındaki

ülkenin ütopik bir ortama sahip olduğu imajını yaratırken, bu strateji özellikle kendi seçmen kitlesine hitap edecek şekilde tasarlanmıştır. Ancak, iktidar konumuna yönelik herhangi bir meydan okuma algıladığında, kampanyalarında özellikle korku, endişe, öfke ve aşağılama/küçümseme gibi olumsuz duyguları da etkili bir şekilde kullanmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, AKP'nin kampanya söylemleri ile uyguladığı politikalar arasında uyumsuzluk olduğu dikkat çekmektedir. Bu durum, AKP hükümetinin her seçim döneminde kendine ait alternatif bir gerçeklik yarattığı şeklindeki bir yoruma olanak tanımaktadır. Bu, örneğin, iktidarını korumak ve pekiştirmek amacıyla Türkiye'ye ve AKP iktidarına yönelik iç ve dış tehditlere ilişkin anlatıları şekillendirerek yaratmasını içermektedir. Sonuç olarak, daha önce de belirtildiği gibi, AKP iktidarını korumak ve sağlamlaştırmak için sosyal, kültürel ve politik olarak inşa edilmiş duygularla döngüsel olarak yeniden ürettiği kendi alternatif gerçekliğini yaratırken duyguları stratejik bir araç olarak kullanmaktadır.

Çalışmada değinilen "duygusal rejim" kavramını da AKP'nin uzun süredir devam eden iktidarı ile ilişkilendirmek mümkündür, çünkü partinin iktidarda olduğu süre boyunca uyguladığı siyasal stratejilerin, siyasal dinamikleri ve toplumsal duyguları yönetmede önemli bir rol oynadığı açıktır. Bu araştırmayı bir bağlama yerleştirmeyi amaçlayan üçüncü bölümün de gösterdiği gibi, parti nüfusun önemli bir kesiminde güçlü bir kimlik ve aidiyet duygusu yaratmayı başarmıştır. AKP, milliyetçiliğe döngüsel bir temelde başvurarak, muhafazakâr ve din temelli bir ideoloji etrafında duygusal bağlılıkları harekete geçirmeye çalışmıştır. AKP, toplumda tehlike ve/veya güvensizlik duygusu yaratmak, iktidarını sağlamlaştırmak ve kendisini rakipsiz ve baskın bir güç olarak sunmak için sıklıkla dış tehditler, darbe girişimleri ve terörizm gibi korku salma taktikleri kullanmıştır. Hakeza, parti, ekonomik refah ile sağlık ve altyapı gibi kamu hizmetlerindeki başarılar yoluyla halk arasında minnettarlık ve sadakat duyguları da geliştirmiştir. Bu duygular, siyasal desteği sürdürmede ve partiye duygusal bağlılığı teşvik etmede önemli bir rol oynamıştır. Ek olarak, popülist söylem, özellikle Erdoğan'ın konuşmalarında, AKP'nin iktidarı sırasında kurulan duygusal rejimle uyumlu olan duygulara hitap etme işlevi de görmüştür. Son olarak, toplumsal kutuplaşma, özellikle laik ve muhafazakâr toplum kesimleri arasında düşmanlık ve öfke duygularını hem yaratmış ve büyütmüş hem de AKP iktidarı sırasında duygusal bölünmeleri daha da derinleştirmiştir. Bu unsurlar, duyguların yönetiminin AKP'nin siyasal stratejisinin temel bir yönü haline geldiğini

ve iktidarı altındaki Türkiye'yi somut bir duygusal rejim örneği haline getirdiğini göstermektedir.

