

Cultural Policy of the Justice and Development Party in the Context of Cultural Policies in Turkey^a

Türkiye'de Kültür Politikaları Bağlamında Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi'nin Kültür Politikası

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ABSTRACT	ÖZET
<p>Republican period in Turkey, conflicts in the cultural sphere are usually an extension of conflicts in the political sphere. Trying to understand the nature of this kind of relationship between culture and politics in Turkey and also, to contribute to the current discussion of the concept of "cultural power", it is important to examine the relationship between politics and culture in the context of current and concrete developments. This study is limited to the period when the Justice and Development Party (JDP) has been in power. Since 2002, Turkey has been being governed by the JDP. This party is distinctly different from the previous governments in its political tradition, ideological tendency and policies. This qualitative difference of the JDP government also directly reflects in his relationship with existing cultural sphere in Turkey. Therefore, in this study, the relationship between politics and culture during the JDP was evaluated in the context of the JDP government's cultural policies. In addition, the historical and sociological reasons of the tension between the established cultural order and the cultural policies of the JDP government in this period were also be taken into consideration.</p>	<p>Cumhuriyet dönemi Türkiye'sinde kültürel alandaki çatışmalar veya kültürel olarak nitelendirilen çatışmaların genellikle siyasal alandaki çatışmaların birer uzantısı şeklinde olduğunu görmek mümkündür. Bu amaçla Türkiye'de siyaset ile kültür arasındaki ilişkinin mahiyetini anlamaya çalışmak ve ayrıca "kültürel iktidar" kavramının Türkiye özelindeki güncel tartışmasına bir katkı sunmak için siyaset ve kültür ilişkisinin güncel ve somut gelişmeler bağlamında irdelenmesi önem arz etmektedir. Çalışma Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi'nin iktidar olduğu dönemle sınırlandırılmıştır. 2002'den beri Türkiye'yi yöneten AK Parti, siyasal geleneğiyle, ideolojik eğilimiyle ve politikalarıyla kendisinden önceki iktidarlardan belirgin olarak farklılaşan bir niteliğe sahiptir. AK Parti iktidarının bu niteliksel farklılığı Türkiye'deki mevcut kültürel alanla kurduğu ilişkiye de doğrudan yansımaktadır. Dolayısıyla çalışmada AK Parti iktidarı döneminde siyaset ile kültür arasında nasıl bir ilişkinin olduğu AK Parti iktidarının kültür politikaları bağlamında değerlendirilecektir. Ayrıca bu dönemde yerleşik kültürel düzen ile AK Parti iktidarının kültür politikaları arasında ortaya çıkan gerilimin tarihsel ve sosyolojik nedenleri de dikkate alınacaktır.</p>
<p>Keywords Cultural Policies, Cultural Power, Secularism, Conservatism, JDP</p>	<p>Anahtar Kelimeler Kültür Politikaları, Kültürel İktidar, Sekülerizm, Muhafazakârlık. AK Parti</p>

^a This study was funded by Afyon Kocatepe University, The Scientific Research Projects within 18. Career. 139. Project

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1. Introduction

The main objective of cultural policies in nation states is to develop a national culture. Thus, cultural policies were imposed strictly until the 1950s. After the Second World War, it was observed that more flexible policies were adopted to preserve the cultural diversity in liberal countries, especially in the West. In fact, in nations with a certain level of national culture, culture has been considered as an extension of development based on the conservation, development, and promotion of the national culture. The conservation of cultural diversity has also led to a flexibility in oppressive and regulatory state policies on culture. This has been a major cultural policy approach since the mid-20th century. One of the results of this approach was the establishment of the Ministry of Culture. Significant resources were allocated in the general budget for the activities the Ministry of Culture. Thus, cultural activities became current government policies. The ministries of culture, which exist in almost every country, generally determine and implement cultural policies based on various foci. The Ministry of Culture is typically an institution that organizes the promotion and marketing of national culture. However, it should be noted that it would be inadequate to reduce the intervention of the state, and more specifically, that of the government, to the interventions conducted by the Ministry only, or to analyze the relationship between the authority and culture based on the activities of the Ministry. The culture is not limited to the activities of the ministry; and the government's cultural interventions; since the indirect and permanent interventions often take place through the institutions and mechanisms other than the Ministry of Culture.

