

College of Social Sciences and International Studies,  
Department of Politics

# **The Power of the Media on Forming Public Opinion: The Analysis of the 2010 Constitutional Referendum in Turkey**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis explores the role of the media in voting behaviour in Turkey in terms of the 2010 constitutional referendum. The media is a very important tool for both providing information and entertainment for people in Turkey. Thus, it can be claimed that the media are very powerful and have a large influence on audiences. In this study, I seek to explore the media's power over citizens' political choices. In other words, this thesis aims to reveal the affect the media content has on voters. To achieve this goal, I have chosen to analyse the 2010 referendum because of its special characteristics, which differentiate it from other referendums and elections in Turkey.

Although there are many studies which examine the media effects on voting in the literature, these generally concentrate on developed democracies. Furthermore, general elections and presidential elections are more common in the field. The number of studies searching for the media's effect on referendum voting in Turkey is very limited. For this reason, I prioritise referendums and the media systems to provide a better understanding of the Turkish case, as a developing democratic country. In addition to this, media content and public opinion constitute the main data for the methodological part of the study. In order to identify the influence of the media in the 2010 referendum, I employ a three-step method including firstly, an analysis of the public opinion survey data to understand voter preferences; secondly, media content analysis to see the media coverage on the referendum issue and the salience of the referendum in the media and; as the third and final step of the analysis, I link the public opinion data and the media content.

My contribution to the field is the analysis of the media effects on referendum voting with a systematic and an extensive methodological approach, which is supported by the analysis of the media system in Turkey, as an example of developing country. I expect to contribute a comprehensive analysis of the referendum voting in respect of the media nested with the voter preferences to the literature on politics in Turkey.

## **Table of Contents**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| <b>Abstract:</b> .....  | 1  |
| <b>List of Figures:</b> .....   | 5  |
| <b>List of Tables:</b> .....  | 5  |
| <b>Abbreviations:</b> .....   | 7  |
| <b><u>Chapter I:</u></b> Introduction.....  | 8  |
| 1.1. Overview of the Thesis.....  | 13 |
| 1.1.1. Purpose of the Research.....   | 13 |
| 1.1.2. Scope and Significance of the Research.....  | 14 |
| 1.1.3. Research Questions.....  | 15 |
| 1.1.4. Limitations of the Research.....   | 17 |
| 1.2. Chapter Outline.....   | 18 |
| <b><u>Chapter II:</u></b> Historical Background: The Media and Referendums in Turkey.....         | 21 |
| 2.1. Historical Development of the Media in Turkey.....   | 23 |
| 2.1.1. Landscape of Turkish Media.....  | 32 |
| 2.1.2. Legislative Regulations on the Media.....  | 44 |
| 2.2. History of Referendums in Turkey.....  | 58 |
| 2.3. Concluding Remarks.....  | 62 |
| <b><u>Chapter III:</u></b> Review of the Literature on Media Systems and Referendums.....         | 64 |
| 3.1. Referendums.....   | 65 |
| 3.1.1. The Notion of Referendum.....  | 66 |
| 3.1.2. Constitutional Referendums.....  | 68 |
| 3.2. Referendums in Turkey and 12 September 2010 Referendum for<br>Constitutional Amendments..... | 72 |
| 3.2.1. The Path to 2010 Referendum.....   | 74 |
| 3.2.2. 12 September 2010 Referendum.....  | 77 |
| 3.2.3. Positions of Political Parties during the Referendum Period.....                           | 82 |
| 3.3. Voting Behaviour in Referendums: Role of Parties, Elites and<br>Campaigns.....               | 85 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| 3.4. Media Effects: Role of the Mass Media in Referendums.....                            | 89  |
| 3.5. Media Effects Theories at a Glance.....  | 95  |
| 3.6. Media Systems.....   | 100 |
| 3.7. Concluding Remarks.....  | 114 |
| <b><u>Chapter IV:</u></b> Research Design and Methodology.....                            | 117 |
| 4.1. Analysing the Content: Qualitative versus Quantitative Analysis or Mixed Method..... | 118 |
| 4.2. Media Content and Survey Data Combination.....                                       | 119 |
| 4.3. Research Design.....   | 121 |
| <b><u>Chapter V:</u></b> People’s Choice: The Referendum in Public Opinion Surveys.....   | 132 |
| 5.1. Voting in Referendums.....   | 132 |
| 5.2. Research Design and Methods.....   | 137 |
| 5.2.1. Data.....  | 137 |
| 5.2.2. Research Design.....   | 139 |
| 5.3. Analysis Results (I): Dynamics of Opinions .....                                     | 142 |
| 5.4. Analyses Results (II): Determinants of Voting Decisions .....                        | 153 |
| 5.5. Concluding remarks.....  | 164 |
| <b><u>Chapter VI:</u></b> Analysis of the Media Content.....                              | 166 |
| 6.1. The Importance of the Media Content on Voting Behaviour.....                         | 166 |
| 6.2. Research Design.....   | 168 |
| 6.3. Qualitative Content Analysis .....   | 170 |
| 6.4. Quantitative Content Analysis .....  | 178 |
| 6.5. Concluding Remarks.....  | 191 |
| <b><u>Chapter VII:</u></b> Public Opinion, Media and Voting.....                          | 194 |
| 7.1. Research Design.....   | 197 |
| 7.2. The Combination of Public Opinion and Media Content Data Results.....                | 198 |
| 7.3. Concluding Remarks.....  | 209 |
| <b><u>Chapter VIII:</u></b> Conclusion.....   | 210 |
| APPENDIX I.....   | 218 |

APPENDIX II.....223  
REFERENCES.....230

## **List of Figures**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Figure 5.1: The meaning of the constitutional amendments.....                                  | 149 |
| Figure 5.2: The best sentence about the constitutional amendments.....                         | 150 |
| Figure 5.3: Party Preferences & Vote intention.....  | 157 |
| Figure 5.4: Party preferences& Meaning of the Referendum.....                                  | 158 |
| Figure 5.5: Education& Vote intention& Party Preference.....                                   | 163 |
| Figure 6.1: Distribution of the Referendum News.....   | 179 |
| Figure 6.2: Visibility of the Referendum in the First Pages.....                               | 182 |
| Figure 6.3: Tone of the news items according to each outlet..                                  | 184 |
| Figure 6.4: Balance between positive and negative statements week by week for all outlets..... | 186 |
| Figure 6.5: Numbers of YES/NO and Boycott Statements by Outlets.....                           | 187 |
| Figure 6.6: The most emphasized actors .....   | 189 |
| Figure 6.7: Actors by outlets.....   | 190 |

## **List of Tables**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Table 4.1: Outlets for Content Analysis.....                    | 121 |
| Table 4.2: Comparison of the KONDA and WVS Data.....            | 125 |
| Table 4.3: Summary Variables: Content Measures.....             | 129 |
| Table 5.1: Vote Intention and Referendum Results.....           | 143 |
| Table.5.2: Vote Intention/2.....                                | 144 |
| Table.5.3: How can Kemal Kilicdaroglu impact CHP's votes? ..... | 146 |
| Table.5.4: Expectations for Referendum Results.....             | 147 |
| Table 5.5: Which will be actually voted in the referendum?..... | 148 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Table 5.6: Aim of the Referendum& Meaning of the Amendments.....                        | 151 |
| Table.5.7 Vote Intention& Perception on Referendum Reason.....                          | 152 |
| Table 5.8 What is your final decision about your vote in the referendum?.....           | 153 |
| Table.5.9: Which reason affects your vote in general?.....                              | 154 |
| Table 5.10: If there is a general election today that would you vote for?.....          | 155 |
| Table.5.11 Religiosity& Political Party.....  | 159 |
| Table.5.12: Religiosity& Vote .....   | 160 |
| Table 5.13: Education& Vote Intention.....  | 161 |
| Table 5.14 Education& Voting Reasons.....   | 162 |
| Table 6.1: The source of information/opinion about these constitutional amendments..... | 170 |
| Table 6.2: Proportion of the Referendum News in the First Pages .....                   | 181 |
| Table 6.3: Tone of the Items.....   | 183 |
| Table 6.4: Boycott Statements in all News Items.....                                    | 188 |
| Table 7.1: The source of information.....   | 198 |
| Table 7.2: Newspaper Preference .....   | 199 |
| Table 7.3: Newspaper Preferences & Vote Preferences.....                                | 200 |
| Table 7.4: Newspaper preference & Party preference.....                                 | 202 |
| Table 7.5: Party & Newspaper & Vote Preference.....                                     | 203 |
| Table 7.6: TV Preferences & Vote Intention.....   | 204 |
| Table 7.7: TV & Party & Vote.....   | 205 |
| Table 7.8: Voting on Referendum: Media, Party Support and Social Indicators.....        | 207 |

## **Abbreviations**

**AA:** Anadolu Ajansı/ Anatolia Agency

**AAPOR:** American Association for Public Opinion Research

**AKP:** Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi / Justice and Development Party

**ANAP:** Anavatan Partisi/ Motherland Party

**AYM:** Anayasa Mahkemesi/ Constitutional Court

**BDP:** Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi/ Peace and Democracy Party

**BTK:** Bilgi Teknolojileri ve İletişim Kurumu/ Telecommunications Communication Presidency)

**CHP:** Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi/ Republican People's Party

**CPJ:** Committee to Protect Journalists

**BDDK:** Bankacılık Duzenleme ve Denetleme Kurumu/ Banking Regulation and Supervision Agency

**DP:** Demokrat Parti/ Democrat Party

**DSP:** Demokrat Sol Parti/ Democratic Leftist Party

**EU:** European Union

**FP:** Fazilet Partisi/ Virtue Party

**HYK:** Haberleşme Yüksek Kurulu/ Communications High Council

**MHP:** Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi/ National Action Party

**MTM:** Medya Takip Merkezi/ Media Monitoring Centre

**PKK:** Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan / Kurdistan Workers' Party

**RP:** Refah Partisi/ Welfare Party

**RTUK:** Radyo Televizyon Ust Kurulu/ Radio Television Supreme Court

**SETA:** Siyaset Ekonomi ve Toplum Arastirmalari Vakfi/ Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research

**TBMM:** Tukiye Buyuk Millet Meclisi

**TCC:** Turkish Constitutional Court

**TMSF:** Tasarruf Mevduatı Sigorta Fonu/ Saving Deposit Insurance Fund

**TRT:** Turkiye Radyo Televizyon Kurumu/ Turkish Radio and Television Association

**TUIK:** Turkiye Istatistik Enstitusu/ Turkish Statistical Institute

**YSK:** Yuksek Secim Kurulu/ Supreme Electoral Council of Turkey

**WWS:** World Values Survey

## **Chapter I: Introduction**

In the mid-1990s, Turkey initiated a constitutional reform process. Turkey accelerated this process after the reorganization of Turkey as an official candidate of the European Union (EU) at the Helsinki summit in 1999. There were the most comprehensive amendments in 2001 and 2004. Nine harmonization packages have been carried out up until today. These constitutional and other legal reforms have been achieved under the impact of the EU conditionality that affected Turkish democracy positively extensively in terms of human rights and, rights and freedoms. The main subjects are legal guarantees for fundamental rights and liberties, abolition of the death penalty, prevention of torture and mistreatment, and freedom of speech and expression. Yet, problems remain in the sphere of freedom of expression and speech and especially on freedom of press and expression which will be detailed in the following parts. To give an example, article 301 of the New Penal Code still constitutes a very big problem for Turkish legal system. This article is against to the crimes on insulting 'Turkishness' and it is also very open-ended. This article has allowed many journalists, scholars and writers to be charged, such as Nobel Prize winner Orhan Pamuk and Armenian journalist Hrant Dink who was assassinated in 2007. These writers and journalists were tried because of their columns and novels; in other words, due to doing their jobs.

However, the power of the military has been curtailed, publication and broadcasting in other languages besides Turkish have been permitted and restrictions on human rights have been removed by the constitutional reform process under the impact of the EU accession process. But, these amendments were still inadequate for eliminating the inheritance of the military regime from the Turkish constitution, and Turkey still has to continue the legal reforms in all areas of legislation besides the constitution. These reforms are carried out not only for the EU membership but also for a more democratic and free Turkey. Yet, none of them are adequate for removing the authoritarian essence of the 1982 Constitution. Finally, for this purpose, the government prepared very comprehensive constitutional amendments including 26 articles and held a referendum on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2010.

The referendum was applied during the ratification of the 1960 Constitution for the first time in Turkey. As a consequence of the first referendum, the new constitution was recognized (62 per cent 'Yes' votes). Afterwards, Turkey experienced its second constitutional referendum in 1982 and it was passed with 91% 'yes' votes. Meanwhile, both of these referendums were effectuated straight after the military coups by military regimes. Finally, the last constitutional referendum was conducted on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2010, which was the 30th anniversary of the 12<sup>th</sup> September 1980 military coup, allegedly to democratize the existent 'military constitution'. The last referendum was carried out by civil government and under the impact of the European Union (EU) accession process, to demonstrate the democratization of Turkey. Finally, the referendum was passed with 58 per cent 'Yes' votes.

In contradistinction to previous referendums, the 2010 referendum was recognized as a political preference by both political parties and citizens. In other words, it was perceived as voting for political parties and leaders rather than constitutional amendments. Referendum campaigns of parties had a similar atmosphere to general election campaigns and Turkey witnessed a hard power struggle between the political parties. It can be said that, in respect of political parties, the propaganda during the referendum process was to weaken the opposing party for each party and demonstrate their power, rather than supporting or criticising the constitutional amendments package. Both the opposition party the Republican People's Party (CHP) and the ruling party the Justice and Development Party (AKP) transformed the referendum into a vote of confidence for the AKP with their campaigns. In a sense, the CHP paved the way for dissension without referring to the context of amendments. Referendum was perceived as a practice run for the national elections which would occur in June 2011. Political parties specified their preferences overtly. For example, the ruling party the AKP ran a dense campaign to persuade citizens to give 'yes' votes while the main opposition the CHP was working for 'no' votes. On the other hand, as a third camp pro-Kurdish the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) which can be defined as the defender of the rights of Kurdish people in Turkey-called on citizens to boycott the referendum. The political parties intended to measure their political support, which could have indicated if they would succeed or fail in the forthcoming national elections that will be held in 2011. According to the survey of one of the most important and well-known public opinion research and

consultancy centres in Turkey, KONDA, 32.7 per cent of the respondents said 'government hold referendum about constitutional amendments in order to reinforce its power and constitute civil dictatorship' while 41.8 per cent said 'these reforms are necessary and pursuant for our democratisation' (KONDA 2010)<sup>1</sup>.

In modern societies, informed citizens are the impartial elements of the modern democracies. It is especially crucial when citizens participate in the political decision-making process with their votes during election and referendum times. At this point, the media play an important role as a medium for providing information from the government to the public. The media are very important actors in the flow of political information also in Turkey as it will be seen in the following chapters. That is why the media effects are searched in this thesis for the analysis of the 2010 referendum. In order to understand the role of the media on voting in Turkey, media systems, media effects theories and historical background of the media are considered necessary for this research.

On the other hand, socio-political context of Turkey and presenting the voter profile in Turkey are also crucial for this thesis to understand the voting behaviour in Turkey. Besides the media; political parties, elites, heuristics and campaigns are also essential dynamics of voting behaviour and needs to be examined. Voters in Turkey have strong ties with political parties/leaders and this connection plays an important role in their vote decisions as it will be seen in the following parts especially in chapter 5 on public opinion. Our analysis also showed that, political developments in historical context, personal features such as ideology, education, and level of religiosity can be determinant in voting decisions. However, these factors can also play a significant role in people's media choices as well and they can filter the information they get from the media according to their individual characteristics or political identifications. Thus, analysing the public opinion in the light of KONDA surveys places great importance for this research which provided us to see the voting reasons and main characteristics of voters in Turkey.

Herein, it is useful to look at the stance of the media during the 2010 referendum period in Turkey after mentioning the importance of the information and the media

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<sup>1</sup> KONDA Research and Consultancy, <http://www.konda.com.tr>, access date 24.05.2011

for voters. The media coverage during the 2010 referendum is considered to worth to be examined when evaluated within the frame of the referendum about the constitutional amendments. On 13 May 2010 –a day after the announcement of the referendum- all televisions and newspapers in Turkey started to divert into sides: Yes or No. Also even as can be defined as the third side ‘Not enough but yes’ was one of the most striking slogans during the referendum campaigns, and there was even a website set up with the same name by a large group of people who supported yes but also claimed that the amendments package was inadequate. On the other hand, as the real third group, boycotters invited people not to vote at all which constituted a small group. The boycotters were mostly pro-Kurdish political party BDP supporters and their reason to boycott the referendum was the lack of amendments for the improvement of Kurdish rights.

All of these groups used the radio, television, newspapers, magazines, books and the internet to a large extent for the referendum campaign. Even months before the referendum, there were intense discussions between the ruling party advocators who supported the amendments and their opposition on television channels and in newspapers. Surveys were conducted; observers and opinion leaders declared their votes openly and tried to influence citizens’ decisions for months. There were referendum discussions on almost every television channel almost every day during the referendum campaign period. Also as it will be shown in the following chapters television is still the most important and common media in Turkey and, especially people prefer to follow television to get political information. Therefore, the role of television deserves attention to reflect this climate as the most popular media and very important instrument for providing information and constituting ideas in Turkey. In this respect, the attitudes of the mass media and the freedom of the press and other media became significant for analysing whether the mass media affect citizens’ preferences. In order to understand the effects of the media in any given country, it also requires analysing the media system in that country as well. For the analysis of the media system in Turkey, Hallin and Mancini’s three models will be extensively given a place and will be used as guidance in this research. As yet, basically it can be said that, as a developing country and an example of the Mediterranean model, the intervention of the state in the affairs of the media is a visible feature of the media system in Turkey which could restrict the independence

and freedom of the media, affect the content of the media and thus, the impact of the media as well.

According to the World Press Freedom Index 2011-2012 and of *Reporters without Borders*, Turkey could become 148 out of 179 countries<sup>2</sup>. The increase of the number of arrested journalists to 105 by January 2012 played a major role in determining Turkey's place in the world rankings (Birgun 2012)<sup>3</sup>. Under these conditions, the objectivity of the media started to be questioned. In particular, the ability of the Institution of Turkish Radio and Television (TRT) to protect its objectivity is a controversial point, as the state's official broadcasting organization.

At this point, the analysis of the media content has a vital importance for this research in order to understand the role of the media during the referendum campaign period. In terms of media coverage, in the 2010 constitutional referendum several pieces of research and surveys were carried out by media monitoring companies. Their results will be referred in detail in the following chapters which concern the media content and the public opinion surveys. On the other hand, some results of those companies' researches show parallelism with the results of this thesis. The most salient of these research results are considered necessary to summarize here to provide insight for the thesis.

Medya Takip Merkezi (MTM - Media Monitoring Centre)<sup>4</sup> – one of the most important of those companies- promulgated some of their reports, which were comprehensive and profound. According to the MTM report that covered 44 national newspapers throughout August 2010, 27 per cent of news items supported 'yes' votes. 25 per cent of the news items supported 'no' votes while 48 per cent stayed neutral (MTM 2011). In reference to the survey conducted by one of the top websites on media<sup>5</sup> in Turkey, it was asked which political party had carried out the most successful political communication campaign during the 2010 referendum. 59 per cent of the responses pointed to the ruling party the AKP and 25 per cent said the main opposition party the

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<sup>2</sup> [http://en.rsf.org/IMG/CLASSEMENT\\_2012/CLASSEMENT\\_ANG.pdf](http://en.rsf.org/IMG/CLASSEMENT_2012/CLASSEMENT_ANG.pdf), access date 25.02.2012

<sup>3</sup> BIRGUN Daily,

[http://www.birgun.net/actuel\\_index.php?news\\_code=1327940149&year=2012&month=01&day=30](http://www.birgun.net/actuel_index.php?news_code=1327940149&year=2012&month=01&day=30), access date 30.02.2012

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.medyatakip.com.tr/>, access date 14.06.2011

<sup>5</sup> [medyaloji.net](http://medyaloji.net), 2010 access date 25.10.2011

CHP. In terms of the objectivity of the media, when asked about the approach of the media, 76 per cent recognized the media as partitioned and merely 2 per cent said that the Turkish media is objective. Eventually, according to MTM, the referendum was fifthly among the most frequently mentioned 15 issues in the media in Turkey in 2010.

In brief, the impact of the media became a current issue on the political agenda of Turkey along with the 2010 referendum for constitutional amendments, which was passed with 58% 'yes' votes. However, from this point of view, several questions came up such as how the media covered the views of different political parties, whether the media influenced the votes of citizens in the referendum, and how the media affected the results. In order to find answers to these questions, characteristics of the Turkish media system and its interaction with the political system, media effects in Turkey as an example of emerging democracies, will be analysed in detail in the next chapter. This is because, in this study I assume that understanding the relation between the independent or free media and democracy is crucial for the democratisation of Turkey.

## **1.1. Overview of the Thesis**

### **1.1.1. Purpose of the Research**

This thesis examines the role of the media content on the 2010 referendum voting by the help of the analyses of the dynamics of the voting in Turkey including the media coverage of five newspapers.

Turkey is a country which experienced different social processes such as migration and urbanization and still continues its social, cultural and economical transformation since the establishment of the republic. That transformation has an impact on a large scale from political party preferences to voting in Turkey. Turkey also constitutes an interesting research area for the social scientists and especially for voting behaviour researchers, when those social facts are evaluated with the historical background, cultural and geographical features of Turkey as a democratizing country. In 1980s, Turkey started a new era that aspiring economic growth and development with the privatization and, afterwards, Turkey also started a new democratization process in order to adapt to a globalizing world. Turkey stands between East and West and

experiences modernization and democratization processes as an Islamic state. This study may present introductory information for researchers about the media and voting in Turkey as a bridge between East and West or as a conflict area between western values and eastern culture. Those processes will be emphasized in the following chapters that include Turkey's political history and democratization journey but; herein, specific to title of the thesis I would like to mention the importance of the 2010 Referendum for Turkey.

The reason for choosing the 2010 Referendum is its unique importance in the history of Turkey. Although, it was conducted for the constitutional amendments, as the most extensive amendments on the Turkish constitution since the establishment of the republic, there has been a common perception like it was a political choice such as general elections among the public. The media played an important role in the creation of this perception. The role of the mass media in referendums is often overlooked despite the media's intensive concern about the referendum, as well as elections. To sum up, the 2010 referendum is very important in the history of Turkey due to its extent and the political environment during the period. With this research I seek to investigate the role of the media in forming this perception, and intend to make a contribution to the fairly limited media studies literature on Turkey, by linking the media effects with the referendum voting. Consequently, I expect to show how the media affects people's votes in emerging democracies, and to what extent.

### **1.1.2. Scope and Significance of the Research**

Despite the large scope of the media effects literature and voting behaviour literature, the scope of this thesis is limited by the media effects on voting behaviour and especially on referendum voting. The framework of the thesis is largely drawn from the media systems literature and the role of the media in new democracies. Media effects theories are also important for this research for the interpretation of the media content analysis data. Also, the dynamics of voting are handled in respect of referenda voting. In brief, the field of the study is around the importance of political communication in new democracies during voting periods. On the other hand, public opinion surveys and media content are the main datasets for the empirical part of the study. KONDA research agency's public opinion surveys will be used for the first part

of the analysis and five national newspapers are selected as the outlets of this study for the analysis of the media content.

### **1.1.3. Research Questions**

With this research I aim to emphasize the importance of the explanation of the relation between the media system, media structure and the media content and the voter profile and the voter preferences in Turkey which can give clues about the democratization of Turkey as the main argument in the 2010 constitutional referendum. For this purpose, I aim to elucidate the media effects on referendum voting as a practice of direct democracy and, particularly the effects upon the 2010 constitutional referendum as the most extensive and controversial referendum in Turkey. I will scrutinize the influence of newspapers' coverage and public opinion surveys in order to understand the power of the media upon voting behaviour and forming public opinion in Turkey. With this project I plan to link the literature on media studies and constitutional referendum studies to examine the role of the media in Turkey. Therefore, with the answers to the following main research questions I seek to expose the impact of the mass media upon voting preferences in the 2010 referendum:

- Did the media affect the 2010 referendum results? To what extent did the media affect votes and form opinions in 2010 referendum?
- How did the media represent the referendum process? Was it neutral or biased? To what extent did the media cover the amendments in its content?
- What were the most important determinative factors for the voters in 2010 referendum?

In order to reply these fundamental research questions, I employ the public opinion survey data analysis and the media content analysis and I will link these two analysis results in the light of the media systems, media effects theories, and referendums literature. Public opinion survey data provided from KONDA as row data including questions and their answers. I transferred the data into SPSS and analysed in the direction of my research questions. I also collected the media content data from the

city archive in Izmir by taking the copies of each news items from the hardcopies as primary sources.

However, the main research questions mentioned above are intended for the empirical part of the thesis. On the other hand, there are also some sub-questions regarding the theoretical chapters that are crucial to understand the empirical results. The main of these questions can be listed as below:

- How did the historical development of Turkish media affect the current media system in Turkey?
- How did the media affected by the fall of Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the republic? How did this transformation affect the point of the view of public on media?
- What are the legislative regulations for the news media in Turkey? And what factors have influenced these regulations?
- How was the referendum history in Turkey? Does Turkey have an established referendum tradition?
- What are the main media systems and what are the main features of Turkish media system? Why the media systems are important to understand media effects on voting?
- What are the dynamics of voting behaviour and especially for referenda voting? Why referendums are important and what is the importance of constitutional referendums?
- What were the dynamics of voting behaviour in 2010 referendum in Turkey? And, how were the referendum and its reasons perceived by citizens?
- What are the main voter profiles in Turkey? And, how is the relationship between vote intention and personal features of voters such as party identification, education or religion?
- How was the change in vote intention during the referendum campaign period?

- How did the media represent the referendum by different media outlets? Were they neutral or biased?
- Did the media focus on the content of the amendments or political campaigning of parties in their coverage?

#### **1.1.4. Limitations of the Study**

There are also some limitations to this research, as with almost all researches. First of all, public opinion is a crucial element for this study but it is very challenging to reach public opinion data in Turkey, as with reaching the archives of newspapers and television channels. However, it is not sensible to conduct surveys retrospectively. Thus, I had to use the only one public opinion survey data from a private research and consultancy company KONDA. KONDA also represents a controversial position in Turkey due to its connections with CHP and their results have often been discussed. This point will be detailed in the research design chapter again.

In addition, the literature regarding the media history and the media landscape in Turkey is very limited. One of the reasons for this is that, the media and especially Turkish media can be defined as a new and developing academic area in Turkey. Also, it is hard to stay current because of unstable and the quick-changeable structure of media ownership in Turkey. For this reason, I had to apply some non-academic and same resources oftentimes to provide information about these fields.

Last but not least, the most important limitation of this research is the lack of online archive system for the newspapers and televisions in Turkey. However, it is not allowed to citizens to reach the archives. Data sharing is very limited in terms of the media and even if the archives open for the researchers it takes a long time for the getting permission because of red tape. Also, working with hardcopies of the newspaper archives also has been very time-consuming process. At the beginning of the research, it was planned to include five television channels' evening news in the analysis because of the importance of the television in Turkey. Unfortunately, only two of those channels have had online archives but, they were accessible until a year ago which means they were accessible since the January 2011. Yet, later chosen television outlets excluded from the media outlets of this research.

Therefore, due to all these limitations and especially with the limitation of the resources on the media studies on voting in Turkey, this research is expected to provide a unique contribution to this literature in case of Turkey with this methodological approach.

## **1.2. Chapter Outline**

*Chapter 1* represents the introduction of the subject and my reasons for choosing this topic. This chapter includes the importance of the subject, contribution of the thesis, objectives, scope and limitations of the study. Besides, main research questions and assistive sub-questions can be found in this chapter. Chapter outline as an introduction and a brief summary of each chapter are also given place in this part.

In *Chapter 2* I provide an extensive historical background of the Turkish media and the referendum experiences of Turkey. In addition, to provide systematic integrity for understanding the Turkish media system, I discuss the media landscape of Turkey – press, television, radio and online media- with the legislative regulations and regulatory institutions on the media. I briefly note the 2010 Referendum process in this chapter, which I elaborate in the following chapter within the context of the amendments. The information provided in this chapter is expected to help to understand the media coverage and the effects of the media that will also be useful for the interpretation of the data analyses.

In *Chapter 3* I provide a comprehensive review of the literature regarding the media systems, referendums and media effects theories. This research is theoretically linked with the media system models of Hallin and Mancini. I will also discuss Turkey's media system in light of Hallin and Mancini's media systems categorisation by emphasizing structure of media markets, political parallelism, professionalism and role of the state. I will address referendums with regards to their importance in the democratizing countries as a direct democracy practice. The notion of referendum and constitutional referendums will also take place in this chapter. The 2010 referendum will be explained within the content of the amendments package and the process before the referendum. Voting behaviour in referendums will be explained in respect of party, elite and campaign effects. Besides, the role of the media in referendums will be mentioned with the media effects theories such as agenda-setting, priming, framing, uses and gratifications and social learning which have been

found useful for this research. At the end of this chapter, main expectations regarding empirical chapters will be stated starting from history, theory and literature, in this chapter

In *Chapter 4* I explain the research design and methodology. In brief, I will describe the data and media outlets and also explain the sampling technique, determination of the time period, unit of analysis, categories and coding method. I will try to elucidate what was considered while collecting data such as the location, length and tone of stories and etc. This chapter also includes the definition of variables, indicators and coding scheme. Qualitative and quantitative content analyses as the research method of this thesis are also mentioned in this chapter. I will also explain how to link the media content with public opinion.

*Chapters 5 and 6* are based on the empirical study, in other words the findings and analysis. In chapter 5, the public opinion survey data provided by the KONDA Research and Consultancy Company will be analysed and this chapter will examine the dynamics of voting in Turkey, voter preferences and voting behaviour in the 2010 constitutional referendum. The role of the political actors such as leaders and parties and the most important determinatives of the public during the 2010 referendum campaign period will be explored in this chapter. *Chapter 6* examine the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the media content in order to understand the salience of the referendum issue in the media and the attitudes of the media outlets in the referendum campaigns. Analysing the content and explaining the media coverage is a very important step for this study to understand the effects of the media on the 2010 referendum.

In *Chapter 7* I intend to link the results of public opinion survey data analysis and the media content analysis which can shed light on the role of the media during the referendum process, on the basis of main findings of former chapters. Media coverage, its impartiality and effects on referenda voting will be discussed in respect of the content analysis findings. I will attempt to define the relationship between the media and the 2010 referendum within the process of democratization in Turkey. *Chapter 8* as the conclusion will cover all the empirical chapter findings and examine these results with the historical developments, theory and the literature to provide

better understanding for the role of the media in the 2010 constitutional referendum in Turkey.

All these chapters mentioned above are expected to provide the readers comprehensive information about the media and voting in Turkey as a special and unusual example. This is because Turkey cannot be described as one of modern, democratic western countries but, at the same time it cannot be described as an Islamic, undemocratic eastern country. To sum up, Turkey cannot easily fit into any given molds and requires a detailed information and analysis.

In the beginning, I will start with the historical background and conceptual approach to referendum issue. The historical development of the Turkish media, the media landscape and legal regulations on the media will be addressed in order to know the mass media in Turkey well. Besides, the referendum practices of Turkey will be historically given place in this chapter to introduce Turkey's social and political structure which would be helpful to understand voting behaviour.

## **Chapter II: Historical Background: The Media and Referendums in Turkey**

Media and politics are the most important and interwoven actors of modern social systems. There has always been discussion about the impact the media may have on politics and political agendas. Thus, the attractive and complicated relation between these two actors has gained a substantial position in the field of political science. Within the framework of referendums, I will examine the relationship between these two actors, the role of the media in politics and their effects on citizens' voting behaviour. Yet, as a beginning I would like to look through the history of the media and referenda history of Turkey because the historical development can help us to understand the current issues with their reasons.

The significance of the mass media in referendums extends beyond their effects in general elections. In referendums specific issues are put to vote, rather than a given party or candidate. Therefore referendums inspire citizens' interest in political issues and help to develop their understanding of public problems. For this reason, citizens keep a close watch on the mass media to get information about the social and economic problems in the state during referendum periods (Gözler 1988: 100). This is because, referendums are about citizens' preferences and so they would like to keep informed about the subject in question. Also, the spirit of democracy is undermined by a lack of publically accessible information about a given policy issue. According to a number of researchers, people follow the media for information about politics. At this point, it is important that the media's provision of political information is neutral. This is because the media could reflect and promote one political camp's attitudes and opinions more than another's. Furthermore, the media is capable of manipulating voters with its content (Simsek 2009:125). Such features would be shaped by the past experiences of a society. A consideration of the historical development of the media could give important clues about today's media structures and virtues.

## **Expectations and Questions**

In this chapter, I will summarize the historical development of the Turkish media to provide a basis for properly understanding the Turkish media system. In the following chapter I will discuss Turkish media systems and I hope this information will help me to obtain more robust results about the effects of the media. In this chapter, I seek to answer these research questions:

- How did the media affected by the fall of Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the republic?
- How did this transformation affect the point of the view of public on media?
- What are the legislative regulations for the news media in Turkey? And what factors have influenced these regulations?
- How was the referendum history in Turkey? Does Turkey have an established referendum tradition?

There are three parts of this chapter: 1) Historical development of the media; 2) the landscape of the media in Turkey; 3) Legislative regulations (including constitutional regulations) on the mass media and regulatory institutions. I use these titles in order to outline the legal limitations of the media and state control over the media. These sections are considered to be helpful for providing a more complete understanding of the Turkish media from the state's nascent stages, and extending into today. In this chapter, I also expect to present detailed information about the history and the landscape of the media in Turkey in order to provide better understanding about Turkey case. At the same time, I hope the information presented in this chapter will help us to understand the Turkish media system better which will be discussed in the following chapter.

Finally, in this chapter I will mention the referendum history of Turkey in brief. It is intended to be useful for understanding the way that Turkish society perceives referendums. This historical context will help to uncover how Turkish citizens position the 2010 referendum in their minds.

## **2.1. Historical Development of the Media in Turkey**

In this part, I aim to show that how the media developed with the changing and evolving political, economic and social structure in Turkey. In other words, historical development process of the media also reflects the transformation process of the Republic of Turkey from the Ottoman Empire. The historical perspective can reveal the point of view of the public and trust on media or the extent of the state control today. Also, the media system of a given country is mostly shaped by the incidents in the history. Thus, even the media content can be implicitly affected by the historical development of the media.

In this era, the mass media plays a significant role both in mature and emerging democracies. In particular, the power of social media has been growing day by day in world politics. It is largely supposed that the media has a major role in political decision making processes and the media has the power to influence citizens, political parties and leaders, and also governments. Here I would like to emphasize that the mass media is also a financial actor. For example, mass media owners also have companies in other sectors. In brief, the mass media is important in economic aspects and in financial activities.

Turkish politics have also been affected by this undeniable power of the mass media. Although the role of the media in politics has been a striking subject in the Republic of Turkey, especially with the transition to the multi-party system, the origins of the contemporary Turkish media are from the times of the Ottoman Empire. The evolution of the media in Turkey will be handled from the establishment process of the Turkish Republic in the 1920s, to the EU accession process in the 2000s in order to understand the Turkish media system, the historical development of 'media-state relations' and to clarify the effects of the media system upon politics in Turkey.

Media has evolved parallel to the development of democracy and social changes in national and international spheres. The establishment of the republic, the transition to a multi-party system, military regime periods and the democratization process towards EU accession process are the most significant developments in Turkey's

recent history, which have also affected the media system (Elmas and Kurban 2011:17).

Herein, the development of the media will be explained in a chronological order. In respect of the mass media, initially, the press started to attract attention towards the end of the Ottoman Empire and in the early days of the Turkish Republic. In later years, radio became an important media source to get information for Turkish society, especially in the periods of military regimes. Along with the emergence and proliferation of television, it comes out as the most popular media until today. In recent decades, the internet and social media seem to have emerged out of the television, but it is still the most popular mass media in Turkey.

The Republic of Turkey has had a critical press as the Fourth Estate, and the press has been exposed to censorship, closed many times and it has been restricted by legislation which started during the Ottoman Empire period in which the press was launched. In other words, the press has been always under the control of the government, preventing any serious public scrutiny and criticism of the government (Semetko 2010:17). On the other hand, journalists have had an important role in the Westernization of both the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey. Journalists have been quite effective in promoting and imposing the reforms of new modern states during one-party regimes, from the proclamation of the Republic in 1923 until the transition to a multi-party system in 1945 (Demirel and Heper 1996:113). State guided press was an important part of the modernisation project, while the opposition press was subject to state pressure. In short, 'Journalists were both the object and the subject of the state-driven modernisation movements in Turkey' (Elmas and Kurban 2010:414). Hence, journalists have had a critical role in the foundation of the republic and the settlement of reforms.

The first newspaper and the first generation of journalists emerged in Turkey during the final stages of the Ottoman Empire with the independence movement led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. During the final years of Ottoman rule, the press was heavily censored and it was impossible to talk about freedom of expression or freedom of press. The Sultan used several methods to enhance his control over the press, such as closing newspapers, bribing and punishing journalists and editors. Under these

conditions, the number of newspapers reduced and the quality of the content also declined. Newspapers started to give eviscerated news, for example only reporting the official news, or some international issues which were deemed to be 'harmless'. Despite these negations, the circulation numbers increased in this period. Due to the ban on discussing internal politics, newspapers covered attractive news stories and improved their technical features and form. This caused an increase in their circulation and impact on society. Moreover, these developments extended the regular newspaper reading habits, international issues attracted more attention because of the ban and several translations and adoptions of foreign publications were made in this period (Kushner 1977:14-15). This way of press changed along with the beginning of the war of independence and the press started to be an important factor in internal politics.

Atatürk knew that 'correspondence' was as crucial as weapons during the war of independence, in the transition from rooted empire for six centuries to a modern nation state. So, Atatürk and a think tank of movement prioritised print media as a common communication device to reach the masses. Atatürk launched the *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* (National Sovereignty) newspaper for the first time on 10<sup>th</sup> January 1920 in Ankara which would later become the capital of the young Turkish Republic. Then, its name was changed as *Ulus*, to represent Atatürk's major decisions during the 'War of Independence'. Likewise, the *Anadolu Ajansı* (Anatolian Agency) was established for the same purpose on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1920. The main goal of Anadolu Ajansı was to publish the 'true' news about the 'Turkish Independence War' in both national and international arenas. Additionally, the press was used as a medium for getting support for independence and creating a spirit of nationalism. As Elmas and Kurban have indicated, 'the creation of the republic was primarily a top-down project, and the press was a vital element for the founding elite to proclaim the republican values' (2011:18).

During the early years of the republic, state-media relations were smooth; but, after a while cracks began to emerge with the establishment of the first opposition political party *Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası* (Developmentalist Republican Party) in 1924. In 1925 the Kurdish Sheikh Said Rebellion occurred in the southeast of Turkey which can be defined a kind of riot. Shortly after that, the *Takrir-i Sükun Kanunu* (Law on

the Maintenance of Order) was enacted on 4 March 1925 under the pretext of protecting the regime from this kind of threat (Akşin 1989:101-102). However, this law impeded the freedom of the press and quelled any sort of defiance in the country. In accordance with this law, many dissenting journalists, politicians and rebels were prosecuted in the Independence Courts (*İstiklâl Mahkemeleri*) and most were subsequently banished on the grounds that they attempt to disrupt the social order. Then by, the only opposition party *Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası* was closed on 3 June 1925 and 15 opposition newspapers such as *Yoldaş*, *Presse du Soir*, *Resimli Ay*, *Millet*, *Sada-yı Hak*, *Doğru Söz*, *Kahkaha* were closed down on 6 March 1925 and closure continued around a month. On the other hand, only government supporting newspapers were permitted to operate such as the government publication *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* (Bilgic 2010:35). Prohibitions, closures and restrictions on the freedom of the press occurred on a number of occasions throughout the history of Turkey.

Another major reform which influenced the Turkish media occurred in 1928. The Alphabet Reform saw Ottoman script, which used Arabic letters, replaced with the Latin alphabet. This radical change required the press to acquire new technology for the new lettering system. As a consequence, the press became financially dependent on the government. This financial dependence meant the state could exercise control over the press. In the meantime, all kinds of opposition were quashed during the *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* (Republican People's Party - CHP) governance for 27 years between 1923 and 1950 (Sumer 2010: 106). The reform caused millions of people become illiterate overnight, which also had a negative impact on people's interest in print media for many years.

Radio broadcasting was launched in Turkey shortly after the start of radio broadcasting in the world, in 1927. The media company called *Türk Telsiz Telefon A.Ş.* (Turkish Radio Telephone- TTAŞ) which broadcasts in Ankara and İstanbul was established by the partnership of two public enterprises *Anadolu Ajansı* and *Türkiye İş Bankası*. The TTAŞ signed a contract with the government and took the BBC as a model (Sumer 2010: 36). Thus, radio broadcasting tended to favor the state even if it was not directly in support of it. In 1936, the company's contract renewal request was not accepted and the state started to carry out the radio broadcasts by itself in the

same year. In 1939, the Ankara Radio began to broadcast news bulletins in foreign languages for the use of other countries which emphasised Turkey's policy of neutrality regarding the Second World War. Thereafter, a radio station was launched in 1949 by the Izmir Municipality and that too was transformed into a government enterprise in 1953. Hereby, Izmir became not only the third major city but also the third major radio broadcasting centre in Turkey after Ankara and Istanbul. Radio broadcasting under the state monopoly served for the 'establishment and consolidation of official ideology in its first decades. For instance, playing Turkish music on the radio was banned. In 1934 Atatürk gave a speech in parliament which illustrates this point: 'it is necessary to collect noble expressions describing elaborate emotions and ideas and process them according to the contemporary music norms' (Elmas and Kurban 2010:416). Following Atatürk's speech, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs determined that Istanbul and Ankara radio stations should play pieces 'composed according to Western technique' instead of Turkish music. This ban lasted for approximately one and a half years. During this period, many people tried to listen to Egyptian, Crimean and Yerevan radio stations which played music closer to traditional Turkish music, rather than Western music (Gokce 1990: 707).

Following the abolition of *Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası*, Atatürk founded another opposition party in 1930 called *Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası* (Free Republican Party). However this party was also closed shortly after its establishment and no medium for the expression of dissent would exist in the country until the 1950s. By 1945, Turkey's economy started to go downhill and the Turkish bourgeoisie were dissatisfied because of the economic conditions. In 1947, Turkey had to comply with democracy and free market economy. Furthermore, Turkey was obligated to adjust democratic principles along with the acceptance of the United Nations (UN) Treaty in 1945. These developments led to the foundation of Democrat Party (DP) which provided the transition to a multi-party system with its triumph in the 1950s elections. With the DP government, the press, as well as many segments of society, had great expectations, especially regarding the democratisation of Turkey. Freedom of the press was one of the initial issues that the DP addressed. There were legal reforms on journalists' social rights and a 'liberal press law' was enacted on 15<sup>th</sup> July 1950. But, these legal reforms conceived to enhance governmental control of universities and the press. The DP attached importance to the point of 'freedom of press' and

tried to provide and strengthen the freedom of the press with some legal reforms. But, actually, these reforms were to control the media. By 1955, press censorship and court cases had increased because of criticism of the government (Elmas and Kurban 2010:416).

The media has been exposed to restrictions by the state from its outset and has often been used as an instrument for manipulation. During the DP government, the freedom of the press was legally restricted and the journalists' union was closed until 1960. In this period, the DP government used the radio as a political tool. For instance, citizens' names who attended the DP's political organism were announced daily on the radio. This implementation could be defined as 'manufacturing consent' (Chomsky and Herman 1988) which is assumed to be one of the most significant reasons for the military coup on 27<sup>th</sup> May 1960.

On 27<sup>th</sup> May 1960 the DP government was overthrown by military coup and soon afterwards the Turkish Radio and Broadcasting Corporation (TRT) was established in 1964. It started public TV broadcasts in 1967. The TRT with its TV channels and radio channels became the most influential and primary medium for the state to reach the large masses. The news headlines were reported in protocol order and the national anthem was broadcasted every day from both the TV and the radio channels. In a sense, the TRT was acting as an extension and tool of the state. In the meantime, the number of TVs in people's houses was increasing day by day thanks to the price reduction of televisions (Elmas and Kurban 2011: 22). The introduction of the television to almost every Turkish household increased the influence of the TRT on individuals.

In 1970, there was a second military coup in Turkey which trundled the country into a huge political chaos and caused instability for a ten year period. It came to a close with the third military intervention at the end of decade. During the chaotic atmosphere from 1974 to 1980, the TRT became like the battle field for opponent political groups. Turkey experienced the third military coup on 12<sup>th</sup> September 1980 and for the first time it was announced to the public through the TRT. Despite the intention of military regimes to seize the institutional framework of the media after the military coups, the last development indicated the inception of the 'structural

transformation of the political and social life' in Turkey which persists today (Dagtas 2007: 2). The media and particularly the TV were used effectively to prohibit all kinds of dissent and to create standardized, non-interfering and uncritical citizens. In 1983, the Communications High Council (*Haberleşme Yüksek Kurulu-HYK*), 'a hybrid civilian and military body', was founded to superintend the communication policies of the government. According to Elmas and Kurban, 'this and similar bodies regulating different walks of social life consolidated the longitude of military tutelage over society' (2010: 417).

After the 1983 national elections, along with the victory of the *Anavatan Partisi* (Motherland Party- ANAP) under the leadership of Turgut Ozal, the final military regime fell into decline and the 'liberalisation process' began in Turkey. Social, political and notably economic factors, free-market reforms of the ANAP substantially affected the evolution of the media in the 1980s. New liberal economic conditions reinforced private entrepreneurship particularly in the media industry. In Turkey, previously, media owners were families who had been in journalism for many years, but later giant corporations started to establish or buy newspapers and television channels. Today these conglomerates dominate the mass media in Turkey (Çağlar and Mengü 2008). As a result, this economic transformation created a new media sector under the impact of large media holdings without small groups in 1990s Turkey. This radical change caused some transformations in terms of print and broadcasting media. According to Elmas and Kurban, 'on the press front, the rapid tabloidisation of newspapers in the 1980s and commercialisation/deregulation of the media in the 1990s generated a tendency toward sensational news journalism' (2011: 23). This shift in the media ownership affected and also changed the structure of the media.

The first private TV 'Magic Box' (renamed Star TV) started to broadcast via satellite from Germany in 1990, despite the TRT's monopoly of television and radio broadcasting ensured by article 133 of constitution. This constitutional ban would be vanquished mostly for President Turgut Ozal's son Ahmet Ozal who was one of the shareholders of television. In 1993, article 133 of the constitution was amended and state monopoly in broadcasting was eliminated. Afterwards, adoption of the Radio and Television Law dates from 1983 provided a legal basis for private broadcasting in

1994. During the 1990s, private and thematic channels increased, the first private radio station was launched and media became diversified in Turkey. By virtue of the dynamism in the media, various silenced actors and groups started to take part in public life. Long programs, in which Turkey's recent history was discussed by intellectuals, were the most popular on television (Elmas and Kurban 2010:418). The intense interest people had in these programs also meant that there was very narrow discussion about the country's current and historical political issues. In other words, it can be said that, there was a need for political affairs programs. In order to respect democratic principles people needed to discuss political issues and current affairs, however it was not possible when there was only one channel, which belonged to the state.

Towards the end of the 1990s, there was a reshaping of long term state control over the media. Big capitalist companies/groups which had media holdings started to use the media to build good relations with governments for their political and economic interests. At the end of the 1990s, the 'post-modern military coup' occurred on 28<sup>th</sup> February 1997. This would be the most important development of the decade. Elmas and Kurban indicated the role of mainstream media in this process as follows:

Mainstream media organisations, prompted by Turkey's military establishment, published fictitious news/content on the rise of Islamism. This catalysed public anxiety over the longitude of the secularist regime and created public support for the toppling of the *Refah-Yol* (Welfare Path) coalition government between the center right True Path Party (DP) and the Islamic conservative *Refah Partisi* (*Welfare Party-RP*). During its monthly meeting in February, the National Security Council, an executive organ comprised of civilian and military leaders, "advised" RP leader Necmettin Erbakan to resign. The military's message was clear; Erbakan faced a more direct military intervention had he not agreed to step down (2011:24).

As a consequence of the 1999 national elections, three political parties: Democratic Leftist Party (DSP), Motherland Party (ANAP) and National Action Party (MHP) formed a coalition government. Meanwhile, two new political parties were

established as the inheritors of the dissolved RP. Traditionalist groups founded *Fazilet Partisi* (Virtue Party-FP re-established The Felicity Party *Saadet Partisi*-The Felicity Party-SP) and reformists founded *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (Justice and Development Party- AKP) which came into power without the support of a coalition partner in 2002. However, along with the AKP government, secularism came into question again in Turkey. Turkey's pro-European and Islamic roots represented a dilemma. Because, it was considered that Islam was an obstacle to the establishment of a secular and modern state. It seems that ever since the establishment of the Republic, Turkey's Islamic tendencies and leanings towards modernity or secularism cannot coexist. This paradox goes beyond the ordinary and challenges the mainstream media which has always been in cooperation with the regime's military and bureaucracy (Cizre 2008: 8).

In November 2000 and February 2001 Turkey experienced serious economic crises. The crises devastated the media industry because of the remarkable amount of investment the media companies had in the banking sector. Many private banks were bankrupted and the Banking Regulation and Supervision Agency (*Bankacılık Denetleme ve Düzenleme Kurulu- BDDK*) revoked the banking licenses of several companies which included media outlets. Meanwhile, the Saving Deposit Insurance Fund (*Tasarruf Mevduatı Sigorta Fonu- TMSF*) entered the media industry stage by taking over the management of bankrupt banks (Elmas and Kurban 2011:25).

Since the 2000s, plenty of reforms have been carried out in different areas such as the constitutional issues and in the field of the media. In this period, the role of the military and its affiliations with politics, the judiciary, society, bureaucracy and the media became crucial with regards to the democratization process in Turkey. The dominance of the military in these spheres has rendered the process much harder. Throughout history, the media has been used to reinforce military power and to diffuse the statist political culture in Turkey. Hence, the media, in particular the mainstream media, became mixed up in tensions between the state-military-bureaucracy circle and society, which sought an independent and objective media. Meanwhile, these developments and constantly globalizing economy gave rise to open up the Turkish media to more foreign investment (Elmas and Kurban 2011: 26). On the other hand, Turkey tried to create new policies of recognition of cultural

identities, and required the recent legal reforms regarding education and broadcasting in the mother tongue in order to guarantee cultural pluralism by virtue of the sensibility of the EU (European Commission, Turkey Progress Report 2008:25). According to the Freedom House 2010 and 2011 scores Turkey is *partly free*. Turkey scores quite low on freedom of expression and freedom of the media. In addition, Freedom House emphasize that Turkey underperforms with regards to 'human rights defence' and 'women's rights' (2012)<sup>6</sup>.

An indispensable element of democracy is an informed citizenry. In modern societies, media is one of the most important instruments for informing the public. In Turkey, media plays a didactic and informative role during political decision-making processes. When we examine public opinion surveys concerning the media, it is clear that people obtain most of their political information from the Turkish media. This point raises several questions, such as: Is the media reliable? If yes, to what extent can people trust the media? Is it neutral or biased? Does it reflect the truth? In order to answer all of these questions it is necessary to know the media in every respect. It is necessary to know its history, landscape, legal regulations and the media system in Turkey.