AKP'nin duyguları politik para birimi olarak aktif bir şekilde kullandığı ve *pathos*'un kullanımıyla *logos* ve *ethos* arasındaki uçurumu kapatma kapasitesine sahip olduğu da açıktır. Başka bir deyişle, AKP ikna için gerekli retorik araçları kullanma, ahlaki ve mantıksal pozisyonları benimseme (*logos*), kendini güvenilir ve inandırıcı bir varlık olarak sunma (*ethos*) ve duyguları kamuoyunda yankı uyandıracak bir şekilde tercüme etme (*pathos*) yeteneğine sahiptir. Ancak veriler, AKP'nin siyasete yaklaşımı ile kampanya yöntemleri arasında tutarsızlıklar da ortaya koymaktadır. AKP'nin korku temelli ve gözdağı veren anlatıları hâkim siyasal atmosfere uyum sağlarken, kampanyaları hâkim siyasal bağlamla doğrudan tutarlı görünmemektedir. Örneğin, 2015'teki iki seçim ve aralarındaki gelişmeler göz önüne alındığında, yenilenen kampanyanın güçlü duygular uyandıran daha fazla sayıda olumsuz reklam içermesi beklenirdi. Ancak bu gerçekleşmemiştir; bu da daha fazla araştırmaya değer ilginç bir bulguyu temsil etmektedir. Kampanyalarından, eylemlerinden ve söylemlerinden de anlaşılacağı üzere, AKP'nin birbirinden belirgin biçimde farklı tezahürlerde ortaya çıktığı görülebilmektedir.

Veriler, AKP'nin seçmen tabanı haricindeki halkın kalanıyla duygusal bir bağ kurma ve teması sürdürme konusunda sorunlar yaşadığını da göstermektedir. Bu, AKP'nin eşitsiz bir duygusal sermaye birikimine sahip olduğu, reklamlarında ülke yalnızca kendi seçmenlerinden oluşuyormuş ve muhalifleri hiçe sayıyormuşçasına duyguları harekete geçirdiği anlamına gelmektedir. Ayrıca, AKP, duygusal sermaye dağıtımını da eşitsiz bir şekilde yapmakta; böylece muhalifleri aşağılayarak ve küçümseyerek duyguları işlerken kendi tabanını övmekte ve yüceltmektedir. Daha önce de belirtildiği gibi, bu durum Cottingham'ın (2016, s. 451–452) vurguladığı, egemen sınıfların duygusal sermayeyi toplumun kültürel ve sembolik sermayesine yerleştirerek baskıcı yönlerini nasıl gizledikleri ile ilgilidir.

Ayrıca, veriler, AKP'nin partinin tarihsel anlatısı içinde başta Davutoğlu dönemini yok sayma çabası olmak üzere iç zorluklar yaşadığını göstermektedir. Bu yaklaşım, partinin resmi YouTube sayfasındaki havuza dahil edilen veya hariç tutulan kampanya reklamlarının seçimiyle kanıtlanmaktadır. Herhangi bir durumun AKP'nin iktidarının devamı ya da konsolidasyonu için potansiyel bir engel olarak algılanması durumunda, parti kendisi ile söz konusu durum arasında bir ayrım yaratmaya

çalışacaktır. Daha sonra parti, kendi varoluşunu yönlendirmeye devam eder ve kendisine yöneltilen olumsuzlukları olumlu bir güce dönüştürürken aynı zamanda olumlu duygulardan yararlanarak kendisini en iyi alternatif olarak tasvir etmeye devam edecektir. Bu nedenle, AKP'nin zaman içinde duyguların kullanımına yönelik yaklaşımındaki görünür tutarsızlığa rağmen, söz konusu esnekliğin, parti açısından ve başarıyı sürdürmek adına seçmen desteğini genişletmek veya sürdürmek için gerekli bir koşul olduğu ileri sürülebilir.

Şüphesiz, AKP'nin iktidar yolculuğu 2019 yerel seçimleriyle sona ermemiştir. Bu tezin tamamlanmasından önce iki seçim daha yapılmıştır. Bu seçimlerden ilki, Türkiye'deki tüm seçimler gibi kendi bağlamında benzersiz olan 2023 genel seçimleridir. Diğer seçim ise, AKP'nin siyasal tarihi boyunca aldığı en büyük seçim yenilgisiyle özdeşleşen 2024 yerel seçimleridir. Gelecekteki çalışmaların odak noktası olacak bu seçimlerin kampanyaları, zaman kısıtlılığı nedeniyle çalışmaya dahil edilememiştir. Ancak, gerek 2023 gerekse 2024 seçimlerinin kampanyaları da dahil, bu doktora çalışmasının, seçimlerdeki başarının veya başarısızlığın kampanya türüyle (rasyonel veya duygusal) ölçülebileceğini iddia etmediğini ve böyle bir ölçümü amaçlamadığını belirtmek gerekmektedir.