Culture itself does not only entail innocent pastime or leisure or non-profit artistic activities but it is determined by power relations. Thus, cultural, economic and political authorities are closely associated (Meigret, 2016:88). In the present study, the concept of cultural policies is employed within this context. There is an extensive literature on the topic. Inspired by Antonio Gramsci's emphasis that one pillar of hegemony is established in the cultural domain within the context of the relationships between culture and power (Lears, 1985), almost all works authored by Pierre Bourdieu focused on the intricate relationship between cultural practices and symbols and economic and political interests (Swartz, 1998). And the analysis of the British Cultural Studies on the production and transformation of the culture by both the authority and ordinary social groups (Turner, 2002) is only a part of the above-mentioned literature.

The present study aimed to investigate the cultural policies of the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi in Turkish/JDP) governments, which has been ruling Turkey since 2002. The study was also an attempt to establish an ideological and political motivation framework of the governmental cultural policies in Turkey, the ideological position of the government, and the relationship and conflict between the government and secular cultural values. The literature generally scrutinized the concept of cultural policies based on a narrow sense that emphasized the institutional and formal state policies on culture. However, in the present study, cultural policies were employed to emphasize the relationship between the government and culture with a holistic approach. The cultural policies of the JDP governments were also analyzed within the same context.

2. The Nature of Cultural Policies in Turkey

Currently, the classical liberal approach that once critical on the state intervention in culture is almost silent and the state is assigned a significant role in cultural activities. The common understanding posits that cultural activities should be supported in both liberal and collectivist

societies. The state is assigned the responsibility to assist citizens with limited access to cultural activities and provide financial support for cultural activities. This public duty also functions to legitimize state interventions in the cultural domain. In the free market environment, the central power and patronage of the state continues despite the presence of national or international capitalist patrons of culture in addition to the state. This leads to the problematization of the state's patronage on culture, especially due to the relationships between culture and authority because the state itself is an arena where various social power conflicts are experienced. Thus, the cultural policy of the state is directly affected by the manifestation of these conflicts.

The same is true for Turkey. Turkish culture is also an arena where political conflicts are manifested. Simply, these conflicts are directly associated with Turkish modernization and the modernization style, since one of the most important elements of Turkish modernization has been cultural modernization. Thus, the analysis of the elites who pioneered modernization would reveal that the most obvious difference between the Ottoman and the Republican elites was their approaches to culture. Ottoman elites tried to find a harmony between the traditional cultural assets and modernization by differentiating the culture and civilization. Republican elites, on the other hand, argued that this was not possible both in theory and in practice because there was a single and universal culture, similar to a single and universal civilization, and it was unnecessary and futile to separate the two. Thus, they claimed that not only the state and institutions, but also the social daily life should be transformed based on universal and contemporary culture. Therefore, it could be suggested that the republican elites established a closer relationship between modernization and cultural transformation when compared to the Ottoman elites. In fact, Niyazi Berkes (1978:539) described the policies of the republican period as a "cultural modernization".

After the proclamation of the republic, the new regime prioritized cultural transformation. This prioritization was adopted to eliminate the legitimacy problem and to establish a sustainable regime (Koyuncu, 2016). Thus, a radical political attitude was adopted during the initial years of the regime to penetrate and transform the existing cultural structure or, when necessary, to liquidate the traditional culture and replace it with a modern one. This approach adopted by the Republican elites became the main criterion for the cultural policies of the initial period. In fact, the cultural policies adopted during the initial years of the republic demonstrated that these interventions aimed to change traditional cultural practices.

