

CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF DISCOURSES ON AND AROUND COUP D'ÉTAT IN TURKISH NEWSPAPERS

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ABSTRACT

This article seeks to critically analyse the discourse(s) of four Turkish dailies (*Cumhuriyet*, *Hürriyet*, *Vakit* and *Zaman*) on two significant political events, the National Security Council meeting on 28th February 1997 and the 2008 indictment case against the ruling Justice and Development Party, with a special focus on the recent 15th July 2016 coup attempt in the discussion. By doing so, the objective will be to understand the coverage of coup d'état by each newspaper. The historical significance of the social problem at stake, and the context of the events, will be delineated at the outset. The data consisting of images of pertinent news articles are digitalised and assembled into a corpus. The news corpus is analysed drawing on a specific Critical Discourse Analysis approach, namely the Discourse-Historical Approach. The findings have shown that the lexical selection and discourse formation of each newspaper is not independent of the agency's attitude towards the events in question. As a result, the newspapers are found to be too acquiescent to challenge the definition of the problem independent of the powerful groups, particularly within the context of 28 February process. More importantly, the conflict seems to rage not in between two separate ideologies but over different understandings of the same religion, i.e. Islam.

Keywords: Turkish newspapers, Turkey, coup d'état, critical discourse analysis, discourse historical approach.

TÜRK GAZETELERİNDE DARBE HABERLERİNİN ELEŞTİREL SÖYLEM ÇÖZÜMLEMESİ

ÖZ

Bu makale dört ulusal gazetede, darbeler açısından yakın Türkiye tarihinin iki önemli olayının (28 Şubat 1997 MGK Toplantısı ve Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi'ne 2008'de açılan kapatma davası) ele alınış biçimlerini incelemektedir. Bu minvalde, makalenin amacı gazetelerin bu iki önemli olaydaki rollerini anlamaya çalışmaktır. Bu nedenle ilk olarak söz konusu sosyal sorunun ve olayların arka planı açıklanacaktır. Konuyla ilgili haberlerden ve haber görsellerinden oluşan veri öncelikle dijital ortama aktarılarak bir derlem elde edilmiştir. Elde edilen derlem Eleştirel Söylem Çözümlemesinin önemli bir kolu olan Tarihi Söylem Yaklaşımı kullanılarak çözümlenmiştir. İnceleme sonuçları her bir gazetenin kelime seçiminin ve söylem oluşturma şeklinin, gazetenin söz konusu olaya yönelik genel yaklaşımından bağımsız olmadığı saptanmıştır. Sonuç olarak gazetelerin, özellikle 28 Şubat sürecinde, söz konusu sorunun güçlü gruplar tarafından yapılan tanımına kafa tutamayacak kadar kadar uysal oldukları gözlemlenmiştir. Daha önemlisi, çatışmanın iki farklı dünya görüşü arasında olduğu kadar aynı dinin Türkiye'deki farklı algılaşmaları arasında cereyan ettiği görülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türk gazeteleri, Türkiye, darbe, eleştirel söylem çözümlemesi, söylem tarihi yaklaşımı.

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Introduction

This research aims to critically analyse discourses on and around two newsworthy events of social and political significance, i.e. the NSC (National Security Council) meeting on 28 February 1997 which dethroned the ruling Welfare Party (WP) of the time and the 2008 Indictment case opened against the ruling JDP (Justice and Development Party) of Turkey. The data consists of the news articles of four national Turkish dailies, i.e. *Cumhuriyet*, *Hürriyet*, *Vakit* and *Zaman*. The selection of newspapers hinges on the ideological allegiances of newspapers.

Print media are only a part of mass communication which is itself one of those human activities that everyone recognizes but few can define satisfactorily (Fiske, 1990: 1). In accordance with the semiotic school of communication and the axiomatic understanding in CDA that discourse is not only socially constituted but also constitutive (Fairclough, 1995: 55; Phillips and Jorgensen, 2002: 61), newspapers are believed to be the reflection of this dialectical relationship par excellence. Based on a vast literature survey and empirical findings, van Dijk's approach to media discourse offers a viable understanding of media's role in society. In the complex contemporary framework of social, economic and cultural forces van Dijk (1985) considers the role of media as supplementary to powerful groups in a society and defines media power first of all in terms of the social power of groups and institutions. Van Dijk, in other words, draws attention to the complexity of the process involved in the (re)production of dominant ideologies by the media (1985).

The particular concern of this study is, therefore, the discourses surrounding coup within the aforementioned events in Turkey— which are referred to as 'politically mediated discourses' (Marsden and Savigny, 2009). Indeed, in such a complex and diverse society as Turkey there is hardly any matter on which a single discourse prevails. Each social and political group speaks of the matter in its own way. Considering this vicissitude across newspapers, this paper will seek to answer the following questions: how does each newspaper represent coup and social actors involved in the process and how are pro- and anti-coup discourses legitimated through each newspaper's take on the issue? Answering these questions will reveal the peculiarities of the competing or coalescing discourses across four Turkish dailies,

marking the way coups are understood and represented by newspapers on the one hand, and the boundaries of and interaction between the so called ideologies of Islamism and Kemalism newspapers are traditionally affiliated with. The findings of the analyses will also be discussed particularly within the context of 15 July coup attempt in 2016 and the role of media in challenging coup discourses, in general.

