

MEDIA, POLITICS AND SLANTED NEWS COVERAGE DURING THE
ELECTION PERIODS- CASE STUDY OF NEWS ON AKP

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EDA AĐLAYAN

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Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

Prof.Dr.Sencer AYATA
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

Prof.Dr.Rařit KAYA
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science in Media and Cultural Studies.

Prof.Dr.Rařit KAYA
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members:

Prof. Dr. Rařit KAYA (METU,ADM)

Assoc.Dr.Necmi ERDOĐAN (METU,ADM)

Dr.Barıř AKMUR (METU,ADM)

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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ABSTRACT

**MEDIA, POLITICS AND SLANTED NEWS COVERAGE DURING THE
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ÇAĞLAYAN, Eda

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Supervisor : Prof. Dr. Raşit KAYA

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This thesis aims to study the attitude of media towards AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi - Justice and Development Party) during the 2002 and 2007 general legislative elections in Turkey. Three national newspapers were selected in the scope of analysis: Hürriyet, Sabah and Yeni Şafak in two months period before 2002 General Elections and 2007 General Elections (September, 1- October, 31 2002, June, 1 –July, 21 2007). Media are assumed to have a defining role on the formation of opinions due to the fact that the events of the external world to our immediate experiences is continuously interpreted and disseminated through them. Under these considerations, it is frequently claimed that world of politics is one of the most effected institutions. So, during the election periods campaigns are designed and carried out to direct opinions by means of media. Main question of the thesis is whether national daily newspapers were favorable to AKP, both before 2002 general elections when it was elected as first political party and before 2007 general elections when it was the ruling party. AKP news coverage of the selected newspapers in the defined periods were examined through qualitative content analysis. Selected newspapers' news slant are revealed by way of reading AKP

news critically to determine their dominant tone, gauging how much space they occupied in the newspapers and considering attitudes of the newspapers towards other political parties.

Keywords: Media, Liberal Media Theory, News Slant, Qualitative Content Analysis

ÖZ

MEDYA, SİYASET VE SEÇİM DÖNEMLERİNDE YANLI HABER İÇERİĞİ- AKP HABERLERİ ÖRNEK OLAY İNCELEMESİ

ÇAĞLAYAN, Eda

Yüksek Lisans, Medya ve Kültürel Çalışmalar Ana Bilim Dalı

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Bu çalışmanın temel amacı 2002 ve 2007 Genel Seçimlerinden önce medyanın AKP'ye (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi) yönelik tavrını çözümlenektir. Tez kapsamında üç ulusal gazete incelenmiştir: Hürriyet, Sabah ve Yeni Şafak. Bu üç gazetede, 1 Eylül- 31 Ekim 2002, 1 Haziran- 21 Temmuz 2007 seçim öncesi dönemlerinde yayınlanan AKP haberleri üzerinde çalışılmıştır. Dış dünyaya ilişkin fikirlerimiz, medya tarafından, olayların sürekli olarak yorumlanarak sunulması ile şekillendiğinden, medyanın kanı oluşturma sürecinde belirleyici rol oynadığı düşünülmektedir. Bu durum göz önüne alınarak, sıklıkla siyaset alanının en çok etkilenen kurum olduğu iddia edilmektedir.. Öyle ki, seçim kampanyaları fikir ve kanıları medya yardımıyla yönlendirmek amacıyla planlanmaktadır. Tez, AKP'nin birinci parti olarak çıkacağı 2002 Genel Seçimleri ve iktidarda olduğu 2007 Genel Seçimleri'nden önce ulusal gazetelerin AKP'yi destekleyici bir tutum içinde olup olmadıkları sorusuna cevap aramaktadır. Seçilen gazetelerde seçim dönemlerinde yayınlanan AKP haberleri niteliksel içerik analiziyle incelenmiştir. Gazetelerin haber içeriklerinin yanlılığı, haber metinlerindeki baskın tonun eleştirel okumayla belirlenmesi, haberlere gazetelerde ne kadar yer ayrıldığıının

hesaplanması ve gazetelerin diğerk partilere ilişkin tutumu da dikkate alınarak ortaya çıkarılmaya çalışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Medya, Liberal Medya Teorisi, Haberde Yanlılık, Niteliksel İçerik Analizi

To My Family

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MEDIA, POLITICS AND SLANTED NEWS COVERAGE DURING THE ELECTION PERIODS- CASE STUDY OF NEWS ON AKP

CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims to study the attitude of the media towards the AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi-Justice and Development Party) during the 2002 and 2007 general legislative elections in Turkey. Main question this thesis seeks to answer is whether national daily newspapers were favorable to AKP both before 2002 general elections when it was elected as first political party and before 2007 general elections when it was the ruling party. Three national newspapers were selected in the scope of analysis considering their specific characteristics: Hürriyet, Sabah and Yeni Şafak in two months period before 2002 General Elections, 2007 General Elections (September, 1-October, 31 2002, June, 1-July, 21 2007). While Hürriyet and Sabah represent mainstream media due to their relatively balanced news coverage, Yeni Şafak is an example for explicitly advocacy journalism. To answer main question entails a research documenting/examining slant of the news about AKP and its leader on selected national daily newspapers.

As universally accepted, media have effects on the opinions and attitudes of those who are exposed to it. Again, there is an agreement that by the development of modern means of communications, one of the most effected institutions is the world of politics. Indeed, the events of the external world to our immediate experiences is continuously interpreted/defined and disseminated through media. Therefore, media are assumed to have a defining role on the formation of opinions even during

the normal course of the societal life. Moreover, during the election periods specific campaigns are designed and carried out in order to mould and direct opinions through the operations of the means of mass communications. This is why there is almost an agreement that today it is very difficult, if not completely impossible, to be successful in the elections without a fair media support.

This being the case, after the victory of the AKP in the 2002 legislative elections it is claimed that this newly founded political party had not enjoyed the backing of the media. Even, some observers pushed the claim to assert that AKP had won the elections despite the hostile attitude of the principal media. This claim is also used to support the idea that the effects of mass media on the political life is not as significant as it is defended in the critical scholarly work.

This thesis, inspired by such debates and discussions, chose the subject matter of the study as the media's attitude to AKP during the electoral campaigns and attempted to critically analyze the content of three daily newspapers' coverage of the electoral campaigns during the chosen time periods. Political news published in front pages or inside pages and columnists' articles published in these periods have been examined to reveal their slant to AKP using qualitative content analysis techniques. So the newspapers tend to reproduce perceived reality in different ways, expressing in different tones, highlighting or undervaluing certain aspects of the issue that meanings present in news stories have been under consideration, different from traditional content analysis focusing on subject matter in quantitative terms. First dominant tones of individual political news were determined and then these political news were sorted according to their main issues. AKP political news were marked as in positive, negative and neutral tones through content analysis and reading critically. The news heads and news texts were marked as "negative" if

they express fear, unease and problem definition. Political news were marked as “positive” if they content affirmative expressions. If they do not express any value judgment, they marked as “neutral”. AKP political news on front pages were gauged in terms of space allocated to them and their percentage rate to other news on front pages was given. The examination of all collected data together gives the prominent issues each newspaper covers and dominant tones of them in AKP political news. The comparison between papers’ news coverage in both 2002 and 2007 general election period provides inferences about changes in newspapers’ attitude towards AKP in time.

Before introducing the findings of this content analysis, a brief theoretical framework is tried to be drown in the first chapter of the present study to shed some light to the role of media in politics in the countries with a broadly liberal-democratic basis. The state of media in Turkey is also briefly mentioned in the same chapter. The case study designed to test the claims on media’s role in election periods is located in Chapter Two. Research method and scope of analysis is explained in the beginning of the chapter. After touching upon historical background of each election periods, findings and evaluations are given respectively by means of graphs and tables. A comparison between findings of each election period is made at the last part of Chapter Two.

CHAPTER 2

2. MEDIA AND POLITICS

2.1. The Role of Media in Democratic Societies

The relationship between politics and mass media has to be understood in terms of the institutions which manage the flow of power: the systems of regulation and patterns of control that organize media. Broadly speaking, having looked at expansive literature on the relationship between media and politics, it could be argued that their point of departure is the ideal conception of media suggested/offered mostly by liberal way of thinking which contemporary representative democracies have been partially built on. As social, economic, technological changes have occurred in Western societies and in the societies adopted Western originated values, different theoretical positions have been elaborated to comprehend the relationship between mass media and politics. In other words, successive phases of capitalism have brought about dramatic structural changes in production, naturally in social life and in media as in all economic sectors. These structural changes in media as an economic sector have altered their functions in the society contrary to assumptions of liberal pluralist approach. This has showed many flaws of liberal pluralist approach. There have been two main theoretical stances to comprehend media; one of them has been liberal pluralist approach inspired by traditional liberal way of thinking and the other has been critical approach built on criticism of liberal pluralist assumptions. This chapter introduces main assumptions of liberal theory first and then flaws of liberal pluralist approach will be discussed in the lines of the discussion of how media function in democratic societies or what the obstacles are to media function as 'forth estate'.

Liberalism is a way of thinking that takes the belief that individuals are rational, self-interested and competitive, and who are capable of living freely and with minimum external interference as starting position. The ideals that inspired liberalism later strongly influenced the organization of the state throughout the Western world. The modern liberal Western state is defined by a commitment to rule by the people, limited government, representative political institutions and a belief in the rights of the individual (Ball & Dagger, 2004, 50-60). Media are conceived as an institution to defend and to protect the individual from the abuses of the state and to facilitate the rights and liberty of the citizenry. According to liberals, media sector must be open and pluralistic in terms of its ownership in order to accomplish this function. In other words, media outlets should be privately owned and permitted to operate unrestricted by governmental regulation.

2.2. Historical Roots and fall of the 'Ideal' by Commercialization

Discussions of media's democratic role have been firmly bound up with a debate about the media's organization and regulation. So, classical liberal theory of free press was a part of political campaign for press deregulation in the nineteenth century (Curran, 2002, 217). The campaign for free press which had been lasted from beginning of nineteenth century to beginning of twentieth century evolved in the axis of changes and challenges derived from industrial revolution and had been integrated into campaign for democracy (Kaya, 2009a, 84). This section will sketch out historical developments related to rise of free press demands and liberal theories main principles defining later on media's democratic role and then put flaws of liberal theory.

Advocacy of press freedom within Western tradition dates back 1600s and early 1700s. The invention of printing press in the 1400s provided a basis

for claiming such a right. By the end of the fifteenth century there were approximately 15 to 20 million pamphlets and publications in circulation. This new invention had great effect on the political authority of both church and the absolutist monarchies. Before invention of printing press transmission and dissemination of new ideas in the society had been slow. The invention of the printing press increased printing firms and outlets capable of mass production. As a result, it made difficult for the church and political rulers/monarchs to control the free flow of ideas and information. It meant that the people could read Bible themselves and make inferences from it without priests' interpretations. This was the main threat on the Church's authority. The threat on monarchs' authority is circulation of the publications overt or implicit critical of their rule (Thompson, 1995, 55). The monarchs had tried to block impacts of printing press from the 1400s to the late 1600s, operating a highly repressive licensing system in England. The other precaution monarchy had taken is to dispense privileges to those who published in favor of state (Wheeler quoted in Errington, Miragliotta, 2008, 5). The bourgeoisie, the new class took advantage of collapse of feudalism and the growth of capitalism protested monarch's attempts to censor news and information. Free press became their main demands (Keane, 1991, 33-34).

To sum up increase of capital and evolution of capital accumulation patterns related production processes brought about arise of two new classes: Bourgeoisie and labour classes. Thus, bourgeoisie consolidated due to industrial revolution led to collapse of monarchies and new political formation. This meant a new political system in which powers of execution and legislation were separated, jurisdiction became independent and natural rights and liberties were guaranteed under the juridical system, legislation could check execution, people from wider range of social origins could be represented. "As this new system foresees the participation of all the people coming from different stratum of the society

to the political competition, and as the legal foundations of such participation is assured, one of its essential features is esteemed to be “pluralism” (Kaya, 2009a, 39). Kaya discerns, among others, “free flow of information” and “free entrepreneurship” as the basic principles of a true “liberal” system of mass communications. But, again according to him these two principles are naturally exclusive and create a theoretical conflict and tension in practice since free flow rises against any move towards monopolization whereas entrepreneurial capitalism lays grounds for monopolistic tendencies (Kaya, 2009a, 71-80). Operation of mass media systems in accordance with free market principles or liberalization of markets, as Curran points out rightly, gave rise not to independent watchdogs serving the “public interest” but to corporations and conglomerates which adjust their critical scrutiny to suit their private commercial and political interest (Curran, 2002, 221). Media organizations have grown into conglomerates that are among the largest corporations in the world. This is not that media are compromised by their links to big business; the media are themselves big business (McChesney quoted in Curran, 2002, 222). In effect, media structures and the actual function fulfilled by the media outlets display outcomes fairly contradictory with those stipulated in the “theory”.

Liberal theory assumes that the principal democratic role of the media is to act as a check on the state. The media should watch the full range of state activity, and fearlessly expose abuses of official authority. This watchdog role is said to be the most important function of the media comparing to other functions. In order to achieve watchdog role, media must be independent from government. In other words, it is important to establish a critical distance between media and government through private media ownership. However media organizations have become more profit oriented and since the sphere of government has been enlarged greatly, political decisions more often affect their profit ability. Consequently, on

one hand governments need the media more than ever, because they now have to maintain electoral support to stay in office (Curran, 2002, 220 - 2007, 27). On the other hand, media organizations are today profit seeking business enterprises and turned into huge corporate conglomerates in time. Media conglomerates reduced “public” to mere “mass of consumers” However, to explain media solely in terms of market theory is inadequate. Such an approach disregards many other influences which can shape media, including the political commitments and private interests of media shareholders, and the influence exerted through news management and the ideological power of leading groups in society. As Curran points out rightly, it fails to take into account the wider relations of power in which media are situated (Curran, 2002, 222). Under these considerations, it could be inferred that media could not accomplish “the forth estate” role which liberal theory charge.

2.3. Media-Politics Linkages: On the Effects of Mass Media

There is universal agreement that the media do have effects on almost all aspects of modern societal life. This is why most part of the study of mass communications is based on researching the effects of the media. Nevertheless, the extent, levels and kinds or direction of media effects is an issue on which there is least agreement. However, it is again generally accepted that the media effects may cause intended or unintended changes or facilitate changes in the social life. Media may also function to reinforce what exists and thus prevent change.

Talking about media effects is, in many respects, talking about the power of media. As a matter of fact, one of the most influenced and changed societal realm with the advent of a modern means of communication is the world of politics.

Indeed, “the emergence of representative democratic government corresponded to the needs of a numerically enlarged and physically dispersed community. Representative democracy is inconceivable without forms of mass communication- to create awareness of political issues that face a society whose members are not personally in touch with each other, who lack common geographic reference points, and whose central institutions are remote from the people they serve or exploit (Bogart, 1998, 4).

In these societies with a broadly liberal-democratic basis the political function of the media is proclaimed as “the voice of the public and of interest groups, and as the source of (public) information on which choices and decisions could be made by a mass electorate and by politicians” (McQuail, 1983, 210). In effect, a country’s political agenda, its stock of sociopolitical knowledge, its style of political debate, all are largely shaped by the news media but as stated by Hallin “there is no reason to suppose that they will be ‘optimized’ by profit-seeking programmes and advertisers” (Hallin, 2000, 234).

Professionals of journalism would claim that they adopt and exercise the neutral and objective model of journalism which performs a “watchdog” function, it is hard to claim that journalism anywhere in the world is completely neutral and stands apart from particular interest. As a matter of fact, development of commercialization decreased the degree of political parallelism in media institution in many countries, but it increased the instrumentalization of the media by the business interests. Consequently, news organizations began relaying interpretive frameworks consonant with the interests of the owners. Especially, in these countries where there are weak consensus on journalistic standards with very limited development of professional self-regulation and where there is no formal legal basis to protect the journalistic autonomy, the level of instrumentalization of the

media increases. Liberal approach to journalistic practice requires that the news columns of a newspaper not be administrated according to political allegiances but it is still possible to discover the political colour of a newspaper in the news columns.

Although the wave of liberalization and deregulation of the 1980s have diminished the role of the state in most parts of the world as an owner, funder, and regulator of the media, but the role of state in the capital accumulation process did not decrease. Therefore, the business dealings of the owner rendered the media contents more open to pressures coming from the external world. It simply meant the increased instrumentalization of the media by the political actors.

Since the advocacy of journalism that believe serving for more 'sacred ideals' is less concerned with the traditional ideals of 'objectivity', political slant of the advocate media outlets are easy to scrutinize. The case of the mainstream media is somewhat different since it is generally more oriented toward informational and narrative styles of writing and often contains commentaries of different columnists with different viewpoints.

Another point that needs to be stressed here is that, in all countries based on representative democracy, the media news coverages are subjected to special regulatory norms during the periods of electoral campaigns. Special measures are imposed on media outlets to assure that the news coverages are balanced and objective (i.e. should be fact-centered).

2.4. State of Media in Turkey

To comprehend current 'state of media in Turkey', historical developments and conditions in which Turkish mass communication system has emerged must be briefly examined. We will focus especially on the period

after 1980s to 2000s which still have impact on current times. Neo-liberal policies practiced after 1980 military coup engendered the 'structural transformations' in social, economic institutions. These structural transformations bring about concentration in Turkish press and production of sensational media content. In effect, media sector in all over the world prominently have been exposed to "concentration", "conglomeratisation" and "globalization".

Mass communication systems have been subject of deregulation, called re-regulation by some scholars, and privatization in accordance with neo liberal policies of new-rightist governments all over the world and Turkey. That is to say, two main hallmarks of neo liberal policies have been deregulation and privatization (McChesney & Herman, 1997, 38). So in accordance with neo liberal policies in 1980s, public monopoly on media sector was abolished that quality of capital invested in media sector was changed and was property relations. Although these changes were in harmony with the dominant tendencies all over the world, historical contingencies peculiar to countries matter like being under developed country. The most radical change is abolishment of public monopoly on radio and television (Kaya, 2009a, 234). Kaya takes '24 January Decisions' in which 'economic stabilization measures' are declared, as starting point of 'structural transformation' in Turkey (Kaya, 2009a, 234). 24 January Decisions was not only a stabilization program, but it also included structural adjustment measures which international capital marketed, by means of World Bank with two strategic aims, one of which is market freedom and the other consolidation of local and international capital against labour (Adaklı quoted Boratav (1989b), 2006, 141). The coincidence between 24 January Decisions and 1980 Military coup is the indication of the ability of authoritarian rule to practice 24 January Decisions. While Military coup reformulated political system in a more antidemocratic way, attempts at hegemonic projects have been put into

practice to maintain the Establishment. First, Atatürkçülük (Kemalism) had been put into practice as ideological carrier of hegemonic project. However, it had been inadequate to mobilize popular support in huge range. Then Turkish-Islamic synthesis had been articulated to hegemonic project. At last, the Özalism achieved the function of maintaining establishment and lasted its impact on society until nowadays. The main purpose actually was to provide internalization of New Right and structural adjustment by means of neo liberal policies presented as big transformation (Kaya quoted Tünay 1993, Timur 1996, 2009a, 235).

Structural transformations realized by means of neo liberal policies have had impact upon mass communication system until the day. After the abolishment of public monopoly on media, numerous radio and television channel were established without legal implementations. Technological developments also enabled entrepreneurs to establish radio or television channels using far less capital. This gave way to abundance of radio and television channels in a short period of time. However, as Kaya said, in market competition conditions, media institutions should have much more capital to obtain technological equipment in order to survive. The most prominent aspect of structural transformations in mass communication system in Turkey is related to media ownership and the quality of capital invested in media sector. New media owners were banks, contractors or mostly the groups doing both of the jobs. In Turkey, the solely rival of this type of groups is pro-Islamist media supported by Pro-Islamist capital. Today, in Turkey, media sector is under domination of the people who aren't journalist who accumulated capital out of media institutions (Kaya, 2009a, 245). In 1980s, press and/or transformed form, 'the media' were expected to assist to settle 'hegemonic project' properly. In the period of military coup, due to strict measurements against newspapers, any annoying implication on newspaper texts could be an excuse of closing and publishing punishment (Adaklı, 2006, 146).

In late 1980s, monopolization came up. First, the investments of Asil Nadir in media sector seemed to attempt at monopolization. In 1988, Asil Nadir bought Günaydın newspaper which was established in 1968. Also in 1989 he bought Güneş Newspaper and Gelişim Publications which was established in 1982. This was the first time that two main newspapers and magazine groups were in the same hand. However in 1990, Asil Nadir withdrew from the market because of economic deficits.

Aydın Doğan, who bought Milliyet newspaper in 1980, contributed to monopolization tendencies until now. Aydın Doğan bought Hürriyet newspaper in 1994. Hürriyet had been published since 1948. In the transformation process, economic deficits caused many newspapers to close or to be sold. The transformation process had started together with conglomeration of Hürriyet and Sabah newspapers and the investments of the other conglomerates in media sector, accelerated by Özal's policies. Simavi family and Dinç Bilgin were the last media bosses originated in journalism. After Simavi family withdrawing from business life and elimination of Dinç Bilgin from media sector, the capital not originated in journalism became dominant in media sector. The conglomerates in media sector have maintained their growth by way of vertical and horizontal integration.

The prominent media groups in the last quarter of century in Turkey is Doğan Media Group, Çukurova Group, Doğu Group, Turgay Ciner Group, Dinç Bilgin Group, Uzanlar Group, Erol Aksoy Group, İhlas Holding- Enver Ören Group. The media groups supported by religious communities and pro Islamist capital could be called as AKP biased media. The most important point Raşit Kaya emphasized is that both 'holding media' and 'conservatist pro-Islamist media' have the same supportive attitude towards general interests of the capital, both about

macro economic policies and social conflicts in industry (Kaya, 2009a, 249). After seize of TMSF, Ciner's Merkez group, Dođan, ukurova and Dođuş groups have survived. Kaya pointed out the changing nature of press conflicts into media conflicts is the changing nature of quarrels from idea based ones into interest oriented ones. (Kaya, 2009a, 249).

