

## The Evolution of State Reason of Turkish Islamists and Its Effect on the Justice and Development Party Performance

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### Abstract

The identity and performance of the Justice and Development Party of Türkiye since coming to power in 2002 has been the subject of much thought and questions. By emphasizing the legacy of the last Islamic caliphate and relying on new economic-political achievements, Turkish Islamists have displayed a new formulation of state reason (raison d'état) in the international system under the banner of "Islamic Democracy". They claim to have formulated the requirements of being a Muslim requirements and the secular provisions of today's world together. This formulate of ruling which is based on a new understanding of Turkish Muslim identity contributes to the manifestation of self-confidence in domestic and foreign politics, and this is what have made them to be reckless in pursuing the policy of strategic depth in the Islamic world, the Middle East, Central Asia, North Africa and even Mediterranean area .

By applying the theoretical possibilities of the concept of Governmentality in Foucault's thought, this article aims to first shed light on what and how this intellectual and identity transformation is, and then apply it to the politics of the Justice and Development Party.

### Keywords:

Justice and Development Party of Türkiye, Governmentality, Political Islam, Kemalism.

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## Introduction

**The Problem:** The leadership of Turkey's Justice and Development Party since 2002 has shown a new identity of the political actions of this country, both internally and in the international arena. This new identity, of course, carries strong elements of the last Islamic caliphate's pride along with new economic-political achievements. In quantitative terms, perhaps the greatness of the legacy of the empire after its collapse can be traced in the form of 50 independent countries, which include almost a quarter of the member states of the United Nations and are spread over the three continents of Asia, Africa and Europe. Today, this heritage plays a prominent role in the mentality of the Turkish people and the political action of its elites. In addition to this inheritance, the type Justice and Development Party (JDP) as a model that is distinct from its predecessors in the Islamic world with its emphasis on democratic values, has revealed a model of "**Islamic democracy**" as a Muslim country that displays secular Islam.(Fuller, 2010) Its economic and political successes, in particular, have brought the recognition of the then US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, regarding the emergence of a world power alongside China, Brazil and India.(Kösebalaban, 2011, p. xi)

From a foreign perspective, the Justice and Development Party, unlike its predecessors, who mostly accepted Turkey's pre-defined role in the international system and behaved according to it, has been able to pursue more independence in foreign policy, and even in some cases played prominent roles in issues Play regionally and globally. This can be seen in recent years with the ups and downs of Turkey's relations with Israel, the intervention in the South Caucasus and the explicit support of Azerbaijan in the war with Armenia, the direct military intervention in the ISIS crisis and the geopolitics of northern Iraq and Syria, as well as expressing the desire to play a role a mediator in Iran's nuclear crisis followed with major powers. These achievements (and, of course, some disappointments due to not being accepted into the European Union) have given the elites of this party confidence to make a clear turn from Westernism to the East and to restore their strategic depth in the Islamic world, the region. Middle East, Central Asia, North Africa and even the Mediterranean area.

**Necessity and Importance of discussion:** Of course, the new face of Türkiye has led to different interpretations by thinkers. Some people consider this party's political action to be against the fundamentals of political Islamists, and therefore consider it a form of hypocrisy and political opportunism, which is done in order to maintain power in order to change the structures of secular democracy in favor of Islamists at the right time.(

Korab-Karpowicz, 2008). On the other hand, some others consider this to be a distance from the foundations of identity and the true acceptance of Western secularism. This group basically believes that the way of governing justice and development has nothing to do with the political thoughts of Islam. Meanwhile, some others refer to this model as Islamic pragmatism.(Nasr, 2003, p.71) Clarifying the identity and the basis of the functioning of the Justice Development Party is not only important for neighboring countries such as Iran, but also for the Islamic world and Islamologists, knowing their ruling model is significantly important.

**Goals, Questions, & Assumptions:** In this article, an attempt is made to open a window to understand the development of Türkiye's activism in the field of domestic and foreign policy. For this purpose, the aim is to identify the political approach of this party and its elites by answering the reason of state. It will be said that the logic of thinking of the party elites indicates "Islamic conservatism along with a certain view of Western neoliberalism in accordance with the identity of Turkish Islam" in the way of ruling. By understanding this political approach, the way is opened to examine the decision-making pattern of this party in domestic and foreign affairs.

**The Method:** To examine the issue, this research attempts to benefit from Foucault's genealogical method, especially emphasizing the theoretical implications of the "**Governmentality**" concept. Appeared in Foucault's later works, this concept is one of Michel Foucault's theoretical innovations that he uses in his genealogical method to analyze the two issues of "state" and "subject". Foucault has used the issue of government precisely to analyze the relationship between what he calls the technologies of the self and the technologies of the oppressed; Or in other words, what is related to the construction of the subject and what leads to the formation of the state. Based on this, all of Foucault's efforts from the discussion of "Governmentality" is to show how the modern ruling state and modern individual independence are co-determining in finding each other. (Lemke, 2022, p. 2-3) The term "the technologies of the self" refers to those facilities through which a person can perform actions related to his body, soul, thoughts, deeds, and in this way transform himself and reach the state of perfection. But the concept of "governmentality" refers to the methods through which the state supervises its citizens, their wealth, poverty, customs, and habits. In other words, governmentality deals with the whole society. (Miller, 2018, p. 251). In this article, the "governmentality" concept will always be considered in the same meaning mentioned.