### **2.1.1. Landscape of Turkish Media**

In this section I will discuss the current landscape of the Turkish media and legal regulations. The current structure of the media and legal framework are very important for understanding the media system in Turkey, as well as the historical background. Turkey has a dominant capitalist system, so it is difficult to understand the attitudes of the media without understanding the huge conglomerates and their transformation into media giants. The huge conglomerates and the state have always had a close relationship in Turkey. The media's involvement in this relationship functions to influence the dynamics of the society. While conglomerates use the media to cultivate a consumption culture and to propagate capitalist ideology towards their interests, the state also propagates its own ideology via its power over the conglomerates (Coban 2013: 165). For this reason, it will be helpful to examine the

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.freedomhouse.org/country/turkey>, access date 04.03.2012

most powerful media groups. In the next part, I will provide a brief account of these groups and their TV channels, radios, websites, newspapers and magazines.

When examining the media sector, it can be said that concentration of ownership is the most distinctive feature of the Turkish media landscape. According to Semetko (2010:21); 'Media concentration of ownership has been criticized for resulting in less diversity in news and information as well as conflicts of interest in displaying a lack of critical reporting on the non-media institutions and organizations owned by media groups'. There is currently a very heavy concentration of the media industry which is problematic for the mainstream Turkish media. Furthermore, self-censorship, the weakness of the media against the military and the government, and nationalist rhetoric are significantly problematic (Baris 2007).

The majority of the media outlets, including television, newspapers, magazines and radio are largely dominated by the ownership of a few multisectorial conglomerates. These companies are also active in other business sectors such as banking, telecommunication, health, finance and construction. However, they need to build close relationships with political and social powers such as the government, bureaucrats, major religious communities and the military, to protect their economic benefits. Thus, for that purpose, these conglomerates use the overwhelming amount of mainstream media that they own. This circumstance has caused a biased and nationalistic media profile and has blocked the development of independent journalism for over 20 years. At the same time, the news coverage has excited the attention of the media owners. In these circumstances, media outlets need to adopt 'strategic editorial policies' and the mainstream media has become 'pro-government, pro-military or sect-oriented' (Baris 2007). On the other hand, the media has some internal problems, which Baris defines as 'editorial hegemony' (2007). For instance, some news is blocked, unpublished or ordered by editors in chief who act according to the instruction of media patrons. In the meantime reporters and journalists are hard done by editorial staff (2007). Despite the recent progress as a consequence of the wave of democratization, there remain many problems for the freedom and independence of journalists and the media.

Turkey's media landscape is structurally divided into two groups. The most influential 8 of 15 are Dogan, Ciner, Dogus, Calik, Albayrak, Cukurova, Feza and Ihlas groups; and the biggest and the most prominent one is the Dogan Holding among these conglomerates which was established in 1980 (Elmas and Kurban 2011:30). These groups own all of the major commercial radio and television stations, newspapers and magazines; and all kinds of media of each group generally share same policy and represent very similar coverage. All these groups, their media organs and main characteristics will be analysed in detail in the printed and visual media sections in order to acquaint them because they lead and direct the media sector in Turkey.

## **Press**

According to the Basbakanlik Basın Yayın ve Enformasyon Genel Müdürlüğü- Office of the Prime Minister, Directorate General of Press and Information (BYEGM), the aggregate number of newspapers that are currently circulating in Turkey is 2.780, of which 187 are national, 92 are regional and 2.501 are local. In addition to this, the total number of periodicals circulating is 3.679; 2.098 national, 265 regional and 1.316 local (TUIK 2011). The aggregate daily newspaper circulation is nearly 4.658.79<sup>7</sup>. Circulation measures do not adequately capture the reach of newspapers as many are also read in public places such as coffee houses and in the workplace. Semetko claimed that; 'at least 13 daily newspapers are circulated to more than 100,000 people each, and 7 dailies sell more than half a million copies each day (2010:21-22). As measured against the population of Turkey, the proportion of readers could be qualified as low. However, the rate of literacy is 88.7% which is also considered to be low. The current population of Turkey is around 74.000.000 (TUIK 2011).

The national newspapers have the highest reader rates, with 4.5-5 million daily circulations. Among the national daily newspapers (with their average weekly sales), Zaman (945.162), Posta (467.646), Hürriyet (418.581), Sabah (337.427), and Haber Türk (240.806) are the top five<sup>8</sup>. Istanbul and Ankara, are the headquarters of the

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<sup>7</sup> [http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreTablo.do?tb\\_id=15&ust\\_id=5](http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreTablo.do?tb_id=15&ust_id=5), access date 17.06.2011

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.medyaline.com/haber/rating.html>, access date 03.12.2011

national media outlets, including newspapers and television. All of the main media centers are based in these cities.

All of the major newspapers belong to the large media holdings mentioned at the beginning of the section. Dogan Group has 8 national newspapers: Hurriyet, Referans, Hurriyet Daily News, Milliyet, Radikal, Posta, Vatan and Fanatik<sup>9</sup>. Hurriyet has the second highest circulation figures and along with Milliyet it has represented the mainstream of the Turkish press for a long time. Hurriyet and Milliyet are considered to be nationalist, statist, center right and liberal secular newspapers, but it is hard to characterize them with any particular ideology. This is because these newspapers are owned by a huge multisectorial media holding. This factor creates one of the main traps for the media in Turkey. This is: large media outlets support political powers in return for financial gains. Radikal, another of the Dogan Group's dailies, could be identified as a leftist intellectual newspaper. Radikal has a social-democrat point of view and is supportive of religious rights and the freedom of ethnic minorities. Posta is a tabloid newspaper with the second highest readership in Turkey. And, Referans was a financial paper that merged with Radikal in 2010. Hurriyet Daily News is the oldest newspaper which has been publishing in English since March 1961<sup>10</sup>. It is considered as the primary news source for foreign people living in Turkey. Vatan has a young audience, and Fanatik was the first sports daily, launched in 1995 (Dogan Medya Grubu Faaliyet Raporu - Annual Report of DMG 2009). Furthermore, the biggest media company the Dogan Group and Turkuvaz Group lead the distribution of the print media.

Another important media company is the Turkuvaz Group which belongs to the Calik Holding, and is known for its connections with the government party AKP (Elmas and Kurban 2010:423). The Turkuvaz Group has the mainstream newspapers Sabah, Sabah Avrupa (Europe) and USA Sabah for Turkish people living in Europe and the USA, Takvim daily, sports daily Fotomaç, and the Yeni Asır which is distributed only in the Aegean region and is based in the west city İzmir<sup>11</sup>. The Calik group has several thematic weeklies such as Bebeğim ve Biz (Baby-Mother), Sinema (Cinema),

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.dyh.com.tr/> access date 26.09.2012

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/about-the-newsroom.aspx?pagelD=454> access date 26.09.2012

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.turkuvazyayin.com.tr/> access date 26.09.2012

Home Art (House Decoration), Yeni Aktuel (Politics-Agenda) and Global Enerji (Economic) (Calik Holding 2011; Turkuvaz Medya Grubu 2012)<sup>12</sup>.

The Ciner Group is one of the strongest companies existing in the Turkish media sector. The group runs Gazete Haberturk which was launched in 2009 and became one of the most circulated dailies in Turkey. It could be described as an example of the catch-all press<sup>13</sup>. Baris claims that, the Ciner group is also the closest rival of Dogan group which may replace it as the largest media conglomerate in Turkey (2007). The Ciner Group also owns the Turkish language editions of international magazines such as Newsweek, FHM, Marie Claire Maison, Marie Claire, Food and Travel, GEO, and Mother and Baby. The Cukurova Holding owns the TurkMedya media group including the Aksam and Gunes dailies.

The most circulated Islamic-liberal newspaper Zaman belongs to the Feza Group which has strong connections with the Gulen Islamic community, led by Fethullah Gulen. For Elmas and Kurban: 'Fethullah Gülen movement, an extremely well organised and close knit conservative community which operates Turkish instruction schools and universities across the world and invests internationally in various sectors of the economy' (Elmas and Kurban 2010:422). Established in 1986, Zaman is also released in Europe, the United States, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Romania and Turkmenistan. Today's Zaman is the English version owned by the Feza Group.<sup>14</sup>

Founded in 1952, the Albayrak Group entered the media sector in 1995 at the same time as the launch of the Islamic Yeni Safak newspaper, which has approximately 200.000 daily circulations<sup>15</sup>. It is described as a 'free island in Turkish press' by the Group because it has several columnists who represent alternative perspectives. The group is known for its close ties with the government because the owner of the group is Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's son in law Berat Albayrak.

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<sup>12</sup> [http://www.calik.com/TR/Medya/yazili\\_medya\\_gazeteler\\_ve\\_dergiler](http://www.calik.com/TR/Medya/yazili_medya_gazeteler_ve_dergiler) and <http://www.turkuvazyayin.com.tr/> access date 30.09.2012

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.cinergroup.com.tr/> access date 01.10.2012

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.zaman.com.tr/wp-content/uploads/kunye.jpg> access date 01.10.2012

<sup>15</sup> <http://albayrak.com.tr/SektorSirket/YeniSafak> access date 01.10.2012

Cumhuriyet is the first daily newspaper of the Turkish Republic. It was established to support Ataturk's resistance movement in 1924. It means 'Republic' in Turkish, a name given with the aim of defending and representing the republic, and had the mission of explaining Ataturk's principles to the people. Even though the founder of Cumhuriyet, Yunus Nadi, tried to distinguish it from a government or a party newspaper, Cumhuriyet clearly came to represent the main ideology of the state. Cumhuriyet is not entirely owned by any multi-sectorial group and was once the newspaper representing the left-wing in Turkey. Although it has experienced many financial crises and relatively low circulation, it has significance for its permanent readership such as radical secularists, Kemalists (pro Ataturk), anti-Islamists, and the educated elite.

There are also some minor Islamic newspapers circulated in Turkey. Vakit, Yeni Akit, Milli Gazete are the most radical Islamic newspapers and the Milli Gazete is the voice of the 'Milli Gorus' movement that is led by Necmettin Erbakan who was the founder of many Islamic political parties in Turkey. He is also known as the 'teacher' of the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan in his political journey (Baris 2007).

Moreover, there is an alternative press, or in other words, minority press in Turkey. For instance, Taraf is the most striking example of this minority press, owned by a bookshop chain *Alkim Kitabevi*. It was established in 2007 by some important journalists and intellectuals. Its stance cannot be identified as pro-government or pro-Islam but it can certainly be identified as anti-militarist. Taraf affected the military traditions with its courageous and harsh publications. Although it seems positive towards the AKP, it has criticized the ruling party AKP on the issues of the freedom of the press, the Kurdish problem and police violence. Taraf could come to the fore despite its low level of circulation in comparison with the mainstream press, because it has published a range of secret documents that reveal the unsuccessful military coup attempts against the governing party AKP (Elmas and Kurban 2011: 35). In other words, Taraf challenged the dogmas, and nationalistic discourse of the press and Turkey's taboos, for example 'the role of the military in politics, the politicisation of the Turkish judiciary system, governments' unfair legislation on state contracts'. Taraf gained an unprecedented position in Turkey's media landscape within

approximately three years. It has played an important role in forming public opinion and shaping politics with its publications (Baris 2007: 299). Taraf instantly increased its circulation numbers against the mainstream media ruled by the huge media holdings. This situation showed that people needed independent journalism.

Turkey's officially recognized minorities also have their own newspapers. Greek orthodox people have the daily IHO and weekly Apoyevmatini, while the Jewish community has the publication Salom. Armenians run three important newspapers: the most known Agos, their oldest paper Jamanak and, Marmara and Lrapar as the newsletter of the Armenian Patriarchate in Istanbul. Agos has a special position as a minority newspaper because it is predominantly published in Turkish and so may reach the large masses countrywide. In 2007, after the assassination of the chief editor Hrant Dink, Agos became known to everyone in Turkey and increased its circulation (Elmas and Kurban 2011:34). People who would like to revolt against unsolved murders, racism, radical nationalism, all sorts of state control and pressure and who would like to defend human rights, freedom of the press and minority rights started to promote Agos after 2007 to show their reaction. Welat was the first weekly in Kurdish. It was established in 1992 just after the abolishment of the ban on writing and speaking in Kurdish and renamed Azadiya Welat in 1996<sup>16</sup>. It became daily in 2006 after moving its center from Istanbul to Diyarbakir in 2003. Despite various interruptions by court actions it continues to go to press today (Baris 2007: 291).

The interest in magazines and periodicals in Turkey is also low relative to the size of the population. There are 14 weeklies selling a combined total of around 110,000 copies<sup>17</sup>. The four bestsellers are news magazine Aksiyon, founded by the Feza Group with a fairly steady rate of 38,000, Yeni Aktüel of the Turkuaz Group with 8,000, Newsweek Turkiye with 5,000 and the weekly magazine The Economist sells around 9,000 copies. As a result, the circulation of the weeklies is quite low compared to the dailies. The celebrity magazines have a total weekly circulation of 20,000 copies, while the automobile magazines circulate over 15,000. It is also important to mention Birikim, a highly respected liberal-left journal which publishes elaborate articles on social and political issues (Elmas and Kurban 2011: 424).

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.azadiyawelat.info/> access date 20.10.2012

## Television

Television is the primary source of information and the main tool of entertainment in Turkey. According to the viewing survey of the RTUK (Radio and Television Supreme Council) in 2006, daily TV watching time on week days is 5.1 hours per person, and it increases to 5.15 hours at the weekend which decreased by years – on weekdays 4.3 in 2009 and 3.7 in 2012 (RTUK Televizyon Izleme Egilimleri Arastirmasi – Research on TV Audience Measurement- 2013)<sup>18</sup>. On the other hand, according to Vedat and Vesile Cakir in their recent research in 2010, Turkish people watch 4 hours per day on average (2010).

After the completion of the digitalising process, the number of TV channels available on cable is expected to reach 300. According to the BYEGM (T.C. Babakanlik Basın Yayın ve Enformasyon Genel Mudurlugu- Republic of Turkey Office of the Prime Minister Directorate General of Press and Information) there are 24 national, 16 regional and 215 local television stations in Turkey<sup>19</sup>. There are approximately 300 privately owned local television channels, and more than a dozen nationally broadcast private channels. While the majority of private channels are commercial and feature entertainment, sports and news, as in the U.S., some religious groups in Turkey own or control channels and include programming on Islamic practice and topics. Turkey's major television channels include: the TRT which is the state broadcaster; Star TV, private and the first to break the state's TV monopoly; Show TV, a high ratings private network; Kanal D, a high ratings private network; less frequently viewed private networks are ATV, TGRT, NTV, and CNN Turk.

Broadcasting first started in 1964 with the state establishment of the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT)<sup>20</sup>. The state controlled broadcasting in Turkey for over 20 years until the establishment of the first private television channel Star, which was launched in 1990 at which time private broadcasting was illegal. It became legal

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file:///C:/Users/Sinem/Downloads/2013%20Y%C4%B1%C4%B1%20Ara%C5%9F%C4%B1rmalar%C4%B1.pdf access date 21.04.2013

<sup>19</sup> [http://www.byegm.gov.tr/uploads/docs/Bir\\_Bakista\\_Turk\\_Medyasi\\_TR.pdf](http://www.byegm.gov.tr/uploads/docs/Bir_Bakista_Turk_Medyasi_TR.pdf) access date May 2013

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.trt.net.tr/Kurumsal/Tarihce.aspx> access date 20.05.2013

in 1993 with the lifting of the constitutional ban mentioned in the *Historical Background of Turkish Media in Turkey*.

The public broadcaster TRT has 15 television channels: TRT 1 (general), TRT News, TRT 3 for sports and broadcasts live from the Turkish National Grand Assembly at specific hours and TRT 4 (education), a regional channel TRT Gap for the south-eastern region of Turkey, TRT Kid, TRT Documentary, three international channels TRT-TURK for Europe, USA and Australia, TRT-AVAZ for the Balkans, Central Asia and Caucasus and TRT Arabic for the Arabic world, TRT HD, TRT Music, TRT Anatolia, TRT School (TRT 2012). Lastly, TRT 6 (TRT Şeş and called as TRT Kurdi since January 2015), the 'first full time Kurdish Channel' of Turkey, started to broadcast in Kurdish on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009<sup>21</sup>. The channel was launched with a speech by the Prime Minister, who gave a short greeting in Kurdish. TRT 6 became 'the first TRT channel ever to exclusively broadcast in a language other than Turkish' (Baris 2007; Elmas Kurban 2010: 423). This important development occurred as a part of the democratization process for the EU membership that also emphasized in European Commission 2008 Progress Report for Turkey<sup>22</sup>.

The main actors in commercial broadcasting are again the multisectorial conglomerates as in press. The Dogan Group's mainstream television channel Kanal D is one of the leading news channels and CNN Turk as a joint venture with CNN International are amongst the most watched channels in Turkey. On the digital platform the group has D-Smart, which includes many thematic and pay to watch channels. Moreover, the group provides access to all of the channels on Türksat satellite<sup>23</sup>.

As other very popular television channels, ATV owned by the Turkuvaz Group, Show TV and SKY Turk television stations owned by the Cukurova Group and Digiturk, which broadcasts the national football league matches, is another important

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<sup>21</sup> <http://www.trt.net.tr/Kurumsal/TelevizyonTanitim.aspx> access date 11.01.2015

<sup>22</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/press\\_corner/key-documents/reports\\_nov\\_2008/turkey\\_progress\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/press_corner/key-documents/reports_nov_2008/turkey_progress_report_en.pdf) access date 10.10.2015

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.doganholding.com.tr/is-alanlari/medya.aspx>

investments of the group<sup>24</sup>. The Ciner holding has Haberturk TV and Bloomberg TV. Another important news channel, NTV, belongs to the Dogus Group. The Dogus Group also has thematic channels such as Turkey's first music channel Kral TV<sup>25</sup>. The Group works with international brands such as CNBC, NBA, Billboard, Virgin, and The National Geographic. Since 2007, the Albayrak Group has been running TVNET news channel<sup>26</sup>.

On the other hand, besides mainstream, some pro-Islamic and conservative channels attract considerable attention as it was same for the newspapers. This group of channels includes Kanal 7 as the voice of the *Milli Gorus* movement and Samanyolu TV, which belongs to the Feza Group and these two channels have high rating. As the minority media Roj TV, a pro-Kurdish or even pro Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) which is defined as a terrorist organisation, broadcasts internationally from Denmark via satellite (Elmas and Kurban 2011:32). It is also very popular among the Kurdish people living predominantly in the south eastern part of Turkey.

The quality of the visual media in Turkey is criticized due to its content. Excluding thematic television stations such as the 24-hour news channels NTV, CNN-Turk, Habertürk, and Sky Türk, the most popular television channels offer quite similar content comprising entertainment, news, football and locally made dramas and sitcoms. Television channels broadcast similar programs because they imitate the program which gets the highest rating. This situation causes monotype broadcasting and it is hard to identify any creativity or diversity in the channels (Baris 2007). Kanal D, ATV, NTV, CNN Türk and Habertürk are the top five channels according to the September 2010 ratings, which was the referendum month (Medyaradar, 2010)<sup>27</sup>.

## Radio

Radio broadcasting started in Turkey in 1927 at the hands of the state, just after radio was first launched in the world. Radio has been the most important vehicle for attaining information and entertainment for a long time in Turkey. Turkish people

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.cukurova.com.tr/Medya.aspx>

<sup>25</sup> <http://dogusyayingrubu.com.tr/markalarimiz/televizyon/>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.albayrak.com.tr/Sektorsirket/Tvnet>

<sup>27</sup> [www.medyaradar.com](http://www.medyaradar.com) access date 10.11.2011

learnt of military coups and the state's economic or political crises from the radio during the most turbulent days of Republic. But, the radio slipped into the background with the emergence and quick development of television and the internet.

The TRT monopolized radio broadcasting from 1964 to 1994. Approximately 1,087 private radio channels are currently broadcast in Turkey, 36 national, 100 regional and 951 local, 100 of which are accessible via cable. The TRT has four national and five regional radio stations broadcasting on different themes: Radyo 1 (general), TRT-FM (Radio 2) (Turkish classical, folk and pop music), Radyo 3 (primarily classical music and also jazz, polyphonic and western pop music, broadcasts news in English, French and German), and Radyo 4 (Turkish Folk and Classical Music). The TRT has an international radio called Türkiye'nin Sesi Radyosu (Radio The Voice of Turkey) which broadcasts in 26 languages (Baris 2007). TRT Avrupa is available on cable and online for Turkish people living in Europe. TRT Radyo Haber (Radio News) was established to announce national and international news, and only broadcast news programs.<sup>28</sup>

At the same time, the media holdings also have a leading role in radio broadcasting as well. Private radio stations generally run music programs instead of informative or didactic broadcasts. Kral FM, Radyo D, and Power Turk FM generally play Turkish pop music. Super FM and Metro FM are the most popular radio channels owned by the aforementioned media holdings, and tend to play Western pop music. There are several local, regional and national independent radio stations, despite the domination of the media holdings.

Acik Radyo has special importance in the landscape of the Turkish media. Launched in 1995, Acik Radyo is an entirely independent collective organism<sup>29</sup>. Its programs are based on listener participation in discussions on public issues and it is also financed by listeners. The aim is to improve open dialogue (Baris 2007). Acik Radyo is one of the advocates of the environmental movement and has a liberal multi-cultural point of view.

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<sup>28</sup> <http://www.trt.net.tr/Anasayfa/anasayfa.aspx> access date 20.05.2014

<sup>29</sup> <http://acikradyo.com.tr/what-acik-radyo>

## Online Media

The Internet was widespread in Turkey by 1993. It was first used in academia, in business and then in people's homes. The role of internet cafes in introducing Turkish people to the internet should not be overlooked (Elmas and Kurban 2010: 425). According to the Turkish Statistical Institute's research, 42.9% of houses have internet access and 45% of people aged between 16 and 74 use the internet. Women's internet usage is low in comparison with men's. According to the 'Information and Communications for Development 2009 report' of the World Bank, only 7% of women in Turkey use the internet. The internet is predominantly popular among young people between the ages 16 and 24. E-mails and online shopping are the main forms of internet usage in Turkey (TUIK 2011).

Despite its popularity, the use of social media is limited due to the lack of the necessary technological infrastructure, yet it is quite popular, especially among young people. Facebook, twitter and personal blogs are the most common means of using the social media. However, access to YouTube was blocked from 2007 to 2010 due to videos which were found by a Turkish court to be insulting Atatürk. Small enterprises, especially in the agricultural sector, use social media to sell their products and compete with the gigantic companies. While tourism companies consider social media as a way to reach out to international customers in a fast and cheap way (Elmas and Kurban 2010: 425). All of the national newspapers and TV channels have web editions that are updated throughout the day, and some of these are also in English. There are numerous news portals and internet magazines. The interest in online media is considered to be high, despite the low penetration of the internet. It is hard to talk about alternative ways of making the news. Due to the heavy costs of having correspondents most of the news is almost 'copy-pasted' from news agencies and the traditional media. Only very few of the online media companies employ journalists (Baris 2007).

Although the freedom of the press is currently controversial in Turkey, as Elmas and Kurban have indicated, 'the Internet, the "uncontrollable" media, became the medium through which news that would not be covered by the mainstream media were provided to the public' (Elmas and Kurban 2010: 442). In other words, despite

restrictions and other obstacles to internet usage, it became a relatively free alternative media organ to promulgate dissent, and it is not under the influence of huge media holdings. The newspapers and columnists which have been dismissed by mainstream media outlets started to write their own blogs or newswires, and this tendency is increasing day by day.

### **2.1.2. Legislative Regulations on the Media**

Legislative regulations and guarantees are keystones of the modern democratic constitutional states in numerous fields as well as in the field of the media. In democratic media systems it is important to ensure that political information provided by the mass media serves to restrict instead of enlarge governmental power. At this point, two features become important. Firstly, there should be constitutional guarantees on citizens' free access to political information, freedom of the press and freedom of speech. According to Guther and Mughan:

These freedoms also give citizens the right to take issue publicly with their government and its goals and to remove it from office through free and competitive elections if its actions or inactions are unacceptable to enough of them (2000: 4).

Secondly, the media should be protected from arbitrary action by the political power holder to enable the free flow of information. The diversity of media outlets should be provided and supported legally and there should be institutionalised media pluralism (Guther and Mughan 2000:4-5).

Legal regulations can be formed by taking other countries regulations as a model but, at the same time, these regulations should be in accordance with the social, political, economical and historical dynamics of the given country. In Turkey, legal regulations are also largely shaped by taking Western democracies as a model when the republic was established and developed by the changing conditions in time. Also, it has been seen that legal regulations are frequently applied in media studies in a large scale but, these are not seen in similar studies searching for the role of the

media in referendum voting in a micro scale of this study's literature review. However, legislative regulations on the media have been decided important for Turkish case because of its own characteristic that will be detailed on the following parts.

Legal regulations on media can be a very important determining factor about the freedom and independency of the media, or these regulations are also determinative about the state control over the media. Thus, if it is thought that the media content can be largely affected by these mentioned factors, it can be said that legislative regulations also have an impact on the formation of the media content especially on important political issues such elections and referendums. For this reason, in Turkish case, I find necessary to include the legislative regulations on the media in connection with its historical development in order to understand the Turkish media system and the media content of the coverage for the 2010 constitutional referendum.

By the 1990s, the legal reforms increased the independence, freedom and plurality in the Turkish media. These developments caused a reconstruction of the media sector, in parallel with the globalization process. However, governments tried to adapt national legal frameworks to the EU standards without making any concessions on the official ideology of the state. They also sought to avoid losing the state's control over the media when trying to increase independency of the media. These conflicting purposes resulted in contradictions and tensions that became the main features of the reform of the planning and implementation of media policies in Turkey (Elmas and Kurban 2010).

There are two main kinds of laws regulating the content of the media in Turkey. In the first group is a range of primary laws directly regulating the content and the structure of the media sector, while the second group includes the existing laws in the Turkish legal system that seriously restrict the media content, albeit indirectly. The first group contains the main laws in the field of the media:

-‘Basin Kanunu’ (Press Law), 9 June 2004, with the law no 5187,

-‘Radyo ve Televizyon Kuruluş ve Yayınları Hakkındaki Kanun’ (The Radio and Television Law), 15 February 2011, with the law no 6112,

-‘TRT Kanunu’ (TRT Law), 11 November 1983, with the law no 2954,

-‘İnternet Ortamında Yapılan Yayınların Düzenlenmesi ve Bu Yayınlar Yoluyla İşlenen Suçlarla Mücadele Edilmesi Kakkında Kanun’, 4 May 2007, with the law no 5651 which is called Internet Law for short,

-‘Elektronik Haberleşme Kanunu’, 5 November 2008, (Electronic Communication Law) with the law no 5809

In the first article of the Press Law- Article 1 (2004), which refers to its aim and context, it is stated that ‘The aim of this law is to regulate the freedom of press and the usage of this freedom’. This law secures the freedom of the press and the right to demand information. It grants journalists a right to secure news sources and also grants individuals the right to respond to false and slanderous news. Although it appears to be liberal, in between the lines the press law is authoritarian. It restricts the freedom of the press in order ‘to provide the impartiality and the authority of the jurisdiction’. In a sense, the press law keeps both the basic rights for the independent and free media and the heavy and comprehensive restrictions peculiar to authoritarian regimes. However, in contradistinction to the old system, the authority to grant publishing permission passed from the executive power to the judicial power. This situation allows the courts to take action to the press companies who do not follow the bureaucracy, and by this way the freedom of the press could potentially be restricted. As a consequence, courts do not hesitate to exercise their authority to seize written books based on this restrictive interpretation of the law in Turkey (Elmas and Kurban 2011: 46-47).

Radio and Television Law provides legal protection of the right of privacy, personal attacks that go beyond the limits of criticism, and prohibits discriminatory and humiliating broadcasts on the basis of race, religion, sexuality, disability, political and philosophical ideologies. Further, it prohibits broadcasts that incite violence and contain abuse of children and disabled people. The law forbids broadcasts against ‘the existence and the independence of The Republic of Turkey, the indivisible integrity of the State with its nation and territory and the Atatürk’s principles and reforms’<sup>30</sup>. These amorphous concepts give the Radio Television Supreme Court

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<sup>30</sup> [www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.6112.pdf](http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.6112.pdf), access date 02.11.2013

(RTUK) a large discretionary power to impose sanctions on broadcasters. In 2002, the power of the RTUK was restricted by the amendment of Law on changes in the Establishment and Broadcasting Services of Radio and Television; and after this amendment; the RTUK could only cease the broadcasting of a given radio or television program rather than all of the broadcasting activities of the media organ<sup>31</sup>. However, the RTUK still has significant punitive powers and imposes disproportional sanctions on the media operators.

The TRT Law<sup>32</sup> regulates public broadcasting which remains outside of the authority of the RTUK. This means that the RTUK can control all television channels in Turkey except the TRT. The TRT is out of its control and has a separate law that it is subject to. However, the standards of public broadcasting presented in the TRT Law shares similarities with the Radio and Television Law such as to protect the indivisibility and independence of the Republic, and to secure the principles and reforms of Ataturk. Furthermore, as public employees TRT staff have to protect the priorities of the state. In addition, the 'Regulation of Publications on the Internet and Suppression of Crimes' legislated in 2007, which targeted child pornography, drugs and, particularly, crimes against Ataturk resulted in the blocking of nearly 4,000 websites inside and outside Turkey, including Youtube (Baris 2007). Access to the Youtube was blocked in compliance with decision 2007/384 issued by the Istanbul 1st Criminal Court of Peace (*Sulh Ceza Mahkeme*) on March 6, 2007. The ban was lifted after 3 days when Youtube proved the removal of the videos but it has been blocked in 2008 once more. The government banned to access by blocking IP addresses and changing Google DNS services. When users tried to access the site, it was redirecting requests to a government webpage with this note 'Access to this web site has been suspended in accordance with decision no: 2008/55 of T.R. Ankara 12th Criminal Court of Peace'<sup>33</sup>.

In addition to the direct laws mentioned above, there are a number of laws indirectly regulating the media. The most notable ones are the Terorle Mucadele Kanunu (Anti-

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<sup>31</sup> [www.tbmm.gov.tr/kanunlar/k4756.html](http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/kanunlar/k4756.html), access date 05.11.2013

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/Metin.Aspx?MevzuatKod=1.5.2954&MevzuatIliski=0&sourceXmlSearch=>, access date 10.11.2013

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/mar/07/turkey> and [http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2007/03/07/youtube-banned-in-turkey-after-insults-to-ataturk/?\\_r=0](http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2007/03/07/youtube-banned-in-turkey-after-insults-to-ataturk/?_r=0) access date 17.01.2015

Terror Law-1991) and the Ceza Kanunu (Penal Code-2004)<sup>34</sup>. Both of these laws assume that illegal acts committed via the media are a cause of social aggravation and so should have an increased penalty. The new Penal Code of 2004 criminalized many acts. Such as provoking military staff to disobey the law (article 319), discouraging the public from military service (article 318), affronting the President of the Republic (article 299), insulting the government of the Turkish Republic, the military or the law enforcement agency (the most controversial article 301), and provoking people to disobey the law (article 217)<sup>35</sup>. In respect of the Anti-Terror Law<sup>36</sup>, it became a crime to publish the proclamations or statements of terrorist organizations. Under these circumstances the owners or chief editors of the media outlets can be fined and the next issues can be ceased for between 15 days and 1 month by court order. The European Court of Human Rights found these practices to conflict with article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights which emphasizes the freedom of expression in ‘Case of Urper and Others v. Turkey’ and ‘Case of Turgay and Others v. Turkey’<sup>37</sup>. This also undermines the freedom of the press protected by article 28 of the constitution of Turkey.

### **Constitutional Regulations<sup>38</sup>**

This section presents the regulations about the media in the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey. Thus, it is aimed to display the constitutional protection or restrictions on freedom of expression and freedom of press in Turkey by showing the related articles of the constitution.

In recent years, there have been several constitutional reforms regarding the media, alongside other legislative regulations. As it was mentioned in Interim Resolution ResDH(2004)38 Freedom of Expression cases concerning Turkey: General Measures of Council of Europe Committee of Ministers; “Recalling its Interim

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<sup>34</sup> <http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/Kanunlar.aspx>, access date 17.11.2013

<sup>35</sup>

<http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/Metin1.Asp?MevzuatKod=1.5.5237&MevzuatIliski=0&sourceXmlSearch&Tur=1&Tertip=5&No=5237>, access date 17.11.2013

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.3713.pdf>, access date 17.11.2013

<sup>37</sup> [www.hudoc.ehcr.coe.int/](http://www.hudoc.ehcr.coe.int/), access date, 28.11.2013

<sup>38</sup> Constitution of the Republic of Turkey can be reached from [https://global.tbmm.gov.tr/docs/constitution\\_en.pdf](https://global.tbmm.gov.tr/docs/constitution_en.pdf)

Resolution ResDH(2001)106 on violations of the freedom of expression in Turkey, in which it encouraged the Turkish authorities to bring to a successful conclusion the comprehensive reforms planned to bring Turkish law into conformity with the requirements of Article 10 of the Convention and having examined the significant progress achieved in further series of reforms undertaken with a view to aligning Turkish law and practice with the requirements of the Convention in the field of freedom of expression”.<sup>39</sup> In respect of constitution it was also stated that; “Welcoming the changes made to the Turkish Constitution, in particular to its Preamble to the effect that only anti-constitutional activities instead of thoughts or opinions can be restricted, as well as to Articles 13 and 26 which introduce the principle of proportionality and indicate the grounds for restrictions of the exercise of freedom of expression, similar to those contained in paragraph 2 of Article 10 of the Convention”<sup>40</sup>.

The most notable amendments in Turkish Constitution were carried out in article 13 on ‘Restriction of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms’, article 26 regulating ‘Freedom of Thought and Opinion and Freedom of Expression and Dissemination of Thought’ and article 28 on the ‘Freedom of Press’.

Article 13 now provides that only anti-constitutional “activities” rather than “thoughts or opinions” may be restricted and such restrictions should respect the principle of proportionality and be based on the specific grounds listed in the relevant articles of the Constitution. As it was stated in the European Commission’s Interim Resolution ResDH(2004/38), by the amendment of article 13, ‘it is activities, not expressions of ideas or opinions, against national interests and principles which are targeted’<sup>41</sup>.

On the other hand, Article 26 of the Constitution on freedom of expression and dissemination of thought has been amended as well. The paragraph which prohibited minority languages was removed from article 26:

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<sup>39</sup> <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=ResDH%282004%2938&Language=lanEnglish> access date 15.12.2015

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

No language prohibited by law may be used in the expression and dissemination of thought. Any written or printed documents, phonograph records, magnetic or video tapes, and other means of expression used in contravention of this provision shall be seized by a duly issued decision of judge or, in cases where delay is deemed prejudicial, by the competent authority designated by law. The authority issuing the seizure order shall notify the competent judge of its decision within twenty-four hours the judge shall decide on the matter within three days.

The amended version of article 26 is as below:

Everyone has the right to express and disseminate his thoughts and opinion by speech, in writing or in pictures or through other media, individually or collectively. This right includes the freedom to receive and impart information and ideas without interference from official authorities. This provision shall not preclude subjecting transmission by radio, television, cinema, and similar means to a system of licensing. The exercise of these freedoms may be restricted for the purposes of protecting national security, public order and public safety, the basic characteristics of the Republic and safeguarding the indivisible integrity of the State with its territory and nation, preventing crime, punishing offenders, withholding information duly classified as a state secret, protecting the reputation and rights and private and family life of others, or protecting professional secrets as prescribed by law, or ensuring the proper functioning of the judiciary.

Additionally, article 28 of the 1982 constitution on the freedom of the press amended in 2001 to promote the press freedom by removing the paragraph stating that publication could not be made in any language prohibited by law from the text. Below is the article 28 of the constitution:

The press is free, and shall not be censored. The establishment of a printing house shall not be subject to prior permission or the deposit of a financial guarantee. The state shall take the necessary measures to ensure freedom of

the press and freedom of information. In the limitation of freedom of the press, Articles 26 and 27 of the Constitution are applicable.

Anyone who writes or prints any news or articles which threaten the internal or external security of the state or the indivisible integrity of the state with its territory and nation, which tend to incite offence, riot or insurrection, or which refer to classified state secrets and anyone who prints or transmits such news or articles to others for the above purposes, shall be held responsible under the law relevant to these offences. Distribution may be suspended as a preventive measure by the decision of a judge, or in the event delay is deemed prejudicial, by the competent authority designated by law. The authority suspending distribution shall notify a competent judge of its decision within twenty-four hours at the latest. The order suspending distribution shall become null and void unless upheld by a competent judge within forty-eight hours at the latest.

No ban shall be placed on the reporting of events, except by the decision of judge issued to ensure proper functioning of the judiciary, within the limits specified by law.

Periodical and non-periodical publications may be seized by a decision of a judge in cases of ongoing investigation or prosecution of offences prescribed by law, and, in situations where delay could endanger the indivisible integrity of the state with its territory and nation, national security, public order or public morals and for the prevention of offence by order of the competent authority designated by law. The authority issuing the order to confiscate shall notify a competent judge of its decision within twenty-four hours at the latest. The order to confiscate shall become null and void unless upheld by the competent court within forty-eight hours at the latest. The general common provisions shall apply when seizure and confiscation of periodicals and non-periodicals for reasons of criminal investigation and prosecution takes place.

Periodicals published in Turkey may be temporarily suspended by court sentence if found to contain material which contravenes the indivisible integrity of the state with its territory and nation, the fundamental principles of the Republic, national security and public morals. Any publication which clearly bears the characteristics of being a continuation of a suspended periodical is prohibited; and shall be seized following a decision by a competent judge.

Besides, the Right to Publish Periodicals and Non-periodicals is protected in Constitution of Turkey with the article 29 as follows:

Publication of periodicals or non-periodicals shall not be subject to prior authorisation or the deposit of a financial guarantee. To publish a periodical it shall suffice to submit the information and documents prescribed by law to the competent authority designated by law. If the information and documents submitted are found to be in contravention of law, the competent authority shall apply to the appropriate court for suspension of publication. The publication of periodicals, the conditions of publication, the financial resources and the rules relevant to the profession of journalism shall be regulated by law. The law shall not impose any political, economic, financial, and technical conditions, thus obstructing or making difficult the free dissemination of news, thought, or beliefs. Periodicals shall have equal access to the means and facilities of the state, other public corporate bodies, and their agencies.

Article 30 of the constitution is on 'the Protection of Printing Facilities'. This article protects the legally established printing facilities against seizure or closure on the basis of having been used for crime by the amendment occurred in 2004. The article 30 is as follows:

A printing house and its annexes, duly established as a press enterprise under law, and press equipment shall not be seized, confiscated, or barred from operation on the grounds of having been used in a crime.

Article 31 on 'the right to use mass media other than the press owned by public corporations' was also amended in 2001 and the second paragraph concerning the restrictions on this right has been changed. The article as follows:

Individuals and political parties have the right to use mass media and means of communication other than the press owned by public corporations. The conditions and procedures for such use shall be regulated by law.

The law shall not impose restrictions preventing the public from receiving information or accessing ideas and opinions through these media, or preventing public opinion from being freely formed, on the grounds other than national security, public order, or the protection of public morals and health.

Finally, the right of private companies to establish and administer radio and television station is guaranteed in article 133 of the constitution with the additional paragraph in 2005. Below is the article 133:

Radio and television stations shall be established and operated freely in conformity with rules to be determined by law.

The Radio and Television Supreme Council, established for the purpose of regulation and supervision of radio and television activities, is composed of nine members. The members are elected, on the basis of number of members allocated to each political party group, by the Plenary of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey from among the candidates, twice the number of which is nominated by political party groups in proportion to their number of members. The formation, duties and powers of the Radio and Television Supreme Council, and qualifications, election procedures and term of office of its members shall be regulated by law.

The unique radio and television institution established by the State as a public corporate body and the news agencies which receive aid from public

corporate bodies shall be autonomous and their broadcasts shall be impartial.

These amendments are important steps towards the enhancement of freedom of expression and press as well. Freedom of press is a frequently-cited topic in the European Commission Turkey Progress Reports and these amendments are found useful for the EU harmonization process as it was mentioned in these reports<sup>42</sup>. Despite all of these amendments there are still comprehensive constraints on these rights in order to protect 'national security, public order, and the integrity of the state with its nation and territory' (Elmas and Kurban 2010: 432). It seems that the judiciary can still censor all media outlets depending on the interpretation of the constitution and in the name of 'protecting basic characteristics of the Republic' and 'safeguarding the indivisible integrity of the State with its territory and nation' as also Baris stated (2007).

## **Regularity Institutions**

There are numerous regulatory institutions and media policies in Turkey that cause confusion with regards to their duties and authority. The ministry of state is responsible for television and radio and also has authority over the RTUK. The Ministry of Transportation/Communication is responsible for the regulation of the internet. The Directorate General of Press and Information (BYEGM) within the Prime Ministry has authority over the press, including giving accreditation to the press for its relations with the government. Ministry control is a key indicator for state control rather than independent regulator as Hallin and Mancini (2004) emphasized in their work on media systems which will be detailed in the following chapter.

Bilgi Teknolojileri ve İletişim Kurumu (BTK - Telecommunications Communication Presidency) is an independent institution responsible for the regulation of internet and mobile communication established with the Regulation of Publications on the Internet and Suppression of Crimes Law with law no.5651 and, with the article 8 of

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<sup>42</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/package/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/package/index_en.htm) access date 14.09.2012

the BTK is authorised by this law to carry out court orders to block websites<sup>43</sup>. In terms of broadcasting, the RTUK is the equivalent of the BTK as an independent institution responsible for television and radio (Elmas and Kurban 2010: 433).

The most controversial and well known regulatory institution in private radio and television stations in Turkey is the RTUK which was established in 1994 after lifting the constitutional ban on private broadcasting in 1993. The duties and authority of the RTUK is regulated by Law no. 3984, namely the RTUK Law.

Its main regulatory function was to issue broadcasting permits and licenses to private companies and to assign frequencies. Its monitoring function includes enforcement powers against private broadcasters that do not comply with the law. All television and radio broadcasters are under its supervision. The RTUK is granted with the authority to give penalties (for breaching the legal framework) to the broadcasters, which may range from a warning to the suspension of the TV and radio channels. However, the RTUK does not have authority over the TRT because the public broadcaster is subject to a separate law (no. 2954) which applies solely to the public broadcasting agency. However, although the RTUK was established to fulfil the duties mentioned above, it can no longer perform its function.

Political parties in the parliament nominate candidates for the RTUK and the parliament members select 9 members of the RTUK from the nominees. Individuals related to RTUK members, up to the 3rd degree, cannot be shareholders, managers or partners of radio and TV companies. While the RTUK defines itself as ‘an autonomous and impartial’ public body, its composition ‘is considered to be profoundly influenced by the political considerations of governments and, thus, substantially undermining the Council’s claim of impartiality’. The second ground of criticism against the RTÜK is the punitive powers it has to monitor private broadcasters’ compliance with the law. This kind of practices can be seen in some European countries such as Italy and France. These practices can be interpreted in respect of political parallelism which will be also explained in the following chapter on media systems in the light of Hallin and Mancini.

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<sup>43</sup> <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2007/05/20070523-1.htm> access date 22.01.2015

There are also a few independent organizations which monitor the media. The Basın Konseyi (Press Council) was established by a group of journalists in 1988 to constitute self-regulation of the press with regards to professional ethics and the rules of conduct. In recent years, newspapers have begun to appoint ombudsmen among columnists and editors in order to oversee accordance with ethical rules, and to respond to reader complaints and apprehensions. But, the online versions of the newspapers remain outside of the ombudsmen's remit (Elmas and Kurban 2010: 433).

Turkey's main unions for journalists are the Turkey Association of Journalists, Turkey Federation of Journalists, Contemporary Journalists Corporation, Journalists and Writers Foundation and Media Corporation. The Journalists' Union of Turkey and Medyasen (Union of Media) are quite ineffective. The Turkey Association of Journalists represents the statist tendency of the mainstream media, and has members from the Dogan Group. The Contemporary Journalists Corporation was established by leftist media members while the Journalists and Writers Foundation has religious sensibilities. The founders of the Media Corporation were pro-AKP journalists (Elmas and Kurban 2010: 434). These corporations could not provide an adequate contribution to the development of media policies because of these schisms and polarization. The individual and economic interests of media holdings and journalists come before the freedom and independence of the Turkish media. It can be said that development of journalistic professionalism is weak in Turkey, when the historical development of the journalism and media landscape have been considered together with these information about the journalists' organisation. Professionalism has a vital importance in respect of freedom of press and its reliability which is also a determinative element to understand the media systems as it will be detailed in the next chapter.

To sum up, the freedom and independence of the media constitutes a problem due to legal restrictions and the structure of the media sector, but also because of other political actors. The historical development of the relationship between the state and the media since the final years of the Ottoman Empire has had a lasting impact on the political culture of the state. The mainstream media traditionally stayed close to the

government in terms of politics, economics and ideology and could not exist independent of the state. Democratically elected governments applied political pressure on the media as well as the military governments. The judiciary has been an important factor in prosecuting many journalists, prohibiting several periodicals and newspapers and punishing radio and television broadcasters because of their criticism of taboo government policies. As a consequence of the liberalisation process in the 1980s, giant conglomerates entered the media sector and changed its economic structure. This reinforced the dependence between the media and the state.

In that period, the AKP government and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan were criticized because of their anti-democratic media policies. The Prime Minister has always overreacted to the dissident criticisms of cartoonists and journalists<sup>44</sup>. There have been several cases, and in 2008, the Prime Minister invited AKP members to boycott the newspapers and television channels of the Dogan Group<sup>45</sup>. This was because these media revealed the connections between some AKP officials and an Islamic organization in Germany which was involved in major corruption (Deniz Feneri Trials)<sup>46</sup>. Dogan media group channels and newspapers published some claims about Zahid Akman who was the chief of the RTUK in that period - and also the head of the pro-government and Islamist channel Kanal 7. Despite the claims concerning him, insistence from the public, and cancellation of Kanal 7's INT (broadcasting in Germany) by Germany, Erdogan refused to deprive Zahid Akman from the RTUK, as a public position responsible for monitoring the media. The largest impact of the AKP against the Dogan Group was the \$2.5 billion record tax case in 2009<sup>47</sup>. In 2010, the Prime Minister claimed that columnists caused the drop in market shares and appealed to the media patrons to fire them. The AKP government, especially Prime Minister Erdogan, has pressured the media by assuming irritable and intolerant positions against opponent media outlets and journalists. This has profoundly damaged the freedom of the press (Elmas and Kurban 2010:340).

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<sup>44</sup> There are various lawsuits brought against cartoonists and humor magazines -such as the most famous Leman and Penguen- by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. These cases can be reached via; <http://bianet.org/bianet/ifade-ozgurlugu/163164-her-karikaturist-erdogan-in-davalarini-tadacaktir> access date 20 March 2015

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/turkish-prime-minister-urges-boycott-on-dogan-group-newspapers-9936433> access date 15.12.2013

<sup>46</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deniz\\_Feneri\\_Trials](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deniz_Feneri_Trials) access date 22.12.2013

<sup>47</sup> [http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/10/world/europe/10istanbul.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/10/world/europe/10istanbul.html?_r=0) access date 23.12.2013

In recent years, the mainstream media has experienced several difficulties such as prosecution, the conviction of many dissenting columnists, police raids and the seizure of newspapers and periodicals covering the important and critical issues such as the Ergenekon Case and the assassination of Armenian journalist Hrant Dink. All of these incidents caused Turkey to take position at the bottom of the Reporters without Borders' World Press Freedom Index 2012<sup>48</sup>, and caused the 'Fourth Estate' function of the media to be questioned. Despite several reforms of media regulation and the freedom of the press, Turkey is still far from reaching democratic ideals.

Lastly, herein, Turkey's previous referendum experiences will be take place by the end of this chapter as it is mentioned at the beginning part. This brief information is expected to be helpful to understand the 2010 referendum, its difference and its importance. This chapter is found suitable for the history of referendums because this chapter focused on historical background.

## **2.2. History of Referendums in Turkey**

In modern democracies, demographic and social reasons have made it almost impossible for citizens to exercise the right of self-determination directly. Therefore, representative democracy dominates in the modern world. Citizens select their representatives who participate in the political decision-making processes in their place. However, citizens are also eligible to participate in the constitution-making process and legislative prerogative with their votes. Citizens can exercise sovereignty in three ways: Referendum, veto and legislative proposal. A referendum is a yes or no vote on a law made by the legislative power.

There is a growing interest in referendums as a means of semi-direct democracy in both old and new democracies. There are many reasons for using referendums, such as 'to decide major questions of public policy, regime-level change and supra-national governance' that could be gathered under 'polity reshaping' referendums (Clarke and Stewart 2004: 345). Nevertheless, it could be said that referendums are

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<sup>48</sup> [http://en.rsf.org/IMG/CLASSEMENT\\_2012/CLASSEMENT\\_ANG.pdf](http://en.rsf.org/IMG/CLASSEMENT_2012/CLASSEMENT_ANG.pdf), access date 25.02.2012

rarely applied in Turkey in contrast to developed countries. Referendum is included as an optional institution in the 1982 Turkish Constitutional Law, and was a compulsory institution when the related article of the constitution was amended (Gözler 1988). The public are granted a refereeing capacity and given the final word on constitutional amendment, and 50% of the vote is required for an amendment to come into effect (Goker and Dogan, 2011: 48).

In 1961 Turkey had its first referendum. Since then Turkey has had six referendums, all of which were conducted for constitutional amendments. All have been accepted with the exception of one since the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923. Referendums that have been held in Turkey and their results are as follows<sup>49</sup>:

The first referendum in the history of Turkey was applied on *9<sup>th</sup> July 1960* for the 1961 Constitution which was prepared after the first military coup on *27<sup>th</sup> May 1960*. The first referendum saw 62% of electorates vote 'yes' and 38% 'no'. Thus, the 1961 Constitution was accepted and prepared by the Constituent Assembly.

The second referendum took place for a new constitution after the second military coup staged on *12<sup>th</sup> September 1980*. That referendum was applied on *7<sup>th</sup> November 1982* and was accepted with a 91.37% 'yes' vote. Both the 1982 Constitution prepared by the Consultative Assembly of the military coup was accepted, and Kenan Evren who was the leader of the military coup was elected as the president of the Republic.

The third referendum was conducted on *6<sup>th</sup> September 1987* to abolish the political ban which was introduced with the 1982 Constitution. The ban was abolished with a small majority. 50.1% votes were 'yes' for amendment.

The fourth referendum was carried out just after the third on *25<sup>th</sup> September 1988*. Its aim was to bring the local elections one year forward

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<sup>49</sup> <http://www.referandum.org/eski-referandumlar/> access date 10.10.2011

with the amendment of the related article of the constitution. However, by 65% 'no' votes the amendment was rejected. And it is the only referendum in the history of Turkey to have had a negative result.

Turkey had its fifth referendum on *21<sup>th</sup> October 2007*. People were asked whether the president of the republic should be elected by citizens instead of appointed by the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM). The amendment was accepted by 69% 'yes' votes. The presidential term was reduced from seven to five years with an opportunity for re-election. Among other changes, the parliamentary term was cut from five to four years.