CHAPTER 3

3. CASE STUDY: REPRESENTATION OF AKP IN THE MEDIA DURING THE PERIOD BEFORE 2002 AND 2007 ELECTIONS

3.1. The Scope of Analysis and Research Method

This research has been conducted to answer the question whether national daily newspapers were favorable to AKP both before 2002 general elections when it was elected as first political party and before 2007 general elections when it was the ruling political party. To answer such a question entails a research documenting/examining slant of the news about AKP and its leader on selected national daily newspapers. In other words, to examine slant of the news about AKP means to reveal whether there has been favorable coverage to AKP. A news outlet is defined as being slanted if it gives more favorable coverage to one side of politics than the other. Three national newspapers were selected in the scope of analysis considering they would exhibit specific characteristics: Hürriyet, Sabah, Yeni Şafak in two months period before 2002 General Elections, 2007 General Elections (September-October 2002, June - July 2007). The reason for specifically choosing these three newspapers will be explained in the following section with the historical background of these newspapers.

This study aimed to explore the attitude of the Turkish press towards AKP during the electoral campaign periods of 2002 and 2007 general elections. In effect, as already stated in the introduction of this thesis, it is generally claimed that in the 2002 elections AKP has managed to win a decisive victory despite the hostile attitude of the mainstream press to the party. Again, there is almost general agreement that during the electoral campaign period of 2007 general elections AKP succeeded to win the

mainstream press over to its side. This study is designed to empirically test these claims which are taken for granted in almost all recent analysis of the Turkish politics.

This study scrutinizes the contents of selected dailies in the period of two months before the 2002 and 2007 General Elections. For this purpose, the news coverages of selected dailies; Hürriyet, Sabah and Yeni Şafak between the period September, 1, 2002-October 31, 2002 and June 1, 2007- July, 21, 2007 are analyzed.

Political news published in front pages or inside pages and columnists' articles published in these periods have been examined to reveal their slant to AKP. Main topics for political news that are categorized for analysis include daily political issues, election polls, policy proposals suggested by opposition parties, government policies, speeches of political leaders, meeting news, election manifestos, candidate lists, discussions from parliament, conversations with political leaders, conversations with people on their voting behavior,... etc.

There appears to be evidence of newspapers reproducing perceived reality in different ways. Presentation of the same issues differ in slant by expressing in different tones, locating on first or inner pages, presenting with questioning headlines or absolute headlines, giving with photographs or by covering a huge space. Due to these different ways of representations, the political news, especially on AKP have been analyzed by content analysis techniques. Content analysis is a quantitative data examination method offering distribution of news in newspapers with different characteristics. Traditional content analysis techniques generally focus on counting words, not meanings. This could cause to isolate object of inquiry from its context. Thus, an analysis resting upon such a technique could be inadequate to comprehend object of inquiry with all

aspects. This research avoided the risk of content analysis to reach shallow results, focusing on qualitative evaluation also by reading critically news stories. Numerical data collected by qualitative concerns provide relatively reliable inferences bringing answers to the main questions of this study.

Content analysis has been employed in different levels of this research. First, dominant tones of individual political news were determined. Second, these political news were sorted according to their main issues. Also the AKP political news on front pages were gauged in terms of the space allocated to them and their percentage rate to other news on front pages was given. The headlines and banner headlines on front pages related to AKP were counted. The conclusion will be reached through analyzing all these data together.

AKP political news were marked as in positive, negative and neutral tones through content analysis and reading critically. The news heads and news texts were marked as “negative” if they express fear, unease, problem definition of AKP and its leader. They were marked as “positive” if they use affirmative expressions like pride. Political news were marked as “neutral” if they do not include any value judgments.

There are questions guiding content analysis through the political news: How political leaders and political parties are defined? Which words have been chosen by reporters? Do these words reflect prejudices, slandering or pride? And thus how political parties or leaders have been presented? How issues have been presented? Which sides of political issues have been emphasized? Which sides of political issues have been neglected? Which issues have been presented as important or useless? Have the newspapers presented same issues in different ways? If they have, what

are the main differences between their presentations? What are their tones in news texts?

In the next sections examples of positive, negative and neutral toned news can be seen. Also an example will be given for an issue presented in different tones in two newspapers. These examples will clarify the above definitions and the decision procedure for defining the tone which will be the main base of this research.

Other than the tones defined above, the location of the news on newspaper provides us salient inferences. News are located in newspaper pages according to its order of importance. The order and level of importance of the news is determined by its location in which page, in which part of the page, what amount of space is dedicated to it and whether it has a headline or a banner headline. The most important news in newspaper are located in the front page. Headline news is located below the nameplate and refers to the very important news of the newspaper. Banner headline news is located above the nameplate and refers to the news deemed more important than headline news. Being on the front page is an indicator to be important news, and the level of significance is also dependent on location the news on the front page. Order of importance is generally; left top side, right top side, left bottom side and right bottom side. Going through inside pages of the newspaper level of significance of the news is diminishing. All political news on the three newspapers, constitute scope of this analysis. Besides their tones, political news are marked according to being on the front page or inside pages and being headlines or banner headlines.

In this study the percentage rates of AKP political news on front pages and percentage rates of political news about AKP in the whole newspaper to all political news in examined period were given in graphs and tables.

These data will be used together with the tones of the news from the chosen newspapers to define their news slant. Drawing from Entman's definition, slant characterizes individual news reports and editorials in which the framing favors one side over the other in a current or potential dispute (Entman, 2007, 3). That is why the study focuses on defining tones of the news about specific entity. As the main concern of the study is to reflect news slant fully, some data about other parties than AKP has also been given in this study.

In summary, to answer the main questions of this study, attitudes of newspapers to AKP before 2002 and 2007 general elections have to be revealed. Qualitative, quantitative content analysis provides us with figures expressing amount of positive, negative and neutral political news on three newspapers. First the collected political news have been read and determined whether they are positive, negative or neutral according to tone they set. Second, numerical findings have been set to tables, graphs and analyzed. Same procedure is followed for different main issues mentioned in AKP news in these newspapers and then space allocated and the way they are allocated like banner headlines or headlines on the front page have been listed and shown with graphs. The attitudes of the columnists in the defined period is tabled and graphed through their tones and finally some brief information on how other parties are covered in the specified newspapers have been given. Through these data all together will give a clear picture for the questions mentioned previously.

3.1.1. Brief Information about the Newspapers Used in Research

Hürriyet is a daily newspaper deemed one of the prominent representatives of mainstream media in Turkey since it is one of the most widely circulated newspaper in Turkey. Hürriyet is one of the daily newspapers of Doğan Media Group. Looking closer to history of Hürriyet;

It was founded by Sedat Simavi in 1948. Then two sons of Sedat Simavi, Erol and Haldun Simavi started to conduct Hürriyet until 1971. After 1971, Erol Simavi became the only name. In 1994 Hürriyet newspaper was bought by Doğan Media Group within Doğan Holding.

Doğan Media Group is the only media group achieved fully vertical and horizontal integration in Turkey. Doğan Media Group have great market share in every area of media sector; newspaper, magazine publishing, news agent, radio, TV and online broadcasting, book publishing, advertisement and TV program producing, music producing (Adaklı, 2006, 264). In addition to media business, Doğan Holding acts in many other sectors like, finance, trade and energy. Doğan Group is constituted by two holdings; Doğan Company Group Holding in finance, tourism, industry and marketing (Doğan Şirketler Grubu Holding) and Doğan Media Holding acting in media and related areas (Doğan Yayın Holding).

Sabah is one of the most widely circulated newspapers published in Turkey. Sabah was first published in 1985 within Sabah Publishing Inc. company founded by Dinç Bilgin. Sabah Group is the only media group whose boss had a journalist origin among the chosen newspapers for this research. In 2000, since Etibank, -financial source of the group- went bankrupt, Dinç Bilgin transferred some shares of the company to Turgay Ciner. Turgay Ciner had started to control media conglomerate under the license starting from 2003. Turkish Savings Deposit Insurance Fund (TMSF), government body protecting deposits opened lawsuit to Dinç Bilgin. Stated that Dinç Bilgin had used Etibank for his profit, he was imposed an interim injunction. Turkish Savings Deposit Insurance Fund (TMSF), government body protecting deposits, seized second biggest media group in Turkey in April 2, 2007. TMSF reported that the seizing was due to a newly acquired knowledge on some secret contracts allegedly signed between the majority stakeholder in Etibank, Dinç Bilgin and Turgay Ciner, who has effectively controlled the media conglomerate

under license since 2003. A statement from TMSF said the fund has seized partnership rights, management and auditing rights, excluding accumulated dividends of the Medya Yayın Holding based on the relevant clauses of Banking Law number 5411 (www.hurriyetdailynews.com/2007-04-03). Following the seize, incumbent editor in chief Fatih Altaylı resigned from his office. TMSF appointed Ergun Babahan as news editor in chief. Erdal Şafak had been editorial writer before TMSF's seize, Mehmet Barlas had been charged by editorial writing. Thus, it is expected that Sabah's editorial principles and editorial policy has been changed after government body's seize of Sabah. After a while TMSF announced its decision to auction seized media assets including daily newspaper and ATV. Çalık Group bought Sabah Newspaper and ATV in 2007. As Çalık group is known to be close the AKP and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, this auction and sale had been quite spectacular in those days all over the media.

Yeni Şafak is a daily newspaper first founded by M.Dr. Yakup Yönten and Tufan Mengi in 19th September 1994. After two months, the publishment had stopped due to financial problems. The newspaper had been bought by Ahmet Şişman and started daily issues with a new identity in 23 Ocak 1995. After a period of Mahmut Kış owning the newspaper, Albayrak Group bought the newspaper and they still own it. The newspaper had consistency in their strong conservative and pro-Islamist tendency by all means with the main presentation and the columnists.

So, as a summary and also underlining the reasons for choosing these three newspapers; the newspapers used in this research have been selected considering them representative examples of national media in Turkey. Hürriyet and Sabah are two examples of the most widely circulated newspapers. They could be marked as representatives of mainstream media. Hürriyet is the daily newspaper of Doğan Media Group and one of the most widely circulated newspaper in Turkey as explained above. In both of the periods before General Elections Hürriyet

was owned by Doğan Media Group. On the contrary Sabah had changed owner and had been sold to Çalık group, which effected the general tendency of the newspaper. While in 2002 both of them could be defined as Holding newspapers. In 2007 Sabah was a newspaper under control of government body; TMSF due to its owner financial deficiencies. Since publication policy of the newspapers is determined in dependence on newspapers owners, it is assumed that editorial slant and policies adopted also change in accordance with every change in who control the newspaper. Based on this assumption, it is also expected that in 2007 Sabah offered different news coverage than one in 2002, before seizing of TMSF. Yeni Şafak couldn't be marked as an example of mainstream media in terms of both its circulation and its ideological stance. It could be rather marked as a pro-Islamist and conservative newspaper. In addition, it has been observed that Yeni Şafak offers positive AKP news coverage. The main differences between the selected newspapers could help us making comparisons bringing efficient results about media's attitude to AKP.

3.1.2. News Examples in Positive, Neutral and Negative Tones

In this section some examples of news in positive, negative and neutral tones will be given with practicing evaluation criteria to make clear the operation of qualitative coding strategies. In other words, news have been marked as “positive”, “negative” and “neutral” using some criteria mentioned before. Before, starting the numerical findings, as these marking will carry great importance for understanding the news slant and the whole research analysis will be based on these judgments, typical examples and definitions for positive, negative and neutral toned news will be given below.

a) Example for Positive Toned News

The first example is, “Halkın Oyuna Yasak” “Ban on Public Opinion”, September 21 2002, Yeni Şafak. News text: “High Election Committee refused AK Party Leader Erdoğan’s, Hadep leader Bozlak’s, SDP leader Birdal’s, Hakpar leader Fırat’s applications for being parliamentary candidate. The decision on ban of Erdoğan’s candidacy has been taken by four votes against three votes.”

News head “Halkın Oyuna Yasak”, “Ban on Public Opinion” defines this decision of political ban as obstruction on public opinion. News text mentions the refusal decision about four political leaders. Erdoğan receives more attention than the others; Birdal, Bozlak and Fırat.

Above example is given to show positive tone in one of the AKP news. Positive news are the news that either their head or their texts inherently include affirmative words and expressions. Words are selected by reporter concentrating on developing a frame by which reader’s interpretations and preferences are altered and shaped positively. In other words, some elements of the perceived reality are highlighted to promote certain interpretations by way of priming.

The second example is, “Seçime Dinamit” “Dynamite for Election”, September 17 , 2002, on Yeni Şafak is given with banner headline and also three sub heads. Sub heads are “Anti-democratic Threat”, “Political Decision” and “Two Decisions More”

News text: “The centers out of democracy and judicial decisions threaten the legitimacy of November general elections. 8th section of the Supreme Court of Appeals’ refusal of the decision on cancellation of Erdoğan’s criminal record rendered independence of judge as disputable entity. It is

said that these attempts are beneficial for the lobby who wants to cancel the elections”

According to news headline the judicial decisions mean to sabotage general elections. In another words, for Supreme Court of Appeal to deny the demand on cancellation of Erdoğan’s criminal record is an “anti-democratic threat” and a “political decision”. The frame drawn by news, both news head and news text, is favorable to Erdoğan’s side. This news is in positive tone.

b) Example for Neutral Toned News

Neutral news are the news which report events as they are; without any value judgments, evaluations or comments in ideal means. Both neutral news heads and texts do not have any value judgments on the issue. Although being objective is impossible in many terms, trying not to express value judgment is the closest way to be objective. In neutral news, news head and news text report only the events and speeches without making any comments. Reporter does not commentate on the issue.

The example of the news in neutral tone is “Kanadoğlu: İkisi de Milletvekili Olamaz”, “Kanadoğlu: Both of them could not be deputies” on Hürriyet, September, 14, 2002, news head presents words of Public Prosecutor of Supreme Court of Appeals with quotation marks. This could be interpret as signal of neutrality. News reported Sabih Kanadoğlu’s speech without comment or value judgment.

News text is like “Public Prosecutor of Supreme Court of Appeals Sabih Kanadoğlu who had made demurral to cancellation of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s criminal record appealing to 8th Section of Supreme court of Appeals, applied to High Election Committee yesterday. Kanadoğlu sent

denunciation note to High Election Committee saying Erdoğan and Erbakan could not be deputies.” This news text reports perceived reality without adding any comments.

c) Example for Negative Toned News

The news in negative tone includes negative value judgments, comments and evaluations. An example to the news in negative tone is “Başörtüsü İslami Sembol Değildir” “Headscarf is not an Islamic Symbol” on September 6 , 2002, on Hürriyet. What makes this news negative is value judgments against Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s ideas previously declared by him about headscarf reported in another news text with the headline “Emine Hanım Taahhüdü”, “Emine Hanım Guarantee” on the first page and same day. In addition, news head is formed by the words of expert’s. This shows that newspaper assumes ideas uttered by the theologians are true.

News title displays Hürriyet’s point of view about turban issue. News story is based on Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s statement on turban issue; “Headscarf is not a symbol of any party, but Islam” and expert opinions objecting to it. The news text continues, “Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s statement that headscarf is not a symbol of a party but Islam, is not approved by theologians. Marmara University Theology Faculty Dean Prof. Zekeriya Beyaz said that the symbol of Islam is to repeat the Islamic testimony of faith. No specific clothes can represent Islam. Istanbul University Law Faculty Prof. Hüseyin Hatemi said that headscarf is not a condition to Islam. So it can not be a symbol.” News title shows newspaper’s point of view. So this title is not presented as someone’s statement, not in quotation marks. Newspaper gives expert opinion on headscarf issue which is clearly against Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

d) Example for News on Same Issue with Different Tones

Finally before dealing with statistical data, an example of two different coverage of same event will be given to show how two different newspapers can approach the same event. As will be seen from the examples, perceived reality is represented by two newspapers differently in terms of different news slant. This phenomenon is very important in analyzing the news and finding news slant. Although statistically only negative or positive toned news can be seen in tables and graphs, in final evaluation, such cases make the picture very clear in understanding the real news slant.

News to be example are related to political parties' announcements of candidate lists. First, news heads release different point of views. The Sabah's news on announcement of candidate list has been released on front page with headline and covered 12% of the page. News headline "AKP de Yeni Vitrin, CHP'de Tek Derviş" "New display in AKP, only Derviş in CHP" refers to change in AKP and lack of change in CHP. This news is in positive tone. This could also be seen from follow up story:

"Tayyip Erdoğan put the candidates joining from ANAP and DYP in first ranks of the list. Baykal's list is nostalgic. AKP leader Tayyip Erdoğan put the people originated from centre- right, Erkan Mumcu, Köksal Toptan, Murat Başesgioğlu in first ranks of candidate lists. Thus, he sent an important message to the discussions on whether he changed or not."

News text makes the inference that new candidate list is a signal for change of AKP's and its leader's political stance in consequence. Sabah takes candidate lists partially into consideration and made inferences on change of AKP's political ideology. According to Sabah, AKP's political ideology could be counted as centre- right.

Same event has been presented differently by Hürriyet. This news on new AKP candidate list is located in political news page not in front page in contrast to Sabah's way. Hürriyet's news headline "AKP'de Milli Görüş Ağırlığı" "Dominance of National View in AKP", claims AKP's political ideology as National View and does not mention any change in political stance of AKP. News story supports news headline's message:

"AKP's candidate list is dominantly constituted by people who support National View. AKP leader Erdoğan put the former FP parliamentarians dating back RP period in candidate list except two of them." News text puts emphasis on dominant existence of FP parliamentarians originated from National View on new candidate lists instead of candidates joining from ANAP and DYP. This shows us that Hürriyet highlights existence of former FP parliamentarians in contrast to Sabah which emphasizes a few candidates joining from ANAP and DYP on candidate lists. Hürriyet news makes the situation clear that AKP is formed by candidates especially originated from National View on big scale. From the other side Sabah news locates AKP in centre- right on political spectrum.

To summarize, same event, announcement of party's candidate lists is presented by two newspapers in different ways. That is reproduction of perceived reality in two different ways. While Sabah locates the news on candidates list with headline covering 12% of the front page, Hürriyet locates the news on AKP candidate list in inside political news page. The headline of Sabah news refers to newness in AKP's display and the only new thing in CHP, Derviş "New display in AKP, only Derviş in CHP". Hürriyet news headline emphasizes on the existence of candidates originated from National View, "Dominance of National View in AKP". These two ways of presentation of same event makes us think while Hürriyet defines AKP as successor of National View, Sabah defines AKP

as central right party. Thus, Hürriyet defines AKP, out of its intentions to appear as a central right party. From the other side Sabah defines AKP in accordance with its goals. While Sabah news is in positive tone, Hürriyet news is in negative tone. That is to say, AKP always claimed to be 'central right party'. However, it has been disputable whether it is 'centre-right' party as it claims or it has implicit pro-Islamist agenda. While Hürriyet news frames event in favor of second claim, Sabah news frames event in favor of first.

Newspaper's point of views reveal in all news about same issue. For example, decision on refusal of his demurrer to Supreme Court of Appeals is presented by two newspapers in two different ways. While Hürriyet only refers to judicial issues under the news head " İki sürpriz daha" "Two More Surprises" September 18 , 2002, Sabah also releases a news containing Tayyip Erdoğan's comments on not being allowed to be parliamentary candidate, under the head saying again his words "Önemli Olan İlkelerimin İktidar Olması", September 18 , 2002, "The more important thing is my principles to be in power". While Sabah presents legal decision from Tayyip Erdoğan's point of view, in addition to the other news which releases newspaper's point of view "Ne şiirmiş ama...", "What a poem...", "Erdoğan'sız AKP Sandığı Patlatır mı?", "Can Akp blow the election box without Erdoğan?" Hürriyet ignores Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's comment on being in power by way of his principles. And Hürriyet generally avoids using sensational headline even in news in positive tone about AKP. Hurriyet uses headings that are generally neutral and do not mean judicial statement. Sabah's news heads about legal position of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and related judicial issues are more sensational than Hürriyet's.

3.2. 2002 GENERAL ELECTION ANALYSIS

3.2.1. Historical Background of 2002 Election Period

There were several debates in the period before 2002 General Election. The most prominent ones were legal position of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, pro-Islamist, anti-secularist image of AKP and closure case of AKP opened by Chief Public Prosecutor Sabih Kanadoğlu.

Legal position of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan had been at stake even after AKP won the election. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan had been banned from political life due to the fact that he had been judged and sentenced to ten months on the grounds that he agitated public for hostility by way of discrimination in religious faith and race according to article 312/2 of Turkish Penal Code. According to the constitution provisions, the one judged from article 312 of Turkish Penal Code could not be a parliamentary candidate. In August 2, 2002, 3rd Diyarbakır State Security Court denied the demand to delete the imprisonment from the Turkish Penal Code article 312 from Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's criminal record. However, 4th Diyarbakır State Security Court decided to delete the imprisonment from the Turkish Penal Code article 312 from Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's criminal record in September 6 , 2002.

To understand the development of events to that stage, take a brief look at the history of AKP; AKP was founded on August 14 , 2001 under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and was formed by dominantly former deputies of closed down Fazilet Party (Virtue Party) who deemed themselves as reformers, the other group joined Saadet Party (Prosperity Party). Fazilet Party was banned by Constitutional Court in June 22, 2001 after closure case was opened on the grounds that it became focal point of anti-secular activities. FP had already been formed by former banned pro-Islamist RP party members and the deputies who hadn't been deprived

from political life. Although founders of the party have pro-Islamist background and have done politics in pro-Islamist political parties, AKP claimed to be pro-Western, mainstream, centre-right party with conservative social agenda and also committed firmly to liberal market economy. This claim had been at stake in this period. In the same vein, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's former speeches including pro-Islamist, anti secular arguments had been at issue in the cases against him in the period.

Since despite his political ban, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan became one of the founders and chairman of AKP (Justice and Development Party), several cases were opened against him and his party. In August, 21st, 2001, Chief Public Prosecutor of Supreme Court of Appeal Sabih Kanadođlu applied to Constitutional Court for warning against the fact that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan could not be founder member and he should not be using authority of being a chairman. He added that six other founder members also have to be dismissed from the party. In January, 9 , 2002, Constitutional Court decided to warn AKP against founder membership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Supreme Court refused the request related to injunction of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's authority derived from being chairman and warning against abolish the turbaned founder member's membership.

In September 11 2002, Chief Public Prosecutor of Supreme Court of Appeal Sabih Kanadođlu sent denunciation note to High Election Committee saying that Necmettin Erbakan and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan could not be parliamentary candidate in September, 13, 2002. In September 16, 2002, 8th Section of Supreme Court of Appeal approved the decision of 3rd Diyarbakır State Security Court on refusal of application for cancellation of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's criminal record. As a result,

High Election Committee denied application of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Necmettin Erbakan to be parliamentary candidate in September, 19, 2002.