### **Contexts for the Transformation of State Reason of (Raison d'état) of the Justice and Development Party**

The emergence of the political Islam movement in Turkey and the process of its rise to power, sociologically, begins with the explanation of domestic and international socio-political developments from the 50s, of course, from the 70s and 80s onwards, especially with the rise of the Motherland Party (MP) and Turgut Özal's government marks a turning point. The coup d'état of 1980 left wide and considerable effects on the political-social structure and the formulation of the possibilities of political competition in Türkiye. In fact, for the third time (1960, 1971, and 1980), Turkish society faced the aggressive and violent face of the Kemalist government, which, with the help of military power, justified the intervention in civil society under the pretext of controlling and reorganizing it. But this time, the coup plotters saw a more important danger than the Islamists. The chaos of the political and economic system in the 1970s was caused by the political-social polarization between the right and left ideologies. For this reason, the coup plotters considered the radical leftists as the main enemy this time, and instead of fighting with the Islamists, they tried to create an alliance between the right-wing movement and the Islamists by presenting a modified model of Islam.

The basis of this alliance was prepared with the help of the ideology of "Turkish-Islamic Synthesis (TIS)" theorized by the Intellectuals' Heart. Based on this ideology, the constitution was revised to eliminate small parties and left-wing extremists, and the proportional representation system was approved by obtaining at least 10% of national votes. (Eligür, 2015, p. 115) In this way, political ground was provided for the activity of Islamist parties. In the gap between the left and center-right parties, as a representative of political Islam, the Welfare Party (WP) appeared prominently in the power play scene of political parties by attracting the votes of leftists deprived of political competition.

In fact, since the middle of the 1980s, with the revelation of the economic crisis in the Özal government, people's understanding of a neoliberal development-oriented government was formed as an elitist government that, instead of paying attention to public opinion and interests, tried to impose its policies on the society in an authoritarian manner. As a result, a dysfunctional government appeared, which became a suitable platform for propaganda and gaining the power of opposition parties, especially other Islamic groups. In such a situation and with the political opening that was created after 1987 with the referendum and which led to the return of political elites such as Necmettin Erbakan, Demirel, Bülent

Ecevit, and Alparslan Türkeş to the political scene, political Islamists for the umpteenth time with organizational consolidation in the Welfare Party from they benefited the most from the opportunity to attend and participate in politics. By looking at the past, political Islamists formed critical literature against the secular government in the new era, have used global conditions based on democratization, freedom, and human rights, and instead of criticizing liberal policies, they have employed liberal and conservative literature to cover their religious tendencies. The Welfare Party, on the one hand, showed the superiority of the ideology and management system of political Islam by exploiting the global demands and criticizing the institutional structure of the government for internal dysfunction, and on the other hand, by proving the real efficiency of the party's program through providing successful management in the municipalities. (Ibid, p. 194)

From this time onwards, three periods of active presence of political Islam in Turkey can be mentioned: the first period is dedicated to the years of experience of the political participation of the Welfare Party alongside the army in the construction of the government, which is in the context of the political opportunity provided by the new constitution and designed processes based on the ideology of Turkish-Islamic synthesis and economic and social liberalization under the leadership of Motherland Party led by Turgut Özal. This social and economic context provided the ground for rethinking the second generation of Islamist intellectuals. Therefore, the Islamist social movement, led by its branch of political Islam, has succeeded in gaining power in the middle level of the political structure since the early 1990s, and with their successful experience in managing municipalities, took the next step in the 1995 national elections and was able to form a coalition government with a relative victory. The third period is formed due to the accumulation of experience of Islamists in these almost two decades of the turbulent and political-social ground builder of Turkey, and of course the unsuccessful experience of maintaining and continuing the coalition government due to the soft intervention of the army in 1997.

The victory of the Justice and Development Party in the third term was achieved as a result of experience and fundamental rethinking of the issue of Turkish Islamist governmentality based on the logic of "neoliberalism policy" and a new formulation of the relationship between the government and civil society. The governmentality of the Justice and Development Party since 2002 is based on the developments of the international system in the transition period and the post-polar world, rethinking state reason resulting from the bitter experience of secular "security policy" and redefining the interaction between the state and civil



society. These objective and subjective developments in a mutual struggle have been the builder of the neoliberal governance logic of the Islamists. Strengthening the social base, opportunism in the transitioning international structure, and making structural-legal changes, especially since 2017, have contributed to the continuation of this party's power until now.

### **1. What is the political approach: Rethinking the Political**

The basis of the intellectual evolution and political action of the Justice and Development Party Islamists should be sought from the experience of the Kemalism secular rule on the one hand, and attention and learning from the structural opportunities of the international system and new ideas of governance on the other hand. Two main features of the party's governance, i.e. Islamic conservatism and neoliberal governance, have emerged from this experience.

#### **1-1. Making Distance from Kemalism**

Kemalism failure in the project of modernization of Turkish society is considered the first stage of transformation in the intellectual and social organization of Islamists. Kemalism was revealed in response to the ineffectiveness of traditional thought and the way of governance of the Ottoman sultanism in solving the problem of building a modern state. While Kemalism creates alienation with two the Social and the Political of the Ottoman, it uses the secular-nationalist worldview to differentiate its identity, and by introducing Islam as a reactionary and backward factor, it replaces French positivism with religion and makes it the basis for Imperative planning to build a new nation. (Yavuz, 2011, p. 46)