The sixth and final referendum occurred on *12<sup>th</sup> September 2010* to amend 26 articles of the constitution. It was the most comprehensive and sensational constitutional referendum in the history of Turkey. In most cases, the 1982 Constitution is regarded as undemocratic. It was made during the impact of the 12<sup>th</sup> September 1980 military intervention. For this reason, it would represent an obstacle in the European Union (EU) membership process and so wide scaled amendments would be required. Thus, the amendment package that included 26 articles of the 1982 Constitution was prepared by the TBMM and the referendum was announced by the president of the Republic on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2010. Within the three months from its announcement to the day of the referendum campaigns were carried out similar to those in election times. The referendum was perceived as a political choice for citizens and political parties. Because of that perception the referendum process was transformed into a political communication campaign and the representation of political agendas in the mass media was a controversial issue. Voters accepted the amendments by a wide margin, 58%.

As can be seen, In Turkey, most of the referendums were held under the governance of the military and it is hard to claim that there is an established referendum culture in Turkey. Constitutional amendments that were stipulated by military regimes largely

occurred by means of referendums, which were conducted under overt or hidden political pressure. The 2010 referendum differs from other referendums in respect of the conditions in which it was conducted and its aims. That last referendum was held under democratic conditions. On the other hand, the 2010 referendum has been recognized as undemocratic by some groups. Around 200 people called as “intelligentsia” including academicians, novelists, actors, artists, journalists, and members of NGO’s came together and wrote a letter to the president of the republic in order to tell their concerns about the referendum. Their first concern was that; in the referendum amendment package, very different and irrelevant issues were collected under the same package and were voted for in one voting. However, to respect democracy, amendments should be voted for in separate referendums, and not in one block as it was emphasized in Venice Commission Code of Good Practice on Referendums 2007(30) below:<sup>50</sup>

An even more stringent requirement of free suffrage is respect for unity of content. Electors must not be called to vote simultaneously on several questions without any intrinsic link, given that they may be in favour of one and against another. Where the revision of a text covers several separate aspects, a number of questions must therefore be put to the people. However, total revision of a text, particularly a Constitution, naturally cannot relate solely to aspects that are closely linked. In this case, therefore, the requirement for unity of content does not apply. Substantial revision of a text, involving a number of chapters, may be regarded as being equivalent to total revision; clearly, this does not mean the different chapters cannot be put separately to the popular vote

Moreover, it is claimed that the AKP seeks to demonstrate its power and get a vote of confidence as the CHP propounds. Amendments could be made by parliament without a referendum due to the predominance of AKP seats. In conclusion, propaganda activities, abundant campaigns and polemics between politicians were the other differential features of the 2010 referendum. The dynamics of this recent

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<sup>50</sup> [http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD\(2007\)008-e](http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD(2007)008-e) access 26.02.2012

referendum and the media coverage regarding the constitution will be examined in detail in the third chapter.

### **2.3. Concluding Remarks**

This chapter handled the Turkish media in a historical perspective and introduced the media landscape in Turkey. This point of view showed that the media developed in parallel with the transformation process of Turkey from the empire to the republic. Political, social and economical facts have always been effective in the development of the media. It has been obviously seen that the media have been used as a tool by political power in accordance with social and political needs. Also, the media have been under the control of the political actors because of their power. On the other hand, this situation also led to the decline of public trust in the media. All of these are long-term factors that can be still seen today on Turkish media system.

At the same time, landscape of Turkish media part also provided us very important clues for the next chapter that focused on the media systems. The high concentration on Turkish media has obviously seen by the help of the ownership information about the visual and print media. In respect of legal regulations, the controls over the media and dependency of the media have been revealed more clearly. Especially, establishment of the RTUK and its extensive and controversial authority over the media is one of the most important problems of Turkish media. This restriction and the concentration also have serious effects in the formation of the media content as well as the media system. Regarding this, the content and coverage of political issues can be seen biased by public and the confidence in media has been shaken.

In the recent times, '*yandas medya*' (*slanted media*) is the most discussed issue in the Turkish media and it is also assessed as a new view of the press and politics. The word '*yandas*' means the breach of impartiality, one of the fundamental professional principles of journalism - it also includes an ironic expression in Turkish (Goker and Dogan 2011: 53). The transition to democracy and the development of the mass media have been difficult in Turkey. The media has often played a political role. At the same time, its role and power have been exposed and the mass media has always been exposed to restraint and control. This basic and crucial information

will help this research to recognize the media system in Turkey which is not exactly classified according to any of the defined media systems. In other words, Turkey represents a special case as an Islamic, secular, democratizing, politically and economically developing country which is a tough to fit into conventional patterns or known media systems that largely shaped according to mature western democracies.

The details mentioned in this chapter give us very important clues about the state control over the media in Turkey or political parallelism and professionalism which can be considered as the main indicators for the specification of media systems. The media system in Turkey will be analysed in the following chapter based upon Daniel Hallin and Paolo Mancini's guide book *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics* (2004). As they have stated, the media system of a country develops alongside and in reflection of the political system. The economic system, political freedom, social structure, and culture would mainly affect the structure and development of most media systems.

As historical background showed that late development of industrialism and the liberal market, and the dominance of state control and institutions have had a decisive influence on the development of the media in Turkey. Developments of both literacy and press circulation have also been affected negatively by these conditions. Turkey has experienced political instability and oppression. Turkey represents similarities with the Mediterranean or Polarised Pluralistic Model of Hallin and Mancini's categorization, when the characteristics such as low levels of newspaper circulation, high political parallelism, instrumentalisation of the media, limited professionalism, and politicization of public broadcasting and the state control of the mass media are considered (2004).

Media systems, in light of Hallin and Mancini, will be scrutinized in the next chapter and the Turkish media system will also be evaluated within this framework by the help of the information provided in this chapter. In addition, the theoretical and conceptual approach to the referendum issue such as the concept of referendum and constitutional referendums will also take place in the *Chapter 3* to understand the referendum voting and its difference better.

### **Chapter 3: Review of the Literature on Referendums and Media Systems**

Elections and voting have always been a point of interest in the scope of political science. Political decision making processes and the elements which affect citizens' political decisions have been questioned for many years. Political scientists have developed theories and models in order to understand political behaviour. The purpose of this thesis is to understand voters' behaviour and the role of the media in their votes in respect of the 2010 Constitutional Referendum in Turkey. With this chapter, I aim to set the theoretical background for explaining referendum voting and media systems in order to understand how voters make their political decisions and the impact of media during political decision making processes.

The topic of the media systems is one of the essentials of this thesis. This is because the media system plays an important role in respect of the media effects. In its simplest form, it can be said that the media can be more effective on political decisions when the media is more independent, free, neutral and informative if the media system is away from the state control, censorship or concentration. Otherwise, trust of the public opinion in the media also reduces and people may be less impressed by the media.

There are many studies in the literature that have used public opinion data to examine citizens' reasons for voting a particular way. There are several factors that influence vote choice –these include economic conditions, social and cultural features but also long held attitudes such as ideology. Also, voters are seen to apply heuristics or shortcuts such as party identification (Popkin 1994) as one of the most important determinative factors of voting. In some models, voters choose the parties closest to them on issues (Downs 1957). In addition to these, the rapidly emerging mass media has attracted researchers' attention as being a very important element that may influence voters. The media plays a role in transmitting information to voters and is thought to help strengthen the links between preferences and fundamentals. Analysing the mass media and its coverage has brought a new and different perspective to the field. Public opinion survey data alone is inadequate and may provide misleading information, such as deceptive answers by respondents. For this reason, using public opinion data and media content data together is deemed

appropriate for this study. I present both bodies of literature in this chapter to provide a basis for the interpretation of the data analysis in the following chapters.

As a first step I address referendums; the concept of referendum, and constitutional referendums will be discussed which may help to draw a distinction between referendums and political party elections. This point has importance in respect of the 2010 Constitutional Referendum which was in the general elections atmosphere and partisanship was in the forefront than the content of the constitutional amendments point during the referendum campaign period. Political parties' campaigns and strategies in the 2010 referendum will be detailed in the empirical chapters.

Following this section, I will discuss voter behaviour in referendums. This section is especially restricted to the voters' behaviour in referendums due to the vast literature on voting behaviour in general including local/general and presidential elections; but also benefits from the rich literature on voting behaviour in general elections and presidential elections in brief. After the referendums section, the remaining part of this chapter addresses the mass media. In the first step, I will address media effects theories in general to help in the analysis of media coverage on voting behaviour. Following this I will discuss the media systems literature, including the media system in Turkey. It is important to understand the media system because it is necessary for understanding the effects of the media. Media systems provide clues for understanding media coverage, trust in the media and the role of the media in a given society.

### **3.1. Referendums**

Democracy is based on the will of the people. Individuals are the most important actors in the political system; they exercise their right to self-determination in several ways. Referendum is one of these ways. It can be defined as a direct democracy practice which is increasing in popularity for democratic decision-making (Rourke et al., 1992). Direct democracy is an extensive concept meaning the direct participation of ordinary citizens in deciding on political issues (Hobolt 2009: 5). But this pure version of direct democracy is difficult to apply in today's world because of the growing population, and other social developments. Thus, representative democracy has replaced direct democracy. Representative democracy enables citizens to express their will via representatives during the political decision-making process

(Qvortrup 2005). In order to remedy the deficiencies of both direct and representative democracy, semi-direct democracy as a hybrid democracy practice has come to be considered as the closest system to direct democracy. In semi-direct democracies voters not only select the representatives but also affect the constitution-making and legislative prerogative processes with their votes. In other words, in these practices voters can directly vote on issues and do not need for representatives. In theory, it seems that citizens have a direct impact on legislation, but in practice institutions, political parties and elites shape citizens' political preferences in referendums (Hobolt 2009; Mendelshon and Parkin 2001). Nowadays, the media is also a very effective actor in referendums, as well as in other political processes, because of its growing power over society. Therefore, it is important to search the interactive relation between the media and referendums as two controversial popular concepts.

In this section, I will first of all outline the concept of referendum, and note its development and importance. After that, I will attribute a special importance to constitutional referendums in order to understand the 12<sup>th</sup> September 2010 constitutional referendum. The role of political parties and campaign effects in referendums will be analysed by considering the role of the mass media during referendum processes. Finally, I will provide details of the concept of referendum in Turkey, its legal status and practice, and the case of the 2010 constitutional referendum within the content of amendments.

### **3.1.1. The Notion of Referendum**

Referendum is a ballot which is generally used for constitutional amendments, ratification of a law or to specify the citizens' will on important issues. In other words, referendum ensures direct citizen participation in legislative processes about draft laws, or other issues (Gul 2000: 23). The free will of the public is directly reflected in political life through referendums. Inviting people to participate in political issues helps to enhance patriotism and teach them to think about public issues. In this way, people feel that they help to determine the state's circumstances and have increased awareness of their responsibilities.

Referendum is not only a stabilizing but also a destabilizing concept. While social compromise can be provided and political tension can be prevented by a referendum, applying them constantly creates an election atmosphere and can cause political chaos and economic imbalance. Referendums can easily turn into a vote of confidence which happens if voters focus on the people who prepare the text rather than its content. Referendums that transform into votes of confidence are precarious for governments in countries with dense socio-cultural problems, such as Turkey. This is because the government may be obliged to resign or may lose its prestige if the voting results are not as they expected. On the other hand, leaders sometimes state that they would resign if they could not get the results they wanted. In these circumstances referendums deviate from their aim, and the resignation threats transform the referendums into votes of confidence (Gozler 1988: 106). It has been claimed that this happened in the referendum in Turkey in 2010, by some political circles especially opponents of the government. I will explain this in the following sections on the Turkish case. The media coverage indicates that the discourse of politicians and the media suggests that voting was for political parties rather than constitutional amendments. In other words, the referendum was considered as less important and a second order contest and it was more about getting approval of governing political parties (Garry et al. 2005). For instance, a very small amount of the news stories in newspapers cover the content of the referendum<sup>51</sup>.

There are some key arguments to criticize the referendum as direct democracy practice. Firstly, according to some views, a referendum is merely taking on board the opinions of uninformed people on complicated issues. Matsusaka states that 'an obvious concern with direct democracy is that it places decision-making power in the hands of the uninformed' (2003: 4). Likewise, during referendum periods, people can get information about the economic and social issues of the state, mostly by keeping a close watch on the mass media. Ordinary citizens cannot perceive the legal regulations on complicated issues. Therefore they form their opinion towards the mass media under the influence of political power (Gözler 1988: 100). That view indicates the importance of the media as the main instrument for providing political information to citizens. Of course, there are other important factors at play during the

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<sup>51</sup> Media coverage about referendum content is explained in the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter in detail

decision making process for voters, such as elite manipulation and the citizens' interest and sophistication. But this research will handle the referendums in terms of the media. New studies have developed the optimistic idea that 'voters can make reasoned choices based on very limited information by using cues and information shortcuts' (Hobolt 2009: 33). In other words, the role of the media in referendums is handled in both positive and negative influence on referendum voting.

However, the degree of democracy and difference between democratic systems has an impact on the implementation of referendums as well. While it is possible to observe successful examples of direct democracy in established democracies, there are also some instances of 'manipulative abuse of referendums' by authoritarian powers (Setala 1999: 1). For example, the 1993 constitutional referendum in Russia during the transition period to democracy after the Soviet regime, President Boris Yeltsin used the referendum in order to legitimize the enhancing and strengthening of his power and also to mandate the press via the new constitution (LeDuc 2003: 59, 62). Setala has underlined another important criticism of referendum, the will of the majority theory, which asserts that referendums (or direct democracy) represent the will of the majority and ignore the will of the minority (1999: 11).

Referendum practices can differ from one state to another in respect of its political, social and economic system, along with the democracy culture. Referendums are not only held by governments: legislators and citizens can initiate referendums as well. There are various types of referendum, such as advisory referendums, which are not for changing a law, citizen initiatives in which citizens can propose a referendum. As De Vreese states; 'referendums can be binding or advisory' (2007: 2). Constitutional referendums will be the main focus point of this study.

### **3.1.2. Constitutional Referendums**

The relationship between democracy and constitutions is neither simple nor straightforward. Constitutions are basically about constraining the power of democratically elected parliamentary majorities. As Vernor Bogdanor states; 'Codified constitutions are, after all, valued as a means to the end of limiting governmental

power; and, in a democracy, limiting also the power of the people to whom government is responsible' (cited from Elgie and Zielonka 2001: 2).

Constitutions impose a tight corset on the citizenry, taking away some power from the people and putting it into the hands of constitutional framers and constitutional courts. Constitutions force the people and their representatives to engage in a complex deliberative process by imposing numerous procedural hurdles, require the state to gain broad public support for its ideas by making constitutional amendments difficult to adopt, and guard against the easy denial of certain individual rights. Second, it has been argued that by taking some power away from ordinary parliaments and putting it into the hands of constitutional framers and courts, constitutions ensure that the representatives of the people cannot easily betray their electorates. Elected officials have a tendency to invoke the name of the people to legitimize the pursuit of their own interests. But dividing constitutional prerogatives between different agents creates a mechanism by which institutions check one another and allows voters more easily to monitor the behaviour of their representatives. Finally, it has been pointed out that constitutions create the rules of the game that enable democracy to function effectively, rather than fall prey to paralysis or chaos. Ineffective democracy brings no justice to the people. Therefore, by clarifying prerogatives of different institutions and spelling out decision-making procedures, constitutions create the stability and predictability necessary for the democratic system, and prevent partisan interests from misusing democratic institutions (Elgie and Zielonka 2001: 3).

Constitution-building is a process that has been developing throughout history and it is assumed that it should be based on social consensus. Constitution-building is a pre-eminently political act. It is perhaps the quintessential political act by which countries make choices concerning the most fundamental concepts in political life: power and authority; representation and legitimacy; liberty and equality. As such, constitution building is also an essentially conflictual process. It crystallizes contending political forces, and is often marked by intense political bargaining and logrolling (Elgie and Zielonka 2001: 1-2).

A well-functioning constitutional democracy should provide several direct or indirect ways for citizens to participate, such as referendums, local and global initiatives consultative meetings, elections, interest groups, protests, political parties, and public discussions organised by the media (Tully, 2000: 216). Citizens whose voices are heard are more effective and responsible because their public actions are important for political decision making, in particular constitution making. Today, it is impossible to picture a constitution-making process without any public discussion (Arato, 2000: 250).

The legitimacy of a constitution is based on the citizens' acceptance which can be obtained by gauging citizens' opinions and participation. The procedure for constitutional amendments requires public consultation. It also takes a long time for policy makers to transfer suggestions to citizens if the final decision implies referendum (LeDuc 2009: 233). As Elgie and Zielonka state 'during constitution-making process referendums can be used as a legitimizing strategy' (2001: 12). The ratification feature of referendums provides legitimacy for constitutional amendments and provides an opportunity to citizens for exercising their sovereignty. However, for constitutional amendments, other basic constitutional rules can be applied before using referendums. It is reliable to agree on the problematic issues such as who constitutes the majority and who has a veto before constitutional amendments via referendums. On the other hand, the institutional design of referendums also affects their success (Mendelsohn and Parkin 2001: 10). Constitutional referendums are elementarily crucial for democratic governments as a legitimating mechanism (Galligan 2001: 109).

Elgie and Zielonka (2001: 13) explain that constitutions require more than being drafted by a legitimate assembly for legitimacy. Citizens should make the final decision directly. The 1973 Irish Constitution, the 1946 Italian Constitution, the 1978 Spanish Constitution and the 1953 Danish Constitution for amendments were ratified by referendums. Besides established democracies such as in Western Europe, referendums are applied in Eastern Europe which can be identified as new democracies. Constitutional referendums are also a very controversial issue in Eastern Europe because of revolutionary situations. While referendum supporters emphasize the direct participation of the public along with the compromise by the elites, opponents point out the instability of the circumstances and the

underdevelopment of the political culture. As a very striking experience, the 1996 referendum in Belarus was held after manipulation by the president who also has the media monopoly. In brief, as Elgie and Zielonka state 'referenda in Eastern Europe provided new constitutions with little popular legitimization, and in some cases they proved to be a tool of political manipulation' (2001: 14). At this point, the role of the media gains importance again. Information, as a crucial element for referendum voting, should not depend on party or family identification; it should be focused on the content of the referendum. Today, this information is widely provided by the media and the partisan inclinations of the media system can affect the content and the information. The development of an independent media system is also important as the development of the political system for the citizens' participation in the democratic decision-making process.

Constitutional referendums include amendments of constitutions and make alterations on political institutions and government forms. The 1992 Canadian constitutional referendum, the 1991 Swiss referendum and the 1992-93 New Zealand referendums are the main examples of this kind of referendums (De Vreese 2007: 3). The 2010 referendum in Turkey, the focus of this research, is also included in this group.

Constitutional amendments are notably different from other policy referendums and constitutional amendments have a special importance because of their higher law nature and their relation with state institutions (Galligan 2001: 109). As Galligan has mentioned, 'changing the constitution requires a higher level of consensus than changing ordinary law' (2011: 123). Constitutional amendments are expected to be flawless (Mendelsohn and Parkin 2001: 10). On the other hand, LeDuc states that, 'constitutional politics are normally the exclusive preserve of the political elites' (2003: 74). Yet, when the 1992 Canadian case is examined, it is observed that 'using the referendum as a device to ratify the outcomes of such elite-level bargaining sessions can be highly problematic' and this example also shows the intervention of basic partisan politics in referendums (Mendelsohn and Parkin 2001: 10).

The constitutional referendums have a special importance due to the constitution's importance in a democratic state. It is also pursuant for democracies to include the citizens in the constitution making process or amendments. However, to achieve the referendum's goal the citizens should be informed. In undeveloped or developing

democracies citizens can be exposed to the manipulation or control of the political power holder, such as parties or political actors, and may be used as a tool for legitimacy. Thus, the point of how the citizens decide their votes becomes vital. If the citizens are well informed they are not just an instrument for the legitimacy of the political power and can make more robust decisions. Thus, the voting behaviour of citizens, role of political parties and elites, campaigns and referendums play a crucial role in referendum voting.

### **3.2. Referendums in Turkey and 12 September 2010 Referendum for Constitutional Amendments**

Despite the background of successive constitutions in Turkey, the legitimacy deficit has remained up until today and the current constitutional reforms seek to remedy this deficit (Scharfe 2013: 3). The first constitution of Turkey could not meet the expectations during the harsh conditions of the 1920s. Then, the 1961 constitution was made after the 1960s military coup, which was also known as the 'liberal constitution'. However, the military intervened in politics again in 1971 and the new constitution was amended to 'strengthen the autonomy of the military and purge the army of dissident officers' (Scharfe 2013: 3). The atmosphere of political chaos dominated the period between 1960 and 1980, and resulted with a military coup again on 12<sup>th</sup> September 1980. Afterwards, military rulers and elites designed a new and restrictive constitution in 1982 by giving justification to these conditions. The main problem with the 1982 constitution is emphasizes the state's as higher than citizens' and defines state with terms such as 'sublime' (yüce) and 'sacred' (kutsal). Scharfe states: 'This is a constitution that emphasizes restrictions upon rights granted by the state' (2013: 5). More than 90 per cent of voters were tacitly forced to vote yes in the 1982 referendum but the 1982 constitution was never respectable to the majority except the military, and was amended 17 times throughout its acceptance (Kalaycioglu 2001: 2).

Most of the referendums have been held under the revolutionary or military regimes after the coups in Turkey. Also, these were conducted by the organisation and administration of the governments under custody. The constitutional amendments stipulated via referendums which were implemented under military governments'

explicit or latent impact. The function of these referendums was to endeavour to legitimize the mandatory changes under the guise of the 'national will'. For instance, the 1982 constitution, which was the subject of the referendum that was held after the 12<sup>th</sup> September 1980 military coup, included many articles in opposition to the constitution's necessity of including a minimum number of articles. This is inconvenient because a constitutional text with many articles may be confusing for citizens. In this respect, when we look through the 1980 referendum, we can see that citizens voted without understanding the content of the constitution. At the same time, the pro-coup mentality also seeks to cause this confusion and lead them by propaganda and intimidation (Eroglu 2010: 4).

When we look at the concept of a referendum and its practices there are fundamental similarities between referendums in Turkey and those of other countries. Turkey has experienced six referendums since 1923 – the establishment of republic- as an emerging democracy. These referendum processes will not mentioned again in this section and only the 12<sup>th</sup> September 2010 referendum for constitutional amendments will be scrutinized.

The existing 1982 constitution covers referendums in some articles as shown<sup>52</sup>:

Article 67: In conformity with the conditions set forth in the law, citizens have the right to vote, to be elected, and to engage in political activities independently or in a political party, and to take part in a referendum.

Elections and referenda shall be held under the direction and supervision of the judiciary, in accordance with the principles of free, equal, secret, and direct, universal suffrage, and the public counting of votes. However, the conditions under which the Turkish citizens who are abroad shall be able to exercise their right to vote are regulated by law.

All Turkish citizens over 18 years of age shall have the right to vote in elections and to take part in referenda.

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<sup>52</sup> The Constitution of Turkey,  
[http://www.anayasa.gov.tr/images/loaded/pdf\\_dosyalari/THE\\_CONSTITUTION\\_OF\\_THE\\_REPUBLIC\\_OF\\_TURKEY.pdf](http://www.anayasa.gov.tr/images/loaded/pdf_dosyalari/THE_CONSTITUTION_OF_THE_REPUBLIC_OF_TURKEY.pdf), access date 17.03.2013

Article 79: The general conduct and supervision of a referendum on legislation amending the Constitution shall be subject to the same provisions as those relating to the election of deputies.

Article 175: Laws related to Constitutional amendment which are submitted to referendum, shall require the approval of more than half of the valid votes cast.

The Turkish Grand National Assembly, in adopting the laws related to the Constitutional amendment, shall also decide on which provisions shall be submitted to referendum together and which shall be submitted individually.

### **3.2.1. The Path to 2010 Referendum**

Turkey has been in the wake of constitutional reform since the 1990s mostly under the impact of the European Union accession process. There have been some amendments such as strengthening gender equality with the amendment of article 10 of constitution in 2004 and in 2008, the abolition of the death penalty and state security courts with the constitutional amendments in 2004, enhancement of freedom of speech by amending articles 13 and 26 of the constitution in 2001 and also party closure has been more difficult with the amendment of the article 69 of the constitution after the 2010 referendum (The Constitution of the Republic of Turkey; Scharfe 2013: 6). However, the democratization process of Turkey required the rewriting of the existing constitution which is seen as an obstacle in this way as footprints of the 1980 military coup. Yet, it has been very hard to have a consensus in the political separation and distrusting atmosphere in Turkey.

The reform period for constitutional amendments began on the heels of the AKP government. AKP came to the power in the 2002 general elections with notable success. However, the AKP was faced with a constitutional obstacle along with its victory. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the leader of the AKP was politically banned due to his previous conviction and was not eligible to be an MP and Prime Minister. Then, the new AKP government passed a constitutional amendment with the support of the opposition party CHP to enable Recep Tayyip Erdogan to become the Prime Minister (Scharfe 2013: 7).

While the AKP's reformist process has continued, it has been hindered by the constitution. In 2007, by the end of the current President of the republic's term, the AKP wanted its own candidate for the office. This was because amendments generally required the President's approval which could be problematic for the AKP. But, the parliament was electing the president for the 1982 constitution and it was difficult for the AKP to make sure its candidate was elected in the meantime. Then, the AKP called an early election in July and after that held a referendum in October for the election of the President by citizens (Scharfe 2013: 3; Kalaycioglu 2011: 2-3). Eventually, the AKP's candidate Abdullah Gul was elected as the new President of the republic with the 70 per cent of the vote.

The AKP gained self-confidence with these victories at both election and referendum polls. Then, the AKP intended to revive another important problem of Turkey, the headscarf ban in state institutions and universities. This issue is specifically prominent for Islamist-conservative AKP whose supporters and inner circle have suffered under this ban for a long time. For example, there is a case in the European Court of Human Rights presented by the President Abdullah Gul's wife Hayrunnisa Gul in 2002. Therefore, the AKP tried to lift this ban in 2008 with a constitutional amendment with the support of the MHP. However, the Turkish Constitutional Court (TCC) refused this legislative proposal for secularist reasons. In the meantime, the closure of the AKP by the TCC was on the agenda that concluded with only a warning and fine, but the AKP noticed the requirement for judicial revision. As Scharfe has noted; 'The AKP sees the Turkish Constitutional Court in particular as a hostile and anti-democratic state institution which must end its obstruction of the political process' (2013: 7,16). In that case, it will be useful to look through the TCC during the constitutional reform period.

The Constitutional Court is very important within the constitutional debates in Turkey. It was established by the 1961 constitution and 'it promoted political liberalization and sought to defend the rights of autonomous institutions, notably the universities, which were the site of a wave of political activism in the 1960's and 1970's (Scharfe 2013: 6). According to many military members, the autonomy of these institutions was the reason for political instability during the 1970s and the role of the Turkish Constitutional Court (TCC) was distinctively altered by the 1980 coup's generals. The

new TCC was designed to promote state-centred values into the government institutions and the President was appointed by the members of the court. Consequently, the TCC went beyond its aim and became one of the crucial actors in politics on behalf of the military. The court also became famous for dissolving pro-Islamist and pro-Kurdish political parties (Shayambati and Kirdiş, 2009: 772).

After all of these developments 'the AKP was branded as a political party with dubious secular credentials and constitutional legitimacy and by late 2008 Turkey began to move toward a deepening political legitimacy crises' as indicated by Kalaycioglu (2011: 3).

Another significant judicatory development of the pre-referendum period was indubitably the Ergenekon case by the extensive waves of arrests of former military members, academics, journalists, lawyers, businessmen and trade union leaders in 2007. The defendants were arrested and accused of trying to establish a terrorist organisation called Ergenekon, by the specially authorised prosecutors. The organisation was also accused of being connected to an attempted military coup against the AKP government. Ergenekon is characterized as a deep rooted organisation called 'derin devlet' (deep state) in the media (Kalaycioglu 2010 and 2011). The increase of waves of arrest and the concentration on people and groups opposed to the AKP provoked some questions about the case. In addition, the uncertainty and doubts about the evidence damaged the reliability of the trial. Finally, 'The case began to look increasingly to the opposition political parties and their sympathisers like a tool of intimidation of opponents of the AKP government and criticised as a 'political trial' by the political opposition and an increasing number of journalists' (Kalaycioglu 2011: 3-4).

To summarize, the parliamentary politics in Turkey was 'deeply divided, polarised, intensely confrontational, and marked by mutual hatred and distrust' if it comes to the 2010 (Kalaycioglu 2011: 4). On the other hand, the AKP's relentless determination to achieve constitutional amendments was very gutsy.

### **3.2.2. 12 September 2010 Referendum**

In Turkey, the constitution can be amended in two ways. The amendments should be approved by two-thirds of the parliament. If an amendment has less than two-thirds of the parliament's support it requires a referendum (The Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, Article 175 amended in 1987). Despite the power of the AKP, with more than 60 per cent but less than two-thirds of the seats in the parliament, it only had enough support to pass the proposals through the parliament with its own group, and not to make them binding. Thereafter, the AKP prepared the amendments without compromising with the other parties and could not get their support. The amendments package passed through the parliament 'as a partisan bill, received support as a partisan bill and was presented as a partisan proposal to the popular vote' and 'the constitutional amendments through referenda have become examples of the enhanced partisanship and elite conflict in Turkey since 2007' (Kalaycioglu 2011: 2). The MHP and the CHP opposed the constitutional amendments not only because of the content. They maintained their political opposition during the referendum period with the same arguments such as the Kurdish issue for the MHP and the concerns with secularism such as the headscarf ban for the CHP. Finally, that impasse brought Turkey to the 2010 referendum.

The atmosphere became similar to that of election times and this perception also brought referendum success to the AKP (Scharfe 2013: 8-9). According to Kalaycioglu; a major 'kulturkampf' came out of the 12<sup>th</sup> September 2010 referendum. With this expression, he aims to refer to the polarization between the liberal, secular and Islamist conservative fractions (Kalaycioglu 2011). The AKP and Islamist-nationalist parties supported yes, other parties supported no, but the third part Kurdish Party BDP called for a boycott which is a very distinctive point of the 2010 referendum campaign. On the other hand, some groups emphasizing the freedoms created a motto 'yetmez ama evet', which means 'yes but not enough'.

The pro yes side tried to persuade voters that the constitutional amendments package settled matters with the military tutelage regime of the 12<sup>th</sup> September 1980 military coup, and the higher judicial bodies as its 'organic-extension'. And also it was claimed that the military and judicial system would be democratized by this way. On

the other hand, a part of pro no side claimed that the state would cause division between the state and the public. Another part of the no supporters based their discourse on democratic social and laws to emphasise the AKP's majoritarian dictatorship tendency. Additionally, as a third side, the pro-Kurdish party BDP called on voters to boycott the referendum as a political strategy, and to reject the mainstream of legal politics. This boycott may be the most distinctive feature of the 2010 referendum.

The 12<sup>th</sup> September 2010 referendum created the impression of passing through an extraordinary period because of the presentation, structure, time, reasons and probable outcomes of the referendum and the conduct of the referendum campaign. Although, the 2010 referendum was represented as a choice based on the people's will, it was also criticized by opposition parties for resembling the referendums which have been held by the military and coup governments because of its preparation form and technique. According to that criticism, a chain of complicated events occurred, and it can be realised on later inspection that they were linked with each other. However, this kind of event happens only during revolution and military coup periods, which create confusion. This is because the text that would be voted on was multi-titled and far from being basic, which is an essential element for referendum voting. The referendum appears to have brought anti-democratic regulations to the citizens via referendum. Another latent side of the 2010 referendum is that it played an expanding role in respect of social division, and intensified this conflict. The disaggregation as part of the referendum spirit may cause larger disputes in some countries with sharp divisions where the democratic culture is not stable, contrary to established democracies. The 2010 referendum campaign also added to the large amount of existing tension and dissociation issues in Turkey as an emerging democracy. The referendum campaign of the ruling party, the AKP, was based on attrition to opposition parties and the judiciary. Then the referendum campaign period was formed within this frame. Thus, the referendum campaign turned into a political campaign through constitutional amendments and the referendum deviated from its initial aim and scope. This tense atmosphere disrupted social integrity and triggered conflict (Eroglu 2010: 5-11). According to Turan; 'Irrespective of the outcome of the September 12 referendum, constitutional reform, rather than serving as an opportunity for integration, has created yet another occasion for reinforcing the deep

cleavages in Turkish politics' (Turan 2010). For some journalists and opinion leaders, the 2011 general election campaign process started along with the referendum debate.

In the campaign period, the matter became independent from the content of the constitutional amendments and transformed into a political struggle between political parties. Even though the 'yes but not enough' position supported the content of the amendments, it represented a political stance. Therefore, it would be helpful to have a look at the articles that were subject to change via the referendum.

### **Content of the 2010 Referendum: Articles Subject to Amendments<sup>53</sup>**

The amendment package including 26 articles was represented as a big step by the ruling party AKP for the democratization in the path to the European Union. By this constitutional amendments package, it is aimed to make the 1982 constitution more democratic and harmonize Turkish domestic legal order with the EU legal system. After the Helsinki Summit in 1999, Turkey became a candidate for full membership to the EU and started an intense reform process to fulfil the Copenhagen Criteria as a prerequisite to start accession negotiations<sup>54</sup>. Turkey preferred to carry out these legal reforms through "harmonization packages" and the constitutional amendments performed in October 2001 constitute a basis for the harmonization with the Copenhagen Criteria. Afterwards, there have been 8 harmonization packages including improvement of rights and freedoms. Especially freedom of expression and thought have been expanded, pre-hearing detention process increased to 4 days to avoid allegations of torture in accordance with the EU criteria and some regulations were carried out to promote gender equality<sup>55</sup>. However, the main purpose is to renew the basic law in harmony in a long term period as it is mentioned in the political criteria of the Turkish National Programme for the adoption of the Aquis<sup>56</sup>:

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<sup>53</sup> The main articles subject to the change are listed as appendix.

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.ab.gov.tr/files/pub/abuyp.pdf> access date 20.01.2013

<sup>55</sup> <http://www.ab.gov.tr/files/pub/prt.pdf> access date 20.01.2013

<sup>56</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/turkey/npaa\\_full\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/turkey/npaa_full_en.pdf) access date 20.01.2013

In 2001, the Turkish Government will speed up the ongoing work on political, administrative and judicial reforms and will duly convey its legislative proposals to the Turkish Grand National Assembly. The goal is to further develop, on the basis of Turkey's international commitments and EU standards, the provisions of the Constitution and other legislation to promote freedom; provide for a more participatory democracy with additional safeguards; reinforce the balance of powers and competences between State organs; and enhance the rule of law. In the context of the reform process regarding democracy and human rights, the review of the Constitution will have priority. The constitutional amendments will also establish the framework for the review of other legislation.

The Turkish Government will monitor closely progress in the country in the areas of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, regularly evaluate the work underway for harmonization with the EU acquis, and will take all necessary measures to speed up the ongoing work.

In addition, legal and administrative measures will be introduced in the short or medium term regarding individual rights and freedoms, the freedom of thought and expression, the freedom of association and peaceful assembly, civil society, the Judiciary, pre-trial detention and detention conditions in prisons, the fight against torture, human rights violations, training of law enforcement personnel and other civil servants on human rights issues, and regional disparities.

Following this process, in 2004 December, European Council declared that Turkey sufficiently fulfils the criteria for opening accession negotiations in October 2005.<sup>57</sup> Negotiations started in 2005 and during the negotiations, Turkey also continued reform process in the light of progress reports. After the small regulations made in the interim, the government decided to amend a large proportion of the constitution to demoratize it. Herein, the content of this extensive amendment package will be detailed.

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<sup>57</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/turkey/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/turkey/index_en.htm) access date 22.01.2013

The set of amendments under consideration in the 2010 referendum can be categorized under the three titles. The first kind of amendments were intended to expand the democratic content of the existing 1982 constitution including positive discrimination in favor of children, women, and the handicapped, collective bargaining for public servants, the introduction of ombudspersons and the lifting of some restrictions to which labor unions were currently subject etc. The second group is related to the broadening and reorganization of the High Council of Judges and Public Prosecutors and the Turkish Constitutional Court as two major institutions of the Turkish judicial system. Also the president and the government's role were enhanced in respect of the appointment of members to these institutions. Finally, 'the architects of the 1980 military intervention become subject to prosecution' (Turan 2010).

The draft constitutional amendments proposal included articles 10, 20, 23, 41, 51, 53, 54, 74, 84, 94, 125, 128, 129, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 156, 157, 159. These were amended while provisional article 15 was repealed and provisional articles 18 and 19 were added to the constitution. The first 8 articles subject to amendment (10, 20, 23, 41, 51, 53, 54, and 74) were concerning rights and freedoms. These amendments aimed to provide equality and to enhance freedoms. Article 84 was restricting the role of the Turkish Constitutional Court and protecting the rights of MPs whose parties had been closed by the TCC, while article 94 was deregulating the presidency of the Turkish Grand National Assembly. With the amendment of article 125, it was enabled to 'recourse to judicial review against all decisions taken by the Supreme Military Court regarding expulsion from the Armed Forces'. Articles 128 and 129 regulating public servants and other public employees labour conditions reformed for their benefit. Articles 144 and 145 also restricted the role of military justice and increased the role of the Ministry of Justice. The articles between 146 and 149 concerning the members of the TCC were also redispersed by the referendum. Articles 156, 157, 159 related to the Military High Court of Appeals, the High Military Administrative Court and Supreme Council of Judges and Public Prosecutors were also amended in terms of their members, incumbency and operation system.

To conclude in brief, the extensive set of constitutional amendments, including 26 articles, was passed in parliament in the 2010 referendum. While some of these

reforms were the continuation of liberalization, others were contested because of partisan tendencies which got ahead of amendments. Although, the amendments which have been made by the 2010 referendum changed a large part of 1982 constitution; substantially it is still the same constitution with military roots (Scharfe 2013: 5). The September 2010 referendum resulted in the acceptance of amendments with 57.9% of valid votes. The 2010 referendum was a component element of a long series of political and legal reforms in Turkey. 'Although this was neither the first nor the last attempt at modifying the 1982 Constitution, what differentiated the 12 September 2010 referendum was the political bickering and divisions it precipitated, with voters in the western and southern coastal parts of the country mainly voting against it while the central, northern and eastern inhabitants voted overwhelmingly for it' (Kalaycioglu 2011: 2).

### **3.2.3. Positions of Political Parties during the Referendum Period**

Political parties carried out serious campaigns in the 2010 referendum for the constitutional amendments in Turkey. At the very beginning of the referendum process, firstly, the constitutional amendments package to be submitted to referendum was voted on in the parliament. The ruling party AKP supported the amendments as they prepared the package, and the MHP objected to the amendments, while the main opposition party CHP and the pro-Kurdish BDP did not even attend parliament on voting day. Two small parties which did not have seats in the parliament also announced that they would support the amendments. Thus, political parties' positions about the referendum were clear at this stage of the process, and mostly did not change from then until the referendum day.

During the referendum campaign, political parties explained the reasons for their votes with the brochures that they published. Some institutions and social platforms also prepared informative publications that reflected their opinions on the referendum issue. One of the most extensive publications was prepared by SETA (Siyaset Ekonomi ve Toplum Arastirmalari Vakfi- Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research). SETA published an issue in 2010 October on political parties' stances in the referendum (Yilmaz 2010). The issue of the SETA included the attitudes of the four main parties (the AKP, the CHP, the MHP and the BDP) in the parliament during the referendum campaign. As a social platform, 10 Aralik Hareket

(10<sup>th</sup> December Movement) also published a manifesto titled ‘20 Soruda Anayasa Değişikliği’ (Constitutional Amendments in 20 Questions). Herein, I will attempt to show the political parties’ stances from their own publications as first-hand information sources.

The AKP published a handbook for the referendum called ‘12 Eylül’de Referanduma Evet’ (Yes in the Referendum on 12<sup>th</sup> September) before all of the other parties. This handbook contains 40 questions and answers to explain why voters should say yes. This is the most extensive and was the first booklet about the constitutional amendments. The AKP’s referendum book consists of four sections: introduction, individual rights and freedoms, jurisdiction, economics and work life. At the beginning of the book, Recep Tayyip Erdogan indicates that the reforms were inadequate but, the reform package was a very good starting point for future reforms, and a very important step forward in the development of Turkish democracy. In the introduction section, it is explained why these reforms were necessary, why the reforms were needed before the elections and what the reason was for putting the 26 articles to the vote as a group. In this handbook, the AKP declared their goals which could be achieved by the acceptance of the constitutional amendments in the referendum, mainly in four topics as below:

- To enhance, strengthen and diversify the constitutional level of human rights and fundamental rights and freedoms
- To improve the democratic standards
- To strengthen the state of law and the jurisdiction
- To enable the political sphere by bringing it back to its natural boundaries

When I examined the questions in the handbook, I noticed that brochure was mostly shaped by the opposition’s claims, and also the main opposition party CHP and its leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu are often cited in the answers. The opponents mainly claimed that the reason for the referendum was the AKP’s desire to get a vote of confidence before the general elections which would be held in 2011. In particular, the CHP frequently emphasized that the articles should be voted on separately because of the lack of relevance between them. The AKP’s brochure was a response to all of these assertions. For example, the AKP’s answer for this claim was that it is impossible to vote on all 194 of the articles separately. In brief, the AKP formulated

these claims as questions and replied to them in their brochure. In the answers, it is also often emphasized that the AKP struggled to reach a compromise with all of the parties.

According to the AKP's brochure, the amendments on individual rights and freedoms aimed to strengthen the social state and provide affirmative action for children, people with disabilities, martyr's relatives and ghazis. Also, privacy of personal information which is hard to secure by the development of technology will be provided with the amendments to prevent profiling. In addition, it was particularly highlighted that amendments were suggested after several international reports and documents had been examined.

One of the most important arguments of the AKP about the constitutional amendments concerned the trial of those responsible for the 12<sup>th</sup> September 1980 military coup. The AKP asserted that the generals who carried out the 1980 coup d'état would be judged 30 years later by these amendments. In terms of jurisdiction, the AKP claim that the current structure of the judicial system is against the principle of separation of powers, and they attach great importance to the independence and impartiality of jurisdiction. The AKP suggested that the judicial system should change along with the changing world, and that the amendments would reinforce the separation of powers. The AKP noted that if the state of law strengthened, political and economic stability could be ensured and thus, economic development would follow. Finally, it is mentioned that conditions of working life would be enhanced by the constitutional changes.

After the AKP, both the CHP and the MHP published booklets sharing the same title: 'Neden Hayir?' (Why say 'NO'?'). The MHP first of all emphasized that the AKP would like to change the constitution independently and was not willing to compromise with other parties. The MHP's brochure had a topic on whether the constitutions should be amended in which it was noted that the AKP's method was wrong interventionist. Constitutions should be changed by the request of society. Thus, according to the MHP, the AKP would like to change the constitution due to their interests rather than social requirements. In particular, regulations on the juridical system were defined as dangerous, could potentially shake the state's foundations and cause the deterioration of unity. In their handbook, the MHP claimed that the AKP's aim was to

establish a civilian dictatorship. In terms of individual rights and freedoms, the MHP claimed that the AKP presented regulations which already existed as amendment via word play. The MHP ended the handbook with suggestions to the AKP about establishing a reconciliation commission in parliament, to form a democratic contract on agreed articles by the commission and to empower parliamentary approval.

The CHP's brochure included 12 questions and all of them were answered as no. The CHP emphasized the same points as the MHP and their arguments were almost the same as well. Both parties shared a very similar rhetoric when defending the no vote in the referendum, for which reason I will not outline the CHP's arguments. Yet, the MHP's handbook was more comprehensive than the CHP's publication and already included the CHP's arguments. This is because the MHP's reasons were outlined extensively in the first step. The CHP's handbook started with the introduction of the party leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu, and ended with a call for no votes for democracy. It was also emphasized that voting no in the referendum meant voting against the AKP. In this last part, the AKP were also accused of being insincere.

The BDP decided to boycott the referendum on the grounds that the constitutional amendments package was not covering the rights of the Kurdish community (Yilmaz 2010: 32). The BDP did not publish a brochure about the referendum, but SETA paid attention to the BDP's position as well. As Yilmaz (2010) summarized, referendum campaigns were run to appeal to the political party grassroots rather than the constitutional amendments package. The CHP transformed the referendum to a vote of confidence for the AKP without mentioning the content of the package, and based its defiance on political discussions on the AKP. The CHP also led the package to go to the Constitutional Court. Lastly, the BDP's call for boycott did not receive much of a response from Kurdish people.

### **3.3. Voting Behaviour in Referendums: Role of Parties, Elites and Campaigns**

At first sight, referendum voting seems very simple; Yes or No. If voters choose Yes it means that they are not pleased with the status quo and would like change, while voting No presents an attitude opposed to change and demonstrates voter satisfaction with the existing conditions. However, referendum voting differs from elections to vote for parties or governments because of its nature. Referendums

generally cover a specific question about constitutional issues. Thus, it requires specific information about the subject for voters to make a robust decision. In this respect, the level of information determines voter preferences. In other words, votes are determined by differing levels of information, from a level of full-information to a level of low-information. For example, if the voters are well-informed about the questions asked via referendum, they may decide regarding the content and the aim of the referendum. Otherwise, voters may need to refer to party cues or heuristics, which will be detailed below.

In voting behaviour studies -largely concentrated on general elections- there are some key concepts to explain why and how people vote. A striking one of these concepts is party identification. Hobolt defines party identification as follows: 'Party identification refers to relatively stable and enduring affective attachments to parties that predispose the individual for the party with which they "identify"' (2009: 33). In brief, party identification means voting for a party due to sense of belonging. Party identification has been accepted as a powerful predictor of voting behaviour and it also filters political messages. This second effect of party identification is more significant for referendum voting than it is for elections (Hobolt 2009: 34). In Turkey, it can be claimed that citizens have strong ties with political parties. When survey results<sup>58</sup> are examined, the AKP's vote rates during the 2007 and 2011 general elections and the 2010 referendum are closed. At the same time, a considerable amount of people stated that they would vote yes in the referendum in line with the AKP and the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's demands. It is expected that Erdogan' endorsement of a "Yes" vote on the referendum influenced the decision making of voters and his evaluations increased the probability of a "Yes" vote. According to Stevens and Banducci, 'This is because, in the absence of strong partisan cues, referendum voters must rely on other heuristics to combat the complexity of the voting decision' (2013: 275).

As for the rational choice approach, party preference is related to individuals' own interests. At this point, the position of parties and the information about them becomes important to make a rational choice. Thus, the cost of information causes a

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<sup>58</sup> KONDA Survey for 2010 Referendum from May through September 2010

decline in the desire for information, and a lack of knowledge about politics and parties can be an obstacle for making rational choices. Then, people start to use informational shortcuts and heuristics. As Downs has noted party identification can be a tool for making an informational shortcut (Hobolt 2009: 34-35). On the other hand, De Vreese notes that political parties provide 'ambiguous' information cues in a referendum campaign in opposition to general elections (De Vreese 2007: 1).

Campaigns in referendums have become important by the growing popularity of referendums as an important tool for legislation (Mendelsohn and Parkin 2001; De Vreese 2007; Setala 1999; Marsh 2007). In referendum campaigns, the short term factors of campaigns are more influential in opposition to general election campaigns. They have long term impacts such as partisanship and ideology which assume a pivotal role (De Vreese 2007: 1). Although referendum voting seems very simple due to the simple choice of voting Yes or No, for voters it is more complicated than elections. It is much more important to be well informed in referendums than it is in elections due to the complexity and peculiarity of the issues that are being voted on. Modern democracies suppose that democratic citizens are well informed about political issues but this assumption has already been refuted by several empirical studies (Hobolt 2009: 23). As LeDuc (2003: 74) has noted, voters generally have very little information until the inception of referendum campaigns and thus, they are tied to campaign actors for cues and information. As he also stated; 'A campaign provides opportunities for distortion and misinformation and allows opponents to plant doubts in the minds of voters that are not easily resolved over a short period' (LeDuc 2003: 74).

According to De Vreese the most important actors of referendum campaigns are political elites including parties and interest groups, voters, civil society, public opinion and the media (2007: 7). Political parties and leaders seek to raise the visibility of party in the media and attract the attention of voters. In order to achieve this, parties and party elites should provide clear messages to the citizens during the campaign. This is because, as Zaller (1992) has also emphasized, ambiguous or unclear cues affect public opinion negatively (cited from De Vreese 2007: 10).

Marsh argued that referendum campaigns serve a purpose to change what people think or to change what they think about by evoking Cohen's (1963) famous expression that media tells people what to think about more than what to think (2007: 63). Thus, especially in election times rather than in referendums, parties seek to emphasize positive issues in campaigns rather than referendums (Marsh 2007: 63). The success of a referendum campaign affects voters and the results directly. For example, strong campaigns can clarify voters' opinions, while a weak one may cause confusion in voters' minds (Marsh 2007: 63).

LeDuc points out that 'Poorly prepared or poorly organized campaigns are doomed to fail' and he continues to explain the reason for failure as being due to elites 'overestimating their abilities to control the political forces that such campaigns may unleash'(2003: 74). On the other hand, the intensity of the campaign is an important point. If the campaign is weak or less intense, voters are uninformed about what the referendum is about. Thus, they can apply to the political cues and the weakness of the campaign may prevent the party messages from reaching the citizens. As Hobolt has indicated, when the campaign is more intensified, issues become more important (cited from Marsh 2007: 64). Therefore, a successful campaign may increase the popularity of a political party or leaders, while an unsuccessful one damage their political reputation (De Vreese 2007: 11). Referendums may also bolster the parties if they are used properly. Small parties can find the opportunity to attract public attention and gain credibility by their position in a campaign (Mendelsohn and Parkin 2001: 8).

In respect of referendum campaigns, the media play a pivotal role. As Dalton states (2002: 39); 'campaigns are now largely media events'. However, the literature on media effects in referendum campaigns is very limited, conversely to election campaigns. In addition studies about media effects on voting behaviour have focused on developed Western democracies. New (developing) democracies such as Turkey which represents a different political system, and a different media system from established democracies, have fewer studies.

The media play a role in transmitting the cues mentioned above to voters. There are a number of approaches to studying media effects on voting behaviour. Thus, I will

utilize these theories and the role of the mass media in voting behaviour especially in referendums with the support of election campaigns studies.

### **3.4. Media Effects: Role of the Mass Media in Referendums**

In the 21st century the power of the media has been more distinctive thanks to excessive development and transformation of communication technologies. Today, the media -including books, television, movies, music, the internet, radio, magazines, newspapers etc. – influence many aspects of our daily lives. The media has the power of providing flow of information, reflecting the values of society, affecting ideas and decisions of masses and to a large extent creating new ones. Therefore, the world has been transformed into a ‘Global Village’ as claimed by a forerunning theorist Marshall McLuhan (1962 and 1967). Thus, it became possible to access information all over the world and the global community became aware of recent events and news from as far as halfway across the world.

The mass media is an invisible part of modern societies. The mass media is not only in the centre of our social, economic and political lives but also very important for democracy. Habermas describes contemporary democracies as ‘media societies’ (2006: 419). In contemporary societies, it is supposed that the mass media has two main functions for democracy: information and expression (2012: 2). Most of the electorate, who do not have direct partisan ties, gets political news via the mass media, where political communication mostly occurs in modern societies (Muller 2014, Bennett and Entman 2001).