As a national culture was developed in the early years of the Republic, the adoption of a West-oriented cultural policy and the political attitude to eliminate traditional culture deepened the existing cultural conflicts, and this symbolic and radical cultural intervention led to the development of two contradictory cultures in Turkey (Colak 2017). These were the nationalist and West-oriented culture, prioritized by the republican elites, and the national and Islamic culture, adopted by the opposition against the former. However, the analysis of the cultural space in Turkey based on this dichotomous distinction would hinder the details. Furthermore, it is possible to argue that this distinction offers an opportunity to understand the cultural conflict and the impact of this conflict on cultural policies based on the relationship between politics and culture because the two poles that defined the debate on cultural policies were determined by these two rhetorics. Thus, the cultural environment in Turkey included the clash between the two above-mentioned poles. In fact, it could be suggested that this dichotomy basically emerged as an extension of the ontological debate about the domain that Turkey belongs to. On the other hand, it should be noted

that it is very difficult to draw the boundaries of that dichotomy in Turkish society and daily life practices.

3. Building a New National Culture in the Turkish Right

After the 1950s, it was observed that a new approach emerged in Turkey and determined the cultural policies. This was due to the change in the nature of the political regime. The right-wing governments, starting with the Democratic Party (DP), prioritized cultural policies. This emphasis was due to their philosophy that the cultural space was an extension of political conflicts. However, it is necessary to distinguish the DP from its successors based on cultural policies because the first DP government adopted the general cultural policies of the previous single-party regime. The improvement of the relations between Turkey and the West after NATO membership of Turkey was also reflected in the cultural policies of the DP government. Western influence could be clearly observed in various artistic fields such as music, theatre, painting and sculpture (Catalbas and Koc, 2016). Unlike the single-party period, the DP took some symbolic steps in cultural policies to minimize the reaction of its conservative constituency. Such as, opening Imam-Hatip schools, using symbols reminiscent of the Ottoman Empire, and celebrating the conquest of Istanbul. Also, it continued the general Kemalist cultural trends and policies. However, in the following years, especially as populism started to determine Turkish politics, the previous cultural public policies were discontinued. As Kahraman (2013:40) stated, “the state no longer imposed an elitist cultural preference, perhaps it stepped back, sensing that this would not provide an alternative to the avalanche of mass culture.” This change, which became clear in the 1960s, significantly determined the direction of cultural policies in Turkey which still continues today.

After the government abandoned the policy of creating and imposing an elitist culture, the "nationalist Islamic" discourse which positioned itself against the Western culture began to influence cultural public policies, albeit partially, due to the cracks induced by populism. This discourse introduced the "national culture" debate to the public opinion in the 1970s, when the Ministry of Culture was established and influenced the cultural policies of the Nationalist Front government. Ahmet Kabakli's analysis on the cultural policies that should be adopted by the Ministry is important to understand the objectives of the cultural policies adopted by the Turkish right during the Cold War after the establishment of the first ministry in 1971. Kabakli states that:

“the past should not be despised, all Turkish documents including those produced during the Ottoman and Seljuk periods should be adopted, and the fact that Islam has been the foundation of Turkish culture and civilization for ten centuries, the assets and spiritual values of the nation should not be ignored, socialism and communism should be rejected, the high civilization and culture that has developed in the homeland for 1000 years should provide a foundation; however, the external Turks and their culture and existence should never be forgotten.”

Also, in 1974, when the Ministry of Culture was re-established, Prime Minister Sadi Irmak stated that the national culture was neglected in Turkey and their government aimed to preserve and develop the national culture (Tabakli and Irmak, cited in Bek, 2007:38).

The discourse of national culture has been one of the most emphasized concepts by the Turkish right after 1960. Samiha Ayverdi (2019), one of the right-wing intellectuals of the period, analyzed social change with a moral perspective in her work *National Cultural Issues and Our Educational Struggle*, first published in 1976 and claimed that Turkish society degenerated morally; and that this could only be remedied by the introduction of a national culture in education. The main argument in *Cultural Imperialism* by Ahmet Kabakli (2020 [1970]), *Turkish Culture and Nationalism*