1. Background Information

Although the electoral victory of the Welfare Party (WP) first in the 1994 local elections, then in the national elections of 1995 cannot be totally attributed to the dire economic situation, it still did have an impact, not surprisingly, on the voter's swing to Erbakan's *adil düzen* (just order), suggesting a more equitable distribution of wealth and implying a change to corruption of politicians. The coalition government of the True Path Party (TPP) and the Motherland Party (MP) collapsed in less than three months¹. When Erbakan's WP voted against the motion for inquiry into Çiller's scandalous use of the discretionary fund, Çiller was persuaded to take part in the WP-TPP coalition that would make Necmettin Erbakan Turkey's first avowedly "Islamist" prime minister.

The WP-TPP coalition, which was more of a marriage of convenience, was worn out by Çiller's clandestine ties with the 'deep state'² and Erbakan's precariousness, and could hardly last a year. The victory of the WP in the 1994 local elections had already alarmed many Turkish secularists. Their fears were reinforced when Erbakan made his first official foreign visit to Iran to sign a natural gas deal worth \$22 billion. Later Erbakan announced his plans to form a union (D-8³) of countries with majority Muslim population as an alternative to the G-7. In a sequence of events, Erbakan's invitation of several *tarikat*⁴ leaders to a fast breaking meal in Ramadan came as the last straw that broke the laden camel's back. The Islamist organisations were under the scrutiny of military intelligence and a special body, entitled *Batı Çalışma Grubu* (Western Working Group) had been established within the General Staff to monitor the activities of Islamists (Jenkins 2008: 161). The army and several NGOs pressurized the WP to pull back from the government on account of its anti-secular activities. Several marches were organized in big city centres in which, especially, secular women marched against *Şeriat*. On 28 February 1997 the

NSC (National Security Council) gathered for the longest meeting in its history to give an ultimatum to the Welfare Party. The government was presented a list of anti-Islamist measures, ranging from bans on private Quran classes to curbs on the donation of sacrificial animal hides to religious organisations. At the top of the list was the demand for the extension of compulsory education to 8 years. This clearly aimed at scrapping the intermediate sections of the *İmam Hatip*⁵ schools. The army then started a psychological war, in tandem with the civilian component of the secular establishment, against the so-called “Islamist reactionism” or *irtica* in Turkish. Therefore, the term “February 28 Process” was coined, implicating the far-reaching effects of the NSC measures that would confiscate power until the secular correction was plunged in (Cizre and Çınar, 2003: 310). During the spring and early summer of 1997, the army held a series of briefings in which journalists, diplomats and business people were informed about the “activities of Islamists” which the army regarded as the most dangerous internal threat together with the PKK. The WP was closed and Erbakan was banned from politics once again on 18 January 1998 six months after Vural Savaş, the Constitutional Republic Prosecutor, sought an indictment against the party. The party members applied to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) but on 31 July, 2003, to the Welfare Party’s disappointment the ban was upheld and the ECHR ruled that Ankara's decision to ban the Islamist Welfare Party was constitutional, because the party violated the secular principles of the country.

On 14 March 2008 the Republican Prosecutor of the Supreme Court of Appeals, Abdurrahman Yalçınkaya, submitted an indictment against the ruling party, the JDP, which was charged with attempting to undermine the principle of secularism enshrined in the constitution. In the background of this closure case against the JDP (Justice and Development Party) were the crisis of Abdullah Gül⁶ and a few unsuccessful attempts, encouraged by the NAP (Nationalist Action Party), to lift the ban on veiling. In late April the Chief of Staff, Yaşar Büyükanıt, also warned the government against Gül’s appointment via a hastily drafted memorandum. On June 2008 the Constitutional Court annulled the amendments to Articles 10 and 42, which had been thought to scrap the ban on veiling. The Constitutional Court ruled against the amendments as these were considered to relate to the Articles 2 and 3 of the Turkish

Constitution, which are non-amendable. The characteristics of the Turkish state designated in the articles⁷ 2, 3 is so broad that almost no constitutional amendment can be conceived that is not related to one of these (Hale and Özbudun, 2010: 74). On 30 July 2008, the Constitutional Court decided that the JDP would not be banned; however, deprived of half of the fund it received from the state. The irony was that six out of 11 judges voted in favour of banning the party only lacking one more for the qualified majority (three-fifths or seven out of 11).

2. Method: Discourse-Historical Approach

The Vienna School of Critical Discourse Analysis, which is represented most notably by the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) of Wodak et al. (among many others see Reisigl and Wodak, 2001; Wodak vd., 2009; Wodak and Pelinka, 2002) considers the task of CDA as twofold: to reveal the relationship between linguistic means, forms and structures and concrete linguistic practice, and to make transparent the reciprocal relationship between discursive action and political and institutional structures (Wodak vd., 2009: 9). As such, CDA is not interested in discourses and other linguistic features for their own sake and since “language indexes power, expresses power, *and* is involved where there is contention over and challenge to power” (Wodak, 2001: 11). The integration of the historical dimension into the analysis is not only rendered by incorporating as much available information as possible on the historical background but also by investigating the diachronic changes which particular types of discourses undergo (Wodak, 1990; Wodak vd., 2009: 9). For this very reason the current study uses the DHA to enable the analysis to pay utmost attention to the historical sources where discursive events are embedded. Following the DHA, the qualitative discourse analysis in this study follows three analytical steps;

- The identification of specific *contents* or *topics* of coup discourses;
- The investigation of *discursive strategies* used in the representation of social events and involved actors as well as in argumentation;
- The examination of *linguistic means* of these strategies.