In, October 19, 2002, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan resigned from membership of Founders committee of his party. In October, 23, 2002 Chief Public Prosecutor of Supreme Court of Appeal Sabih Kanadoğlu opened case to Constitutional Court for closure of AKP, on the grounds that it did not respond to court warnings complying with the law completely. Chief Public Prosecutor of Supreme Court of Appeal Sabih Kanadoğlu also demanded imposing interim injunction on Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's usage of the authority derived from being chairman and founder member of the political party. Because of the closure case, exchange market decreased drastically. This closure case was dismissed by Constitutional Court in July 9, 2009 seven years after it was opened.

In this period it has been discussed whether Bülent Ecevit's state of health is obstacle him to perform his duty. In May 22, 2002, AKP, DYP and SP claimed that since Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit could not perform his duties he should resign from his office and an election government should be formed instead of present government. In the following period, health problems prevent him from joining some certain meetings, National Security Committee meeting,... etc. Nine DSP (Democratic Left Party) deputies joined discussions by a declaration saying that DSP should carry on its political life without Ecevit's.

Thorough July, 2002 resignations from ministerial cabinet and DSP have continued and the number of vote of confidence has decreased below the number necessary for coalition. 53 deputies resigned from DSP founded a new political party under the leadership of İsmail Cem, YTP (New Turkey Party). So, in July 31, 2002, with 449 affirmative votes against 62

dissentive votes, it is decided to go for an early election in November 3, 2002.

In November 3, 2002 Early General Election out of 41 million 407 thousand 27 electorate, only 32 million 768.161 voted. With % 79.14 it has been the lowest turnout among last seven elections. According to election results, AKP gained 363 deputies receiving %34.29 of votes, CHP gained 178 deputies receiving %19.38 of votes. After 1954 it is the first time only two parties were represented in the parliamentary. Other parties could not receive enough vote required by %10 election threshold to be represented in parliamentary. DSP (Democratic Left Party) received %1.22, MHP (National Activity Party) received % 8.36, ANAP (Motherland Party) received % 5.13 and DYP (True Path Party) received % 9.54 of votes. Nine of the independent candidates became deputies.

In, November 16, 2002, President Ahmet Necdet Sezer assigned Kayseri AKP deputy Abdullah Gül to form a government. Due to his political ban Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was not elected. 58th Government was formed in November 18, 2002.

In December 1, 2002 High Elections Committee canceled the elections in the Siirt District on the ground that there has been deficiency in election procedure. In December 13, 2002, constitutional amendment package was accepted by general assembly of the parliament. The most priming amendment was in the 76th Constitution provision related to having right to be a candidate for elections which was the most important obstacle for Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. According to the amendment, the expression of “ideological and anarchic activities” was changed into “terrorist actions”. So, the article 312, on which ground that Erdoğan had been sentenced, was excluded the scope of the ban of Erdoğan from political life suggested by Constitution.

Erdoğan became parliamentary candidate for the re-elections in Siirt in March 9, 2003 and elected. Prime Minister Abdullah Gül submitted resignation of 58th Government to President Ahmet Necdet Sezer. Ahmet Necdet Sezer assigned Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to form government in March 11, 2003.

3.2.2. Findings

Examining newspapers' real slant to certain political party requires examining both the tones used by the newspaper and amount of the space allocated to that party. It is also important to take into consideration whether news is given with headlines or banner headlines and how much amount of space allocated to it if it is on front pages of the newspapers. This research collected some certain quantitative data from the selected newspapers about AKP. These data collected from the research on three newspapers will be analyzed. Some tables and graphics will be elaborated to illustrate AKP news slant of three newspapers.

a) Distribution of News in Positive, Negative and Neutral Tones

	POSITIVE NEWS (AKP)	NEGATIVE NEWS (AKP)	NEUTRAL NEWS (AKP)	TOTAL NEWS (AKP)
HURRIYET	31 (%26.7)	38 (%32.8)	47 (%40.5)	116
SABAH	57 (%55.9)	11 (%10.8)	34 (%33.3)	102
YENI SAFAK	115 (%88.5)	0 (%0)	15 (%11.5)	130
TOTAL	203	49	96	348

Table 1 - **2002 Election**, September- October 2002, AKP news tones of newspapers

Table 1 shows the distribution of the news in the newspapers under the categories of positive, neutral and negative. The evaluation of these data will be given in the next sections. The answer of the question to what amount of political news coverage was devoted to AKP is shown with the table below;

	TOTAL NEWS ABOUT AKP	TOTAL POLITICAL NEWS	RATIO
HURRIYET	116	330	35.15%
SABAH	102	416	24.52%
YENI SAFAK	130	562	23.13%

Table 2 - **2002 Election**, September-October 2002, Comparison of total political news and AKP news

As seen in Table 2 in the two months period before 2002 general elections the number of the political news on Hürriyet is 330, Sabah is 416 and Yeni Şafak is 562. The ratios of AKP news to all political news are also given as %35.15 for Hurriyet, 24.52% for Sabah and %23.13 for Yeni Safak.

b) Main Issues in AKP News

There are some certain issues coming into prominence peculiar to each election period. At the same time, there are also some certain issues maintaining their importance in every election period. Islamic image of the AKP and turban issue had come into prominence in each election period. Besides, the question of whether AKP has changed and whether it could be defined as centre right party have always been important issues for the newspapers.

HURRIYET	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	OBJECTIVE	(TOTAL)
ISLAMIC IMAGE OF AKP, TURBAN ISSUE	6	13	-	19
CLOSURE CASE OF AKP, LEGAL POSITION OF TAYYIP ERDOĞAN	9	6	26	41
ELECTION CAMPAIGN, SPEECHES	10	12	18	40
POLICY PROPOSALS	5	6	2	13
EU MEMBERSHIP PROCESS	1	1	1	3

Table 3 – **2002 Election**, September-October 2002, Hurriyet, The distribution of main issues in AKP news

SABAH	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	OBJECTIVE	(TOTAL)
ISLAMIC IMAGE OF AKP, TURBAN ISSUE	5	4	2	11
CLOSURE CASE OF AKP, LEGAL POSITION OF TAYYIP ERDOĞAN	21	2	14	37
ELECTION CAMPAIGN, SPEECHES	19	3	14	36
POLICY PROPOSALS	11	2	2	15
EU MEMBERSHIP PROCESS	1	-	2	3

Table 4 – **2002 Election**, September-October 2002, Sabah, The distribution of main issues in AKP news

YENI SAFAK	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	OBJECTIVE	(TOTAL)
ISLAMIC IMAGE OF AKP, TURBAN ISSUE	3	-	0	3
CLOSURE CASE OF AKP, LEGAL POSITION OF TAYYIP ERDOĞAN	33	-	4	37
ELECTION CAMPAIGN, SPEECHES	67	-	9	76
POLICY PROPOSALS	10	-	1	11
EU MEMBERSHIP PROCESS	2	-	1	3

Table 5 – **2002 Election**, September-October 2002 Yeni Safak, The distribution of main issues in AKP news

In this study, AKP news coverage, in the period previous 2002 general elections, is categorized under five subject headings as seen above in Table 3, 4 and 5; Islamic image of AKP/turban issue, legal position of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan/Closure case of AKP, election campaign, speeches, EU membership process. As these had been the mostly focused issues on AKP news, the analysis had been processed on these categories.

c) The Space Allocated to AKP on Front Pages

	Allocated Space Front Page (%)	Allocated Space Front Page (cm²)	News about AKP HEADLINES	News about AKP BANNER HEADLINES
HURRIYET	8.4 %	154.5	12	6
SABAH	4.8 %	88.6	6	3
YENI SAFAK	17.6 %	324.8	7	13

Table 6 – **2002 Election**, The space allocated to AKP on front pages

How frequently has AKP news been on headlines or banner headlines? Do AKP news occupy most of the front pages? Responses to these questions provide us the clues on slant of AKP news coverage of the newspapers and also the inferences on how media agenda focus on AKP. In other words, the subject matter of which attitude these three newspapers maintain to AKP become clearer examining front pages. These statistical data have to be analyzed with the data from the previous sections where the news tones are given, as not only the place allocated on front page but the general tone given to these news together will make the slant picture clearer. What amount and which part of front page the newspaper allocates to certain issue/political party gives way to clarify the level of significance it receives from the newspaper. Newspapers' headlines and banner headlines have been examined in terms of their location and space they occupied on front page. Headlines and banner headlines have been calculated in square centimeters and percent ratio as seen in Table 6.

d) The Columnists

In this research AKP news coverage of each newspaper has been examined according to tones of news outlets about AKP and the amount of space on newspapers devoted to AKP. In similar vein, front pages, inside pages have been examined to document political news coverage and front pages has been examined to assess the amount of space allocated to AKP news.

It is not only political news which has been examined to reveal real AKP news slant of the newspapers; the articles of columnists and editorial stances of the newspapers have been also taken into account. Columnists' articles and newspapers' editorials on AKP or Recep Tayyip Erdoğan have been examined to reveal their tones. The main reason to

include columnists' articles and editorials in the scope of analysis is the assumption that there might be implications of editorial stance of the newspaper for news coverage. Although editorial department and news department are distinct in newspapers, there might be similarities between editorial stance and tones of news in that specific newspaper. Since, editors are more likely to be in contact with media owners, – some editor in chiefs are members of the board of the media holdings like Hürriyet's editor in chief Ertuğrul Özkök- they directly affect and form the news slant. The headlines and banner headlines on the front pages of the newspapers which reveals main attitude of them are determined by editor in chiefs. Columnists are relatively independent in the media organization. However, it was sometimes observed that the columnists who tend to write in contrast to editorial slant sometimes were obliged to resign. This research considered the articles on AKP of all columnists and editor in chiefs.

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	OBJECTIVE	(TOTAL)
HURRIYET	7	30	1	38
SABAH	6	14	4	24
YENI SAFAK	11	0	0	11

Table 7 – **2002 Election**, Hürriyet, Sabah, Yeni Şafak, September – October 2002, The tones of articles about AKP

Table 8, 9, 10 gives detailed data about columnists' articles in Hurriyet, Sabah and Yeni Şafak in two months period before 2002 General Elections.

HURRIYET	AKP POSITIVE	AKP NEG.	AKP NEUTRAL	GOVERNMENT POSITIVE	GOVERNMENT NEGATIVE
ERTUĞRUL ÖZKÖK	4	2	-	1	1
EMİN ÇOLAŞAN	-	8	-	-	1
BEKİR COŞKUN	-	4	-	-	-
OKTAY EKŞİ	-	3	-	-	-
YALÇIN BAYER	-	5	1	-	-
TUFAN TÜRENÇ	-	4	-	-	-
FATİH ALTAYLI	-	2	-	-	-
SEDAT ERGİN	2	1	-	-	-
CÜNEYT ÜLSEVER	1	1	-	-	1

Table 8 – **2002 Election**, Hurriyet, Columnists and tones of articles

SABAH	AKP POSITIVE	AKP NEG.	AKP NEUTRAL	GOVERNMENT POSITIVE	GOVERNMENT NEGATIVE
ERDAL ŞAFAK	1	4	1	-	2
MEHMET TEZKAN	-	3	-	1	1
YAVUZ DONAT	4	-	1	1	-
NECATİ DOĞRU	-	1	1	-	-
ÖMER LÜTFİ METE	-	2	-	-	-
YAMAN TÖRÜNER	-	-	-	-	1
HINCAL ULUÇ	-	1	-	-	-
MURAT BİRSEL	1	-	1	-	-
ALİ KIRCA	-	-	-	-	1
EMİN ÖZGÖNÜL	-	-	-	-	1
ABDURRAHMAN YILDIRIM	-	2	-	-	-
OKAN MÜDERRİSOĞLU	-	-	-	-	1
EMRE AKÖZ	-	1	-	-	-

Table 9 – **2002 Election**, Sabah, Columnists and tones of articles

YENİ ŞAFAK	AKP POSITIVE	AKP NEG.	AKP NEUTRAL	GOVERNMENT POSITIVE	GOVERNMENT NEGATIVE
FEHMİ KORU	2	-	-	-	-
NAZLI ILICAK	2	-	-	-	-
CENGİZ ÇANDAR	4	-	-	-	-
ALİ BAYRAMOĞLU	1	-	-	-	-
TAHA KIVANÇ	1	-	-	-	-
MUSTAFA KARAALIOĞLU	1	-	-	-	-

Table 10– **2002 Election**, Yeni Şafak, Columnists and tones of articles

3.2.3. Evaluation

a) Evaluation of AKP coverage, 2002 General Election

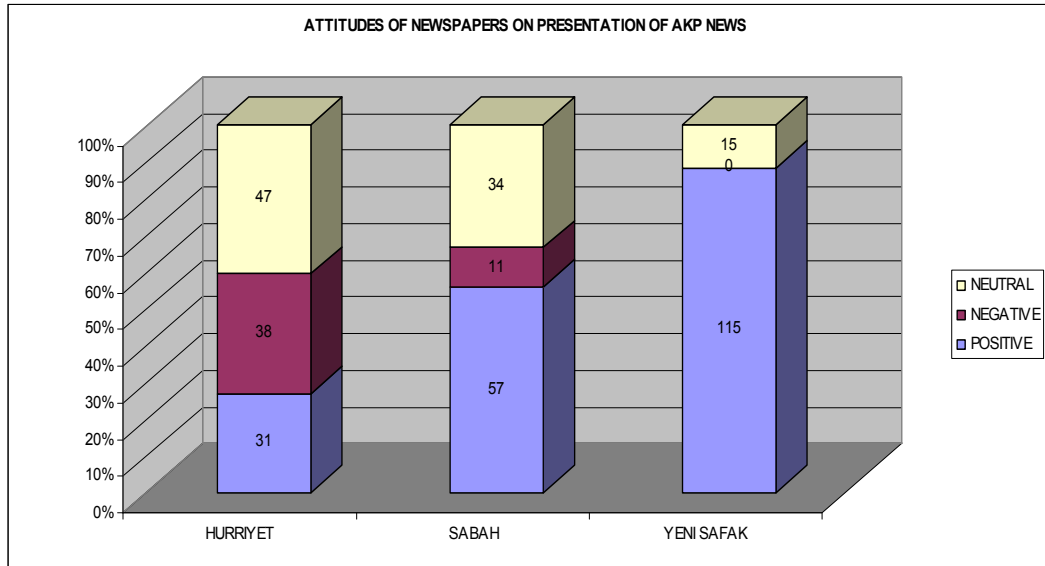


Figure 1 - **2002 Election**, AKP news tones of newspapers

As seen in Figure 2, in Hürriyet, the number of the news about AKP is approximately one third of all political news, which is 116 out of 330. Taking into account that there would be 18 political parties in general elections, it could be argued that the space allocated to one party, AKP is relatively very high in total. AKP not being the ruler party in that period makes that ratio even more significant. This shows us Hürriyet highlighted AKP as the prominent political party. So, Hürriyet treated AKP as the most important item of agenda. Having examined news texts, news heads, headlines, banner headlines together, 31 news in positive tone, 38 news in negative, and 47 news in neutral tone are determined as seen in Table 1 and Figure 1. The closeness of numbers of news in each tone could be explained by Hürriyet giving different points of view and trying to be at equal distance. In other words, Hürriyet does not put forward any extreme

dominant slant. This reminds us Entman's views on mainstream media "Mainstream news organizations contend that they treat competing frames equivalently, ensuring that their reports do not slant" (Entman, 2007, 165). Thus, the neutral toned news in Hurriyet are slightly higher than the others.

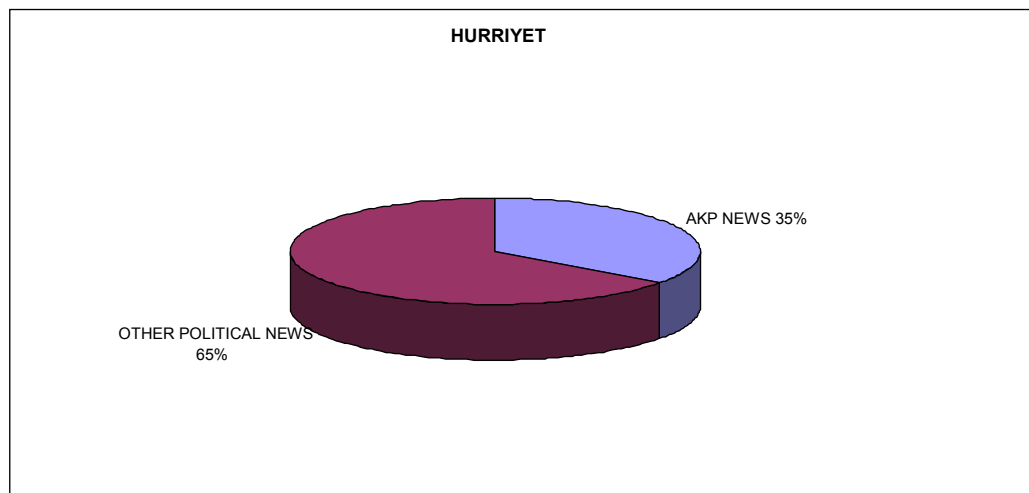


Figure 2 – **2002 Election**, Percentage of AKP and other political news in Hurriyet

Having examined news, news headlines, banner headlines on Sabah newspaper for the same period, it could be seen that there are more political news than on Hürriyet. There are 416 political news, both on front and inside pages of Sabah. 102 out of 416 news are about AKP as can be seen in Figure 3. Sabah deemed AKP as an important subject to be highlighted. Amongst AKP news, 57 are in positive tone, 11 are in negative tone and 34 are in neutral tone as seen in Table 1 and Figure 1. The news in positive tone are dominant, the neutral toned ones are relatively lower and negative ones are in third order. Drawing from these numerical findings, it could be argued that Sabah had positive attitude toward AKP before 2002 general elections.

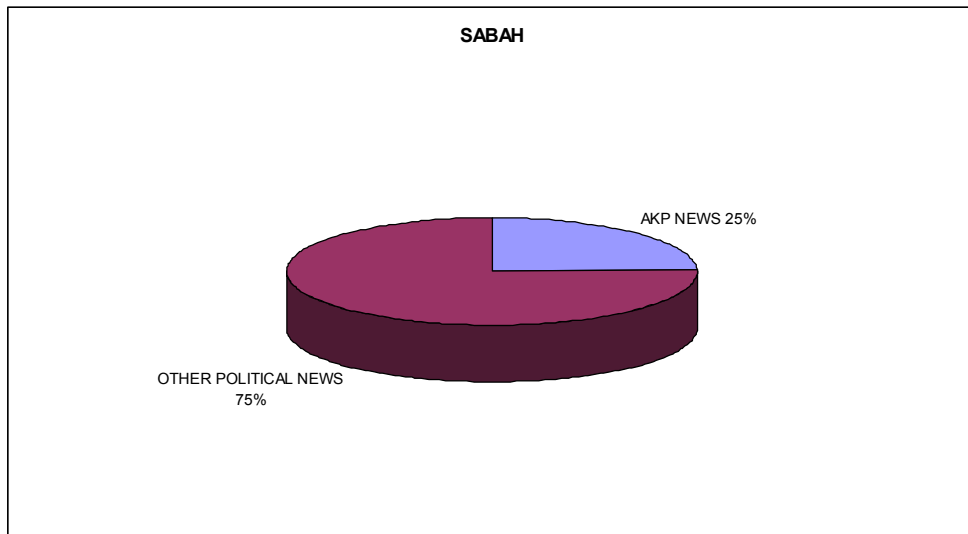


Figure 3 – **2002 Election**, Percentage of AKP and other political news in Sabah

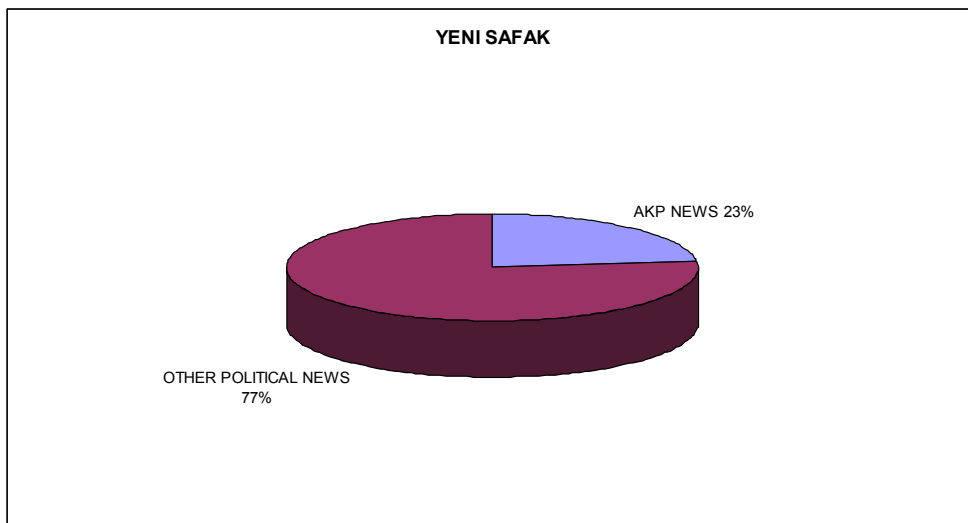


Figure 4 – **2002 Elections**, Percentage of AKP and other political news in Yeni Safak

Yeni Şafak newspaper published 562 political news in mentioned period. 130 of them are related to AKP as in Figure 4. While most of them, 115 are in positive tone, a few of them, 15 are in neutral tone, none of them

are in negative tone. All the statistical data and graphs clearly display that Yeni Safak is quite supportive to AKP and very positive in AKP news slant. Yeni Şafak treated AKP as the most important subject with one difference from the other newspapers; Yeni Şafak has the highest number of political news.

Examining these three newspapers (Sabah, Hürriyet, Yeni Şafak) in the period previous 2002 general elections showed that Hürriyet is the only newspaper which has more negative toned news compared to positive toned ones. At the same time Hürriyet is the newspaper with dominant number of neutral toned news about AKP. All of three newspapers highlighted AKP as an important subject of political agenda.

