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THE REPRSENTATION OF THE AKP IDEOLOGY WITHIN THE TURKISH CHILDREN CARTOON SERIES "PEPEE"

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AKP İDEOLOJİSİNİN "PEPEE" ADLI TÜRK ÇİZGİ FİLMİNE YANSIMASI

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Abstract:

Mass media play a significant role in the reproduction and dissemination of the government ideology due to its ability to reach thousands, millions and even billions of people. The aim of this thesis is to analyze and evaluate the first Turkish cartoon series "*Pepee*" in relation to the Turkish ruling party AKP's ideology. Representation of the governing ideology through children cartoons plays an important role in the construction and formation of children's political identity.

This is a descriptive study utilizing a qualitative research design. The sample of the study consists of eight seasons of the *Pepee* cartoon series that comprised of 211 episodes. Research data was analyzed both using the methods of content analysis and discourse analysis.

Based on the analysis, it was observed that the *Pepee* cartoon series did contain several messages in line with the AKP ideology. It was revealed that the AKP's ideas about patriarchy, family values, Westernization, Islam and gender dimensions were strongly reflected within the cartoon series through the language used in the episodes, food and beverages, colors and style of clothing, the socio-cultural and socio-economic status of the characters, emotional situations and the games played by the characters throughout the episodes.

Keywords: *autocracy, censorship, children cartoons, content analysis, cultivation, democracy, discourse analysis, European Union, freedom of expression, gender equality, gender roles, government, hegemony, ideology, the JDP, mass media, media and state relations, media literacy, media politics, narrative, Pepee, politics, political*

parallelism, representation, regulation, socialization, television, television transparency, Turkish broadcasting, westernization.

Özet:

Kitle iletişim araçları, egemen ideolojinin yayılmasında ve yeniden üretilmesinde önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Özellikle birden fazla duyuya hitabedebilirliği ve her sosyo-ekonomik duzeydeki aileye ulaşabilirliği sayesinde televizyon bu hususta oldukça etkilidir. İzleyici kitlesi çocuk olduğunda ise, durum daha da hassasiyet kazanmaktadır çünkü çocuklar televizyondan aldıkları mesajları sorgulamaksızın bilgi dağarcıklarına eklemektedirler (Bandura, 1986).

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı son dönemlerde bir çok çocuğun severek izlediği *Pepee* çizgi filminin söylem analizini ve içerik analizini yapmaktır. Tez kapsamında, 2008 yılının Eylül ayından 2015 yılının Ocak ayına kadar geçen sürede yayınlanan 211 bölüm *Pepee* incelenmiştir. Ortalama 11 dakika süren bölümlere internet aracılığı ile ulaşılmış, bölümler indirilmiş, arşivlenmiş ve analiz edilmiştir.

Yapılan araştırmaların ve incelemelerin sonucuna gore ilk Türk yapımı çizgi filmi olan Pepee'nin bir çok yönden egemen ideolojiyle paralellik gösterdiğini söylemek mümkündür. Bu benzerlikler ataerkil motifler, dini öğeler, aile ilişkileri, kadın-erkek eşitsizliği ve batı karşıtlığı olarak beş ana başlık altında toplanmıştır. Söz konusu hususlar genellikle bölümlerde kullanılan dile, müziğe, karakterlerin kıyafet ve aksesuarlarına, bölümlerde yenilen yemeklere, içilen içeceklere, karakterlerin oynadıkları oyunlara, birbirleriyle olan ilişkilerine, sosyo-ekonomik ve sosyo-kültürel durumlarına yansımıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *AKP, animasyon, Avrupa Birliği, basın özgürlüğü, çizgi film, demokrasi, egemen ideoloji, hegemonya, içerik analizi, ifade özgürlüğü, kitle iletişim araçları, medya, medya ve siyaset ilişkisi, sansür, televizyon, Türk televizyonculuğu.*

List of Tables and Charts:

Introduction:

Democracy has always been considered an ideal form of governance and its most important guiding principle is "*freedom*". The European Convention on Human Rights provides the right to freedom of expression and information subject to certain restrictions that are "in accordance with law" and which are "necessary in a democratic society" (EC, article 10). This right includes the freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas. Moreover, in the Foreign Affairs Council meeting in Brussels on the 12th of May 2014 it was stated that:

> "*Free, diverse and independent media are essential in any society to provide and protect freedom of opinion and expression. By facilitating the free flow of information and ideas on matters of general interest and by ensuring transparency and accountability, independent media constitute one of the cornerstones of a democratic society. Without freedom of expression and freedom of the media, an informed, active and engaged citizenry is impossible*" (EC, 2014).

Although Turkey claims to be a democratic society in a modernization period and is being propelled into an open-ended path of European style normalization to converge with the European Union (EU) standards in almost all walks of life (Belge, 2004), the freedom of the mass media is very low in Turkey. According to Tanış (2014), Turkey is the only European country, which has not a full freedom of expression (Tanış, 2014). Moreover, according to the US-originated think tank "Freedom House", who is investigating the freedom of press in 195 countries and 15 territories (Freedom House,

2015), the press status of Turkey is "not free" with 65 point out of 100 (FHR, 2015). Moreover Turkey took the 149th place out of 180 in Reporters Without Borders Organization World Press Freedom Index Report 2015 (RSF, 2015). Although Turkey applied EU-inspired reforms such as expanding freedom of expression, allowing education and broadcasting in Kurdish or abolishing cruel punishments for verbal propaganda (Governments reform package, 2002), it could not prevent nor reduce the state's involvement and regulation of media institutions. Contrarily, the Freedom House and Reporters Without Borders Organization World Press reports indicate that it has been decreasing every year (FHR, 2015 and RSF, 2015). While the press freedom grade of Turkey was 62 in 2014 out of 100, it declined to 65 in 2015, where zero is considered as the best and hundred considered as the worst (FHR, 2015).

Following AKP's coming to power after the 2002 general elections, the political discourse and practices in many spheres including the media, education, economy and so on have faced a major transformation. During the period of its governance, slowly but surely the AKP has built close relations with the owners of various mass media institutions, who were businessman instead of media professionals (Gül, 2012). Moreover, when AKP raised share of its votes from 34.26 per cent to 46.58 per cent (Turkstat, 2007) and guaranteed its place within the public by re-winning the elections on the 22nd of July 2007, its religious-oriented background has become more and more visible than before and this has reflected heavily within the media content. Even, the current president and former Prime Minister Recep

Tayyip Erdoğan did not hesitate to express that their goal is to raise "*religious youth*". In one of his speeches during the AKP's second tenure he said that:

> "…*Did not come pious contemporary generation? Cannot one be both religious and contemporary? Gentlemen bend your head forward and consider… One can be both religious and contemporary and we the AKP will show you how to do this…*"[1] (Erdoğan, retrieved from: http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/19825231.asp).

Hence children have become the new target for Turkish media. The timing of the broadcasting of the first Turkish prime time television cartoon series "*Pepee*" corresponds with the second tenure of the AKP governance, which should not be considered as a simple coincidence.

Since, "childhood" is recognized to be a stage in life open to learning, realizing and discovering the world and framing an identity (Casey, et al., 2008), they cannot learn everything on their own. They also need external sources to guide them, and prime time television cartoons provide a unique opportunity for this (Bandura, 1986). A growing body of literature demonstrates that children learn the facts, values and norms about the world from cartoons and then retain what they have watched and add this to their stock of prior knowledge (Lemish, 2015). However, assuming children's cartoons to be one of the biggest sources of education does not mean that every single message conveyed by them has a positive content. They may be equally good or bad for children. I therefore strongly believe that analyzing the content of the

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[1] Translated by the author

one and only Turkish prime time television cartoon series' content is very significant for the future vision of children and for the country.

Accordingly, this thesis is aimed at revealing the AKP's ideology from the first Turkish prime time television cartoon series *Pepee* and analyzing how government reach children through the mass media. However, the contextual analysis of the cartoon series would be more meaningful with an understanding of media politics; thus the first chapter of the study provides a detailed illustration of the relationship between media and the State. Chapter two focuses mainly on television, which is one of the most important mass media tools and examines its linkage with the government. Chapter three covers on the state of the television broadcasting in Turkey and its historical transformation. Since the Turkish ruling party's vision is to create a religious youth, chapter four examines the media's role on children's lives and last but not least chapter five provides a discourse analysis of the one and only Turkish cartoon series *Pepee* and illustrates the reflection of the AKP ideology within the cartoon series.

1. Theoretical Background:

The freedom of mass media is one of the most significant issues in the contemporary mass media studies. Very basically it can be defined various channels of communication that involve transmitting information in some way, shape or form to large numbers of people (Gordon, 1998). In other words the term mass media can be considered as the organized means of open communication at a distance and to many in a short space of time (McQuail, 2010). What makes mass media an important

feature in society is its capacity to reach the entire population rapidly and with much of the same information, the universal fascination it holds, the presumed relationship to forces of power and last but not least the assumption of great impact and influence. Throughout time some ongoing changes have happened in the spectrum of mass media and in many aspects of their form and content. However, their continuing significance in contemporary societies in the spheres of politics, culture, economics and everyday social life has never changed. According to Dennis McQuail, in respect of politics the mass media provides an arena of debate for politicians, interest groups and government agents to disseminate their ideas to the public. In the realm of culture, the mass media is for most people the main channel of cultural representation and expression and the primary source of images of social reality and materials for forming and maintaining social identity. Moreover, everyday social life is strongly influenced by the routines of media use and infused by its contents through the way leisure time is spent and lifestyles are influenced. Lastly, mass media corporations are dominating the media market (McQuail, 2010). As he clearly states and we can clearly see, what makes the mass media significant in a society is neither its form nor its technology; it is the message that in carries by its content.

1.1. Mass Media Texts:

In this sense, we can confidently argue that the media is not objects like newspapers, television sets or telegraphs or so on but the messages and the content that these objects convey. Therefore "mass media" of itself clearly has no straightforward definition; it gains a meaning through the message or text that it

carries. Because what we call text is the process of making meaning (Barthes, 1994). Media texts refer to the given meaning and exist in the mind of the media - when they are seen, read or heard. Briggs and Cobley suggest that texts are important for the role they play in producing our "*common sense*" understandings of the world. As such media texts are thought to affect the way we understand others and ourselves and the way we lead our lives (Briggs and Cobley, 2002). In a broad sense, media texts are objects produced with the explicit intention of engaging an audience and they comprise a torrent of materials and produce a flood of meanings (Lotman, 2011). The connection between text and meaning is also about the relationship between the media and society. The classical Marxist approach assumes that text messages, which are conveyed into the consciousness of the audience, have shape and structure (Burton, 2009). They are nothing but representations in both the material and ideological sense (Hallam, 2000). In the material sense the media text is a made thing, a product of technology (Burton, 2009), an image on a screen or a set of marks on a page. However, in an ideological sense, media texts represent the ideas of a special group of people (Burton, 2009). Hence, media texts are an illusion of power rather than the mirror of a reality. They are something socially constructed; the representations of the social reality but from a biased perspective.

Very basically the term representation is considered as the way in which the media portrays particular groups, communities, experiences, ideas, or topics from a particular ideological or value perspective (Burgan, 2004 as cited in Levin, 2013). It is the construction of ideas about a subject through some means of communication

(Burton, 2009). Stuart Hall argued in "The Work of Representation" that representation connects meaning to culture (Hall, 1997:2). So representations are the fundamental elements of the world, which have saturated us. People seek to give meaning to the world by constructing a set of correspondences between things, people, objects, events, ideas or abstracts and so on, the so-called "*reality*" inside their heads, and then they desire to express, share or exchange those interpretations they have formed in their heads. The concept we call representation is the process of using language to say something meaningful about the world or to represent the world meaningfully to other people (Hall, 1980). Moreover, David Chandler (2005) defines mass media representations as:

> "…*representation refers to the construction in any medium*
>
> *especially the mass media of aspects of reality such as people, places,*
>
> *objects, events and cultural identities…*"   (Chandler, 2005 as cited in

Signes 2007).

1.2. The Politics of the Mass Media:

All mass media representations tend to reflect an ideological position. As Levi-Strauss (1958) notes all representations have ideologies behind them. While certain paradigms are encoded into media texts others are left out (Levi-Strauss, 1958). What paradigms those are and to whom they belong are the main issues requiring analysis within media studies. Hence Gigi, Durham and Kellner's (2012) statement that mass media representations are not pure entertainment or informative

tools but instead they are saturated with social meanings and transcode major political discourses (Gigi et al., 2012). The social and political impacts generated are to reinforce the existing domination and subordination. Thus it is always necessary to ask and illustrate in whose reality we are seeing, reading or hearing through the mass media. This question highlights the effects of politics on the media and turns the freedom of mass media into one of the most significant issues in contemporary mass media studies. This goes back to Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels and has been theorized by a number of notable scholars. According to Marx ideology is the system of ideas and representations, which dominate the mind of a man or a social group (Althusser, 1971). Marx and Engels strongly disagree with the neutrality and objectivity of ideology and developed a theory in order to criticize the already noted illustration of ideology. They claimed that:

> *"…The class which has the means of material production at its*
>
> *disposal has control at the same time over the means of mental*
>
> *production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of*
>
> *those who lack the means of mental production are subject to*
>
> *it…"* (Marx & Engels: The German Ideology, as cited in Curran et al.

1982: 22).