Taking the macro semantic categories as starting point, various discursive strategies employed in a text are examined by asking the following questions (Reisigl and Wodak, 2009: 13)

- How persons, objects, phenomena/events are, processes and actions named and referred to linguistically in the process of 1997 coup and the 2008 indictment case?
- What characteristics, qualities and features are attributed to social actors, phenomena/events and processes that relate to these two events?
- What arguments are employed in the justification and legitimisation of stances/standpoints/positions expressed with regard to conflicting discourses over and around the socio-political issues in question?
- From what perspectives are these nominations, attributions and arguments expressed?
- Are the respective utterances articulated overtly; are they intensified or mitigated?

Following the aforementioned analytical steps the article will summarise the results of the content/ discourse topics analysis and discursive strategies used by newspapers. Linguistic manifestations of the discursive strategies will be analysed through sample extracts and images from the newspapers. The results will be presented in thematic order as it emerged from the analysis, followed by a discussion section.

2.1. A Brief Note on the Data

Below is the table of the corpora of the news articles on and around the 2008 indictment case against the ruling party, JDP, and the 28 February NSC meeting in 1997. For the second event, the nodal point is 15 March 2008, when the head of the Supreme Court, Abdurrahman Yaşınkaya, announced in a press statement that an indictment was opened against the JDP and its politicians on the grounds that they became the focus of anti-secular activities. For the former, it is 28 February 1997, when the army heads in the National Security Council warned the WP against its anti-secular activities. News articles and editorials that relate to each event in four newspapers within a month-long period, two weeks before and after the nodal point,

were selected manually and built into the corpus. The table below outlines the number of articles and words in each newspaper's corpus. All of them will be called collectively the Turkish News Corpora (henceforth TNC).

Table 1. The Turkish News Corpus (TNC)

Newspaper	<i>Hürriyet</i>		<i>Cumhuriyet</i>		<i>Zaman</i>		<i>Vakit</i>	
	1997 (February- y-March)	2008 March	1997 (February- March)	2008 March	1997 (February- March)	2008 March	1997 (February- March)	2008 March
Number of Articles	62	62	93	58	39	140	20	60
2008 Total	319 articles							
1997 Total	214 articles							
Overall	533 articles (223.479 words)							

3. Discourse Topics

Considered within the context of 28 February NSC meeting, 'exploitation' appears to be a common macro-topic in the *Cumhuriyet* and the *Hürriyet*. The representation of social actors is constructed around this theme as those who exploit something and those who are affected by it. The articles from the *Cumhuriyet* and the *Hürriyet* use 'religious exploitation' in reference to politicians with Islamic sensitivities. Both the *Cumhuriyet* and the *Hürriyet* treat religious people as a homogenous group and accuse them of exploiting religion for material benefits, an argumentum ad hominem. In the *Zaman* and the *Vakit* discourses on secularism and abuse of the concept of secularism are common. Universal and local understandings of secularism are also commonly frequented in these papers, with specific reference to misapplication of the concept by secularists in Turkey. What is more significant is the fact that the *Zaman* avoids any direct challenge against the secular regime and garner a rather deceptive image of what was happening at the time. This is mainly because the *Zaman*, which was closer to the coalition government than any one single party of the time, maintained its 'conciliatory' position by reiterating the happy relationship between the army and the government.

In the aftermath of the indictment against the JDP newspapers are all involved in discussions that focus on the principles of Atatürk, principally secularism, and modernity. Therefore, within the *Zaman* and the *Vakit* articles, representation of the social groups involved in the Indictment case overlap to a great extent: both point out the ‘victimhood’ of the JDP and its leader Erdoğan visa viz the ‘totalitarian’ and ‘undemocratic’ attempts of the judiciary in general and the head prosecutor Yalçınkaya who opened the case, in particular. In respect of their anti-government position, the *Cumhuriyet* and the *Hurriyet*, however, try to consolidate the judiciary’s decision and legitimise party closures by referring to secret agendas of Islamist groups.

4. Discursive Strategies

The discursive strategies used in all texts are multifarious and there is considerable overlap among them. The pronoun ‘we’ and ‘they’ are frequently used in all the texts to construe pertinent in- and out-groups. The indeterminate pronouns, like ‘those’ and ‘some circles’ are often used to mystify the excluded social group. As for absence, more significantly, in 1997 the army remains silent and backgrounded.

It has also emerged from the qualitative analyses that with respect to the style of each text, some strategies turn out to be more salient than others. In this sense, in the shorter columns in the *Hürriyet* and the *Cumhuriyet*, the figurative uses of language pertain both to the predication and argumentation strategies. One such example is the ‘head-packing’ metaphor used in 1997 *Cumhuriyet* articles, which is not only a depreciatory reference to veiled women but also provokes the Orientalist argumentative viewpoint on women (Göle, 1996; Said, 1979). Metaphors pertaining to natural phenomena are also frequently used in texts to refer to religious exploiters. One such example is ‘to stir a storm’ used in an article from the *Zaman*. Metaphors are also found to be most subtly creating levels of sameness across a group of people, as in the example of ‘closet Atatürkists’ in another *Zaman* article.