In this new program, the protection of secularism is defined as the first and main duty of the government, and to get rid of the domination and authority of religion, a radical effort is made to remove religious foundations and manifestations from the politics and society of Turkey. The Kemalists abolished the caliphate by passing several laws in 1924-1925 and banned Islamic courts, religious schools, and Sufi associations and Islamic brotherhoods. In the field of personal status laws, polygamy was prohibited and civil marriage was replaced by it. In 1926, instead of Islamic law, civil laws and western criminal law were approved. In the revision of the 1928 constitution with the amendment of the second article, Islam was no longer the official religion of the state. This principle, which was the basis of the secularism of the government, was also implemented in the laws of 1937, 1961 and 1982. (Barbier, 2007, p. 302-303) Also, the government, by interfering in the field of religious affairs, put the organization and how to

perform religious duties and even the preaching of religion strictly under its planning and control. The establishment of the Directorate of Religious Affairs (DİB) attached to the Prime Minister in 1924 in order to control all religious issues and in accordance with the principle of secularism was for this reason. The training of religious preachers and teachers in state centers was entrusted to the Ministry of National Education and Imam Hatib schools to train a state clergy. Even Azan (the call to prayer) in Arabic was prohibited until 1950, and the mandatory prayer five times a day was abolished. (Ibid, p. 303) As a result, Kemalist secularism, instead of recognizing and respecting the independent religious sphere, interpreted it as a subset and under the control of the government and sought to exploit religion for the benefit of its modernization program. In fact, Kemalism did not seek to separate the Religious from the Political, but sought to form a "state religion". The idea of "enlightening Islam" in the discourse of Kemalism shows this view.

In the face of these attacks, with the aim of protecting identity and social boundaries, and in order not to directly confront the official arena and the public sphere, which was under the fence of the laws and political restrictions of Kemalist institutions, the Islamic movement took a secret strategy and invested in the civil society. Because the relentless hostilities of the government against the religious identity of the civil society led to the great mistake of Kemalism and turned the external identity gap between Islam and the West into the most important internal and active social gap between Islamism and secularism. However, in both the Second Republic (1961) and the Third Republic (1983), despite the efforts to restore the authoritarian modernization idea of the secular state, the commitment to preserve the freedoms of non-governmental organizations and associative life prevented the radicalization of the Islamist trend. Because the reproduced structures had provided the possibility of systematic political action in the public sphere. In other words, the Islamic movement in Türkiye has learned political action as a regulated game in the context of the democracy structure.

The success of the Justice and Development Party in presenting a new governance model is rooted in the Islamists' rethinking of politics. Kemalism had a paradox, according to Islamists. Because, on the one hand, Kemalism sought to alienate from the Ottoman Caliphate; But on the other hand, it gave great importance to the state and suffered from "state inflation". The unlimited growth of the state, characterized by absolute power and widespread bureaucracy, had formed a totalitarian state that allowed hidden violence covered by social welfare and populism policies. From an

international point of view, in the years after the First World War, welfare states in the West and party governments in the East were challenged as malignant and unacceptable states. It seemed that only outside the state could there be a worthwhile life that included human freedom. (Rose & Miller, 1992, p. 271) The conditions of the economic crisis after the war made the government's intervention in the economy inevitable. However, the excess of this idea led to the state economy, which Türkiye also suffered. In the shadow of the state economy, the independence of civil society in the field of economy was largely lost in favor of state monopolies and the formation of a state bourgeoisie (TÜSİAD)(1) in most of the right-wing governments of Türkiye until the end of the 1980s. Thus, the Kemalist government, based on its special dynamism, regularly reproduced itself and spread its branches. The six principles of Kemalism(2) in a paradoxical and irrational combination, with an authoritarian, hasty, populist manner, and the direct intervention of the government in the economy, emphasized centralism in contrast with the political-cultural foundations of the society and political pluralism and had become basically a big obstacle to reach political modernity.

By showing the problems of Kemalism, in fact, the Islamists did not see the root of the problem in the "state"; because the strong tradition of the state in Turkey's political culture does not allow Islamists to question the state basis. The state has always played a central role in the history of Turkish political culture in the construction of society, politics, and culture. According to them, the problem is the "Kemalist governmentality". Since the state is a construct entity which resulted from different governmentalities in the society, it is a posterior existence. Therefore, there is no thing that is a priori in the position of creating the society. By challenging different governmentalities and through the subject-object struggle, the organization of the state is built and becomes an instrument for ruling. Therefore, the Islamists tried to rebuild the construct matter and this time put the government under the supervision of the civil society inversely and redefine the issue of the legitimacy of the state from within the civil society.

## **1-2. Redefining the Theory of the State: Neoliberal Islamic Governmentality**

Having learned from the neoliberalism governmentality experience as a solution to deal with the shortcomings of Kemalism is the second factor that has led to the transformation of the ruling reason of Turkish Islamists. It should be kept in mind that the Political and the criterion of legitimacy in the school of neoliberalism have found a subtle and major evolution. According



to Foucault, while until the 18th century, when the interest of the state was the criterion for the actions of the states and their legitimacy, the instrument of this assessment was "law". But from the 18th century onwards, the criterion is no longer the law; Rather, it is "political economy". He refers to political economy in its broad sense as any method of ruling that ensures the happiness and well-being of the nation. (Foucault, 2012, p. 26) Based on this new criterion, the limitation of the modern state was pursued through "a kind of internal regulation of governmental rationality". (Foucault, 2007, p. 447-455) This means that the restrictions imposed on the government are no longer external - such as expedients arising from the divine will or emanating from a firm historical tradition or...; Rather, the limiting principle should be sought within the art of governance. (Foucault, 2012, p. 21) As a result of these internal limitations, the meaning of political legitimacy changes to a practical and de facto concept, i.e. "efficiency". That is, non-observance of restrictive boundaries shows the incompetence and mismanagement of the state. (Ibid, p. 22) This change in the legitimacy criteria based on political economy has tremendous results in governmentality and the way of government action.