Marx and Engels opined a harsh critique of ideology attempting to show how cultural texts protect the interests of dominant groups by naturalizing, idealizing and legitimizing their views. They state that the ruling classes employ intellectuals and cultural producers to glorify their own ideas in literature, the press or film and

television because the media is an integral part of the capitalist system (Burton, 2009). According to the classical Marxist position the mass media disseminate the ideas and world-views of the elites and impugn contrary ones. Ergo, since the mass media became a part of capitalism and its interests the media texts turned into manufactured goods. Hence one can justifiably claim that control over the means of production and distribution of goods leads to control over the ideas within those goods. Since the ruling elite are the owners of the means of production, including the media organizations, it is an incontrovertible fact that media texts advance the dominant ideology and serves to maintain the power of these ruling elites.

The raison d'etre, the basic reason of this biased mass media can be shown as the desire of the ruling class to ensure and sustain their dominance over society. In order to satisfy this desire, the ruling class has taken control of mass media organizations and uses them according to its own interests. These groups manipulate the perception about current issues with their own thoughts and judgments about certain issues. With the power they have they can be effective in promoting certain factions of the society to certain fields of action (Arsan, 2013). The governments also try to control the minds of readers or viewers through the media and produce a consensus among the audience in society leaving the mass media to pose as neutral and impartial but they are not. Various scholars have theorized the issue of the relationship between politics and the mass media. Although they all focused on different aspects of the issue, they all agree that the centrality of the media to social life is taken for granted today. Ruling classes spread their ideology over the general

masses through the mass media. And people start to accept these ideas as "*normal*". Antonio Gramsci is another second-generation European Marxist scholar who has theorized this common-sense building process. According to Gramsci, the dominant class constantly tries to win people's consent and he uses the term "hegemony" for this endless winning and re-winning of the consent of the majority (Gramsci, 1971). He believes that the ruling class has to produce a consensus within society (Yaylagül, 2006) and this can be built through social institutions such as schools, religion or the media. These institutions teach people the world views of the ruling class' which come to be accepted as commonsensical by people, who in turn start to evaluate the real facts according to those imposed views and ideas (Yaylagül, 2006). Therefore the media is a medium, which transfers the ruling class' values to its readers, viewers and listeners. It is always hostile to any kind of message, which opposes the views of the ruling structure, dominant values and any kind of event that threatens them. Gramsci supports the idea that we acquire a naturalized and dominant view of how things should be but indirectly, through formal learning and through media consumption (Burton, 2009). The media filters our perception of reality, which in turn accords with the ruling class' perception. The way we think about social reality is bound up with the ideas of the ruling elites. For example, in todays' patriarchal and heterosexual societies homosexuals are shown as deficient people who need punishment and correction and people accept this idea as something normal and as a result homosexual people are turned into minority people. Indeed, there is not any rule or

statement telling homosexual people that they are deficient; this is just the ideology of the ruling elite, which has been conveyed into public's mind.

Furthermore, an American linguist and philosopher Noam Chomsky and professor Edward Herman outlined a model called "Propaganda Model" in their book "Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media" in 1988. Very basically the propaganda model seeks to explain the behavior of news media operating in a capitalist economy. The model suggests that media outlets will consistently produce news content that aligns with the interests of the political and economic elites (Enoch, 1996). Although both Chomsky and Herman are not identified as Marxist scholars, they have similar thoughts to the classical Marxist approach. They believed that within capitalist societies the media and culture had turned into an industry and were organized according to codes of capitalism. Both the media and culture are owned and controlled by capitalists who are wealthier and politically more powerful than the rest. Chomsky and Herman claim that todays the mass media and culture are being used to spread these powerful groups' ideologies to the public. It is almost impossible for an ordinary citizen to represent his or her own ideas to the public by using the mass media or a cultural tool. Therefore, the freedom of the media in todays' world cannot even be mentioned (Yaylagül, 2006).

All in all, the governments control the minds of readers or viewers through the media and produce a consensus among the audience within society thus the mass media poses as neutral and impartial, however they are not. As Richard Hoggard argues:

"…The whole ideological atmosphere of our society, which tells us that some things can be said and that others had best not be said. It is that whole and almost unconscious pressure towards implicitly affirming the status quo towards confirming the "ordinary man" in his existing attitudes, towards discouraging refusals to conform, that atmosphere which comes from the morning radio news and chat programs as much as from the whole pattern of reader-visual background and words in which is the context of television news…"

(Hoggart, as cited in Bennet, 1982: 303).

Because people have limited time and cognitive resources to seek and process information themselves they have good reasons to rely on the information offered to them by the media (Somer, 2010). However, the problematic nature of mass media with its interest and profit-based relationship with the government means it has lost its beneficial feature and has turned into a medium of economic and political manipulation by the authorities. Governments are constantly releasing their own ideology to the public through various mass media tools including the press, radio and television broadcasting, books and so on.

The broadcast and cable television, radio, movie and music studios, newspapers, magazines, books and most print publications which are all considered "old media" are more likely to fit into these definitions than the new media tool which is the "internet". This is because the old media is silent and the audience cannot engage actively with the media texts. Since all the old media tools are as problematic

as each other the aim of this thesis will mainly focus on television. The rationale behind choosing television as the subject matter of this thesis is the inter-related aspects of television, which continually figure in any debate about it and make it different from a debate about the press, radio or cinema. A distinctive feature of television has been its high degree of regulation and control by governmental authorities- initially out of technical necessity and later out of a mixture of state self-interest and sheer institutional custom (McQuail, 2010). Moreover television can reach a potentially scopic range and penetration of everyday living (Corner, 1999). A popular television show can reach 15-20 million households (Croteau and Hoynes, 2003) and must be considered as one of the most powerful media tools. Despite the fact that television has been largely denied an autonomous political role and is primarily considered as a medium of entertainment, it plays a vital role in modern politics. It is the main source of news and information for most people and the main channel of communication between politicians and citizens (McQuail, 2010). Although, it is severally considered as a channel of communication between politicians and citizens, it has remained credible and trusted. Hence, in order to illustrate the relationship between politics and mass media one needs to analyze the sphere of television broadcasting and how broadcasting firms serve the dominant groups within society.

1.3. Politics of Television Broadcasting:

By the mid 2000s, pronouncements of the death of television were very common. This was because people were tweeting, watching video online or updating

their Facebook status and so on. Nevertheless, television has not gone anywhere and continues to play a crucial part in the media landscape in most societies. It can still regularly command a nightly viewing audience of over 100 million in the United States and 20 million in the United Kingdom in 2010 (Gray and Lotz, 2012). Television in the late 1940s and early 1950s like any new invention entered societies that had already established norms of social relations. Ten years after its entrance to people's homes as a new popular form of media, television studies emerged as an identifiable entity due to their close relationship with politics, economics and culture. The theoretical and methodological roots of television studies lie in the field of "cultural studies" which derives from particular inflections of Marxism, semiotics and post-structuralism (Fiske, 1987). The role of television on people's attitudes and behaviors can be summarized as educating children, setting the agenda on public discourse, supplying resources for political participation and shaping the cultural identity of its viewers (Gripsrud, 2010), is very important. But what makes the study of television so important is its power to determine people's view of the world because as Gripsrud (2010) states it is still a mirror and an actor in the social, political and cultural spheres. Thus it is very important to analyze the messages conveyed by television because close dialogical and reflective relations with the rest of the society are manifested in its contents day by day following historical and socio-political developments (Gripsrud, 2010). Roughly, television is considered as the source of the most broadly shared images and messages in history (Gerbner, 1985-1989, p.1). It is a medium, which has become so closely integrated to our daily and domestic lives

because of its ability to command the attention of our eyes, ears, fears and dreams like few other sources can. Despite the proliferation of competition from a variety of new media forms, it is still one of the most important sources of communication, the key storyteller whose impact is increasingly felt around the contemporary industrialized world. Television constantly punctuates, articulates and manipulates the world around us. It is the primary source of things that we know because it is the continual repetition of stories, myths, facts, lessons and so on that define the world (Gerbner, 1985-1989). It provides a daily ritual and legitimizes a particular social order. However, nothing that happens on television "actually" happens, everything is a representation of reality. The role that television plays in society is constructing core beliefs, telling stories and offering information (Gray and Lotz, 2012). It is giving us a representation of reality. As such, everything on television is an image of and a play on a message with some meanings. John Fiske and O'Sullivan define television as a mass communication medium, a cultural agent, a provoker consisting of transmitted programs, that carry some meanings (Fiske, 1983 and O'Sullivan et al., 1983). They argue that these meanings are embedded in television codes (Fiske, 1983 and O'Sullivan et al., 1983). John Fiske defines a code that:

> *"…a rule-governed system of signs. They are the links between*
>
> *producers and audiences, agents of meaning network that constitutes*
>
> *our cultural world and reflects the reality…"* (Fiske, 1987:3)

Therefore the main concern of television studies is how these meanings are produced. People perceive and make sense of reality by these codes. In short, this socially

constructed, transmitted reality is structured into television codes with the aim of serving the dominant ideology. Thus television is not a medium offering a public service by informing, entertaining or educating its audience, on the contrary it is maintaining the ideological power by reflecting the views and concerns of the ruling class (Creeber, 2006). Because television broadcasting is a costly activity, the ones who hold the purse strings play a significant role in the broadcasting process (Crisel, 2006). Although television broadcasting appears as a natural and transparent window on the world, it is actually highly constructed to align with the interests of powerful groups (Spigel et al., 2004). The government decides what the broadcasting firms can do or cannot do. Television texts produce and perpetuate a distorted perception of the world; it prescribes and constructs reality in such a way as to maintain the politically dominant ideology (Gitlin, 1978). Because of its potential influence on society, what television should broadcast and who should broadcast it has always been one of the greatest concerns of government. Thus in almost every country the state imposes rules and policies over television broadcasting firms under its control (Miller, 2010). This does not take place only in politically biased television programs such as news or current affairs; it clearly takes place in less politically motivated genres such as soap operas, television action series, police shows, children cartoons or even sitcoms. Therefore, one should analyze all television genre's contents because television can be considered to be one of the most powerful tools for disseminating the dominant ideology because it is 24 hours broadcasting and not only so-called politics, but it is

also entertaining people but as James Curran states while entertaining it is still reproducing the dominant ideology.

> *"…entertainment is intimately linked with politics through the values it articulates and the passions it generates…"* (Curran, 2000:139).

Government institutions in all branches and at all levels invest sizeable resources to manipulate the television texts and messages so that they favor their causes and generate supportive public opinions. Although these government regulators act as allies of and protectors of the weak and vulnerable in society, protecting children, the disabled, rural dwellers, the poor and further the political promise of free expression, in fact they ensure the production and reproduction of the dominant ideology. As Patricia Aufderheide states, each of these social welfare-oriented approaches has a slightly different take on the notion of the public and its relationship to government (Aufderheide, 1999). And both the manner and the extent of the government's regulation are primarily the expression of its own ideological position. It consistently naturalizes the world around us and turns ideological bias into a natural representation (Creeben, 2006). Thus Fiske calls television an essentially realistic medium because of its ability to carry a socially convincing sense of reality, which is indeed just the dominant sense of reality (Fiske, 1987:21). Having looked at an expansive literature on the relationship between media and politics I can say that due to the social, economic and technological changes that have occurred in Western countries and also in societies adopting western-originated values, freedom of expression has lost its meaning. Television broadcasting has lost its role of defending and protecting

individuals from the abuses of the state and facilitating their rights and liberty, on the contrary it has become a weapon of the ruling elite to spread and disseminate their own values and to protect their own interests. Although freedom of speech is a fundamental human right and protected in international human rights instruments including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 19), the International Convent on Civil and Political Rights (Article 19 and 20) and the European Convention for the protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Article 10) it cannot be fully realized all over the world (Arat, 2007). Furthermore, the European Court of Human Rights has ruled that any infringement on freedom of expression "must be prescribed by law", must be needed in a democratic country and must be reasonably proportionate to the aim of responding to that need (Robertson and Nicol, 1984). Although Turkey identifies itself as a democratic country, freedom of expression cannot even be mentioned in Turkey. There have been frequent government restraints and restrictions on freedom of expression especially on freedom of the press and freedom of television broadcasting in Turkey (Arat, 2007).

2. Brief Information about Mass Media in Turkey:

2.1. The Background of Television Broadcasting in Turkey:

In 1914 the Turkish journalist Ahmed Emin Yalaman defended his dissertation at Colombia University by stating that:

> *"…the press should be taken as a measure of development because it has always been the leading factor in the modern Turkish movement…"*

A century later numerous key scholars including Ali Çarkoğlu, Gözde Yavuz and Raşit Kaya have accepted this argument and applied it to television broadcasting. Çarkoğlu and Yavuz (2010) argue forcefully that the critical role that freedom of television broadcasting plays in a society is constantly monitored as a measure of the quality of democracy (Çarkoğlu and Yavuz, 2010). Although Turkey identifies itself as a democratic country the freedom of broadcasting is very limited in Turkey. It has always been marked by a high degree of political parallelism (Kaya and Çakmur, 2011). Political parallelism is a concept built upon from Seymour Ure's term "press-party parallelism" by Daniel Hallin and Paolo Mancini. Colin Seymour Ure coined the term "press-party parallelism" in 1974 in his book "The Political Impact of Mass Media". He used the notion to describe the degree to which the newspaper systems mirror the party system (Ure, 1974). After a while Hallin and Mancini took the term and developed it. They prefer to call it "political parallelism" instead of "press party parallelism" to widen the analysis of the relationship between politics and mass media to all media tools and not limiting it to the press only because politicians are now using all mass media tools to disseminate their messages to the public (Gripsrud and Weibull, 2010). They identified a three-fold typology of media systems according to the degree of state involvement and regulation on media institutions, the historical developments and the extent of media professionalism (Curan, 1986). These typologies are: Liberal Model, Democratic Corporate Model and Polarized Pluralist Model. Raşit Kaya places Turkish broadcasting in the "Polarized Pluralist Model"

which mainly typifies the countries in Mediterranean Europe and calls for deep concern over the more restricted freedom of expression (Kaya and Çakmur, 2010).