As Table 2 shows Yeni Şafak has the highest number of political news. This finding could make us think Yeni Şafak covered political agenda in great scale. However, when taking news texts and the space allocated to the news into account, it could be seen that the space allocated to the political news that are not about AKP is much narrower than the news about AKP. In addition to this, the number of political news in negative tone about the other parties is quite dominant. A striking point is that, Yeni Safak forms its discourse of the political news on other parties, in accordance with Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's point of view, judgments, evaluations, expressions embedded in his speeches. Yeni Şafak also covers quite an amount of news mentioning what type of positive developments will be under probable AKP rule, with headlines and banner headlines. More than being positive, all these show that Yeni Şafak is acting like a representative of AKP.

Bringing together the significant numbers and dominant slants; the highest number of political news was on Yeni Şafak and the most significant thing is newspaper has no negative toned news about AKP. Hurriyet leads the

percentage ratio of AKP news to total political news and the newspaper has neutral news dominant where the rest are well balanced. The statistical data shows that Sabah has mostly data of values in between these two newspapers. The most significant data about Sabah is, the newspaper has very few negative toned news about AKP compared to Hurriyet, and this negative tone seems to come out after Recep Tayyip Erdoğan starts speaking against ANAP leader Mesut Yılmaz.

The graphs and data on news with different tones were mentioning the general attitude, but the issues that are mostly focused in AKP news will reveal the news slant better;

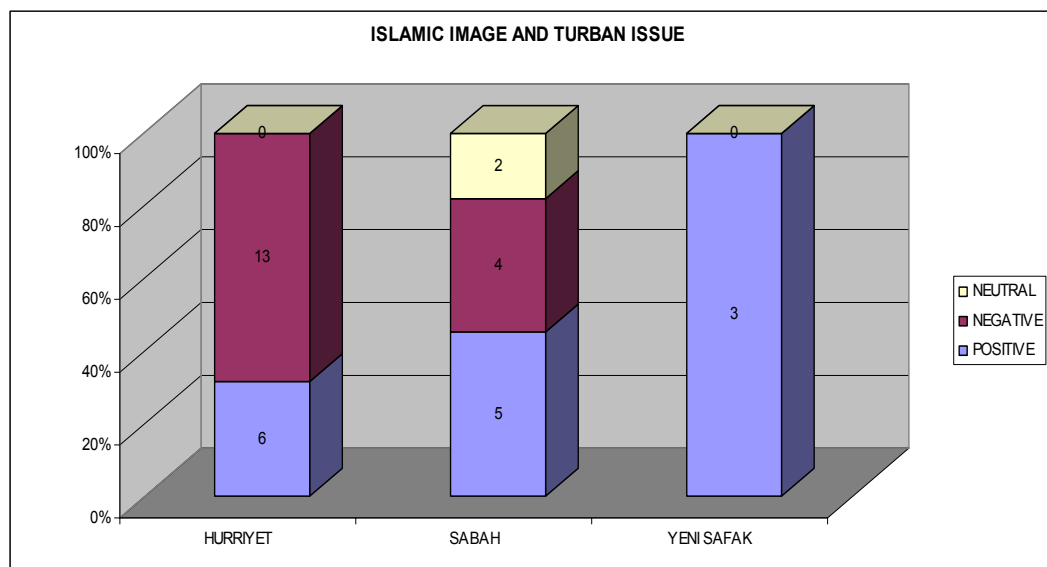


Figure 5 – **2002 Election**, Islamic Image and Turban Issue on the newspapers

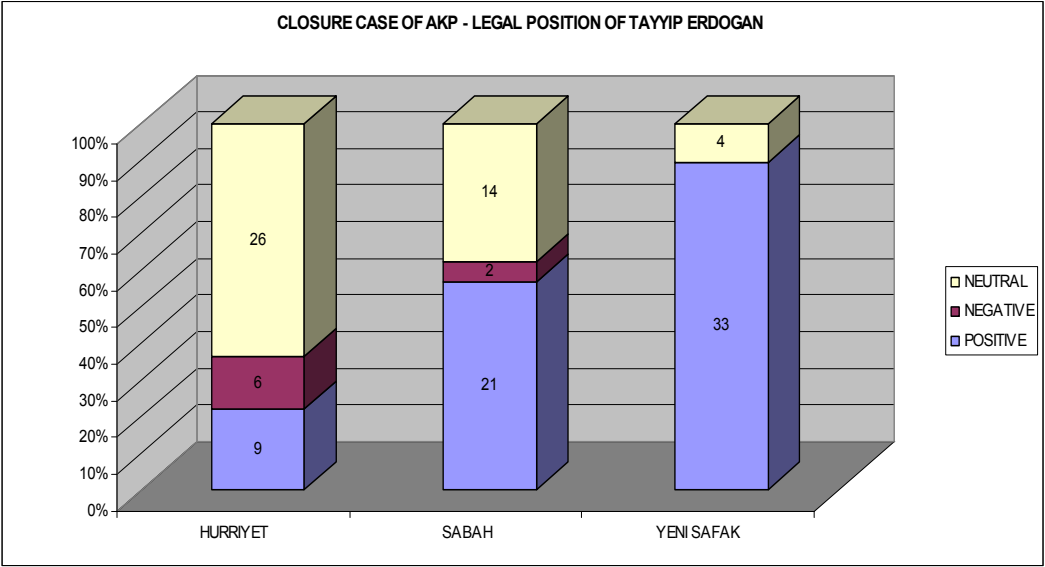


Figure 6 – **2002 Election**, Closure Case of AKP and Legal Position of Tayyip Erdoğan on the newspapers

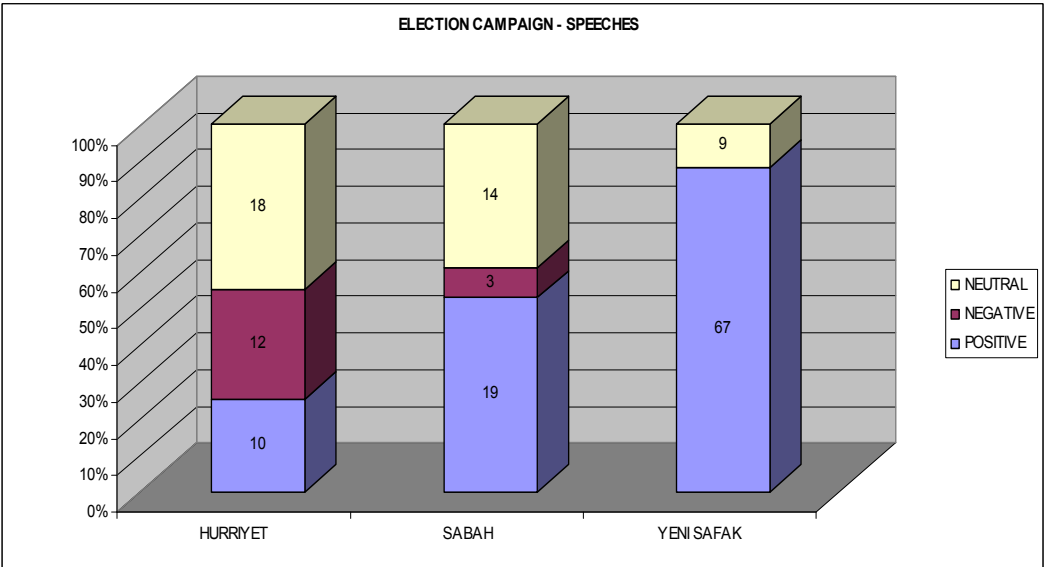


Figure 7 – **2002 Election**, Election Campaign and Speeches on the newspapers

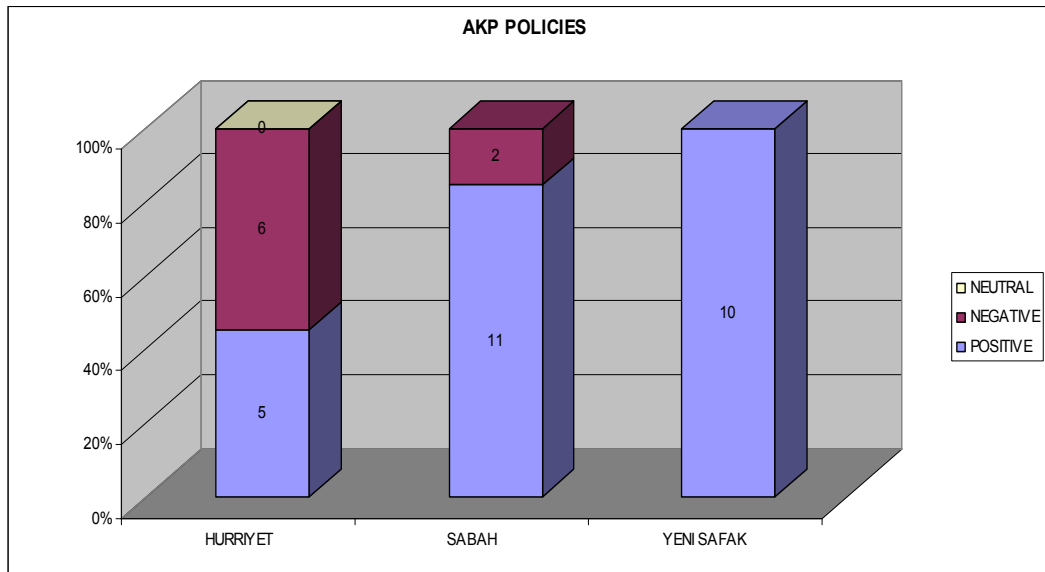


Figure 8 – **2002 Election**, AKP Policies on the newspapers

Hürriyet made 19 news on Islamic image and turban issue. 13 of them are in negative, 6 of them are in positive tones. (See Figure 5) A significant point is none of them are in neutral tone, It was observed that political news about AKP in Hurriyet are dominantly in neutral tone, so this new data shows Hurriyet's negative point of view on the specific issue. Hürriyet made 41 news on closure case and legal position of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, As seen from Figure 6, 26 of them are in neutral, 9 of them are in positive and 6 of them are in negative tone. Drawing from these numerical findings, it can be argued that Hürriyet adopted neutral attitude to closure case of AKP and legal position of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Hürriyet made 40 news about election campaigns, speeches and meetings, 10 of them are in positive, 12 of them are in negative and 18 of them are in neutral tone. (See Figure 7) Policy proposals of AKP have been at issue 13 times, 5 of them in positive, 6 of them in negative and 2 of them are in neutral tone. (See Figure 8) Again remembering the tones of all political news on AKP, it could be claimed that Hürriyet tends to adopt relatively balanced attitude; 31 positive, 38 negative and 47 neutral news of 116 political news about AKP. While %26 of them are in positive,

%32 of them are in negative and %40 of them are in neutral tone as stated before. (See Table 1, Figure 1). This means Hürriyet tended to maintain neutral attitude to AKP except for the Islamic Image and Turban issue, which it covers in strongly negative tone. Bringing together and evaluating the data, neutral image is combined with quite a dominant coverage amount in political news numbers, for a party that is not ruling. It can be argued that this attitude also supports AKP indirectly by highlighting their name.

Sabah's news coverage on Islamic image of AKP and turban issue consists of 11 news, 5 of them in positive, 4 of them in negative and 2 of them in neutral tone. Sabah has no certain attitude to Islamic image of AKP. Closure case of AKP and legal position is presented rather with positive tone. Out of 37 news about closure case, 21 in positive, 2 in negative and 14 in neutral tones. There are 36 news about election campaign and speeches related to AKP on Sabah, 19 of them are in positive, 3 of them in negative and 14 of them are in neutral tone. This means Sabah presents election meetings and speeches substantially in positive tone. It can be argued that Sabah tend to be rather positive than to be neutral in tone. There are 15 news on AKP's policy proposals, 11 of them are in positive, 2 of them are in negative and 2 of them are in neutral tone. According to these numerical data, Sabah treats AKP's policies predominantly positive in tone. Examining all political news published on Sabah in this period, it can be seen that Sabah substantially supports ANAP and Mesut Yılmaz. Besides, Sabah also presents issues about AKP in positive tone except for the conflicts between these two specific parties.

Yeni Şafak presents 130 political news about AKP out of 562 political news. %88.46 is in positive and %11.54 is in neutral, none of them in negative tones. Yeni Şafak presents every issue related to AKP in positive tone. There are 130 political news about AKP and only 15 of them are in

neutral tone. 9 of these neutral toned news are about election campaigns, speeches, 4 of them are about closure case and legal position of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan , 1 of them is about policies and 1 of them is about EU membership process. Other than giving the distribution of these neutral news, no further analysis is needed through previously defined issues as rest of all news are positive in attitude.

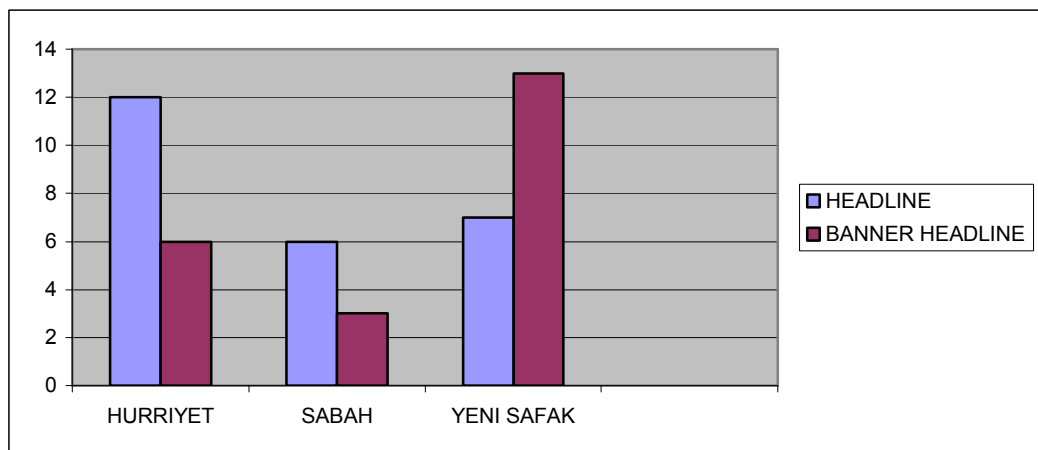


Figure 9 – **2002 Election**, Headline – Banner Headline distribution through newspapers

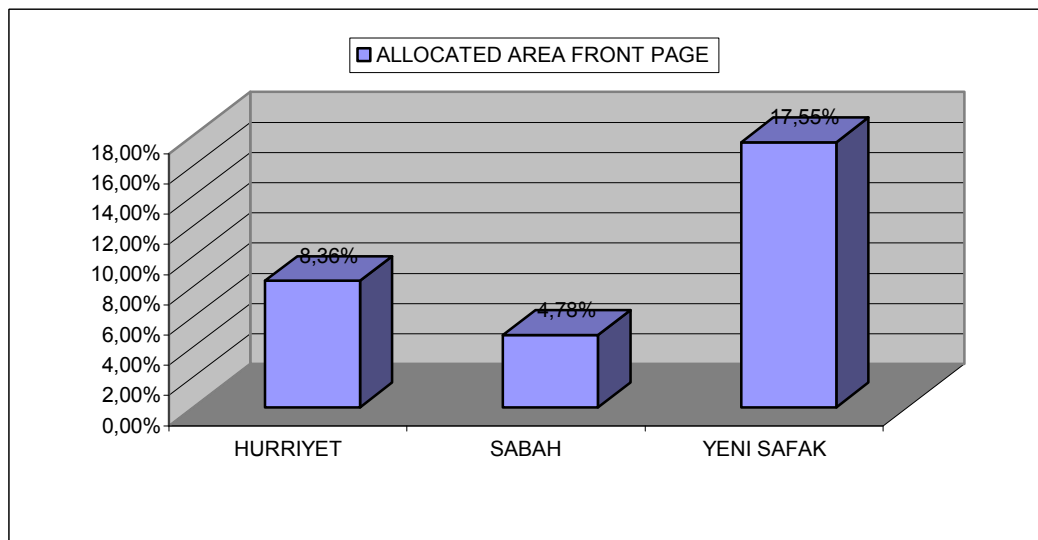


Figure 10 – **2002 Election**, Allocated space percentages on front page

As seen on Table 6, in 2002 September-October, average 154.5 square centimeters for political news about AKP has been allocated on Hürriyet front page which gives 8.4% of the front page by area. (See Figure 10) There are 12 headlines and 6 banner headlines about AKP. (See Figure 9) 6 of headlines are in negative tone, 4 of them are in positive and 2 of them are in neutral tone. 3 of headlines are related to 'policy proposals', 5 of them are related to election meetings and speeches news. 2 of them are related to Islamic image of AKP. 2 of them are related to legal position of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

As seen on Table 6, In 2002 September-October, average 88.6 square centimeters for political news about AKP has been allocated on Sabah front page. This gives 4.8% of the front page by area. There are 6 headlines and 3 banner headlines about AKP. While 7 of them are in positive tone, only 2 of them are in negative tone. There are no headlines or banner headlines in neutral tone. 3 headlines are related to 'legal position of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan' and in positive tone. There is one headline about each topic; 'policy proposals', 'Islamic image of AKP' and 'election speeches'. There are 3 banner headlines, 2 of them are in positive tone, 1 of them is in negative tone. While 1 of them is related to legal position of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 1 is related to policies of AKP, the other one is related to Islamic image of AKP. Of 6 headlines 3 are related to legal position of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and closure case of AKP, all of them are positive in tone. Taking banner headlines it can be seen that there is equal frequency between the issues. The reason why although Sabah provides mostly positive coverage to AKP, AKP has not been on front pages of Sabah compared to other newspapers is that Sabah's ANAP coverage is much more positive than AKP. Sabah predominantly gives more space, headlines and banner headlines to ANAP than AKP on the front pages.

As seen on Table 6, In 2002 September-October, average 324.8 square centimeters for political news about AKP has been allocated on Yeni Safak front page which gives 17.6% of the front page by area. There are 7 headlines and 13 banner headlines about AKP. 5 of headlines are related to legal position of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 1 of them is on election. 3 of 13 banner headlines are related to policies of AKP, 5 of them are related to legal position of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and 5 of them are on election meetings, speeches. All headlines and banner headlines are in positive tone. Headlines and banner headlines on AKP are predominantly about legal position of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and closure case of AKP.

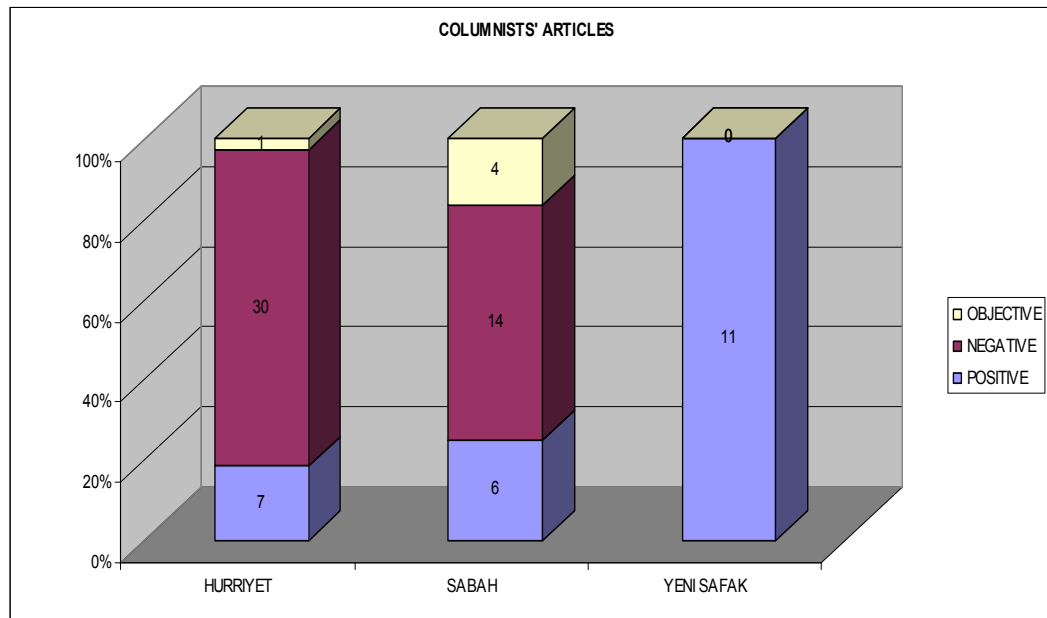


Figure 11 - **2002 Election**, The tones of articles about AKP

In Hurriyet, there are nine columnists taken into consideration with AKP articles in this research and one of them is the editor in chief. Ertuğrul Özkök is editor in chief of Hürriyet. In this period without sorting according to their writers, there were 30 articles in negative tone, 7 articles in positive and 1 article in neutral tone as seen in Table 7. It appears that Hürriyet columnists' AKP slant was mostly negative. In 2002 Hürriyet's AKP

editorial slant was much more negative than AKP news coverage. There were columnists whose almost every article were in negative tone.

Sabah's editorial slant was examined for dominant tones in articles of columnists and editorial in chief. According to Table 7 there were 14 articles in negative, 6 in positive and 4 in neutral tones on Sabah in the period. In comparison of editorial slant with news coverage slant on AKP, it could be argued that AKP news slant is more positive than AKP editorial slant. Percentage rate of articles in negative tone is much more than the news in negative tone. Editorial in chief, Erdal Şafak wrote 4 articles in negative, 1 article in positive and 1 article in neutral tones.

There were 11 articles related to AKP or Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on Yeni Şafak in the specific period. Yeni Şafak's both editorial slant and news slant are in positive tone. The most prominent thing is that Yeni Şafak columnists wrote about abstract and moral issues instead of AKP directly. They rather wrote on Islam and Islamic way of life in metaphorical way. This is why Yeni Şafak had relatively less articles about AKP.

b) News Coverage of Other Parties

A little inspection and brief information on news coverage of the three newspapers about other parties than AKP in the period before 2002 general election provides clues on main characteristics of their AKP news slant. This research does not contain detailed numerical data about political parties other than AKP, so for this brief information, mostly news titles will be used. The news used and sampled in this section with their titles had been critically analyzed.

Although Hürriyet meant to cover most of the political parties, it didn't allocate equal space to all political party news. Hürriyet predominantly

allocated most amount of space to the political parties which are strong candidates to rule. AKP and CHP were ranked as the first and the second parties in public opinion polls. CHP is the party dominantly appealing left wing votes with DSP, the biggest partner of the government. Other parties and political leaders Hürriyet covered are Çiller and DYP, one of the representative of centre-right wing, İsmail Cem who left CHP with some other members and formed YTP opposed to CHP, ANAP, small partner of the coalition government, SP and Erbakan.