The neoliberal state reason gives Islamists the possibility to design a mechanism to compensate for the social injustices of the Kemalist government by preserving the "state". This work was followed through a new formulation of economic rationality and its justification through Islamic literature and by using the ideas and spaces of political opportunity created in the shadow of global neoliberalism. To realize this idea, instead of reforming the government institution, they go to the society. That is, instead of developing a new social structure to adapt to the irrationalities of the Kemalism state, they move towards a new formulation of economic rationality to adapt to the social irrationalities of Kemalism. The result of the first way is the same idea that the Kemalist state followed. That is, the government, as the founder and leader of the society, is placed in the position of the driving engine of development and modernization, and considers itself responsible for the policy, planning, and implementation of the new nation-building project. In this way, everything opposed to the goals of the powerful Kemalism state machine is crushed under its wheels to make a smooth and uniform path of society. According to the second strategy, instead of the state being the driver of modernization and development, civil society appears in the role of the founder and the source of the formation of the Political, the Economic, and the Cultural. Via this, the disorder of society is handled through the design of a new formulation in the Economic and accordingly,

the Political is redefined too. In other words, in the new design, the "market" logic is used for the formalization of society and state.

Based on the "market" criterion, the goal of Islamists is to preserve a religious identity and its practical implementation in the life of a believer. Consequently, in order to deal with the dominance of Kemalist aggressive secular institutions, they emphasize the state's guarantee of civil society's freedoms and its pluralistic and competitive atmosphere. In fact, any government intervention in society should only be for the purpose of maintaining the principle of competition in society and preventing its distorting factors such as violation of the individual's rights, interference in the private sphere, economic or educational monopoly, comprehensive control, planning... . Since, according to Islamists, there is a difference and inequality between believers and non-believers, a space must be created to maintain the supremacy of believers in society.

Inspired by neoliberalism, they believe that freedom and competition do not come from a natural and divine rule; Rather, what is presented as the right to freedom and the right to faith for individuals in civil society is a construct matter resulting from the struggle of the rules of the formal game in civil society in order to guarantee competitive conditions. This means that the "formal game between epistemic inequalities" should be guaranteed based on universal regulations. Hence, in order to "return faith to the public sphere", this competitive environment must be constructed within the framework of the formal legal structure. So, the primary goal is to maximize as much as possible the objective and real space for the formal structure to shape competition in civil society. In other words, Islamists' strategy is to produce an active policy that is independent of government control. As they know that in competitive conditions, eventually the inefficiency of the positivist epistemology of Kemalism will be revealed and the superiority will be for the epistemology of Sunni-Sufi Islam.

For ensuring the creation of these conditions for Islamists, prompted them to actively and intelligently seek to gain power in the state institution and to change the way of governance in order to ensure the supremacy of Turkish Muslims in civil society. In their opinion, in fact, this governmentality should be intelligently for the benefit of the Islamic civil society, not to rule through the Islamic civil society. So, it is necessary for the government to maintain its trans-class and trans-group aspect. This new formulation of economic rationality to be compatible with the social irrationalities of Kemalism leads to a change in the state reason. Because there is a direct relationship between the economic organization of the society and the root of the government.

What is important for political Islam is "government" and not the state. The way of governance should be changed to guarantee a competitive and free environment of civil society. The state is the embodiment of that governance method and the civil society is the platform in which ruling is implemented. From this point of view, civil society has found an original existence and as a bearer of the government ruling, it undergoes transformations and changes. In this sense, the government is no longer a servant of civil society; Instead, civil society is put in the service of governmentality. Providing and guaranteeing rights is no longer the goal; Rather, pluralism and inequality are the criteria in civil society. This is the very strategy of formulating the new economic rationality in civil society to adapt to the stupidity of the state. But neoliberal profiteering is curbed here with the help of Islamic social ethics.

The formulation of the new model of ruling is done by calling on the Islamic-Ottoman heritage on the one hand and using the idea of the Homo economicus (economic man) of neoliberalism, which ultimately leads to the creation of the concept of "Homo Islamicus" (Islamic man). Based on this concept, the formulation of neoliberal governance requires the drawing of a self-interested agent to build political sovereignty. There is a difference between the concept of Islamic man in the thinking of Turkish Islamists and the economic man of the neoliberalism school, in the articulation of "**social-cooperative ethics**". Contrary to Western liberalism, which defines social ethics based on the school of utilitarianism, in the discourse of Islamists, Islamic ethics is central. For this purpose, the intellectual elites of Islamists went to the early days of Islam, and the moral virtues of the Prophet (PBUH) such as his honesty, trustworthiness, and gentleness in his economic activities and social interactions become the model of Islamic human behavior in the contemporary world(3). The reproduction of the character of the Prophet (PBUH), which represents social activity and production based on honesty and trustworthiness, is very compatible with the neoliberal understanding of today's Islamic man and is the basis of social capital. On the other hand, the concept of "service/cooperation" crystallizes in the Islamic community. Revival of the multicultural and tolerant heritage of the Ottoman Empire society helps a lot in rebuilding the new identity of the Islamic man and provides the means to justify the return to the Islamic and conservative traditions of the imperial era. It is in such an atmosphere that Islamists are generally trying to build and develop private economic and educational networks in a wide, complex and dense manner with the aim of attracting the largest number and educating Islamic people.