As a regulator and funder the state has always exerted strong control over the television broadcasting in Turkey. In order to analyze the current state of television broadcasting in Turkey and the reasons for this political parallelism and its consequences, we should look at historical developments and the transmissions that the Turkish mass communication system has experienced.

2.2. The Period of TRT Monopolization (1960-1980):

Turkey has a short but complex broadcasting history, and it is worth a profound analysis. In general from the first television broadcasting until today it has been under a high level of state regulation. The Turkish television broadcasting roots back to the 1960s. The Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT) was established as an autonomous institution in 1960 but because of the technical incompetence and lack of television broadcasting equipment in Turkey only began at the end of the 1960s. It was a publicly owned autonomous institution with a legal status (Çaplı, 1998). On the 31st of January 1968 test transmissions started on the channel TRT 1 in Ankara by the announcer Nuran Devres. The first television program was her opening speech. From 1968 to 1971 there was not a regular television broadcasting in Turkey, it was more like a trial than a full functioning service. A full nationwide service of regular daily broadcasts only began in December 1972 in more developed big cities such as Ankara, Istanbul, and Izmir. Day

after day it became more wide spread and today there is at least one or more television sets in every household.

From the establishment of TRT until March 1990, when the first private sector station was launched and co-owned by the son of the president at the time Turgut Özal, TRT was the only television channel in Turkey. Thus it was under a high level of state regulation. This state control of TRT broadcasts has always been an issue with the government applying a variety of control mechanisms (Aziz, 1993). This monopolization of TRT, which was owned by the government, led the state to broadcast everything in accordance with its own ideology and not to broadcast any contrary ideas. It has been operated entirely according to an authoritarian state-broadcasting model rather than as a "public service". It was a publicly owned, autonomous institution. As Ayşen Akkor Gül states in her article "Monopolization of Media Ownership as a Challenge to the Turkish Television Broadcasting System and the European Union" TRT had full autonomy for programing, administration and for its finance. Its functions were defined as being those of a fully public service (Gül, 2011). Although TRT was constantly reflecting the dominant ideology (Aksoy and Robins, 1997), one should not deny that on the one hand TRT tried to inform the public and educate people with hundreds of programs such as *Anadolu'ya*[2], *Gezelim görelim*[3], *Yediden adam olacak çocuk*[4] and so on. But on the other hand, TRT has always been in agreement with the ruling government. It has always been criticized

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[2] A Turkish television show, which broadcast about various places in the Anatolian region of Turkey
[3] A Turkish television show, which broadcast about various regions of Turkey
[4] Former Turkish television show, which educates children about various issues.

because for reflecting the ruling government and prioritizing it (Gül, 2011). TRT has always been the voice of government and has been reluctant to debate any controversial issues on the public agenda. The Gezi demonstrations that happened in summer 2012 in Turkey can be given as the biggest and the most recent example.

2.3. The Privatization Period of Turkish Television Broadcasting (1980-2000):

When we come to the 1980s and beyond we can see how Western countries were affected by neo-liberal policies, which lead to "privatization" and "deregulation" (Mchesney and Herman, 1997). An under-developed country like Turkey adopted these policies at its national level. Moreover, at this time Turkey experienced its third military coup, the 1980 intervention, which brought the need for a smooth transfer to a "neo-liberalist" system (Kılıç, 1998 as cited in Tunç, 2002). These neo-liberalization policies and the privatization of public broadcasting times came up to Turgut Özal's prime ministry in Turkey (1984-1989). So he was the one who opened up Turkey's economy to global market forces. His project was to integrate the Turkish economy into the global economic system (Şahin and Aksoy, 1993). The integration of Turkish broadcasting into the global media market started with TRT Avrasya and various commercial channels beaming their signals to Turkish diaspora viewers in Europe and later to viewers in America, Australia and Africa (Karanfil, 2009). Within this conjecture in the early 1990s the private channels entered the market and challenged TRT's monopoly position. This was the start of commercial broadcasting in Turkey. Starting with Star1, which quickly mushroomed, new, private

television broadcasting channels started to be established (Kaya and Çakmur, 2011). Three years after the first broadcast of the private channel Star1 in July 1993, Article 133, which permitted private radio and television stations to operate was incorporates into the Turkish constitution. The official constitution is:

> *"Radio and television stations shall be established and administered freely in conformity with rules to be regulated by law.*
>
> *The unique radio and television administration 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…"* (Constitution of Turkey; 1982,

Article 133)

Especially in the second half of the 1990s a considerable number of television channels have started in Turkey and Turkish audiences were free to zap among them. These new channels offered a wide range of content. They were sometimes showing American dramas, sometimes daily-reality shows, sometimes entertainment and informative programs for children and sometimes they featured serious debate programs on various themes. Faced with this situation Karanfil and Kaptan of the state Turkish broadcasting arena started to experience an unprecedented feeling of disorder and chaos in the media scene as stations had not been authorized to operate on specific frequencies or were competing for the same airwaves. Moreover the popularity of religious channels was concerning the government (Kaptan and Karanfil, 2013). This was the period when the state broadcasters' monopoly was

broken and private commercial broadcasters entered the national Turkish broadcasting sphere (Aksoy and Robins, 1997). On the one hand this was something productive but on the other hand it caused some problems within the industry. The main problem was the lack of legislation regulating these new channels and a regulatory body to assign frequencies to them. According to Kaya and Çakmur, this situation frightened the government and all the political parties because private channels were using powerful transmitters, which caused interference to and jammed other frequencies and this was decreasing the ability of the state to convey their ideologies as it had been. The Prime Minister at the time, Süleyman Demirel, decreed that closure was necessary to create a climate of order (Aksoy and Robins, 1997). Thus the government proceeded to make an amendment to the constitution in July 1993 and finally in 1994 the law on the Establishment of Radio and Television Enterprisers and Their Broadcast was adopted as a licensing and supervision authority (Kaya, 1994). This is how the biggest fear of broadcasting institutions and the biggest regulation of the state over television emerged. On the 16th of May 1994 as a direct result of the new legislation the Turkish Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) was established (as cited in http://www.rtuk.gov.tr/#) as a regulatory body, and as a major actor in the field of broadcasting primarily responsible for the "orderliness" of the sector (Kaptan and Karanfil, 2013). Since the abandonment of the state monopoly could not put an end to the use of television solely for political purposes by the government the RTÜK solved this problem and started to exert strong control over the content of television texts. Gökçen Karanfil argues that from the day of its establishment the acronym became

one of the most common words used in the Turkish broadcasting sphere (Karanfil, 2013) because of its great responsibilities and authorities. This new Council was made up of nine members appointed by Parliament. The main responsibilities of the RTÜK included the setting up of rules and regulations for running radio stations and television systems, allocating frequencies, granting channels and transmission licenses to all broadcasting organizations, supervising broadcasting companies, granting permission for the establishment of private radio and television systems, monitoring broadcasters and regulating broadcasting activities (Kejanlıoğlu et al., 2004, Kaptan and Karanfil, 2013, Çaplı, 1998). The authorities and sanctions given to the RTÜK by the Government and parliament covered a wide range. The lightest of these was a warning. If a station continued to ignore the Council's decisions, then tougher sanctions would be implemented, ranging from closing the station down for one day, or withdrawing the station's broadcasting license altogether (Çaplı, 1998). In other words the RTÜK was able to control the content and the channels, which are against the state and to punish them according to these controls. It became a body responsible for considering the dialectic between broadcasting policies, broadcasting companies and broadcasted content. It functioned to regulate the content and context of broadcasting with the dominant party's ideology.

By the end of the 1990s and early 2000s the Turkish broadcasting market with 18 million television- owning households became one of the biggest in Europe (Ratem, 2009 as cited in Gül, 2011). The number of television channels has risen to 23 national, 16 regional and more than 212 local channels (Ratem, 2009) and Turkish

audiences were free to zap between them. This situation created expectation within the sphere of media studies, which is the hope of a decrease of state regulation. However, unlike many other European countries neither neo-liberation, privatization nor the development of commercialization could decrease the high degree of political involvement in television broadcasting institutions because the media market was dominated by major and smaller cross-media groups who are also businessmen rather than media professionals. They are involved in other businesses or holdings involving the media sector thus they need to have very close relations with the politicians and they all targeted either to gain some political power or to turn their investments into profitable enterprises and accumulate more and more money (Gül, 2011). In other words in order to survive within the harsh market conditions, the broadcasters tried to increase the usage level of their media properties by reflecting the dominant ideology with the aim of making more money. Broadcasting owners kept on serving the dominant ideology in order to protect their own interests and make more and more money. In response the politicians responded for this and used this great variety of channels to convey their ideology as much as they could. Thus totally contrary to expectations this situation became a win – win situation. The private media in Turkey developed a close relationship with the state. Media always worked for and allied themselves with the national interest. They incorporate elements from official ideology (Mutlu, 1999). Still every single genre is carrying the dominant ideology values. According to Ergur, increasing levels of control by the conglomerates of media institutions together with the crude commercialism promoted by the private

television channels had an inevitable impact on the economic and socio-political functions of the media systems in Turkey (Ergur, 1997). So contrary to expectation, the shift towards the neo-liberal policies, by being so far away from abolishing the state regulation on broadcasting, it could not decrease its level but instead it fortified the media industry and thus paved the way to the instrumentalization of the media outlets by the corporate interest (Adaklı, 2006). The media systems in Turkey show a parallelism with political systems and develop according to dynamics of country's specific political background.

2.4. The Period of Justice and Development Party Governance (2000s and onwards):

Another distinctive change that the Turkish television broadcasting experienced was the rapid proliferation of conservative/Islamist contents, which came up in the early 2000s with the rise of "*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*" (AKP) (Justice and Development Party). The former Professor at the Middle East Technical University and the current minister of the Republican People's Party (CHP), Sencer Ayata, argues that today the conservative/Islamist print and broadcasting media can easily rival the mainstream media in Turkey (Ayata, 1993). The formation of the AKP has its roots in the Islamic political movement created by the former prime minister (1996-1997) Necmettin Erbakan in the late 1960s (Gülalp, 1999). His three political parties the National Salvation Party (Milli Selamet Partisi), the Welfare party (Refah Partisi) and the Islamist Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi) were closed down one by one. However, there was a younger generation of Islamists within Erbakan's party who

were seen as moderate, pro-western and in support of globalization (Cizre and Çınar, 2003). This group will later form the original codes of the AKP and will cause important changes in various spheres of the Turkish political context.

In the year 2002 the AKP won the general elections in Turkey. After the AKP came to power the political discourse and practice in Turkey on many issues including economy, education, media, social policy etc. have faced a great transformation as a result of the policies of AKP. The party's image was accompanied by a promise of "change" that signaled a rupture from their political Islamist legacy and manifested itself in the party's pro-EU stance. However since 2007, patriarchal and moral values often framed by religion have started to become dominant in the party's regulation of social and cultural domains (Öniş, 2009 and 2012). So it is better to consider AKP's ruling period as two different phases because the period from 2002 to 2007 and 2007 to 2015 show big differences in the party's image itself. Even though, the Turkish media has been under siege by the ruling government AKP and the level of political pressure and legal restraints on Turkish television broadcasting were still visible in an unprecedented scale between 2002-2007, the AKP were promoting western values within cultural, social and political spheres. The AKP portrayed itself as a conservative party that advocated a liberal market economy and membership of the European Union. In this first phase of its government the AKP focused on nurturing a recovery from the recession, pushed the liberalizing reforms required to enable Turkey to begin official accession negotiations for membership of the EU and to adopt the EU's policies including freedom of expression. Furthermore during these

years the AKP prioritized Turkey's relationship with the European Union and the democratization process and Turkish foreign policy remained anchored to Europe with the goal of integration to the EU. This pro-EU stance offered a glimmer of hope to the media sphere because it is always claimed that the EU will have a positive effect on media policies in Turkey. The EU with its culture and tradition of law in accordance with the European Human Rights Convention has a democratizing effect on political culture and communication. These values were very important and were obviously reflected and seen within the broadcasting texts and RTÜK'S membership. At this time RTÜK became one of the 53 members of EPRA, European Platform for Regulatory Authorities (Karanfil, 2013). This membership shows that Turkey accepts the regulation policies of Europe. So Turkey's face was still looking towards the West. During the first phase of AKP'S governance Turkey leaped forward in democratizing its legislative framework for the media and the Prime Minister of the period, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, promised that all broadcasters will be treated equal thus the media need not fear (Güvenç, 2007). So arguably, the AKP's governing policies were in compliance with the media.