Tense and modality markers have been found to serve as indicators of authors’ perspectives in the texts. One such example is the suffix ‘*dIr*’, the generalizing modality marker. For instance, in an article from the *Zaman* in 1997, the author frequently uses this to attain the highest level of epistemic modality when he describes

secularism. As for the argumentation strategies, some of the most frequent fallacies observed in all texts are *argumentum ad hominem*, *argumentum ad populum* and hasty generalisations. The analysis of argumentation strategies has shown that argumentation does not follow a strict line of development in each text. Furthermore, some of the arguments are only subordinate to others. In this sense, the combination of the pragma-dialectical approach (van Eemeren vd., 1996) with the content-related argumentation analysis of the DHA (Reisigl, 2011; Reisigl and Wodak, 2001) has been conducive to cover unsaid premises and relate them to the main argument of the texts.

5. The Analysis

Substantial work on media framing has shown that the relationship between the governing elites and news organisations is closer and more cooperative than the ideal envisions (Entman, 2004: 2). Whether newspapers are mere conduits of the elite in Turkey is part of an ongoing discussion. As far as this research is concerned, it is obvious that the relationship is one of dominance; i.e. the central goal of news reporting in the 1997 NSC meeting and the 2008 Indictment case is to generate either support or opposition to the political groups or state authorities in question.

5.1 Civil-Military Relations

As is obvious from analyses, the mainstream secularist media in 1997 prepared the way for the 28 February memorandum.⁸ On the one hand, the *Cumhuriyet* and the *Hürriyet*, took a clearly pro-army stance and legitimised its intervention. The cover page in Figure 1 is a quintessential example of how the NSC meeting was represented by the secularist media. The first thing to notice is that the results of the meeting are named in the headline as ‘Memorandum like advice’.

Figure 1 First Page of the Cumhuriyet (1 March 1997)



Therefore, the point that it is not a *coup* but an ‘advice’ from the army is highlighted. The by-line above the headline reads: “In the 9-hour meeting of the NSC, especially the shariah attempts were asked to be curbed”. Suppressing all the active and passive agents the whole emphasis is put on the length of the meeting and shariah attempts. Below are some more *Cumhuriyet* headlines in the following days of the 28 February, which legitimise the NSC meeting results.

Cumhuriyet Yasalarından Taviz Yok “No compromise from Republican Laws” (01.03.1997)

Dinci Siyasete Denetleme “Controlling the Religionist Politics” (02.03.1997)

Şeriatçı Eğitim Dorukta “Sharia Education at its Peak” (03.03.1997)

Kararlar Çağdaşlığa Karşı “the Decisions are Against Modernity” (04.03.1997)

After the NSC meeting, the Turkish army in the *Cumhuriyet* and the *Hürriyet* is represented as a defender, a paternal, fatherly figure who warns his child by showing him the stick. For instance, a title of a news article in the *Cumhuriyet* reads “there is no possibility of a coup, the government has been beaten” (05.03.1997), another one in the *Hürriyet* states “*Asker Kulak Çekti*” (The Soldier Pulled Ears). The paternal

relationship is also clearly expressed in most of the caricatures of the *Cumhuriyet* following the NSC meeting as in the following figure:

Figure 2 Erbakan in the Cumhuriyet (04 March 1997)



In Figure 3, the army General, i.e. *Paşa*, is represented as the embodiment of how the lieutenants are one of us. The line above the picture on the left hand side in which the Paşa visits a hospital it says: “He speeds, He listens to pop music.” Then below on the right hand-side picture of a military parade it says: the soldier and diplomat model. Such ‘normalisation’ of the army image and generals is part of the strategy of the secularist media which alleviates the political tension in favour of the army during times of crises, and legitimises the army’s role as the upper hand of politics and therefore maintains the historical top down relationship between the rulers and the ruled in Turkey.

Figure 3 An Anatomy Of A General (Hürriyet, 02 March 1997)



In the *Zaman* and the *Vakit*, on the other hand, the process of 28 February is that of ‘paralysis’. That is, given the power structure of the period they could not or did not want to challenge the army as clearly as they did the judiciary in 2008. More significantly, they reflected the WP’s cautious reaction and echoed the discourse of ‘harmony’ between the army and the government. The figure below shows the cover page of the *Zaman* after the NSC meeting. It is obvious from the wording that the *Zaman*, though not taking a pro-army stance, does not evaluate the meeting and puts emphasis on the length of the meeting. The title above the image of the coalition leader, Erbakan and Çiller, reads: Unity Message from Erbakan-Çiller⁹.

It is also vital to note that the *Vakit* was essentially different from the *Zaman*. The *Vakit* only mentioned the NSC meeting on its cover page next to the head news of the day. Furthermore, the perspective of the *Vakit* in 1997 coalesces with that of the WP politicians and specifically its legendary leader Erbakan, in contrast to the *Zaman* which stood aside the WP and TPP coalition. The extract below (Figure 5) from the *Zaman* illustrates this difference. In this image, two separate photos are juxtaposed to stand in opposition. On the left are the representatives of the civil authority and on the right are the army generals¹⁰.

Figure 4 First Page of the *Zaman* (01.03.1997)



Figure 5 First Page of the Zaman (02.03.1997)



The quotations from the leaders of all the main political parties under the image suggest a more convergent stance taken by the *Zaman* in contrast to *Vakit*'s exaltation of the RP and its leader Erbakan.

Figure 6 First Page of the Vakit (05.03.1997)



Having looked at the 1997 articles, it can be argued that there have been significant changes in the *Zaman* and the *Vakit* over the years. Considered within the shift of political power after the JDP rule, the transformation in these newspapers is one of coalescence. After the 2008 Indictment case both newspapers took a clear pro-government position in their reporting.