Along with the increasing development of the media, its ability in building political agendas and in forming public opinion has grown considerably. The power of the mass media to influence has been more distinctive in the fields of politics, international relations, and sociology. Basically, it is possible to say two significant features of the mass media increase its effectiveness (Barrat, 1986). ‘One-way flow of information’ is the first and inherent feature that arises from their design. As Barrat has indicated, messages are transmitted by a limited group of media professionals to a wide audience with too few opportunities to reply. The second key characteristic of the mass media is its capability of ‘transmitting the same message simultaneously’ to

a very large audience (1986: 15). In other words; speed is a pivotal feature of the mass media.

Besides these important functions, democratic performance of the media is a controversial issue. When we have a look at different opinions about the role of the media, Gunther and Mughan (2000) claim the mass media is the 'connective tissue of democracy'. However, they discuss the role of the mass media in terms of mature democracies and transition countries. They point out that the media would play a pivotal role in promoting democracy in developing countries, while they do not attempt to improve the quality of democracy in established democratic societies. Yet, 'a free press is needed everywhere, no less in developing countries than in advanced industrial society' (McConnell and Becker 2002: 8). In other words, freedom of communication and free media are very important requirements for the democratic functions of the media (O'Neil, 1998) and the conduct of democratic (or undemocratic) politics -on national or international levels- depends on the mass media more and more (McQuail 1992).

Moreover, the media structure and the media content come into prominence as the other factors that would influence the democratic functions of the mass media. On one hand, the monopolization of the media systems by a few media conglomerates leads to a reduction in diversity of viewpoints in the public sphere and causes dependency of the media on the political actors (Woods 2007). On the other hand, the mass media creates its content on political issues which could be widely attractive, such as scandals, sensational events, personalization or competition between political actors, and even when substantive issues are covered, these are reported in a stirring way (Muller 2014: 3). This situation created the idea that the news media causes mistrust of the government, cynicism about political institutions and public disengagement which is referred to as 'media malaise' or 'video malaise' which the term is generally preferred to use for television audiences by theorists in the literature (Norris 2004). While the media malaise theories suppose that the mass media has a negative effect on civic engagement, Norris (2000) emphasizes the positive influences of the news media on citizens, trust, mobilization and civic engagement; and also gives examples from the United States and Britain about how reading newspapers and paying attention to the television news increases political interest and knowledge; and understanding of politics.

The media is not only a communication channel to inform citizens, but also became one of the milestones of the process of political decision making in capitalist democracies after the last quarter of the 20th century. In modern politics, success or failure of a political movement depends on the ability of accessing the wider masses, and therefore to a very large extent, the range of using media. Nowadays, almost all political organizations tend to use the growing power of the media in order to mobilize the masses towards their interests and ideologies in both democratic and democratizing societies. Particularly, the growing power of the media is mentioned in the period of elections and political parties need to attain media support mostly in election times. As Semetko has pointed out; 'the mass media are the most common source for information about election campaigns in democracies and societies in transition around the world' (2010: 2).

For societies in transition, the mass media is also expected to play a supportive and contributory role in the democratizing process besides its informative role and even more than this. On the other hand, in transition societies, 'the media's roles in the process must contend with citizens' learning processes that are both more urgent and less stable and, at the same time, flexible and open' (Voltmer and Schmitt-Beck 2002). In spite of its importance, the role of the mass media in transition countries has not taken stride and 'lack empirical evidence' (Loveless 2009). Katrin Voltmer and Rüdiger Schmitt-Beck also touch on this; they have conducted all their media studies in the context of established Western democracies, so it is unknown whether the same pattern will appear in new democracies (2002). As Loveless has noted,

It has long been supposed that in democratizing countries, a liberalized media environment would forge an arena for public debate, and thus a venue for civil society, aid in political socialization, and serve as a watchdog in the untidy process of political and economic reform. The role of mass media as a contributor to this process points to alternative sources of 'learning democracy' beyond individuals' static socioeconomic location and rare institutional interaction as individuals' mass media exposure greatly outweighs their experiential opportunities (2010:470).

Media play an important role during election times thanks to their possible impact upon society. For example, the society could judge candidates upon appearances and performances in the mass media. If a presidential candidate could not speak in front of large groups, he or she would have little chance of being elected in today's society. It would not matter that his or her policies were better than their opponents. Due to the importance of communication, politicians have utilised the power of mass media to appeal to voters throughout history. The most well known example of this was the efficient usage of the radio by Adolf Hitler in Germany. Hitler and his Minister of Propaganda Goebbels used the radio throughout their governance and especially during World War II.

It is crucial to inform citizens politically for democracy to function effectively because citizens have little knowledge about public affairs (Ansolabehere 2006). Politically informed citizens are more participant in politics, more related to political issues and make more rational and consistent choices with regards to their own attitudes. Thus, for normative as well as empirically supported reasons, it is desirable that the media adequately inform the electorate about public affairs. News and commentary enable citizens to make informed and effective choices about the exercise of state power. Today, although political information is more 'widely available', flow of information about politics is no better than any other time in history. Despite the excellent growth of online newspapers and their print versions, the internet is predominantly used for entertainment purposes and not for seeking news and current affairs information (Aalbert, van Aelst and Curran 2010:256-7).

Media are often defined as the 'Fourth Estate' (van Aelst et al. 2008) of political power. But, what power requires comes into question in both public and academic discussions. The notion of power is systematically discussed in political science rather than media studies. There is a concentration on how the public is affected by the mass media rather than its power over politics (van Aelst et al. 2008: 495-496). However, the power of media over politics and on voting behaviour in elections is one of the much debated issues of the modern world. Nevertheless, in terms of media effects on voting behavior, referendums are a little glossed over as a kind of voting behaviour. Despite the large amount of research on media effects in elections, less research exists about the role of the media in referendums, in the literature and in Turkey as well.

The impact of media in referendum campaigns recently attracted attention of scholars because referendums focus on one issue that can cut across party lines. The news media may be the more important source of information to voters who cannot rely on traditional party lines for guidance in a specific issue. National referendums on issues about European integration became widespread with the enlargement of European Union from 15 members to 25 in 2004 and, the researches about the media effects in European referendums became common. These studies show that campaign news matter not only for the vote choices but also for perceptions about the campaign and the various aspects of the referendum issue as well (Semetko 2004: 365). Yet, despite the long readings and literature search, studies about the influence of news media in national referendums about the European integration are not included in this study. This is because their dynamics and results are found inherently different and far away from this research.

Jenkins and Mendelsohn (2001) discuss the news media in terms of both election campaigns and referendums in order to reveal the difference of the media coverage between these two voting processes. The first main difference is the objective of the elections and referendums. According to Jenkins and Mendelsohn, 'referendums are about making policy rather than choosing governments' (2001: 215). Actors also vary in elections and referendums. Parties and their leaders are the most notable elements of election campaigns and have a large place in the news coverage, while they emphasize the small amount of space dedicated to the non-party sources including citizens in the media. Moreover, media coverage may play a more important role to inform voters and to provide them cues about the campaign in referendum than in election campaigns because of the lack of partisan attachments and often low information levels (Hobolt and Binzer, 2009). Therefore, 'there was certainly the potential for large media effects in the referendum given low levels of knowledge and high levels of uncertainty at the outset of the campaign' (Stevens and Banducci 2013: 277).

During referendum periods actors generally extend beyond the parties and are less familiar to the voters, such as committees. Media practices during referendums are less established and less structured in comparison with elections. The democratic responsibility of the media is both to report on the stages of the contest and to provide information in elections, while in referendums it is only to provide information.

In addition, in referendums, required information is defined as deliberative, as well as cue giving which is all that is required for elections. However, voters generally decide according to their established loyalties in elections, while they may behave very differently during referendums. Voters also need different kinds of information during referendum periods to make informed choices. This is because they are not asked to choose parties or governments, but to decide on a particular question. Thus, voters may need more and differently framed information during a referendum campaign. In other words, voting behaviour towards the issues subject to referendum is unknown in referendums (Jenkins and Mendelsohn 2001: 217-218). Although there are remarkable differences between elections and referendums, news coverage of these two campaigns becomes similar during the campaign process.

However, 'a referendum campaign challenges media organizations to prepare in ways that are in many respects similar to their preparation for other electoral contests, but there are also a number of specific characteristics to media planning in a referendum' (Semetko and DeVreese 2004: 12). He also states that newspapers and television programs change their formats and generally devote specific parts to the campaign during these periods. An additional political editor or anchor takes a position just for the analysis of current developments in the campaign. Media content is also a vital point for the media during campaigns. For Semetko (2008), balance and fairness are important elements of political reporting during election periods. This point is confusing for the referendum campaigns because only the question replaces parties or candidates which can challenge the balance conception. Moreover, 'journalists are challenged because of that all the actors involved may not be clear on the parameters of the two camps which makes a referendum campaign potentially more unpredictable' (Semetko and De Vreese 2004: 13).

The referendum process includes propaganda activities because of the perception of the referendum process as a political choice and parties' efforts to influence citizens' choices. Thus, important functional works concerning the referendum, such as arousing interest, providing information and leading opinions are performed within the scope of political communication. In this respect, it is important how and to what extent the media reflects the developments during the referendum process and the political communication activities of political parties. The main aim of this research is to present how the 2010 referendum took place in the media during this process.

In short, the role of mass media in politics is a controversial issue but, all this literature shows that the media plays an important role in political decision making processes. On one hand, some authors emphasize the mission of the media as conveying political knowledge and civic engagement. On the other hand, some other authors note the commercial interests and entertainment functions of the media. In this respect, the role of the mass media is not only to inform and educate citizens, but also to entertain them. Graber (2003) reiterates the 'for-profit enterprise' feature of the media which naturally brings financial concerns with it. Graber has added that the media is not responsible for 'teaching civic knowledge' and any kind of political performance should not be expected of the media. Yet, in this study I am interested in the political roles of the mass media with regards to voting behaviour. At this point, I need to review some general theories about how the media influences public opinion and voting behaviour.

### **3.5. Media Effects Theories at a Glance**

In this section, selected media effects theories including agenda-setting, framing, priming, uses and gratifications, and social learning theories – which are considered useful for this research-, will be presented with the main lines. The media systems will also be presented in the following part in relation with media effects because it is considered that media systems play an important role about the influence of the media on voters.

#### **Agenda Setting, Framing and Priming**

There is a thought that 'the media have almost magical powers to alter the ideas and behaviour of their audience' (Barrat, 1986: 8). Therefore, the possible effects of the media on audiences' behaviours have been attractive in social studies. There are a number of theorists who have tried to explain the relationship between the mass media and audiences, which can be also be referred to as media effects. Media effects have been examined for a long time with the purpose of identifying how and in which ways the media influence audience behaviour. According to these theories, the mass media may have direct, indirect or limited effects on their audiences in several aspects. The mass media can affect people in a wide range of ways, from their social behaviour to consumption habits. Herein, I am interested in the effects of the media on audiences' political behaviour. In this section I will consider agenda setting,

framing and priming on a preferential basis within the theoretical framework of this study, which concerns how the media shape public opinion and how the media may affect voting behaviour.

Early studies, such as the hypodermic model of the 1930s or the two step flow of communication model in the 1940s and 1950s, have been replaced by the agenda setting model which was developed by McCombs and Shaw, with their celebrated research in 1972. The agenda-setting model emphasizes the power of the mass media to influence the public agenda. According to McCombs and Shaw (1972), the mass media determines and selects the issues or ideas and leads people to think about these topics. In other words, as demonstrated in Cohen's (1963) very famous expression the media tells us 'what to think about' rather than telling us what to think exactly (cited in McCombs and Shaw 1972). Yet, the media not only tell us what to think about, it also tells us how to think about it (McCombs and Shaw 1993). The mass media have the ability to bring up some issues in the public sphere (Severin and Tankard 1997). This ability of the mass media provides them with a power to determine the agenda. However, McQuail (1994) draws attention to the relationship between the salience and order of the issues in the media and the importance given to these topics by the public and politicians. In other words; 'salient issues on the media agenda are likely to be salient in the public agenda' (Dearing and Rogers 1996).

Agenda setting is one of the most well-known models in media effects studies. It refers to the attitudinal effects of the mass media and also emphasizes the idea that audiences tend to filter the messages in the media according to their personal predispositions and characteristics (Scheufele and Tewksbury 2007). This is also the common ground of priming and framing models. For this reason, framing is assumed to be part of agenda-setting or the second-level of agenda-setting. Priming is often considered as an extension of agenda setting (Neuman and Guggenheim 2011, Scheufele and Tewksbury 2007, McCombs 2002).

Priming refers to the effects of the media content on the behaviour of their audiences, or their judgements related to the content (Bryant et al. 2009: 97). Iyengar and Kinder (1987: 63) claim that priming refers to 'changes in the standards that people use to make political evaluations'. The mass media have the ability to highlight some news

items by making them the headlines, by reserving them a large space, or by repeating the stories. The media can make audiences think that some issues are particularly important by prioritizing them as special issues. In other words, priming effects can be defined as telling people what issues they should use to evaluate the performance of parties, leaders or candidates while making their decisions (Hansen 2008). To sum up, Scheufele and Tewksbury mention that 'By making some issues more salient in people's mind (agenda setting), mass media can also shape the considerations that people take into account when making judgments about political candidates or issues (priming)' in order to specify the difference between agenda setting and priming (2007: 11). They also continue on to explain these three models' differences in terms of framing. They claim that framing obviously differs from these two models because, 'it is based on the assumption that how an issue is characterized in news reports can have an influence on how it is understood by audiences' (Scheufele and Tewksbury 2007: 11).

Simon and Xenos (2000) state that, media owners or journalists could lead the news content to frame the issues within the context of dominant interpretations or influential readings and, 'issues are framed in ways that suggest to audiences how they should be interpreted by media owners or journalists'. Thus, audiences assign a meaning to issues on the basis of what has been highlighted (De Vreese and Boomgaarden, 2006). The mass media could frame and shape the issues and set the agenda for citizens' discussion by simplifying the issues which can be perceived as complicated by audiences. In other words, the mass media could contextualize the news content within the same frame and affect which frames people use to make sense of issues.

These three models are related and similar but also they have differences from each other. The three models meet at the point of 'we judge as important what the media judge as important' (McCombs and Shaw, 1972). Along with these models which refer to media content, it would be useful to outline some theories regarding the cognitive effects of media exposure such as social learning theory, and the uses and gratifications model.

### **Uses-and-Gratifications and Social Learning Theories**

The uses and gratification model suggests that people use the mass media to satisfy their needs or for their gratification in its simplest form. Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch

(1973) refer to basic primary uses for the media such as entertainment, identity, surveillance and social solidarity as the pioneers of the uses and gratifications approach. Uses and gratifications theory suggests that audiences choose a specific media source according to their needs and it focuses on the individual differences and societal variables in media use and effects (Rosengren, 1974). Audiences actively choose and use the media which could satisfy their needs and they could also alter their media use towards their needs. As Shao (2009) has summarized, individuals use media content to meet their entertainment, information and mood management needs. They enhance their social connections by actively participating in the content, and by this way they can also produce their own contents for 'self-actualization' and 'self-expression' especially with the development of the internet and social media. In other words, actually the mass media is not so powerful that it can directly influence or change audiences' behaviors, because they already play an active role when they choose media sources and the content that they consume in order to fulfill their needs.

The uses and gratifications approach has been criticized in social science theory by some mass communication scholars due to conceptual problems. To give an example, Swanson (1977) asserts that the uses and gratifications approach is vague, imprecise and not theoretical. On the other hand, Ruggiero (2000) stands in opposition to that idea and claims that the importance of the uses and gratifications approach increased with the emergence of computer mediated communication. He also noted that 'in fact, uses and gratifications has always provided a cutting-edge theoretical approach in the initial stages of each new mass communications medium: newspapers, radio and television, and now the Internet' (Ruggiero 2000:3).

Uses and gratification theory parallels social learning theory, but differs from it regarding the point of expectations of the media. In social learning theory, expectations are based on the outcomes of media consumption behaviour, while according to uses and gratification theory expectations form around the gratification of needs (Straubhaar, LaRose and Davenport 2013: 415). In terms of mass communication, both uses and gratifications and social cognitive theories posit the idea that people play an active role in their media behaviour, and they explain more than how media influences people's lives or identities (Bandura, 2001; Katz et al., 1973; LaRose and Eastin, 2004).

On the other hand, according to social learning theory or social cognitive theory<sup>59</sup> as it was later called (Bandura 1986), people make their decisions based on anticipation and they rely heavily on previous experience which might be experience of others making their decisions for them (Bandura, 1977). Social learning theory regards self-efficacy as a driving power of changes in human behavior which are defined as 'one's beliefs in her or his ability to carry out a certain action' (Sood, Menard and Witte 2003: 125). Efficacy expectations and outcome expectations are the main determinants of individuals' choices in Bandura's theory which pioneered the trend (Bandura 1977; Sood et al., 2003: 125). The social cognitive theory is based on psychosocial functioning and it explains personal parameters, environmental factors and behavioural patterns as interacting determinants (Bandura, 1986). In other words, this theory supposes that individual's behaviour is the result of learning from personal or other people's experiences as a cognitive process that can occur through direct instruction, observation or rewards and punishments (Bandura, 2001). Social cognitive theory has two roles with regards to communications, firstly in promoting changes by shaping behaviours, attitudes and ideas and secondly, linking people to social networks which comes into prominence with the emergence of social media (Bandura, 2001, Shao 2009).

To sum up, it can be said that the uses and gratifications approach basically assumes that individuals use certain media sources to satisfy certain needs in certain ways, while social cognitive theory provides a psychological perspective to shed a light on issues such as what those needs are and where they come from. This Social Cognitive Theory is important for mass media studies because of its difference from traditional theories which have a mechanistic view and pass over humanistic features.

In the following stage, I will provide details of media systems and the media system in Turkey due to its important role in media coverage and media freedom, as mentioned in the previous parts.

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<sup>59</sup>LaRose and Eastin draw a distinction between these two theories by this means; 'Social Learning Theory is a theory of media effects and Social Cognitive Theory is a broad human behaviour theory which may be applied to media attendance as well' (2004: 360).

### 3.6. Media Systems

The mass media have been one of the most important power centres that affect social, economic and political life since its emergence. Thus, political powers and mass media have always been in an interaction. Political powers have been either launched their own newspapers or benefited from available newspapers and other forms of mass media. In other words, political powers have manipulated the media for their own interests and sometimes sought to keep the media under control and censored if necessary. Today, this situation has been reversed and the media's power has become more influential over political power. Therefore, the relationship between media and politics has been evolving for years, and still continues to evolve. However, mass media has been an important actor in politics which leads researchers to examine this relationship in order to understand the role of the media in democracies.

There are several important dimensions in a given society for understanding the relationship between the media and democracy such as social, cultural, political, economic, legal and demographic patterns. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a multi-dimensional analysis of the society in question, including all of these structures which separately affect the development of both the media system and democracy. In addition, these dimensions influence the dynamic relationship between the media and democracy. In this thesis, these concepts and processes will be analysed in the light of Daniel Hallin and Paolo Mancini's prominent research that they elucidate media systems. According to them, media systems were developed in parallel with political and social systems in their comprehensive book *Comparing Media Systems: Three Model of Media and Politics* (2004), containing 18 countries in North America and Western Europe.

Although Hallin and Mancini's work is accepted and popular in the field of comparative media system research, it should be noted that '*Four Theories of the Press*' by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm published in 1956 is the basis of the field. This book is outdated for today and will not be detailed but referred as the starting point of the field and also the basis of the most of current studies on comparative media systems including Hallin and Mancini's research.

Hallin and Mancini built their theory based on four dimensions which enable them to compare the media systems of developed democracies. They have entitled these four dimensions as follows:

1. The development of media markets (concentrated on the mass circulation press)
2. Political parallelism
3. The development of journalistic professionalism
4. The degree and nature of state intervention in the media system (Hallin and Mancini 2002: 21).

They have developed three models of media systems by considering these four major dimensions: 1- Polarized Pluralist or Mediterranean Model (for Southern European countries, like France, Greece and Italy); 2- Democratic Corporatist or North/Central European Model (Germany, Netherlands, Scandinavian countries); 3- Liberal or North Atlantic Model (United States, Great Britain, Canada) (Hallin and Mancini 2004; Baris 2007).

The four dimensions drawn by Hallin and Mancini are crucial for the comparison of the media system of any country. Therefore, these dimensions will be summarized in brief and are also considered helpful to delineate the media system in Turkey. Although, Hallin and Mancini's theory is designed for developed capitalist democracies, I will try to apply these dimensions to the media system in Turkey as a democratizing country. Turkey has a close resemblance to the Polarized Pluralist or Mediterranean Model when their typologies are examined. However, Stylianos Papathanassopoulos assumes that this is included in the eight 'Mediterranean Media Model Countries' with Spain, Italy, Greece, Portugal, Malta and Cyprus (2007: 191). Ruken Baris expresses this by emphasizing the geographical proximity as follows: 'The intellectual ties that were established with French literary cultures at the end of the 19th century, a similar Mediterranean culture, and the long tradition of paternalistic and clientalistic politics had their impact on the development of media system in Turkey, as in other Southern European countries' (2007: 3). According to the Mediterranean Model, 'the media in southern Europe share some major characteristics: low levels of newspaper circulation, a tradition of advocacy reporting, instrumentalisation of privately owned media, politicisation of public broadcasting and

broadcast regulation and limited development of journalism as an autonomous profession' (Hallin and Mancini 2004). I will touch upon the main characteristics of both the Polarized Pluralist/Mediterranean Model and the media system of Turkey in more detail in the following section, in which I examine the four dimensions.

### ***The Structure of Media Markets: The Development of a Mass Press***

Hallin and Mancini emphasize that; 'one of the most obvious differences among media systems has to do with the development of the mass circulation press' (2004: 22). According to Hallin and Mancini, the development of mass circulation newspapers differs from country to country within the historical process. In their reference book, they noted that high rates of newspaper circulation are seen in Scandinavian countries and Northern Europe which are classified as Democratic Corporatist or North/Central European Model, while the countries of Polarized Pluralist/ Mediterranean Model including Southern Europe present low circulation rates (Hallin and Mancini 2004: 22). However, today, this situation has been evolved by the development of electronic media in time and the broadsheet readership reduced even in Northern Europe while it increased in Southern Europe since 2004<sup>60</sup>.

In terms of the structure of media markets and the development of the mass press, Turkey shares similarities with Southern Europe. As in Southern Europe, the newspapers of Turkey have a fairly low newspaper circulation even the increase in recent years. Also the media have mostly been supported by political actors and thus, they have been influenced ideologically. Elmas and Kurban state that: 'as a typical example of the Mediterranean Model, Turkey has a quite low level of newspaper circulation, while the media is occupied with state or government politics which result in advocacy journalism' (2010: 12).

According to Turkish Statistical Institute 2010 data, daily newspapers per 1000 people were 95 when the 2001 World Bank estimates were 111 in Turkey. When considering other Southern European countries according to data from 2000, it indicates very close figures with Italy (121.4), Greece (77.5) and Portugal (82.7) (Hallin and Mancini 2004: 23; Baris 2007: 5; World Bank 2000). Although the figures increased in these countries, they still represent low numbers among the remaining

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<sup>60</sup> World Press Trends 2014, [http://www.arpp.ru/images/123/51253\\_WAN-IFRA\\_WPT\\_2014.pdf](http://www.arpp.ru/images/123/51253_WAN-IFRA_WPT_2014.pdf)

part of the Europe. However, the big gender difference in newspaper readership is another common point between Turkey and Southern Europe, which also shows that historically women were removed from literacy and politics (Hallin and Mancini 2004: 22-23). In Turkey, the differences between male and female literacy rates were 20 per cent in 1935 and 13 per cent in 2000 (TUIK-Turkish Statistical Institute). Late industrialism, dominance of religion and its institutions and the counter-Enlightenment tradition are seen as the reason for the late development of the market, which influenced the development of literacy and mass circulation press in southern Europe negatively. Also, transition to democracy has commonly been late in these countries which has an important role in the development of the mass media (Hallin and Mancini 2004:128).

During the transition period from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey, besides many social, political and religious reforms, alphabet reform was influential in the development of literacy and the development of mass media circulation. Hundreds of thousands of people were made illiterate by the sudden transition from the Arabic alphabet to the Latin alphabet (Aksin 1989). Moreover, the young republic experienced three coup d'états which weakened the development of the mass circulation press as well as many other economic and social issues. In brief, despite several fundamental reforms, transition to democracy has not been smooth for Turkey, and the painful democratization process has eminently affected the development of the mass media.

Media consumption and the size of a market are two important elements for understanding the media structures. In the Mediterranean media model countries, development of profitable media enterprises has been delayed by contrast with the Northern European newspapers which have rooted and powerful media enterprises with high circulation rates. In Turkey, media enterprises and existing media conglomerates were mostly established and enhanced after the liberalisation process in the 1980s. Elmas and Kurban define the media sector in Turkey as 'structurally divided into congregations' (2010: 12). As it is mentioned under the title of *Historical Background of the Media in Turkey* in the previous chapter, almost all media giants are active in several business sectors such as construction, health and telecommunication, and none of them dare to risk their own economic interests. Thus, the tight junction the between media and the media giants' economic interests

inspires them to 'share the same mindset in upholding the *interests of the state* and *national security* above democracy, human rights and media freedom' (Elmas and Kurban 2010: 12), despite their varying ideological attitudes. As they have concluded, for this reason, the existence of qualitatively different media groups does not mean that they are qualitatively different (2010).

Also the type of mass medium that is commonly used gives clues about the media market structure of a given country. As Hallin and Mancini mention, the absence of mass circulation newspapers in a country means electronic media usage is more extensive for getting information about political issues (2004: 24). Papathanassopolus also emphasizes the differences between European countries about consumption of the traditional media like television and the press (2007: 191). The Eurobarometer data about the ratio of TV and newspaper consumption in EU countries reveals that the majority of the public prefers TV rather than newspapers in Mediterranean model countries with low circulation rates such as Greece, Portugal and Spain (Eurobarometer: Public Opinion in the EU 2001). Markus Prior explains this point by highlighting the difficulty of learning from print media rather than learning from television and claims that 'picking up information from television news requires less attention and less cognitive effort than learning from print media' (Prior 2010: 48). In southern Europe, late development of the market delayed the development of the mass circulation press. In the meantime, by the emergence of radio and television these two media outlets have been the primary sources of information and the print media has lost its significance.

Hallin and Mancini emphasise that: 'The distinction here is not only one of quantity' and, they continue; 'it is also a distinction in the nature of the newspaper, its relation to its audience and its role in the wider process of social and political communication' (2004: 22). Herein, Hallin and Mancini emphasize the difference between the audiences that newspapers of the north and the south address. Southern European newspapers appeal to a politicized, urban, educated 'small elite' which is involved in a '*horizontal process*' of communication, while Northern European/North American newspapers appeal to the 'mass public' that is involved in a '*vertical process*' of debate, regardless of whether they are politicized or depoliticized. On the other hand, they can also take part in the horizontal process of 'inter-elite communication' by mediating elites and masses (Hallin and Mancini 2004: 22).

Consequently, while the mass circulation press had emerged by the late nineteenth century in northern Europe, as Hallin and Mancini note ‘a true mass circulation press never fully emerged in any of the Mediterranean countries’ (2004: 91). On the other hand, Papathanassopoulos stated that the electronic media is the ‘only true mass media’ of southern Europe and its power in forming public opinion is spectacular (2007: 193). As this point suggested, radio and television have been the most important media in Turkey as an example of Mediterranean model. Nowadays, this can be also claimed for the internet but the mass circulation has never been strong in Turkey as well.

### ***Political Parallelism***

The term of press-party parallelism was propounded by Colin Seymour-Ure for the first time in 1974. It underlies the term of political parallelism (Hallin and Mancini 2004; van Kempen 2007; Bayram 2010). According to Seymour-Ure (1974), ‘press-party parallelism is present if ties exist between newspapers and political parties’ (van Kempen 2007: 303) and ‘its strongest form is when each newspaper supports a party that is highly visible in the leader columns and in the editorial parts of newspaper’ (van Kempen 2007: 303). On the one hand, some authors such as Hetty van Kempen (2007) use the term ‘media-party parallelism’ which includes television news because of the emergence and the rapid development of public and private television channels. On the other hand, Hallin and Mancini (2004) prefer the notion of political parallelism as a wider concept. Nowadays, it is hard to distinguish the political parallelism in press and broadcasting because of the ‘high concentration’ in media ownership. For example, as one of the biggest media conglomerates of Turkey, the Doğan Media Group owns two important mainstream newspapers, Hürriyet and Milliyet, and also owns one of the major national television channels, Kanal D (Öncü: 2000). In brief, it could be said that if there were a political parallelism in the media system of any country, it would also penetrate all of the other media in these circumstances.

Political parallelism is an important characteristic of the media systems of many European countries and it is strongest in Mediterranean countries where the advocacy traditions are common. In these countries many newspapers are

associated with political parties or other political groups and they also influence the readers' opinions in order to get their support by indicating political tendencies. Both media owners and journalists are apt at being 'party politicized' due to their interests (Papathanassopoulos 2007: 193; van Kempen 2007: 304; Hallin and Mancini 2004). This is also the case in Turkey as mentioned in the historical background. It also came to the fore during the referendum period with the perception of the 2010 referendum for constitutional amendments as a political choice.

Hallin and Mancini (2004: 26) claim that political advocacy has been a central function of the print media, becoming its principle function with the emergence of newspapers as a force in political life. Then by the late nineteenth century this political journalism mindset turned to professional journalism which emphasizes the neutrality of journalists rather than biased journalism. It is also connected with the development of commercial media. As Carkoglu and Yavuz note: 'increasing tendency towards commercialization is expected to weaken partisan political control over the media outlets' (2011: 616) In other words, the aim of the print media has shifted to deriving economic interests instead of representing political interests and, advertisement revenue has replaced the financial aids of political parties or other political organisations. Nonetheless, the commercial media can also be politicized in the same way as non-commercial media (Hallin and Mancini 2004: 26). The concept of instrumentalisation of the media refers that; 'in all countries, there is a strong tendency for the media to be controlled by private interests with political alliances and ambitions who seek to use their media properties for political ends' (Hallin and Mancini 2004, Papathanassopoulos 2007: 193). When it is thought in terms of Turkey, huge media groups as Dogan, Cukurova, and Dogus use the media power in their hands in order to carry out their other economic objectives.

Political parallelism can be observed by means of indicators such as media content, organizational connections between the media and political parties/actors, the tendency of media personnel in being active in political life, and the necessity of political relationships for journalism, partisanship of media audiences and journalistic culture including journalistic organization and role orientations. Even the direct or discernible effects of political parties/actors are few if any; their past effects still impact on institutions (Hallin and Mancini 2004: 28-9).

Another leading reason for the political parallelism is the public broadcasting and the regulatory agencies which link commercial broadcasting with the political system through supervision. As exemplified in the classification of Hallin and Mancini, in the 'government model' state controls public broadcasting directly, while the professionals run but the state controls in the 'professional model'. On the other hand, political parties share the control of public broadcasting in the 'proportional representation' model. In the final model, called 'civic or corporatist', as an enhanced form of proportional representation model, control over public broadcasting is served out not only to political parties but also to different social groups. In addition to all these, it is necessary to state that 'all modern public broadcasting subject to political influence, pressures and manipulation from government or other political actors' (Hallin and Mancini 2004: 29). In terms of Turkey, the public broadcaster TRT can be seen as an example for the government model due to the government's direct control of it as it was mentioned in the previous chapter. Papathanassopoulos states that because of the paternalism of the state in the Mediterranean countries, public broadcasting – both radio and TV - is considered as the 'arms of the state' and the interference or control is inured (2007: 193). For example, the TRT has always been under 'tight control of the state', and largely lost its audience after the inception of private broadcasting (Papathanassopoulos 2007: 194). Before the launch of private broadcasting the TRT was in the main sites of conflict among the major powers in politics.

Political parallelism of the media in Turkey should be analysed as distinct from the countries in Western or Southern Europe. This is because, as mentioned in the historical background, the press and journalists played an instructive role in the modernization, secularization, and westernization processes of Turkey during the transition to democracy. As Oncu states: 'the radio and television are seen as powerful tools to disseminate the ideals of modernization to the general public by the state elites' and the TRT's mission is 'to define and promote a common and collective agenda for modernization' (Öncü 1995: 55).

Bayram (2011: 594) explains that, 'political parallelism in the Turkish press is at moderate to high levels' in his article on political parallelism in the Turkish press

covering the time period between 1830 and 2002. He focusses on commercialization, party-system characteristics, and the number of parties, ideological polarization, government type and cleavage voting concepts. According to his results, one-party systems represent the highest level of political parallelism in the press, as Seymour-Ure estimate. Turkey experienced one-party, multi-party and two-party periods within the time frame of his research and the average levels of parallelism are 89.0, 57.7 and 64.6 respectively. In his final analysis, 'there is more parallelism in the Turkish press when ideological polarization in the party system is high; there is more parallelism when coalition governments rule the country instead of single-party governments; and there is more parallelism when cleavage voting is strong' (Bayram 2011: 592-4).

The relationship between media and politics reverted to another dimension in the period after the 2002 general elections where Bayram's research comes to an end. The 2002 general elections were the inception of both the ongoing AKP government and inspired the term of 'slanted' (yandas) media (Carkoglu and Yavuz 2011: 617). During the following period 'media independence' and 'freedom of press' was more controversial. According to the Freedom House and Reporters without Borders reports, the rank of press freedom in Turkey began to fall dramatically day by day. For the *Freedom of the Press 2012* Turkey is 117<sup>th</sup> among 197 countries and the status is partly free<sup>61</sup> (Freedom House, 2012). For the *Press Freedom Index 2011-2012* Turkey is 148<sup>th</sup> among 179 countries<sup>62</sup> (Reporters without Borders, 2012). As Carkoglu and Yavuz have summarized (2011, 618):

According to detailed reports, the declining rank of press freedom in Turkey is mainly due to the increasing number of prosecuted journalists, publishers and activists; the assassination of the Armenian journalist Hrant Dink in 2007; bans on internet and increasing number of inaccessible websites including YouTube<sup>23</sup>, Google Groups and Dailymotion; ongoing defamation suits launched by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan against members of the media, especially against satirical magazines; and lastly the huge tax penalty to Dogan Media Group amounting to approximately 4 billion Turkish Lira, or

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<sup>61</sup> <http://www.freedomhouse.org/country/turkey>, access date 03.03.2012

<sup>62</sup> [http://en.rsf.org/IMG/CLASSEMENT\\_2012/CLASSEMENT\\_ANG.pdf](http://en.rsf.org/IMG/CLASSEMENT_2012/CLASSEMENT_ANG.pdf) access date 01.03.2012

approximately 2,6 billion US dollars, in 2009. In addition to those current issues, press freedom in Turkey is threatened by structural pressures caused by the restrictive media legislation. Although there has been some progress since the beginning of European Union accession, Turkish Penal Code is still a serious threat against free speech and free press.

Last but not least, Turkey remains on the national and international agenda due to its imprisoned journalists. For the New York based Committee to Protect Journalists<sup>63</sup> (CPJ) press freedom report in 2012, Turkey is the 'world's worst jailer' due to the 49 jailed journalists Turkey. Iran is second with 45 journalists and China is third with 32. The CPJ gives space for the statements of Mehmet Ali Birand, a well-known Turkish editor, 'make no distinction between journalists exercising freedom of expression and (individuals) aiding terrorism; the government does not differentiate between these two major things: freedom of expression and terrorism' and he also defines the use of anti-state laws against journalists as a 'national disease'. On the other hand, the CPJ report highlights the imprisonment of the editor-in-chief -Tayip Temel- of the nation's sole Kurdish daily (Azadiya Welat). He stands trial for being a member of a Kurdish terrorist organisation and faces 20 years in prison with the evidences including only his published work, and 'wiretapped telephone conversations' with news sources and his colleagues. He was released from prison in July 2014 after 2 years with the judicial control decision. He still gives signature in two days of the week in the provincial security directorate –Hakkari- where he is registered and cannot go out of this city<sup>64</sup>. Finally, as can be deduced from these information, freedom of the press and correlatively democracy has taken a major blow due to these last developments in Turkey.

### ***Professionalization***

Professionalization is a controversial feature of media systems due to its unclear boundaries and definition. The ideal type of professionalization should be based on

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<sup>63</sup> <http://www.cpj.org/reports/2012/12/imprisoned-journalists-world-record.php#more>, access date 11.12.2012

<sup>64</sup> <http://www.evrensel.net/haber/90929/gazeteci-tayyip-temelin-esareti-suruyor> access date 14.01.2015

'systematic knowledge or doctrine', which journalism is not. The level of professionalization differs from country to country towards historical, social and political developments (Hallin and Mancini 2004: 33-4). Papathanassopoulos points out that journalistic autonomy will be restricted by the 'instrumentalization of the news media by oligarchs, industrialists, parties or the state' (2007: 196). In Southern European countries, the emergence of journalism has been correlated with literature and politics. Undeveloped media market structures, non-financial independency and state intervention has hindered the development of journalism as a profession. (Hallin and Mancini 2004; Papathanassopoulos 2007: 196).

According to Hallin and Mancini's classification, there are three dimensions of professionalization: autonomy, distinct professional norms and public service orientation (2004: 34). Autonomy requires an 'esoteric' character which journalism cannot have because of its nature. Thus, journalism suffers from a lack of autonomy and even if journalism can achieve relative autonomy within media organisations, it remains limited. Distinct professional norms are tightly related to autonomy. The outside control over the practice of journalism impairs the existence of distinct professional norms. Public service orientation is an integral part of professionalism. Due to serving a public interest, 'public trust' and the orientation of the ethic of public service is especially important for journalism (Hallin and Mancini 2004: 35-7). Elmas and Kurban state that: 'Journalism or any kind of position in the media field is not suitable for professionalism' because of 'multiple conflict of interests' (2010: 12). They use as an example the multiple institutions and regulations in Turkey which were conceived for the 'state interest' instead of providing media freedom (Elmas and Kurban 2010:12). In a word, professionalism is a 'traditional criteria' for journalism which is also vital and 'sacred' for some authors (Broddason 2000: 162) with its complimentary dimensions.

The degree of professionalization is lower in the Mediterranean countries and in Turkey as well. On the other hand, Papathanassopoulos (2007: 196) emphasizes the idea that it does not mean the journalists are less educated in these countries. On the contrary, journalism could be defined as an elite occupation because of the intellectual and writing background of journalists. By his own illustrative words transferred from Hallin and Mancini (2004: 112): 'Limited professionalization is also

manifested in a limited development of institutions of journalistic self-regulation, like the press councils which exist in much of northern Europe' (Papathanassopoulos 2007: 196). Under the light of all this information, it is obvious that the attributed role of journalists in the historical process, political parallelism and financial interests of media patrons have an influence on the level of journalistic professionalism.

To train to be a journalist in Turkey it is necessary to graduate from a communication school which was converted from The Schools of Press and Publishing in the 1980s. These schools/faculties have journalism, cinema and television studies, advertising and public relations, visual design and communication departments (Ozcan 2007: 13). It is not only the training of journalists in Turkey that remains a controversial issue, but also their working conditions are open to question. As Ozcan states (2007: 13), 'they need to work under pressures inserted by the financial interests of media owners and the ideological sensibilities of the Turkish state'. She also argues that the Turkish press around the terms of 'freedom of press', 'censorship' and 'illiberality of the state' and 'corruption of journalistic standards' as Finkel (2000) who revealed the power of the government and military over editors, and the abuse of the Supreme Council of Radio and Television (RTUK) by political actors which indicates the control of media by outset actors. This leads us to the concept of instrumentalization as a threat for professionalization which could be for both political and commercial interests (Hallin and Mancini 2004; Papathanassopoulos 2007). The major media giants in Turkey such as the Dogan, Dogus and Cukurova Groups etc. represent a very good example of commercial instrumentalization due to using their media outlets for their other financial interests. Hence, it seems to be one of the most important problems in the Turkish media.

### ***The Role of the State***

As Hallin and Mancini point out; 'The state plays a significant role in shaping the media system in any society' (2007: 41). Yet, the form of state intervention and its extent would differ from country to country. They state that public service broadcasting is certainly the most important form of state intervention. In many countries the state would also have power over other media outlets such as newspapers or news agencies. One other significant and prevalent dimension of

state intervention is press subsidies - direct or indirect (Hallin and Mancini 2004: 41-43).

However, 'absence of a strong civil society' is one of the reasons for state autonomy and state dominance (Hallin and Mancini 2004; Papathanassopoulos 2007: 197). Different forms of state intervention are outlined by Hallin and Mancini, such as 'libel, defamation, privacy and right-of-reply laws; hate speech laws; laws regulating access to government information; laws regulating media concentration, ownership and competition; and broadcasting licensing laws etc.'(2004: 43-4), while Papathanassopoulos emphasizes the censor media owner roles of the state (2007: 197). Besides all these, Hallin and Mancini (2004: 44) note that one of the most important roles of the state is as a 'source of information' and 'primary definer' of news which also affects the agenda and 'framing of public issues'. In Turkey, state can control the media coverage by related laws as mentioned in the legislative regulations section. Especially RTUK has a large power on broadcasting that can be restrict the media freedom for 'security' reasons including to protect the indivisible integrity of the republic and principles and reforms of Ataturk. TRT Law also has similar articles and authority on only public broadcaster TRT.

In Turkey, the state has a very large role in the development of the media, like other Southern European countries. Ozcan claims that throughout history, the state has played an effective role - more so than market forces - in the development of the media system in Turkey (2007: 15). And, the official state ideology has affected the practices and role model of journalists and directed them to introduce and represent the ideals of the modern republic. She also emphasizes two significant aspects of the state-media relationship in Turkey. According to Ozcan; 'On the one hand, the mainstream media historically emerged as the carrier of the state ideology to the masses; but on the other hand, it suffered from the limits of the same ideology that it to support and disseminate' (2007: 4). The state acted as founder and supportive role in the development of the media but, at the same time used the media as a means of state.

The state was more influential in the media sphere in Turkey before the 1990s in terms of westernization and modernization targets during the nation state building

period. Afterwards, various developments such as globalization, economic and political liberalisation lead to significant amendments including permission for broadcasting in languages other than the official language Turkish with the amendment of the law no. 3984 on the Establishment of Radio and Television Enterprises and their Broadcasts in 2004<sup>65</sup>.

In Turkey, the state does not take part as an owner in media. The state have organic links with only the national public broadcaster TRT which is funded by taxes around 70% and government grants around 20% and the final 10% coming from advertising (RTUK 2014)<sup>66</sup> However, it is hard to claim that state ownership exists in Turkey when state ownership is one tenth of the total market in Greece. In Ukraine and Hungary this figures are among the lowest in all of Europe with 14 and 20 per cent (Fardigh 2010:11).

To sum up, the media system in Turkey as an example of the Mediterranean model of Hallin and Mancini represents low levels of circulation, high levels of concentration and political parallelism. Independent journalism is quite limited. In light of the knowledge mentioned in Chapter 1 and in this chapter, the freedom of the press is still under duress and development of the commercial press has been late. The press also focuses on political issues and the state provides subsidies to the press. Professionalism can be defined as limited and underdeveloped. Despite the major role of the state as owner, regulator and incorporator, the state is unable to make an efficient regulation.

Media and politics are the most important two actors of the modern political system and the relationship between the mass media and politics is multifaceted and interactive. Herein, the media system of the country in hand gains an importance. The media system affects the freedom of the media, its content and in this way determines the public opinion during referendum periods as well as in election times. The media agenda influences the public opinion with positive or negative broadcasts and the news. Thus, the priorities of the mass media become the priorities of the

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<sup>65</sup> <http://www2.tbmm.gov.tr/d24/2/2-1121.pdf> access date 09.01.2015

<sup>66</sup> Radyo ve Televizyon Yayinciligi Sektor Raporu (Radio and Television Broadcasting Sector Report) [www.rtuk.org.tr/Icerik/DownloadReport/3691](http://www.rtuk.org.tr/Icerik/DownloadReport/3691) access date 11.12.2014

public (McCombs and Shaw, 1972: 187). Moreover, in general, citizens follow the media in order to reach political information. A referendum is the people's choice and citizens would like to be informed about an issue on which they have to give their preference. It is against the spirit of democracy for citizens to make a decision without information. Thus, the media plays an important role in referendums just as in elections. Referendums will be discussed in the next section as a direct participation practice of citizens to the political decision-making process. I will also discuss referendum experiences in Turkey and the 2010 referendum. The role of the media system during this period was one of the most important actors that took part in modern democracies and new democracies such as Turkey.

### **3.7. Concluding Remarks**

In this chapter, I have introduced media systems and referendums in order to understand the relationship between these two interrelated concepts. With this study I seek to analyse the impact of the media upon 12<sup>th</sup> September 2010 constitutional referendum in Turkey. The 2010 referendum campaign has taken a large place in the Turkish media before and after the referendum. Yet, the question is how media has covered this process.

One of the main arguments of this research is that the vote in the 2010 referendum occurred under the intense impact of political parties and political actors. In other words, the referendum results reflected potential party preferences and feelings about government performance rather than the referendum and constitutional amendments. Within the frame of this research the media is regarded to be one of the main factors which lead to this perception. As mentioned above, referendum voting differs from elections and requires a different type of information regarding the content of the referendum question. Political and ideological identifications do not play a significant role in referendums in opposition to elections. Thus, the media is the most crucial element of the process from which voters can get information about the referendum. On this point, this research asserts that information is vital for a referendum, and media content is crucial for information, and the media system has a pivotal role for the media content. The media system affects the media content as biased or neutral and only an independent media can function as a tool for information.

In the 12<sup>th</sup> September 2010 referendum, the Turkish media presented a fragmented structure during the campaign from the official announcement of the referendum date until the ballot day (13<sup>th</sup> May - 12<sup>th</sup> September). While the content of the referendum was sometimes limited, political parties and leaders were the most visible elements of the referendum campaign in the media. Although it may seem that the political and ideological ties influenced the voters, the media was conducive of this situation. The media coverage gave a large place to the political actors and their opinions instead of amendments and this condition caused an information pollution atmosphere which created confusion among the public. Voters applied for cues and heuristics, but always via the media.

The democratic system in Turkey is still developing and this situation affects the Turkish media system as well. As an example of the Mediterranean model, the Turkish media system represents low circulation, political parallelism and a highly concentrated structure along with state control and censorship. The media content is also under the influence of this organism which was mostly discussed during the 2010 referendum period as '*yandas medya*' (slanted media). In the 2010 referendum, the campaigns were shaped around political parties and leaders and as the means of campaigns media coverage on the also shaped around these actors too. This situation shows that there was the lack of independent and neutral coverage on the referendum issue as well. These points will be addressed in the *Chapter 6* on the analysis of the media content. However, in referendums, it is important to have well-informed citizens, if a question is asked to the citizens in order for them to participate in the decision-making process in the name of democracy. Otherwise, if the citizens have been left uninformed, referendum cannot be more than a legitimization strategy used by a given political power. Thus the role of the media as an informative instrument becomes vitally important in developing democracies such as Turkey where this tendency is more common.

## **Expectations**

In terms of the historical and theoretical information provided until here, I would like to state the main expectations of this study before starting the analyses:

- In Turkey, referendum voting is not perceived different from the general elections as there is not an established referendum tradition and the political actors such as parties and leaders play the most important role on voting.
- The media are hard to provide an independent and neutral flow of information to the audiences when the media system, landscape of the media, legal regulations and their practices considered in Turkey. In the circumstances, I expect that given the media characteristics and the political structure in Turkey that there should be minimal effects of the media on 2010 referendum voting.

## **Chapter 4: Research Design and Methodology**

The aim of this research is to comprehend the impact of the media coverage on the 2010 referendum process in Turkey. In this study, I seek to shed light on the role of the media and its influence on voters' decisions during the construction of the new constitution in Turkey through the 2010 referendum for constitutional amendments. The research proceeds in 3 steps in order of; analysis of the public opinion survey data, media content analysis and, linking these two analysis.

In the first, public opinion surveys held during the referendum term between June 2010 and September 2010 are examined in order to recognize the preferences of the public and to consider the level of trust in the media, political parties and institutions. The surveys ask questions about media preferences and the referendum together.

Secondly, I use content analysis to examine the media coverage of selected outlets. Content analysis helps to reveal the representation of the referendum in the Turkish media and identify its pro or anti attitudes towards the referendum. Therefore, I will use content analysis of the Turkish media to answer questions such as where the referendum was positioned in the news agenda, and how the constitutional referendum took place.

Finally, I will employ the survey data and combine this with the content analysis data for the same period of time. With regards to media effects, it might not be possible to obtain the most reliable results using only survey data or content analysis. According to Barabas and Jerit, the evidence for media effects is shaky because of 'measurement and design problems' and it is necessary to link the media content with surveys for better results (2009: 73). I use this research design in order to conduct more robust analysis by linking the media content with the views of the individual voters. This helps to measure the extent of the media's influence on voters and whether the media preferences of the public are paralleled by their votes.

In this chapter, the subsequent steps will be followed in order to answer the research questions. Firstly, I will provide a brief summary of the methodology. This includes analysis of the content and public opinion data, which will be linked with the survey data. I use a mixed method which gathers qualitative and quantitative content analysis. In the second step, I will discuss the outlets for content analysis, the time

period and public opinion. Finally, I will outline the variables (dependent and independent) and the content measures for the analysis.

#### **4.1. Analysing the Content: Qualitative versus Quantitative Analysis or Mixed Method**

In this study I incorporate quantitative and qualitative content analyses. I concentrate on qualitative analysis over quantitative data, which will be used as a starting point for the qualitative analysis. Firstly, I will conduct basic quantitative content analysis and then I will apply more in-depth analysis qualitative methods. The main purpose of the content analysis is to find results beyond the obtained data with reference to a set of qualitative and quantitative indicators. Qualitative and quantitative methods should be viewed as complementary, thus, my research design combines qualitative and quantitative methods together.

However, quantitative content analysis is used to search out the extent to which the selected media outlets considered the referendum to be important and how they represented the referendum process. Quantitative analysis is basically used to indicate visibility but also to identify the direction of support (for vs. against), and tone. With this research I also seek to reveal the message, attitude and latent meaning in the news items. As Deacon et al. have pointed out: ‘...the (quantitative) method is not well suited to studying ‘deep’ questions about textual and discursive forms’ (1999: 117). In this regard, it would be inadequate only to adopt a quantitative analysis based methodology for a comprehensive analysis of the media texts. Quantitative content analysis findings would contribute and help to obtain better results from qualitative analysis. Qualitative analysis is essential to find out ‘the intricate details of phenomena’ (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 19) within the scope of this research.

Researchers who advocate analysing latent as well as manifest content as a way of understanding meanings of texts integrate qualitative and quantitative message analysis. Newbold et al. note that:

The problem (with quantitative content analysis) is the extent to which the quantitative indicators are interpreted as intensity of meaning, social impact and the like. There is no simple relationship between media texts and their impact,

and it would be too simplistic to base decisions in this regard on mere figures obtained from a statistical content analysis (2002: 80).

Macnamara (2003: 5) states that:

Quantitative content analysis can conform to the scientific method and produce reliable findings. Qualitative content analysis is difficult and maybe impossible to do with scientific reliability. But qualitative analysis of texts is necessary to understand their deeper meanings and likely interpretations by audiences – surely the ultimate goal of analysing media content. So a combination of the two seems to be the ideal approach.