Cross talks between CHP and AKP leaders are covered in election campaign news. Examining Hurriyet news headlines and news texts, there are some news about CHP in positive tone; like “Eğitimli Türkler CHP’ye Oy Verecek” “Educated Turkish People are to vote for CHP” on September 19, 2002. This is based on the news from Financial Times and is not located on front page, but presented on a large space in Hurriyet. Other examples of the positive news on CHP mostly use Baykal’s words for the heads: “Yargıdan Kaçmayan Bir Başbakan Seçin” “Vote for a president who does not avoid justice system” on October 13, 2002, “Dindar Adam Dokunulmazlık İstememeli” “Religious man shouldn’t demand parliamentary immunity” October 16, 2002, “Ak Değil Kara Parti” “Not white, but black party” on October 18, 2002, “Hukukla Çatışarak Siyaset Yapılmaz” “Can not do politics being in conflict with law” on October 24, 2002. DSP and Ecevit were covered in a comparatively positive tone in Hurriyet. SP was covered mostly in times they have problems with AKP. The negotiations between YTP and CHP were covered couple of times. The most covered statements of Çiller and Yılmaz were especially the ones about Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. It is observed that speeches of Çiller, Yılmaz, Bahçeli and Erbakan were mainly about Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and AKP. Sometimes CHP were the subject of criticism together with AKP. For example, Çiller’s speech news; “AKP’yle Koalisyon Yerine Tekrar Seçim” “Instead of coalition with AKP,

re-election” on October 4, 2002, “Erdoğan ve Baykal’a Korkak dedi” “She calls Erdoğan and Baykal as cowards” on October 18, 2002, the news on DYP’s web site “DYP: İmamlar AKP’ye Çalışıyor” “DYP: Imams serve AKP” on October, 19, 2002, Yılmaz’s speech news; “AKP ve CHP Çürük Merdiven” “AKP and CHP the rotten ladders” on October 13, 2002, “AKP İstismarcı, CHP Yasakçı” “ AKP, the exploiter, CHP, the prohibitor” on October 24, 2002.

Examining results gathered from numerical findings, Hürriyet had the highest number of news on AKP in negative tone compared to other newspapers, object of inquiry. As mentioned in previous sections Hurriyet is dominantly neutral toned in AKP news. In the light of these results, although this study did not gather numerical data about CHP or the other parties, it could be argued that Hürriyet maintains more positive attitude to CHP than AKP. The speeches about Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of both Çiller and Yılmaz were covered at most compared to their other speeches. Attitude of Hürriyet to ANAP and DYP could be defined as neutral. DSP was covered in more positive way than the other newspaper did. YTP is one of the political parties drawing attention as being the opposition camp separated from CHP. YTP was covered frequently about its negotiations with CHP on union.

Sabah mostly covered the political parties which are likely to be in rule after the election and the parties already are incumbent. So, there are political news about ANAP, DYP, YTP, MHP and DSP in addition to AKP. Examining the news, headlines and banner headlines on the front page and the news inside pages, it could be seen that Sabah is supportive to ANAP, ANAP’s policies and incumbent deputy prime minister and chairman of the party Mesut Yılmaz’s practices about European Union membership process at most. The news headline reveals the attitude of Sabah to Mesut Yılmaz: “Bir Anadolu Bir Brüksel: Aynı Onurlu Duruş”,

“Anatolia, Brussels: Same Honorable Stand” on October 4, 2002. Mesut Yılmaz’s statements are given as headlines and banner headlines on the front page predominantly in this period: “Yılmaz: AKP ve CHP Balonlarını Patlatın”, “Yılmaz: Blow the AKP and CHP balloon.” headline on October 7, 2002, “Avrupa İçin Namus Sözü”, “Word of Honor for Europa” banner headline, on October 9, 2002. Although ANAP is one of the partners of the three party coalition government, receives more positive treatment than the other partners of the coalition, MHP and DSP. In addition Government practices were criticized in inside pages. While DYP leader Çiller’s statements are reported in neutral way ANAP leader Mesut Yılmaz’s statements are given in much more positive way. AKP leader Erdoğan’s statements are also reported in more positive way than the other parties’ leaders’ except ANAP’s leader. AKP leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is called sometimes as ‘Tayyip’ and sometimes as ‘Erdoğan’. This received much attention due to the fact that it is the first time a political leader is called by his forename instead of his surname. This has been seemed as a remark of slandering. However there can be several reasons for calling Recep Tayyip Erdoğan by his forename; his age, his way of speaking, his terminology, and the words he has preferred. In addition, when the headlines, banner headlines and news texts are examined together it can be seen that the headlines including ‘Tayyip’ could be in positive tone. Like “Tayyip’i Yakan Zirve”, “Damaging Summit for Tayyip” on September 18, 2002, “ Tayyip’e ağır ceza”, “Severe Punishment for Tayyip” on September 19, 2002.

Sabah adjusts its attitude to any party and leader by considering the attitudes of that parties’ to ANAP and ANAP’s leader. At the beginning of the period, Sabah calls Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as Erdoğan and reports Erdoğan’s statements and events about AKP in more positive way until Erdoğan flays Mesut Yılmaz for his practices. The speeches of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan criticized Mesut Yılmaz were presented as “Tayyip:

Ümüğünü Sıkırız”, “Tayyip: We strangle” October 16, 2002. News story also exhibits negative tone: “Another unbounded speech from AKP leader Erdoğan” Another example of AKP news in negative tone is presented in the first page; “Hangisi Doğru Tayyip Bey?”, “Sir Tayyip, which one is true?” with sub-head, “AKP İçeride Yerli Dışarıda Global” “AKP pretends to be a local in Turkey and looks global to the world” on October 17, 2002. Then, Sabah begins to call Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as ‘Tayyip’ more frequently. In time, Sabah recovers its earlier positive attitude to AKP and Erdoğan. MHP leader Bahçeli also was covered in negative tone as long as he criticized Mesut Yılmaz. The news on Bahçeli’s speech is given in negative tone: “Yılmaz’a: Siyasi Hayatın biter.” , “He said Yılmaz: your political life will finish” with sub-head, “Bahçeli’den Diyarbakır’a Ambargo”, “The embargo from Bahçeli to Diyarbakır” on October 16, 2002. Reporter makes comment on Bahçeli’s speech in negative tone.

Sabah generally reported government’s practices in negative manner in this period. “ Evet! Devlete Elektriği Pahalı Satıyoruz” “Yes! We Sell Electricity to State more expensive” , on September 19, 2002, “Yaşlısı, genci, ninesi, çocuklusu... Memurlar sokakta hak arıyor”, “Whether old or young, grandma or parents...Civil servants seek justice on the streets” on September 1, 2002.

Yeni Şafak is the newspaper which published political news in the highest number 562 while the number of political news on Sabah is 416, on Hürriyet is 330. 130 out of 562 are related to AKP, while 102 out of 416 and 116 out of 330 are related to AKP. Having a large number of political news on Yeni Şafak could be perceived that Yeni Şafak covered actions of almost every political actor, party, party leader active in that time. However, when news text, spaces allocated to political parties, headlines and banner headlines are examined together, it could be seen that Yeni Şafak is predominantly supportive to AKP and its

leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. There are political news about government parties and practices in negative manner. Yeni Şafak also adjusts its discourse and slant considering the relation between other parties and AKP. There are many political news about all political parties joining general elections although the spaces allocated to them are much smaller than AKP's in total. Yeni Şafak's coverage of the other parties is generally in neutral tone except CHP which is seen the biggest rival of AKP. CHP news comes the second for allocation of space in the newspaper after AKP. Yeni Şafak covered CHP in negative tone, as an example especially by presenting Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's speeches about CHP: "CHP'nin Neresi Temiz" (on front page) "What is clean about CHP" " "Erdoğan: Biz Sosyal Demokratları Tanırız" (inside page) Erdoğan: We know Social Democrats" on October 14, 2002. "Sosyal Demokratlar Taş Üstüne Taş Koymadı", "Social Democrats did not perform any considerable action" on October 19, 2002. AKP is much more better than CHP for government "Ya İSKİ li CHP ya Tayyip'li İstanbul" "Either CHP with İSKİ or İstanbul with Tayyip" on October 20, 2002.

3.3. 2007 General Election Analysis

3.3.1. Historical Background of 2007 Election Period

The debates on Presidency Elections, proposal of amendment in provisions of Constitution related to Presidency Elections, increasing terrorist attacks marked the period before 2007 General Elections. These issues were prominent in the election campaigns and speeches of political leaders. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has mostly been charged by failing against terror.

In April 24, 2007, at his party group meeting, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan declared he would nominate Abdullah Gül as a President

candidate. Afterwards, Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Gül appealed Presidency of TBMM (Grand National Assembly of Turkey) for presidential candidacy. In the same day, Assembly Committee Council determined the dates of election rounds, accordingly, first round would be on April 27, second round on May 2, third round on May 9 and fourth round on May 19 if necessary.

In first round, April 27, presidency candidate Abdullah Gül received 357 votes from deputies and could not reach 367 votes that the Constitution demands for being the President. TBMM President Bülent Arınç declared that 361 deputies joined the vote. CHP opened a case to Constitutional Court claiming that quorum was 367 and the meeting did not reach quorum requiring cancellation of first round and issue of stay order. In the same day, Military General Staff published a declaration on its web site, for the evaluations related to Presidency Election. This declaration mentioned: "In the process of Presidency Election prominent problem is focused on secularism. It mustn't be forgotten that Turkish Military Forces is a side of this discussion and defender of secularism." This declaration also criticized the alternative greetings to National Commemorations and added, "Some who acts like that exploit peoples' religious emotions. This is challenging the state." The declaration also pointed out that "To sum up everybody who are contrary to the Great Leader Atatürk's approach 'What a happiness to say I am Turkish' are rivals of Turkish Republic and will stay the same. Turkish Military Force is determinant to maintain this order and would not avoid using authority suggested to itself by the law". In April 28, Spokesman of the government Cemil Çiçek said "The declaration of Military General Staff is perceived as an attitude against government. It couldn't be accepted in democratic, constitutional state that such an organ subjected to Prime Ministry used expressions against government. Cemil Çiçek also added, "According to Constitution, Military General Staff is responsible for Prime Ministry on account of its duties and authority. "

In May 1, Constitutional Court decided to the issue of stay order and cancellation of first round vote on the grounds that it is against the constitution basing on not having the quorum of 367. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan defined this decision as a bullet fired to democracy.

In, May 3, AKP presented General Assembly of the Parliament a proposal for an amendment in Constitution. This amendment suggested general elections to be in every four years, President to be elected by public election in every five years, and the quorum for all meetings in TBMM to be 184. In June 19, CHP opened the case to Constitutional court demanding the cancellation of amendment in Constitution on the grounds that mentioned law had formal defects.

In, May, 6, First round of presidential vote was repeated; required number of 367 deputies for quorum wasn't gathered. Abdullah Gül declared that he withdrew his candidature.

In July 5, 2007 Constitutional Court denied both President Sezer's and CHP's applications demanding cancellation of amendments in Constitution.

According to General Elections in July 22, 2007, AKP gained 341 deputies by %48,58 of votes, CHP gained 112 deputies by %20,33 of votes, MHP gained 71 deputies by %14,27 of votes and independent candidates gained 26 deputies. Some of independent deputies founded a group in the parliament joining DTP afterwards.

In August 14, 2007 Gül declared that he is going to be a presidency candidate again. In the first round vote at 20th of August, presidency

candidates could not receive enough vote (367) suggested by the Constitution. By the third round vote in August 28, 2007, Kayseri deputy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Vice Prime Minister Abdullah Gül received 339 votes out of 448 deputies and elected as 11th President of the Turkish Republic. In August 29, 2007 Recep Tayyip Erdoğan formed 60th Government and presented to new President Abdullah Gül's approval.

By the referendum in October 21, 2007, the amendment in the Constitution was accepted by %68.95 affirmative votes, suggests general elections will be every four years, President will be elected by public elections in every five years, and the quorum for all meetings in TBMM would be 184. .

3.3.2. Findings

a) Distribution of News in Positive, Negative and Neutral Tones

	POSITIVE NEWS (AKP)	NEGATIVE NEWS (AKP)	NEUTRAL NEWS (AKP)	TOTAL NEWS (AKP)
HURRIYET	56 (%65.1)	8 (%9.3)	22 (%25.6)	86
SABAH	77 (%80.2)	0 (%0)	19 (%19.8)	96
YENI SAFAK	108 (%97.3)	0 (%0)	3 (%2.7)	111
TOTAL	241	8	44	293

Table 11. **2007 Election**, June – July 2007, AKP news tones of newspapers

The newspapers had all their specific tones forming the news slant for AKP. For to reveal this attitudes, the statistical data showing the distribution of news with their tones are given in Table 11. Other than the tones used by the newspapers, the amount of news covered for AKP is another clue for reaching a solid result in this research. In Table 12, the figures show the total political news and AKP news, with their ratio in that specific newspaper.

	TOTAL NEWS ABOUT AKP	TOTAL POLITICAL NEWS	RATIO
HURRIYET	86	227	37.9%
SABAH	96	229	41.9%
YENI SAFAK	111	189	58.7%

Table 12 – **2007 Election**, June – July 2007, Comparison of total political news and AKP news

b) Main Issues in AKP News

In every election period, there are some major issues highlighted by newspapers on agenda. When the news about a specific party is examined, some of the topics dominate the coverage. Political parties and leaders are covered associated to specific issues. Sometimes these issues are chosen by politicians, sometimes by newspapers' editors. For the period before 2007 elections, Presidential elections were the most important issue. Islamic image of AKP and turban issue was not very popular compared to 2002 Elections. The election campaign and the party policy proposals are always important for the news coverage. So these four categories are shown with the distribution of toning referred for each newspaper in following Tables 13, 14, and 15.

HURRIYET	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	OBJECTIVE	(TOTAL)
ISLAMIC IMAGE OF AKP, TURBAN ISSUE	3	-	1	4
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION	10	1	4	15
ELECTION CAMPAIGN, SPEECHES	33	6	17	56
POLICY PROPOSALS	10	1	-	11

Table 13– **2007 Election**, June – July 2007, Hurriyet, The distribution of main issues about AKP

SABAH	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	OBJECTIVE	(TOTAL)
ISLAMIC IMAGE OF AKP, TURBAN ISSUE	2	-	-	2
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION	7	-	2	9
ELECTION CAMPAIGN, SPEECHES	52	-	11	63
POLICY PROPOSALS	16	-	6	22

Table 14 – **2007 Election**, June – July 2007, Sabah, The distribution of main issues about AKP

YENI SAFAK	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	OBJECTIVE	(TOTAL)
ISLAMIC IMAGE OF AKP, TURBAN ISSUE	0	-	-	0
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION	15	-	-	15
ELECTION CAMPAIGN, SPEECHES	85	-	2	87
POLICY PROPOSALS	8	-	1	9

Table 15 – **2007 Election**, June – July 2007, Yeni Safak, The distribution of main issues about AKP

c) The Place Allocated to AKP on Front Pages

	Allocated Space Front Page (%)	Allocated Space Front Page (cm ²)	News about AKP HEADLINES	News about AKP BANNER HEADLINES
HURRIYET	2.7 %	50.7	4	0
SABAH	8.1 %	111.7	7	0
YENI SAFAK	9.4 %	173.5	4	5

Table 16 - **2007 Election**, June – July 2007, the space allocated to AKP on front page

The newspapers present important issues in the front pages and according to their importance they use either headlines or banner headlines. In period before 2007 General Elections, Hurriyet, Sabah and Yeni Şafak were examined and numerical data for their front page has been given in Table 16. This table shows the allocated average area in square centimeters and the proportion of the AKP news space to total page. Headlines and Banner headlines on the front page is counted and also listed in Table 16.

d) The Columnists

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	OBJECTIVE	(TOTAL)
HURRIYET	8	47	2	57
SABAH	21	5	3	29
YENI SAFAK	24	0	0	24

Table 17 - **2007 Election**, The tones of articles about AKP

Columnists' articles and newspapers' editorials on AKP or Recep Tayyip Erdoğan have been examined to reveal their tones. The main reason to include columnists' articles and editorials in the scope of analysis is the assumption that there might be implications of editorial stance of the newspaper for news coverage. Although editorial department and news department are distinct in newspapers, there might be similarities between editorial stance and tones of news. Table 17 shows the distribution of tones in articles in three newspapers.

Table 18, 19 and 20 shows the detailed list of columnists, number of articles they had and the tones they use in their articles.

HURRIYET	AKP POSITIVE	AKP NEGATIVE	AKP NEUTRAL
ERTUĞRUL ÖZKÖK	5	-	-
MEHMET Y.YILMAZ	-	4	2
EMİN ÇÖLAŞAN	-	10	-
BEKİR COŞKUN	-	5	-
OKTAY EKŞİ	-	2	-
YALÇIN BAYER	-	5	-
TUFAN TÜRENÇ	-	4	-
ERDAL SAĞLAM	-	3	-
YALÇIN DOĞAN	-	2	-
ÖZDEMİR İNCE	-	6	-
CÜNEYT ÜLSEVER	2	4	-
ŞÜKRÜ KÜÇÜKŞAHİN	1	-	-
ŞÜKRÜ KIZILOT	-	1	-
RAHMİ TURAN	-	1	-

Table 18 – **2007 Election**, Hurriyet, Columnists and tones of articles

SABAH	AKP POSITIVE	AKP NEGATIVE	AKP NEUTRAL
ERDAL ŞAFAK	-	-	2
AYDIN AYAYDIN	4	-	-
ERGUN BABAHAN	4	-	-
HINCAL ULUÇ	-	-	-
ASLI AYDINTAŞBAŞ	3	-	-
MUHARREM SARIKAYA	2	-	-
HASAN BÜLENT KAHRAMAN	1	-	1
YILMAZ ÖZDİL	-	5	-
MAHMUT ÖVÜR	-	-	-
YAVUZ DONAT	2	-	-
ŞELELE KADAK	2	-	-
ABDURRAHMAN YILDIRIM	1	-	-
BALÇİÇEK PAMİR	1	-	-
UMUR TALU	1	-	-

Table 19 – **2007 Election**, Sabah, Columnists and tones of articles

YENİ SAFAK	AKP POSITIVE	AKP NEGATIVE	AKP NEUTRAL
FEHMİ KORU	9	-	-
TAHA KIVANÇ	1	-	-
ALİ BAYRAMOĞLU	2	-	-
KÜRŞAT BUMİN	2	-	-
YASİN DOĞAN	2	-	-
ÖZLEM ALBAYRAK	1	-	-
HAKAN ALBAYRAK	2	-	-
HAYRETTİN KAHRAMAN	1	-	-
MELİKŞAH UTKU	1	-	-
FİKRİ AKYÜZ	1	-	-
MEHMET ŞEKER	1	-	-
AKİF EMRE	1	-	-

Table 20 – **2007 Election**, Yeni Şafak, Columnists and tones of articles

2.3.3. Evaluation

a) Evaluation of AKP Coverage, 2007 General Election

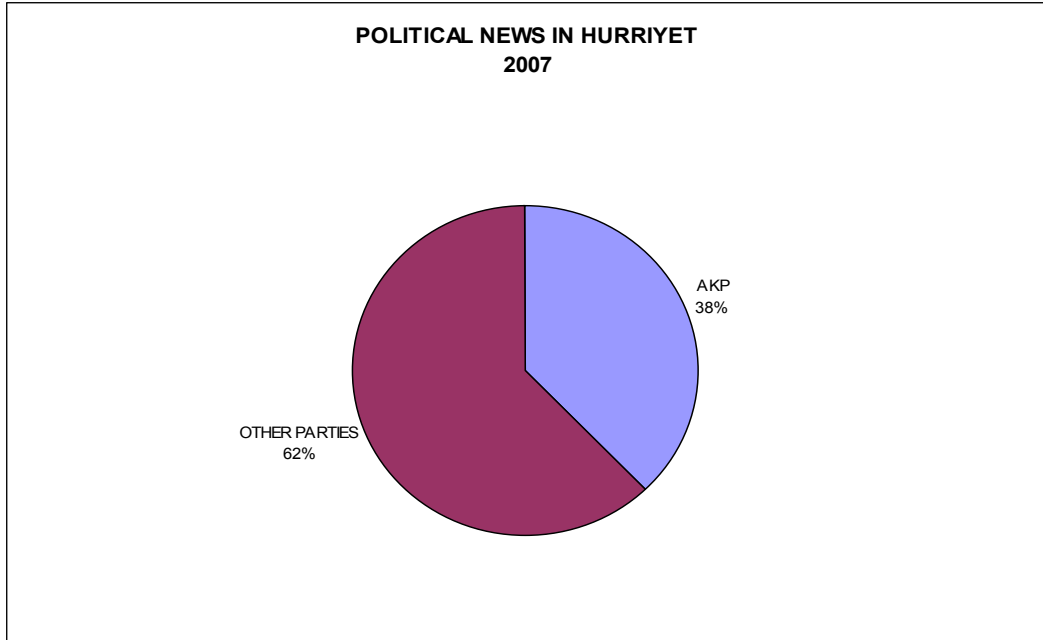


Figure 12 – **2007 Elections**, Percentage of AKP and other political news in Hurriyet

As seen on Figure 12, in the two months period before 2007 General Elections, Hürriyet published 227 political news and 86 of them are covering AKP. Although AKP is the ruling party, this ratio is quite high. This data by itself shows that Hurriyet is quite keen on presenting AKP news. In other words, like the other newspapers, there is a dramatic decrease in the number of political news, and increase in the number of political news on AKP.

Having examined news text, for all the 86 AKP news in Hurriyet 56 news are positive, 8 news are negative and 22 news are determined in neutral tone as seen in Figure 13. These ratios show the clear attitude of the newspaper as it can be seen from political news ratios in Figure 12. The

combined data shows the same attitude, Hurriyet is mostly making news about AKP, and dominantly these news tend to be in a positive tone.