Figure 7 First Page of the Vakit (15.03.2008)



The above figure is the cover page of the *Vakit* on 15 March 2008¹¹, the day after the Indictment case was opened. The headline reads ‘national sovereignty cannot be locked’. In fact, the whole process of the Indictment case is reduced to the positive and negative representation of the main actors in the *Vakit*. Abdurrahman Yalçinkaya, the prosecutor, stands unequivocally at the far end of negative representation.

Figure 7 First Page of the Vakit (19 March 2008)



The *Vakit* in 2008 takes a rather revanchist position, demonising the prosecutor with references to his irreligiosity as can be seen in the picture above¹². Taking a similar pro-government stance, the *Zaman* focuses more on the international reactions to the indictment case as well as the economic ramifications. Here are some exemplifying headlines from the *Zaman*:

Kapatma Davası Dünyayı Ayağa Kaldırdı (The Closure Case Uprooted the World) 15.03.2008

Demokratik Kurumlara ve Seçmenlere Saygı İstiyoruz (We want respect for democratic institutions and the voters, Matt Brysza) 16.03.2008

Türkiyenin 21. yy'a uygun hakim ve savcılara ihtiyacı var (Turkey needs judges and prosecutors apt for the 21st Century, Joost Lagendijk) 16.03.2008

Sadece Demokrasiye Değil, Ekonomiye, İstikrara ve Yatırıma da Müdahale Edildi (Not only democracy but also the economy, stability and investment have been curbed) 16.03.2008

In 2008, the *Cumhuriyet* legitimises the indictment case again by opposing the government. This time, however, the judiciary is represented as the authority and the government as the one to be warned.

Figure 8 First Page of the *Cumhuriyet* (19 March 2008)



In this sense, the *Hürriyet* takes a similar pro-judiciary and anti-government stance, albeit with its cautious approach to the latter.

Figure 9 Hurriyet Cover Page Of 15.03.2008



On its cover page on 15.03.2008 the *Hürriyet* used the headline “Case Shock to the JDP”. More significantly in the by-line, the preamble of the indictment case is given in direct quotations: “because it [JDP] has become the focus of anti-secular activities.” This headline represents the detachment of the *Hürriyet* and contrasts with the *Cumhuriyet*’s involvement illustrated in Figure 9 in which the climbing figure metaphorically stands for the JDP, using democracy as a ‘ladder’¹³ to reach to its ultimate goal, i.e. sharia.

5.2. Different understandings of Islam and Secularism

One of the most significant common denominators of the four newspapers analysed in this research is the main religion in Turkey, i.e. Islam. However, putting aside the internal differences in each group, the *Hürriyet* and the *Cumhuriyet* adheres to a different understanding of Islam than that of the *Zaman* and the *Vakit*. The split that separates each group’s understanding of Islam is deep and rooted in the history of Turkey and codes of Kemalist principles, in particular. First and foremost, the kind of Islam that various *Cumhuriyet* and *Hürriyet* articles discuss is against *sharia* and tradition and therefore makes a clear distinction of what Islam is not. In a 1997 *Cumhuriyet* article (*Şeriatla İslam aynı Şey Değildir*, Neşet Çağatay, *Cumhuriyet*, 05.03.1997), the author who was a professor of religious studies argues that the headscarf, beard and *tarikats* are not rules of God and therefore can be compromised. Notice that the first two relate to the public appearance of Islam and the last one offers a challenge to the idea of a modern Kemalist society. The out-datedness of Islamic jurisprudence and family law (*imam nikahı*) are also highlighted by the same author. Furthermore, the historical evidence for secularisation in the Ottoman *Mecelle* system is often and especially propounded by the *Cumhuriyet* authors. İlhan Selçuk writes:

The Ottomans did not apply the shariah jurisprudence from the beginning. Today, being shariatist is against being democratic and human rights. Being shariatist today is to say amen to the prayer which will not come true.

However, those religionists (*dinciler*) who want to bury Turkey into the darkness of traditionalism (*irtica*), their wish to hold shariatism (*şeriatçılık*) equal to Islam (*Müslimanlık*), is a strategy to overthrow the secular republic of Atatürk.

99 per cent of Turkey is composed of (as the religionists keep repeating) Muslims...but they are not shariatists. (Cumhuriyet, 05.02.1997).

As can be seen in the above extract, Selçuk is not against Islam per se, what he is against, indeed, is integration of Islam back into the state structure. This can be extrapolated from the examples he gives, i.e. Iran and Saudi Arabia, both of which claim to be religious states. Besides, dysphemistic pronouns (*şeriatçi*, *dinci*, *irtica*), refer to the politicisation of Islam, i.e. Islamism. The organised and publicly visible Islam, therefore, is not to be tolerated and as the author himself defines, people in Turkey are Muslims and their religion is *Müslümalık*¹⁴, which denotes a secular and individual Islam unlike the former. In the figure below, the president of the time, Süleyman Demirel, says ‘those using religion for politics commit both a sin and a crime’.

Figure 10 First Page of the Hürriyet (09 February 1997)



While committing the same crime himself by recontextualising religious jargon to criticise the politicisation of Islam, Demirel’s statement, indeed, reflects the inherent conflict of Turkish secularism in that it purports to assert people’s freedom of faith on

the one hand, and does not want to lose its grip on the type of Islam that it espouses, on the other hand.

Although they seem to have no problem with Kemalism and its principle of secularism, the *Zaman* and the *Vakit* attend to a different understanding of Islam in the sense that Islam and shariah are inseparable for them.