Shoemaker and Reese's categorization of a humanist approach to media content as a reflection of society and culture, and a behaviourist approach which analyses media content with a view to uncovering its likely effects, is also useful for understanding how media content analysis should be conducted. Research exploring media content for both what influence it may have on, and how it might reflect, society should use a combination of quantitative and qualitative content analysis (1996). In short, as Macnamara summarized from Hansen et al. (1998), that a combination of quantitative and qualitative content analysis offers the best of both worlds and, further, that a combination of quantitative and qualitative content analysis methodologies is necessary to fully understand the meanings and possible impacts of news items (2003: 7). As noted by Hope: 'Qualitative content analysis ascertains the broad content of each text providing a database from which the passages that are most relevant to the question can be selected for more detailed analysis' (2010). Qualitative analysis of content is used on all columns and commentaries as the main actors of the qualitative part of this research. I will pick up some specific themes and discourses that are used by specific outlets, and their framing of the referendum will be shown in this section. I have chosen mainly commentaries and columns for the qualitative analysis because I assume that attitudes can be perceived in commentaries rather than news reporting stories.

#### **4.2. Media Content and Survey Data Combination**

The mass media is one of the most important political actors in modern democracies, and providing political information to the citizens is one of their most important roles.

The mass media provides this information via its content. How this content is created and transmitted to the public are vital stages in the flow of information. Citizens access the political information provided by the mass media mostly during political decision making processes such as in elections times or in referendums. Since the 1960s researchers have been interested in identifying the possible effects of the media on the electoral choices of citizens. How the media impacts on voting behaviour during election times has been a particularly popular field for media researchers. However, along with the development of research in this area, new researchers have identified some deficiencies and gaps in past studies. As Barabas and Jerit (2009: 74) summarized, some past research only analysed survey data without media content. This is problematic because it is hard to sort out cause and effect with only survey based analyses. Another common research type was 'laboratory experiments with simulated media coverage' (Barabas and Jerit 2009: 75). This second type of study mostly focused on describing media content and measuring media exposure. Following this, a new method has been developed which combines public opinion survey data and media content analysis. Barabas and Jerit, the pioneering researchers on linking media content and survey data, claim that: '

These studies examine people as they naturally encounter political information, and they include measures of media content as a variable in the analyses. Because these studies rely on comparisons across individuals, the potential for omitted variable bias remains. Unobserved individual-level characteristics may influence knowledge, thereby limiting researchers' ability to attribute learning to media coverage (2009: 75).

The new model enables us to conduct better analyses of media effects by linking survey data and media content. Although these studies are very important for showing the effects of the news on political knowledge, they still have some shortcomings. For example, these studies overlook the media system which may influence the media content and its effects. As Baek has indicated; 'for understanding the influence of political communication on political behaviour the partisan nature of the media system or regulations on news media coverage are important' (2009). In other words, the media content and the media system of a given country are nested factors. In this study, the media system in Turkey is explained because of its effects on the media outlets. This content helps to carry out a more robust analysis of the

role of the media in referendum voting, along with the analysis of public opinion survey data and media content.

**4.3. Research Design**

**Table 4.1: Outlets for Content Analysis**

| Period                               | Media Outlets (Newspapers) | Total number of news items |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 13 May 2010-<br>12 September<br>2010 | Cumhuriyet                 | 305                        |
|                                      | Zaman                      | 462                        |
|                                      | Radikal                    | 239                        |
|                                      | Hurriyet                   | 120                        |
|                                      | Posta                      | 140                        |
| Total (n)                            |                            | 1266                       |

The target population of the study is the widespread printed and visual media in Turkey. In the first stage of this research, five national newspapers; Posta, Zaman, Cumhuriyet, Hurriyet, Radikal and four TV channels; TRT, Kanal D, NTV, Samanyolu TV have been chosen as the outlets for coding the media content. These newspapers and TV channels have been selected according to their level of circulation, ratings, ideological position, format, broadcasting policies and their financial dependence. I choose these specific outlets from different ideologies to compare different type of coverage across the media. This is because the goal of this study is to show different coverage and the slanted presentation of the same issue which indicates the manipulative disposition of the media during the 2010 referendum campaign period in Turkey.

On the sidelines of the data collection phase of the field work, all printed media outlets were reached, but TV records were almost inaccessible. The deficiency of digital and online archive systems hindered my ability to reach TV evening news records. Despite the lack of television news content data, I will provide details of the television channels that were intended for analysis. This is because the public opinion surveys contain questions on television and I will analyse these questions in Chapter 7.

The TRT has specific importance for this research because it was not only the first and largest broadcaster, but is also the state broadcaster of Turkey. Unfortunately,

after a long bureaucratic procedure, TRT rejected my request to access their archives on the grounds that they keep individual records of the news, rather than entire records of the evening news. Therefore, the TRT does not gather evening news records day by day and does not provide them as a whole for the 4 month period. Also, it is forbidden to enter the TRT archives independently. The situation with the NTV, a leading Turkish news channel, is virtually the same. NTV News Production Director Cengizhan Kocahan stated that NTV does not have a digital archive for broadcasts before 2011. During my visit to their channel building in Istanbul he added that they do not have enough staff for the job. Samanyolu TV, the channel I chose as the representative of conservative-Islamist media, was also inaccessible. Samanyolu TV, and with Kanal 7, are the best known two conservative-Islamist channels in Turkey and they share very similar broadcasting policies. The coverage of the two outlets has special importance as they are also known for their ideological proximity to conservative political parties, in particular the AKP. Finally, Kanal D represents the mainstream media in Turkey, belongs to the Dogan Holding group, and enjoys the highest ratings. Kanal D evening news is the leader of the September 2010 ratings, which represent the referendum month. Kanal D also has an online archive of all its broadcasts including the evening news, but these records do not work properly. Nevertheless, the Kanal D evening news records were the most accessible but, are the only television records that could be used. Only analysing Kanal D coverage would be pointless, so I have decided to use newspapers for the media content analysis. Despite a low circulation number, newspapers contained large referendum coverage and they could reflect the mass media organizations' positions. They are owned by the same companies as the television channels.

To sum up, broadcasting media played a significant role throughout the 2010 referendum process and it can be said that television is the main information source in Turkey. This will be seen in the data analysis in the following chapters. News programs on national TV channels were the starting point of political campaigns, and hosted harsh discussions between political party representatives and people with alternative opinions on the referendum.

This research covers five outlets of print media. In this part, I will introduce each of them in brief because these outlets also mentioned in the *Chapter 2* in the media landscape section. I would like to start with Posta. Posta is a typical example of

tabloid newspapers which enjoying the highest circulation in Turkey. Posta is not known with any ideology or political position and it can be defined as politically neutral as it will be mentioned and also seen by the analysis of the content in *Chapter 3*. Zaman has the second highest circulation numbers and it is the most important conservative-Islamic newspaper in Turkey. However, Zaman turned into a conservative-liberal newspaper by engaging some influential journalists from other ideological sides. It is also published internationally in Australia, the United States, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Germany, Romania, Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, Macedonia, and Turkmenistan and it can be said that Zaman is the most known and popular daily outside of Turkey. On the other hand, Cumhuriyet was the first daily newspaper of the Turkish Republic that supported Ataturk's resistance movement in 1924 as it was mentioned in the landscape section. Even its name means 'Republic' in Turkish and it has the aim of defending and representing the republic and the mission of explaining Ataturk's principles which they strictly tied to. It has very low circulation numbers which is interesting when its place and effects in Turkish media thought. Yet, Cumhuriyet has always fixed readerships who define themselves as secular, 'republican' and 'Kemalist' which means being pro Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. Hurriyet has represented the mainstream of the Turkish press for a long time, and has high circulation figures. Although Hurriyet could be considered as a centre right and liberal secular newspaper, it is hard to associate it with any particular ideology. This is because these newspapers are owned by huge media conglomerates, which also have interests in other businesses. This factor creates one of the main traps of the media in Turkey, large media owners support political parties in return for financial gains. Radikal can be identified as a leftist intellectual newspaper. Radikal has a social-democrat point of view and is supportive of religious rights and the freedom of ethnic minorities. During a four month period of field work, I collected and copied all of the relevant newspaper outlets from their original hardcopies in the Izmir Ahmet Piristina City Archive, Turkey.

### **Period of Study**

The newspaper and TV channel outlets of a four month period will be analysed. The period begins straight after the announcement of the referendum date 13<sup>th</sup> May, until 12<sup>th</sup> September 2010. I have chosen this time period because the referendum attained large media attention immediately after the precise referendum date was

announced. The selected time period is useful for revealing the increasing interest in the referendum.

The public opinion survey data provided by KONDA covers a 4 month period from June 2010 to September 2010 as well. Thus, I have access to both media content and survey data from the same period which is helpful for the research design.

### **Sample Size and Coding**

I read all news stories on an individual basis in order to determine their relevance. Five national newspapers were selected as the media outlets, and 1266 news items in total were coded for the quantitative content analysis. The number of news items that were collected from each newspaper is as shown in Table 4.1 above. All items are coded in SPSS 21 according to their place, type, actors mentioned (up to 3), tone, number of yes, no and boycott statements for the quantitative analysis. From the 1266 news stories I selected columns/commentaries as the sample for the qualitative analysis.

### **Public Opinion Survey Data**

For public opinion data on the Turkish media and on the 2010 referendum secondary analyses will be carried out through the survey data collection from one of the biggest private public opinion research companies in Turkey, KONDA (Research and Consultancy and Media Monitoring Centre). The data from the other private companies including questionnaires about trust of the media, government, and parties, attitudes and media stance prior to the referendum will also be used in the interpretation of the analysis, if it is found to be helpful. The main public opinion survey dataset is provided by KONDA, and includes the four month period from June 2010 to September 2010. Surveys have had between 33 and 57 questions, which vary according to the month. Each month between 1856 and 2771 people from 38 cities, 120 districts and 154 villages in Turkey participated in the surveys on a face to face basis. The exact dates that surveys were conducted in June, July and in August have not been specified but, the last survey was conducted on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> September 2010 (KONDA Report, 2010). It is useful to compare the KONDA sample with the World Values Survey (WVS) data in terms of some basic variables, in order to see to what extent KONDA's sample reflects Turkish views.

**Table 4.2: Comparison of the KONDA and WVS Data**

| Variables                 | KONDA (2010)  |       |        |           | World Values Surveys (2011) |       |
|---------------------------|---------------|-------|--------|-----------|-----------------------------|-------|
|                           | June          | July  | August | September |                             |       |
| Age                       | Young         | 29.8% | 28.9%  | 29.3%     | 26.7%                       | 28%   |
|                           | Middle Age    | 34.8% | 34.2%  | 35.3%     | 35.3%                       | 45.8% |
|                           | Above Mid Age | 35.4% | 36.7%  | 35.4%     | 37.8%                       | 26.2% |
| Gender                    | Male          | 49.3% | 46.9%  | 49%       | 47.8%                       | 50.7% |
|                           | Female        | 50.7% | 52.9%  | 51%       | 51.9%                       | 49.3% |
| Religion (Very important) |               |       |        | 66.6%     | 71%                         | 68.1% |

**NOTES:** 1- WVS Data from 2011 as the closest survey to the referendum

2- For KONDA; Young (18-28), Middle Age (29-43), Above Middle Age (44 and more) and for WVS; Young (up to 29), Middle Age (30-49), Above Middle Age (50 and more)

3- In June and July KONDA surveys do not include religion question

Table 4.2 indicates that the KONDA sample shows similarities with the WVS data. If we consider differences in coding, we can see reasonably large inconsistencies, but of course the reliability of the KONDA survey data is up for discussion. This point will be developed in Chapter 5 where the public opinion data is analyzed. In addition, KONDA provided me with the raw data, including questions and answers. The data is transferred to SPSS 21, which I coded in accordance with the aims of the thesis.

The KONDA surveys contain questions on several aspects such as age, gender, occupation, location, education, religion/sect, ethnicity and marital status...etc. which will be helpful to recognize the voters and their preferences indirectly. On the other hand, although survey questions vary every month, they also include questions on respondents' political party preferences; their ideas about the referendum and their media preferences as well. The most useful questions for this research may be the following:

- Which is the best sentence about the constitutional amendments?
- How did you get information about the amendments' content, and form your opinion?

- Do you watch debates on TV about constitutional amendments? (link to frames)
- Do you have a fixed decision for your vote or might you change your mind in accordance with ongoing debates?
- There is a polemic about the aim of the referendum. Is it for the constitutional amendments, or a vote of confidence in the government?
- What is the meaning of the amendments?
- What will you vote, yes or no?
- Which elements affect your vote?
- Which TV channel do you prefer for watching the news?

The answers to these questions are expected to give us important clues about the media effects on politics in Turkey, in respect of the 2010 referendum. The most part of yes votes can be evaluated within the frame of democratisation, while no voters defend the idea that the government used the referendum to provide the opportunity for a vote of confidence. The democratisation frame was the most powerful element of the ruling party AKP during the referendum campaign process. The democratisation frame includes enhancing democratic rights, judicial independence, and the trial of the generals who were responsible for the 12<sup>th</sup> September 1980 military coup, and the prevention of military coups. On the other hand, the most important antithesis of the opposition is that the AKP abused the referendum to receive a vote of confidence. When electorates were asked about the meaning of the 2010 referendum, 51% said it was for constitutional amendments for the purpose of democratisation, while 40% said it was for vote of confidence for the AKP.

There are also several questions in the surveys regarding past and future elections and party leaders or other political figures that indicate the party preferences of the respondents. If we elaborate this point slightly, with regards to the question asking if there was a general election today, 42% of respondents said they would vote for the AKP and the AKP got 45% of the votes in the last general election before the referendum in 2007. When it was asked which party may win the election 59% agreed on the AKP, and 48.5% would like to see Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan govern the country, out of the ten leaders presented to the respondents. The AKP ran the most successful political communication campaign according to

59% of respondents. The CHP follows the AKP by 25% and the DP's campaign was a failure according to survey respondents, with 1%.

Surveys also include questions about how the media impacts on our daily lives, and respondents' preferences. 54% prefer watching television, while only 5% prefer reading newspapers. 37% pay attention to the media when forming an opinion. Party leaders' and family elders' opinions are the following popular answers on forming opinions, by 22% and 15% respectively. Regarding the content of the referendum, 19% have information about amendments which shows that content does not matter when deciding votes. Finally, 76% had decided what to vote by September 2010, but 23% were still open to new ideas or information and could change their mind in accordance with the news.

The A&G Research Company asked the voters about their votes four times from when the referendum gained currency, until the referendum day. The survey was conducted using the face to face meeting method on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2012 with 3072 people (1528 female) from 7 geographical regions, 49 cities, 153 districts, and 254 villages. Two of these surveys resulted with 'No' and other two of them resulted with 'Yes', by a narrow margin. According to the A&G Research Company, the vast majority decided in the direction of their preferred political parties' attitudes, instead of looking into the content of the constitutional amendments. The head of the company states that voter behaviour differs in referendums and there is a certain section of voters who act differently from their preferred political parties. For example, despite the 91.37% 'Yes' vote in the 1982 Constitutional Referendum, in the general election that was held just a year later, the Milliyetci Demokrasi Partisi- Nationalist Democracy Party (MDP) formed by the military government which made the new constitution only obtained 23.3 % of the votes (Aksam 2009). Regarding election results, in the 2012 referendum 'Yes' votes were (57.9%) more than the AKP's votes in the 2007 general elections (46.6%), in the 2009 local elections (38.8%) and the 2011 general elections (49.9%). In consequence, it is not ideal to compare the referendum results with general election results for the analysis. Therefore, 'Yes' votes were not necessarily produced by the AKP, nor 'No' votes by the CHP. In referendums, AKP voters might say 'No', while CHP voters could say 'Yes'.

Most of the citizens who voted 'Yes' said they thought Turkey would become more liberal this way. Every other person said he or she voted 'Yes' for Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who strictly advocated the amendments, and one out of seven said they voted 'Yes' against the opposition party CHP leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu. However, one out of ten confessed that they voted 'Yes' under the influence of his or her family or spouse. On the other hand, almost half of the 'No' voters said they voted no against the ruling party AKP or Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The data shows that 40.8% of 'No' voters were concerned that the judiciary would be seized by the AKP. 20% of those against the amendment believed that Turkey would be divided if the constitution changed. 19% said no because of Kemal Kilicdaroglu the leader of the CHP, and 5.7% said no because of the impact of their family or spouse.

The other important point for this research is public trust in the media. The Media Monitoring Centre asked about the quality of the Turkish media, and 76% said it is polarized, 21% thought that the same news appeared in all media outlets, and only 2% thought that the media was neutral, while 1% believed that Turkey had a developed broadcasting system. 68% said that columnists were competent.

### **Variables: Dependent and independent variables**

In this research, the main independent variable of interest is the media content - tendencies of media outlets, such as yes, no or boycott slants. The other variables are the visibility of the referendum in the media, and the framing and tone of the news items that express that tendency. At the same time, it is important to know how much attention was devoted to the media by citizens. To estimate this, respondents were asked to state their source of referendum news, either the television or newspapers and which channel or newspaper. They were also asked how often they followed the news or programs about the referendum and whether they trusted the media. The dependent variable is public votes in the referendum. The survey questions asking about the votes and referendum results indicate people's voting behaviour. Some socio-economic measures such as political party or ideological belongings, religious beliefs, education and income are considered as variables that potentially affect citizens' voting behaviour.

**Table 4.3. Summary Variables: Content Measures**

| <b>Variables</b>  | <b>Measures</b>  |
|---|--|
| <b>Visibility</b>   | Stories about the referendum, length and placement of news items, frequency                                  |
| <b>Tone</b>   | Positive, negative and neutral   |
| <b>Actors</b>   | Actor list (up to 3 actors per story) individuals, parties, institutions                                     |
| <b>Topics</b>   | Primary and secondary topics about the referendum  |
| <b>Frames of campaign debate (for qualitative analysis)</b> | Referendum content coverage, constitutional amendments, vote of confidence, democratisation and legal frames |

The unit of analysis in the study is all news stories and columns or commentaries concerning the 2010 referendum in the selected newspaper pages. One of the main focal point in this study is visibility, which shows the extent to which the media concentrated on the referendum. In order to measure the extent of visibility of the referendum, all stories on the front page, and randomly selected pages among Turkish (current news) pages and the politics pages of each newspaper.

The names of the pages differ from one newspaper to another but the main themes of the pages are as indicated above. Columns and commentaries have been searched in all pages of Cumhuriyet, because sometimes they may be placed in other sections, such as economics or sports, but only the referendum related ones are included in the study. For the other outlets, political columns and commentaries are collected in the specified pages.

Visibility is mainly determined by the placement of stories, the length of items and the number of referendum relevant news items among the total number of news items in the selected pages. However, visibility is an important point for the quantitative part of the analysis to see where the referendum was in the news agenda. The referendum was closely monitored in the media during the four months period from the announcement day to the referendum day. There have also been intense campaign and propaganda activities performed by political parties and party leaders, or other political figures. The referendum was the fifth most stressed issue in the Turkish

media in 2010 and it was mentioned 136.669 times in the printed and visual media according to the MTM reports<sup>67</sup>.

Political parties and actors also attach to much attention to the visibility during the campaign periods. This is because the visibility of the campaign can raise their votes by sticking in voters' minds. Visibility is also related with the agenda-setting function of the media as well. In other words, media performs their agenda-setting function by increasing the visibility of any issue. This can be claimed that if any issue is visible in the media, it will be come to the fore in the political agenda of the country and people will start to talk about the subject what the media highlighted. On the other hand, it is also important that how the media presented or highlighted the given issue. This brings us to the tone of the news items. It is important that if the news stories are neutral or slanted while presenting issues as well as to what extent the media make these visible.

The tone of the stories is another crucial variable for this research as an indicator of tendencies. In other words, coding the tone of items can provide us to know the stance of the media outlets. In this research, statements in the news stories and columns will be coded as pro yes, pro no or boycott because pro-Kurdish political party Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) ran an intense campaign to boycott the referendum. This should not be ruled out of the analysis of the 2010 referendum. When we look at the past statistics about the tone of the news items on referendums, we are faced with the research of the MTM one more time. The news items supporting 'Yes' were 27% and 'No' proponents were 25% of the 5.251 news items related the referendum obtained from the analysis of 44 national newspapers throughout August 2010. Nevertheless, 48% of referendum news articles were neutral or indecisive<sup>68</sup>. These results based on a large sample size are very similar with my media content analysis results in terms of the tone of items as it will be seen in the Chapter 6. I seek key words such as yes, no, boycott, democratisation, military, civil constitution, constitutional court, liberation, AKP, military coup d'etat, and the European Union as indicators while determining the tone of the news items.

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<sup>67</sup> <http://www.medyatakip.com.tr/>, access date 14.06.2011

<sup>68</sup> *ibid.*

I also determine to use some specific frames for the analysis of the media content. Media frames emphasize some specific features of any given issue and the media address this issue from the perspective that they would like to highlight. However, if one side dominates the other in the coverage, its framing of the issue may shape the public opinion (Druckman and Dennis 2011:238). Media frames are very powerful on public opinion because people use the frames that discussed in the news when they evaluate political issues and the media form these frames. Framing can shape overall opinion of people. As Dennis and Druckman notes, a strong and applicable frame can defeat the prevalent frame even if it is weaker or less applicable (2011: 242)

I will analyse the media coverage by using the frames of democratisation, vote of confidence, constitutional amendments and the legal frame including the content of the referendum. I determine these frames before and during the data collection process by the help of public opinion survey questions, political parties' and leaders' discourse in the campaigns and their own booklets. These frames are concretized after all news items have been read in the archival research. In the news items, I search for the presence or absence of these key words and frames in order to decide the tone of the items. For instance, pro yes AKP use the democratization too often and if the news items emphasize the importance of the referendum in terms of democratization, the tone of this item is coded as pro yes. Finally, I would like to note that actors that are coded from the news items can be an individual, political party, institution, organization or a company.

This chapter aimed to draw a roadmap for the following chapters that constitute the empirical part of the thesis where these information presented in here will be applied to the data analyses. In the *Chapter 5*, public opinion survey data will be analysed in order to understand the reasons of voting behaviour in the referendum. The public opinion survey data provided from KONDA will be analysed by the help of SPSS 21. I this chapter. After that the media content will be analysed with qualitative and quantitative ways in the *Chapter 6*. Also the results of these two main empirical chapters will be linked in *Chapter 7*.

## **Chapter 5: People's Choice: The Referendum in Public Opinion Surveys**

In the previous chapters, I examined the main characteristics, the historical background of the media and referendums in Turkey and the theoretical framework in the literature. The information provided in previous chapters has shown that the referendum process is an important tool for the direct participation of citizens in decision making processes, and it is more complicated than it seems. In this chapter, I explore the dynamics of referendum voting to understand the voter preferences and what affects the choices of voters in Turkey. In other words, I seek to uncover the process of voters' opinion formation concerning the constitutional referendum, and how people viewed the main issues, such as the purpose and the meaning of the referendum, its content and whether the content was important. I do this in order to understand the roots of voting behaviour in the 2010 referendum. Also, I will examine the dynamics of change: how and why opinions may have changed during the campaign period in this chapter.

### **5.1. Voting in Referendums**

When referenda are examined as a decision making process, we see different approaches explaining the interaction between voters and other actors such as political parties, elites or the media and how voters make decisions. Sara Hobolt refers to two main theories of voting behavior in her book *Europe in Question* (2009): the sociological approach and the rational choice approach. The first approach places *party identification* at the center of the theory. Party identification is a very important element of voting choice, which was emphasized in Chapter 3 as a *powerful predictor* of voting behaviour in elections in the literature on electoral studies. Party identification also has a *filter role* for voters for political messages and cues. According to Hobolt (ibid), the filter role of party identification is more significant than its predictor feature in respect of referendums as voters are expected to vote on issues. As Downs has noted, voters could apply to party identification as an informational shortcut in their voting choice (1957). On the other hand, according to the rational choice approach, voter preferences are connected with the individual benefits of voters. As Hobolt has mentioned, rational choice is based on 'the maximization of voters' individual utility functions', and information is also evaluated by cost which may not only obstruct acquiring information, but also making rational

choices (2009: 34). At this point, informational shortcuts and heuristics help voters to make rational choices since getting information is too costly for voters with low information levels. They might sometimes make sufficient decisions with imperfect information by using these heuristics and cues, such as party or elite cues, group endorsements, campaigns and the media in elections. Yet, a low information level may cause a greater problem in respect to referendums where citizens are asked 'to vote on often complex and unfamiliar issues' (Hobolt 2009: 23).

As can be seen from these approaches, information is one of the most important elements of the vote choice and has a crucial role in referendum voting. Voters are expected to be well informed to make competent decisions but the source of information is also a very important point. People can get information from various sources such as the media, campaigns and political parties during elections and referendums. Another important point about the information is how voters use the information provided by these sources and which sources they prefer to get information from. For Lupia and McCubbins (1998), citizens could be more easily persuaded by the information providers with whom they share a common interest, which does not mean *enlightening*. Gelman and King (1993) scrutinized the concept of *enlightened preferences* in their well-known research on American Presidential Elections. They stated that: 'The idea of making voting decisions on the basis of enlightened preferences only requires that voters cast their ballots in the same manner as they would if they had full information and time for a complete consideration of all issues' (1993: 436). Gelman and King also emphasize that they do not mean people should discuss the preferences intelligently with their theory of *enlightened preferences*. They state that people should only base their decision on *fundamental variables* which would be possible with the information provided by campaigns (Gelman and King, 1993: 434).

In short, when the necessary information provided to the voters by the mass media in order to match values and social status to parties, voter preferences become enlightened during election campaigns in terms of the concept of *enlightened preferences* (Gelman and King 1993; Andersen et. al., 2005). Campaigns have become more important in elections, and the role of the mass media has become more significant in campaigns. Media coverage has started to be more detailed

about party politics and ideologies after election campaigns, which has reduced the number of people basing their party preferences on less important factors such as images of leaders (Gelman and King, 1993; Anderse et al., 2005). In other words, voters become enlightened along with the development of campaigns.

On the other hand, campaigns are quite important and effective for voters in referenda, as well as elections, in providing vital information about the 'complex and unfamiliar issues' at stake. As Dvorak has indicated that; 'Referendum campaigns can be seen as processes of learning' (2013: 367). In general, voters have limited information or, they are unenlightened before referendum campaigns and require cues from the party or actors to get information (LeDuc, 2003: 74). He also states that: 'A campaign provides opportunities for distortion and misinformation and allows opponents to plant doubts in the minds of voters that are not easily resolved over a short period' (ibid). As an example, de Vreese notes that political parties provide 'ambiguous' information cues in a referendum campaign in opposition to general elections (de Vreese 2007: 1). Furthermore, the media might also provide biased or deceptive information as a crucial information source for citizens, especially in underdeveloped democracies.

Campaigns have always been very important in elections and have started to become more significant in referenda through their growing popularity as an important tool for legislation (Mendelsohn and Parkin 2001; De Vreese 2007; Setala 1999; Marsh 2007). In referendum campaigns, the short term factors are more influential in opposition to general election campaigns in which long term influences, such as partisanship and ideology have a vital role (De Vreese 2007: 1).

Referendum campaigns are interesting not least because they are often characterized by close races, an undecided or volatile electorate, and greater importance attached to campaign events because the dynamics of traditional party politics are potentially less important for explaining turnout and voting behaviour (Denver 2002; LeDuc 2002). Voting in a referendum is often multifaceted despite the simplistic nature of it (Yes or No) and different aspects may trigger different perceptions of the issue among voters. This information environment in a referendum campaign is thus potentially important for the vote because party attachments often

mean less in these campaigns. The arguments, aspects or framing of the multifaceted issue by political actors and key information sources during a referendum campaign may therefore be unusually important to a referendum outcome, especially in a close race. During the campaign voters might learn about actors or get in-depth information about the issues at stake.

According to de Vreese, the most important actors of a referendum campaign are political elites, including parties and interest groups, voters, civil society, public opinion and the media (2007: 7). Political parties and leaders seek to raise the visibility of the party in the media and attract the attention of the voters. In order to achieve this, parties and party elites should provide clear messages to the citizens during the campaign. This is because, as Zaller (1992) has emphasized, the ambiguous or unclear cues affect public opinion negatively. Marsh (2007: 63) argued that referendum campaigns serve a purpose in changing what people think or what they think about, by evoking Cohen's (1963) famous expression that media tells people 'what to think about' more than 'what to think'. The campaign guides people on 'what to think about' and affects 'how people decide' by its nature (Hobolt, 2009: 17). Political parties seek to emphasize positive issues in their campaigns (Marsh 2007: 63). The success of a referendum campaign directly affects voters and results: for example, strong campaigns can clarify voters' opinions, while a weak one may cause confusion in voters' minds (Marsh 2007: 63).

LeDuc points out that 'Poorly prepared or poorly organized campaigns are doomed to fail' and he continues to explain the reason for failure as being due to elites as the organisers and conductors of campaigns by 'overestimating their abilities to control the political forces that such campaigns may unleash' (2003: 74). In addition to this, the intensity of the campaign is also very important. If the campaign is weak or less intense, voters are uninformed about what the referendum is about. Thus they may appeal to political cues, and the weakness of the campaign may prevent the party messages from reaching the citizens. As has been indicated, when the campaign is more intensified, issues become more important (Hobolt, 2009; Marsh 2007). Therefore, a successful campaign may increase the popularity of a political party or leaders, while an unsuccessful one may damage their political reputation (de Vreese 2007: 11). Referenda may also bolster the parties if they are used properly; for

example, small parties can find a chance of attracting public attention and gaining credibility by their position in a campaign (Mendelsohn and Parkin 2001: 8).

In addition to this, voters' political interest or awareness levels also influence their decision-making methods. Citizens may filter the information provided by the media, parties, elites or campaigns, and respond to the messages from these sources depending on their political interest levels (Hobolt 2009, 17). Thus campaign intensity and voter awareness are connected if the campaign is intense, information and issue voting increase. As Zaller (1992) states, information has a mediating role and information-rich campaigns should lead to stable attitudes and make value predispositions more relevant in decision-making (LeDuc, 2002, 2007). These mean when campaigns are intense and voters are well informed about the issue, voters should form stable, competent and accurate ideas. Yet, interest may change during the campaign, and despite intense campaigns and well-informed citizens, a new emerged interpretation could also cause unexpected opinion reversals in some situations (Dvorak, 2013). At this point, some researchers explain this situation with *framing effects*. However, framing effects are described as a result of a lack of information and generally refer to low intensity campaigns where the voters are uninformed and confused about the issue at stake. Yet, the reason for the shift is not about the level of information; it is because of the reframing of the proposal in public debate.

LeDuc asserts that when a referendum campaign involves social cleavages and ideology and political parties take well-known and predictable positions, there should be the least amount of campaign volatility and potential for opinion change. Moreover, when strongly held predispositions are reinforced by the campaign, referendums begin to take on some of the characteristics of elections, in which traditional ideologies and cleavages play a crucial role. However, when the campaign involves a new or previously undiscussed issue, or when parties line up in a non-traditional way, there should be more potential for short-term campaign effects and campaign volatility (LeDuc, 2002: 714).

In the 2010 referendum, political parties declared their votes and ran serious campaigns, and it can be said that the atmosphere of the referendum campaign

period was like general elections times. Political parties published handbooks and brochures with which they sorted their reasons for yes or no votes. In other words, they officially indicated their views in writing, which they declared at party rallies and on television. It would be useful to take a glance at these brochures to understand political parties' attitudes in the referendum.

## **5.2. Research Design and Methods**

### **5.2.1. Data**

In this study, I will conduct a secondary analysis of the public opinion surveys conducted by KONDA Public Opinion Research Agency. KONDA's public opinion surveys questions were found to be very useful for this research. They included both the media preferences and the vote preferences of participants on a regular basis for a four-month period from June 2010 to September 2010. The surveys included questions 33 to 57 (up to month), and 1856-2771 people from 38 cities, 120 districts and 154 villages in Turkey participated in the surveys on a face to face basis. Although the exact dates of the surveys in June, July and August are not specified, the last survey was conducted on 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> September 2010 (KONDA Report, 2010).

There are several reasons for using the KONDA data for this study, and there are also advantages and disadvantages of using the KONDA surveys. First of all, KONDA is one of the most accessible research agencies in Turkey with such a large range of data. As mentioned in the first chapter, accessing data – both the media data and survey data - is a very problematic and important limitation for researchers in this field in Turkey. Hereof, KONDA is very helpful and has a policy of sharing datasets with academic researchers as a company policy. Although, there are different surveys regarding the 2010 referendum, it is almost impossible to reach the other research agencies and to get their data. Therefore, I could only refer to other survey results in this research that has been published in newspapers, or on agencies' own websites.

As well as its accessibility, KONDA has the most appropriate survey questions in accordance with the purpose of this research. Moreover, KONDA made the closest

estimate in the 2010 referendum<sup>69</sup> which is important for the reliability of this research (Radikal 2010). However, the reliability and neutrality of KONDA might be a controversial issue from time to time. The most important reason for this is the political position and party connections of its founder and owner Tarhan Erdem. He has been a member of the CHP since 1953 and he was an MP and Minister of Industry and Technology for this party in 1977 (KONDA, 2012)<sup>70</sup>. Although, this situation causes the neutrality of KONDA to be questionable, it is still one of the most important and recognized research companies in Turkey.

KONDA did not specify any information about the survey standards, ethical principles or quotas for the surveys used in this study. Yet, there are international principles and standards about surveys on ethical issues, data collection, analyses of the data and interpretation of these analyses. The American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) has 'The Code' explaining their main principles in surveys and public opinion research. In their own words,

The Code describes the obligations that they believe all research professionals have, regardless of their membership in this Association or any other, to uphold the credibility of survey and public opinion research. And they also have a principle that to reject all tasks or assignments that would require activities inconsistent with the principles of this Code (2010).

The main principles of the AAPOR are 'to maintain high standards of scientific competence, integrity, and transparency in conducting, analyzing, and reporting their work; establishing and maintaining relations with survey respondents and their clients; and communicating with those who eventually use the research for decision-making purposes and the general public' (2010). The AAPOR has 3 groups of principles which are presented in the appendix at the end of the thesis.

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<sup>69</sup> [http://www.radikal.com.tr/politika/tahminlerin\\_galibi\\_konda\\_oldu-1018661](http://www.radikal.com.tr/politika/tahminlerin_galibi_konda_oldu-1018661), access date 30.06.2011

<sup>70</sup> [http://www.konda.com.tr/en/konda\\_team.php](http://www.konda.com.tr/en/konda_team.php), access date 27.11.2012

### **5.2.2. Research Design**

The questions in the KONDA surveys vary from month to month along with the current developments in the political agenda and the developments of the campaign. This is also a result of the change in the media content and thus the timing of the surveys is crucial for this research. In chapter 6, qualitative part of the media content analysis deal with this issue in detail. Also, some important current political developments are mentioned while the tables are explained in this chapter as well. However, to give an example, questions about the importance and reliability of the leader for voters added to the surveys just after the change of the leader of the main opposition party. This parallelism between campaign developments in the media and the surveys will be discussed in chapter 7 concerning to link the media content and survey analysis -after the media content will be analysed in the following chapter. Herein, this chapter will focus on the analysis of the survey data results in terms of voter preferences.

KONDA surveys have different questions for each month and also have different responses even for very similar questions. The first two surveys (in June and in July) mostly focused on the political agenda and general political attitudes rather than the referendum. In the August and September surveys, questions regarding constitutional amendments became more visible as the referendum approached. In the first step, I attempt to draw a picture of public perception of the 2010 referendum by starting with the first group of questions regarding the referendum. Therefore, the first group of analyses is based on the August and September surveys.

Herein, I attempt to discuss the survey questions that I use and explain why these questions were chosen. In the first step, I have collected the questions that I specified for the analysis under three main titles regarding:

1. Referendum content and referendum perception
2. Political tendencies
3. Individual identification

The first group of questions is directly concentrated on the referendum, its content and voters' perception. These questions seek to understand the respondents' levels of information and viewpoints about the referendum. This also gives clues on voter intention and expectations of the referendum during the four month campaign period.

The main questions used in the first group of analyses are below:

- Which sentence represents the constitutional amendments in question?
- There has been some suggestion that there is a different purpose for the voting in the referendum, even if the topic is ostensibly the constitutional amendments. Which one will be actually voted for in the referendum, constitutional amendments or confidence in the government?
- If your answer is constitutional amendments, what is the meaning of the amendments?
- Did you make a final decision about the referendum or might you change your opinion through on-going discussions?
- What will you vote in the 12<sup>th</sup> September 2010 referendum?
- What are you expecting in the referendum results?

The second group is focused on the political preferences of voters. It is important to understand the effect of political ties on voters in the referendum. These questions are helpful for revealing whether political parties' referendum campaigns were influential on their supporters and other parties' supporters as well; or whether the electorates are tied blindly to their parties even in referendum voting. The questions shown below, including voting preferences in the last general election, are considered useful for explaining the impact of political parties in referendum voting:

- If there were a general election today, which party would you vote for?
- If there were an election today, which party might win?
- What reason affects your vote in general?
- Is there any party or leader that you say you never vote for?

- Which party can solve the most important problems of Turkey?
- Who should rule Turkey? (Political Party leaders/members)
- Who did you vote for in the 2007 general elections?

The third group of questions is composed of individual questions such as age, education level, the ethnicity or religious attitudes of respondents. These questions are selected to recognize the voters and to introduce the voter profile. Also, these questions about the personal features of respondents are expected to help to examine the relationship between political ties and personal connections/commitments which can influence the vote preferences as well. This relationship gives clues about whether political parties are preferred because of their connection with voters' ethnic origins or views on religion. Therefore, this paves the way to see the indirect effect of individual characteristics on voting behaviour. At the same time, media preferences of voters can be also determined in terms of these features.

- Do you or your wife use a head cover? If yes, how?
- How do you identify yourself ethnically?
- What is the religion or sect you feel you belong in?
- How do you define the strength of your religion?

To sum up, in this chapter, I will explore the link between these three groups of questions, perceptions of the referendum, party support, religious and social ties and how these are linked to the referendum. The purpose of this chapter is to discover the citizens' reasons for their voting decisions and whether the campaign was effective or whether no campaign effect is evident. The dynamics of the change and the shift of preferences are also the other interests in this chapter, and I will seek to analyze how and in what direction voters' preferences changed in the 2010 Referendum in Turkey.

In public opinion survey analysis, voter preferences are interpreted around some key concepts, such as partisanship, leader, ideology, campaign and the media. This is to reveal whether voters make choices depending on the information/content of the referendum or cues such as partisan identifications, elite endorsements and heuristics. The frames, which are democratization, constitutional development, seizure of jurisdiction, party identification, information level, concerns about republican values and vote of confidence for government, are determined by referring to media content, which will be detailed in Chapter 6.

### **Research Questions**

This chapter aims to introduce the voter characteristics in Turkey and to search for their voting reasons in 2010 constitutional referendum. For this purpose, I will try to reply these questions:

- What were the dynamics of voting behaviour in 2010 referendum in Turkey?
- How were the referendum and its reasons perceived by citizens?
- What are the main voter profiles in Turkey?
- How is the relationship between vote intention and personal features of voters such as party identification, education or religion?
- How was the change in vote intention during the referendum campaign period?

### **5.3. Analysis Results (I): Dynamics of Opinions**

The vote intention is the first important question of KONDA's survey series in respect of the 2010 referendum. Furthermore, KONDA has the best forecast prediction about the referendum results according to its last survey which was conducted on 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> September 2010. The shift in the vote intention during the referendum campaign period and the referendum results are presented in Table 5.1 as a starting point for the analysis regarding the referendum perception in public opinion.

**Table 5.1 Vote Intention and Referendum Results**

| KONDA SURVEY | JUNE | JULY | AUGUST | SEPTEMBER | Referendum Results |
|--------------|------|------|--------|-----------|--------------------|
| YES          | 53%  | 54%  | 54%    | 57%       | 58%                |
| NO           | 47%  | 46%  | 46%    | 43%       | 42%                |
| Total (n)    | 2739 | 1856 | 2748   | 2767      | 37.644.051         |

**Source:** The Last Research Summary about Referendum, KONDA 2010

Referendum Result Source<sup>71</sup>: Yuksek Secim Kurulu (Supreme Committee of Elections-SCE), 2010

As can be seen in Table 5.1, the vote intention changed to the side of *yes* during the referendum campaign from June to September 2010. At the beginning of the campaign period, there was a minor difference between *yes* and *no* vote intentions. In the process of the referendum campaign *yes* votes increased regularly month by month, while the *no* votes declined. The change in the voting intentions could depend on the visibility of the referendum campaign during this four month period. The ruling party AKP and main opposition party the CHP started their referendum campaigns right after the announcement of the referendum date by the Supreme Committee of Elections (SCE). The media's role in reflecting the referendum campaigns should be considered at this point. The visibility of the referendum campaigns in the mass media increased after July 2010. This shift could show that the *yes* campaign became more visible. On the other hand, there was a decrease in *no* votes in the upcoming months. This result may also show the success of the *yes* campaign and framing effects of the media about *yes* votes. Media coverage is considered to play a key role in this shift as the most important source of information and as a main mediator of the campaigns. Having said that, voters were exposed to more intense campaigning after July 2010 and, the level of information about the content also increased towards the end of the campaign. The impact of the media content will be detailed in the next chapter on media content.

Looking first at the June survey, vote intention was sought by asking 'if the referendum had been held today what you would vote' and the options in June and

<sup>71</sup> [www.ysk.gov.tr](http://www.ysk.gov.tr), access date 25.07.2011

July were different from August and September. Boycott was not included as an answer choice while there were *yes*, *no*, *not decided* and *no idea* options because the pro-Kurdish party BDP started the boycott campaign on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2010. This was for the reason of the deficiency and inadequacy of the amendments in terms of Kurdish rights. The boycott campaign deepened and was picked up by the media after June 2010. Thus, parallelism between survey questions/options and media content showed that KONDA also considered media coverage while designing the surveys. At the same time, the survey questions about political preferences and attitudes in each month were generally based on current issues on the media agenda.

In August and September, questionnaires directly asked respondents their vote preferences and presented *yes*, *no*, *boycott* and *undecided* as alternatives. Therefore, it would be better to analyze the KONDA data in detail with these options besides *yes* and *no*, to see the changes especially in respect of *no idea* and *boycott*.

**Table.5.2 Vote Intention/2**

| Answer Choices | JUNE | JULY | Answer Choices | AUGUST | SEPTEMBER |
|----------------|------|------|----------------|--------|-----------|
| YES            | 33%  | 34%  | YES            | 42%    | 47%       |
| NO             | 29%  | 29%  | NO             | 31%    | 31%       |
| No Idea        | 15%  | 18%  | Boycott        | 4%     | 4%        |
| Undecided      | 24%  | 16%  | Undecided      | 23%    | 18%       |
| Total (n)      | 2739 | 1856 |                | 2748   | 2767      |

**Source:** KONDA Survey Data, 2010

As can be seen in Table 5.2, the most significant result is the major change in intentions to vote *yes* from 33% in June to 47% in September while *no* and *undecided* replies are almost stable. This change mainly can be connected with the success of the *yes* campaign run by AKP. With the development of the campaigns, vote decisions became clearer and also the *no idea* option was replaced by the *boycott* option in the KONDA surveys. In this respect, it can be said that respondents

who have had *no idea* changed their intention towards *yes* option in the second half of the referendum campaign process. The framing of the media coverage also played an important role in this shift because, the campaigns of political parties became more intense and especially *yes* campaign became more visible in the media coverage with the approaching referendum as it will be seen in the following chapter on the analysis of the media coverage. The framing effect on this change will be mentioned in the linking chapter after the media content analysed as well.

However, it may be interesting to investigate whether the change in question wording caused the shift in response. The June and July surveys indirectly asked respondents their vote intention: *If the referendum were today, what do you vote?* On the other hand, the last two surveys in August and September directly asked: *What will you vote in the 12<sup>th</sup> September 2010 referendum?* Yet, if the wording change caused that shift, this might affect *yes* and *no* options as well.

Therefore, it is necessary to have a good look at the campaigns of the pro-*yes* AKP and the BDP, the leader of the *boycott* campaign. Herein, the relation between political party identification and the voting intention of the electorates in the referendum should also be considered. As will be seen in Figure 5.3, there is a strong relation between party and voting preferences in Turkey, which will be detailed in the following pages. Yet, in short, AKP supporters predominantly said *yes* for constitutional amendments in parallel with the AKP campaign, while supporters of the opposition parties the CHP and the MHP said *no*, in tune with their parties. Pro-BDP supporters substantially started to *boycott* the referendum along with the inception of the *boycott* campaign by the BDP.

Besides the success of professional campaigns, this fluctuation can be interpreted within the frame of current political affairs in national and international levels. Yet another public opinion research and consultancy company named Konsensus has drawn attention to the two important current issues of the period that may have been effective on voters' referendum decisions. These issues were the sex tape scandal of the main opposition parties' leader Deniz Baykal and the *Mavi Marmara*<sup>72</sup> crisis between Turkey and Israel which occurred because of Israel's attack on one of the Turkish aid ships for Gaza (Konsensus 2010). Deniz Baykal, the former leader of the

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<sup>72</sup> "Mavi Marmara" is the name of the aid ship that had been attacked by Israel

main opposition party the CHP, had to resign after he was allegedly caught up in a sex tape scandal in May 2010 (Hurriyet Daily News, 2010). Because of this scandal, the CHP started to lose public confidence. Afterwards, as a breath of fresh air, Kemal Kilicdaroglu took lead of the CHP in May 2010 and reversed this situation in favour of the CHP. In June and July, KONDA asked how Kemal Kilicdaroglu could affect CHP's votes and, the vast majority of respondents thought he could increase CHP's votes, as can be seen in table 5.3.

**Table.5.3 How can Kemal Kilicdaroglu impact CHP's votes?**

|          | June | July |
|----------|------|------|
| Decrease | 8%   | 12%  |
| Stable   | 34%  | 32%  |
| Increase | 54%  | 52%  |
| Total(n) | 2734 | 1856 |

**Source:** KONDA Survey Data, 2010

On the other hand, according to SETA, the AKP successfully managed the *Mavi Marmara* crisis and was widely appreciated by national and international circles (Yilmaz 2010). The AKP gained trust from a large segment of Turkish society with this success and it also caused an increase in yes votes.

In August and September, participants were asked about their expectations for the referendum results along with their vote intention. Table 5.4 shows that according to public expectations, yes votes would be predominantly higher than no votes in the referendum. The reason for that high expectation for yes votes is supposed to be related with the media coverage again. The media mainly concentrated on yes campaign and the visibility of the yes campaign was higher than that of the *no* campaign during the referendum campaign process. The actors supporting yes vote were also more visible in the media coverage as well which can be seen in the next chapter on the analysis of media content. In other words, expectations were formed towards yes votes because the media mainly represented pro-yes news, gave a large place to the opinion leaders who supported yes on and people started to think that

majority would vote for yes. As it was mentioned in the previous parts, AKP leader Erdogan’s endorsement of a yes vote also influenced participants’ votes and his evaluations increased the probability of a yes vote. Thereby, this situation influenced voters’ expectations which did not reflect their real attitudes at all.

**Table.5.4 Expectations for Referendum Results**

|           | AUGUST | SEPTEMBER |
|-----------|--------|-----------|
| YES       | 64%    | 70%       |
| NO        | 29%    | 24%       |
| NA        | 7%     | 6%        |
| Total (n) | 2748   | 2767      |

**Source:** KONDA Survey Data, 2010

**Note:** NA means respondents did not answer the question

One of the most important questions of the surveys is assumed to be: ‘Which will be actually voted in the referendum?’ This question not only reveals the frames of the campaign but also reveal how voters perceived the referendum in a real sense. A full version of the question would be helpful to explain this statement. The question starts as such: ‘Even if the constitutional amendments will be voted on in the referendum, it has been suggested that the real purpose of voting is different. Which statement below is correct?’ The allegation was substantially rooted in some spin-doctors’ expressions who claimed that the referendum was called by the AKP to measure voters’ support before the 2011 general election, rather than the democratization of the constitution.

The referendum campaign was formed around two main concepts/frames: democratization and vote of confidence. The AKP used the democratization frame proficiently to persuade the voters that the constitutional amendments were crucial for the democratization of the 1982 constitution. The AKP insistently emphasized the importance of these amendments for more democratic Turkey with the deepening campaigns which increased the idea about the necessity of the constitutional amendments in public opinion.

Table 5.5 shows that the results were equal in August 2010 and then the equality was broken in favour of constitutional amendments option by 11% difference with the

upcoming referendum in September. This change showed that opinions of the respondents became clearer and the majority of respondents started to evaluate the referendum in terms of democratization frame. At the same time, this situation can be interpreted as the success of yes campaign.

**Table 5.5 Which will be actually voted in the referendum?**

|                                       | August | September |
|---------------------------------------|--------|-----------|
| Constitutional amendments             | 47%    | 52%       |
| Vote of confidence for the government | 47%    | 41%       |
| Total(n)                              | 2748   | 2767      |

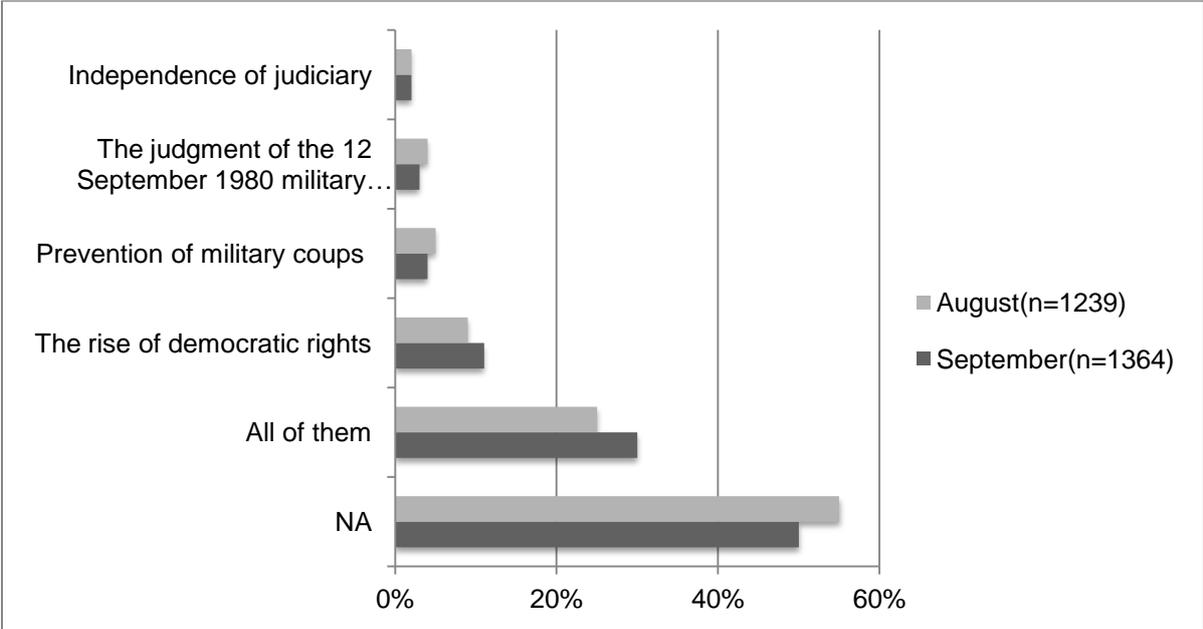
**Source:** KONDA Survey Data, 2010

On the other hand, the *no* campaign side including opposition parties claimed that AKP suggested the referendum for getting vote of confidence to measure its support for the coming election. The no camp represented their campaign around the ‘vote of confidence’ frame. Thus, the *no* campaign moved away from the frame of constitutional amendments with this claim because, the opposition had run their campaign over anti-AKP attitudes, instead of the content of constitutional amendments. No campaign mentioned the articles subject to amendment in a very limited extent. The vote of confidence claim was the focal point of the no campaign. In this sense, voters might have found it unnecessary to pay attention to the content of the amendments and the referendum was perceived as a partisan choice. This also shows how citizens make decision in a referendum. In this respect, the shift seems like partisan preference, and the success of the AKP in the *yes* campaign rather than an efficient voter choice based on the content of the referendum and constitutional amendments.