Buna karşılık, bu tez, günümüz Türkiye siyasetini anlamak için -ekonomik, siyasal ve sosyokültürel dinamikler ve faktörler gibi mevcut araştırma nesnelerine ek olarak- duyguların da tatmin edici açıklamalar sağlayabileceğini iddia etmektedir. Bu araştırmada da duyguların yerinin, rolünün ve kullanımının AKP bağlamında iyi bir çalışma nesnesi olarak ele alınabileceği ve böylece çağdaş Türk siyasetinin anlaşılmasına katkıda bulunulabileceği savunulmuştur. Duyguların, AKP'nin uzun vadeli siyasal varlığına ve güç konsolidasyonuna katkıda bulunan araçlardan biri olduğu, çünkü duyguların her zaman partinin yönetim biçiminin önemli bir bileşeni olarak işlev gördüğü iddia edilmiştir. Ayrıca, görev süresi boyunca parti, esas olarak dinamik bir toplumsal ilişkiler süreci tarafından şekillendirilen duygusal-siyasal bağlamı stratejik olarak kullanması sayesinde önemli bir duygusal sermaye biriktirmiştir. Buna ek olarak AKP, toplum içinde belirli bir duygusal ortamı dikkatlice geliştirerek iktidarını sağlamlaştırmıştır. Bu manzara kutuplaşma ile karakterize edilirken, parti kendi konumunu güçlendirmek için ("biz"i kuran) sadakat, güven, merhamet, şefkat ve memnuniyet gibi duyguları ustalıkla kullanırken, aynı zamanda ("onlar"ı kuran) aşağılanma, endişe, nefret ve korku duygularını da körüklemektedir.

Sonuç olarak, Türkiye örneği -ve AKP vakası- duyguların araçsallaştırıldığı bir atmosferin nasıl yaratıldığını göstermektedir. Bu tez, bu koşullar ışığında ve daha derin kavrayışlar elde etmek için yeterince analiz edilmemiş ya da göz ardı edilmiş faktörlerin araştırılması gerektiği düşüncesiyle, duyguların siyasetteki rolünü incelemek için seçim kampanyası videolarına odaklanmış ve özel olarak AKP örneğinde duyguların somutlaştırılmasına vurgu yapmıştır.

Tüm akademik çalışmalarda olduğu gibi, bu tez de belirli sınırlamalara tabidir. Türkiye'de yüzün üzerinde kayıtlı ve aktif siyasal parti bulunmaktadır. Hepsi seçimlere katılmak için gereken yeterliliğe sahip değildir ve her seçime katılan parti sayısı değişmektedir. Yazım sırasında, Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi'nde on beş parti temsil edilmektedir. 2002-2019 döneminde temsil edilen partilerin analize dahil edilmesi mümkün olsa bile önemli miktarda zaman ve kaynak yatırımı gerektirecektir. Dolayısıyla, bu tez, AKP'nin yirmi yıldan uzun süredir iktidardaki statüsünü koruduğu ve sürekli olarak yoğun ve aktif kampanya yürüttüğü gerekçesiyle bir vaka çalışması olarak tek bir partiye odaklanmıştır. Ancak, her kampanya için mevcut verilerin farklı sayıda olması, seçim yılları arasında karşılaştırma yapılmasına izin vermediği için bu tezin kapsamını kısıtlamaktadır. Sonuç olarak, bu çalışma öncelikli olarak her kampanya içindeki olumlu ve olumsuz duygusal çekiciliklerin dağılımına odaklanmıştır.