by Erol Gongur (2007[1975]), Turkish National Culture by İbrahim Kafesoglu (2015[1977]), and National Culture and Identity by Nevzat Koseoglu (2018[1992]) was the existence of a rich Turkish culture apart from the Western culture, which should be preserved by the state. This trend in the Turkish right was based on the distinction between civilization and culture by Turkish sociologist and the ideologue of the founding elite Ziya Gökalp. Gökalp claimed that the Turkish nation could be included in the Western civilization by preserving its national culture, which was sociologically possible (Gökalp, 2015:25-40; Karakaş, 2008:460-462). Gökalp's distinction between civilization and culture was adopted by the right, and its philosophical impact is still visible today. One of the most fundamental criticism of the Turkish right about Kemalist cultural policies was the prioritization of the Western culture without such a distinction by the Kemalists. The first serious non-populist critic of Kemalist cultural policies was Mümtaz Turhan within the Turkish right. Turhan (2015), a follower of Gökalp, stated in *The Cultural Changes* published in 1951, that the imposition of the Western culture on the society by the state led to various problems and contradictions in the society. Thus, he described the modernization policies of the late Ottoman and the early Republican periods as the periods of "forced cultural change."

The concept of national culture has mostly been used by the Turkish right to emphasize the alternative to Kemalist cultural policies. The word national was not only an adjective that characterized the nature and objective of the cultural policies of the right, but also made it easier to understand the political and ideological motivation of the right to the public. Thus, the concept became an attribute that defined the limits of the paradigm adopted by the Turkish right. The emphasis on nationalism included a protest of westernization. It was also employed as a criticism against communism which became popular alternative during the Cold War period. The right perceived that "what was ours was consciously ignored", "neglected", "not valued", "it was not an impediment to development and growth", "included traits such as goodness, beauty, civilization, and human values." The adjective national was employed in several fields such as national culture, national politics, national economy, national order, national ethics, and so on. Thus, it should be noted that the adjective national, employed to indicate an alternative cultural policy to the Kemalist cultural policy, was not arbitrary, and it reflected significant connotations for the right. The concept of the national culture, which was used to emphasize novel cultural policies, also had an institutional structure. The National Cultural Council, which is still active as a secretariat in the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, was organized for the first time in 1982, a second time in 1989, and a third time in 2017. Roadmaps were drawn on the types of cultural policies that would be adopted by the Council.

A general assessment of Turkish cultural policies would reveal that cultural activities were conducted under the strict control of the state until the late 1940s. In the following years, despite the development of a relative autonomy, the cultural activities continued to be dependent on the authorities close to the state. Thus, the changes in the government directly affected the content of cultural activities. The emergence of an autonomous cultural space was directly associated with the free market. In countries without a free market and non-institutionalized regulations, there is no capitalist class and an autonomous cultural space supported by civil society as seen in Western Europe. In Turkey, albeit on a small scale, the culture and, in particular, the art market began to emerge only in the post-1980s. This was due to the reflection of political and economic changes in Turkish culture after 1980 (Genckaya ve Demirci, 2018: 66-68). After the 1980s, as a result of neoliberal policies adopted in the USA and the UK, the state was distanced from economic and social institutions in Turkey. Thus, the government decisions enforced on January 24, 1980 provided a legal basis for the implementation of neoliberal policies.

Western neoliberal policies increased the influence of the private sector in cultural and artistic activities (Wu, 2002). However, it should be noted that after the transition to the free market in Turkey, no significant policy changes were adopted in the financing of cultural activities by the state. It could only be argued that a culture market, albeit on a small scale, began to emerge with the free market economy. This culture market became a medium that allowed the people who were against or distant from the government ideology to conduct particular cultural and artistic activities. However, since this medium was under the control of the capital, the types of sponsored cultural and artistic activities and the audience depended on the nature of the relationship between the capital and the authority.