The survey also had two related questions for participants. The first one appealed to particular participants who had chosen the constitutional amendments option in the former question shown in Table 5.5, which asked the meaning of the referendum. If the respondents said the constitutional amendments (rather than vote of confidence) would be voted for in the referendum, faced with the question asking the meaning of constitutional amendments. This question seeks to understand why the respondents

believe the aim of the referendum as represented by the AKP. In other words, the question aims to find out the benefits of the amendments according to these respondents. Five options were presented to the respondents and as the fifth answer choice 'all of them' presented to the respondents that includes previous four options.

**Figure 5.1: The meaning of the constitutional amendments** (Only for respondents who chose constitutional amendments in the previous question)



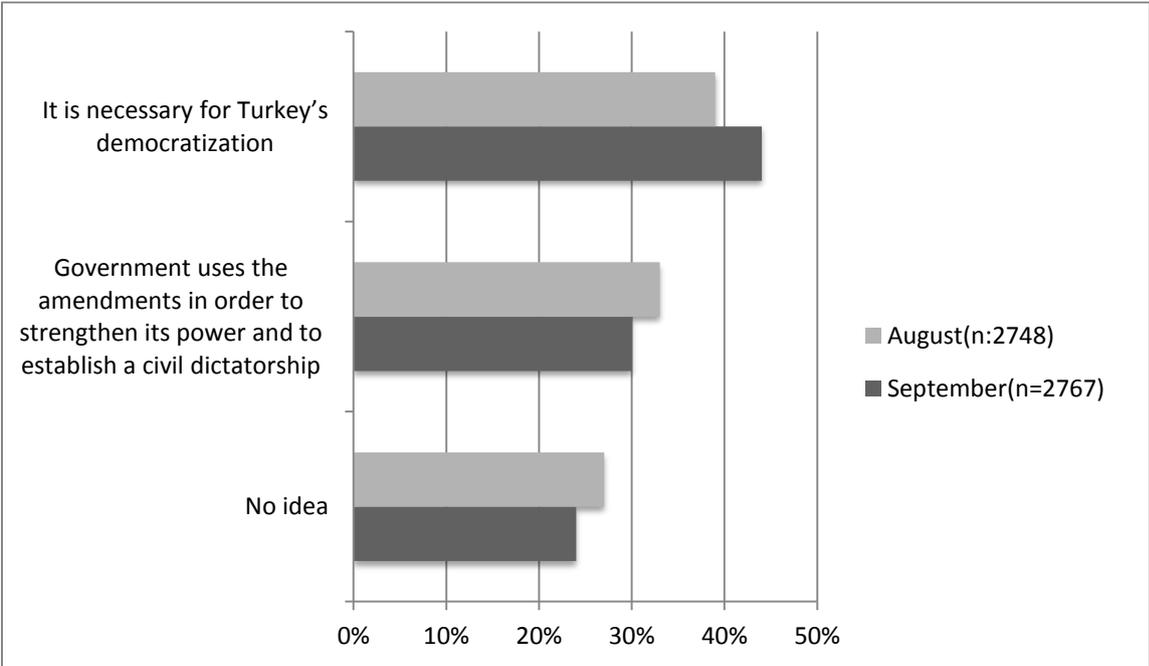
Source: KONDA Survey Data, 2010

The respondents who based their opinion on the idea of the democratization of Turkey said that the referendum had been held to amend the 1982 Constitution. The democratization frame was intensively used by the AKP during their referendum campaign. The Prime Minister and leader of the AKP Recep Tayyip Erdogan claimed that these constitutional reforms were crucial for the success of Turkey's democratization process. If the referendum were to end up with yes both the impact of the military on the political and legal structure of Turkey would be diminished, and the judiciary and democracy would also develop. These reasons were put to public opinion as a package, and as shown in the data analysis respondents mainly chose the last option involving all. Figure 5.1 demonstrates that the constitutional amendments were seen as an important step for Turkey's democratization, especially

to prevent the intervention of the military in legal and political matters. Nevertheless, it is interesting that approximately half of the respondents, who thought that the referendum was for constitutional amendments, did not want to answer this question. The reason for this might have been the lack of information and partisan choices of voters because if they abstained, it might have been valid for the former question as well. It seems that respondents were unable to go beyond an expression of partisanship, and preferred not to answer the question in regard to content, which required specific knowledge of the issue. Herein, participants' partisan ties, level of education and the source of information require analysis which will be done in the final stage of this chapter which regards the individual features of participants.

Turning back to the analysis of the referendum, a second question about the constitutional amendments asked participants for the best sentence to define the constitutional amendments. All of the participants were asked this question. It is also similar to previous question about the meaning of the amendments. Yet, the answer options were presented differently and the proportion of responses was almost double. In surveys, similar questions might be asked in another form one after the other to elicit information. This technique helps to increase the chance of obtaining the real answer (Oppenheim, 1992).

**Figure 5.2: The best sentence about the constitutional amendments**



Source: KONDA Survey Data, 2010

Figure 5.2 shows that the majority of participants said these amendments were necessary for the democratization of Turkey and this rate increased from August to September. However the option of 'government uses the amendments in order to strengthen its power and to establish a civil dictatorship' decreased in the referendum month. If the ruling party the AKP's referendum campaign that focused on the enhancement of democratic rights by the constitutional amendments is considered, it can be said that both persuasiveness of the AKP and voters' trust in the AKP had risen. If table 5.5 and figure 5.2 are compared, similarity between answer choices stands out. In table 5.5, the meaning of the referendum was queried, while the meaning of the referendum was already assumed as constitutional amendments in figure 5.2. According to Table 5.5, the majority of respondents who said that the referendum was for constitutional amendments, also said that the constitutional amendments were necessary for the democratization of Turkey in Figure 5.2. At the same time, the respondents who said that the aim of the referendum was measuring the vote of confidence for the AKP also thought that the government played politics with the constitutional amendments in order to strengthen its power and to establish a civil dictatorship. Table 5.8 below helps to demonstrate this relation.

**Table 5.6 Aim of the Referendum& Meaning of the Constitutional Amendments**

|   | <b>Aim of the Referendum</b> |                                   |                           |                                   |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
|   | August                       |                                   | September                 |                                   |
| <b>Meaning of the Constitutional Amendments</b>   | Constitutional amendments    | Vote of confidence for government | Constitutional amendments | Vote of confidence for government |
| It is necessary for Turkey's democratization  | 77%                          | 17%                               | 82%                       | 15%                               |
| Government uses the amendments in order to strengthen its power and to establish a civil dictatorship | 21%                          | 82%                               | 16%                       | 81%                               |
| Total(n)  | 2748                         |                                   | 2767                      |                                   |

**Source:** KONDA Survey Data, 2010

As seen in table 5.6, a few respondents - 21% in August and 16% in September- thought that although constitutional amendments would be voted on, the AKP used the amendments for its own benefit. Participants representing 77% and 82% of the group in table 5.6 are also expected to be prone to voting yes. If vote intention is analyzed by taking one of the questions analyzed above, this expectation might be supported by the numbers. Table 5.7 compares vote intention and the aim of the referendum as follows:

**Table.5.7 Vote Intention& Perception on Referendum Reason**

|                                       | August |     |    |     | September |     |    |     |
|---------------------------------------|--------|-----|----|-----|-----------|-----|----|-----|
|                                       | Yes    | No  | B  | ND  | Yes       | No  | B  | ND  |
| Constitutional amendments             | 69%    | 11% | 2% | 18% | 74%       | 9%  | 2% | 15% |
| Vote of confidence for the government | 17%    | 52% | 6% | 25% | 16%       | 63% | 5% | 16% |
| Total (n)                             | 2748   |     |    |     | 2767      |     |    |     |

**Source:** KONDA Survey Data, 2010

Note: B for Boycott; ND for Not Decided

According to table 5.7, respondents who also selected the constitutional amendments option in response to the question about the reason of the referendum, were mostly inclined to vote yes in accelerating percentages from August to September. The results show that if people thought the referendum was being held for constitutional amendments, they also thought the reforms were necessary and useful. Thus, they tended to vote yes. On the other hand, if people thought the voting was for measuring the AKP’s potential, they chose to say no. Boycott represents insignificant numbers, the BDP oriented boycotters thought that the amendments were inadequate for the rights of Kurdish people and the AKP conducted the referendum for a vote of confidence. In line with my expectations, the citizens of Turkey found the constitutional amendments necessary, but there was also suspicion about the aim of the amendments which may have caused them to revert to their partisan norms.

The surveys also asked participants if they had made their final decision or whether they were still open to new ideas and might change their decision with respect to ongoing discussions in the mass media. This question is important for understanding if they paid attention to the campaigns, media and opinion leaders. The answers in Table 5.8 show that the majority of respondents had decided their votes, and that this proportion increased from August to September. On the other hand, there is a small proportion around 10 percent who said that although they had an idea they might still change it in response to discussions. This second group and third group, who said that they had not decided on their votes and would pay attention to discussions, constitute a group of people who did not behave in a partisan way for this referendum. If these respondents were planning to vote for a political party, they had already decided their votes along with their party’s guidance by August/September.

**Table 5.8 What is your final decision about your vote in the referendum?**

|   | August | September |
|---|--------|-----------|
| I decided and it will not change hereafter                  | 65%    | 76%       |
| I have an idea but I may change through discussions         | 11%    | 7%        |
| I have not decided yet, I will pay attention to discussions | 23%    | 17%       |
| Total(n)  | 2748   | 2767      |

**Source:** KONDA Survey Data, 2010

**5.4. Analyses Results (II): Determinants of Voting Decisions**

In the first section of the chapter, the picture about referendum perception and vote intention was established to see the relation between political preferences and referendum voting. The aim of this second section of analysis is to understand how voters decided how to vote. In this section of the analysis I include questions about former elections, and presumptive elections to reveal the political party choices of respondents that provide the comparison with the referendum vote preferences. Thus, the impact of political parties in the referendum can be seen by connecting these questions. In addition, personal features were included in this section such as

education and religiosity to explore the relationship between personal identifications and political and voting choices.

At the beginning of this second stage, the main elements affecting voting preferences were examined without indicating whether the votes were for a general elections or referendum. As one of the most important questions of the KONDA surveys ‘Which reason affects your vote in general?’ plays key role for this study. As can be seen in Table 5.9, the leader was the most important factor for voters, according to the participants in the survey series, followed by ideology and the party. Last-minute voters made up a considerable percentage of the participants while respondents who were nonpartisan represented a low percentage.

**Table.5.9: Which reason affects your vote in general?**

|                   | June | July | August | September |
|-------------------|------|------|--------|-----------|
| Political party   | 19%  | 18%  | 21%    | 21%       |
| Ideology          | 24%  | 24%  | 25%    | 24%       |
| Leader            | 30%  | 28%  | 26%    | 26%       |
| Non-partisan      | 7%   | 8%   | 8%     | 7%        |
| Last-minute voter | 18%  | 19%  | 20%    | 21%       |
| Total(n)          | 2739 | 1856 | 2748   | 2767      |

**Source:** KONDA Survey Data, 2010

Besides general elections, leaders are parties also important in referendums as well. Lupia stated that where a party or an elite politician/leader endorses a position on a referendum, people who trust the source of the endorsement are more likely to follow the recommendation (1994). In this respect, it can be claimed that the AKP leader Erdogan’s endorsement for the yes vote affected the voters to vote for yes when the importance of the leader for Turkish voters is considered. At this point, it is important to note that voters need a specific information in referendums and party or elite cues are generally applied when there is lack of sufficient information. In the 2010 referendum, campaigns and the media mostly focused on partisan debates rather than providing information which may increased the importance of the cues provided from elites or parties.

At this junction, it was considered useful to show the political party choices of participants. As can be seen clearly in Table 5.10, the AKP had the support of the majority of the sample in Turkey. The AKP had been running the government since 2002, without the support of a coalition partner and it was the only political party which has remained in power after three successive general elections, with an increasing percentage of votes. In other words, the AKP has had the support of the vast majority in Turkey from 2002 until the referendum date. This is reflected in the survey results. The AKP also represents a type of ‘leader party’ that is identified with its leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. If the leader and the party are considered to be the main factors affecting voter choice in Turkey in the light of Table 5.9, the AKP’s success is not a coincidence, since it is a kind of ‘leader party’. These results also support the main expectation of this research, as the most effective elements of voting in Turkey.

After the AKP, the CHP is the second most powerful political party, as the main opposition party in Turkey. The CHP’s positioning also demonstrates the importance of ideology, because of its strong ties with the principles of the Republic and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk who was the founder of both the CHP and the Republic of Turkey. The CHP has had its own rooted population since its inception in 1923, which does not drop below a certain level. All of the other parties in the list following these two main parties were under 10 per cent as shown in the survey. Starting from this point, it is not difficult to claim that if there were a political party impact on referendum voting, the AKP and the CHP would be the most effective actors leading the voters.

**Table 5.10: If there is a general election today that would you vote for?**

|                      | June | July | August | September |
|----------------------|------|------|--------|-----------|
| <b>AKP</b>           | 40%  | 34%  | 40%    | 43%       |
| <b>CHP</b>           | 23%  | 24%  | 19%    | 19%       |
| <b>MHP</b>           | 9%   | 9%   | 8%     | 7%        |
| <b>BDP</b>           | 5%   | 6%   | 3%     | 4%        |
| <b>Others</b>        | 4%   | 4%   | 3%     | 3%        |
| <b>Indecisive</b>    | 17%  | 19%  | 21%    | 21%       |
| <b>I do not vote</b> | 5%   | 5%   | 4%     | 3%        |
| <b>Total(n)</b>      | 2739 | 1856 | 2748   | 2767      |

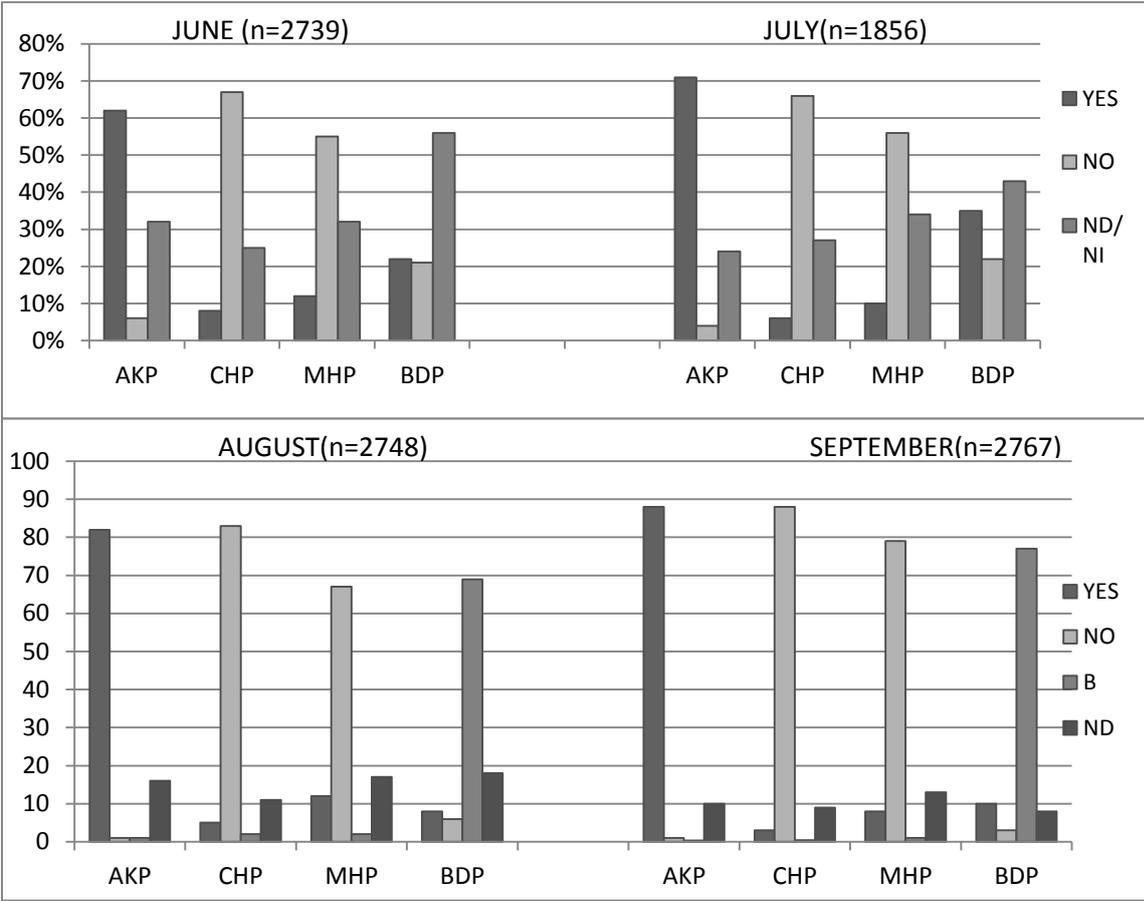
**Source:** KONDA Survey Data, 2010

As was stated in the Analyses Results (I), the ruling party AKP took sides from the very beginning of the referendum process and carried out a serious campaign in the direction of *yes*. The main opposition party the CHP also ran a strong campaign for voting *no*, while the BDP called voters to *boycott* the referendum. Figure 5.3 examined the participants vote intention and political party ties comparatively from June to September.

At first sight, the difference in answer choices between the first two months and the second two months of surveys attracts attention in Figure 5.3. In June and July, there were only *yes*, *no*, *not decided* and *no idea* but, in August and September surveys *boycott* option was added to the answer choices in the surveys. At the beginning of the referendum campaign process, the BDP decided to take sides with the CHP in the *no* camp against the AKP and against the *yes camp*. Then, the BDP started a boycott campaign on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2010 in Istanbul to call voters to boycott the referendum (Bianet, 2010). This is why the boycott was added in the August and September surveys.

When the vote intention was examined in respect of the AKP voters, *yes* inclination was on the rise, while *no* declined month by month. On the other hand, of the CHP supporters around 66-67 percent said that they would be willing to vote *no* in June and July, and then the number of naysayers substantially increased well into 80 percentage rates in August and September. It is possible to say that both the AKP and the CHP had been effective in influencing their own electorate, and that people paid attention to the political parties that they supported during the referendum. Herein, the BDP electorate is considered to be the most striking group because of the fluctuations after the boycott call. Despite the BDP's support for *no*, *yes* and *no* rates were quite close to each other at the beginning of the campaign, but the importance of party guidance and also its impact could be seen clearly in August and September by the dramatic decline of the *yes* and *no* vote intention. After the BDP called its supporters to boycott the referendum, the number of boycott inclined respondents significantly increased and respondents who said *I have no idea* and *I did not decide* changed their decision into boycott. As indicated in Figure 5.3, *not decided* and *no idea* answers also strikingly decreased in August and September among the BDP supporters.

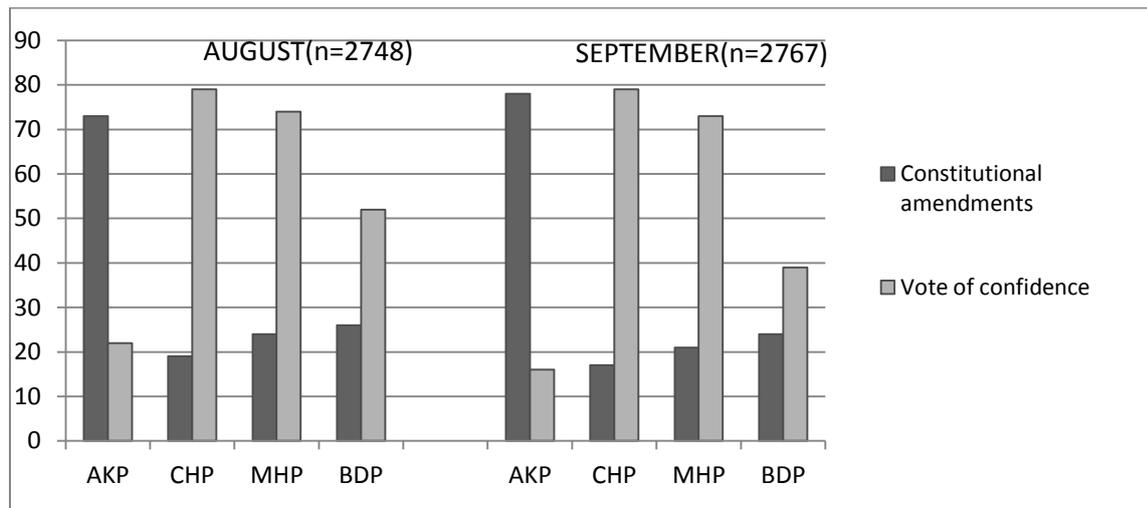
**Figure 5.3: Party Preferences & Vote intention**



**Note:** ND for not decided; NI for no idea; B for boycott

The impact of political parties on their electorate in the 2010 referendum was shown in Figure 5.3. However, it is not clear if the effect derived from respondents' ties with the parties, or the content of the parties' campaigns. In other words, the question is if participants are able to differentiate referendums from elections. Figure 5.3 aims to show the proportion of participants who thought differently from their parties in the referendum.

**Figure 5.4: Party Preferences & Meaning of the Referendum**



**Source:** KONDA Survey Data, 2010

The AKP emphasized the constitutional amendments' essentialness and importance for the democratization of Turkey. The CHP and the MHP claimed that the referendum was a vote of confidence for the AKP and that constitutional amendments were used as a tool for this purpose by the AKP. As can be seen in figure 5.4, supporters of the parties widely shared the view of their parties by over 70 percent. The number of participants who claimed that the referendum was a vote of confidence for the AKP was very few among the AKP supporters and it continued to decline in September, to around 6 percent. It is also worthwhile noting that the BDP supporters' stance is not as clear as the other main parties' supporters, and the difference between the *constitutional amendments* and the *vote of confidence* became narrower in September. This situation might have arisen from the BDP's boycott campaign, that is, the boycott campaign of the BDP was founded on the inadequacy and insignificance of the amendments in terms of Kurdish rights. Thus, the BDP supporters may have thought that the referendum was for constitutional amendments, as well as being insufficient in accordance with their party's discourse. At the same time, the proportion of nonresponsive participants is higher than from the other three parties which may be because they found it to be unnecessary to express an opinion while boycotting the referendum.

The sense of belonging to a political party surely plays an important role for voters' political decision making processes. However, some personal characteristics of the

voters also influence their political choices, including their party preferences as well. Herein, two main variables are selected to identify participants and to understand their voting behaviour in the referendum better.

The first of these variables is religiosity. The reason for selecting religiosity is the rising importance and discussion of religion in Turkey since the AKP came to power. The AKP is a conservative and Islamist party in Turkey. Religion has been seen as a threat for the secular and democratic Republic of Turkey since its establishment. From this point of view, the AKP electorate is widely assumed to be religious people.

**Table.5.11 Religiosity& Political Party**

| If there is a general election today who do you vote for? | How do you define your level of religion? |           |           |         |
|---|---|-----------|-----------|---------|
|   | Not believing                             | Believing | Religious | Devotee |
| AKP   | 1%  | 17%       | 65%       | 17%     |
| CHP   | 4%  | 51%       | 40%       | 5%      |
| MHP   | 2%  | 35%       | 56%       | 7%      |
| BDP   | 4%  | 26%       | 56%       | 14%     |
| Total(n)  | 2739                                      | 1856      | 2748      | 2767    |

Source: KONDA Survey Data, 2010

Table 5.11 shows respondents’ level of religion and the political parties that they would vote for in a potential general election. According to the table, most of the AKP supporters define themselves as religious, which is the third level of answer options. The proportion of respondents’ who say *not believing* is quite small for AKP voters, while the highest rates of participants defining themselves as *devotee* are also AKP supporters. This situation reinforces the hypothesis claiming that there is a strong tie between religion and the AKP. However, if the big picture is examined, the proportion of *not believing* is very limited for all party supporters, and almost every participant identifies himself or herself at least as *believing*. Also, the rarity of *devotee* participants is another striking point in this table.

This table is also very helpful for understanding the BDP and its electorate. As can be seen in Table 5.11, the BDP has the highest proportion of supporters from both *not*

*believing* and *devotee* participants. This picture indicates three sections that constitute BDP support; nationalist, religious and socialist. The comprehensiveness of the BDP originates from these sections and that is the reason why the BDP represents the closest party to an equal distribution. The religious section is based in south eastern Anatolian culture, predominantly populated by Kurds who are also known as religious people. That is the reason for the multitude of *devotee* people among BDP supporters. At the same time, the socialist section of the BDP prefers to stay out of religion and does not identify with any religion. In terms of nationalists, for both Turkish nationalists supporting the MHP and Kurdish nationalists supporting the BDP, religion is a part of nationalism. This is also seen for the MHP and the BDP in table 5.11 by the high rates of religious respondents.

Table 5.12 refers to the relationship between religiosity and vote intention. At first sight, it is worthwhile to say that a very significant proportion of *devotee* participants would vote *yes* in the referendum as the large majority of AKP supporters. *Not believing* participants have a tendency towards a *no* vote intention. The reason for *not believing* participants to vote *no* might be their anti-AKP positioning because of the discriminatory statements of the leader of the AKP, and the Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan against atheists.

**Table.5.12: Religiosity& Vote**

| What do you will vote for in the 12th September 2010 referendum for constitutional amendments? |     |      |         |
|--|-----|------|---------|
| How do you define your religiosity?  | Yes | No   | Boycott |
| Not believing  | 29% | 44%  | 18%     |
| Believing  | 29% | 48%  | 6%      |
| Religious  | 52% | 26%  | 4%      |
| Devotee  | 66% | 14%  | 3%      |
| Total(n)   |     | 2767 |         |

**Source:** KONDA Survey Data, September 2010

Religiosity plays an important role in personal lives in Turkey where people are trapped between the pressure of secularism and religious affiliations or religious

liberty. Thus, political parties take part in this dilemma and sometimes benefit from it. In short, politics and religion have always been intertwined. After pointing out this important element, education is considered as a second important variable for understanding the voting behaviour of the citizens of Turkey. Education level has an additional importance for the referendum voting because; referenda required specific information for the issue in question as mentioned before. If voters wish to get information about the subject, they should read books, articles or at least follow the mass media to get this specific information. Otherwise, they may appeal to political parties, opinion leaders, heuristics or other features which may lead them to make the wrong decisions. Firstly, it is useful to analyze the connection between the education level and vote intention.

When the Table 5.11 and Table 5.12 are considered together, it can be said that the most religious respondents support AKP and the yes vote intention increase in parallel with the increasing religiosity level. From this point, it can be claimed that religiosity have an influence on party preference and party preference have an impact on vote preference. Thus, religiosity affected vote intention in the 2010 referendum even if indirectly.

After religiosity, education level and its possible effects on voting also excited out attention as another social indicator. Table 5.13 below shows the education levels of participants and their vote intentions.

**Table 5.13: Education& Vote Intention**

|                   | AUGUST |     |         |     | SEPTEMBER |     |         |     |
|-------------------|--------|-----|---------|-----|-----------|-----|---------|-----|
|                   | YES    | NO  | BOYCOTT | ND  | YES       | NO  | BOYCOTT | ND  |
| Under high school | 46%    | 19% | 5%      | 29% | 52%       | 20% | 7%      | 21% |
| High school       | 38%    | 38% | 5%      | 19% | 39%       | 43% | 4%      | 14% |
| University        | 37%    | 43% | 5%      | 18% | 28%       | 48% | 6%      | 18% |
| Total(n)          | 2748   |     |         |     | 2767      |     |         |     |

Source: KONDA Survey Data, 2010

Note: ND for Not Decided

It can be seen from the table that there is an inverse proportion between the education level and vote intention. When the education level increases, the no intention decreases. Participants said 'no idea' are also low educated because, by increasing the education level proportion, the no idea answer starts to decline. However, it is hard to claim that by looking at the table, educated people have an extensive knowledge about the referendum content and make vote decisions according to the content of the amendments. On the other hand, participants with low education are mostly intended to vote for no. At this point, it would be better to analyse the education level with the voting reasons and party preferences to make more reliable evaluations. Table 5.14 below analyses the education with voting reasons to see the different reasons in different education levels and to see whether the voting reasons change according to the education level.

**Table 5.14 Education& Voting Reasons**

|                   | Party | Ideology | Leader | Non-partisan | Last-minute voter (campaigns) |
|-------------------|-------|----------|--------|--------------|-------------------------------|
| Under high school | 26%   | 19%      | 28%    | 6%           | 20%                           |
| High school       | 16%   | 31%      | 26%    | 8%           | 18%                           |
| University        | 11%   | 40%      | 23%    | 10%          | 15%                           |

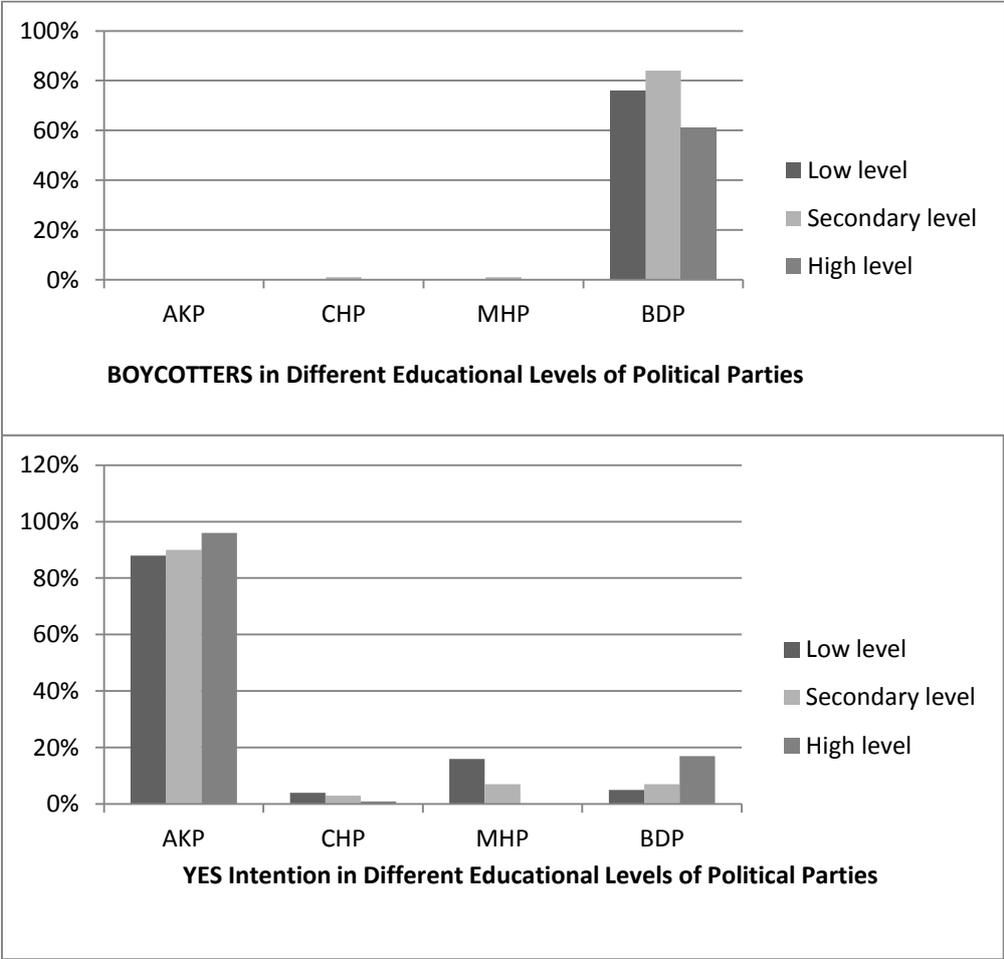
**Source:** KONDA Survey Data, June to September 2010

**Note:** Total (n) =10101

Table 5.14 shows the reasons given by participants for their voting decisions with different levels of education; including the four month period survey results from June 2010 to September 2010. The leader and the party are the most determinative elements for voting for those with an education level under high school, as ideology predominantly becomes important at university level. From this point, it can be said that more educated people less likely apply to party and leader and ideology is the most important element for those with a higher education level. The other important matter is the low levels of non-partisan participants for every education levels, which can be seen as a sign of prevalence of partisanship in Turkey. In addition, it should be noted that the importance of party and leader gradually decreases when the education level increases and, on the contrary, importance of the ideology gradually increases with the increasing education level.

Moreover, it would be illuminating to analyze the link between vote intention in the referendum and different education levels according to party support. As table 5.13 shows, respondents representing a low level of education intended to vote yes more than university graduates. On the other hand, another analysis in Figure 5.3 indicated that the AKP supporters were mostly inclined to vote yes. Thus, I thought it would be interesting to probe whether there is a connection between party preferences, education level and vote intention with the help of a three way table. This connection analyzed for boycotters and yes intention with September data because yes vote obviously identified with the AKP and boycott was identified with BDP while two parties CHP and MHP (included in this research) supported no voting.

**Figure 5.5: Education & Vote intention & Party Preference**



**Source:** KONDA Survey Data, 2010

**Note:** Total (n) =2767

In the Figure 5.5, it can be seen that education level does not matter too much for the BDP supporter boycotters. The BDP supporters intended to boycott the referendum regardless the level of education. In terms of the AKP supporters yes intention increases with the increasing education level in contrast with general yes intention which can be seen in the Table 5.13 where the yes intention was decreasing with increasing education level. Despite small proportion, among the BDP supporters, yes intention also increases with the increase of education level as well. Yet, there is not a sharp difference between education levels, so it can be seen that party support plays more important role than education level for vote intention by looking through this figure.

### **5.5. Concluding Remarks**

To sum up, I would like to note an online survey attempt by the AKP for the referendum on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2010. The AKP Center for Communication started an online survey via its official website which planned to continue for 15 days. There was only one question which asked: what will you vote in the referendum for constitutional amendments? Only 753 respondents marked their votes as yes among 3.808 participants on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2010, 17.00 pm. This amount was 19 percent of the answers and no votes were over 80 percent, which was contrary to the expectations of the AKP. The survey was removed from the website immediately even though it had been planned to last for 15 days. It is stated that one of the well-known social media networks *Incisozluk*, which is famous for similar online actions, was behind the results. The members of that website became organized to vote for no in order to catch attention of public opinion. Additionally, it might be aimed to show that political parties are not very tolerant of opposing ideas or results with this action. However, this short story shows that survey results sometimes can be misleading and additional analysis can be needed for getting better results in this kind of researches.

This chapter aimed to shed light on voter preferences in Turkey within the context of the 2010 Referendum. The results showed that political parties and leaders are the main determinants of the vote choices for either elections or referenda. Individual characteristics play a role in party preferences and the party cues played a crucial role in the referendum voting. According to survey results the governing party AKP was the most popular and reliable party and its leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan was

the most popular leader. Besides, our results showed that *yes* option has been the most popular reply from the beginning of the campaign period as AKP defended. This parallelism between vote intention and political party preference can be seen as the most striking finding of this thesis. However, information and campaigns are also important factors and people pay an attention to the media to get information as well. To give an example, respondents who said *yes* showed their reason as the democratization in parallel with the AKP's discourse. The significant change in vote intention during the campaign period can be seen as one of the evidences of the importance of information. Also, it can be claimed that survey questions are shaped in the frame of the discourses of political actors and thus, the media frames affected the change in survey questions as the main source of information during the campaign period. To add more it, will be seen that the common frame was democratization and the most visible campaign was for *yes* in the media during the campaign period. The next chapter will deal with the media content to show the stance of the different media outlets and the latter empirical chapter 7 will search out this interesting relationship between the media and public opinion.

## **Chapter 6: Analyses of the Media Content**

In the previous chapter, public opinion was examined as the first step of the analysis of the 2010 constitutional referendum in Turkey. The power of the parties, leaders, campaigns and thus the role of the mass media to inform citizens about the campaigns by providing political information were also examined in *Chapter 5*. The possible impact of the mass media on voters as one of their most important information sources makes it necessary to scrutinize the media coverage of the referendum. Also, the media systems mentioned in the *Chapter 3* would be helpful for this section of the analysis. The coverage of the media outlets also reflects the characteristics of the media system. As an example of Mediterranean model of Hallin and Mancini, political parallelism is one of the most important features of the media in Turkey that create an expectation about the partisan coverage. On the other hand, state control and media concentration are the other significant factors that limit the freedom and impartiality of the media, which can also have an influence on media content. In this chapter, the coverage of the mass media will be examined to show how the media covered the issues and how that coverage was shaped during the referendum process. In short, this chapter represents the examination of the media content on the referendum in terms of the selected media outlets as the second step of the analysis of the determinant factors of the 2010 referendum for the constitutional amendments. In addition, I will combine the analysis of these two chapters on public opinion and on the media content in the following and final chapter of the research, to get the optimum results on the analysis of the referendum.

### **6.1. The Importance of the Media Content on Voting Behaviour**

In the age of technology, the mass media have been one of the most important information sources about political issues for citizens. Even if citizens make their political decisions according to party or elite cues, the mass media also play a role in transmitting their messages to audiences. In our time, campaigns are mostly run by means of the media and, even the enlightening process of developing preferences, voters get information from campaigns and the campaigns reach voters via the media (Gelman and King, 1993). In other words, as mentioned before ‘the mass media are the most common source for information about election campaigns in democracies’

(Semetko: 2010: 2). In this respect, freedom of the media and trust in the media gain importance, and have an impact on media coverage.

Freedom of the media is a crucial element for a well-functioning democracy (O'Neil, 1998) and very effective for the quality of the coverage as well. The informative role of the media is functional when the media are free. Otherwise, the information that the media provides cannot go beyond imposing the opinions of a group, party or people. However, freedom of the media is not only having a significant role on media coverage, but is also crucial for democracy. The features of the media system, degree of commercialization, state control over the media and several variables can influence media coverage. In addition, monopolization of the mass media which affects the diversity and freedom of the media affects the media coverage (Woods 2007).

Citizens require political information during voting periods and especially in referendum voting. If we suppose that referendum campaigns are part of learning or enlightening processes (Dvorak, 2013; Gelman and King 1993), we can see that citizens obtain political information such as party or elite cues, which may be biased. Otherwise, the mass media may also provide non-objective, deficient or misleading information.

As Muller has stated, because of the impact of commercialization, the mass media may cover attractive events rather than informative content in order to get high ratings or circulation numbers (2014). This situation may undermine trust in the mass media and can cause media malaise as mentioned in the theory chapter. On the other hand, following the media can cause an increase in political interest and participation no matter what the media content is or which media are preferred. In brief, it is possible to claim that media content has the ability to affect audiences' preferences. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the salient issues in the mass media also become salient in the public agenda. In other words, the mass media has an agenda-setting function. Also, the mass media can highlight the issues they want to call to attention by framing and priming them with their content. He points out how the audiences choose the media and what they should concentrate on. As Katz (1959) has pointed out, media research should focus less on what the media does to people and instead pay attention to what people do with the media. These points are

mentioned by emphasizing theories such as the uses and gratification and social learning theories in Chapter 3.

## **6.2. Research Design**

In this chapter, I deemed it suitable to use qualitative and quantitative methods together for the analysis of the media content. For some research, it may be insufficient to employ only one specific method. Thus, different methods can be used to incorporate support for each other and to achieve the main target of getting optimum results.

The quantitative content analysis constitutes the main basis of this chapter and helps to uncover the extent to which the media covered the referendum issue. I also pay attention to how the referendum was covered by different outlets, I examine the attitudes of these outlets and the change in the media coverage during the period of interest of the study. However, quantitative methods provide analysis of the manifest meaning and may be deficient and incapable of showing the latent meaning in the text.

Qualitative analysis can be helpful even for the coding phase of the quantitative analysis, where the coding might be restrictive. When the news items were examined, it seemed as though the stories did not have obvious *yes* or *no* statements, while the wording, context and the mentioned issues and actors were giving strong clues about the tone of the statements and stories. In such a case, qualitative content analysis, which aims at investigating the latent meanings in the text, can reinforce the quantitative analysis results and provide a better analysis. This feature of the qualitative analysis was also helpful during the coding process of the quantitative content analysis. Therefore, the examination of the latent meaning in the stories was used to explain how the variables and especially the tone were determined. In such a case, qualitative analysis sheds light on the coding principles of the news items.

On the other hand, qualitative methods are still criticized as being subjective, not scientifically reliable, and as requiring support of an additional method if it is appropriate. Thus, qualitative analysis could be reinforced by the numbers obtained from quantitative analysis by using both methods together.

In brief, for some research, it would be most suitable to use the qualitative and quantitative methods together, which are supplementary. This is expected to increase the quality of the research and provide a much stronger analysis by using qualitative and quantitative methods together.

## **Data**

This chapter presents a quantitative content analysis and qualitative content analysis based on five Turkish national newspapers as media outlets: the Cumhuriyet, the Hurriyet, the Posta, the Radikal and the Zaman. I chose these outlets by considering their circulation numbers, historical backgrounds, political connections, ownership and popularity as mentioned in Chapter 4, on Research Design & Methodology. In total, 1266 news items – both commentaries and reports - were coded from these media outlets for a 19 week period extending from the announcement of the referendum until the voting day (13<sup>th</sup> May 2010- 11<sup>th</sup> September 2010). The reason for choosing this time period was to evince the changes about the referendum in the media coverage.

In total, 1266 news items were coded according to their placement in the newspaper (front page or inside), tone (positive, negative, neutral), actors and, the number of yes, no or boycott statements from the selected pages of each outlet. The page selection may vary from newspaper to newspaper because of the changes in the positioning of the referendum news. For instance, referendum news could be found in the *politics* pages of one newspaper, when another outlet preferred to give the referendum a place in the *agenda* pages. The front page and selected three pages were included in the sample.

The media is one of the most important sources of information on political and social issues in Turkey. The 2010 constitutional referendum offered major amendments to the current constitution which required a special knowledge for the voters of a certain level, and the media played an informative role during this period. To give an example, I will analyse the question asking the respondents their source of information.

**Table 6.1: The source of information/opinion about these constitutional amendments**

|                            | Frequency | Percent |
|----------------------------|-----------|---------|
| I already know the content | 365       | 13,3    |
| My party and its leader    | 267       | 9,7     |
| Television                 | 1175      | 42,8    |
| Newspapers                 | 199       | 7,2     |
| Family elders              | 91        | 3,3     |
| No idea/information        | 642       | 23,4    |
| NA                         | 9         | 0,3     |
| Total (n)                  | 2748      | 100     |

**Source:** KONDA Survey Data, 2010

As can be seen in Table 6.1, nearly half of the respondents used the media to get information about the constitutional amendments according to the August data of the public opinion surveys. The most important point is the great power of the television in Turkey. On the other hand, as a result of one of the most distinctive feature of Turkish media system the low circulation, newspapers are not seen as a popular source of information by the respondents. Thus, this table also revealed the major limitation of this research one more time by analysing only the newspapers despite the great importance of the television. The reason for referring to the printed media instead of visual media is explained under the *Limitations* title in the introduction chapter.

### **6.3. Qualitative Content Analysis**

In this section, I aim to capture the meaning of the statements which might be missed out by coding. There are some news items which were coded as negative or positive, although they do not have an obvious 'yes' or 'no' emphasis. Thus, the qualitative analysis part helps to explain the coding reasons and principles by indicating their positive and negative contents with examples. With the qualitative analysis I mainly aimed to focus on commentaries rather than news stories. There are two reasons for choosing commentaries for the qualitative analysis. The first one is the nature of the commentaries which may have latent meanings, while news stories are generally in the form of 'report' and do not have a latent or hidden meaning in the text. The second reason is the width of the sample. The number of commentaries is 314 among the 1266 item sample size, which is reasonable for making qualitative

analysis. For this section, I have selected and interpreted the most salient statements and phrases to show the attitudes of the media outlets.

The sub-questions below seek to find out how actors, events and processes played a role in the formation of the referendum perception and how the media coverage reflected the developments:

**RQ1:** What are the components that represent referendum as a vote of confidence?

**RQ2:** What are the components that represent referendum as an important step for the sake of democratization?

**RQ3:** How did each media outlet cover the referendum and the actors?

**RQ4:** What are the reasons for opposition to and support for the constitutional amendments?

The answers of these questions will be sought in chronological order starting with the pre-campaign period, including early discussions about the referendum date and objections to the referendum, and goes on until the referendum on 12<sup>th</sup> September.

### **The Reflection of the Political Atmosphere in the Media during the Referendum Campaign**

The mass media and the political agenda have always had an interactive relationship. The media content is not only fed from the agenda but also the media has the ability to set the agenda. In other words, the news coverage of the media is generally shaped around current affairs and, the media can select and highlight some issues among the busy agenda from their own perspectives. Thus, in respect of the qualitative part of the content analysis, it is considered to be useful to review the political agenda in the selected outlets starting with the period that the referendum began to be discussed, in order to see the other political issues and current affairs of the period which could have an effect on the referendum results via the media coverage. By doing this, I intend to reveal the main concepts that media outlets used in the referendum coverage.

In this section of the analysis, referendum coverage of the five selected newspapers' as the media outlets of this research are outlined in chronological order with the current political issues in the referendum campaign period that may have a direct or indirect relation with the referendum issue. The main purpose of this part is to show the similarities and differences of the approaches of the media outlets to the various developments. Here, the important point is to reveal how each outlet represented the issues, and with what arguments. Political actors' impact on the media coverage and thus on the referendum may become more clear as a consequence. As a first step, I will mention the developments in the political agenda chronologically, and then I will detail the media coverage on these issues in the newspapers. In addition, before starting the analysis I would like to note that the coverage of the Zaman and the Cumhuriyet will be analyzed comparatively due to the similarity of their content. Also, these two newspapers largely discussed the same issues from different perspectives as a response to each other.

For the sake of this research, the period of the analysis of the 2010 referendum starts with the approval of the president of the republic for the referendum on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2010. This date can also be defined as the beginning of the campaign period, or in other words, as the beginning of a running battle between the yes and no camps. The constitutional amendments package with 28 articles which were prepared by AKP deputies were firstly presented to the parliamentary constitution committee and accepted. Afterwards, the constitutional amendment package was voted on in the TBMM and 26 articles of package passed with 366 affirmative votes and 72 dissenting votes. Then, the proposal for the constitutional amendments was submitted for the president of the republic, Abdullah Gul's, approval. Here, the long process of discussion and disagreement in the media and also in society started with Gul's approval to submit the amendments to the referendum, which was not terminated even after the referendum (NTVMSNBC, 7<sup>th</sup> May 2010).

In this period, the first problematic issue in the media in terms of the referendum was the exact date of the voting. In connection with this, the quick approval of Abdullah Gul was also controversial for some parts of the media, by the 13<sup>th</sup> of May. The Electoral Law amended by the TBMM in March 2010 and the waiting period for putting an issue to a referendum regarding constitutional amendments was reduced from 120 days to 60 days (Resmi Gazete, 2010). On the grounds of this amendment,

the AKP claimed that the referendum should be held 60 days after the approval of the President of the Republic. Yet, it is stated that in the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey Article 67: 'Amendments to the electoral laws shall not apply to the elections to be held within one year from the entry into force date of the amendments' (Iyimaya: 374, 2919). Thus, the Yuksek Secim Kurulu- Supreme Electoral Council of Turkey (YSK) designated the referendum date as 12<sup>th</sup> September 2010 on the basis of the constitution.

The 12<sup>th</sup> September has a symbolic importance in the history of Turkey. It is identified with the last military coup in 1980. Although this date was not in accordance with their desire for the referendum, the AKP took advantage of this historical coincidence and used it in their referendum campaign. In particular, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan often emphasized the idea that the amendments could make it possible to judge the generals who were responsible for the 12<sup>th</sup> September 1980 Military Coup during the referendum campaign period.

From the perspective of the mass media, these developments were represented in a different way by all of the outlets. The *Cumhuriyet* harshly criticized the President of the Republic Abdullah Gul and the AKP. 'Gul did not keep waiting the package' and 'The jet approval' were the most distinctive titles of the *Cumhuriyet*. In the content of these news items, reporters and columnists emphasized that the intelligentsia, lawyers and scientists wrote letters to Abdullah Gul. They tried to warn him that 'human rights cannot be put on referendum' and the AKP government did not prepare the constitutional amendments package by negotiation and the participation of other parties. In addition, they claim that there were disconnected articles which may have restricted voters' freedom of decision making. In other words, these amendments should not be voted on as a package and Gul should return the amendments package to the TBMM. The *Cumhuriyet* generally gave a large place to negative aspects of the amendments and used a specific discourse for the AKP and amendments. To give an example, the AKP members/sympathizers and a large part of the media refer to the party as the AK Party (AK means white/clean in Turkish), the *Cumhuriyet* always uses the AKP and, also prefers to use RTE for the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan which has a negative meaning. In addition, Cuneyt Arcayurek, as one of the most important columnists of the *Cumhuriyet*, uses the 'AKP

partisan in Cankaya' <sup>73</sup> for Abdullah Gul instead of using his name (Cumhuriyet, 14.05.2010).

In contrast with the Cumhuriyet, Zaman emphasized that reconciliation would be provided in the nation, which could not be provided in the parliament. The Zaman also gave a large place to the CHP's appeal to the The Constitutional Court of Turkey (AYM) for the cancellation and stay of execution of the constitutional amendments proposal which had been approved by Abdullah Gul. Columnists and reporters frequently wrote that this appeal was impossible because, this was not an enabled bill and the constitution does not permit 'preventive control'. It was also seen that the actors such as academics and opinion leaders were involved in the Zaman who emphasized that Abdullah Gul had made the right decision. However, the Zaman explained that the decision about the referendum was a 'political decision' and that a referendum should be held 60 days after approval. The Zaman claimed that the 120 days rule is for elections, the referendum is not an election and that political parties are not in competition during referendum periods.

The referendum coverage of the Cumhuriyet and the Zaman was largely formed around the concept of democratization. The Zaman consistently defended the constitutional amendments during the process by highlighting the necessity of constitutional change for the democratization of Turkey, while the Cumhuriyet persistently claimed that democratization was not the main goal of the amendments, on the contrary the amendments could irrevocably damage Turkish democracy. According to the Cumhuriyet, if the amendments package were required to improve democracy, it would also include the abolition of parliamentary immunity. In this respect, the Cumhuriyet exactly parallels the discourse of the opposition party CHP, who suggested abolition of parliamentary immunity several times and it was rejected by the AKP. The Cumhuriyet defined the constitutional amendments package as 'lawlessness' and an attempt to 'seize the judiciary'. The Cumhuriyet supposed that putting irrelevant articles together as a whole for the vote was the most important indicator of the antidemocratic character of the amendments package. That claim is also present in the handbooks of the CHP and the MHP, which the CHP consistently emphasized during the referendum campaign period.

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<sup>73</sup> The term of 'Cankaya' refers to the '*Cankaya Kosku*' presidential palace of Turkey .

For the Zaman, the constitutional amendments would provide the opportunity to confront the 1980 military coup. The Zaman emphasized that military coups are antidemocratic practices that Turkey had experienced and citizens who are against military coups should vote yes in the referendum. In order to support that claim, the Zaman also found the only village that voted no in the 1980 referendum held after the military coup, and announced that people living in that village would vote yes in the 2010 referendum.