Bir diğer sınırlama da insan duygularının dinamizmine içkindir. Öznelerin duygularına yalnızca yüz yüze/birebir etkileşim (deneyler, görüşmeler, anketler gibi) yoluyla odaklanmak mümkün olabileceğinden ve bu çalışma da uzun bir zaman dilimini kapsadığından, insanlara geçmiş deneyimleri için "ne veya nasıl hissettiler" diye sormak kendi sınırlamalarını beraberinde getirmektedir. En azından bu deneyimler kaçınılmaz olarak içinde bulundukları duygusal durumları da içerecektir. İnsanların duyguları o kadar dinamiktir ki, reklamlara maruz kaldıklarında veya belirli bir seçim sırasında ne hissettiklerini hatırlamak, mevcut ruh hallerinden ve zihin durumlarından bağımsız olmayacaktır. Buna paralel olarak, Türkiye'de olduğu gibi yakın geçmişte çok sayıda seçimin yapıldığı bir siyasal iklimde, seçimlerin ayırt edici özellikleri belirsizleşmekte ve bu farklı seçimlere ve kampanyalara ilişkin duygular bulanıklaşmakta, silikleşmekte ve hatırlanması zorlaşmaktadır. Bu nedenle, bu tez çalışması talep yönlü -yani reklamların özneler üzerinde yarattığı/bıraktığı etkiye

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bakan- bir yaklaşımdan ziyade arz yönlü -bir diğer deyişle, reklam videolarıyla yaratılmak istenen ve amaçlanan etkilere bakan- bir yaklaşım benimsemiştir.

Duyguların sınıflandırılması ve tipolojisi konusunda mevcut literatürde bir fikir birliği yoktur. Psikoloji disiplini, ilgili alanları olan siyaset psikolojisi, duygu siyaseti ve duygu sosyolojisi alanlarının her biri duyguların incelenmesi ve ölçülmesi için kendine özgü farklı değerlendirmelere, yaklaşımlara ve yöntemlere sahiptir. Bununla birlikte, söz konusu disiplinler arasında farklılıklar olsa da akademik çalışmalar için tutarlı bir çerçeve oluşturmak amacıyla belirli tercihlerde bulunmak da gereklidir. Bu çalışmada analiz edilen duygu sayısı iki faktörle sınırlıdır. Birincisi, araştırmanın geniş zaman aralığına ve önemli sayıda araştırma materyaline odaklanmış bir yaklaşım gerektirmesidir. İkincisi, siyasal iletişimde kullanılan duyguların büyük ölçüde tüm ülke bağlamlarında benzer olduğunun gözlemlenmiş olmasıdır. İncelenen kampanya materyallerinde tüm duygulara açıkça atıfta bulunulmaması ve belirli duyguları tanımlamanın zorluğu göz önüne alındığında, bu makul bir karar olarak kabul edilebilir. Ayrıca, literatürde zaten yaygın olarak kabul gören bir yaklaşımı benimsediğim ve bir araştırmanın kod kitabını kendi çalışmam için uyarladığım için, bazı duygular tezin kapsamına dahil edilmemiştir. Sonuç olarak, bu tez, mevcut literatürde belirli bir öneme sahip olduğu belirlenen ve/veya sıklıkla ele alınan duygulara yoğunlaşmıştır.

Siyasal iletişimde duyguların rolünü ve yerini arz yönlü bir yaklaşım benimseyerek, nitel içerik analiziyle ele alan çalışmalar incelendiğinde, araştırma çıktılarının görsel temsilinin belirgin bir şekilde eksik olduğu gözlemlenmektedir. Bu nedenle, bu tez, siyasal iletişim alanında yeterince temsil edilmeyen bilgisayarlı analiz araçlarının kullanımı yoluyla yeni bir metodolojik araştırma girişimi sunmaktadır. Bu alan, temel olarak kampanya reklamlarının iletişim unsurlarının içeriğini, göstergebilim merceğinden incelemektedir. Bilgisayarlı analiz araçlarının kullanımı, verilerden elde edilen sonuçların görselleştirilmesine olanak sağlamaktadır. Ayrıca, bu çalışmada kullanılan kod kitabı, farklı ülkelerden veya bölgesel bağlamlarından farklı vakalara uygulanmak üzere çoğaltılabilir ve böylece daha fazla araştırma yapılmasını kolaylaştırabilir. Dahası, gelecekteki araştırmalar, çalışmanın kapsamını parlamentoda temsil edilen tüm siyasal partileri kapsayacak şekilde genişletmeyi veya alternatif olarak zaman dilimini daraltmayı ve/veya genişletmeyi ve böylece karşılaştırmalı analizlere olanak sağlamayı tercih edebilir.

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