Figure 11 'Sharia Means Islam' (Vakit, 19 February 1997)



Islam, according to the *Vakit*, is also politics in so far as it guarantees people's faith. In an article published in the *Zaman* on 19 February 1997, Erbakan says "Freedom is the car and secularism is its brake". As is implied by the metaphor, such an understanding of Islam tolerates secularism since it puts a barrier in front of freedom, which is itself compatible with religion. The problem arises then between the understandings of different secularism(s).

5.3. Turkey's EU Bid and Coup D'états

If we include the perspective of Kemalism and Islamism conflict, Turkey's relationship with the EU has been marked by ambivalence. On the one hand, leftist and Kemalist groups, support Turkey's EU bid as it has been associated with modernisation of the country, however; on the other hand their support has been on the wane with the ascendance of the JDP to power in 2002. Because, according to Kemalists, the EU threatens the national homogeneity of the country and is part of a bigger project of colonising Turkey¹⁵. No matter how "the rhetoric of Kemalist civilian and military elite has historically been extremely pro-European and Westernisation was and remains a fundamental feature of Kemalism" (Tocci, 2001, p. 19), the Kemalists in the post-JDP period have grown more weary of Turkey's EU bid in reaction to the pro-EU policies of the JDP government. With regard to the findings of analyses in this research, this ambivalent relationship can be observed in the

Cumhuriyet and the *Hürriyet* news. As far the ambivalence is concerned, the contents analyses and spatio-temporal metaphors have shown that '(un)modernity' of Turkey is a frequently visited theme and various western countries are presented as the reference point for Turkey's lagging behind the times, especially in the Islamist press. In the *Cumhuriyet* and the *Hürriyet*, the number of news referring to opinions of EU leaders or standards in terms of party closures are strikingly fewer. And whenever reported, the opinions of the European politicians are problematised in the *Cumhuriyet* and the *Hürriyet*.

Figure 12 'The Case Opened Is Meaningless' 18.03.2008, *Hürriyet*



In the above figure the headline reads “the case opened is meaningless”. The article reports the opinion of the spokesperson of the German government, Thomas Steg on the 2008 indictment case. However, on the left hand side of the article, there is another section, entitled ‘Turkey is not a colony’ and it reports the responses of the opposition party politicians to Thomas Steg. By the same token, the next figure from the *Cumhuriyet* reports the reflections of the Indictment case in the EU rather evaluatively as the headlines reads ‘The U.S. and the EU viewed [the Indictment] cautiously’.

Figure 13 'The Us And Eu Viewed Cautiously!' (16 March 2008)



In contrast to these problematised foreign perspectives, in the *Zaman*, the E.U. and its representatives' criticism of the indictment are positively represented. The next figure illustrates a page from the *Zaman* that reports the responses from various EU representatives. Notice how the design of the article reflects the newspaper's pro-EU stance: accompanying stars resemble the EU emblem and all the representatives are quoted directly.

Figure 14 EU Representatives in the Zaman (15 March 2008)



However, considered within the same context, the *Vakit* differs from the *Zaman* in its 'cold' and 'sceptical' attitude towards the EU. After the indictment case, although the *Vakit* also garners the criticisms of foreigners on the indictment case, it is still more circumspect about reporting from abroad. During the same time a recurrent theme that occurs in the *Vakit*, for example, is the tolerance of western countries towards and Islam and the spread of Islam. The rupture between the *Vakit* and the *Zaman* reflects

differences of opinion as regards the EU across Muslim groups in Turkey, and partly explains the decline of EU support among them.

5.4 Veiling Issue

The veiling issue has been and is still one of the seemingly non-negotiable fault lines of the secularisation project(s) of the Turkish Republic. Women were the “the touchstones” of the civilising mission of the Kemalist project (Göle, 1996). Although we could date the origins of the problem back to the early Republican era (1920s) when Turkish society underwent drastic transformations, the legal basis of the current ban on veiling results from a ruling passed by the Constitutional Court in 1989 which banned wearing Islamic veiling in public institutions, particularly veiled university students. Since then, the discussion has changed its parameters, from radical Islamism to democratic conservatism, yet the issue has been equally manipulated by different political groups and stigmatised as a political symbol (Saktanber and Çorbacıoğlu, 2008: 519) not to mention anything of the western imagination and modernisation accounts for which it has been an emblem of Muslim women and their subordination to patriarchy.

The news surrounding the veiling issue constitutes a significant bulk of my corpus, i.e. the TNC. The corpus results have shown that the veiling issue is clearly marked by the choice of words and the way they are used. That is, in the *Hürriyet* and especially the *Cumhuriyet*, ‘*türban*’ appears as a keyword when compared to the *Vakit* and *Zaman* corpora which tend to use ‘*başörtüsü*’ for veiling. Furthermore, in the former set of newspapers it is closely associated with sharia, traditionalism and fundamentalism. The image of veiled women as oppressed by their Muslim partners in Kemalist papers is orientalist, as well.

Before and after each event, veiled women in the Kemalist papers are used as part of the growing religious threat to legitimise the intervention of the army in the first case and the closure of the JDP in the second. Negative representations of veiled women, and especially children are related to the *threat* posed by political Islam.