The Zaman gave a large amount of coverage to the content of the amendments package on individual rights and freedoms in order to defend the democratization target of the amendments. The reformation in the rights of persons with disabilities was emphasized very frequently and amendments on women's rights were defined as revolutionary. The Zaman preferred to highlight reforms regarding individual rights and freedoms, reforms about children, women's and disability rights rather than the regulations about the judiciary, by contrast with the Cumhuriyet.

While discussions were still going on, the CHP applied to the Constitutional Court with the cancellation request of the amendments package. Right after, parties and the media started to discuss the authority of the Constitutional Court about the request of the CHP. The AKP and the Zaman claimed that the Constitutional Court did not have substantive jurisdiction authority and could only examine pro forma amendments. Yet, the main controversial issue was the statement of the reporter of the Constitutional Court. The reporter Osman Can stated that if the court were to decide to cancel the amendments, the government should not accept the court's decision and should present the amendments package as a whole. That statement was harshly criticized in the Cumhuriyet as lawlessness, an attack on the judiciary, and as a call for chaos. On the other hand, it was claimed in the Zaman, that if the Constitutional Court were not to reject the cancellation request, there would be chaos in Turkey and that it would be a political decision.

However, the broadcasting of the state channel Turkish Radio and Television (TRT) was one of the most significant debate subjects for the Cumhuriyet and the Zaman. The discussion started with the Cumhuriyet's allegation that the TRT broadcasting was biased and the advantages of the yes vote had often been emphasized in its discussion programmes. As a state channel, the TRT should be unbiased and it

acted against the decision of the Supreme Committee of Elections (YukseK Secim Kurulu-YSK) on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2010: 'Radio and televisions cannot make a one-way and biased broadcast about the constitutional amendments and they have to respect to the principle of equal opportunity' (Cumhuriyet, 10<sup>th</sup> July 2010). After the official complaint of the CHP by referring to the Cumhuriyet, the YSK launched an investigation and the TRT received a warning. While the Cumhuriyet found that decision to be inadequate, the Zaman interpreted it as 'a blow to the freedom of press'.

In brief, the conflict between the Cumhuriyet and the Zaman showed itself in various fields. For example, when the Cumhuriyet reported the story that the Alevi community would say No in the referendum, the Zaman published news emphasizing that they would vote yes a day later, by referring to a different Alevi union. That situation was also the same in terms of non-governmental organizations, lawyers, students or artists and actors. Both the Cumhuriyet and the Zaman selected a segment of society and reported on people from the groups who shared their views

In the Cumhuriyet, there were very short and punchy expressions such as 'we have to say no' or 'the referendum is AKP's 12<sup>th</sup> September', which alluded to the 1980 military coup. The AKP was even announced as being a 'fascist' party due to amendments in the Cumhuriyet (Oztin Akguc-Yorum, 25<sup>th</sup> June 2010). One of the most important claims from the Cumhuriyet was that, if Turkey says yes in the referendum, Erdogan would become 'sultan'. The Cumhuriyet objected to the referendum mostly by denigrating the AKP and Tayyip Erdogan rather than indicating the content of the amendments.

When the content of the items in the Zaman were examined, it was possible to see news stories about the content of the amendments. The first supplement regarding the referendum was also published by the Zaman which also included advertisement of the AKP's handbook. In terms of Zaman, the wide coverage of the opinions of religious leaders was a remarkable point. Moreover, according to the Zaman's news item, these clergymen said that voting yes was Islamic and a debt of conscience.

According to the Cumhuriyet, Prime Minister Erdogan benefited from the transportation opportunities of the state for referendum propaganda under the cover of official openings. The Cumhuriyet also claimed that the AKP provided coal aid to

citizens in specific regions for yes votes even in the summer time. In response to this, the Zaman asserted that the CHP municipalities were providing subsidies in return for no votes in south-eastern Anatolia. The Zaman also overemphasized the idea that if citizens were to vote yes in the referendum, that vote would not be recognized as yes for the AKP and, in the referendum, our common future would be voted for.

Another interesting point was Erdogan's speech in the parliament, in which he read the farewell letters of the people who were hanged in the 1980 coup d'état. He concluded his speech with tears and stated that citizens should say yes in the referendum, in honour of those people. Then, the Cumhuriyet accused Erdogan of using the dead to promote his political agenda. Interestingly, after that, the Cumhuriyet had a similar coverage of the death of a worker. A worker died in a work accident under a yes poster. The Cumhuriyet reported the headline as 'Yes banner became a shroud'.

Finally, the titles of both newspapers reflecting their sides in the headlines need to be considered. The Cumhuriyet generally used no and the Zaman used yes in their news and column titles. These two newspapers obviously acted as the media organs of the AKP and the CHP during the referendum campaign period. The Zaman took the side of the AKP and yes vote, while the Cumhuriyet played an important role in the no campaign of the CHP. The Zaman tried to discredit the CHP by reminding readers of the resignation of the former CHP leader because of a sex tape scandal. For example, when the Zaman mentioned the CHP, the party was defined as the 'CHP that was shaken by the resignation of its leader'.

When the news items of the Radikal were analysed, I observed that representation of the full spectrum of opinions. If compared with the Zaman and the Cumhuriyet, it can be said that the Radikal takes a relatively neutral position. The Radikal also had wider coverage of the concept of 'Yes but not enough', which was also mentioned in the Zaman, and the 'boycott' side which was generally criticized negatively, and had been paid less attention by all other outlets. This situation originates from the leftist point of view of the Radikal which aims to give place to all sides and especially minorities.

The Posta also can be defined as neutral during the referendum campaign period. The Posta generally preferred to report the developments about the referendum. On

the other hand, when the limited articles were qualitatively analysed, it was possible to see a clear support of the constitutional amendments. Posta has two main columnists who write on political issues; one from pro-government side and the other is from the opposition. Except their articles, it can be said that Posta generally does not add interpretation about news, only prefers to report them.

The Hurriyet displayed a similar image as the Posta. While the articles contain negative and opposition components against the referendum, news items in the type of reporting were neutral and sometimes even positive. When the themes are classified by outlets, it can be seen that pro-yes items mostly emphasized the freedom and democratisation issues. These items also claimed that the generals who were responsible for the 12<sup>th</sup> September 1980 military coup would be judged by these amendments. On the other hand pro-no items claimed that the republic and Ataturk's principles were at risk and, the most important threat of the amendments was that the AKP would keep the jurisdiction under its control. In brief, the discussion of Cumhuriyet and the Zaman pivoted around these concepts during the campaign period.

The qualitative analysis of these five newspapers demonstrated that the media showed great interest in the referendum at every stage throughout the campaign period. Among these, the Cumhuriyet and the Zaman were the most distinctive dailies because of their overt political stance and extensive coverage on the referendum. These two outlets also had the same concept as the other newspapers and included more articles than the others, as the most important differential feature. Analysing their articles rather than reports provided to see their biased stance clearer.

#### **6.4. Quantitative Analysis**

This second level of the media content analysis chapter is based on the 1266 news items. The main research question concerning this chapter is 'How was the 2010 referendum represented in the media?' In order to answer this question by the quantitative methods, the data was analysed using SPSS Statistics 21, and the results were illustrated in graphs and tables to elucidate the representation of the referendum by different media organs. The qualitative and quantitative analyses of the media content on the representation of the referendum were expected to be

useful for answering the main research question of the thesis, with the combination of the public opinion survey data which will be linked in the following chapter.

In this chapter, the analysis is structured around these sub-questions:

**RQ1:** To what extent were the referendum and related debates important for the media represented by outlets over the campaign?

**RQ2:** How did the media represent the referendum by outlets? Did they present for or against statements and did this change over the campaign?

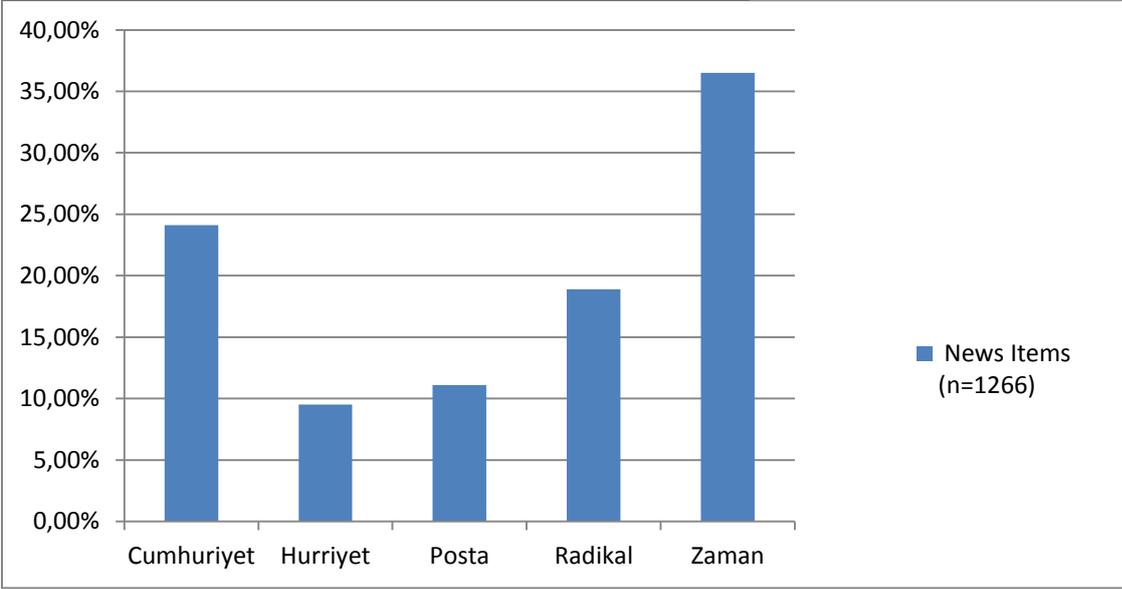
**RQ3:** Who were the most important actors in the news items by outlets?

**RQ4:** How did the media address the referendum campaigns by outlets over the campaign? Did they focus on the content of the amendments package or party strategies/positioning?

**Visibility of the Referendum in the Media: Distribution and Tone of the News Items**

In the first step, the visibility of the referendum according to the media outlets attracts attention when the data is analysed quantitatively. This is important because I will try to show the different coverage of the different outlets in the following parts which can give clues about their political stance. Thus, the visibility of the referendum according to different outlets can be very helpful when they evaluated with their reader circle.

**Figure 6.1: Distribution of the Referendum News**



As can be seen in Figure 6.1, the Zaman paid the greatest attention to the referendum and along with this the Cumhuriyet also had extensive coverage of the referendum issue, when compared to the other three outlets. These two newspapers can be defined as 'ideological newspapers' which were considerably far from being neutral, even outside of the referendum debate. These newspapers were the most important two actors for the *yes* and *no* sides as mentioned in the qualitative part of this chapter. The Cumhuriyet supported the no campaign and the CHP during the referendum campaign as the 'representative' of the values of the republic and Atatürk's Principles and Reforms. The Zaman was the most vigorous advocate of the constitutional amendments and the AKP as the representative of the Islamic-conservative audience, which is also known for its connection with the Fethullah Gulen Community.

These results can be evaluated in terms of political parallelism in the media in Turkey. The table indicated that the partisan media were more interested in the referendum, which might have been to impress/manipulate their audience. Also as the qualitative analysis of their coverage was showed that they use the same frames with the political parties they support. On the other hand, it can be said that they may also reflect their readers' ideas. In other words, they show their audiences what they desire to see. This situation represents a kind of 'chicken-egg dilemma'. It is very hard to identify whether people actively select the media which reflects their opinions, or passively internalize the opinions of the media they read/watch. This situation can be explained with 'uses and gratifications theory' and its parallel 'social learning theory' that mentioned in the chapter 3. In other words, people select the media according to their individual needs and belongings and they can also filter and take the part they needed from the media. To sum up, people play an active role in their media preferences because they can predict what they can find in the media outlet they choose.

On the other hand, in respect of the Radikal, this question can be answered by the mastermind and founding editor Mehmet M. Yilmaz. He explained that the media in Turkey was a 'cartel media' when he suggested establishing a new newspaper to Aydın Dogan, the head of the Dogan Holding in 1996, consisting of traditional mass newspapers such as the Hurriyet, the Milliyet, the Sabah and the Cumhuriyet. He further claimed that there was another side to the agenda which was not reflected in

these media sources, such as human rights, torture, the development of democracy and environmental problems. Following this, he aimed to create a kind of newspaper which could fill this gap and appeal to young, educated, democratic, leftist, generalist, environmentally sensitive city-dwellers who are respectful of human rights without making discrimination between Alevi, Sunni, Kurdish, Turkish, Armenian, Greek or Jewish. In other words, he emphasized that as a first step, the target audience should be described and determined, and then it is possible to answer what kind of newspaper this audience would like to read.<sup>74</sup>As can be seen in the Figure 6.1, the Radikal is the third newspaper concentrating on the referendum and as it will be seen in the following tables, Radikal emphasized the boycott as a third side of the referendum more than other outlets. In comparison with them, it can be said that Radikal tried to cover all sides equally and stay neutral towards its establishment goals. In addition, it was also seen on the qualitative analyses, the Radikal gave space to other current political issues besides the referendum during that period, while the Cumhuriyet and the Zaman mostly ignore the agenda about other issues and largely focused on the referendum.

However, the placement of the referendum news can give clues about the importance it was given by the media. If the newspaper gives any issue in the first page, this indicated that the newspaper gives an importance to this issue and desires to attract their readers' attention on it. This is explained in the theoretical part as the 'priming effect' of the media. Table 6.2 below shows the total proportion of the referendum news in the first pages of the newspapers by outlets.

**Table 6.2: Proportion of the Referendum News in the First Pages**

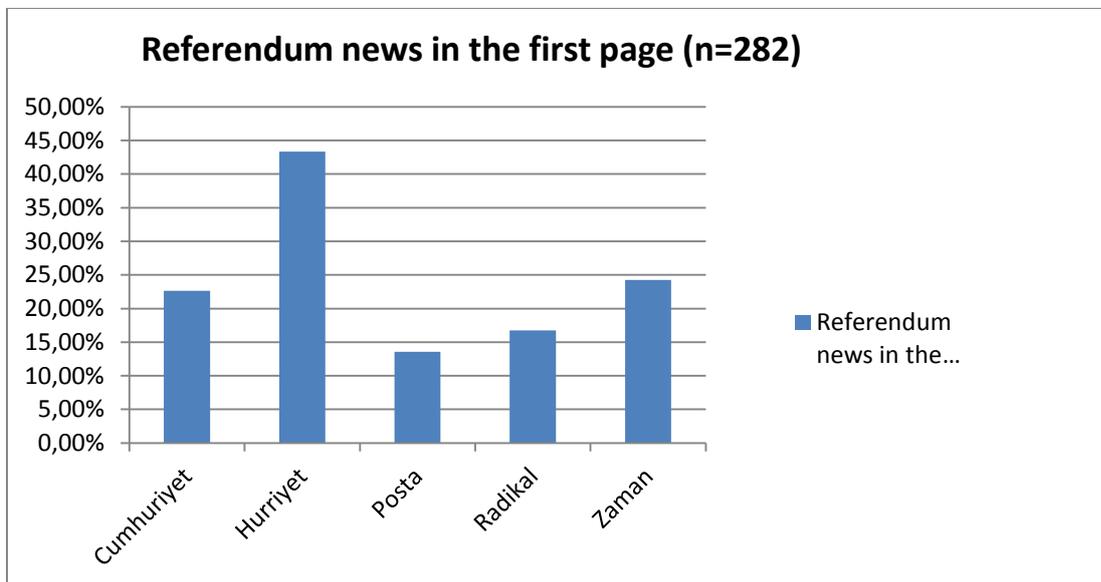
| Referendum News (n=1266) |       |
|--------------------------|-------|
| In the first page        | 22.3% |
| Inside                   | 77.7% |

**Source:** Media coverage of the five newspapers outlets

<sup>74</sup> <http://t24.com.tr/haber/radikal-kotu-yonetildi-aktif-gazetecilik-yapilsa-kapanmazdi,262033>

As can be seen in Table 6.2 approximately one quarter of the referendum news (22.3%) could find place on the front pages of the outlets, while the greater part were placed inside. Also, as it was mentioned in the previous chapters, according to Media Monitoring Centre research referendum was the fifth most emphasized issue among 15 issues in 2010, September. It can be said that this proportion is remarkable but, we can find out which outlet aimed to attract attention to the referendum if we analyse that for each media outlet. The priming effect of the media in the 2010 referendum coverage also analysed for each outlet in the Figure 6.2 below:

**Figure 6.2: Visibility of the Referendum in the First Pages**



When we look at the number of referendum news items on the front pages, the Hurriyet stands out with the overwhelming majority. The Hurriyet, as one of the most powerful representatives of the mainstream media and as a feature of its 'catch-all' structure, provides news items in a format of reporting and has fewer commentaries as compared with the Cumhuriyet and the Zaman. Therefore, the Hurriyet might have preferred to represent referendum news on the front page, while those items were not given space inside the newspaper. However, it is important to emphasize the 'agenda-setter' feature of the Hurriyet as the one of the most rooted and circulated newspapers. The headlines of the Hurriyet have always cared to give place to the political agenda in the first page to make their readers who prefer it to stay updated.

The Posta, as the best-selling newspaper and a tabloid, includes reports rather than commentaries, like the Hurriyet. Despite having columns and commentaries, these are mostly about daily life rather than politics. In short, the Posta presented a kind of reporting journalism that was intended to provide the latest news about the referendum. In respect of Zaman and Cumhuriyet, the referendum found a large place in the articles of columnists and it is considered that their first pages did not largely underline the referendum because of this reason.

The tone of the media is another very important point, when analysing the media content, in order to understand the stance of the media mentioned. The tone can show us the political tendencies of the media outlets. The table below created to see the aggregate proportion of the positive, negative and neutral tone of the media including all outlets together.

**Table 6.3: Tone of the Items**

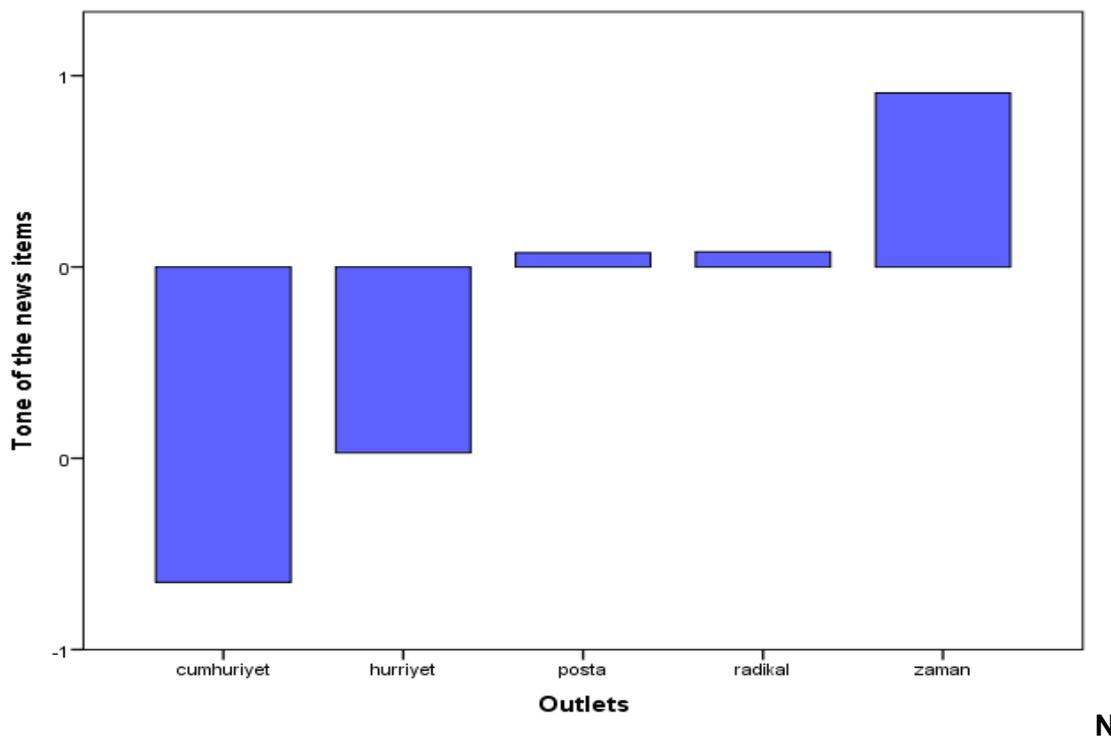
| TONE      | Proportion of Items |
|-----------|---------------------|
| Negative  | 25%                 |
| Positive  | 28%                 |
| Neutral   | 47%                 |
| Total (n) | 1266                |

Table 6.3 above shows the tone of all news that coded from all media outlets. These numbers mean almost half of the news items stayed neutral during the referendum campaign period in 2010. Tone was decided according to the number of yes, no and boycott statements in the items. If the yes statements were more than three these were coded as positive (1) and it was same for no statements which were coded negative (-1). If there were no *yes*, *no* or *boycott* statements in the news item it was coded as neutral. On the other hand, the items that only have boycott statement were excluded for tone coding. In some news items, there were two different statements together and these could be more than three. In these situations numbers were compared and decided by a majority. This table also indicated that our sample size

and outlet selection reflected to overall tone. This is because, when we look at the MTM Report which analysed 44 national newspapers in August 2010 in respect of referendum news, the results were in parallel with our results which were; 27% news items supported 'yes' votes, 25% of the news items supported 'no' votes while 48% stayed neutral<sup>75</sup>.

On the other hand, looking through the tone of news items for each outlet separately can provide us to see the inclination of each outlet on the referendum issue. It means that if the tone of any given outlet is positive, this outlet was closed to the yes camp and supporting the yes campaign.

**Figure 6.3: Tone of the news items according to each outlet**



**Note:** Total (n) =1266

Figure 6.3 above shows the tone of items for each outlet. It shows that the Cumhuriyet presented the largest coverage against referendum. However, the

<sup>75</sup> <http://www.medyatakip.com.tr/>, access date 14.06.2011

Zaman was the most important supporter of the constitutional amendments. Although the tones of these two outlets are not surprising because of their historical and political ties. The Hurriyet's negative stance against referendum is very striking point in this table as a locomotive of the mainstream media in Turkey. The Hurriyet also belongs to the Dogan Holding, which may need to form good relationships with the government who prepared the constitutional amendments package, and put them to the vote. However, as it was mentioned in the earlier parts this negative stance arised from the problems between the pro yes AKP and Dogan Holding that resulted with the unreasonable tax fine to the Dogan Group.

By looking th table it can be said that Posta and Radikal were relatively stayed neutral in thei referendum coverage. The content of the Posta slightly concentrate on political issues as its tabloid nature. Thus, their referendum coverage was also as reporting the developments such as the announcements about the referendum which can be more objective than columns. In terms of Radikal, the referendum coverage may also aimed to give space to the campaigns of all sides in an equalitarian manner in parallel with its establishment targets as it was mentioned pevious parts of this chapter.

Lastly, it is important to note that the tone of three of five media outlets were positive including the Posta and the Zaman as the most circulated dailies when two of them were negative including Cumhuriyet with very low circulation numbers. In other words, it can be said that positive point of view/yes statements reached a wider audience than no statements/negative aspects of the referendum by looking out these results.

On the other hand, development of the tone of statements can be interesting when it is considered in parallel with the development of the campaigns. In other words, the Figure 6.4. below may reveal that whether the campaigns changed the balance referendum coverage of the media by looking the balance between their negative and positive statements.

**Figure 6.4: Balance between positive and negative statements week by week for all outlets**

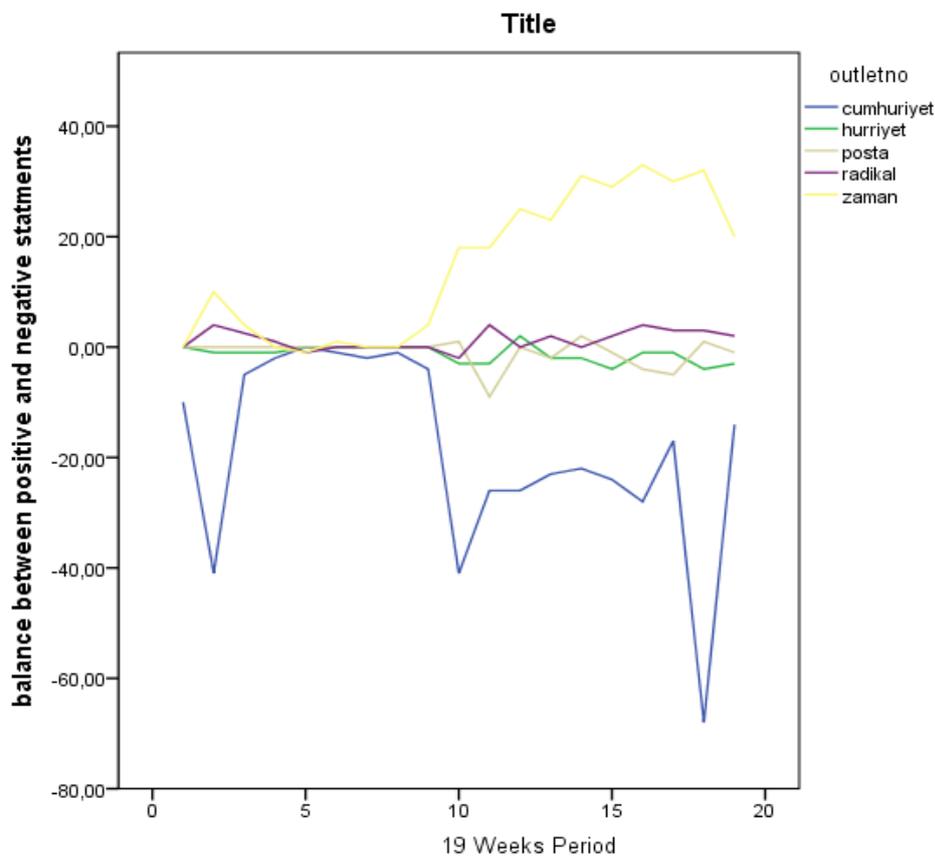


Figure 6.4 above shows the balance between positive and negative statements in news items over the 19 week period, starting with the announcement of the referendum date. It can be said that three of outlets were consistent about their placement. The Hurriyet, the Posta and the Radikal relatively remained steady over the period while fluctuations could be seen in the Cumhuriyet and the Zaman. In the middle of the period, even the Cumhuriyet and the Zaman could be seen as balanced, both of them lost the balance at the end of period. Despite the temporary state of equilibrium, Zaman maintained its positive stance and also Cumhuriyet stayed negative during the 19 weeks period. This fluctuation arises from the busy political agenda of Turkey as mentioned in the qualitative part of this chapter. The referendum was more popular at the beginning of the campaign period just after the announcement of the referendum and then, other national and international issues came to the forefront just after the first discussions about the referendum ended in a few weeks later the announcement of the referendum date. Afterwards, towards the

end of the campaign period, the referendum came to the fore with the intensification of the referendum campaigns of parties.

On the other hand, indicating the numbers of yes, no and boycott statements according to each outlet can be helpful to make clear the tone and political dispositions of outlets.

**Figure 6.5: Numbers of YES/NO and Boycott Statements by Outlets**

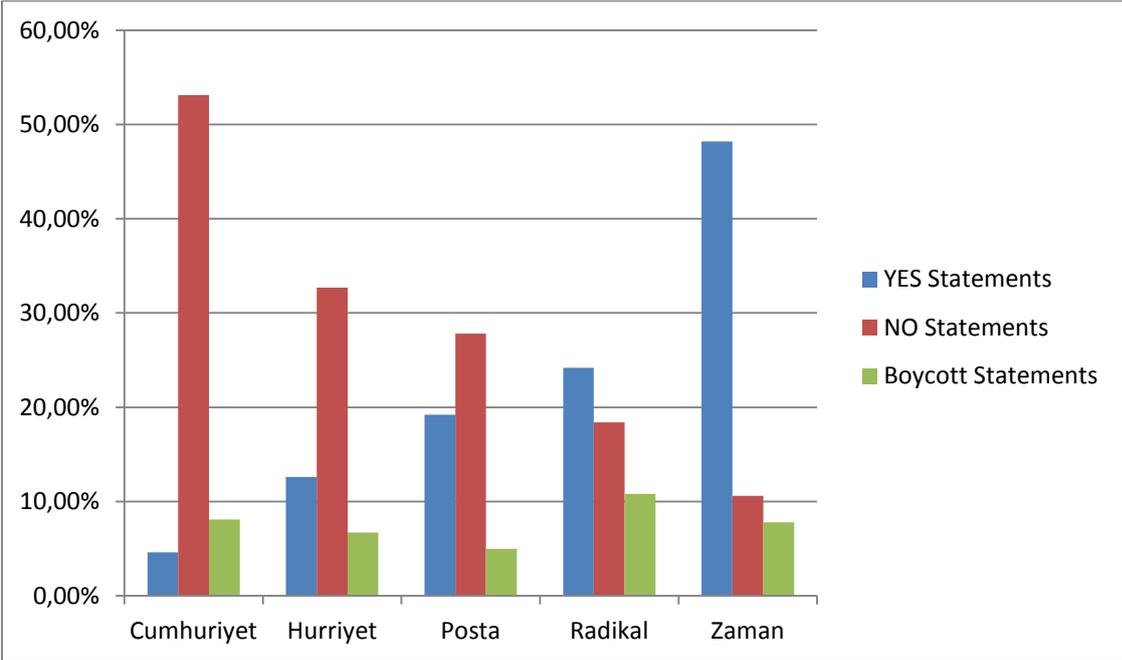


Figure 6.5 above shows the proportions of Yes, No and Boycott statements in the news items of each media outlet. The Cumhuriyet obviously mentioned *No* more frequently while the Zaman gave a large place to *Yes* statements. In Cumhuriyet, there is a big gap between the number of yes and no statements. Similarly, in the coverage of Zaman there is a big difference between statements. Boycott was yet another important option of the referendum. Pro Kurdish political party, the BDP, called their supporters to boycott the referendum and ran a boycott campaign. However, *Boycott* did not find a large place in the media as can be seen in Table 6.5. When the boycott was analysed by outlets, the Radikal was the most interested outlet in *Boycott* campaign and it also represents the most equal distribution of all statements. The boycott was the least stressed side of the campaign period in all outlets' coverage.

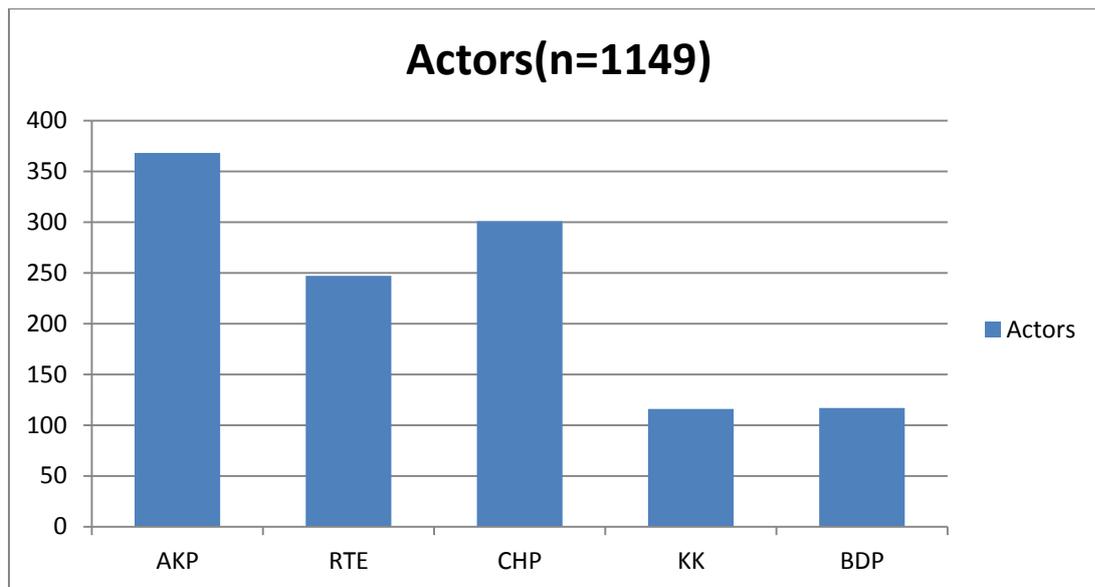
Moreover, when only boycott statements analysed for all outlets, as Table 6.4 below shows that only 102 of the total coded 1266 news items -with 8% proportion- mentioned the boycott from all five newspaper outlets. However, it is important to note that these numbers included the coverage in four months period but the boycott campaign became explicit as a discourse after the public demonstration of BDP on the 1 August 2010. Yet, after that date the number of news items about the referendum constitutes the largest part of total items and thus, the boycott coverage can be still accepted as low. Additionally, boycott was generally mentioned once in these news items and only five news items mentioned the boycott more than two times.

**Table 6.4: Boycott Statements in all news items**

|              | Frequency | Valid Percent |
|--------------|-----------|---------------|
| Boycott news | 102       | 8,05          |
| Total (n)    | 1266      | 100           |

The last, but not least important, research question of this chapter regards the actors of the referendum campaign for the media. Actors can shape the campaign and their visibility in the media also affects the direction of the campaign. In the frame of this research a lot of actors have been coded and the AKP, the CHP, the Recep Tayyip Erdogan (RTE), the Kemal Kilicdaroglu (KK) and the BDP were chosen as the most important actors of the referendum period after the analysis of the data. Also, the analysis of the public opinion surveys showed the importance of the political parties and leaders for the voters in Turkey. Thus, it became crucial to look through that how the actors were covered by the media. In the case of these five actors, distribution of the most emphasized actors is as shown in Figure 6.6 below:

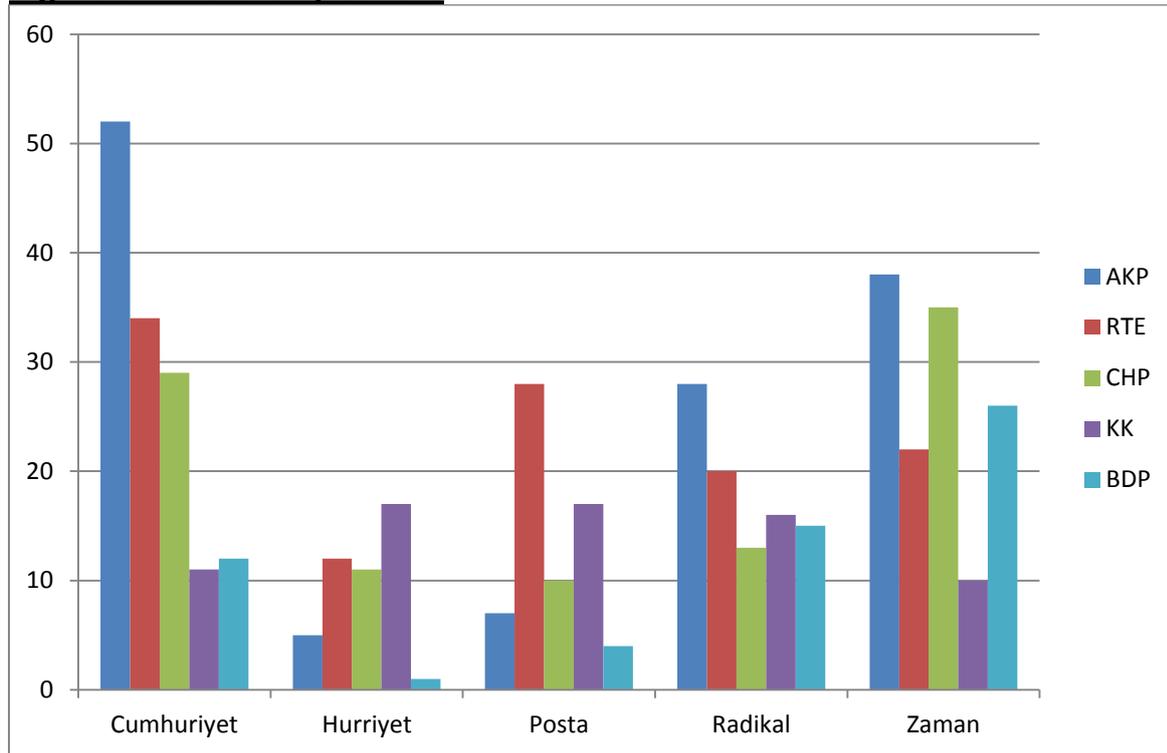
**Figure 6.6: The most emphasized actors**



As can be seen in Figure 6.6, the ruling party AKP and the main opposition party CHP were the most important actors of the referendum period in the media. That result means that media coverage mostly emphasized two main political parties and directed the referendum discussion in the frame of parties. However, secondly, leaders of these parties found a large place in the referendum coverage of the media. In respect of party leaders, Recep Tayyip Erdogan was the most visible leader by far to the CHP leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu. The pro Kurdish party BDP was the least salient actor among these top five actors who ran a Boycott campaign, which was also the least salient campaign in the media during the campaign period.

Political parties and leaders were the most important factors for voters in Turkey and they obviously explained their sides in the 2010 referendum, ran campaigns in this direction. Also, the stance of parties was mentioned in the chapter 3 of the thesis according to their own publications. Thus, when any of these actors were positively or negatively mentioned in news items, this actor would make the reader remember this actor's campaign as well. Also, emphasizing any actor makes its campaign visible and keeps it on the agenda. Herein, these actors are analysed for each outlet with different viewpoints in order to show whether their coverage about actors was parallel with their stance or not:

**Figure 6.7: Actors by outlets**



When the actors are analysed by outlets, the AKP is still the most salient actor for the Cumhuriyet, the Zaman and the Radikal. The Cumhuriyet was known for its negative coverage of the referendum issue but, it mostly mentioned the pro-Yes AKP and Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The CHP leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu was the least frequently mentioned actor, as the main advocator of *No* with his party. Despite the negative tone of Cumhuriyet, the pro yes actors were the most visible actors in its referendum coverage, even if they have been sharply and ‘disparagingly’ criticized. This situation shows that the Cumhuriyet’s campaign coverage to justify the *No* option was widely based on criticism of the opponent.

Hurriyet mostly covered CHP leader in parallel with its negative stance while Recep Tayyip Erdogan came to the forefront in Posta as the most emphasized actor. In addition, the most important point about the Zaman is that it was the only outlet attached importance to the parties rather than actors and BDP was mostly emphasized in Zaman among five outlets.

The results of the Figure 6.7., showed that the media outlets did not mostly mentioned the actors that they support. In general view, the visibility of any actor can

show the success of its campaign and, it can be said that this actor could achieve to become popular and stay in the agenda. Yet, it does not mean that emphasizing any actor shows the support of the outlet to it. Lastly, that is also important to indicate the necessity of coding the tone of news items according to outlets.

## **6.5. Concluding Remarks**

The qualitative part of this chapter showed the framing of the referendum by each outlet. The media outlets obviously used the discourses of political parties that also used by the public opinion surveys. The political developments of the period have also been linked together with the referendum discussions. Besides, especially columnists explicitly explained their vote choices with reasons and did not avoid using derogatory expressions about the opposition side. However, it is striking that the columns did not cover the content of the amendments that presented to vote in the referendum as well as news reports. Two of the selected newspapers -Zaman and Cumhuriyet- preferred to give place to the amendments only once as supplements including only the content of constitutional amendments.

This chapter indicated that people paid attention to the media and the media were closely interested in the referendum issue. When the media coverage is examined, it is seen that the media in Turkey play a significant role for providing flow of information and carry out all their framing, priming and agenda-setting functions. However, the main characteristics of the media system also have an influence on these effects of the media according to each outlet's special features. In this respect, it can be said that the media coverage was reflected the political parallelism feature of the media system and the highly concentration in the Turkish media affected the referendum coverage as well.

The numbers of the news items about the constitutional amendments revealed the importance that attached to the 2010 referendum. In the time period of the study – from May 2010 to September 2010- it was seen that the agenda was mostly set by the referendum. The referendum was more visible in the Cumhuriyet and the Zaman which were far from being neutral and have strong ties with political parties. This can be seen by the analysis of the content. In the content analyses, the Zaman attracted

attention with its wide coverage on the referendum issue when it was considered with its high circulation numbers. In addition, this point has shown that yes was the most visible option, which also reached the widest audiences during the referendum campaign period, when considering the high emphasis on yes voting in the Zaman.

It has been seen that the opinions on the referendum of notable personalities, such as opinion leaders, religious leaders, artists/actors or sportsmen were often mentioned in order to influence audiences. Those people were also covered to attract the attention of the audiences. Actors such as political parties and their leaders were the most emphasized elements in the media coverage. The Cumhuriyet created a picture with negative statements on anxiety, fear and disaster scenarios if the constitutional amendments were made. On the other hand, the Zaman announced the amendments as the beginning of better days for Turkey in terms of democracy, rights and freedoms. These two outlets gave place to the horse-race coverage as well. Apart from these, the Posta, the Hurriyet and the Radikal covered the referendum news with traditional reporting, but their attitudes were manifested in commentaries and columns. The media content can also be criticized because of the lack of coverage of the content of the constitutional amendments package, which disabled the informative function of the mass media. Information was provided by the media on the current developments about the referendum process instead of the content of the referendum.

Political parallelism feature of the Turkish media system would be explicitly seen in the 2010 referendum coverage of the media. The group of analysis on public opinion and media content showed that there was a strong relation between political choices and media choices in 2010 referendum voting. Media coverage is also affected by commercialization as it was seen in Hurriyet's coverage. As the leader of mainstream and the biggest catch-all daily, it could not stay neutral and took a stand against yes side promoted by the government that fined the its owner Dogan Holding. When thinking about how the voters make their political decisions and how the media affect their votes, we should consider how people decide from which media source to get information. If the voters based their media choices on their political and social ties, they would also prefer to follow the media outlet that represents their opinion. In this situation, the possible effects of the media would be lower. For instance, in respect of

our outlets, the connection between the AKP and the Gulen Movement is well known, and the Zaman is also reputed to be the media of the Gulen Movement as it was mentioned in the media landscape of the media in Turkey. As another example, there is a historical and the ideological connection between the Cumhuriyet and the CHP. It can be said that, during the 2010 referendum campaign period, parties tried to persuade voters and the media aligned with the parties tried to persuade them rather than give objective information.

As a final word, the media highly performed its agenda-setting role in the referendum campaign period. Also, framing and priming effects of the media would be seen clearly in this chapter with the analysis of the media content data. However, the media effects in the referendum process will be substantive and robust when the public opinion and the media content analysed together in chapter 7 on linking these two data analysis results.

## **Chapter 7: Public Opinion, Media and Voting**

In this thesis, I have examined the dynamics of voting behaviour in the 2010 constitutional referendum from the point of view of the media in Turkey. As the final analysis chapter of the thesis, I aim to elucidate the relationship between media preferences and voting preferences in the referendum. In other words, the analyses of the media content and the analyses of public opinion will be considered together to show how the use of different media outlets is or is not related to views and vote preferences in respect of the 2010 referendum. It would be useful to remember the previous chapters here in order to reconstitute all of the results together.

The media have the power to reach very large masses and they provide people with a one-way flow of information. If these two important features of the mass media are considered, it is almost impossible to deny their power and influence on audiences. It was seen in *Chapter 3*, on the theoretical framework, that the media could make salient certain elements of the debate surrounding the referendum. The mass media not only have an agenda-setting function, but also could highlight some issues more by framing and priming effects, as seen in the literature. The mass media could make the link between elite/party endorsements, make preferences stronger, or it could have no effect because people choose media sources based on their preferences and the party sentiments that they already have. Uses and gratifications theory supports this idea. It emphasizes the uses of the mass media and the active role of citizens in choosing the media that they prefer or feel represents their opinion. In short, people use the media to satisfy some of their needs, thus they can control their exposure to the information flow from the media. An older theory called 'minimal effects theory' also supports this assertion that people could limit the influence that the media has on them.

My analysis of the public opinion surveys presented basic and important findings about the features of voters in Turkey. In *Chapter 5* I focused on the analysis of these public opinion surveys, which showed the importance of the leaders as the most decisive elements of voting in Turkey. As stated in Chapter 5 (Table 5.9), in response to being asked their reasons for voting a particular way, party leaders was the most popular answer by 28% of the respondents. Although the question was asked without

specifying the type of voting such as general elections or referendums, respondents also indicated the role of the party leaders when answering the referendum questions. This showed that political actors play a crucial role in voting even in referendums, where the issue in question should have a priority in voting preferences, and politics (parties/leaders) should have less importance.

The 2010 constitutional referendum revealed that political actors impact on voters outside of general elections. The AKP has been very successful at the polls since the first general elections after its establishment in 2002 (34.3%). However, the AKP won a great victory in the 2007 general elections as the majority government (46.6%). The AKP also continued its success in the 2004 and 2009 municipal elections with 41.7% and 38.4% of votes respectively<sup>76</sup>. The AKP also campaigned for the yes vote and Recep Tayyip Erdogan in particular ran a serious campaign for the 2010 constitutional referendum. As seen in the same chapter, there was a strong relation between the vote choices and parties. According to the KONDA survey data, supporters mostly voted in parallel with their preferred parties' campaigns.

On the other hand, the analysis of the media content in Chapter 6 showed that people follow the media to get information about public affairs in Turkey. In *Chapter 6* I analysed the five newspapers' positions and points of view on the referendum. Reviewing the selected media outlets, I found that the media has had partisan and biased tendencies with regards to the referendum. The media outlets were chosen according to some factors, such as their circulation numbers and political positions for representing different aspects, and to reflect all segments of the society. Audiences tend to know the main features of television and newspaper media outlets, and they can predict what they will encounter with each media source. As we know from the survey data, people pay attention to the media and follow the news, especially on television. In other words, while they may follow a given television channel to get information, they would already know the political opinions and party ties that the channel represented, if there were any.

However, in Chapter 5, expectations about yes votes were significantly higher than the vote intention. According to the September survey data, when respondents were

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<sup>76</sup> These election results are obtained from the official web site of T.C.Yuksekk Secim Kurulu (Republic of Turkey Supreme Committee of Elections, [www.ysk.gov.tr](http://www.ysk.gov.tr), access date 24.11.2013)

asked what they would vote (vote intention), the results showed 57% for yes. Respondents were also asked what result they expected, they generally predicated the outcome to be yes by 70%. This expectation was higher than the referendum outcome which was 58% yes votes. As indicated in Chapter 6, the visibility of the referendum and especially the visibility of the yes campaign increased in the final run up to the election. In other words, the reason for the high expectation for yes votes was the framing effect of the media. The media coverage related to the yes side was extensive and people thought the referendum would result in an overwhelming yes vote; even if they were planning to vote no.

It is thought that the framing effect of considering the media content analysis results and the public opinion survey data analysis together will provide a very striking finding for this chapter. The power of the mass media is in providing audiences with information, it can also be said that people have formed an expectation for this from the media. This could have originated because of horse-race coverage and the actors mentioned in news items. As stated in Chapter 6, newspaper outlets gave a large amount of their content space to the opinion leaders, actors, singers and religious leaders, along with their views. When audiences frequently see those eminent people, members of associations and representatives of groups that would vote yes, they may start to think that the majority would vote yes. The importance of the media content comes forward with regards to managing perceptions. Framing the issues in terms of elites and parties could attract attention in Turkey where these cues have a significant role in affecting voting behaviour, and even the choice of media source.

Referendums framed around some main concepts such as democratization, a vote of confidence, or the state of law in media coverage, which was mentioned in the analysis of the media content. Those frames could also have affected audiences without political ties or people who might have thought about the constitutional amendments separately from their social or political ties. For that kind of audience, the neutrality of the media gains importance as a vital information source in referendum times. In order to be neutral, any mass media organ should be independent and this is also related to the media system of the country. In Turkey, over one hundred journalists have been jailed and commercialization in the media sector is high. This renders it hard to claim that the media is free.

The questions about the content of the referendum resulted in the most important indicators of the significance of the political parties. Almost half of the participants said they did not know the content of the referendum or they were not interested in the content. When they were asked for their source of information, they preferred to refer to their political parties. At this point, it can clearly be seen that the function of the media in providing information remained powerless. When I analysed the media content about the referendum in Chapter 6, I found that the media prioritised the political parties and public meetings of the party leaders over the content of the referendum. Within the frame of this research, 1266 news items were coded and only five of these (except supplements) concerned the content of the constitutional amendments package and the referendum. These results show that the political campaigning was decisive in the referendum and the AKP ran the most successful campaign in the referendum, as in the last three general elections.

### **7.1. Research Design**

In previous years, media studies used public opinion surveys or media content to measure the possible effects of the media in several areas, including voting. The techniques improved over time with the growth and development of studies on the media. Thus, analysing only the surveys or the media content became unsatisfactory as stated in the previous chapters. In Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, public opinion survey data about the 2010 constitutional referendum in Turkey and the content of the five selected media outlets were scrutinized. In this chapter, I aim to investigate the link between the public opinion survey data analysis results and the media content analysis findings. In order to see the impact of the media on voter behaviour in Turkey, this chapter seeks to reply the research questions below:

**RQ 1:** Did the media influence vote preferences in the 2010 constitutional referendum?

**RQ 2:** How does the influence of the media compare to other types of factors that might influence vote choice?

As can be seen in Chapter 5, only the dynamics of voting behaviour were examined and the chapter was dedicated to recognizing the voters in Turkey. In respect of Chapter 6, merely the media content of the selected outlet were analysed to understand their tendencies. In this chapter, the data on both of these points will be

analysed together. Public opinion survey data will be the primary source while the media content will be mentioned frequently. Political party, vote and newspaper preferences will be analysed and presented in tables and figures to strengthen our expectations about the connection between them and framing effects of the media.

The main expectation of this chapter concerns the impact of the media on the political decision making process. In other words, I seek to figure out if citizens' vote choices were affected by the mass media or their media preferences were determined by their social and political ties. In terms of the previous two empirical chapters, I expect to find that the political identification and ideology play an important role about media preferences and vote preferences.

**7.2. The Combination of Public Opinion and Media Content Data Results**

I started the analysis in this section by indicating the importance of the media in providing information in Turkey in respect of the 2010 referendum. Herein, I have inserted Table 7.1 again from the Chapter 6 on the media content, because it is more useful to remind the numbers again rather than simply referring to it. As can clearly be seen from the table below, television was the most important source of information about the constitutional amendments. As mentioned in the previous chapters, I could not access television news records for the media content analysis. Thus, if we consider the media including television and newspapers together, it can be seen that half of the respondents got their information about the constitutional amendments from the media during the 2010 referendum.

**Table 7.1: The source of information/opinion about these constitutional amendments**

|                            | Frequency | Percent |
|----------------------------|-----------|---------|
| I already know the content | 365       | 13,3    |
| My party and its leader    | 267       | 9,7     |
| Television                 | 1175      | 42,8    |
| Newspapers                 | 199       | 7,2     |
| Family elders              | 91        | 3,3     |
| No idea/information        | 642       | 23,4    |
| NA                         | 9         | 0,3     |
| Total (n)                  | 2748      | 100     |

**Source:** KONDA Survey Data, 2010

As a first step, I will analyse the newspaper preferences as I have the five newspaper outlets' content within the frame of my research. In Table 7.2, newspaper preferences are listed according to the survey data provided by KONDA in comparison with the nationwide circulation numbers. This information can also help us to see the reliability of the KONDA sample as one respect.