## **2. Social policy of political Islam**

The way of neoliberal governance is that instead of changing the structure of the government and coordinating with the criteria of political economy and free market, it reorganizes the social platforms. This approach is called "**social policy**"(4). The meaning of "social policy" is that in order to bring about change in the framework of society, the government must form a new economic-political order through the market existed in civil society, to reform all material, cultural, technical, legal, and geographical aspects. In other words, the government should interfere in the basic conditions of civil society. From this point of view, the social policy of Turkish Islamists is based on two foundations:

First, like Kemalism, policy targeting is no longer based on the principle of populism. Because the result of populism, when it was combined with statism, led to the imposition of social and cultural assimilation policies. Kemalism included populism among its principles in order to destroy the elitist privileges of the Ottoman government. Therefore, in order to eliminate the special privileges of the ruling groups, he sought to create distributive justice. He also followed the provision of justice through government planning and with populist slogans, but in practice with a monopoly in the hands of a special group (the elites of the Republican People's Party RPP and the bourgeoisie of TÜSİAD), which ultimately led to the malfunctioning of the political system. But the Islamists set their goal to ensure "inequality" and ensure maximum competition in civil society. Based on this, the government should not act in favor of the weaker sections or even believing Muslims, either economically or culturally. Because this leads to government ownership and monopoly, which is against the logic of free market economy.

With the understanding that they gained from the experience of action and reactions between Kemalist institutions and civil society, Islamists based their strategy on not challenging the economic power (TÜSİAD bourgeoisie), cultural elites (secular intellectuals) and legal institutions (secular judiciary) of Kemalism. Instead, they set the goal of the government on empowering the civil society by preserving its plurality and diversity. This is the meaning of "**conservatism**" that the Justice and Development Party emphasizes by reviving elements of the heritage of religious culture and the tolerant and pluralist practices of the Ottoman Empire in describing its party identity, which has both a political aspect and pursues a cultural-identity goal.

The second foundation of social policy is the continuation of the first; That is, instead of making policies in favor of Islamists, one should focus on empowering the individual in the civil society so that the individual

in the civil society can insure himself against the dangers of Kemalism and finally free himself from its domination. In fact, Islamists have emphasized "**individual social policy**" instead of "**populist social policy**" in order to ultimately benefit all people by strengthening civil society. Therefore, it should be concluded that the intervention of the government in the form of social policy should be aimed at creating the conditions and formation of civil society in favor of Islamists. The goal of social policy is "**social environment**".

The fight against the monopolies of Kemalism and efforts to create a competitive environment in civil society were pursued through investment in two main areas, namely the market and the field of education. On the one hand, they tried to break the economic monopoly of Kemalist institutions, especially its economic arm, the "Turkish Industry and Business Association (TÜSİAD)"(5). For this purpose, since the sixties, a group of small craftsmen and small businessmen known as "Anatolian Tigers" were formed in different cities and were able to establish the Independent Industrialists and Businessmen Association (MÜSİAD)(6) in front of TÜSİAD. The growth and development of this group were provided under the shadow of the neoliberal policies of the Motherland Party led by Turgut Özal and they were able to position themselves as the Islamic bourgeoisie in front of the secular bourgeoisie. (Kösebalaban, 2007, p. 232) The dispersion of the Islamic bourgeoisie in 49 cities of Turkey should be followed. During the Justice and Development Party, these urban economic groups have become the main axis of capitalism and connection with global markets, which export to 140 countries. (Tok, 2008, p. 83)

The first successful experience of these economic networks, which are responsible for the financial support of the social-cultural and educational service networks of the Islamic Movement, was revealed in the municipal elections and then in the search for power in the 1995 national elections. During the rule of the Justice and Development Party, these networks have been strengthened more and more and they engage in political action as a social support to the policies of the Justice and Development Party government. (See: Ayata, 2004) Islamists pursue policies in development with several goals for the growth of Muslim civil society:

1. First, to allow people to acquire private property as much as possible;
2. Also, the main policy should be to reduce the huge urban areas and pay attention to the urban margins. In fact, programs should be set up in order to replace the politics and economics of the big blocs



- (TÜSİAD) with the economics and politics of private homes and small industries and emerging and weak Islamic bourgeoisie;
3. The next goal should be to decentralize politics and economy and pay attention to the peripheries, focusing on the reconstruction of the society around the house, neighborhood, mosque, Islamic social-cooperative networks, nascent Islamic bourgeoisie, and related industries such as halal food and clothing industries.
  4. Finally, it is necessary to focus on the collective and cooperative life based on the moral-economic life model of the Prophet (PBUH) and the centrality of the concept of service to shape coexistence. In this regard, the revival of the multicultural and tolerant heritage of the Ottoman Empire helps greatly in the reconstruction of the new identity of the Islamic man.

The result of all these policies is that the center of gravity of the government's action is shifted downwards and a "corporate society" is built centered on the activism of the Islamic movement. The corporate society model provides the possibility for Islamists to get rid of the Kemalist security policy; Because the realization of the concept of economic man/Islamic man is the recognition of citizens' right to freedom of political participation. Because the majority of the society is formed by self-interested but Muslim subjects, building and guaranteeing the right to freedom and guaranteeing political participation ultimately leads to the supremacy of Islamists in society. However, how to manage and manage this corporate society is subject to the social policy of Islamists, which will be explained in the following.

### **3. Justice and Development Party's Way of Working**

Based on the explained framework, the way JDP works has been greatly affected by the developments of the international system in transition and how the internal social support is formulated with the political economy of this country as its center.