It is not possible to make a clear distinction between culture and politics in Turkey because political divisions could also be read as cultural divisions. An analysis of the political agenda and conflicts would reveal the prevalence of the cultural elements. Identity politics are also prevalent in Turkey. Cultural identity is a factor in politics and polarization. Cultural identities significantly determine voting behavior. Thus, it is a pragmatic choice for the JDP, which has been ruling Turkey since 2002, to adopt culture-oriented policies. One of the methods to consolidate political power or constituency in Turkey is to refer to the cultural elements and to adopt the policies of cultural identity. In fact, the same it could be argued for other political movements because the polarization between the political parties is based on the differences between the cultural identities they represent; rather than political differences. The most powerful dynamic that determines the political behavior in Turkey is the "assigned" identities. This is not unique in Turkey. Globalization emphasizes the role and significance of the local as a paradox (Lacarrieu, 2015:25-43). Thus, cultural identity has turned into a significant dynamic that determines politics globally. So much so that in the 2000s, when various dimensions of globalization began to deepen, the rise of right-wing parties especially in Europe could be interpreted in the same context.

4. The Cultural Policy of the JDP

The first JDP government did not adopt a systematic cultural policy both in the party program and first-term activities. The party spent most of its energy to acquire legitimacy against the economic and political establishment initially, and started to show interest in culture only in the 2010s. This could be due to the self-confidence acquired by the consolidation of the political power. In his first presidential speech in 2017, the JDP leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan stated that they had been in political power for a long time, but that they experienced problems with the cultural authority, and emphasized that cultural power would not be a product of the ballot box. Thus, a different struggle should be waged in this field, and the issue of cultural power should be addressed by the journalists and politicians close to the government. It was observed that previously neglected issues started to be discussed more seriously after the above-mentioned statement. On the other hand, to analyze the basic cultural policies of the JDP, it is necessary to address the party tradition that developed over the years.

The JDP officially describes the party as "conservative democratic". Especially during the initial years, the party leaders often felt the need to stress that they were a conservative democratic party. The Ak Party and Conservative Democracy by Yalcin Akdogan (2004) was a manifesto for the conservative democratic identity of the party and argued that democracy and conservatism, in particular the Turkish conservatism, could be compatible, and attempted to provide a theoretical foundation for this argument. Furthermore, especially due to its historical origins, the party was associated with the National Vision Movement (Milli Görüş Hareketi). This association was possible since the group that established the party came from this tradition; however, the JDP

positioned itself ideologically on a quite wide spectrum to accommodate various components and fractions in the right. The reason behind the long JDP government was the fact that it became a centrist party that included various components of the right. It could be suggested that the right became the natural government after the election system was established in Turkey. In fact, after a short the Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi in Turkish) government in the 1960s and 1970s, Turkey has been ruled by mostly single-party governments or coalitions led by the right-wing parties. One of the specific strengths of the Turkish right is its continuous demographic majority. The reason behind the fact that right-wing parties reduced democracy to the elections and the ballot box was their awareness about this specific strength. The JDP government consolidated this specific strength quite rationally which in turn allowed a long-term JDP government. One of the factors that allowed easy consolidation of the constituency was the cultural codes and practices prevalent across the conservative constituency and the recognition and employment of these codes by the JDP. The party representing the conservative wing of the Turkish right generally maintained a conservative position. Since it does not adopt sharp lines like nationalism or Islamism, it could be suggested that it always had the potential to include both movements.

From art to literature, and from cinema to broadcasting, the secular sector of the society has been predominant in the creation of cultural works in Turkey. The conservative groups have experienced the dissatisfaction of inability to produce such an attraction. In fact, secular culture derived its strength from the hegemony of modernity. In Turkey, modern values and discourse are dominant, and the culture produced by the secularist groups who embraced modernity is stronger and more attractive. Although the conservative governments have determined the political and economic domains, their inability to control the cultural domain has led to tensions. This has significantly shifted the power conflict to the cultural arena. In fact, the then Secretary General of the Presidency Mustafa Isen stated that “civilization should absolutely walk hand in hand with culture and art. If we have to discuss conservative democracy, and if the conservatives have a democratic philosophy, then we have an obligation to discuss 'conservative aesthetics' and 'conservative art' and to create its norms and structure” (Habertürk, 2020) in a speech delivered in 2012, underlining the requirement for the conservatives to acquire a decisive position in the topic.