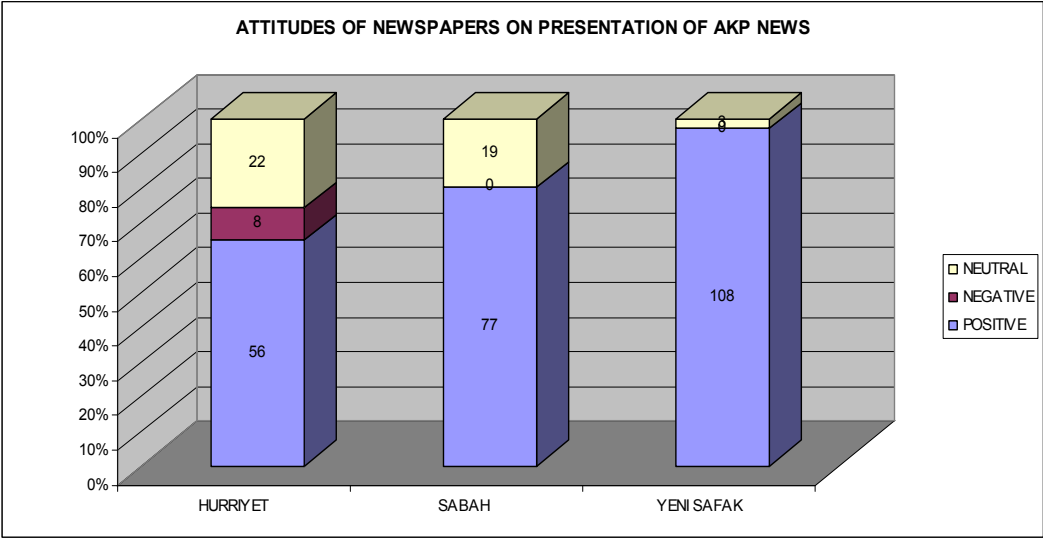


Figure 13 - 2007 Election, AKP news tones of newspapers

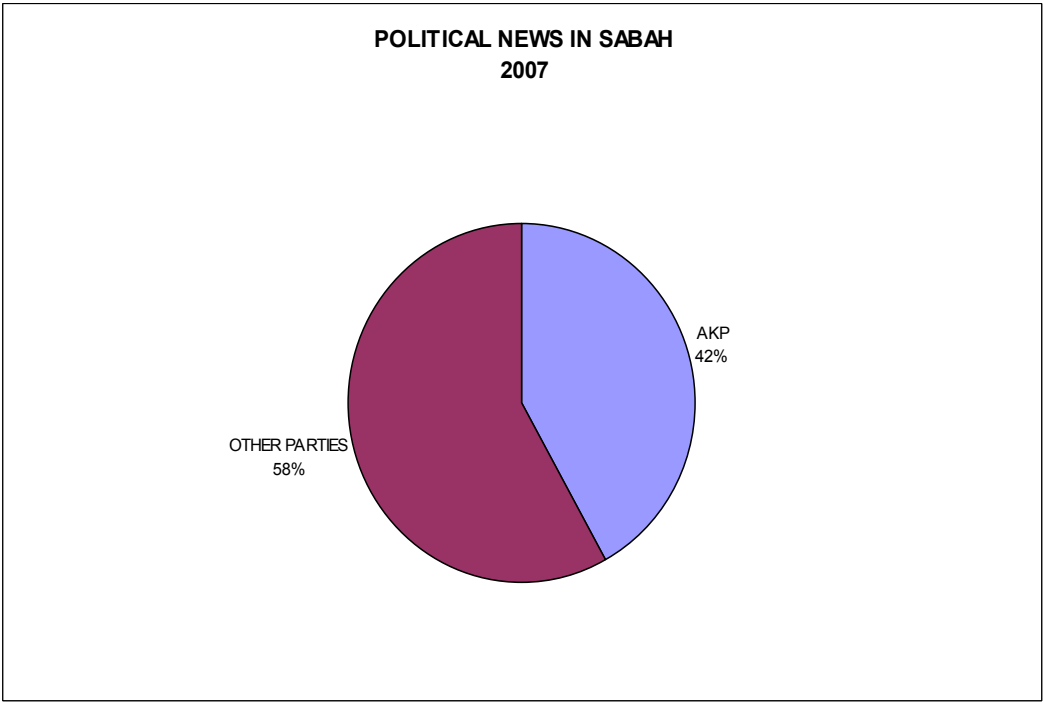


Figure 14 – 2007 Election, Percentage of AKP and other political news in Sabah

Sabah published 229 political news in the period before 2007 General Elections. 96 out of 229 were related to AKP as seen in Figure 14. Almost half of the all political news are related to AKP, These statistical data and the ratio is not much different from Hurriyet's values, so both newspapers are dominantly making news about AKP in such a ratio that it can not be explained only by being the ruling party.

When Figure 13 is examined, it clearly shows the dominant positive toned news of Sabah. Having examined news text, news head, 77 of them are positive; none of them are negative and only 19 of them are in neutral tone. The number of the news in neutral tone on AKP is almost one fifth of the number of total political news on AKP and no negative news at all. This is quite a significant attitude by the newspaper in supporting AKP.

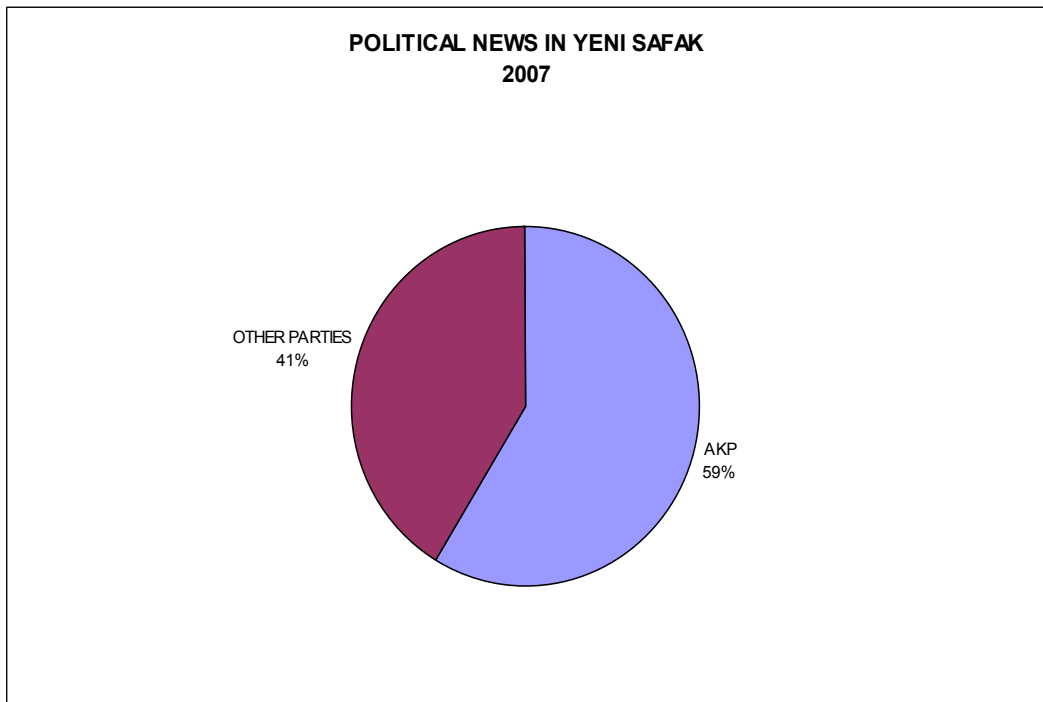


Figure 15 – **2007 Election**, Percentage of AKP and other political news in Yeni Şafak

The numerical figures for Yeni Şafak about the ratio of political news to AKP news is quite the same with the data of Sabah and Hurriyet. Every two news out of five belongs to AKP and again the same result; this ratio is quite high even for the news about a ruling party. Especially when this data is analyzed together with the data from Figure 13, the picture is quite clear; in the period before 2007 General Elections, 108 AKP news out of 111 are in positive tones and only 3 are neutral. This table is even stronger than Sabah comparing the positive toned news ratios. Yeni Şafak is very strongly highlighting the party with the number of AKP news and also supporting them with the very dominant number of positive toned AKP news. By looking all these numbers, it can be easily argued if Yeni Şafak is acting like a press organ for AKP.

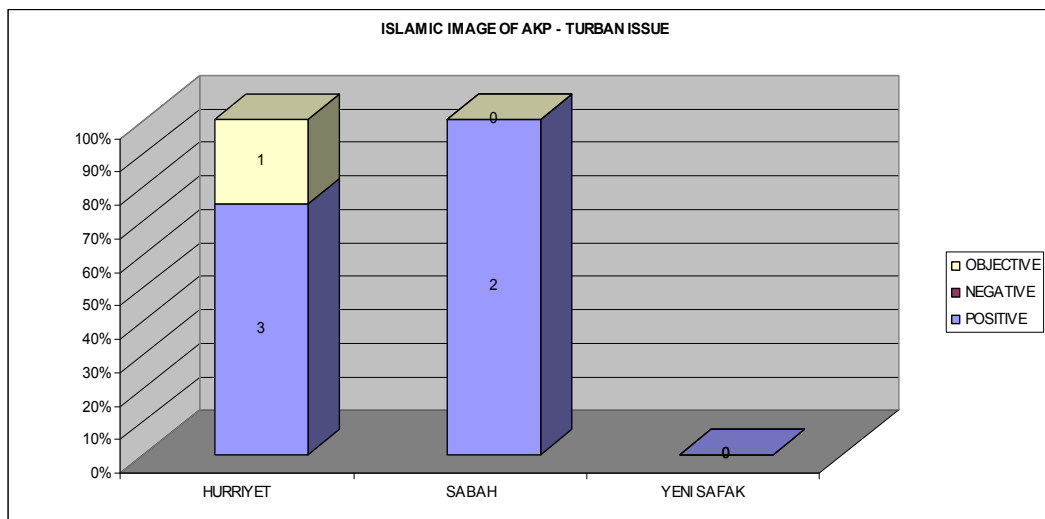


Figure 16 – **2007 Election**, Islamic Image and Turban Issue on the newspapers

There are some certain issues unique to the period mentioned and also some certain issues which are touched upon in both 2002 and 2007 periods. The main issues newspapers paid attention to in the period before 2007 General Elections were; Islamic image of AKP and turban

issue, Presidential Election, election campaign, speeches and AKP's policies. All three newspapers mostly covered the news about election campaign and speeches of AKP among other subject headings. Hürriyet and Sabah also were interested in election campaigns' of CHP, MHP and DYP, but when numerical figures are combined, it is very clear that this interest in other parties is very low compared to the interest in AKP. Media mostly ignored activities and policies of all political parties which would join 2007 General Elections other than AKP and couple other parties with high vote possibility.

Islamic image of AKP and turban issue have been disputable issues since 2002. These issues sometimes were mentioned together with the discussions on whether AKP is a centre party or not, AKP has changed or not. Having examined the AKP political news according to issues; Hürriyet made 4 news about Islamic Image of AKP and Turban issue, 3 of them are in positive, 1 of them is in neutral tone, none of them is in negative tone. It could be argued that Hürriyet was not interested in Islamic image of AKP and turban issue anymore. A few news on Hürriyet about this issue are predominantly positive toned. There were 15 news on presidential election, 10 of them in positive, 4 of them in neutral and only 1 of them are in negative tones. It could be said that Hürriyet adopted more positive attitude in the presidential elections in favor of AKP. Out of 56 news on AKP election campaign and speeches of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 33 of them in positive, 17 of them in neutral and only 6 of them are in negative tones. Hürriyet made 11 news on AKP's policies, 10 of them in positive and 1 of them are in negative tones. Concluding from these numerical data, it could be argued that Hürriyet mentioned AKP's policies mostly in positive way. Besides, Hürriyet could not adopt even neutral attitude to AKP's policies issue.

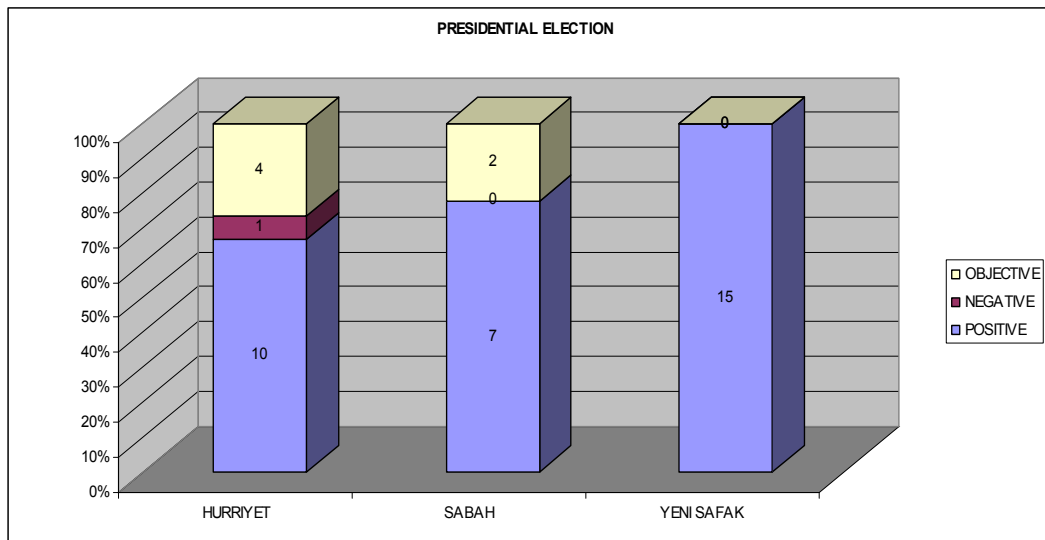


Figure 17 – **2007 Election**, Presidential Elections on the newspapers

This collected data should be evaluated considering TMSF seizing Sabah in April, 2007. The radical change in media ownership no doubt affected news coverage both in quantity and quality. Sabah presents 96 political news on AKP and 229 political news in total. Having examined the AKP political news according to issues; Sabah made only 2 news on Islamic image of AKP and turban issue and both were in positive tone. It could be argued that Sabah did not treat Islamic image of AKP and turban issue as important issues. The number of Sabah’s news on presidential election is 9. 7 of the news on presidential election are in positive and only 2 of them are in neutral tones. These numbers could make us think Sabah did not pay enough attention to presidential elections, which is actually quite an important issue for Turkey. However, this conclusion would totally be wrong, because this issue is mostly touched upon in the news on election campaigns of AKP and Sabah preferred to present the presidential issue through AKP’s words in the election campaign.. Sabah made 63 election campaign and speeches news, 52 of them in positive and 11 of them are in neutral tones. Drawing from these numerical data, it could be concluded that Sabah adopted predominantly positive attitude to AKP’s election

campaigns and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's speeches hence AKP. There were 22 news on AKP's policies on Sabah, 16 of them in positive and 6 of them are in neutral tones, none of them is in negative tone. This numerical data also supports previous evaluations on Sabah's AKP news slant, which is dominantly positive before 2007 General Elections.

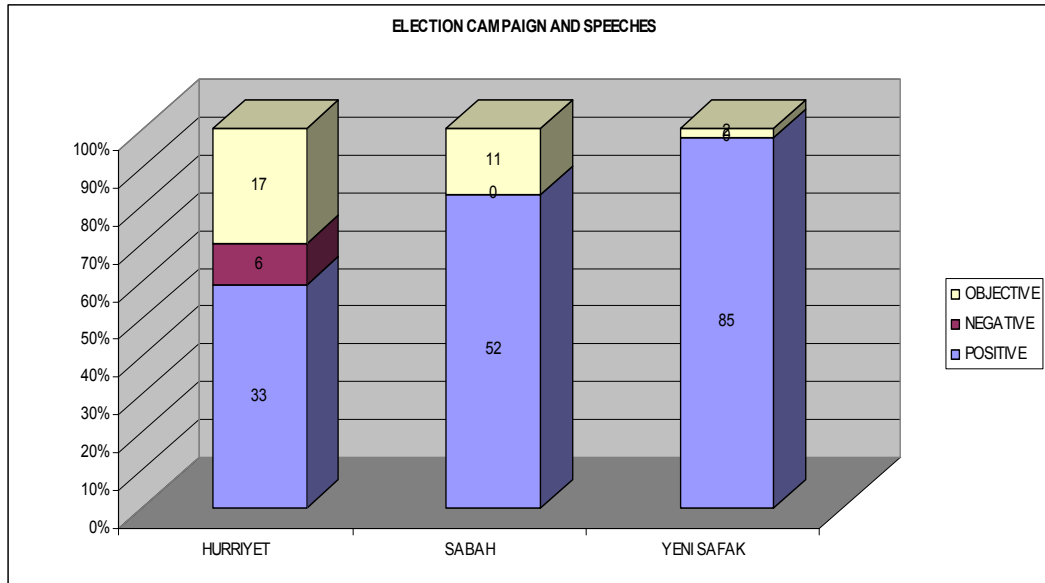


Figure 18 – **2007 Election**, Election campaign and speeches on the newspapers

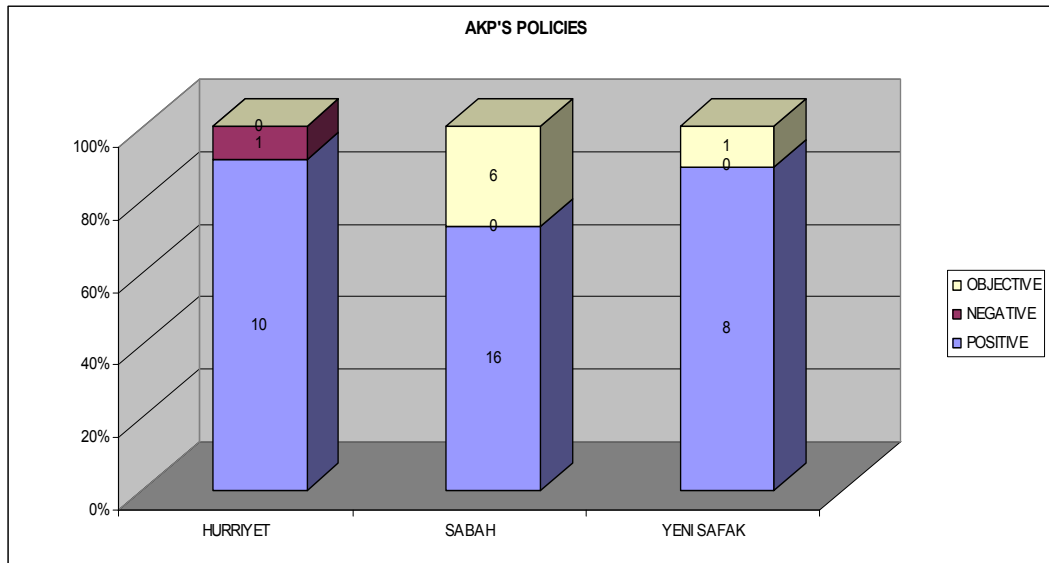


Figure 19 – **2007 Election**, AKP policies on the newspapers

Yeni Şafak presented 189 political news, 111 of these political news were related to AKP. Islamic image of AKP or turban issue has not been even mentioned in any news. Presidential election was covered by Yeni Şafak with 15 news, all of them are in positive tone. Most of the political news about AKP were about election campaign of AKP and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's speeches. The number of the news on election campaigns and speeches were 87 and 85 of them are in positive and only 2 of them are in neutral tones. As it can be seen, Yeni Şafak did not devote space to any negative toned news on AKP. These data also supports the numerical figures given in this section before; Yeni Şafak is covering AKP in an extreme supportive way.

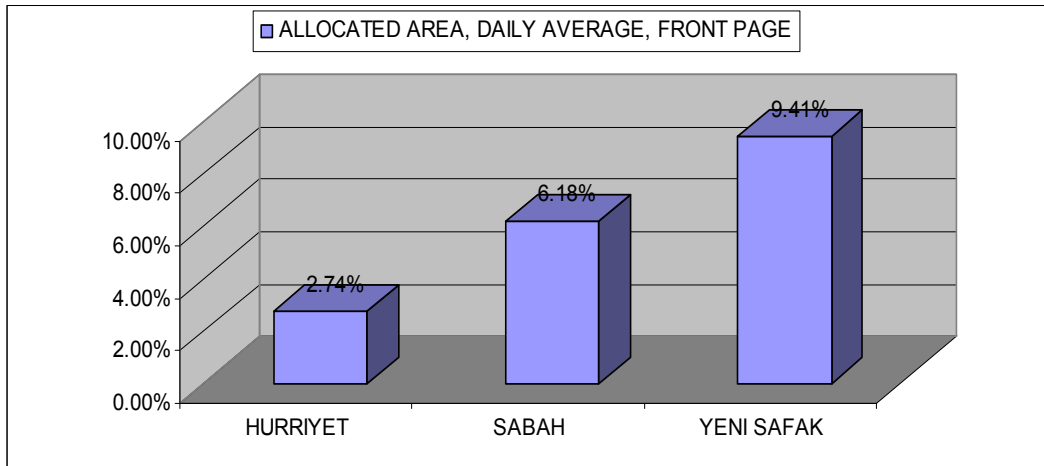


Figure 20 – **2007 Election**, Allocated space percentages on front page

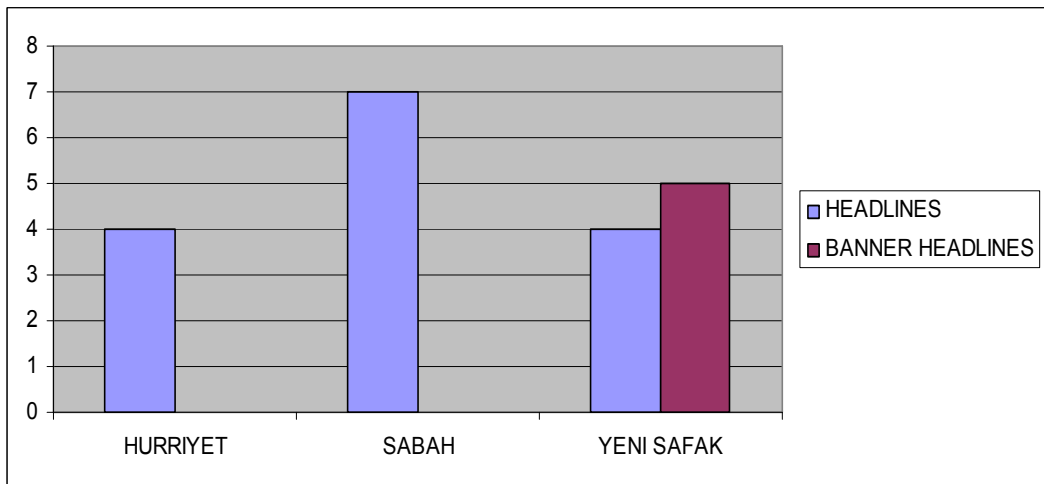


Figure 21 – **2007 Election**, Headline – Banner Headline distribution through newspapers

Having examined front pages of the newspapers in the two months period before 2007 General Elections, Table 16 and Figure 21 were formed. There are 4 headlines about AKP on Hürriyet. This means Hürriyet highlighted the issues related to AKP four times. From these headlines 3 of them are related to election campaign, 1 of them is related to AKP policies. Except 1 headline all of them are in positive tones. When

headlines and news texts are read together it was seen that even for the headlines with neutral attitude, the news texts reveal generally quite positive tone.