However, after 2007 a greater change happened in Turkey. On the 22nd of July 2007, when AKP increased its share of the national votes from 34.26 per cent to 46.58% (Turkstat, 2007) and guaranteed its place with the public by re-winning the elections, the Turkish socio-cultural and socio-political discourse started to change rapidly. In this new phase of AKP governance, its Islamic background has become more and more visible and the party has started to push its Islamic values on the

public more than it had before. In this second phase of its government, Turkish foreign policy took a dramatic turn and Turkey turned its face towards the East instead of the West. The new vision of the AKP government was to become a global player in world politics on the back of the heritage of their Ottoman legacy (Gianotta, 2012). Former minister of foreign affairs and current Prime Minister, Ahmet Davutoğlu, aimed to give Turkey a major role in the unanimity of Islamic countries and to hold a prominent position in the Muslim world (Akser and Baybars, 2012). These activist policies of the AKP, which are aiming to harmonize Turkey's European and Islamic identities and to improve its relations with Middle Eastern and Islamic countries was clearly transferred to the new television broadcasting sphere (Kaptan and Karanfil, 2013). For example the number of religious television programs has increased, women with religious hijab can be seen on the screens both in reality shows and in television series, the wives of politicians with religious hijabs have become visible on the screen, and the number of domestic women's programs has increased. Moreover, the RTUK took the initiative of creating two organizations, BRAF an acronym for Black Sea Countries Broadcasting Regulatory Authorities, and IBRAF an acronym for Islamic Countries Broadcasting Regulatory Authorities Forum (İlter et al., 2010).

Whilst, theories of representative democracy suggest three major roles for television broadcasting: it should be a civic forum encouraging pluralistic debate about public affairs, it should be a mobilizing agent encouraging public learning and entertainment and lastly it ought to stay at the same distance to all political ideologies

(Norris, 2000). Moreover according to Çarkoğlu and Yavuz the debate on media independence is twofold: first it has to be free from political pressure in order to function well and second it has to be distanced from partisan loyalties as much as possible in order to maintain the objectivity (Yavuz and Çarkoğlu, 2010). However, Turkey has always had poor results in fulfilling the roles identified by Pippa Norris and has always been devoid of these features as clarified by Yavuz and Çarkoğlu. The media discussions and value changes of the contents were always linked with subsequent political developments (Yavuz and Çarkoğlu, 2010). Turkish television broadcasting always shapes the public values and preferences by reflecting the thinking of the elite. So from the establishment of TRT until today, the Turkish broadcasting has always been ideologically biased and has served the dominant ideology. The content of the flow and narrative is continuously changing in accordance with the governing groups. As Murat Akser and Banu Baybars state, the mandate of media bosses, political pressures have very often worked against the independence of television broadcasters (Akser and Baybars, 2012). Aslı Tunç summarizes the situation in her article "Mediated Justice: Turkish Newspapers' Coverage of Controversial Criminal Cases" after 2007. Especially during the AKP's second tenure the structure of media changed radically with the increase of media outlets openly supporting government policies and with the AKP's move toward a more authoritarian control of the media (Tunç, 2010). Although a restricted freedom of press began after the third military coup on 12 September 1980 this has become worse and even dangerous since the AKP's coming to power in the 2002 general

elections. There was a decline in media independence and the emergence of an advocate partisan media. In addition to strong control over broadcasting firms, the AKP was aiming to bring back all those Islamic motives inherited from Ottoman Empire. Television series telling the stories of the revolutionist communist youth were replaced with the series telling the time of the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, former Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has never abstained from stating that he is aiming to encourage a religious youth. He repeated his goal several times in his speeches and in one of them said that:

> *"…Did not come pious contemporary generation? Cannot one be both religious and contemporary? Gentlemen bend your head forward and consider… One can be both religious and contemporary and we the AKP will show you how to do this…"* [5] (Erdoğan, as cited in https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8GGeXLgcMBA).

And immediately children have become the new target for Turkish media.

3. Children and Television:

3.1. Children and Television:

The concept of "childhood" is understood as being a stage in life characterized by dependency and immaturity and being open to learning and shaping (Casey, et al., 2008). Generally it is seen as an important part of the realizing and discovering of the world mainly through education and play where children are raised to be well functioning adults. Although Freud suggests that a sense of personal identity is learnt

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[5] Translated by the author

by observation of and interactions with others (Freud, 1933) we cannot deny the significant role of television on that learning. This process is called "*socialization*". It is the total set of experiences in which children learn about the norms and values of the culture they were born in. It is the process of learning how to function as respected and accepted members of a society. Children are socialized at both conscious and unconscious levels to internalize the dominant values and norms of their culture and in doing so develop a sense of self (Croteau and Hoynes, 1997). There are numerous theories of how socialization works and how children learn to adapt themselves to their culture and all these theories agree that there are some particular agents of socialization that strongly influence children's cultural adaptation including the mass media, family, school and the peer group (Holtzman, 2000). As Buckingham states cultural texts addressed to children are social constructions, prepared for them at the micro level by their parents and at the macro level by the dominant ideology (Buckingham, 2001). Thus children's programs are not produced by children but for children with the aim of educating them. So one can claim that television is one of the most powerful sources, to reinforce and shape the attitudes and experiences of children.

Another widely referenced model of the relationship between television and children is Albert Bandura's "*social learning*" or "*observational learning*" theory (Bandura, 1986). He argues that children cannot learn all or even much of what they know to guide their own behavior from direct personal observation and experience alone but rather from indirect sources where they learn more than they learn from

direct sources. Television is one of the most important of those indirect sources. His theory suggests that children's attention is directed towards media content of potential relevance to their lives and personal needs and interests. They then retain what they have watched and add it to their stock of prior knowledge (Bandura, 1986). Thus the media are continually offering children pictures of life and models of behavior and in doing so media portrayals are constructing, shaping and re-shaping children's normative standards. Early studies of children's use of media revealed a tendency for children to find lessons about life and connect these with their own experience. Television presentation of images of social reality strongly shape children's expectations and aspirations (McQuail, 2010). So people are born into a symbolic environment, which has television as its mainstream. Children begin watching TV several years before they begin reading and well before they can even talk, so television teaches various "*facts*" about the world (Gerbner, pp.14-21) via various television genres.

3.2. Children Cartoons:

A growing body of literature demonstrates that prime time television cartoons provide a unique opportunity for children to learn information and even to modify their attitudes and behaviors accordingly (Brodie, et al., 2001). Children start watching television at a very early age, 18 months to 2 years old (Hapkiewicz, 1979), and cartoons are the preferred television format for them (Lyle & Hoffman, 1971a,b as cited in Thompson & Zerbinos, 1997). Children cartoons are television programs designed for children between 3 to 9 years of age because the age 3 is accepted as the

earliest age when children can start realizing and generalizing the world around them and age 9 is considered as the upper limit of children who are watching cartoons. Older children tend to prefer programs other than cartoons (Lyleer & Hofmann, 1971a,b). Cartoons are normally scheduled for broadcast during the morning and afternoon when children are awake. They can sometimes run in the early evening, allowing children to watch them after Kindergarten or school. In Turkey various cartoons are generally broadcasted on the local and national channels during the morning on weekdays and on weekends. In addition there are some other channels such as the Cartoon Network, TRT Kids and *Yumurcak* TV, which broadcast cartoons at almost any time of the day or reserve a large time slot of their programming for cartoons (Kalaycı, 2015). The purpose of the shows is mainly to entertain and to educate (Bernstein, 2002). Although many studies state that cartoons teach children the facts, behaviors, values, norms and how the world works and it contributes to the formation of their worldviews (Lemish, 2015) as Former Federal Communication Commissioner of United States of America Nicholas Johnson said:

> *"…All television is educational: the only question is what it is*
>
> *teaching..?"* ("Opinion," July 20, 1999, p. 13A).

So assuming television to be one of the biggest sources of teaching does not mean that every single thing that it conveys to people has a positive content. The messages that television is passing on may be either good or bad for children. I therefore strongly believe that analyzing the content of the cartoons' texts and seeing how much children notice the given messages from those texts is very significant for the future vision of

children and for the country. Since Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan states that "*we as the Justice and Development Party are willing to raise a religious youth*" (Erdoğan, retrieved from: http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/19825231.asp) and has repeated the concept "*religious youth*" several times during his governance, I believe that media contents especially the ones which are targeting children should be analyzed deeply.

4. Case Study: The Discourse Analysis of the Turkish Children's Cartoon Series *"Pepee"*:

4.1. The Scope of Analysis and Research Method:

This research has been conducted to illustrate reflection and presentation of the AKP's ideology in first Turkish prime time television cartoon series "*Pepee*". For a complete and careful illustration of such an issue, a qualitative research methodology has been followed and utilized with a combination of expletory and descriptive forms of research design.

The data derived from the episodes of the *Pepee* cartoon series. The 211 episodes of cartoon series have been broadcasted from 2008 September until 2015 January on TRT Kids, Show TV and TV 8 channels and the sample of this study consists of these 211 episodes. Each cartoon episode was approximately ten minutes and they were accessed via the Internet, downloaded, archived and analysed.

Discourse analysis has been employed in the illustration phase of the research and as discourse analysis of television content is the study of its narrative and narrative consist of visual signs that include all the images and graphics that are seen

on the screen and aural signs that consist of speech, sound and music which television produces (Bignell, 2013), the language, food and beverages, clothes and accessories, the songs and the music used throughout the episodes have been analysed. Additionally, the frequency of and emotional relations among characters, their socio-economic and socio-cultural status have been examined and compared with the AKP's worldview in order to answer the main question of how the AKP's approach is being reflected within the cartoon series.

4.2. Brief Information about *Pepee*:

Pepee is Turkey's first cartoon project, which has been broadcasting since 2008. It was designed especially for pre-school age groups (3-6 years). The cartoon series was developed by Ayşe Şule Bilgiç with the aim of entertaining and educating children. The name of the main character -a four-year old boy- derives from the term used in the Anatolian region of Turkey "*Pepe*" for someone with speech difficulties. The cartoon series is produced by "*Düşyeri Çizgi Film Stüdyosu*" and distributed by the "Ciner Media Group", a Turkish media conglomerate established in 2007 (Retrieved from; http://www.dusyeri.com.tr). From 2008 to 2014 *Pepee* was broadcast on TRT kids, which is owned by the government, and broadcasts everything in accordance with its own ideology and not showing any oppositional ideas. From 2014 to 2015 it was broadcast on Show TV, which is a nation-wide television channel owned by the Ciner Media Group. Lastly from 2015 onwards it has been broadcasting on TV8 owned by Acun Ilıcalı. All these channels are known by their closeness to the government. As Yusuf Kalyango and David Mould state in their

book "*Global Journalism Practice and New Media Performance*" the Ciner Media Group is considered as liberal mainstream but also tries to maintain good relations with the government (Kalyango and Mould, 2014). It is heavily slanted in favour of the government in power and of their supporters and reflects the ideological status quo under the AKP government, which is a mixture of religion-tinted conservatism, superficial liberalism and the pragmatic governmental line (Tunç, 2011).

As child program specialist in Media Monitoring Commission Gülsüm Süslü claims *Pepee* has received a large number of children followers since it was first broadcast (Süslü, 2014) with high ratings when compared with other children cartoons (Yorulmaz, 2013). In the first year of broadcasting its average ratings was 0. 674%, in 2009 it increased to 0. 862%, in 2010 it was 1.233%, in 2011 it was 1.002%, in 2012 1.390%, in 2013 1.086%, in 2014 3.403% and lastly in 2015 it is 1.067% (retrieved from: http://www.canlitv.com/rating/index.php?tur=tv).
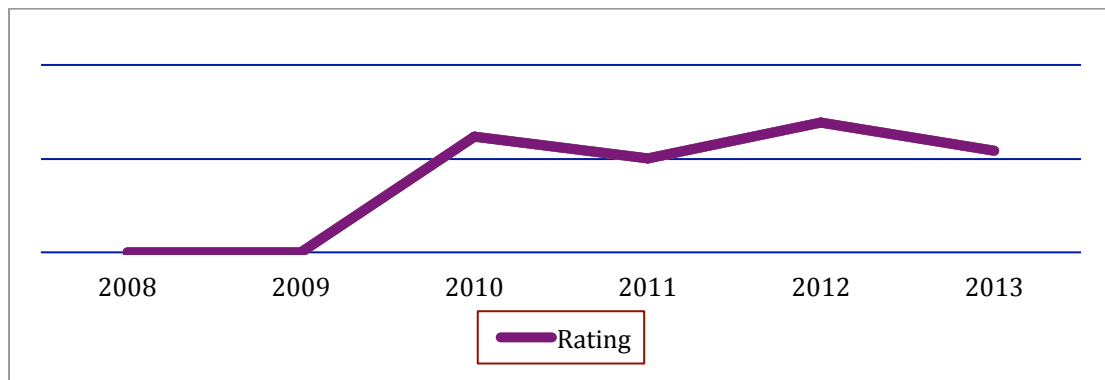

Table - 1: *Distribution of Pepee's ratings according to years*

As can be seen from the table children have a strong interest in *Pepee*. According to the Radio and Television Supreme Council survey in 2013, the most watched cartoons in Turkey were "*Keloğlan*", "*Pepee*" and "Ben 10" (Ilhan and Çetinkaya, 2013). Although, the *Pepee* cartoon series was originally created with the aim of teaching children about the world of helping them to find a role model for them and sustaining their lives accordingly, when analyzed in detail it is clear that like other Turkish television productions it reflects heavily the AKP ideology.