The most important feature of the international system in the transition period, unlike the Cold War era, was the disintegration of the hegemonic conditions of the great powers, and the transition from power-security-oriented politics. (Zarif, 2015, p. 54-55) However, the transition period characterized by globalization has affected all aspects of the previous international order. In the new conditions, the world is considered borderless and the economy is assumed to be one of the main bases of power. Therefore, commercial tools instead of military tools, capital instead of firepower, and the market instead of a military base determine the way of

thinking and possibilities of global actors. The consequences of this phenomenon in international politics can be traced in the convergence of financial markets and industrial productions and the failure of states' monopoly in the management of the international economy in economic terms, the interdependence of states in terms of politics and norms, and the spread of meanings and ideas from a cultural perspective. (Ibid, p. 64-70)

These new conditions of the international system are the basis for the new understanding and implementation of the pro-activism policy of JDP elites to create a meaningful distance from Turkey's passive role in following the Western bloc in the era of bipolar rule. In fact, the aim of the doctrine of strategic depth of Ahmet Davutoğlu as the architect of the party's foreign policy is to highlight soft power and the magnificent Ottoman cultural and historical heritage in all the sub-regions to which Turkey belongs(7), as well as the activism of democratic and economic institutions based on the free market. (Grigoriadis, I. N., 2010, p. 4-5) According to him, the integration of Türkiye's internal political and economic stability is the basis of such a goal. In fact, the country's internal reforms and growing economic power are helping it to emerge as a missionary of peace in the neighboring regions. (Aras, 2009, p. 128) It is for this reason that the stability and security of neighboring countries has become a main policy for Turkey, and it always pursues the implementation of the **"zero problem policy with neighbors"**; Because Türkiye defines itself as a central power in these regions. Türkiye's desire and active role in active mediation in regional crises can also be explained in this regard. (Davutoğlu, 2010)

The new understanding of the priority of political economy in politics has made Türkiye's policies basically follow the interests of economic groups. The relations of these groups - which are mainly the "Anatolian tigers" - with the government of JDP are mutually beneficial. Davutoğlu's initiative in proposing the policy of "zero problems with neighbors" was done precisely for this reason, both to save this country from the economic crisis of 2001 by diversifying its economic partners and to increase Turkey's active role and economic strength by making the private sector the basis of its foreign policy. In contrast, the Islamic bourgeoisie has put their economic initiatives in the service of the diplomatic success of the government of JDP in the conditions of economic and political crises. An example of this issue occurred during the global financial crisis in 2008, when Turkey's main export destination and business partner, Europe, was no longer able to continue its previous relations with Turkey under the influence of the crisis. Therefore, looking for new markets, the Middle East and Asia were considered new targets. The increasing growth of Türkiye's foreign

trade volume from 72 billion dollars in 2001 to 333 billion dollars in 2008 is clear proof of this claim. Meanwhile, the share of Asia and the Middle East increased from 18.7 billion dollars to 131 billion dollars, while the share of Europe decreased. (Qanbarlu, 2012, p. 88-89)

The priority of political economy can also be traced to the strategy of pro-activism of the JDP government. A clear example would be Türkiye's foreign economic aid policy. According to some statistics, they were able to increase this aid from 500 million dollars in 2005 to more than 6 billion dollars in 2016. From the perspective of humanitarian aid, Turkey ranks second among all donors and sixth in terms of the net cost of official development assistance (ODA). Zengin and Kurkmaz (2020, p. 133-134) believe that this aid should be analyzed in the form of two concepts "multi-stakeholder diplomacy" and "Controlled Neo-populism". In multi-stakeholder diplomacy, three main players, namely the government, non-governmental organizations, and businessmen, are active, while none of them have the final decision. In fact, the pro-activism policy of the JDP means that diplomats play the role of facilitator and entrepreneur. According to these experts, this should not be seen only as a conscious desire of the party elites to take maximum advantage of the new world order, but it mainly stems from the fact that basically the civil society actively participates in these government initiatives. (Ibid, p. 136) Even the government has removed visa restrictions with many countries in the Middle East, Caucasus, Africa, Latin America, Europe, and even Australia to facilitate trade relations and increase communication axes. (Online reference, 2024) This is evidence of the very meaning of corporate society and the participation of the Islamic human subject in the construction of power that was explained earlier; That is, the part of the Islamic bourgeoisie, not a partner in power, which is basically a main component of the government's power.

Also, the diplomacy of the stakeholders has made the Justice and Development Party pursue its soft power development strategy beyond neighboring borders or relations based on historical-cultural heritage. The expansion of economic relations with Latin America and the South African Sahara are two suitable examples for this policy, which are mainly due to the relations of non-governmental organizations, sub-governmental agencies such as TİKA, and chambers of commerce linked with Turkey. In fact, despite language, cultural, and geographical differences, Turkey has adopted an all-round policy in the dimensions of Turkish Airlines, the MÜSİAD, and some faith-based NGOs such as the Humanitarian Aid Foundation (IHH). (See: Gonzalez & Zengin, 2016) These examples show that the distinctive

feature of the Justice and Development Party compared to its predecessors is that in addition to the role of the government, sub-governmental and non-governmental actors are also present and decisive in foreign policy and are actually the promoters of Türkiye's soft power strategy.

But it should be noted that the main focus of the party's policies is on Central Asia, the Middle East, and the Balkans. The historical-cultural links with these regions have provided Turkey with the possibility of effectively acting. These ambitious efforts have led to the long-term results of increasing trade relations and social interaction, which, especially after the Arab Spring and in support of the fall of governments, have always been justified and interpreted in the form of conservative Islamic culture literature and support for democracy in the Arab world, and a special place has brought for the party(8).