**Table 7.2: Newspaper Preference**

| <b>Newspapers</b> | <b>KONDA<br/>(June, 2010)</b> |       | <b>Circulation<br/>Numbers</b> |       |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|-------|--------------------------------|-------|
| Posta             | 361                           | 13.2% | 508.400                        | 11.3% |
| Hurriyet          | 269                           | 9.8%  | 440.696                        | 9.8%  |
| Zaman             | 235                           | 8.6%  | 789.623                        | 17.6% |
| Cumhuriyet        | 54                            | 2.0%  | 55.711                         | 1.2%  |
| Radikal           | 11                            | 0.4%  | 38.231                         | 0,8%  |
| NA                | 918                           | 33.5% |                                |       |
| TOTAL (n)         | 2739                          | 100   | 4.475.418                      | 100   |

**Notes:** Circulation numbers show 14 June 2010-20 June 2010 week due to weekly data can be reached from *tiraj.org* and *www.canlitv.com*<sup>77</sup>

As can be seen from Table 7.2, KONDA respondents' preferences largely reflect the general circulation numbers except for the ZAMAN. The reason for this situation seems to be the subscription system of the Zaman. The Zaman has an extensive annual subscription system with reasonable fees and payment methods, unlike other outlets<sup>78</sup>. Thus, the Zaman always has a particular reader. On the other hand, it is commonly claimed that the Zaman has also been delivered freely without subscription, and this is the reason for its high circulation numbers. In other words, according to claims which cannot be proved, people do not need to pay for Zaman. Zaman has a financial support from the '*cemaat*' (refers to conservative and islamist Gulen

<sup>77</sup> <http://www.canlitv.com/rating/bilgi.php?tur=gazete&tarih=2010-06-14>, access date 17. 10.2014

<sup>78</sup> The subscription fees and payment methods can be reached via the official website of Zaman; [www.zaman.com.tr/gundem\\_abone-olmak-icin-tiklayin\\_1109532.html](http://www.zaman.com.tr/gundem_abone-olmak-icin-tiklayin_1109532.html)

movement) and regularly publish and delivered to the post boxes of houses. The results in KONDA also showed the proportion of Zaman readers were very low among respondents in comparison with general population. This point gains importance when the extensive coverage and the sharp tone of Zaman are considered in terms of the reliability of this research.

Although the Posta and the Hurriyet were the most popular newspapers according to the survey respondents, they had the least coverage of the referendum issue, as can be seen in Chapter 4, Table 4.1. This situation attracts attention because the respondents indicated the media as their main source of information and their most widely preferred newspapers had the least amount of coverage of the referendum. In addition, these newspapers, especially the Posta, stayed relatively neutral during the referendum campaign period. This point is relevant to the main expectations of the thesis regarding the relation between media preferences and vote choices again.

Herein, media preferences and vote intention of the respondents will be analysed together in the Table 7.3 below:

**Table 7.3: Newspaper Preferences & Vote Preferences in the Referendum**

|            | YES   | NO    | Not<br>Decided<br>Yet | No Idea | NA   | TOTAL(n) |
|------------|-------|-------|-----------------------|---------|------|----------|
| Cumhuriyet | 7.4%  | 79.5% | 5.5%                  | 7.4%    | 0    | 54       |
| Hurriyet   | 21.5% | 43.8% | 18.2%                 | 15.2%   | 1.1% | 269      |
| Posta      | 21.8% | 35.4% | 16%                   | 26%     | 0.5% | 361      |
| Radikal    | 0     | 63.6% | 18.1%                 | 18.1%   | 0    | 11       |
| Zaman      | 68%   | 8%    | 8.9%                  | 14.8%   | 0    | 235      |
| TOTAL (n)  | 890   | 780   | 412                   | 643     | 13   | 2739     |

**Note:** KONDA Survey Data, 2010

When the questions upon the vote preferences and the newspaper preferences of the respondents were analysed together, at first glance, we see that the Cumhuriyet readers intended to vote *no*, while the Zaman readers preferred to say *yes* in the referendum. In other words, Cumhuriyet and Zaman readers were quite clear about their vote choices. This situation can be explained with the framing effects of the media as their referendum coverage was explicitly analysed in the Chapter 6.

In Table 7.3, most of the *not decided yet* responses were from those who claimed that the tabloid Posta or the mainstream Hurriyet were their preferred outlets. The *Not decided yet* option may mean that these respondents were still considering the campaigns and could change their choices. Thus, it can be said that people who pay attention to campaigns and who had *no idea*, were mostly the Posta readers. These respondents may have had no ideology or no rigid political allegiances as it can be claimed by looking their newspaper choice, because a person who seeks for political information does not choose Posta as a tabloid. The reason for this could be the type of reporting of the Posta, and its relatively neutral stance. This may have been preferable for the people who required impartial information about the referendum. On the other hand, it could be claimed that politically disinterested people preferred to read tabloids, and did not look for political information. However, readers of Posta and Hurriyet represent the vast majority of respondents.

The public opinion surveys also asked participants their political party preferences. This helps to identify which party supporters prefer to read which newspaper. Table 7.4 below shows that supporters of the CHP generally preferred to read the Cumhuriyet, with 88.8%, and the majority of the Hurriyet readers were also supporters of the CHP, with 42%. One of the most interesting points in this table is the high number of CHP supporters among readers of the Radikal. This group of people are expected to represent the leftist and libertarian part of the CHP who claim that there is no alternative for them except the CHP. Yet, it is also necessary to note that there were only 11 respondents which is a very low proportion that can be deceptive.

**Table 7.4: Newspaper preference & Party preference**

| <b>JUNE<br/>2010</b> | AKP   | CHP   | MHP   | BDP  | Total (n) |
|----------------------|-------|-------|-------|------|-----------|
| Cumhuriyet           | 3.7%  | 88.8% | 1.8%  | 1.8% | 54        |
| Hurriyet             | 17.4% | 42%   | 11.8% | 1.8% | 269       |
| Posta                | 29%   | 29.3% | 14.4% | 2.2% | 361       |
| Radikal              | 9%    | 54.5% | 0     | 9%   | 11        |
| Zaman                | 79.1% | 2.5%  | 2.9%  | 0    | 235       |
| TOTAL (n)            | 1081  | 621   | 234   | 131  | 2739      |

**Source:** KONDA Survey Data, 2010

The table also shows that supporters of the AKP mostly preferred to read the pro-Yes Zaman with 79.1%, and almost all of the Cumhuriyet readers were CHP supporters. In respect of the Posta readers, the amount of AKP and CHP supporters was almost equal. Also, the Posta has the most BDP supporter readers among all of the outlets. In short, it can be said that the Posta has a wide range of readers from different political camps and represents a kind of catch-all media. Yet, also the majority supports the AKP and the CHP among Posta readers, as these are the two major political parties in Turkey. This table indicated that again, there is a strong relation between media preferences and party preferences which reveals the political parallelism in the media in Turkey in parallel with the expectations of this research.

On the other hand, as expected there should be correlation between party preferences, media preferences and vote intention in the light of previous chapters' results. It is expected that the party preference have an influence both on their vote decisions and media preferences. At this point, it would be useful to analyse the newspaper, political party and vote choices of the respondents in a three-way table. The results are represented in the Table 7.5 below:

**Table 7.5: Party & Newspaper & Vote Preference**

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|                   |            | <b>AKP</b> | <b>CHP</b> | <b>MHP</b> | <b>BDP</b> |
|-------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| <b>ZAMAN</b>      | %Yes votes | 76.3       | 16.7       | 42.9       | 0          |
|                   | %No votes  | 3.8        | 83.3       | 42.9       | 0          |
| <b>RADIKAL</b>    | %Yes votes | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          |
|                   | %No votes  | 0          | 83.3       | 0          | 100        |
| <b>POSTA</b>      | %Yes votes | 55.2       | 8.5        | 7.7        | 0          |
|                   | %No votes  | 9.5        | 66         | 51.9       | 25         |
| <b>HURRIYET</b>   | %Yes votes | 70.2       | 7.1        | 9.4        | 60         |
|                   | %No votes  | 2.1        | 69         | 53.1       | 20         |
| <b>CUMHURIYET</b> | %Yes votes | 100        | 2.1        | 0          | 0          |
|                   | %No votes  | 0          | 85.4       | 100        | 0          |

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**Source:** KONDA Survey Data, 2010

As can be seen in Table 7.5, there was a very limited number of AKP supporters who read the Cumhuriyet and very few CHP supporters reading the Zaman. 76.3% of people who read the Zaman and supported the AKP intended to vote yes. By comparison, of the Zaman readers who also supported the CHP only 16.7% intended to vote yes. This picture means that party support played a more important role in voter choice than newspapers. This suggests that even if an AKP supporter were to follow the Cumhuriyet, or a CHP supporter were to read the Zaman, she or he would filter the information according to her or his political identity, ideology and background. They would only take a specific part of the information she or he needed, as claimed in the uses and gratification theory and the minimal effects theory. If we consider the Posta to be an objective outlet, we see that the AKP supporters still intended to vote yes and the CHP supporters preferred to say no. Thus, it can be said that the party is determinative. In brief, in respect of the Turkish 2010 referendum, people who preferred a particular party would vote according to party sentiments rather than because of persuasive newspaper articles. The content analysis showed that particular newspapers did take particular stands in the referendum, and reflected the partisan bias of the newspapers.

Despite the low circulation numbers, newspapers have been held as the main media outlets in this study. However, television can be added to the analysis in this last stage because there are questions on television channels in the surveys. Also, the ownership of the televisions and newspapers are generally in the hands of same groups as it was mentioned in the landscape of the media in Turkey. This high concentration of the media caused the similar coverage of the different outlets of the same groups. Thus, the television channels can be evaluated in the frame of their group’s newspapers in respect of their political stances.

At the beginning of the research, four television channels would have been selected as mentioned in the previous chapters. Some basic information about the general structure of these channels was also provided in Chapter 4 (on research design) which may have an influence on their coverage. In respect of television, the focus of interest is the TRT for this study, as the public broadcaster which does not belong to any private company. A high number of TRT 1 audiences (38.9%) intended to vote yes, while those who intended to vote no were only 20.4%. As was mentioned in the content analysis chapter, TRT 1 was accused of representing pro AKP coverage and pro yes broadcasting. Also it was put on notice from the YSK. When the vote intention of TRT 1 audiences is analysed, it can be seen that the number of people intending to vote yes was almost two times more than those who intended to vote no. This result may support the claim about that the TRT’s referendum coverage was biased but, it is very hard to prove that because of the lack of TRT content data.

**Table 7.6: TV Preferences & Vote Intention**

|                            | Kanal D | Samanyolu TV | TRT 1 | NTV   |
|----------------------------|---------|--------------|-------|-------|
| <b>YES</b>                 | 19.5%   | 61.2%        | 38.9% | 27.5% |
| <b>NO</b>                  | 32.7%   | 5.3%         | 20.4% | 42%   |
| <b>NO IDEA/NOT DECIDED</b> | 47.2%   | 33.4%        | 40.7% | 29.8% |
| <b>NA</b>                  | 0.6%    | 0.3%         | 0     | 0.7%  |

Source: KONDA Survey Data, 2010

The television channel results about Kanal D and Samanyolu TV were in parallel with my expectations. 61.2% of the Samanyolu's audiences intended to vote yes like the Zaman readers and the AKP supporters. Kanal D, the Hurriyet and the Posta belong to the same media conglomerate Dogan Holding, and they share similar publication policies and similar attitudes in their coverage of political issues. Kanal D audiences intended to vote no by 32.7%, which is similar to the Hurriyet readers. In addition, it can be seen that almost half of the Kanal D audiences, 47.2%, had no idea about the referendum or they had not yet decided their votes. The least *no idea/not decided* options, with 29.8%, belonged to NTV audiences, one of the most important and biggest news channels in Turkey, alongside CNN Turk. Thus, it can be claimed that people who were interested in information followed news channels rather than mainstream channels and had more ideas about their votes. Samanyolu, as a conservative Islamist television broadcaster, had pro AKP coverage in that period and the influence of the Gulen Movement was also very clear in its coverage.

The same analysis in the Table 7.5 is also made in terms of television preferences rather than newspapers in the Table 7.7. It shows the results from the analysis of television preferences by party and vote preference. The results are very similar to the newspaper preferences analysis as can be seen below:

**Table 7.7: TV & Party & Vote**

|                  |            | <b>AKP</b> | <b>CHP</b> | <b>MHP</b> | <b>BDP</b> |
|------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| <b>KANAL D</b>   | %Yes votes | 44.4       | 7.7        | 7.3        | 20.0       |
|                  | %No votes  | 6.2        | 64.1       | 47.3       | 5.0        |
| <b>SAMANYOLU</b> | %Yes votes | 68.9       | 0          | 16.7       | 75         |
|                  | %No votes  | 2.8        | 100        | 50         | 0          |
| <b>TRT 1</b>     | %Yes votes | 67.3       | 9.7        | 21.1       | 0          |
|                  | %No votes  | 8.2        | 61.3       | 31.6       | 0          |
| <b>NTV</b>       | %Yes votes | 80.6       | 3.9        | 12.5       | 23.1       |
|                  | %No votes  | 3.2        | 72.5       | 62.5       | 38.5       |

**Source:** KONDA Survey Date, 2010

It is seen from the table, even a CHP supporter or an AKP supporter who preferred to watch TRT 1, he/she intended to vote in parallel with his or her party. From this point of view, it can be said that even if the referendum coverage of the TRT was pro-yes, it did not affect the CHP supporters' ideas to a large extent. This is a strong indicator for our hypothesis about that the party is more important than the media in voting decisions in Turkey. The other distinctive point in Table 7.7 is that none of the BDP supporters followed TRT 1 according to the KONDA survey respondents. Although, the BDP invited its supporters to boycott the referendum, Kanal D and Samanyolu TV audiences among the BDP supporters intended to vote *yes*, while the NTV followers mostly intended to vote *no*. Thus, it can be said that these BDP supporters may be paid attention to the media and campaigns to decide their votes, and were affected by the media accordingly who did not intend to boycott the referendum.

Finally, in order to reply to the second research question of this chapter, I applied a logistical regression analysis to control for all possible explanations at the same time and to see whether newspaper reading still had an effect when the partisan preferences were taken into account, and which had a stronger influence. I run three separate models; 1.Party vote 2.Media and 3.Demographics. The dependent variable is dichotomous in this model, as newspaper preference and party support have been included together as two dependent variables. I tried to uncover how the *yes* votes versus *no*, *no answer* and *no idea* differs from the *yes* versus only *no* preferences.

As can be seen in Table 7.8, some basic socio-demographics were held constant as these might influence party support. Age, gender, education, ethnicity and religion have been included in the model. As it was discussed in the chapter 5, there is a connection between education level and voting reasons/vote intention in Turkey. Additionally, the similar connections can be seen in respect of the level of religiosity. These demographics play roles in political party and vote preferences of citizens in case of Turkey. Also, ethnicity has an importance in respect of Kurdish issue when the pro Kurdish BDP considered. All of these indicators are added to this multiple model because of their effects on political preferences. Recoding for each variable as;

for ages; between (18-28)=1, (29-43)=2 and (44 and above)= 3

for gender; 0=male 1=female into female

for education; 1=under high school 2=high school 3=university and higher degrees

for ethnicity; turkish is the residual category and dummy variables are coded as 1=arab 0=otherwise 1=kurdish 0=otherwise

for religiosity; 1=religious 0= not religious

The coding of the variable for party preference and newspaper reading residual/comparison categories created. As the main political parties, AKP, CHP, MHP and BDP coded for the model and 'othervote' category created that comprised of other party preferences and no preferences. Similarly, except selected media outlets Cumhuriyet, Zaman, Posta, Radikal and Hurriyet, no\_news residual category created for other newspapers non-readers. These categories are also dropped from the model.

**Table 7.8:** Voting on Referendum: Media, Party Support and Demographics

|                    | <b>June 2010</b>                             |        |    |                                 |         |
|--------------------|--|--------|----|---------------------------------|---------|
|                    | All Respondents (1=yes, 2=no and all others) |        |    | Yes = 1, No= 0 (drop NA, other) |         |
|                    | Coef   | Exp(B) |    | Coef                            | Exp(B)  |
| AKP Intended Vote  | 2.51<br>(0.19)                               | 12.34  | ** | 2.12<br>(0.13)                  | 8.32 ** |
| CHP Intended Vote  | -1.74<br>(0.21)                              | 0.18   | ** | -0.87<br>(0.19)                 | 0.42 ** |
| MHP Intended Vote  | -1.13<br>(0.25)                              | 0.32   | ** | -0.48<br>(0.23)                 | 0.62 *  |
| BDP Intended Vote  | -0.15<br>(0.38)                              | 0.86   |    | 0.30<br>(0.28)                  | 1.36    |
| Cumhuriyet Readers | -0.94<br>(0.64)                              | 0.39   |    | -0.72<br>(0.58)                 | 0.49    |
| Zaman Readers      | 1.07<br>(0.31)                               | 2.91   | ** | 0.71<br>(0.17)                  | 2.03 ** |
| Posta Readers      | -0.39<br>(0.23)                              | 0.68   |    | -0.26<br>(0.16)                 | 0.77    |
| Radikal Readers    | -19.92<br>(14417.73)                         | 0.00   |    | -19.63<br>(11499.10)            | 0.00    |
| Hurriyet Readers   | -0.06<br>(0.23)                              | 0.94   |    | -0.04<br>(0.08)                 | 1.05    |
| Age                | 0.10   | 1.10   |    | 0.07                            | 1.09    |

|              |        |      |        |        |
|--------------|--------|------|--------|--------|
|              | (0.10) |      | (0.10) |        |
| Female       | 0.00   | 1.00 | 0.81   | 2.25** |
|              | (0.15) |      | (0.10) |        |
| Education    | -0.06  | 0.94 | 0.17   | 1.18*  |
|              | (0.11) |      | (0.08) |        |
| Kurdish      | -0.67  | 1.95 | 0.06   | 1.06   |
|              | (0.27) |      | (0.16) |        |
| Arab         | 0.24   | 1.27 | -0.41  | 0.66   |
|              | (0.39) |      | (0.28) |        |
| Religious    | 0.14   | 1.16 | 0.20   | 1.23*  |
|              | (0.16) |      | (0.12) |        |
| Constant     | -0.54  | 0.58 | -2.61  | 0.07   |
|              | 0.35   |      | 0.26   |        |
| Cox-Snell R2 | 0.46   |      | 0.28   |        |
| N            | 2739   |      | 1670   |        |

Note: \*p < .05 \*\*p < .01

In Table 7.8, comparing the effects of party support to readership of the newspapers to social indicators, it can be said that party preference was a very strong predictor in the 2010 referendum voting and AKP support matters. As can be seen in the table, reading the Zaman still makes a difference among newspapers. As mentioned in the content analysis, the pro yes Zaman had an informative coverage in comparison to other newspaper outlets, which might have lead readers to vote yes or the excess of yes intended respondents among Zaman readers may caused this. Indeed, the AKP intended voters were more likely to vote yes and the Zaman readers were almost twice as likely to vote yes, even when controlling for party preference. It can be seen from the table that supporting the AKP had a positive impact on yes voting. However, it can be claimed that newspaper reading still makes a significant contribution to voter choice. In terms of demographics as it was analysed before religiosity and education level can be considered notable when the ethnicity does not have a remarkable effect. On the other hand, it should be noted that ethnicity plays an important role in terms of BDP because it is known as a Kurdish party and based on Kurdish population's votes. Additionally, almost all boycotters were Kurdish and BDP supporters in the referendum. Besides, in the table, the unusual results on the Radikal derived from the limited number of readers, as 11 respondents.

### **7.3. Concluding Remarks**

In this chapter, I tried to analyse the public opinion data and media content data together by comparing party preferences with media preferences and the vote intention. Also, I interpreted these new analysis results in the light of public opinion survey analyses results that obtained from the Chapter 5 and the media content analyses results from the Chapter 6.

When I scrutinized the media content, I found that the media had an extensive coverage of the referendum issue, and that people followed the media to get information. In Turkey, the media actually perform all its agenda-setting, framing and priming effects besides providing flow of information. Also, in the referendum, the tone of the any media outlet showed parallelism the vote intention of audiences who follow this outlet. As this can be explained with the influence of the media, it is also crucial to look at the other dynamics of voting as well. This is because when the media preferences were analysed with the party preferences, it was seen that the vote intention was in the same direction with the political party that the audience supports, if the tone of the media coverage of the outlet was different from the party's aspect.

Therefore, analyses results showed that party ties were very important for voters in Turkey and it can be claimed that even if people paid attention to the media to get information, they also pay attention to their political party support in their media choices along with the other individual features such as ideology, education or religiosity. The media outlets had their own political stances and strong ties with politics and audiences were already aware of the political leanings of their coverage. In other words, when they decided to buy a newspaper, they could more or less predict the tone of the coverage. In general, it can be said that, directly or indirectly, the parties were the most important factors while the voters making their decisions in the 2010 referendum.

## **Chapter 8: Conclusion**

In this thesis I have explored the role of the media in the 2010 constitutional referendum, which was a very important junction for the democratization journey of Turkey. In this chapter, the main key findings will be presented together to help to answer the main research question of the thesis which is: 'Did the media affect the votes in the 2010 constitutional referendum?' However, the chapters included some sub-questions which I will not address here, but I will use their answers that I found in the analyses of the data. In this respect, the outcomes obtained from each chapter will be tried to put together as pieces of a puzzle and explained alongside the literature, historical development of the Turkish media and Turkey's road to democracy.

This thesis is structurally based on two fundamental datasets: Media content data and public opinion survey data were employed together in cooperation. This chapter is also based on the analysis results of these data; the dynamics of voting and voter behaviour in Turkey; and on the media coverage, the tone of the media coverage on the referendum, media exposure and the media content with the impact of Turkish media system. In the final section, I will state some concluding remarks, including the limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies.

### **The Power of the Media on Forming Public Opinion in Turkey**

In the most general sense, Turkey can be defined as a young democracy. Turkey was established after the Ottoman Empire which ruled a large geographical space for centuries. After a long period of domination by the empire, it has been hard for Turkish society to get used to new concepts such as democracy, republic, secularism, modernism, freedom and independence. These concepts are still being discussed in Turkey and it can be said that even the process of adaptation, which began with the establishment of the republic, is still incomplete.

The abrupt and sharp transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey affected the politics, economics and society in many aspects. Turkey has always been wedged between Islam and secularism, west and east, modernization and tradition. The aim of the Atatürk was to bring Turkey to the 'level of contemporary civilization' as mentioned in the *Nutuk* (Speech) (1927). This modernization project

has required perpetual change, development and transformation in all areas. Therefore, Turkey resorted to the European Union as a part of its modernisation and democratization project. The process of EU membership (including the application to the European Economic Community) has been in progress for more than 50 years, and there have been several regulations made to enable membership acceptance. The constitutional amendments package which was submitted to vote in the 2010 referendum, can be shown as the most important and comprehensive development in this journey. The 2010 constitutional referendum passed with 58 percent 'Yes' votes, and was one of the most controversial voting sessions in Turkish history.

In general, referendums are considered as second order election in opposition to general elections as first order elections. In the 2010 referendum, the media treat it as a first order election contrary to general opinion. Thus, the role of the media in the 2010 has been an attention grabbing topic which a rare research area for Turkey. This research put the media content and the public opinion surveys together to search the role of the media. For this aim, the thesis provided an extensive overview of the historical development of the media in Turkey and revealed the main characteristics of the media system in detail. This is because the media coverage cannot make sense without having information about the media system.

At first sight, political parallelism, high concentration and state control attract attention as the main characteristics of the media system in Turkey. These features not only restricted the freedom of the media but also damaged the objectivity and the reliability of the media as well. In recent times, especially the freedom of the media is very controversial in Turkey. Turkey is in the lower ranks in world lists regarding press freedom (148 out of 179 countries)<sup>79</sup> because of some reasons such as prosecution, the conviction of many dissenting columnists, police raids, closure of websites, fines and the seizure of newspapers and periodicals which largely originated from covering critical issues that the government does not want to be covered by the media or covering in a different manner than the political powers desired.

In democratic media systems it is important to ensure that political information provided by the mass media serves to restrict instead of enlarge governmental

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<sup>79</sup> World Press Freedom Index 2011-2012, access date 25.02.2012

power, and freedom of expression and freedom of the press are vital rights that should be protected by the constitution. There have been developments to enlarge these rights in recent years with the influence of the EU membership process. Despite the improvements, freedom and independence of the media constitutes a serious problem mainly due to legal restrictions and the structural defects of the media sector. And, according to the MTM report, 76% of respondents said the media is partitioned and only 2% said that the Turkish media is objective (2011).

On the other hand, self-censorship is another problem of the media in Turkey which has been derived from the weakness of the media against the government. The tax penalty that the Dogan Group was exposed in 2009 was an example of the indirect control over the media. This is because, after the 1980s, within the economic liberalisation process, huge media conglomerates started to dominate the media sector and today the media ownership is still largely on the hands of these multi sectorial companies which require building strong relations with government due to financial concerns.

All of these problems and developments of the media system also affected the media content especially on political issues. The biased/partisan coverage of the media during the 2010 referendum campaign period was revealed in the Chapter 6. The content analysis of the media showed that the content of each outlet was shaped with regard to the political connections or economic concerns. The media have been a very important tool for political powers since the establishment period of Turkey, and the two have always had to be intertwined. The impact of politics was mostly perceived in terms of the Zaman and the Cumhuriyet which were almost served as the official papers of the AKP and the CHP during the referendum campaign period. The content analysis of the media content showed that the media coverage was biased and far away from being objective. Also, very limited number of items mentioned the content of the amendments that would be voted in the referendum.

The analysis of the media coverage has been also shown the ability of the mass media on agenda setting; framing and priming. The referendum was 5th place among the most frequently mentioned 15 issues in the Turkish media in August 2010 (MTM 2011) and the referendum did not fall in the agenda during the four months campaign period. Yet, the media framed the referendum issue largely in terms of discussions of

political parties and leaders; also media frames were in the same direction with the parties frames that they support. Thus, it can be said that people faced with the absence of information about the content of the referendum because the media covered the political campaigning rather than the amendments. Even if voters get information from the media about the referendum, this information was most probably biased. Therefore, the lack of information lead voter to apply other cues such as parties, elites or heuristics.

The dynamics of voting are also an important part of the analysis of the media effects. In order to understand the effects of the media on voters' decisions, it is also important to recognize the audiences that the media appeal to. In decision making process, there can be many factors that affect vote choice, such as economic and social conditions. As emphasized several times in this study, and as indicated by Popkin, ideology, heuristics and shortcuts such as party identification are very important factors for voting decisions (1994). Parties are important as a shortcut because, in general, people choose the closest party to their values and use information provided by the party. In other words, they do not need to put in effort to get information from other sources such as the media. They rely on the party, and vote in a particular direction under its guidance. As Hobolt has stated voters use shortcuts and cues, and can make reasoned choices in this way with very limited information (2009: 33). In this study, as also the analysis of the KONDA data demonstrated that political parties and leaders are very important factors in voting decisions in Turkey.

The analysis of the public opinion survey data showed that the leader and ideology are the most popular reasons for voting in Turkey, and political parties followed them. Herein, it is necessary to note the 'leader party' feature of the AKP. This is important because the AKP is the only party that could succeed in coming to power alone since the 1950s, and has remained in power for the longest period. The AKP's leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan is identified with the AKP, and supporters of the AKP mostly say they support the AKP because of his 'charismatic authority'. In brief, the leader answer can be interpreted as the party answer for this time period in Turkey.

The AKP ran an intense campaign for yes voting and also published a handbook on the referendum called '12 Eylül'de Referanduma Evet' (Yes in the Referendum on

12<sup>th</sup> September). Individual rights and freedoms, jurisdiction, economics and work life are claimed to be developed by these amendments in the handbook that also main contents of the democratization frame. One of the most important arguments of the AKP for the constitutional amendments was the trial of those responsible for the 12<sup>th</sup> September 1980 military coup. On the contrary the CHP and the MHP published 'Neden Hayir?' (Why you should say 'NO'?), and claimed that the AKP were trying to get a vote of confidence to establish a civilian dictatorship as the second main frame of the referendum in this study.

The analysis of public opinion showed that AKP supporters defend the same opinion with their party, intended to vote for yes and preferred to follow the media presenting the referendum in the democratization frame. Also, the majority of CHP and MHP supporters intended to vote for no as suggested by their parties while BDP supporters boycotted the referendum as expected.

However, shortcuts like party identification can be replaced by other factors such as information or elite cues in referendum voting. This is because in referendum voting the political, economic and legal issues are presented as special information. According to Matsusaka (2003) decision-making power is in uninformed people's hands during referendums. Lack of information leads people to keep a close watch on the mass media during referendum times and they form their opinions based on information accessed via the mass media. The data results showed that 42.8 percent of respondents got information about the constitutional amendments from television. But, it can be also said that they form their opinion towards politics from television content as it is thought that the media are under the impact of political powers in Turkey. In respect of elite cues, people can learn the opinions of opinion leaders from the media as well. According to the MTM report, 68% of opinion leaders avoided announcing their votes while 32% of them explained their votes. The majority of the explained votes of opinion leaders were for 'yes' (66%) which increased the visibility of yes voting.

The AKP's long lasting success in general elections demonstrates that voters believe and trust the AKP. The analysis showed that this relation was also reflected in the referendum. This trust in the AKP might have originated in its Islamist and

conservative structure. This is because the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the republic brought secularism which a large part of the society perceived as a kind of backsliding or removal of religion. In other words, there is a new idea that the AKP protects their religious values. From this point, it can be said that religion is also an important motivation for voting. According to the World Values Survey results in 2011, 68 percent of respondents defined themselves as very religious. This proportion increased to 71 percent in the KONDA survey data. Also, the high proportion of AKP supporters who identified themselves as religious supported the expectation about the strong role of the religion on voters, at least in terms of their political party preferences in Turkey.

Political campaigning played a very striking role during the 2010 referendum in Turkey. The referendum results proved the success of the yes campaign. Also voters found the ruling party the AKP's campaign with 59% proportion when they were asked 'Which political party had carried out the most successful political communication campaign during the 2010 referendum? Only 25% of the respondents said the campaign of the main opposition party the CHP was the most successful (MTM 2011). Campaigns are a very important and indivisible part of voting. However, they have a special significance in referendums, campaigns and in connection with information. Campaigns are generally run by political parties and these campaigns reach the citizens via the mass media. Here, both the reliability of the parties' campaigns and the media come into question. As De Vreese has stated, political parties can provide 'ambiguous' information cues in a referendum campaign in opposition to general elections, where information plays a crucial role in voting on an issue that requires special information (2007: 1). In this circumstance, the information provided by the media becomes more important again. For the media to be well-functioning, it should be nonpartisan, unbiased and neutral in order to provide accurate information to the audiences/readers. And to have these features the media should be free.

I would like to summarize all of my analyses, before I end the thesis. As Kalaycioglu stated with regards to the referendum process, the parliamentary politics in Turkey was 'deeply divided, polarised, intensely confrontational, and marked by mutual hatred and distrust' (2011: 4). The referendum campaign process was tough for

Turkey, with the AKP's insistent and relentless stance which might be because of coming to power alone three times since 2002. This polarised political atmosphere was reflected in the referendum process as partisanship, even though it is supposed to be a direct non-partisan type of election. Under these circumstances, the media could not be expected to stay neutral, unbiased or nonpartisan. The media was also partisan and biased during the referendum campaign as the media content analysis showed us. Despite this, the media performed all its expected effects such as agenda-setting, framing and priming. Although, the media used all of its power to influence public opinion and tell us what to think about, we saw that voters have much stronger factors influencing their votes.

This research showed that the voters keep a close watch on the media to get information but they follow it with a critical perspective on political issues. People do not trust the media and filter the information they get from it. Actually, they filter the media rather than filter the information. In other words, they choose the media according to their personal values, ideology, social and political ties and they know what kind of content they will encounter when they follow any media outlet. To sum up, the media is a very important tool for providing political information but, voters use the media in line with their needs and filter this information according to their own cues. Finally, it can be said that even its intense interest on the referendum, the media had a limited impact on the 2010 constitutional referendum results.

### **Concluding Remarks: Contribution, Limitation, Suggestions for Future Studies**

This thesis handled the role of the media in voting behaviour in Turkey, in a versatile way. In this study, the analysis of public opinion and the media content were employed in cooperation with the support of the literature on media systems and referendums. In respect of Turkey, these kinds of studies are too seldom link the media with public opinion beyond the context of the United States and Western Europe. Analysis of the referendum voting in this extensive way can also be specified as a differential feature of this thesis. Also, Turkey represents a very interesting context for the analysis of media effects in referendums as a developing democracy and as a 'bridge' between East and West. One of the strongest contributions of this thesis is the coding of 1266 news items which represent a huge number for the

analysis of the media content in Turkey. This thesis is expected to make a useful contribution to the literature for media studies in Turkey.

During the research period, I have been faced with several limitations as shortly mentioned in the earlier parts. At first step, the limited literatures on Turkish media system and on the media landscape were formidable. For these reasons, the resources in the literature on the media in Turkey regrettably remained limited contrary to I desire. The other significant limitation was the archive system and reaching the data. There is no online newspaper archive in Turkey and working with hardcopies is very time-consuming. In respect of television - which would have a great importance for this study, it is very hard to reach the records. In connection with this, using the newspapers as media outlets despite low circulation numbers is another limitation of this study.

For future studies, firstly I plan to carry out a similar analysis of the media effects by comparing general elections and referendums in order to explore the different dynamics between different voting forms in Turkey. Also, as another comparative study, the role of the media in Turkey can be analysed in comparison with any selected Western democracy. Finally, I hope to prepare an extensive study on Turkish media systems which has been identified as a deficiency during this research.

## **APPENDIX I:**

### **Articles Subject to Amend in the 2010 Referendum**

The provisional 15 that entirely removed from the constitution was as below<sup>80</sup>;

No allegation of criminal, financial or legal responsibility shall be made, nor shall an application be filed with a court for this purpose in respect of any decisions or measures whatsoever taken by: the Council of National Security formed under Act No. 2356 which will have exercised legislative and executive power on behalf of the Turkish Nation from 12 September 1980 to the date of the formation of the Bureau of the Turkish Grand National Assembly which is to convene following the first general elections; the governments formed during the term of office of the Council, or the Consultative Assembly which has exercised its functions under Act No. 2485 on the Constituent Assembly. The provisions of the above paragraphs shall also apply in respect of persons who have taken decisions and adopted or implemented measures as part of the implementation of such decisions and measures by the administration or by the competent organs, authorities and officials.

Provisional article 18 and 19 were added to the constitution<sup>81</sup>:

Provisional 18: The current substitute members of the Constitutional Court shall acquire the status of regular members on the date of entry into force of this Law. Within thirty days of the date of entry into force of this Law, the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) shall elect one member each from among three candidates nominated by the plenary assembly of the Court of Auditors and the heads of Bar Associations. In order to nominate candidates for the membership elections to be held by the TGNA: a) The President of the Court of Auditors shall announce the beginning of the application process for candidacy within five days of the date of entry into force of this law. Candidates shall apply to the Presidency within five days following the final

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<sup>80</sup>[http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/anayasa/anayasa\\_2011.pdf](http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/anayasa/anayasa_2011.pdf)

<sup>81</sup>[http://www.abgs.gov.tr/files/Bas%C4%B1nMusavirlik/haberler/constituional\\_amendments.pdf](http://www.abgs.gov.tr/files/Bas%C4%B1nMusavirlik/haberler/constituional_amendments.pdf)

date of the announcement. The plenary assembly of the Court of Auditors shall hold elections within five days following the final date of application. The three candidates obtaining the greatest number of votes shall be nominated in these elections in which each member of the Court of Auditors may vote.

b) The Head of the Turkish Union of Bar Associations shall announce the beginning of the application process for candidacy within five days of the date of entry into force of this law. Candidates shall apply to the Turkish Union of Bar Associations within five days following the date of announcement. The election shall be held at the place and time indicated in the announcement of the Turkish Union of Bar Association within five days following the final date of application by the heads of the Bar Associations. The three candidates obtaining the greatest number of votes shall be nominated in these elections in which each member of the Turkish Union of Bar Associations may vote.

c) The names of those nominated through the elections held in accordance with subparagraphs (a) and (b) shall be notified to the Presidency of the TGNA by the Presidency of the Court of Auditors and of the Turkish Union of Bar Associations on the day following the elections.

d) Elections shall be held at the TGNA within ten days of the notification made in accordance with paragraph (c). In each election held for each vacant position, a two-thirds majority of component members in the first ballot and the absolute majority of component members of in the second ballot shall be required; if the absolute majority cannot be attained in the second ballot, a third ballot shall be held between two candidates obtaining the greatest number of votes in the second ballot; the candidate who obtains the greatest number of votes in the third ballot shall be elected.

Following the vacancy of the positions allocated to the High Court of Appeals and the Council of State, the President of the Republic shall choose one member each from among three candidates to be nominated for each vacant position by the Council of Higher Education from among academicians from the fields of law, economics and political sciences who are not members of the Council of Higher Education.

The current members, as well as substitute members elected from the quotas allocated to institutions which have nominated members for the Constitutional Court shall be taken into consideration in the final election.

The status of those who have been appointed to certain posts in the Constitutional Court shall continue until the end of their term of office. Those who are members on the date of entry into force of this Law shall continue in their post until the statutory age limit. Necessary legal arrangements on individual applications shall be completed within two years. Individual applications shall be accepted as from the date of the entry into force of the implementing law.

Provisional 19: The members of the Supreme Council of Judges and Public Prosecutors shall be elected within thirty days as of the date of entry into force of this Law in accordance with the principles and procedures indicated below:

a) The President of the Republic shall select four members from among academicians who have been working in the field of law, for at least fifteen years, and lawyers who have completed fifteen years of active professional service, for whom there is no impediment to becoming a judge.

b) The plenary assembly of the High Court of Appeals shall select three regular and two substitute members from among members of the Court. The First President of the High Court of Appeals shall announce the beginning of the application process for candidacy within seven days of the entry into force of this Law. The candidates shall apply to the First President within seven days of the date of the announcement. The plenary assembly of the High Court of Appeals shall hold elections within fifteen days from the final date of application. In the elections, where each member of the High Court of Appeals may vote, the candidates with the greatest number of votes are elected regular and substitute members respectively. c) The plenary assembly of the Council of State shall select one regular and one substitute member from among members of the Court. The President of the Council of State shall announce the beginning of the application process for candidacy within seven days of the entry into force of this Law. The candidates shall apply to the Presidency within seven days of the date of the announcement. The plenary assembly of the Council of State shall hold elections within fifteen days from the final date

of application. In the elections, where each member of the Council of State may vote, the candidates with the greatest number of votes are elected regular and substitute members respectively.

ç) The plenary assembly of the Turkish Justice Academy shall select one regular and one substitute member from among its members to the Supreme Council of Judges and Prosecutors. The President of the Turkish Justice Academy shall announce the beginning of the application process for candidacy within seven days of the entry into force of this Law. The candidates shall apply to the Presidency within seven days of the date of the announcement. The plenary assembly of the the Turkish Justice Academy shall hold elections within fifteen days from the final date of application. In the elections, where each member may vote, the candidates with the greatest number of votes are elected regular and substitute members respectively. d) Seven regular and four substitute members which are first category judges, shall be selected by civil judges and public prosecutors under the direction and supervision of the Supreme Election Council from among civil judges and public prosecutors maintaining the qualifications for being first category judges. Within five days of the date of entry into force of this Law, the Supreme Election Council shall announce the applications for candidacy. The candidates shall apply within three days of the date of announcement. The Supreme Election Council shall examine the applications, finalize the list of candidates and announce this within two days following the expiry of the date of application. Objections to this list may be made within the following two days. The objections shall be examined and finalised and the definitive list of candidates shall be announced within two days following the expiry of the objection period. Judges and public prosecutors working in provinces or districts shall vote in elections to be held in each province and district on the second Sunday following the date of announcement of the definitive list by the Supreme Election Council, under the direction and supervision of the provincial election boards. The provincial election boards shall establish ballot councils according to the number of judges and public prosecutors that are to vote in that province. Provincial election boards shall give decision in relation to complaints on and objections to proceedings, measures and decisions of the ballot councils. Candidates may not conduct campaigns. They may publish their resumé on an internet site allocated

for this purpose within the framework of the principles and procedures defined by the Supreme Election Council. The candidates that obtain the greatest number of votes shall be considered to have been elected as regular and substitute members respectively. The Supreme Election Council shall determine the voting ballots as well as other matters. The Supreme Election Council may have the voting ballots printed or may have these printed through provincial election boards as it may deem appropriate. In the elections to be held, the provisions of the Law No. 298 on Basic Rules on Elections and Voting Registers, 26.4.1961, that are not in conflict with this subparagraph are to be applied.

e) Three regular and two substitute members which are first category judges, shall be selected by civil judges and public prosecutors under the direction and supervision of the Supreme Election Council from among civil judges and public prosecutors maintaining the qualifications for being first category judges. In provinces where there are regional administrative courts, these elections shall be held under the direction and supervision of the provincial election boards and judges and public prosecutors working in these regional administrative courts and in courts that are subject to authority of those courts shall vote. The provisions of subparagraph (d) shall be applied to these elections.

The regular members of the Supreme Council of Judges and Public Prosecutors, who have been elected in accordance with subparagraphs (a), (ç), (d) and (e) of the first paragraph, shall take their office on the working day following the date of entry into force of this Law. At the first meeting of the Council to be held after the members that have been elected in accordance with this Article have taken their office, the duties of one of the substitute members of the Supreme Council of Judges and Public Prosecutors, coming from the High Court of Appeals, determined by way of drawing lots, shall end. The remaining regular and substitute members shall continue their duties until the end of their term of office. The members who have been elected in accordance with subparagraph (b) of the first paragraph shall take office in place of those whose term of office expires. At the first meeting of the Council to be held after the members that have been elected in accordance with this Article have taken their office, the duties of one of the regular and substitute members of the Supreme Council of Judges and Public Prosecutors, coming from the Council of State, determined by way of drawing lots, shall end. The remaining regular and substitute members shall continue their

duties until the end of their term of office. The members who have been elected in accordance with subparagraph (c) of the first paragraph shall take office in place of those whose term of office expires.

From among those members elected in accordance with subparagraph (b) and (c) of the first paragraph, the term of office of those who take Office in accordance with the third and fourth paragraph shall expire on the date of the end of the term of office of the other Council members elected in accordance with subparagraph (a), (ç), (d) and (e) of the first paragraph. Regular members elected to the Supreme Council of Judges and Public Prosecutors shall benefit from the same financial, social and pension rights envisaged for the Head of Chamber of the High Court of Appeals in the relevant legislation, until the necessary arrangements are made. Furthermore, regular members of the Council except for the president shall receive additional compensation on a monthly basis in the amount to be calculated by multiplying the index of 30000 by the coefficient applied to salaries of civil servants. Until arrangements are made in the relevant laws, the Supreme Council of Judges and Public Prosecutors: a) shall operate in the form of a Council in accordance with legal provisions in force without prejudice to the provisions of the Constitution, b) shall convene under the chairmanship of the Minister of Justice within one week following the date that the regular members take Office in accordance with the second paragraph and shall elect a temporary deputy chairman, c) shall convene with at least fifteen members and take decisions by the simple majority of the component members, ç) the secretariat functions shall be conducted by the Ministry of Justice.

Until inspectors of the Council are appointed, the existing judiciary inspectors shall carry out their duties under the title of inspectors of the Council.

The provisions of this Article shall be applied until the necessary.

## **APPENDIX II:**

The American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) members states their goal as “to support sound and ethical practice in the conduct of survey and public opinion research and in the use of such research for policy- and decision-making in the public and private sectors, as well as to improve public understanding of survey and public opinion research methods and the proper use of those research results”.

The main principles of the AAPOR are to maintain high standards of scientific competence, integrity, and transparency in conducting, analyzing, and reporting their work; establishing and maintaining relations with survey respondents and their clients; and communicating with those who eventually use the research for decision-making purposes and the general public.

The AAPOR has The Code describes the obligations that they believe all research professionals have, regardless of their membership in this Association or any other, to uphold the credibility of survey and public opinion research. And they also have a principle that to reject all tasks or assignments that would require activities inconsistent with the principles of this Code.

The AAPOR has 3 groups of principles:

1. Principles of Professional Responsibility in Dealings with People

Respondents and Prospective Respondents: avoiding practices or methods that may harm, endanger, humiliate, or seriously mislead survey respondents or prospective respondents.

Respect respondents' desires, when expressed, not to answer specific survey questions or provide other information to the researcher. We shall be responsive to their questions about how their contact information was secured.

Participation in surveys and other forms of public opinion research is voluntary, except for the decennial census and a few other government surveys as specified by law. We shall provide all persons selected for inclusion with a description of the research study sufficient to permit them

to make an informed and free decision about their participation. We shall make no false or misleading claims as to a study's sponsorship or purpose, and we shall provide truthful answers to direct questions about the research. If disclosure could substantially bias responses or endanger interviewers, it is sufficient to indicate that some information cannot be revealed or will not be revealed until the study is concluded.

We shall not misrepresent our research or conduct other activities (such as sales, fundraising, or political campaigning) under the guise of conducting survey and public opinion research.

Unless the respondent explicitly waives confidentiality for specified uses, we shall hold as privileged and confidential all information that could be used, alone or in combination with other reasonably available information, to identify a respondent with his or her responses. We also shall not disclose or use the names of respondents or any other personally-identifying information for non-research purposes unless the respondents grant us permission to do so.

We understand that the use of our research results in a legal proceeding does not relieve us of our ethical obligation to keep confidential all respondent-identifying information (unless waived explicitly by the respondent) or lessen the importance of respondent confidentiality.

Clients or Sponsors: When undertaking work for a private client, we shall hold confidential all proprietary information obtained about the client and about the conduct and findings of the research undertaken for the client, except when the dissemination of the information is expressly authorized by the client, or when disclosure becomes necessary under the terms of Section I-C or III-E of this Code. In the latter case, disclosures shall be limited to information directly bearing on the conduct and findings of the research.

We shall be mindful of the limitations of our techniques and capabilities and shall accept only those research assignments that we can reasonably expect to accomplish within these limitations.

The Public: We shall inform those for whom we conduct publicly released research studies that AAPOR Standards for Disclosure require the release of certain essential information about how the research was conducted, and we shall make all reasonable efforts to encourage clients to subscribe to our standards for such disclosure in their releases.

We shall correct any errors in our own work that come to our attention which could influence interpretation of the results, disseminating such corrections to all original recipients of our content.

We shall attempt, as practicable, to correct factual misrepresentations or distortions of our data or analysis, including those made by our research partners, co-investigators, sponsors, or clients. We recognize that differences of opinion in analysis are not necessarily factual misrepresentations or distortions. We shall issue corrective statements to all parties who were presented with the factual misrepresentations or distortions, and if such factual misrepresentations or distortions were made publicly, we shall correct them in as commensurate a public forum as is practicably possible.

The Profession: We recognize our responsibility to the science of survey and public opinion research to disseminate as freely as practicable the ideas and findings that emerge from our research.

We can point with pride to our membership in the Association and our adherence to this Code as evidence of our commitment to high standards of ethics in our relations with respondents, our clients or sponsors, the public, and the profession. However, we shall not cite our membership in the Association nor adherence to this Code as evidence of professional competence, because the Association does not so certify any persons or organizations.

## 2. Principles of Professional Practice in the Conduct of Work

A. We shall exercise due care in developing research designs and instruments, and in collecting, processing, and analyzing data, taking all reasonable steps to assure the reliability and validity of results.

1. We shall recommend and employ only those tools and methods of analysis that, in our professional judgment, are well suited to the research problem at hand.

2. We shall not knowingly select research tools and methods of analysis that yield misleading conclusions.

3. We shall not knowingly make interpretations of research results that are inconsistent with the data available, nor shall we tacitly permit such interpretations. We shall ensure that any findings we report, either privately or for public release, are a balanced and accurate portrayal of research results.

4. We shall not knowingly imply that interpretations should be accorded greater confidence than the data actually warrant. When we use samples to make statements about populations, we shall only make claims of precision that are warranted by the sampling frames and methods employed. For example, the reporting of a margin of sampling error based on an opt-in or self-selected volunteer sample is misleading.

5. We shall not knowingly engage in fabrication or falsification.

6. We shall accurately describe survey and public opinion research from other sources that we cite in our work, in terms of its methodology, content, and comparability.

B. We shall describe our methods and findings accurately and in appropriate detail in all research reports, adhering to the standards for disclosure specified in Section III.

3. Standards for Disclosure: Good professional practice imposes the obligation upon all survey and public opinion researchers to disclose certain essential information about how the research was conducted. When conducting publicly released research studies, full and complete disclosure to the public is best made at the time results are released, although some information may not be immediately available. When undertaking work for a private client, the same essential information should be made available to the client when the client is provided with the results.

A. We shall include the following items in any report of research results or make them available immediately upon release of that report.

1. Who sponsored the research study, who conducted it, and who funded it, including, to the extent known, all original funding sources.

2. The exact wording and presentation of questions and responses whose results are reported.

3. A definition of the population under study, its geographic location, and a description of the sampling frame used to identify this population. If the sampling frame was provided by a third party, the supplier shall be named. If no frame or list was utilized, this shall be indicated.

4. A description of the sample design, giving a clear indication of the method by which the respondents were selected (or self-selected) and recruited, along with any quotas or additional sample selection criteria applied within the survey instrument or post-fielding. The description of the sampling frame and sample design should include sufficient detail to determine whether the respondents were selected using probability or non-probability methods.

5. Sample sizes and a discussion of the precision of the findings, including estimates of sampling error for probability samples and a description of the variables used in any weighting or estimating procedures. The discussion of the precision of the findings should state whether or not the reported margins of sampling error or statistical analyses have been adjusted for the design effect due to clustering and weighting, if any.

6. Which results are based on parts of the sample, rather than on the total sample, and the size of such parts.

7. Method and dates of data collection.

B. We shall make the following items available within 30 days of any request for such materials.

1. Preceding interviewer or respondent instructions and any preceding questions or instructions that might reasonably be expected to influence responses to the reported results.

2. Any relevant stimuli, such as visual or sensory exhibits or show cards.

3. A description of the sampling frame's coverage of the target population.

4. The methods used to recruit the panel, if the sample was drawn from a pre-recruited panel or pool of respondents.

5. Details about the sample design, including eligibility for participation, screening procedures, the nature of any oversamples, and compensation/incentives offered (if any).
6. Summaries of the disposition of study-specific sample records so that response rates for probability samples and participation rates for non-probability samples can be computed.
7. Sources of weighting parameters and method by which weights are applied.
8. Procedures undertaken to verify data. Where applicable, methods of interviewer training, supervision, and monitoring shall also be disclosed.

C. If response rates are reported, response rates should be computed according to AAPOR Standard Definitions.

D. If the results reported are based on multiple samples or multiple modes, the preceding items shall be disclosed for each.

E. If any of our work becomes the subject of a formal investigation of an alleged violation of this Code, undertaken with the approval of the AAPOR Executive Council, we shall provide additional information on the research study in such detail that a fellow researcher would be able to conduct a professional evaluation of the study<sup>82</sup>.

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<sup>82</sup> The Code (Revised 5/2010),

[http://www.aapor.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=AAPOR\\_Code\\_of\\_Professional\\_Ethics\\_and\\_Practice&Template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=3142](http://www.aapor.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=AAPOR_Code_of_Professional_Ethics_and_Practice&Template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=3142) access date 12.01.2014

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