4.3. Findings of the Research:

Cartoon messages provided both directly and indirectly play an important role in a child's development process. They can teach norms and values to children and they continuously offer them pictures of life. These ideas were supported by a research study conducted in Turkey. According to the results of this research children cartoons are the genre, which children watch mostly (72 per-cent) and from which they learn a lot (Mete, 1999). In accordance with these explanations, although *Pepee* like any other animated cartoons contains several educational elements, when analyzed in detail it can be clearly seen that it shows significant parallelism with the AKP's worldview. The religious and Islamic motives, the patriarchal values, the anti-westernized aspects and the heavy emphasis on motherhood and the concept of "holy family", which all of coming directly from the AKP's ideology are all largely embedded in the children cartoon series "*Pepee*". In addition to these categories there are various gender inequalities within the narrative of Turkish cartoon series *Pepee* that are also in accordance with AKP's statement about gender equality:

" *…One can not equal position of men and women, it is contrary to*

human nature…" (Cumhuriyet, 2014).

4.3.1. Religious and Islamic Features:

Turkey has a complex and extraordinarily rich religious tradition and is of course an overwhelmingly Muslim society. However, from the foundation of the republic until the early 1970s Mustafa Kemal and his friends placed religion in the realm of private practice for citizens instead of in the realm of politics. With the establishment of the Republic, Turkish politics de-emphasized Islam as a part of the Turkish identity (Çınar and Duran, 2001). However, the "National Outlook Movement (NOM), (Milli Görüş Hareketi)" led by Necmettin Erbakan during the 1970s put "religiosity" on the Turkish scene. Consequently, the secular character of the Turkish Republic has been destroyed (Cizre, 2010). Due to the fact that the AKP has emerged from the National Outlook Movement, the party is in accordance with NOM ideology, which has been the main representative of political Islam in Turkey. As Ahmet Yıldız argues:

> *"AKP with the majority of its party activists, many of its*
>
> *parliamentarians and a bulk of its voters is the inheritor of the*
>
> *National Outlook. At the same time with its ideological discourse*
>
> *occupies a center-right position in the political spectrum and outputs*
>
> *the Islamic orientation and frames framed by religion the*
>
> *social and cultural domains, political and international relations*
>
> *through religious and conservative values"* (Yıldız, 2008: 43).

As it is mentioned repeatedly nothing that happens of television "actually" happens, every single image that we see or every single word that we hear on television is a representation of a certain ideology. And the main aim is to maintain this ideology, to keep masses believed in it and to make them more familiar in the publics' lives. Since the party has an Islamic approach and an aim of raising a *"religious youth"* it would not be a surprise to encounter various Islamic motives and features within the cartoon series.

Religious Expressions	Religious Practices	Motives with Superstitions
81	2	211
38,38%	0,94%	100,00%

Table-2: *Distribution of Islamic Symbols and Conservative Motives in Pepee.*

When the findings of *Pepee* were analysed it was seen that, although, there were no Islamic visuals such as mosques, prayer rugs and none of the characters were shown while they were performing salaat, there is a high level of Islamic expressions. "*Allah Allah*"[6], "*Allasen*"[7], "*Maaşallah*"[8], "*inşallah*"[9], "*Bismillah*"[10] and *"Allah yardımcın olsun"*[11] are all frequently used by Muslims all over the world (Arabic Acceleration Report, 2013). In the content of *Pepee*, one can encounter many of these expressions. For example, the expression *"Allasen"* was repeated 47 times in various episodes by

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[6] Gosh!
[7] Gosh you!
[8] Praise be!
[9] If God wills!
[10] In the name of God!
[11] Godspeed!

different characters. Moreover the expression "*maaşallah*" was used 21 times, "*allah allah*" 9 times and "*allah yardımcın olsun*" is 4 times in the cartoon series *Pepee*.

Expression	Number	Rate	Character that used the expression
Gosh you!	47	22,27%	Pepee (47)
Praise be!	21	9,95%	Grandma (11) Grandpa (9) Mother (1)
Gosh!	9	4,26%	Pepee (6) Grandpa (2) Bebee (1)
Godspeed!	4	1,89%	Grandma (3) Mother (1)

Table-3: *The distribution of Islamic expressions.*

In the episode called "the same and the different" the grandmother "*Nenee*" was teaching the concepts of same and different to her grandchildren. In that episode, *Pepee*, *Şila*[12] and *Bebee* were wearing hats. *Pepee*'s hat was blue and the girls' hats were both pink with a tiny difference. The out voice *Şuşu* asked *Bebee* if her hat is different than *Şila*'s and *Bebee* said, "*no they are same*". But this was the wrong answer because their hats were different from each other. When *Bebee* gave the wrong answer *Pepee* got angry at his sister and said, "*Allasen Bebee can't you see they are different*". He used the expression "*allasen*" in order to show his anger to his sister. In another episode called "It's so good to play together" Pepee and *Bebee* were playing with their toys in the garden. Suddenly, *Bebee* stood up and started walking away. *Pepee* asked his sister "*hey Bebee where are you going, why did you leave*

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12 Name of Pepee's cousin

me?" and *Bebee* said, "*I did not leave you, I going to pick up the dog and bring him*". After this *Pepee* said to his sister, "*allasen Bebee, you are so strange why didn't you tell me that you want the dog to play with us too*". On this occasion, used the expression to show his surprise. In addition to these examples, *Pepee* used the expression "allasen" severe times to express his various feelings.

Moreover, "*maaşallah*" is another expression that is used commonly in the daily language of very religious people and it is used 21 times in the 211 episodes of the cartoon series. Muslim people use this expression towards people who they admire and whom they want to wish God to protect. In the episode called "*Pepee* is taking a shower", the mother "*Annee*" was washing *Pepee* and as he was siting still during the bath, his mother liked this situation and said to him "*maaşallah to my son, he is a good boy*". She used the expression to show her distillation to her son. Furthermore, in the episode called "*Pepee*'s hand, arm and elbow", *Pepee*, the grandfather "*Dedee*" and *Şila* were in a boat and the grandfather taught *Pepee* how to paddle the boat. *Pepee* learned paddling quickly and successfully and the grandfather said to his grandson, "*Maşaallah to my grandson, look how wonderful he is paddling*". In this episode he used the term in order to show his appreciation and how his pride of his grandson. In another episode *Pepee* and *Bebee* woke up from their mid-day sleep and *Pepee* helped his sister to change her clothes. While he was helping, his grandmother saw him and said to the mother "*maaşallah look, how he is helping his sister*". This time she again used the term to show her admiration. Overall, the expression has been used several times by different characters to show their

admirations and appreciations. They used the Islamic terms instead of using expressions like "well-done", "good-job", which have the same meaning. Thus, since, one of the aims of children cartoons is to disseminate a certain ideology to children from an early age and to make them normalise this ideology, the choice of these expression is done on purpose rather than as a simple coincidence.

Furthermore, "*Allah Allah*" is another expression widely used in Muslims' daily languages. The term can be used to express various feelings such as anger, astonishment or disappointment. In cartoon series *Pepee* I has been used nine times by different characters in order to express various feelings. For example, in the first episode the out voice *Şuşu* taught something new to *Pepee* and *Pepee* said "*allah allah Şuşu I have never heard this before*". He used the expression to show his bemusement. Moreover, in the episode called "*Pepee* is making a kite", the grandfather was teaching *Pepee* and *Şila* how to make a kite. For a while *Pepee* could not merge the sticks and said "*allah allah why is this not happening*". He used the expression this time to show his anger to the sticks.

"*Allah yardımcınız olsun*" is a positive expression that means "I hope everything will be easy for you with the God's help". And it is one of the most common Islamic expressions and is used 4 times in *Pepee*. For example, in the episode called "*Pepee* is exploring" *Pepee* and his father were going to the forest to explore nature and the mother said "*Allah yardımcınız olsun*" while she was seeing them off. Even though these are moderate Islamic expressions including them in *Pepee*'s narrative has a close relationship with the AKP's Islamic orientation.

In addition to these Islamic expressions the findings of the research suggest that there are numerous conservative motives. The term conservatism basically refers to political and social philosophy, which promotes re-training traditional social institutions in the context of a particular culture and civilization (Adorno, 1950). It has different types but the one that the AKP carries and tries to disseminate is religious conservatism, which seeks to apply the teachings of particular religions to politics. Sometimes by merely proclaiming the value of those teachings and at other times by allowing those teachings to influence the law (Andersen, et al., 2005). In Turkey generally, religious conservatism seeks to uphold traditional social values and the role of religion in the public sphere. It typically opposes abortion, homosexual behaviour, drug and alcohol use, sexual activity and any kind of sexual elements (Blake, 1967). When the findings of *Pepee* are examined in detail, it was recognized that it includes a high level of conservative notions. An example of this is the amulet that has a great importance in the Muslim world because Muslims believed in the protective and healing power of amulets is seen in every single episode of the cartoon series. *Pepee* carries one in his cloth at all. Moreover, *Pepee*'s and *Bebee*'s balls both have amulet motives on them.

In addition to amulet, the lack of sexual scenes is another issue. It is not a problem that nationally televised cartoon series designed for children age three to six do not to transmit any sexual scene. The issue arises when the cartoon series underspecifies the issues. In the episode called "*Pepee* is taking a shower", *Pepee*'s mother washed *Pepee* and *Bebee* one by one. While she was washing them both of

them were wearing swimming clothes. The rationale behind this is not to show private parts of our bodies to the audience. However, it is problematic. Showing *Pepee* taking a shower with swimming clothes may mislead children because, children cartoons teach norms and values to children and children find lessons about life from those cartoons and connect them with their own experiences and people do not take a shower with their swimming clothes, they take a shower naked. Moreover, in the episode called "*Pepee* is learning his body" the grandfather was teaching him parts of the human body, the names of the organs and their functions. However, while teaching and showing the parts of our body, he missed out the parts between the hips and the neck. Although, these episodes prove the educational function of children cartoons, it is not educating them completely. Children are learning about human bodies but only about some parts rather than the whole body.

Another conservative motive from *Pepee* was found in the episode called "today is a religious holiday". In this episode, *Pepee*'s father told the meaning of religious holidays and his own memories of it.

All in all, findings from this study indicated that there is a high level of religious, traditional and conservative motives within the cartoon series' narrative. As Roland Barthes states, television texts are composed of signs, which generate a set of meanings or a message (Barthes, 1973). This message or meaning is nothing but representation of a particular ideology with the purpose of conveying the dominant ideology and of making it natural. Since, television's provisions of sound, image, narrative and repetition provide the frameworks for children's everyday lives and

seeing a particular ideology repetitively make them accept and normalize what they see, these motives are aiming to achieve the AKP's aim of rising religious youth.

4.3.2. Patriarchal Features:

A detailed analysis of the Turkish cartoon series *Pepee* suggests that there is a strong emphasis on the notion of patriarchy and a biased representation of patriarchal aspects. Very basically, as Malti Dougless says patriarchy is a social system in which males are the primary figures of authority (Dougless, 2007). This system legitimizes the male ruling, male privilege and female being subordinated. Moreover, the Feminist Theory defines patriarchy as an unjust social system that is oppressive to women. One of the founding mothers of feminist theory and an important scholar Heidi Hartmann defines patriarchy as a set of social relations between men, which creates an interdependence or solidarity among them and enable men to dominate women (Hartmann, 1997: 42-47). So, one common consequence of all these definitions is that patriarchy is historically a gender discrimination favoring the male gender. Although, patriarchy is a global issue, it is more problematic in under developed and developing countries of which Turkey is one. The most important reason for patriarchy to be present in Turkey is the country's complex political history. The roots of patriarchy in Turkey go back to the Ottoman Empire and its traces are still being felt within the society. Moreover it is argued that the AKP's period in government has increased the visibility of patriarchy and as Simten Coşar and Metin Yeğenoğlu (2011) stated has led to a new mode of patriarchy. This AKP mode of patriarchy can tentatively be named "neo-liberal conservative patriarchy"

which limits the access of women to the public sphere through employment or education and defines the domestic sphere as the natural place of women (Gündüz Hoşgör and Smits, 2008; Coşar and Yeğenoğlu, 2011). This new mode of patriarchy has borrowed a lot from Islamist patriarchy and has attributed various characteristics to both women and men. Generally the characteristics attributed to women limit their way of living, their socio-economical status and consider them as emotional and weak beings, who are dependent on men and are always more ineffective than men.

As it has already mentioned repeatedly, despite television broadcasting appearing to be a natural and transparent window on the world, it is highly constructed with the interests of powerful groups (Spigel et al., 2004). Television texts produce and perpetuate a distorted perception of the world; they prescribe and construct reality in such a way as to maintain the politically dominant ideology (Gitlin, 1978). In line with these ideas, the one and only Turkish children cartoon series *Pepee* contains a high level of patriarchal motives. They can clearly be seen in the employment status of male and female characters, in the language used in the episodes, and the work done by male and female characters, in the game preferences of female and male characters and in their success level in those games.