The ideological JDP tradition provided a harsh criticism of Kemalist cultural policies. As the strength of the party increased, criticism has evolved into action, and led to "culture wars" in Turkey. The clash of cultures has been ongoing in Turkey. This cultural conflict in Turkey could be read as an extension of political conflicts and polarization. As stated by Dogan Gurpinar (2016:226), “the polarization between the secularism and religion will continue in Turkey. In fact, the polarization of the cultural rhetoric is the wars between the two trenches.” In the ongoing culture war, the JDP adopted a cultural policy within the already established position rather than establishing a new position. Thus, the JDP's cultural policies could be read as the sustenance of the Turkish-Islamic tradition that prioritized the conservative culture over the secular culture.

On the other hand, it was observed that the JDP influenced Turkish cultural policies via various regulations during the initial years of power, and attempted to abolish the state monopoly on culture, especially through privatization policies. The enacted laws and amendments demonstrated that the state attempted to transfer the patronage of culture to the private sector by encouraging cultural investments. Furthermore, the subsequent law amendments allowed the

deduction of cultural expenditures and donations from the taxable income tax and corporate revenues by the private and public institutions (Genckaya and Demirci, 2018: 66-68).

Concordantly, the JDP governments considered culture as a touristic asset. It was not a coincidence to combine culture and tourism under the same ministry. This also revealed the approach of the JDP to culture. The transformation of culture into a touristic asset could not only be associated with the JDP governments. Cultural tourism is a globally accepted phenomenon. Cultural tourism that entails the promotion of cultural elements has been considered as an instrument of development. Cultural tourism quickly became popular after the 1980s and became a significant market. The same trend existed in Turkey as well. The aim of the combination of culture and tourism in the same ministry was the coordinated management this market and the social and economic development of the targeted regions via cultural tourism (Alaeddinoğlu and Yildiz, 2011:21-31). The cultural policies of the JDP government reflected an encouraging attitude towards cultural tourism.

In Turkey, the influence of the private sector on culture increased after the 2000s, and business holdings started to become the patrons of culture and arts. This development was consistent with the neoliberal approach to the state (McGuigan, 2005). Particularly, after the selection of Istanbul as the European Capital of Culture in 2010, the government and the private sector and artists worked in harmony in cultural activities. However, the attitude and intervention of the government towards the cultural field and art led to political discussions and polemics in certain periods. In particular, symbolic acts such as the demolition and reconstruction of the Atatürk Cultural Center in Istanbul and the demolition of the historic Emek Movie Theater in Beyoğlu, in Istanbul led the anti-government circles to label the government as "the enemy of art and the artists". In 2006, Erdogan used the term "monstrous sculpture" for the sculpture called "human monument" by sculptor Mehmet Aksoy in Kars. Erdogan's outburst led to a similar debate. Thus, similar outbursts by both Erdogan and other party leaders about artistic and cultural artifacts and activities led to frequent debates. The source of these tensions could also be attributed to the difference between tastes. According to German philosopher Immanuel Kant, taste is a judgment that could distinguish and assess the aesthetic and the non-aesthetic (Altug, 1989). Cultural environment and especially the positions of social classes are important factors in the development of these judgments of taste (Bourdieu, 2010). Since the culture and class of the JDP elites determined their judgment of taste, they did not consider the works of secular culture as aesthetic. Since the judgment of taste is directly associated with the world view, these differences and conflicts could be considered as the outcomes of political polarization. However, the analysis of cultural tensions, especially in Turkey, only based on judgment of taste could make it difficult to understand the public debate. Thus, it could be argued that political polarization and cultural differences play a key role in both the development of the judgment of taste and cultural tensions.

Although the cultural activities of the private sector were encouraged with regulations by the JDP governments, it was observed that the government still intervened in the culture in the 2010s with an increasing interest in cultural activities. This was due to the ideology of the government. Although the JDP generally adopted neoliberal policies, it also clearly stated its objective to reshape the public sphere and regulate daily life. However, the government still lacked the cultural capital to organize cultural and artistic activities. In fact, this shortcoming was frequently emphasized by the leading politicians and authors in the government. Especially after the JDP government consolidated its political power, it turned its attention to culture to make up for this problem, demonstrating the recognition of this shortcoming. Thus, the analysis of the cultural

policies of the JDP government except the regulations would reveal that it adopted a cultural breakthrough to mobilize public institutions, municipalities, mass media, organic intellectuals and NGOs (Non-governmental organization) by employing the advantages of the government in recent years.