Figure 15 'The Army Of Hizbullah' (4 February 1997)



In the above extract (Figure 17) from the *Cumhuriyet* the news is about the Turkish extension of *Hizbullah* which was quite dominant in the southeast of Turkey in the 1990s. However, the veiled girl is decontextualised to instigate the ‘threat’ of religious orders. As can be seen in the documentary by M. Ali Birand on the 28 February process, the media played a significant role in the misrepresentation of veiled women who are abused by religious men¹⁶.

Figure 16 'They are Poisoning Children by Abusing the Religion' (Cumhuriyet 18 March 2008)



The question of veiling also pertains to the idiosyncratic understanding of Islam of the Kemalist press. In this sense, theoretical discussions regarding the pre-Islamic roots of veiling are penned by the academic authors¹⁷ of the *Hürriyet* and the *Cumhuriyet*. The *Vakit* and the *Zaman* respond to the misrepresentation and problematisation of veiling by the Kemalist media, as it appears from the TNC, in a few articles that address this issue from an 'Islamic' perspective. One of them in the *Zaman*, entitled “*Başörtüsü neyin ifadesi?*” (‘What does the headscarf express?’)¹⁸, is penned by a female author, Ülkü Özel. In a similar article in the *Vakit*, entitled “*Türban sorunu mu?*” (The problem of Turban?)¹⁹, Ahmed Hulusi emphasises that “veiling is a religious duty”. As stated in one of the previous findings, the question of veiling is discussed within the ambits of Islam, especially in the 1997 corpus, both in the Kemalist and the Islamist media.

The representation of the “*türban*” as a tool for fundamentalism and a reflection of the oppression of Muslim men does not bear any significant change from 1997 to 2008 in the Kemalist press. Often, images of veiled school girls of Imam Hatip are decontextualised in the *Cumhuriyet* to incite the threat of fundamentalism. As can be seen from Figure 18, the veiling problem is intrinsically related to the question of religious education, as well.

In terms of the question of veiling, a significant change occurs in 2008 in the Islamist press, especially in the *Zaman*. It has been pointed out in the previous finding that the EU bid has resulted in a shift towards rights and democracy based discourses in the *Zaman*. By the same token, the Kemalist treatment of the veiling issue is contested in the *Zaman* using the repertoire of democracy and equality, and frequently references are made to western countries²⁰. Therefore, the veiling problem is discussed as a matter of individual right and a necessity of the rule of law in the 2008 *Zaman* corpus. In 2008, besides news that discuss veiling from a rights based discourse²¹, the *Vakit* more frequently garners news demonstrating individual victims of the veiling ban in Turkey²².

6. DISCUSSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the relationship between the powerful groups and the press in Turkey as regards the problem in question has developed from that of dominance to contestation between 1997 and 2008. On 15 July, 2016 Turkey experienced another deadly coup attempt with a death toll of 246 and more than 2.000 wounded. The putschists were not successful in their attempt for various reasons, one of which was obviously the social media. Social media created an alternative venue for people to learn about and spread the news. Though putschists took control of the TV channels and the state run TRT for a short while and started broadcasting their statement, people took on the streets and repelled them. In this sense media played a significant role in responding to and categorically delegitimizing the coup d'état. Whereas the coup in 1997 was clearly supported by the *Hürriyet*, *Cumhuriyet* and the *Zaman*, and weakly challenged by the *Vakit*, the relationship was evolved towards contestation in 2008. In 2016, however, almost all of the political groups and the media took a clear stance against the coup and the army's meddling with politics, as epitomised in the *Yenikapı* meeting. Similarly, the Turkish media coalesced around the right of people to self-determination and against any groups', whether it is the army or the FETÖ, hijacking of this right. The 15 July Coup attempt, therefore, serves as a turning point in Turkish media's role in politics inasmuch as most, if not all, newspapers took a clear stance against army's meddling with politics.

Returning to our research questions, the analyses have revealed that newspapers' coverage of the coup in 1997 and the Indictment case in 2008 are marked by their lack of normative stance against and categorical denunciation of the coup. In contrast, the putschists are exalted, particularly in 1997 in *Cumhuriyet* and *Hürriyet* article, as the guardians of the secular republic. Another significant finding gleaned from the analysis in the study is that there are different understandings of Islam represented by the newspapers in question rather than a clash between Kemalist and Islamist ideologies. Therefore, the dichotomous treatment and categorisation of Turkish media as Islamist and Kemalist, and reducing the identity of their readers to this dichotomy, is insufficient to address this mismatch with regard to what sort of

Islam they refer to. Secularism constitutes, to an extent, a common ground on which theoretical discussions can be maintained. Yet, the concept is often hijacked and appropriated by each group's own power struggle. While the Kemalist press sacralise Kemalism and its pertinent principle of "*laiklik*", the Islamist media problematizes and often associates it with the west, and therefore deems it foreign and impossible. It is beyond the scope of this study to offer a form of secularism that would best fit Turkey; however, as far as the language used in press is concerned, rationalisation of the problem rather than mystifying concepts and sanctifying individual actors could be a good start. Finally, decontextualisation of the images of Muslim women to imply a sharia threat and construing their victimhood as an honour problem are equally problematic and exasperate gender inequality in Turkey rather than addressing it. As shown by a recent study on the representation of Muslim women in the BBC and Arab news (Al-Hejin, 2014), veiling doubles the burden of womanhood for Muslim women, not to mention anything of the western imagination and modernisation accounts for which they have been an emblem of subordination to patriarchy.