As mentioned above, according to the AKP's mode of patriarchy women's main place is their domestic sphere and they cannot access to public sphere through employment (Gündüz Hoşgör and Smits, 2008). This aspect of the AKP mode of patriarchy is one hundred percent reflected in the *Pepee*'s content. When the occupational and social roles of female and male characters are examined further

differences occur. For example, male characters portrayed in *Pepee* are employed but women are not. Although *Pepee*'s mother is a lawyer, she never goes to work. Furthermore, other women characters like *Pepee*'s aunt and grandmother or his friends' mothers are not employed at all. In the majority of the episodes the male characters were shown both verbally and visually while they were working. However, the mother is always shown as a housewife fulfilling her domestic tasks. This picture may seem common yet it is doing nothing other than reproducing the AKP's mode of patriarchy, where women are defined as housewives who are responsible from all kinds of domestic tasks.

Another important and suppressive feature of AKP mode patriarchy is considering women as emotional and weak human beings, who are highly dependent on men (Aybars, 2010). This point is clearly reflected in the language and the songs used in the cartoon series. According to the semiotic approach, every single word that we hear from television is an interpretation of a particular group and carries an ideology. As Stephen Hill states:

> *"…The language that is used in the television is something "written" in the sense that is embodied autonomous not derived from immediate life world cultural participation but from sediment meanings…"* (Hill,

1988:65)

With the language that has been used within television texts, the dominant ideology has been reproduced again and again. A detailed analysis of the language used in the cartoon series *Pepee* is in line with these arguments. When the findings were

analyzed, it was recognized that female characters were associated with more soft and naive adjectives such as *"beautiful", "dear", "little" or "pretty"* and so on. The purpose of using these adjectives is to reproduce the ideas that women are vulnerable human beings, who need to be rescued and looked after by their hero husbands, while the male characters were associated with more strong adjectives, which emphasize on the notion that they are the dominant and powerful groups within the society such as *"powerful", "hero", "enormous", "cool", "lion"* and so on. For example, throughout the 211 episodes *Pepee* and *Bebee* sing songs for their family members. The lyrics of the song they have written for their mother is:

> *"You are my one and only dear mother*
>
> *You are my beautiful mother*
>
> *You, dear mother, you beautiful mother*
>
> *You are my special*
>
> *Dear mother, beautiful mother…"*

The song they have written for their father goes as:

> *"I have a powerful and an enormous father*
>
> *I have a cool and a great father and a handsome father*
>
> *Father father father…"*

The lyrics of the songs are highly discriminative; they ascribe the notion of being beautiful but not powerful to the mother. However, they attribute the characteristics like being handsome, powerful and cool to the father. These lyrics are very much in line with the existing literature. More than 40 years ago, Streicher looked at how

males and females were portrayed in children cartoons and suggests that cartoons were predominated by active, noisy and successful male characters, while female characters were less numerous and needed to be rescued (Streicher, 1974). His findings were consistent with those of Sternglanz and Serbin. They also found that children's television has always been male dominated by portraying men more adventurous, active and victorious whilst portraying women are in need to be rescued, causing trouble, talked and worked less (Smith, 1994). Moreover, in the entirety of the episodes, the grandmother and the grandfather love and congratulate their granddaughters *Şila* and *Bebee* by saying "*oh, well done my beautiful girl*" and they say "*well done my great and lion son*". In one of the recent episode, the grandfather, *Bebee*, *Şila* and *Pepee* were in a boat and grandpa was paddling. Suddenly kids got exited and asked their grandpa whether they could paddle or not. The grandfather told his grandkids that only *Pepee* can do it because it is a male job and asked *Pepee* to try. *Pepee* started paddling and succeeded. His grandpa told him "*good work Pepee you are very good at it because you are my powerful grandson*". In another episode called "*Bebee* will not use pacifier anymore", *Pepee*'s mother was talking to her own mother sharing that she wants *Bebee* to quit using pacifier. *Pepee*, who heard this conversation decided to make her mother happy by helping his sister to quit the pacifier. While he was playing with his sister helping her to quit sucking pacifier, the out voice *Şuşu* asked him what he wass doing and *Pepee* answered "*Şuşu, my mother is very upset because Bebee still uses pacifier so I'm helping her to quit because I want to make my mother happy*". This conversation clearly shows that females are the

human beings that needed to be made happy by others. Whilst, the overall findings of the research clearly suggest that the female characters are illustrated with softer adjectives and shown as vulnerable, which needed help to survive, males are illustrated with more powerful adjectives and portrayed as successful beings, who are able to help female to survive. This picture is very much in line with Roland Barthes' approach, which supports the idea that the language used in television programs generates a set of meanings or a message (Barthes, 1973). This message or meaning is nothing but representation of a particular ideology. When we merge Barthes' argument with Albert Bandura we can strongly claim that the message or meaning disseminated by the children cartoon series has a purpose, which is to convey the dominant ideology and naturalize it from the very early ages of the children because children retain what they have watched, normalize it and add to their stock of prior knowledge (Bandura, 1986). So, when we look at these definitions, we can obviously say that discourse is socially constructed and it represents the dominant ideology, which is the AKP's notion about patriarchy here.

Furthermore, the word "patriarchy", which lies at the core of the AKP ideology literally means the rule of the man or the "patriarch", and originally it was used to describe a specific type of "male-dominated society" (Bhasin, 2006:3). Nowadays it is used more generally "to refer to male domination, to the power relationships by which men dominate women, and which characterize men as active, independent and successful beings who are born to be a successful employee, while women are secondary, emotional, weak and dependent beings who need to be rescued

and who have a tendency to stay at home and to do the works inside the home. The narrative of the cartoon series *Pepee*, has a great accordance with these features.

Additionally, according to the AKP mode of patriarchy women are the main housekeepers, who spend most of their time working inside the house and men spend their time working outside the house. AKP strengthens its patriarchal ideas via various policies such as supporting women to retain home with the social policy program called "*Back to the Family*" and to perform their family duties. All of these ideas of the AKP are one hundred per cent reflected within the cartoon series. In the cartoon series *Pepee*, it was observed that the female characters are verbally and visually illustrated spending most of their time working inside the house and male characters working outside. For example, in an episode called "*Pepee* is brushing his teeth" the mother prepared the breakfast and the whole family had breakfast together. After they had finished the meal the grandfather asked the grandchildren *Pepee*, *Bebee* and *Şila* to go out and play. He said that "*Let's leave the table and go out so your mother can clean the table easily*". So the grandfather and kids went outside the house, the grandfather taught them new games and the mother stayed at home and did her domestic work. In another episode called "*Pepee* is taking a shower", *Pepee* and *Şila* were playing with mud in the garden and their clothes got dirty. The grandfather came and saw how dirty they were and said to them with pleasure, "*Kids you got dirty let's go home and asked your mother to clean you*". When the kids went home with their grandfather they saw the mother reading a magazine in the living room and asked her to clean them. Moreover, in the episode called "Everyone sleeps at nights"

Pepee and the grandfather are going camping. Before they have left home, the mother and *Bebee* helped them to prepare their camping bags. After they had been prepared, *Bebee* and the mother stayed at home, *Pepee* and the grandfather went to forest and slept in tents. As it was repeatedly mentioned above, the male characters of the cartoon series have always been illustrated both visually and verbally outside the house. In line with this argument in the majority of the episodes the father was shown while he was coming back from work or going to work. For example in the episode called "It's so good to play together", *Pepee* and *Bebee* were playing with their toys in the garden. While they were playing, the father was shown coming back from work with his business clothes and said "*Hello kids, it's so nice to see you playing together did your mom cook the dinner*" and *Pepee* answered "*Hello dad, she is at home I think the dinner will be ready soon*". In another episode called "We should eat three times a day", the mother had prepared breakfast and called her husband and her kids to the table. After they had breakfast together the father says "*Bon petit it's time to go to work I will see you tonight*" and he left the house for work, the kids went out to meet *Şila* and play together and the mother stays at home again. Furthermore, since driving a car is an activity, which can only be done outdoors, it is always done by male characters like in an episode called "*Pepee*'s big family", where *Pepee*, the mother, *Bebee*, the father and the grandmother were going to see the waterfalls and the father was driving the car and the grandfather was coming to waterfalls in his balloon. He was not in the car at all. In another episode, *Pepee*, *Bebee* and the mother were going to the grandfather's farm and the mother said to the kids that "*let's wait for your dad*

to come home from work and he will take us to grandfather's". After the father came

home from work he took his family and drove them to the farm. Throughout all the

episodes, it was the male characters that were driving. There was only one exception

in 211 episodes where the mother drove the car and took the kids to *Şila*'s house. In

the episode called "*Pepee*'s autumn rain", *Pepee* was so bored at home because it was

autumn and he was not able to play outside that his mother drove him to *Şila*'s house.

The findings of the analysis suggest strongly that the indoor work such as cooking or

cleaning or preparing the food are performed by *Pepee*'s mother "*Annee*" and his

grandmother "*Nenee*". However, the outdoor work such as driving, feeding the

animals, taking care of the garden or repairing the house were done by *Pepee*'s

grandfather "*Dedee*" or his father "*Babaa*". Additionally, there are some works,

which can be done, both indoor and outdoor such as playing with and taking care of

the children and these works again are done by female characters inside the house and

by male characters outside the house. For example, in an episode called "*Pepee*'s don

don game" *Pepee* and *Bebee* were playing with their ball in the garden but they got

bored. They went home and told their mother that they were bored. Their mother

found a new game for them, which can be played inside the house. They played the

game for a while and got bored again. At the same time, their grandmother "*Nenee*"

came home and saw her grandkids were bored and found another new game to play.

The game that *Nenee* found was called "don don game". She played music and while

the music was playing, the kids were dancing and when *Nenee* suddenly turns the

music off the kids stop moving. This game can be played both inside and outside but

since the character, which found the game was a female the game was played inside. In another episode called "the grandfather's farm", *Pepee* went to his grandfather's farm to learn about the life in the farm with his family. While *Pepee* was exploring the farm and learning about the farm animals, his grandfather and grandmother were helping and teaching him. During the whole episode the grandfather showed *Pepee* the farm animals outdoors and the grandmother showed him the indoor life of the farm. For example, the grandfather showed him horses, cows, chickens and other animals while the grandmother showed him, the kitchen of the farm and how and what she cooks at the farm or showed him the indoor places of the farm.

categories	work done outside the house				work done inside the house					Total
	driving a vehicle	going to/coming from work	spending time with the kids	other	domestic work	DIY	spending time with the kids	preparing or clearing the table	other	
female characters	3	-	7	4	92	19	188	12	23	348
male characters	47	98	484	107	-	3	31	-	68	838

Table-4: *Distribution of works done inside and outside the house*

As can clearly be seen from the table, female characters in the series have always been shown inside the house, while they are taking care of the kids, watering flowers, preparing the food or the table and so on. But on the other hand, the male characters in the series have always be shown outside the house, while they are playing with the kids, going to work or coming from work, driving the car or other vehicles and so on. Since, prime time television cartoons are not only offering a public service by

informing, entertaining and educating its audience, on the contrary they are maintaining the ideological power by reflecting the views and concerns of the ruling class: so this scene is not a coincidence. It is directly coming from the AKP's mode of patriarchy, which accepts that activities done inside are women's duty and outside are men's duty.

Moreover, as *Pepee* is a television program, which was designed for children, it includes various games, hobbies and children activities. However, when the findings were analysed, it was recognized that activities performed outdoors which required more physical power such as hiking, paddling, playing with a gun or a sword, skating, cycling or running, playing with balls were performed mainly by male characters. On the other hand, female characters were mainly more closely associated with games played indoors such as drawing, playing doctors, playing blindfold and dancing. All these game preferences are in accordance with the AKP's mode of patriarchy's ascriptions, which considers women as docile, domesticated, emotional and weak beings, who have a big tendency to be a mother and which considers men as powerful, active and masculine. For example, in the episode called "shoot and goal here is football", the male characters were having great fun and succeeding, while the female characters were bored and were unsuccessful. In another episode called "a little fast, a little slow" *Pepee*, *Bebee* and *Pepee*'s friend *Bibi* were riding their bicycles. *Pepee* and *Bibi* were going very fast and were enjoying themselves. However, *Bebee* was too slow to catch them up and was not enjoying the ride and so she asked her brother to slow down. Moreover, in another episode called "it's too

good to play together" *Pepee* was playing with *Şila* but they could not agree on the game to play. *Şila* asked *Pepee* to paint but *Pepee* did not want to paint; he wanted to play an airplane game where children act as an airplane and run around with their arms open in both sides.

Hobbies	female's choice	male's choice
dancing	√	
playing blindfold	√	
playing doctor	√	√
playing house	√	
rope jumping	√	
cycling		√
racing		√
doing karate		√
playing football		√
taking picture	√	
drawing	√	
camping		√
paddling		√
hot air ballon ride	√	√
hiking		√
playing with a sword/gun		√
swimming		√
playing with animals	√	√
playing with dolls	√	
playing airplane		√
reading	√	

Table - 5: *Distribution of Games and Hobbies Preferences*

As the table shows, there is a male dominant female submissive scenario within the cartoon series, which comes directly from the AKP ideology. The activities that require excessive physical power or are more violent and can generally be done

outdoors, preferred by male characters and the ones, which do not require a greater physical force and are more domesticated and slow, are chosen by female characters. These features are one hundred per cent reproducing the assumption: the males are powerful and strong beings within society who are able to be the main breadwinner and the husband, who has the force to take care of his family while women are emotional and naïve beings, who are waiting to be rescued by their "hero" husbands or companions.