The aim of the cultural advances of the JDP was to reconstruct a "national culture" that the right-wing tradition emphasized for a long time that was sponsored by the state, especially after the 1980s. In the early years of the Republic, the state's effort to build a national culture was obvious. A similar effort was adopted by the JDP; however, this second attempt entailed a conservative (Turkish-Islamic) national culture unlike the initial one. The national culture building efforts aimed to substitute the secular values of the early republican period with the Islamic values. The party program mentioned the interaction between local and universal cultures in the Culture and Art section. The party aimed to spend maximum efforts to preserve and advance national values (Ak Parti Programı, 2020), reflecting the fundamental paradigm of culture and art. In fact, the JDP's claim to cultural power was a reckoning with Turkish modernization. Turkish modernization possessed a secular character that excluded the Islamic culture from the public sphere (Mardin, 2011: 160-162). Thus, one of the aims of the JDP cultural policies was to transform Islam from its current status of exclusion from the public sphere into a reference that regulated the public sphere. As stated by Menderes Çınar (2011), "here, an Islamic identity claimed to be original was assumed, and it was predicted that this "original" Islamic identity would automatically rise and dominate with the collapse of the Western/Kemalist paradigm". Thus, the Turkish-Islamic synthesis which had a long history in Turkish politics was reinterpreted by the JDP and transformed into a source of motivation that guided cultural policies.

5. Conclusion

The modern approach to politics is based on the management of the social sphere based on a certain ideological trend by reconstruction with direct or indirect interventions, beyond the mere functions of bureaucratic institutions. Culture is among the most functional instruments that could reshape the social sphere. In modern Turkey, culture has always been one of the key instruments employed by the political authorities to reshape the society. A close and tense relationship arose between politics and culture, as each government attempted to intervene in the culture and implement policies accordingly to affirm its ideological trends. This tension was manifested as the reflection of the political conflicts in the cultural sphere.

Neoliberal policies and the effort to build a conservative culture due to its ideology were the leading factors behind the cultural interventions of the JDP which has been in the government since 2002. In fact, in a period of neoliberal policies, the state is expected to allow the market to determine cultural activities. However, the JDP government preserved the state as a cultural agent based on specific cultural policies. This has been a general tendency of Turkish governments. The contradiction was the fact that the increasing interest of the government in cultural activities especially in a period where neoliberal economic policy was predominant. Thus, the problem was the difference between the theoretical neoliberal approach and the neoliberal practices in Turkey. Based on the neoliberal theory, the analysis of the relationship between the state and culture in Turkey makes it difficult to comprehend this contradiction.

The perception of the culture as an important policy in a period when the JDP government began to weaken was due to the need for cultural production to promote the political power of the party. Thus, cultural policies were implemented in a hurry to seize the cultural arena to promote the

political authority. It should also be noted that the effort to establish a cultural power based on political requirements contradicted the nature of "cultural power". Therefore, the cultural policies of the JDP aimed to prevent the disintegration of its voter base and to preserve the current power. The aim of cultural and artistic activities that were prioritized by the government was to reinforce the ideological homogeneity of the constituency. The promoted cultural activities included various organizations such as conferences, concerts, poetry and essay competitions, and historical TV series. Media is used as an important instrument of cultural production. The majority of the private media corporations that are close to the government and the state media contributed to this cultural production.

Cultural policies in Turkey have basically been a means of establishing hegemony in the Gramscian sense. It would be impellent to interpret cultural policies or government-culture relations outside of this context in the modern era. The JDP government also aimed to establish a similar power to its political and economic power in culture. Whether cultural policies adopted by the JDP would yield the aimed cultural power is a separate debate; however, considering the global dominance and prevalence of the Western culture for the last two hundred years in Turkey which could be considered in the periphery of the Western culture. The cultural power of the groups that are integrated with the Western culture has a conjectural foundation in Turkey.

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