However, the concept of controlled neo-populism proposed by Zengin and Kurkalmaz is another interpretation of the same governmentality based on the "individual social policy" of the JDP. Along with the organizing measures that have led to the transformation of frameworks in the economic formulation, a series of neoliberal regulatory measures have also been carried out to redistribute resources for the benefit of the Muslim civil society. Although these regulatory policies were first used to pass Turkey from the economic crisis in 2001, the innovations created by the JDP have led to the emergence of a new conservative upper class through privatization and public contracting. Abundant cash flows from private and domestic sources and, more importantly, expansionary monetary policies in the world allowed the JDP to pursue massive spending on education and health care. Along with the fall cycle in the global economy and the Western media's praises of the party's successes, this trust was created to strengthen their position and Turkey's position in the international arena. In addition, the high growth rate and widespread optimism about the overall state of the economy influenced the foreign policy behavior of successive JDP governments, such that the JDP elites dared to have a global outlook. Along the way, new consulates were opened, many foreign students were awarded scholarships, business associations were encouraged to diversify the geography of their target market, and TİKA was strengthened financially and institutionally. (Korkmaz & Zengin, 2020, p. 138)

#### **4. Structure of Policy Making**

The elites of the Justice and Development Party helped to redistribute resources and transform frameworks for the benefit of civil society through two categories of regulatory and organizing measures, which benefited

Islamic subjects as the final winners of this competitive environment. As a result, the diversity of actors (state, non-state, and sub-state) can be observed in the field of foreign policy with the priority of the political economy approach.

On the other hand, the organizing actions of the Justice and Development Party are related to redefining the mandatory rules. In this regard, an effort has been made to follow the moderate Anglo-Saxon version of secularism, which is consistent with the economic-social conditions and the theoretical foundations of the Hanafi-Maturidi school of Muslim Turks. (Ahmadi, 2018, p. 323-326) The main difference between the Justice and Development Party and the Islamist parties of its predecessors appears here. It is said that the discourse of political Islam in the Islamic world has three main claims. First, he claims the supremacy of Islam and is looking for a way to guarantee it in society. The second is the guarantee of this superiority through the implementation of the laws of Islamic Sharia. And finally, the implementation of Sharia laws is not possible except through the Islamic State. (Barbier, 2007, p. 336) These characteristics should be corrected about the Justice and Development Party as follows: In their opinion, Islam with a Sunni-Hanafi reading is considered the superior and main element of Turkish identity and the political culture of Turkish society. From the second point of view, the Justice and Development Party also seeks to implement Islamic Sharia laws in society and return Islam to the public sphere. But unlike the Welfare Party, it follows this matter in a limited way and mostly in the field of civil laws, personal conditions, and religious affairs. But regarding the claim of establishing an Islamic state, it should be said that the Justice and Development Party does not make such a claim unlike other political Islamists in the Islamic world (such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, etc.). In fact, the elites of the Justice and Development Party are seeking to form a kind of "**neoliberal Islamic governmentality**". Therefore, they were able to fill this challenging gap to a large extent by redefining and reformulating secularism in the formulation of governance.

It seems that, however, the other way of redefining mandatory rules is not compatible with the rules of neoliberal democratic governance, and in fact, its negative aspects are gradually becoming more pronounced. That is, it can be seen that during the rule of the JDP's governments, some people and personalities have always played a prominent role in the decision-making and policy-making process. Meanwhile, the main and first role should be sought in the character of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. In the first period of the leadership of the party, three personalities - Ahmet Davutoglu, Abdullah Gül, and Erdoğan - were very influential. While Abdullah Gül



played an important role in advancing Turkey's active foreign policy as foreign minister in the first term, in the second term after 2007, Davutoğlu, who became the foreign minister, followed the direction of this activism more decisively. But during this period, Erdogan always appeared as the leader and identity of the party. Especially, he was the heir to the popularity of the Istanbul municipality and appeared as a champion of the cause of the Palestinian people at the 2009 Davos conference.

Erdogan's gaining power in the party has gradually affected the democratic processes and party decision-making. Erdogan's cult of personality and authoritarian tendencies led Davutoğlu to step down from the Foreign Ministry post in 2014 due to mounting disagreements. Another example is the incident in Gezi Park and the violent treatment of civil opposition to a municipal project in 2013. Perhaps the most important manifestation of this issue can be seen in the dispute between Erdogan and Fethullah Gülen, an effective thinker, ideator of social Islam, and the founder of the service (Hizmet) movement, which culminated in successive attacks on organizations and supporters of the service movement in government institutions and finally accusing them for staging the failed coup of 2016. According to Erdoğan, Fethullah Gülen and his supporters in the service movement with creeping influence in government institutions had actually formed a parallel government and were trying to seize power. Because of this, the trial of Gülen's supporters on charges of trying to overthrow the government increased, especially from 2014 onwards. The failed coup of 2016 provided Erdogan with the most important excuse to carry out a nationwide purge of the supporters of the Gülen movement in all aspects of the state apparatus and mass media. This authoritarian path of Erdoğan was displayed in its last stage with the fundamental legal changes of 2017.

The 2017 constitutional amendment referendum was conducted under strict security conditions. Turkey's military intervention in northern Syria under the pretext of the security crisis of the PKK Kurds and special conditions after the coup, as well as the unwillingness to create a coalition government with the opposition secular parties, namely the People's Democratic Party and the Republican People's Party, special conditions had provided for the victory of Erdogan's party. (Zahedi, 2017, p. 188). The result of the referendum, which was intended to change the parliamentary system to a presidential system, was in favor of the continuation of Erdogan's power in the form of the president and increased his legal powers, and led to the detriment of the democratic institutions of the institutional structure.

The important point here, however, is the transformation in the policy structure, especially in the field of foreign policy. Based on research on how the policy-making process in foreign policy, the decision-making process has been divided between several formal and informal institutions and structures based on the new law. The president is the main authority in foreign policy decisions. Advisory roles have been entrusted to the State Department, the Security and Foreign Policy Committee (SFPC), the National Security Council (NSC), the National Intelligence Service (MIT), advisers formally appointed by the President, and various presidential liaisons outside the presidential sphere who are known as unofficial advisers and also the Turkish army. There is no hierarchy among these institutions and they all provide information directly to the president. (Neset & et al., 2019).