Last but not least, according to the findings of the research, the male characters in *Pepee* are always presented as being more successful, more knowledgeable and are able to learn easier than female characters. In most of the episodes, *Pepee* knows things already or learns them before *Şila* even though they are the same age. After he had learned things, he helps the one who is teaching to teach *Şila*. For example in the 45th episode, which was broadcasted on the 30th of September 2009 the out voice *Şuşu* was teaching *Pepee* and *Şila* the differences between sun and shadow. *Pepee* learnt before *Şila* and helped *Şuşu* to teach *Şila* by giving examples. In another episode, called "you can, if you believe", the grandfather was showing the kids the waterfalls and teaching them their beneficiaries. When they reached to waterfalls *Pepee* told his grandfather and *Şila* that he already knewn what waterfalls were because his father has taught him before. In the episode called "Holley, it's winter again", *Pepee* and *Şila* were having a snowball fight and the winner was *Pepee*. In another episode the grandfather was teaching *Pepee* how to make a kite and *Şila* just arrived and asked her grandfather to teach her too. The

grandfather taught them both. But while, *Pepee* had finished making his kite and was already flying it *Şila* could not understand how to do it. The grandfather just made the kite for *Şila* and while making it said to *Şila* "*my lovely granddaughter, this is a boy thing so let me do it for you than you can fly it*". After the grandfather made the kite for *Şila*, she tried to fly it but she could not make the kite fly and got upset. *Pepee* just left his kite up and helped his cousin and in the end *Şila* could fly her kite too. These unequal levels of success are not only between children; we can see the same relationship between the mother and the father too. In the episode broadcast on the 8th of March 2014, *Pepee* asked a question to his mother about music but his mother could not answer him and told him "*let's ask your dad this evening, when he comes home from work*".

All in all, findings from this study indicate that there is a high level of patriarchal motives within the cartoon series *Pepee*. Although television broadcasting appears as a natural and transparent window on the world, it is highly constructed with the interests of powerful groups (Spigel et al., 2004). The government decides what the broadcasting firms do or do not. Television texts produce and perpetuate a distorted perception of the world; it prescribes and constructs reality in such a way as to maintain the politically dominant ideology (Gitlin, 1978). Due to its potential influence on society because it is 24 hours broadcasting and not only so-called politics, it is also entertaining people but as James Curran states while entertaining it is still reproducing the dominant ideology.

"…entertainment is intimately linked with politics through the values it articulates and the passions it generates…" (Curran, 2000:139).

In line with these arguments, one and only Turkish cartoon series *Pepee*, constantly disseminating the AKP's ideology, which patriarchy is one.

4.3.3. Family Relations and Emphasis on the Notion of Sacred Family:

When we look to the representation of family, family values and relations in the cartoon series *Pepee* we can see a great conforming to the AKP's notions about family. Generally the AKP is favouring the concept of "extended family", where elderly people are living with their children and grandchildren rather than "nuclear family" (Acar and Altınok, 2012). Furthermore, the AKP's understanding of family is strongly based on a patriarchal normative model, where mothers play the role of homemaking and fathers are the main breadwinners (Acar and Altınok, 2012). This model of family puts a variety of domestic responsibilities, such as providing care for children and elderly dependents, cleaning and household maintenance, known as housekeeping, cooking, laundry, ironing, food shopping and so on to mothers and only breadwinning to father. Moreover the AKP put conservatism forward and accorded the key role in the creation and continuation of society to women. The AKP gives women the duty of home making and raising children (Aybars, 2010). They encourage women to stay back at home and perform their familial duties by introducing several policy programs. For example the social policy program called "*Back to the Family*" adjusted during the AKP governance. Additionally, the AKP constantly emphasises the notion of "*holly family*". For example in the third Congress

on Women in Local Government, which was held in Ankara on 27 March 2007, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said:

> *"…There is no status comparable to motherhood and this*
>
> *is the reason why our civilization has placed the heaven*
>
> *under the feet of mothers and not those father"*

(http://www.akpartikadinistanbul.com/pages.asp?nid=35&n=1138) [13] . Therefore, Turkish mothers are generally expected to raise their children themselves, which seriously reduces the possibility of developing a professional career for them (İlkkaracan, 1998). This picture of family and associated arguments are hundred percent reflected in *Pepee*, several examples of each statement can be clearly seen within the content of the cartoon series.

When the findings were analysed, it was recognized that, there is a gender-based division of labour within the family. The mother is staying at home and taking care of her children in every single episode. She is cooking, playing with her children, cleaning the house, helping her husband, washing her children, putting them into sleep or taking them around. She has seen out of the domestic sphere only five times. This situation is not only valid for *Pepee*'s mother his aunt and his friends' mothers are also housewives and never seen out of the domestic sphere. They also have been seen only within the domestic sphere while cooking, cleaning or taking care of their children. On the other hand, although *Pepee*'s father is one of the characters, screened least, he has only seen while going to work. Another two male characters *Pepee*'s uncle and his grandfather only verbally not visually illustrated as employed beings.

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[13] translated by the author

The grandfather was mentioned that he is retired but used to work. For example, in the 47th episode, which was broadcasted on the 2nd October 2009, *Pepee*'s mother was making the breakfast while everyone else in the house was sleeping. After she had made the breakfast, she woke others up. They all had breakfast together and afterwards the father went to work, *Pepee* and *Bebee* went out to the garden to play with the dog and the mother cleaned the kitchen. Moreover, in the episode called "it's so good to play together", *Pepee* and *Bebee* were playing roleplaying and *Pepee* was going to act as a cow thus he needed a cow costume. He immediately decided to go and ask his mother to sew a cow costume for him and she did it. Furthermore, in the episode called "Forgive me" *Pepee*'s mother was cleaning the house before her husband comes home from work and asked her children to tidy their toys from the living room. Beside cooking and cleaning, according to AKP's ideology taking care of children is another duty of the mothers. This duty includes putting them to bed, helping them to take a shower and educating them. Accordingly, in the 150th episode called "*Pepee* is taking a shower", *Pepee* and *Şila* were playing with mud in the garden and their clothes got dirty. The grandfather came and saw them and said enthusiastically, "*Kids you got dirty let's go home and ask your mother to clean you*". Than they went home and the mother washed them. After she had washed him, *Pepee* said to his mother "*mom this was my favourite t-shirt and it looks so dirty*" and he got upset. His mother immediately changed *Pepee*'s t-shirt for a while and washed his clothes. While she was washing the clothes *Pepee* went to his mother smiling and thanked her. He said, "*Mom thank you very much you always make our clothes look*

new". In more than one episode *Pepee*'s mother does laundry because it is also part of her domestic responsibilities. The 87th episode, which was broadcasted on the 14th of October 2010, "Importance of sleep" aiming to teach children sleep easily. *Pepee* was playing in the garden with *Şila* but he was feeling so tired, the out voice *Şuşu* asked *Pepee* why he is so tired and he answered back that he did not sleep well last night. Than *Şuşu* told *Pepee* that children at his age should sleep at least 10 hours in a day in order to grow up healthy and advised him to go home and sleep. *Pepee* found this argument logical and went home. He told his mother that he is feeling tired and could not play in the garden, his mother left what she was doing in the kitchen and took *Pepee* to his room, changed his clothes and put him in his bed. The mother waited *Pepee* to fall a sleep and told a fairy-tale. This was just one example of this kind; in majority of the episodes the mother helps her children *Pepee* and *Bebee* to change their clothes and puts them into bed. In another episode called "*Pepee*'s autumn rain", *Pepee* and *Bebee* were too bored; they could not decide what to play. When their mother realized this situation, she went to her kids and offered a game to play together. Three of them played together as usual and had a lot of fun. Also the mother taught new things to her children, while they were playing. Furthermore, in a very recent episode, which was broadcasted on the 2nd January 2015, *Pepee*, *Bebee* and *Bibi* a friend of *Pepee* were riding their bicycles and suddenly they got hungry this time *Bibi* invited them to his house for lunch. He said, "*let's go to my place my mom will cook for us and you will see my room*". In another episode called "Grandfather's field", *Pepee*'s grandpa was teaching farm animals to *Pepee* and at the same time his

grandma was preparing snacks for them, after *Pepee* saw and learnt all the farm animals he went home with his grandpa and ate the snacks that his grandma prepared for them.

	cooking	cleaning	playing with children	taking care of children	teaching	other domesticated works	non domesticated works
Annee	64	27	7	36	51	2	5
Babaa	-	-	17	-	22	-	58
Nenee	29	6	44	-	44	-	3
Dedee	-	-	227	74	193	-	37
Teyzee	11	4	3	6	-	2	1
Enistee	-	-	-	-	-	-	2

Table - 6: *Distribution of works done by family members*

As it can be clearly seen from the table, the gender-based division of labour within the family is valid within the cartoon series *Pepee*. Women are the ones, who stay at home and fulfil their domestic responsibilities, while men are the main breadwinners of the family.

In addition to conservative normative family model, the AKP and the former Prime Minister who is the current president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan favour the concept of extended family. They believe that grandparents are the ones, who will teach customs, norms and values to our kids. Numerous examples of this argument can also be seen from the content of the cartoon. *Pepee*'s grandfather *Dedee* and his grandmother *Nenee* are the two characters, which teach children things about the world, our customs and so on at most. They generally teach children the colours, how to count, the size differences, the seasons or how to draw something, how to make a

kite and so on. In addition to these, they teach children a lot about Turkish culture such as traditional songs, traditional folkloric games, costumes and importance of traditional days. For example in the episode called "You can, if you believe" the grandfather taught *Pepee* and *Şila* how to make their own kite. Moreover on the episode, which was broadcasted on the 5ᵗʰ of May 2012 the grandmother taught *Bebee* and *Şila* how to play "*Kaşık Oyunu*"[14].

The overall findings suggest that, although the division of labour within the family, where mother is taking care of the household and father is the main breadwinner seems so natural, it shows great similarities with AKP's family understanding and reproducing it. None of the female characters of the animated cartoon series is working. They are all housewives, who are responsible from the domestic work. On the contrary the male characters of the series are generally seen while they are going to work or coming from work. Only the grandfather is retired. However, he is not helping any domestic work, his main role within the series is to educate children. Moreover, there is a great emphasis on the concept of extended family in the cartoon series.

4.3.4. The Anti-Western Values:

The main scriptwriter of the cartoon series *Pepee*, Ayşe Şule Bilgiç stated that, the idea behind producing *Pepee* to introduce the Turkish norms, values and customs (Retrieved from; http://www.dusyeri.com.tr.oni). Although this seems a good idea, since the mass media is not a pure educative tool controversially, very much linked

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[14] Turkish folkloric dance from Silifke region and played by spoons.

with politics and aiming to disseminate the dominant ideology the cartoon series' narrative takes an anti-western shape. The AKP's emergence roots back to the National Outlook Movement (NOM), *(Milli Görüş Hareketi)"* led by Necmettin Erbakan during 1970s. Their ideology has always been in pro-stance to political Islam and against the westernization and entering into the European Union. As Ali Resul Usul (2014) argues, Turkey's aspiration to be integrated to the European state system has started in the 18th century when the Ottoman Turks realized that they need to catch up with the Western militaristic, technological, economical and academic improvements (Usul, 2014). Therefore, since the 18th century Turkey's relations with the European states and organizations can be considered as a process of catching up with the contemporary level of western norms and values through "Europeanization". However, during the 1970s when the Islamic, Conservative and Nationalist groups came into power, this process has been challenged and slowed down. According to this new view, Westernization means the enslavement of Turkey by the Christian Western imperialistic states. Necmettin Erbakan was the main leader of this new view and refused the integration of European organizations especially the European Union. He referred the Union as "*Christian Unity against Muslims*" and rejected its benefits completely (Cizre, 2008). Not only Erbakan but also all other influential leaders of this new view were against Turkey's integration to the EU. However, when the process of "globalization" and its components including the global resurgence of liberal democracy and the EU, has substantially contributed to the reshaping of Turkish politics and the closing down of Erbakans's three political parties the

National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi*), the Welfare party (*Refah Partisi*) and the Islamist Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi*), Turkish politicians have started to believe that EU membership will be both economically and politically beneficial for Turkey (Kosebalaban, 2005; Bulaç, 2003; Ayata, 2004 and Kutan, 2000). Therefore, in 2002, the AKP came to power with a pro-stance to the EU claiming that they "*had removed the shirt of the National Outlook Movement*" (Milliyet, 2003). In their first phase of government from 2002 to 2007, the AKP proceeded accordingly, focused on nurturing a recovery from the recession, pushed the liberalizing reforms required to enable Turkey to begin official accession negotiations for EU membership and to adopt the EU's policies including freedom of expression. Furthermore during these years AKP prioritized Turkey's relationship with the European Union and the democratization process and Turkish foreign policy remained anchored to Europe with the goal of integration to the EU. However, in 2007 when they were re-elected and increased their votes from 34.26% to 46.58% (Turkstat, 2012), their reforms about entering the Union have weakened (Cizre, 2008). For instance, while the Annual Report of 2005 notes that:

> "*…Since 2002, Turkey has made good progress in reforming*
>
> *CMRS…*" (EC, 2005).

The latest Annual Report notes that a progress has been made but the pace of change has slowed in Turkey (Cizre, 2008). As already mentioned, due to the fact that television is kind of a mirror for reflecting the dominant ideology, the anti-western values have become more and more visible within the content.