There are seven headlines about AKP on Sabah's front pages in the specified period before 2007 General Elections. 4 of them are related to election campaign and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's speeches, 2 of them are related to presidential election and 1 of them is related to Islamic image of the AKP. Sabah's all headlines are in positive tones. Islamic image has been presented in favor of AKP. Within this headline and news text, Sabah emphasized that AKP is not an Islamic party, it is a centre-right party. This coverage with a headline shows where Sabah stands with its coverages. Sabah was quite supportive to AKP.

Yeni Şafak covered 4 headlines and 5 banner headlines about AKP on its front pages in the period two months before 2007 General Elections. All banner headlines are related to AKP's election campaign and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's speeches. 2 of headlines are related to election campaign and speeches and 2 of them are related to presidential election. Both headlines and banner headlines of Yeni Şafak are in positive tones same as %97 of AKP's news coverage in Yeni Şafak. The highest number of headlines and banner headlines is on Yeni Şafak AKP's coverage which is quite expected after all the analyzed data. Furthermore, Yeni Şafak is the only newspaper covering banner headlines about AKP in the period of two months before 2007 General Elections. But this does not show that Yeni Şafak is the only newspaper whose AKP news slant is positive. The other newspapers' AKP news slant are also positive although the number of headline and banner headline about AKP is lower than Yeni Şafak's. This may refer to the decrease in the newspapers' attention to political issues in general. In other words, this may show ignorance of the newspapers' to the other political parties and the political issues which are

not related to AKP. Having made deeper analysis, power bloc is determined and is not expected to change, it is characterized by AKP and its policies. According to newspapers, AKP would be the first party of the 2007 General Elections indisputably. The results of 2007 General Elections weren't expected to be different from 2002 General Elections. Furthermore, media is giving effort in this period for AKP to take the same result.

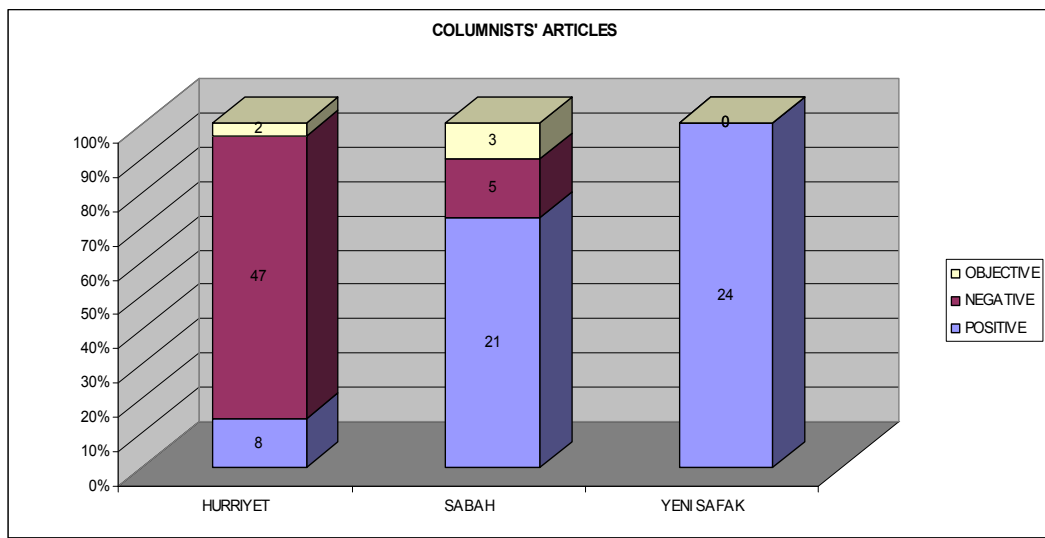


Figure 22 – **2007 Election**, The tones of articles about AKP

Table 17 indicates editorial AKP slant and articles' slant of the newspapers before 2007 General Elections. In Hurriyet, out of 57 articles examined about AKP, 47 articles are negative, 8 articles are positive, 2 are in neutral tones. Although Hürriyet's AKP slant was positive in the period, except editor in chief's articles the other articles' dominant tone was negative. Ertuğrul Özkök's all articles are in positive tone and 5 of the 8 positive toned articles were written by editor in chief, Ertuğrul Özkök, which is quite significant and understandable knowing all other data showing Hurriyet's general AKP slant as positive. Although columnists wrote about AKP and its leader mostly in negative tones, Ertuğrul Özkök's articles were all in

positive tone in accordance with AKP news slant of Hürriyet. This reveals real slant of the newspaper.

Sabah had gone through some procedures because of financial problems as mentioned in historical background of the newspapers and finally the owner of the newspaper had changed. Moreover 'independent' government body, TMSF started to control Sabah. There were relocations, resignations and news staff on duty including editorial in chief. Former editorial in chief Erdal Şafak wrote 2 articles on AKP in neutral tones. New editorial in chief was Ergun Babahan and all his articles on the ruling party, AKP were in positive tone. There were 29 articles related to AKP, ruling party. Out of 29 articles examined 21 articles in positive, only 5 in negative and 3 are in neutral tones. It appears that Sabah's AKP news slant and editorial slant were positive in that specified period.

There were 24 articles related to AKP on Yeni Şafak in the same period. Having examined the articles it could be seen that all articles were in positive tone. Yeni Şafak's AKP news slant, editorial slant and also columnists' slant have been positive both in 2002 and in 2007 periods.

b) News Coverage Of Other Parties

A little inspection and brief information on news coverage of the three newspapers about other parties than AKP in the period before 2007 general election provides clues on main characteristics of their AKP news slant. This research does not contain detailed numerical data about political parties other than AKP, so for this brief information, mostly news titles will be used. The news used and sampled in this section with their titles had been critically analyzed

Having examined Hürriyet's news about the other political parties, it could be seen that Hürriyet covered the parties; CHP, MHP, ANAP and DP. DP under the leadership of Mehmet Ağar and ANAP under the leadership of Erkan Mumcu have been on news mostly in terms of negotiations for unification. CHP was covered in negative tone generally. The news "AKP CHP leşti, CHP AKP leşti", "AKP became CHP, CHP became AKP" is one of the example news head showing this attitude.

The news on Hürriyet, June 2, 2007, "Sağda 'Birlik' Krizde", "'Union' of Right is in Crisis" shows us that the newspaper was not convinced that right parties would unify in the future although there has been negotiations ongoing between them for a while. Taking news head the word 'birlik', 'unity' is given in quotation marks meaning that Hürriyet did not believe parties' intention to unify.

The news about other political parties than AKP have been mostly mentioned linking them to AKP. Both in news head and/or news text, AKP is also mentioned in addition to these parties names. Such news were like "SP'den AKP'li Kükünlere Davet", "Invitation from SP to resentful AKP members" and "AKP CHP'leşti, CHP AKP'leşti", "AKP became CHP, CHP became AKP" on June 7, 2007. Besides, AKP leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's words from his speeches were used as news head "CHP Seçkincilerin", "CHP belongs to elitists" on June 17, 2007. Using someone's words without quotation mark may show the newspapers' presumption of his/her words being true. Examining the news text, the news with the heading. "Prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan addressed to enthusiastic crowd in Bingöl" is against CHP. News text includes many words unfavorable to CHP. In the other news, CHP leader Deniz Baykal's words were given in unsupportive tone.

Although Hürriyet meant to cover the other political leaders' speeches in neutral tone, the space allocated to them shows news slant of Hürriyet. The news covering other parties' and other Party leaders occupied relatively less place on the newspaper. The news on MHP and/or Devlet Bahçeli's speeches were also given sometimes in negative, sometimes in neutral tones.

The election campaign news/election campaign feuilleton with the kicker "Seçim 2007", "Election 2007" on Hürriyet's front pages through Temmuz 2007 were given with big photographs of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan from meetings. The other leaders speeches and meetings news were given with relatively smaller photographs. In addition, the news on AKP and/or Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's speeches and meetings always occupied much more place than the others occupied. Examining inside pages, Hurriyet paid much less attention to the other political parties than AKP in terms of both the amount of space and dominant tone. Hürriyet covered only words of other parties' leaders in the effort to be in neutral tone, however when some of news text on the other parties' meetings were examined it was seen that most of news texts are in negative at least unsupportive tone.

Other than AKP, Sabah mostly covered the political parties which would probably pass election threshold like CHP, MHP and DP in the period before 2007 General Elections. The news on other parties occupied much less place than AKP related ones. The most salient element in the Sabah's news about the other political parties and their leaders' speeches' is that words of leaders were always given in quotation marks. The news on Baykal's speech "AKP eğer uzlaşmazsa bedelini çok ağır öder", "If AKP won't agree on, the price will be high" June 8, 2007. This makes us think the newspaper may not agree with their ideas. Especially the words of the leaders about AKP and AKP's policies were given with the source: "Baykal: Terörle mücadelede siyasi zaafiyet var" "Baykal: There is political deficiency in fighting with the terror." on June 8, 2007, "Baykal: Bu iktidar

kendine çalıştı” “Baykal: This government is working for themselves.” on July 6, 2007. Another negative toned news on CHP was “CHP lideri laf atma rekortmeni” “CHP leader very good on insulting” on July 14, 2007

The news emphasizing other parties’ attitude to turban issue meant to show the change of other parties’ view on that matter in time: “DP türbanın serbest olacağını vaad etti”, “DP promises freedom of turban” on July 3, 2007 and the other news on CHP meeting “Ezan okununca mitinge ara verdi” “Paused the meeting when azan starts” on June 25, 2007. “CHP’li kadınlar Yozgat’ta eşarp Dağıttı” “CHP women gifted scarf in Yozgat” on July 14, 2007. Such news are highlighting the changes in other parties in a way that AKP was once defending.

Yeni Şafak covered the political parties other than AKP with the news about their member resignations or their failures; “Anavatan Teşkilatında Toplu İstifa”, “Group Resigns in Anavatan”, “DP’de İstifalar Devam Ediyor” “More Resignation in DP” on June, 5, 2007, “DP Teşkilatında Toplu İstifa” “Group resigns in DP” on June 7, 2007, “DP’de 180 Kişi İstifa Etti” “180 resignation in DP” on June 22, 2007. The news on CHP were totally in slandering tones; “Baykal Kadınları Görmezden Geldi” “Baykal, ignored women” on June 4, 2007 , “CHP’nin Vaadleri Gayri Ciddi” “CHPs’ Word are not Serious” on June 25, 2007, “CHP nin Reklamı Yalan Çıktı” “CHPs’ ad is a lie” on July 19, 2007. MHP was also covered in negative tone “Öcalan’ın İdamını Bahçeli Engelledi” “Bahçeli Prevented Ocalans’ Execution” on July 2, 2007. In this period, Yeni Şafak covered all political parties except AKP in negative tones.

3.4. Comparison of 2002 and 2007 General Elections Analysis

Comparison between three newspapers’ AKP coverage and AKP news slant in each period –the period before 2002 General Elections and before

2007 General Elections- in terms of the issues newspapers paid attention most and their tones, provides us some salient results. Such a comparison made between two period's coverage could make us analyze newspapers news slants considering probable effects of the period, changes in media ownership, government interferences. In other words such a comparison which is made sorting main issues in each period could display ideological changes in media's coverage and probable effect of the ruling party on media news outlet.

There are questions which would be asked to obtain meaningful results from such a comparison. These are; did issues mostly concentrated on differ from 2002 to 2007? How did newspapers' attitudes to AKP and the issues related to AKP changed? Have Newspapers' AKP news slant changed dramatically from 2002 to 2007? If it does, what are the reasons for the changes in AKP news slants of the newspapers? How could we link historical conditions of the period to the changes in newspapers' AKP news slant?

The comparison between the numerical data from the newspapers in the period before 2002 General Elections and 2007 General Elections display some important changes in attitudes of the two newspapers.

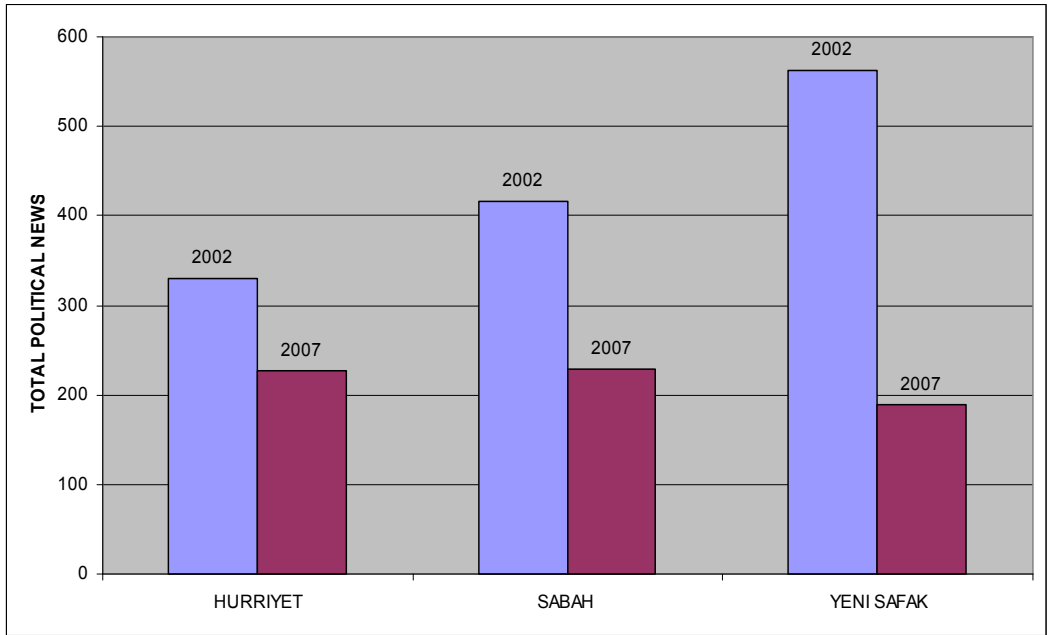


Figure 23 - Change in Total Political News from 2002 to 2007 Elections

Bringing together the numerical data of each General Elections period; as shown in Figure 23 it is significant that there is a dramatic decrease in the number of total political news on each newspaper from 2002 to 2007 news. The number of total political news on Hürriyet was 330 in 2002 and 227 in 2007, for Sabah 416 in 2002, 229 in 2007 and for Yeni Şafak 560 in 2002, 189 in 2007.

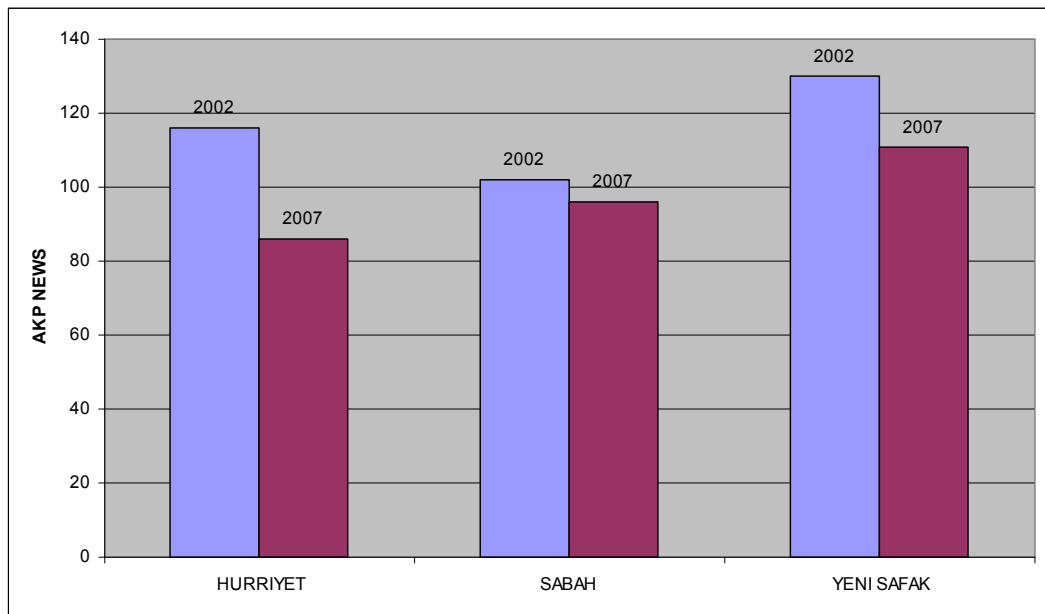


Figure 24 – Change in the number of AKP news from 2002 to 2007 Elections

Figure 23 underlines the decrease of newspapers' attention to political issues, but bringing the data of Figure 23 and Figure 24 together, as AKP News change %15 from 2002 to 2007 in total and the political news are down by %50, this clearly shows that actually it is more than lessened political interest, but the increasing dominance of AKP news on the political news, newspapers also meaning the ignorance to the other parties.

Looking at numbers of AKP news, existent interests of the newspapers in politics were concentrated dominantly on the ruling political party; AKP in 2007. Examining of front pages, headlines and banner headlines will provide clearer picture of news slant of the newspapers. Nevertheless, the dramatic decrease in the number of total political news on each newspaper in the period before 2007 General Elections could mean the decrease in newspapers' interest in political issues or their negligence on political issues on purpose. AKP has been the ruling party since 2002. It is

relatively natural the ruling party draws much more attention than other political parties, but the results in this research are quite extreme to be explained only by being the ruling party. What is extremely significant in this result is that there were almost no negative toned AKP news. The newspapers did not treat any other party as a candidate to be the ruling party. While receiving more attention than the other parties in 2002, AKP was one of the political parties joining elections to become government. The main difference is that the newspapers, object of inquiry, did not ignore the other political parties in the scale they did in 2007.

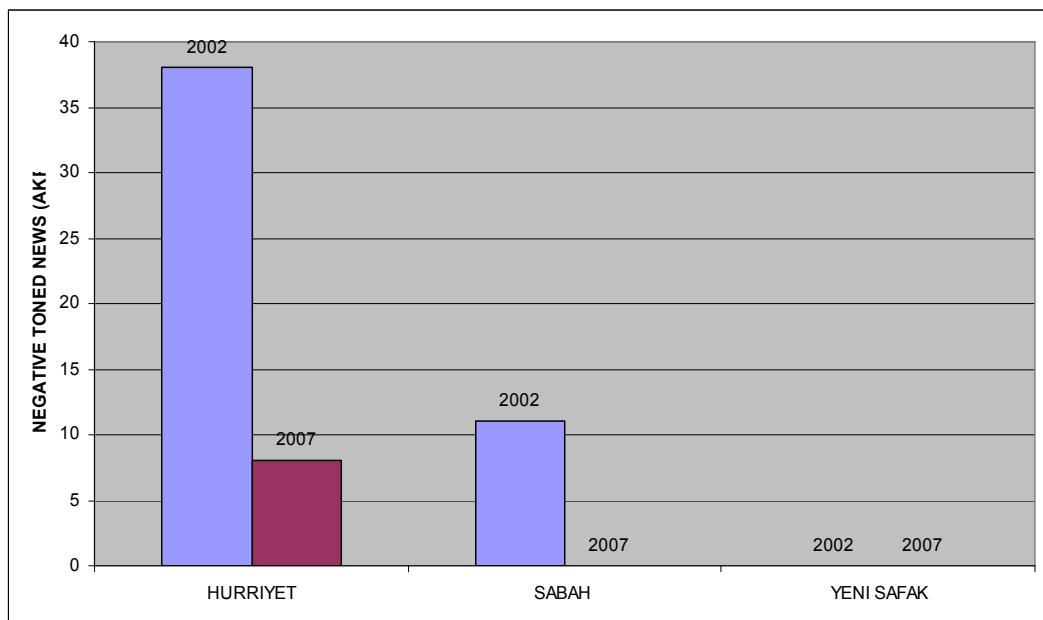


Figure 25 - Change in the number of negative toned AKP news from 2002 to 2007 Elections

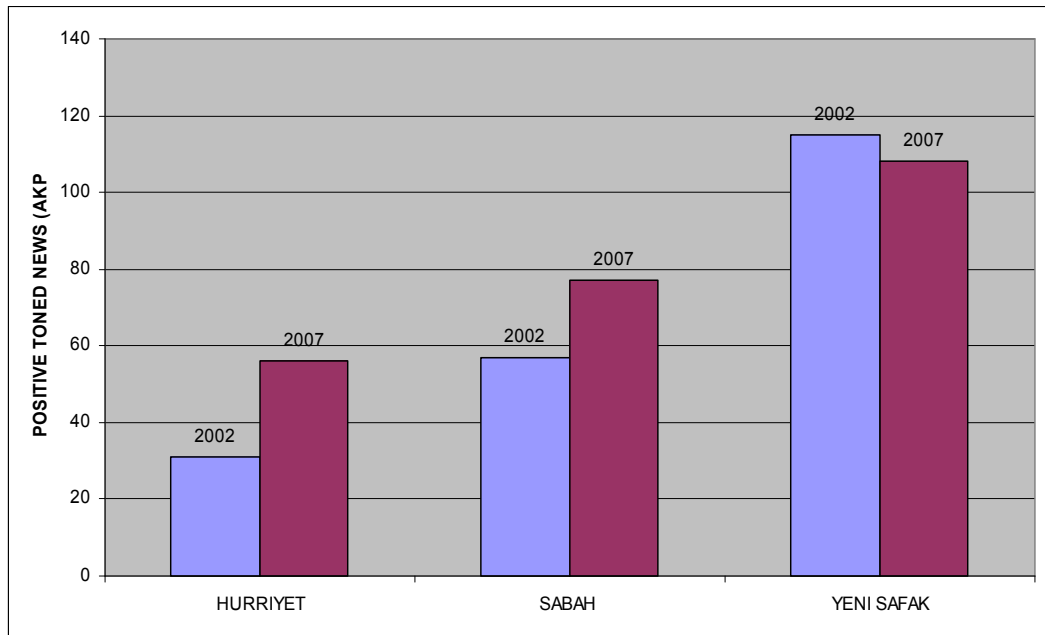


Figure 26 - Change in the number of positive toned AKP news from 2002 to 2007 Elections

As seen from Figure 25 and Figure 26 there is a dramatic decrease in the number of negative news of Hürriyet about AKP and significant increase in the number of the positive news of Hürriyet about AKP. In other words there is an increase in the percentage ratio of the news in positive tone on AKP and a decrease in the percentage ratio of the news in negative tone on AKP in comparison to the period before 2002 General Elections. Besides, the ratio of neutral toned news on AKP decreased from 2002 to 2007 period. In 2002, it was 47 out of 116, but in 2007 neutral toned news was 22 out of 86. Hürriyet covered relatively balanced distribution of all tones over AKP political news in the period before 2002 General Elections. But in 2007 Hürriyet's coverage of AKP political news were constituted predominantly by positive toned AKP news. The issue of "Islamic image of AKP and turban issue" appears in both periods, but it could be seen that Islamic image of AKP and turban issue received much more attention in 2002 than in 2007. In 2002, in Hurriyet, out of 19 news on Islamic image

of AKP and turban issue, 13 were negative and 6 were in positive tones, however in 2007 there were only 4 news on the issue, 3 were in positive and 1 was in neutral tones. Hürriyet, which made dominantly negative toned news in on this issue in 2002, made no news in negative tone. This is a very significant result in the change of Hurriyet's attitude. It could be argued that Hürriyet was convinced in favor of AKP on Islamic image and turban issue. Generally, for Hurriyet, the more neutral and equal distance to all parties image in 2002 seems to change in favor of AKP in 2007.