The Foreign and Security Policy Committee and official and unofficial advisors prepare evaluated information while the intelligence and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Intelligence Organization, and the Army provide operational intelligence. The mentioned institutions have very limited or no decision-making power. Hence, the decision-making process has become very individualized and personalized. The interesting thing is that in the foreign and security policy committee, some people also hold positions as senior advisers to the president, and therefore these people have double power. The members of this committee and its advisers are known to the public, but there is also a group of unofficial advisers whose identity is unofficial and unclear. The members of the committee are nine academic elites, professional advisers, and journalists who have personal ties to the president. The president himself heads this committee. But in practice, İbrahim Kalın, the main advisor to the president, manages this committee as the vice president. It is worth noting that the institutional performance of the committee is very weak and there are no members who have official connections with the National Intelligence Organization, the Army, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which supposedly have valuable knowledge and information. Also, the committee does not have a permanent secretary; This means that there is no regular mechanism to transmit the institutional recommendations of the committee to the president (Ibid).

In the new presidential structure, appointed and non-appointed advisers play an important role in the bureaucratic structure. It is said that Erdogan personally chooses these people based on personal trust and loyalty, not their merits. Some mention the number of these consultants up to 40 people. Informal advisers are drawn from friendship groups, businessmen, academics, and professionals engaged in think tanks. Apart from these, there

is another advisory group that Erdogan especially trusts, which includes former Defense Minister Hulusi Akar, Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, Vice President Cevdet Yılmaz, Erdoğan's son-in-law Berat Albayrak, Mehmet Şimşek the Minister of Economy and Treasury, and the chief of the cabinet Hasan Doğan. Among these people, it is said that Hasan Doğan and Berat Albayrak have a special position and determine the priorities of Erdogan's plan and decide when and under what conditions Erdoğan will meet the people(Ibid).

The authors of this research believe that the new presidential system has led to the individualism of policy processes centered on the president and Erdoğan himself. Ministers are also accountable to the Foreign and Security Policy Committee or the President's Office in their field of work. In fact, Erdoğan's individualism-pragmatism in the new presidential system has caused there to be no specific political instructions and manuals for the bureaucratic staff, and this increases the percentage of errors and increases the routine. In fact, individualism is the opposite of institutionalism and has negative consequences for the political system. Namely the daily routines, ambiguity in intentions and actions, officials' reliance on presidential decrees and not compliance with laws, attempts to bypass the main institutions such as the parliament in the shadow of presidential decrees, very general and less transparent decrees that cause overlapping or confusion of the authority of the triple branches. The individualist system of the presidency actually leads to a severe limitation of the functioning of the institutions of the party-parliamentary system and concentrates power on the ruling party and its allies, and in particular the president himself. In the system of individualism, the influence of non-governmental actors from sectors such as universities, civil society, non-governmental organizations, think tanks and the media can be very high or low depending on the relationships they have with influential people in the government. For this very reason, it is very difficult to evaluate the relationships of these effects(Ibid).

### **Conclusion**

Turkey has shown a new face and identity since 2002 with the coming to power of a new generation of political Islamists in this country. This new figure has been able to adapt to the common pattern of Western neoliberalism and to reproduce the historical-cultural identity of Ottomanism and put it in the service of protecting the identity of Turkish Muslims. Even this conservative aspect of identity has been liked by Islamic countries, especially the Arab world.

In fact, with the transformation in the intellectual system of Islamists and the creation of transformation in the intellectual foundations and redefining the organization of the state by distancing itself from the shortcomings of Kemalism and learning from the model of neoliberal governance, as well as taking advantage of the fragile conditions of the hegemony of the great powers in the transition period of the international system, the governments of this party has successively tried with strength and determination to be active and overcome the passivity of the Kemalist era. To achieve this goal, they changed the way of governance in favor of the Muslim civil society and the Islamic bourgeoisie, and with the strong and intelligent socio-economic support that was formed, they were able to change the social formations in the domestic sphere and take stronger steps in their foreign relations to pursue independent actions. The presence of civil society in power has taken place with the help of transformation in the governmentality of Islamists; Because the basis of this presence comes from the idea that the political participation of citizens is the main component of the government's power. This meaning is in complete contrast with Kemalist thinking and fear of citizens' political participation and therefore the pursuit of security policy.

However, the process of action and reaction of plural civil society with the government organization during the two decades of the ruling Justice and Development Party shows that some historical features, especially individual authoritarianism in the government structure, have led to the dysfunctions of neoliberal and democratic governance. The violent and exclusionary dealings with the opposition, especially due to the failed coup of 2016, have finally led to the revision of the constitution in favor of gaining more power for Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and to the detriment of weakening independent institutional and democratic functioning.

**Note:**

1. Türk Sanayicileri ve İşadamları Derneği / Turkish Industry and Business Association.
2. Republicanism, Populism, Nationalism, Laicism, Etatism, and Revolutionism.
3. According to the survey presented in Eligür's research, in 1998. 66.2% of students of Imam Hatib schools (who were influenced by the religious teachings of Islamists) identified their favorite leader as the Prophet (PBUH); While the popularity of Atatürk was only 9.6%. (Eligür, 2015, p. 182).
4. Gesellschaftspolitik
5. Türk Sanayicileri ve İş İnsanları Derneği
6. Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği
7. From Davutoğlu's point, Türkiye is a country that simultaneously belongs to other regions which are the Balkans, the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Caspian, the Mediterranean, the Persian Gulf, and the Black Sea.
8. An example of this literature can be clearly seen in the explanation of Turkish foreign policy doctrine by Davutoğlu or İbrahim Kalın; See: (Davutoğlu, 2010) & (Davutoğlu, 2012) & (Kalın, 2012).

پژوهشگاه علوم انسانی و مطالعات فرهنگی  
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