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Notes

¹ The Constitutional Court ruled that the votes of confidence for the coalition fell short of the quorum and the "covered payments" scandal then destroyed that coalition for good. In early May 1996, when Yılmaz and Çiller were coalition partners, Yılmaz announced that Çiller several months earlier had withdrawn more than \$6 million from the prime minister's discretionary fund without telling anyone how she had spent the money (Meyer, 1998). See also James H. Meyer (1997) "Çiller's Scandals" *Middle East Quarterly* 4:3, pp. 27-31.

² First, the allegations that Çiller favoured the winning bid in the Tedas-Tofas privatisations, then her discrete use of the "covered fund" were later accompanied by a third scandal, the Susurluk affair. What seemed to be a mundane traffic accident first turned out to be one of the most mysterious incidents of Turkish history. A Mercedes carrying 4 passengers was hit by a truck near the town of Susurluk. Only Sedat Bucak, a member of the TPP survived the accident. Three other passengers, Hüseyin Kocadağ (the director of a police academy), Abdullah Çatlı, a convict wanted by Interpol and an ultranationalist gunman, and a model Gonca Us all died, leaving behind them the real explanations of this bizarre gathering. With them were found ample weapon fitted with silencers and 'privileged' passports issued with different names to Çatlı. The incident raised many questions, which have remained mysterious to date. Bucak tried to prove his innocence by playing three monkeys, and the parliamentary investigation was parried by the government's oblivious manner (Kavakci, 2009; Meyer, 1998).

³ D-8, the Developing Eight, was composed of Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey.

⁴ *Tarikat* originates from the Arabic word طريفة (tariqah, English transliteration) literally meaning “way, path, method”. The word commonly refers to religious orders in Sufism through which a believer finds the truth, *hakikat*. All *tarikats* and similar religious orders were banned in 1925 and still against the law.

⁵ The vocational religious schools, known as the Imam-Hatip (preacher-prayer leader) schools have, since their inception in 1913, been at the centre of the state policies towards secularism and marked the discussions over the threat of Islamism (Pak, 2004; Shively, 2008).

⁶ In April 2007 the JDP suggested then Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül take the Presidency. Abdullah Gül was one of the disciples of Erbakan, the leader of National Outlook, and took an active part in WP government. This alarmed the secularists and their criticism focused on Hayrünnisa Gül, the President’s wife, who is veiled.

⁷ “*The Republic of Turkey is a democratic, secular and social state governed by the rule of law; bearing in mind the concepts of public peace, national solidarity and justice; respecting human rights; loyal to the nationalism of Atatürk, and based on the fundamental tenets set forth in the Preamble.*” The Constitution of the Republic of Turkey as amended on October 17, 2001 Article 2 retrieved from http://www.anayasa.gov.tr/images/loaded/pdf_dosyalari/THE_CONSTITUTION_OF_THE_REPUBLIC_OF_TURKEY.pdf on 15.01.2011.

⁸ Notice that Kongar uses “event” for the 28 February instead of “process” which signifies the long lasting effects of the 28 February and therefore an opposing stance.

⁹ The hyphen is a clear linguistic marker of how the newspapers represent the two leader in harmony and unity.

¹⁰ The sceptical gaze of the army generals, the tilted image of Erbakan towards Çilelr which seems to represent the communication and cooperation of the coalition leaders, and the distant representation of the president Demirel should be noted here. The arrangement of the image itself suffice to reflect the position of the agency.

¹¹ On the cover page, Erdoğan figures as a powerful figure who points his finger at the Court of Appeals and the Council of State, and also gives a ‘grateful’ and ‘embracing’ response to the masses.

¹² The headline reads ‘he had not even gone to his brother’s funeral’.

¹³ In the image, the ladder represents ‘democracy’, and the bulb in the hand of the climbing man stands metaphorically for the JDP. Interestingly, the column on which the sharia chair stands is black, which reiterates the usual colour association of sharia with darkness. The line underneath reads: “Democracy is not an end but a tool, JDP”.

¹⁴ *Müslümanlık* is derived from the root word “*Müslüman*” (*Muslim*) with the derivational suffix *-lik*.

¹⁵ Anti-imperialist discourses are especially common among the leftist groups and relate to the conspiracy of the BOP (Büyük Orta Doğu Projesi, Grand Middle East Project), in which the JDP is accused of being involved by Kemalists.

¹⁶ The story of Fadime Şahin is one of the most notorious examples of this abuse. A *tarikat* (religious order) leader, Müslüm Gündüz, is caught by the media while he was molesting a ‘naive’ veiled girl using his religious authority. Later on, however, it was found out that the lady was hired and disguised as such to be caught with Müslüm Gündüz (among many see ‘There is no such person as Fadime Şahin’ retrieved on 24.03.12 from <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Gundem/?i=199583>).

¹⁷ For example see the article “*Türban Kuran’da Yok İncil’de Var*” (Türban does not exist in the Quran, it exists in the Bible) by Rahmi Turan in the *Hürriyet*, 03.03.2008

¹⁸ 18.02.1997 Zaman

¹⁹ Note that the question mark is a modality marker and expresses a low level of certainty committed to the existence of such a problem.

²⁰ For example, “*Alman Anayasa’sının Türban Yorumu*” (The Turban Interpretation of the German Constitutional Court) Zaman published on 05.03.2008.

²¹ For example; “*Başörtüsü Anayasal Bir Haktır*” (Headscarf is a constitutional right) *Vakit* 07.03.2008

²² For example; “*Türban tarihle bağımızı koparmak için uyduruldu*” (Turban was counterfeited to break our ties with the past) *Vakit* 06.03.2008