Sabah had drastically changed in 2007. There is quite an increase in the percentage ratio of positive news in comparison to the percentage ratio of positive news on AKP in the period before 2002 General Elections. While the number of negative toned AKP news on Sabah was 11 in 2002 General Elections, in the period before 2007 General Elections there were no negative toned news on AKP. The number of the AKP news in neutral tone on Sabah was 34 out of 102 in 2002, and dropped to 19 out of 96 in 2007. When the other statistical figures are examined together, Sabah's AKP news slant became much more positive comparing 2002 coverage with 2007 coverage. The percentage ratio of the positive toned AKP news increased and the percentage ratio of the neutral toned AKP news decreased in 2007. Having no negative toned news in 2007 period is extremely significant. The comparison gives the result that Sabah had gone through quite a change from 2002 to 2007 periods. Situation can be summarized as changing from being mildly supportive to unconditionally supportive.

In 2002 Yeni Şafak's news coverage include not only AKP, but also other parties' news., Examining news texts, amount of the spaces allocated to AKP news front pages; headlines and banner headlines it is seen that in 2002, Yeni Şafak's AKP news slant is dominantly positive and Yeni Şafak treats AKP is the solely political party to win General Elections. According

to Yeni Şafak, AKP and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan were guarantees of democracy and AKP policies were the most beneficial policies for the country. In 2007 Yeni Şafak's AKP coverage is still very positive. The main difference in Yeni Şafak's 2007 political news coverage from 2002 political coverage is the number of total political news. It decreased from 562 to 189, which is quite significant. This drop indirectly brings another difference when comparing two periods; as number of AKP news nearly stayed same in two periods with the drastically drop of political news, it shows that Yeni Şafak's political news coverage became totally devoted to AKP both in number and in tone.

Comparing the newspapers in two periods, an increase in the election campaign and speeches news about AKP from 2002 to 2007 could be seen. The number of the news on election campaigns and speeches in Hürriyet increased from 40 to 56, in Sabah from 36 to 63, in Yeni Şafak from 76 to 87. Although the number of total political news decreased, the number of AKP political news in general and AKP's election campaign and speeches news had increased. Generally speaking, newspapers ignored other political issues which are not related to AKP and the other political parties' activities, at the same time, they paid more attention to the issues related to AKP in favor of it. The salient difference between the coverage of the period before 2002 General Elections and the coverage of the period before 2007 General Elections is that each of three newspapers paid much less attention to the ruling parties of pre-period 2002 compared to AKP, the ruling party before entering the 2007 General Elections.

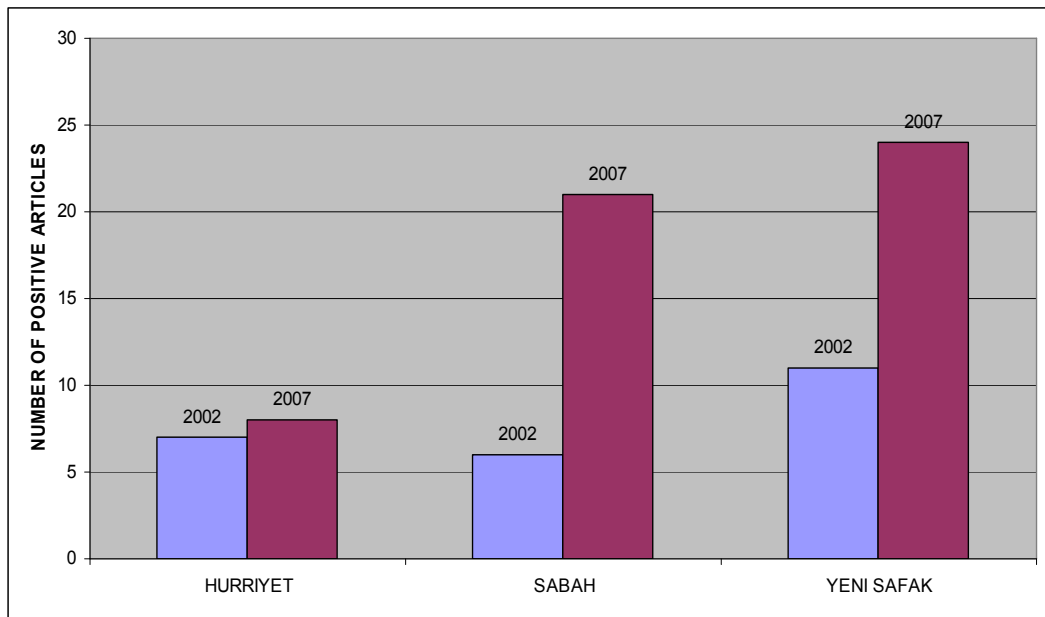


Figure 27 - Change in the number of positive toned AKP articles from 2002 to 2007 Elections

Figure 27 shows the number of positive toned articles have followed the general tendency of the newspapers' general attitude and increased from 2002 to 2007 period. The most significant increase occurs in Sabah and it triples.

Generally speaking in both election periods, in three selected newspapers, all political news coverage tend to focus on individuals, political leaders, candidates, especially -the coverage on Kemal Derviş constitute representative example- and their conflicts with each other, life styles, strong or weak sides to their private life instead of policy proposals and ideological stance of the political parties. This could be explained by the dominance of 'entertainment' element to 'information' element in news coverage. In proceeding analysis this is product of 'tabloidization' process stimulated by high degree of ownership, concentration and neo-liberal policies. Newspapers generally use public opinion polls news and feuillets to support their news slant.

As a summary, analyzing 2002 and 2007 statistical data and examining all the graphs shows remarkable and increasing support to AKP. While Yeni Şafak consistently carry supporting AKP unconditionally, Sabah had a significant change after TMSF seize and Hurriyet increased support and changed its slant from being mostly neutral to positive.

CHAPTER 4

4. ASSESSMENT

The issues at stake in the two months period before 2002 General Elections were; Legal position of AKP's leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, closure case of AKP, Islamic image of AKP and turban issue. Bringing together all data collected on total political news coverage of selected newspapers in the periods before 2002 General elections, these conclusions were reached: The ratio of AKP news to total political news is relatively very high in all three newspapers: Hürriyet tried to be neutral in news on AKP, except the turban and Islamic image issue, which Hurriyet was mostly negative. This issue was mostly covered by Hurriyet among three newspapers. Except turban issue, Hürriyet sought to be neutral in the news about legal position of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, closure case and election campaign. Sabah's AKP news slant is rather positive on news coverages. There is no specific issue that Sabah covered dominantly negative or neutral about AKP. It is evident that Yeni Şafak predominantly gave favorable coverage to AKP. (See Section 2.2.3. Evaluation)

Examining the selected newspapers's news coverage on other parties in the period before 2002 General Elections; Although Hürriyet meant to cover most of the political parties, it didn't allocate equal space to all political party news. Hürriyet predominantly allocated most amount of

space to the political parties which are strong candidates to rule. AKP and CHP were ranked as the first and the second parties in public opinion polls. Sabah mostly covered the political parties which were likely to be in rule after the election and the parties already were incumbent. So, there were political news about ANAP, DYP, YTP, MHP and DSP in addition to AKP. Examining the news, headlines and banner headlines on the front page and the news inside pages, it could be seen that Sabah was supportive to ANAP, ANAP's policies and incumbent deputy prime minister and chairman of the party, Mesut Yılmaz's practices about European Union membership process at most. Other than ANAP issues, Sabah generally reported government's practices in negative manner in that period. Sabah adjusted its discourse and slant on the other parties including AKP considering the quarrels between Mesut Yılmaz and them. Yeni Şafak also adjusts its discourse and slant considering the relation between other parties and AKP. There are many political news about all political parties joining general elections although the places allocated to them are much smaller than AKP news in total. Yeni Şafak's coverage of the other parties is generally in neutral tone except CHP, which is seen as the biggest rival of AKP.

Considering probable symbiotic relationship between editorial slant and news slant, editorials and columnists' articles have been also examined. Examining editorials and columnists' articles these conclusions were reached: It appears that Hürriyet columnists' AKP slant was mostly negative. There were columnists whose almost every article were in negative tone.

In Sabah, AKP news slant is more positive compared to AKP editorial slant. Percentage rate of articles in negative tone is much more than the news in negative tone. Yeni Şafak's both editorial slant and news slant are in positive tone. It is prominent that Yeni Şafak columnists did not write

directly about AKP or its leader anymore. They rather wrote about abstract and religious issues relating it to everyday life. They preferred to write in a metaphoric way.

As a result, for the period before 2002 General Election, Hurriyet was mostly trying to be neutral except turban, but highlighting AKP by unbalancedly covering many AKP news. Islamic image issue and individual articles of the columnists were mostly negative in Hurriyet. Sabah was mildly positive to AKP in news coverage except for the issues in which AKP was against ANAP and Mesut Yılmaz. Yeni Şafak was totally positive and supportive to AKP and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

As Kaya argued that the false belief of AKP winning the General Elections in 2002 in spite of media has to be corrected. The statements of some mainstream media columnists declaring that they would not vote for AKP, definitely does not hide the fact of mainstream media supporting AKP in an indirect, but more effective way. In the period before elections, the three party coalition government was under strong criticism by the media about economic crisis, poverty and corruption. Instead of pushing CHP forward as a strong alternative, media also were strongly criticizing them for their unconstructive policies, internal conflicts and problems. So, all these facts together show nothing but highlighting AKP indirectly as only alternative (Kaya, 2009b).

AKP had been ruling party for five years before 2007 General Election. Devotion of large amount of space to ruling party news by the newspapers is anticipated. For the news on practices of governments inevitably was related to ruling party itself. Although it was deemed normal to devote large spaces to AKP, the newspapers' interests in political issues was almost limited to AKP and its activities in that specific period.

The issues at stake in the two months period before 2007 General Election were; Presidential Election, Islamic Image of AKP and terrorist attacks. It should be stated that Islamic image of AKP was on particular media's agenda, but not on selected newspapers' mostly. In other words, the selected newspapers, especially Hürriyet did not consider turban issue and Islamic image of AKP as an important issue anymore as they did in 2002 Election period. Instead, the other parties' moderate attitude to turban occupied political news coverage. Bringing together all data collected on total political news coverage of selected newspapers in the periods before 2007 General Election, these conclusions were reached: While the number of total political news were very low compared to 2002 period, the share of the AKP news seriously increased considering ratio. All selected national newspapers gave quite favorable coverage to AKP. Hürriyet, which had been more critical than the others before 2002 General Election, offered much more favorable coverage to AKP. Hürriyet's support to AKP was prominent especially in the news related to election campaign and speeches. Sabah supported AKP giving dominantly positive news coverage. Sabah's AKP news coverage was much more favorable from it had been before 2002 General Election as there is no political news about AKP in negative tone. Yeni Şafak's political news coverage almost was devoted to AKP, completely in positive tone.

Examining the selected newspapers's news coverage on other parties: Although Hürriyet meant to cover the other political leaders' speeches in neutral tone, the space allocated to them shows news slant of Hürriyet. The news covering other parties' and other Party leaders occupied relatively less space on the newspaper. Other than AKP, Sabah mostly covered the political parties which would probably pass election threshold like CHP, MHP and DP in the period before 2007 General Elections. The news on other parties occupied much less place than AKP related ones. Yeni Şafak covered the political parties other than AKP with the news

about their member resignations or their failures. (See Section 2.3.3 2007 Evaluation)

Examining editorials and columnists' articles before 2007 General Elections, these conclusions were reached: Although Hürriyet's AKP slant was positive in the period, except editor in chief's articles, the other articles' dominant tone was negative. Ertuğrul Özkök's all articles are in positive tone and 5 of the 8 positive toned articles were written by editor in chief, Ertuğrul Özkök, which is quite significant and understandable knowing all other data showing Hurriyet's general AKP slant as positive. After seizure of TMSF, in April 2007, parallel with changes in important positions like editor in chief, news coverage, editorial slant and slant of columnists' articles were also dramatically changed. Such a way that some columnists had written about AKP in more negative tone in 2002, wrote in positive tone about AKP in 2007. The only articles in negative tone were written by Yılmaz Özdil who resigned from Sabah later on. It appears that Sabah's AKP news slant and editorial slant were positive in the specified period. Yeni Şafak columnists wrote all their articles in an affirmative tone.

As a result, for the period before 2007 General Election, generally speaking, AKP news dominated all the newspapers and this domination was mostly affirmative. Hurriyet changed their attitude of being mostly neutral in 2002 period to being positive in 2007 in AKP news coverage. Sabah was already mildly positive in 2002 period and it has become very dominantly positive after seizure of TMSF. Yeni Şafak carried on its consistent line of being devoted to AKP and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in 2007 General Election period.

Bringing all findings together briefly such conclusions can be drawn: Firstly, in the 2002 Elections, media did not support AKP in very strong

way but there was not a general hostile attitude towards the party. But it can be argued that AKP had enjoyed a very strong indirect support since the traditional political parties of the centre-right and centre-left were held responsible and severely criticized for the prevailing many faced deep crisis in the country. As for the 2007 elections, there was a completely different outlook. This time, AKP, as the majority party in power was directly controlling, in addition to state run broadcasting channels, a leading private channel (ATV) and some daily papers comprising mass circulation Sabah seized by the state. What is more, the remaining mainstream media outlets were exhibiting a political slant clearly in favour of the majority party.

CHAPTER 5

5. CONCLUSION

Today nobody would challenge the view that the worlds of politics and media are closely intermingled. Indeed, as stated early in this thesis, the events of the external world to our immediate experiences are continuously interpreted/defined and disseminated through reality definitions of the means of mass communication. Consequently, media acquires a defining role on the formation of opinions in every aspect of the societal life. On one hand political actors are striving hard to gain the media on their side, on the other hand media owners try to instrumentalize their media outlets to influence the major political decisions. Increasing tabloidization and development of an advocacy journalism also intensify the interrelations between the media and the political formations. The firm and interdependent relationship between political formations become more of an issue in election periods, for they are indispensable part of opinion formation, hence political behavior formation. This study is inspired by the

widespread claim that as a newly established political party, AKP had won the elections despite the unfavourable attitude of the press. It was argued that it did not enjoy an adequate media backing before the elections. This argument was advanced to promote the idea that the effects of the media were not as powerful as it was generally accepted in the critical approaches to the study of media in scholarly research.

This study of the news coverage of selected newspapers aimed at revealing Turkish press' slant to AKP both before 2002 general elections when it was elected as first political party and before 2007 general elections when it was the ruling political party. News output can only be defined as being slanted if it gives more favorable coverage to one side of politics than the other. In representative democracies, media have some certain functions; to inform citizens about political agenda, to be a channel for rulers or several interest groups to convey their messages to citizens and also to be means for citizens to utter their discomforts. In ideal terms, media is generally conceptualized as an arena for all opinions in democratic society. Based on these assumptions, most of the researches conducted on election campaign coverage, examine coverage of news outlets employing 'balance' as the baseline of the study. Researches presuppose that media should cover all opinions in a democratic society, in an objective way and independently from state or any other interest group's interference. What is expected from media is to cover all opinions not favoring one of them.

Many researches on election campaign coverage of news outlet have drawn attention to agenda-setting function of the media. That is; media could highlight some issues while undervaluing others or highlight certain aspects of issues while undervaluing other ones. McCombs who has done groundwork on agenda-setting function of media, made a distinction between first and second level of agenda-setting. While first level agenda-

setting is related to 'object salience', the second level agenda-setting is related to 'attribute salience'. In second level agenda-setting function, news reporters highlight some aspects of specific object. Issues or some aspects of news are presented framing by news reporters. To frame news means to select some aspects of perceived reality and make them more salient in such a way as to put forward a particular problem definition or moral evaluation for the item described. In the light of these considerations political news coverage of selected national newspapers were examined in terms of their positive, negative or neutral tones and the issues they underlined. This examination had been done considering historical conditions of the periods, issues peculiar to the periods at stake and general ownership structures of the newspapers which probably had impact on news coverage. The space and the location allocated to news and the way they are represented as headlines or banner headlines on the front page had been quite informative for answering the question of this research. This study also paid attention to editorial slant and attitudes offered in columnist articles also in order to draw clearer picture of newspapers' AKP news slant.

For this purpose news about AKP are marked as positive, negative and neutral toned and read critically. The news heads and news texts are marked as "negative" if they express fear, unease, problem definition of AKP and its leader. They are marked as "positive" if they use affirmative expressions. Political news are marked as "neutral" if they do not include any value judgments. To reach some comparative assessments, other parties' political news coverage of selected newspapers are also examined. It is presupposed that the main attitudes of the newspapers to other parties would give some evidence on AKP news coverage also.

Examining political news coverage of selected newspapers some conclusions are reached. These conclusions are given from general to

specific. Present research also provides some insights as to the general features of election campaign coverage of Turkish media. The most prominent thing is that media content, political news coverage in the restraints of the research, focused on political leaders' personal qualities such as their weak or strong aspects and quarrels instead of political parties' policy proposals and ideological stances, parallel to 'tabloidization' of media, in accordance with commercialization processes. In other words, it is evident that there is relatively 'dumbing down' of political arguments at several ranges in selected newspapers. It was seen that Hürriyet and Yeni Şafak were more serious in tone of political news in comparison to Sabah. Three of the newspapers tend to give election campaign coverage like 'horse race' instead of arguments of political parties in comprehensive way. They try to be 'sensational' by news headline selection. As a result of this attitude, news heads could be irrelevant to news story. It could be argued that different newspapers could cover same issues and same objects in quite different tones. To say, same object could be reproduced and more correct reconstructed in quite different manners dependent to media organization slant and stances. So to talk about news slant means also talk about media organization as economic sector that owner of the media organization could have impact on news coverage.

Bringing together the data collected via qualitative content analysis on the selected newspapers' coverage, editorials and columnists' articles in the two months period before 2002 General Elections, some conclusions can be drawn: Hürriyet was mostly trying to be neutral except turban, but highlighting AKP by unbalancedly covering many AKP news. Islamic image issue and individual articles of the columnists were mostly negative in Hürriyet. Sabah was mildly positive to AKP in news coverage except for the issues in which AKP was against ANAP and Mesut Yılmaz. Yeni Şafak was totally positive and supportive to AKP and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. So,

AKP did not win the General Elections in 2002 in spite of media. Media supported AKP in an indirect but more effective way.

Before 2007 General Elections AKP had been ruling party for five years. It was normal for newspapers to devote large spaces to AKP. However, the selected newspapers' interests in political issues was almost limited to AKP and its activities in that specific period. Bringing together the data collected via qualitative content analysis on the selected newspapers' coverage, editorials and columnists' articles in the two months period before 2007 General Elections, some conclusions can be drawn: While the number of total political news were very low compared to 2002 period, the share of the AKP news seriously increased considering ratio. All selected national newspapers gave quite favorable coverage to AKP. Hürriyet, which had been more critical than the others before 2002 General Election, offered much more favorable coverage to AKP. Hürriyet's support to AKP was prominent especially in the news related to election campaign and speeches. Sabah supported AKP giving dominantly positive news coverage. Sabah's AKP news coverage was much more favorable from it had been before 2002 General Election as there is no political news about AKP in negative tone. Yeni Şafak's political news coverage almost was devoted to AKP, completely in positive tone.

As a result, for the period before 2007 General Election, generally speaking, AKP news dominated all the newspapers and this domination was mostly affirmative. Hurriyet changed their attitude of being mostly neutral in 2002 period to being positive in 2007 in AKP news coverage. Sabah was already mildly positive in 2002 period and it has become very dominantly positive after seizure of TMSF. Yeni Şafak carried on its consistent line of being devoted to AKP and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in 2007 General Election period.

Evaluating all findings together briefly such conclusions can be drawn: Firstly, in the 2002 elections, AKP actually did not have a very strong media backing but there was not a general hostile attitude towards the new party. But from the output of the media outlets it can be easily argued that AKP had enjoyed a very strong indirect support since the traditional political parties of the centre-right and centre-left; that is its all major contenders were held responsible and severely criticized for the prevailing many faced deep crisis in the country. As for the 2007 elections, there was a completely different outlook. This time, AKP, as the majority party in power was directly controlling, in addition to state run broadcasting channels, a leading private channel (ATV) and some daily papers comprising mass circulation Sabah seized by the state to recoup losses at a failed bank. Moreover, the remaining mainstream media outlets were exhibiting a political slant clearly in favour of the majority party. This media support had an irrefutable share in the landslide 2007 election victory of the AKP. This evidence obtained from the both cases enables us to conclude that the ideological impact and the political effects of the media as an institution is 'there to stay'. That is to say; after Özal's hegemonic project ended, new attempt at hegemonic project has been aroused by AKP. Together with new media order enabling privately owned enterprises in media, hegemonic project attempts gained a new tool for appealing popular support. This study remarks that media have supported new hegemonic project attempt.

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