	Exist	Number	Rate
Turkish cultural motives	√	26	12,32%
Western cultural motives	√	2	0,94%
Other cultural motives	√	4	1,89%

Table - 7: *Distribution of various cultural motives*

As the table shows within the cartoon series *Pepee*, there are high levels of Turkish components with 12.32%; beside them there are few Far East motives with 1.89%, whereas the western values reflected only twice. While these high levels of Turkish cultural motives are reflected in the food eaten in the cartoon series, the music played, the dances and the games played by children throughout the 211 episodes of *Pepee*; the western and far east cultural motives are only limited within the dances. For example in the 8th episode, *Pepee* and *Bebee* were performing an Indian dance. Furthermore, in the 27th episode, *Pepee*'s giraffe friend *Zulu* was doing Michael Jackson's famous "*moon-walk*" dance.

From the findings about food eaten during the episodes, it can be said that *Pepee* prefers to eat Turkish cuisine when he gets hungry. For example, *Pepee* eats bread with molasses tahini, eggs, honey and slip and drinks milk in his breakfast, which considered as main Turkish breakfast food instead of muesli maple syrup or crepes, which are borrowed from the western cuisine. Moreover, *Pepee*'s favorite foods are haricot beans, *gözleme*[15] with hash shepherd salad and pickles. He never

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[15] Traditional pancake.

eats fast food or pizza, defined as traditional western and American foods. Furthermore, in the episode called "We should eat three times a day", *Pepee* was having his lunch and drinking "*ayran*"[16] and he said to his mother, "*mom, I really love the taste of ayran, I can drink it everyday every time*". This language hundred per cent reflect the AKP ideology, because in one of his speeches the former Prime Minister and current president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stated:

"*Our national drink is ayran, everyone should drink it*".

Moreover, in another episode, *Pepee*, *Bebee* and the father were waiting the mother to cook the breakfast. While she was cooking, she was telling what it is. The ingredients and the way she cooks were exactly the same as the crepe. However, after the mother had finished cooking she said "*oh! It tastes delicious let's taste my "Babaa Şaklatması*". Although the crepe is a food that we borrowed from foreign cuisine, the mother called "*Baba Şaklatması*" instead of "*crepe*".

Generally, *Pepee* has been portrayed as little boy, who is very interested in Turkish folk dances and eager to learn them. Thus, in various episodes of the cartoon series his grandfather and the out voice *Şuşu* teach him various Turkish folk dances. For example, in the episode called "*Pepee*'s Teke Zortlaması"[17] *Pepee*, *Zulu*, *Bebee* and *Şila* wore the traditional costumes and they were waiting for the grandfather excitingly to come and teach them the dance. Then, the grandfather came and gave brief information about historical background of the dance and taught his grandchildren how to do the dance. Moreover in the episode called, "*Pepee* is playing

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[16] A Turkish traditional drink made by the mixture of yogurt and water.
[17] The name of a Turkish folk dance

hoptek "[18] *Pepee* and the grandfather were preparing based on the Turkish folk dance *hopte*k and they would play it to other family members after the dinner. *Pepee* was so excited about it. At the beginning *Pepee* could not dance properly but he practiced and learned the dance and taught it to his sister.

Additionally, in various episodes of *Pepee*, they play various songs. Although, because of the Internet it is so easy to listen foreign songs these days, every single song played in the cartoon series *Pepee* is Turkish. For example, "*Ilgaz Anadolu'nun Sen Yüce Bir Dağısın*"[19] and "*Cemilem*"[20] and "*Odaya serdim halı*"[21] are some of *Pepee*'s favorite songs. Moreover, in the episode called "*Pepee*'s *don don oyunu*"[22], it was a rainy day, *Pepee* and *Bebee* were not able to play outside and they were bored. Their grandmother suggested playing musical chairs. The mother were playing the songs from the radio but the songs played were all Turkish traditional folk songs and some imaginary songs that were produced for *Pepee* like "*İki Ekmek Aldım Eve Gidiyorum*" and so on.

The overall findings clearly show that, the cartoon series *Pepee* has an anti-western position, which is directly coming from the AKP's viewpoint on Europeanization and Westernization.

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[18] The name of a Turkish folk dance
[19] The name of a Turkish song
[20] The name of a Turkish folk song
[21] The name of a Turkish folk song
[22] Musical chair game

4.3.5. Gender Inequalities:

Although the notions of gender inequality can be seen within almost every sphere of the AKP ideology and policies, the frequency of male and female characters and their clothing are two features that are being tried to be embedded via cartoons to children's minds. Generally the term "gender" has always been mixed with the term "sex". Although, they are closely related, they are not synonyms. While sex is a term to denote biological differences gender is acknowledged to refer to socially and culturally acquired-roles and behaviors given to those different biological sexes (Casey, et. al., 2008). According to Ashmore and Del Boca sex-roles are considered as the structured sets of beliefs about the personal attributes of women and men (Ashmore and Del Boca, 1979).

Globally media is considered as one of the most powerful agents in constructing and representing gender roles and television as an arena for construction, production and reproduction of stable notions of gender through stereotyping and generic convention (McQuail, 2010). Many cultural commentators have argued that television constructs and perpetuates the gender roles and stereotypes (Gunter, 1995). Many investigations into representation of gender and sex roles on television have suggested that the world as shown us is a gender-skewed one (Gerbner and Signorielli, 1979). These findings were consistent with those of Sternglanz and Serbin. They also found that males were given much more variety in roles and that gender representation did not mirror the real world (Sternglanz and Serbin, 1974).

These findings show a great accordance with Turkish cartoon series "*Pepee*". Moreover, because of the fact that Turkish government does not believe in gender equality, the content of *Pepee* is more problematic. Although, the AKP identifies itself as moderate pro-western party operating within the parameters of a strict secular state system and through a series of reforms (Cizre, 2010), there is a high level of gender inequality in Turkish social, political and cultural domains (Acar and Altunok, 2012; Öniş, 2009, 2012). The AKP do not believe in gender equality and expressed their argument in their various speeches. For instance, in the First International Women's Summit, held by Women and Democracy Association (KADEM) the party leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stated:

> *"You can not subject to the same conditions as a pregnant woman,*
>
> *men in business. One mother, for example, a mother*
>
> *who has to suckle the child, you cannot on an equal*
>
> *footing with men without such obligations. Women cannot run*
>
> *here all his men. So the equality of men and women is against to*
>
> *nature.* [23] *"* (Retrieved from

http://www.bbc.co.uk/turkce/haberler/2014/11/141124_kadininfitrati_erdogan).

These opinions of the AKP can clearly be seen within the content of one and only Turkish children cartoon series *Pepee*'s male and female characters' portrayals.

The earliest studies about the frequency of female and male characters clarify that women and girls have always been under-represented across a wide variety of media and this unequal distribution is still valid in *Pepee*.

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[23] translated by the author.

	Female Characters						Male Characters							
	Bebee	Sila	Annee	Nenee	Teyzee	Mimi	Pepee	Dedee	Babaa	Eke	Zulu	Kopus	Kalis	Enistee
	402	276	192	126	27	3	971	519	96	58	41	54	67	8
Total	1026						1814							

Table - 8: *Frequency of characters' appearances*

	Female Characters	Male Characters	Total
Number	1026	1814	2840
Rate	36,13%	63,87%	100,00%

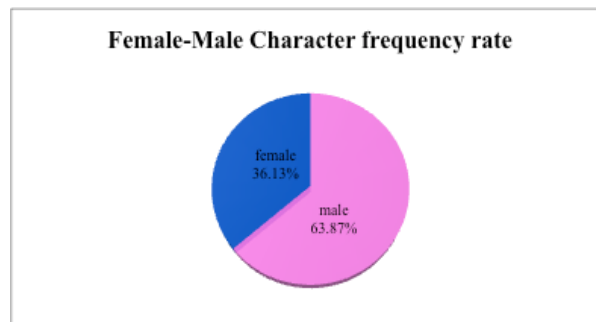**Table - 9**: *Frequency rate of male and female characters*

Chart - 1: *Frequency rate of male and female characters*

As it can be seen from the table and the pie chart the male characters appear much more than female characters. They appear 1814 times (63.87%); while female characters only appear 1026 (36.12%) in 211 episodes of *Pepee*, which makes male

characters appear almost two times more than female characters. While the male characters appear approximately 14 times within an 11-13 minute episode, female characters appear only 6 times.

Another, important gender discrimination can be seen from the choice of the color and style of their clothes. Although, there is no written rule, it is accepted that pink represents the female and blue the male. And this idea is being imposed on children and their families as a cultural norm, which must be followed (Kalaycı, 2015).

Character	Colour	Type
Pepee	Blue	a t-shirt and a jean with bib
Bebee	Pink	a dress a bow tie buckle
Sila	Light purple	Dress
Eke	Yellow Blue	a t-shirt and a jean with bib
Annee	Light purple Dark purple	a long dress a jacket
Babaa	Blue Bordeaux	trousers, a tie, a shirt, a sweater
Nenee	Light purple	a dress a head scarf
Dedee	Blue Brown	trousers, a tie, a shirt, a cardigan

Table-10: *Distribution of colours and types of clothing*

It can be clearly seen from the table that, female characters wore light color clothes such as pink and its shades, purple and its shades. On the other hand, the male

characters were wearing mainly dark colors especially blue and its shades or brown. Moreover, when the findings were analyzed, it was observed that in every single episode male characters were wearing trousers or shorts and t-shirts while the female characters were wearing skirts even, wearing skirt was irrelevant to the situation such as during sport, riding bicycle and so on. For example, in the episode called "Shoot and goal that's football", children were playing soccer. During the game *Şila*, *Bebee* and all other nameless female characters were wearing skirts even though it is not the rule of soccer. In addition to these, in the episodes, which children are learning some activities required their own costumes; the choice of color does not change. In the episode called "*Pepee*'s Teke Zortlatması"[24], the grandfather was teaching how to do the dance and they were all in traditional costumes. While *Pepee*'s and the grandfather's costumes were brown, *Şila*'s costume was purple.

According to overall findings, we can argue that, light colors and skirts are associated with female characters within the content of *Pepee* while dark colors and jeans and trousers are associated with male characters. The purpose of this clothing discrimination is to reproduce, naturalize, idealize and legitimize the AKP's views about gender equality/inequality.

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[24] The name of a Turkish folkloric dance

Conclusion:

In todays world nobody can challenge the view that the spheres of politics and media are closely intermingled. As stated early in this thesis, the actual role of mass media is to disseminate information about the contemporary affairs, which are of interest and importance to the general public, to educate and entertain people and shape or reshape young people's identities. However, with the rise of capitalism, including the media everything within society has turned into an instrument of profit making and capital accumulation. Hence, the media sphere has lost its elucidative role and has turned into a market. Consequently, the media outlets started serving the dominant ideology in order to survive within the harsh market conditions. Meanwhile, political actors strive hard to get the media on their side in order to disseminate their worldview to the public through the capacity of media to reach thousands or billions of people at the same time. Although this situation is contrary to one of the guiding aspects of democracy, freedom of expression, it is widely practiced in Turkey, who identifies itself as a democratic country. From the very early years of the Republic, there has been a high level of state regulation on media institutions in Turkey.

From the data collected via qualitative discourse analysis some conclusions can be drawn: like other Turkish television productions, the cartoon series *Pepee* also reflects parts of the AKP ideology. There are significant religious and Islamic motives as well as patriarchal features; anti-western notions within the content of the series and the portrayal of family relations show great similarity with AKP's worldviews.

Furthermore, gender dimensions of the cartoon series show great accordance with the AKP approach, which does not believe in gender equality.

Any aspect of these cartoons, which is used to reinforce and reproduce the dominant ideology, should be considered as a serious threat. As their target audience are pre-school children between the age of 2-5, who are not mature enough to watch them with a critical eye and are incapable of distinguishing dreams from reality nor good from bad. These consequently create much of their world through what they observe and consider the characters they are watching as role models (Bandura, 1986). Cartoon series with their extremely colorful and fun scenery inject this one-dimensional ideology that they convey into children's mind like a syringe (Croteau, Hoynes 1997), which is totally inappropriate for the identity construction of children.

The role of cartoon series on educating children is so important but the fact that makes the study of television so important, is its power to determine their view of the world because as Gripsrud (2010) states it is still a mirror and an actor in social, political and cultural spheres. Thus it is very important to analyze the messages conveyed by cartoons because close dialogical and reflective relations with the rest of the society are manifested in its contents day by day following historical and socio-political developments (Gripsrud, 2010). In line with these arguments *Pepee* was considered as a television genre, which is suitable for children due to the fact that its content does not include any violent or sexual scenes and contains high levels of educative features. Furthermore children consider *Pepee* - a well-behaved little boy, who is keen to learn new things and who treats his family with respect- as a role

model. However, beside these positive aspects, the fact that *Pepee* carries the ruling party's ideology is damaging the level of freedom of expression in Turkey, which is against the cornerstone principles of democracy. What needs to be done to avoid this situation is to increase the media literacy level in Turkey. At a macro level this goes beyond personal initiatives and efforts and calls for a state involvement. As Gencel Bek argues the restrictive legal structure should be changed, illegal power of the state over civil rights should be ended and the state broadcasting should be turned into a public service broadcasting (Gencel Bek, 1995 as cited in Gripsrud and Weibull, 2010). At a micro level, parents, teachers, students and any individuals, who have the media literacy should force the cartoon producers and scenarists to be more objective and careful about their product and lastly researches analyzing the content of children cartoons from various viewpoints including from its relation with the government or gender equality should be given more importance.

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