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## Transformation of Conservative Politics: A Total Politics Analysis

### Muhafazakâr Siyasetin Dönüşümü: Bir Total Siyaset Analizi

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**Abstract**

Conservative politics, which has left its mark on the last two decades of Turkish politics, has been one of the main carriers of the historical-institutional transformation in the political structure of Türkiye in that period. In the same period, conservative politics has undergone critical transformations within itself; in its internal interaction processes, it has evolved to a different point in the way that it formulates the relationship between society, politics and power. This article aims to analyze how the transformation in conservative politics took place. To this end, the authors start from the total politics analysis, which provides the opportunity to analyze Türkiye's politics through social group behaviors. Total politics analysis argues that politics in Türkiye is shaped around in-group and inter-group power relations among the social groups at the levels of civil society, political sphere and power sphere. In this article, based on the aforementioned conceptual model, we argue that conservative politics developed a qualified relationship based on mutual interaction and autonomy between the social sphere, the political sphere and the power domains during the 2000s. We also claim that as of the 2010s, there has been a transformation in this capacity of forming a qualified relationship, which has led to a critical split within conservative politics.

**Keywords:** Conservative politics, Turkish politics, political transformation, total politics

**Öz**

Türkiye siyasetinin son 20 yılına damgasını vuran muhafazakâr siyaset, bu dönemde Türkiye siyaset yapısındaki tarihi - kurumsal dönüşümün ana taşıyıcılarından biri olmuştur. Aynı dönemde muhafazakâr siyaset, kendi içerisinde de kritik dönüşümler geçirmiş; kendi iç etkileşim süreçlerinde, toplum – siyaset – iktidar ilişkisini formüle etme biçiminde farklı bir noktaya evrilmiştir. Bu makale, muhafazakâr siyasette yaşanan söz konusu dönüşümün nasıl gerçekleştiğini analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bunun için de Türkiye siyasetini sosyal grup davranışları üzerinden analiz etme imkanı sunan total siyaset analizinden hareket etmeyi önermektedir. Total siyaset analizi, Türkiye'de siyasetin sosyal gruplar arasında sivil toplum, siyasal alan ve iktidar alanı düzeylerinde yaşanan grup içi ve gruplar arası iktidar ilişkileri etrafında şekillendiğini öne sürmektedir. Makalede, söz konusu kavramsal model etrafında, muhafazakâr siyasetin, 2000'ler boyunca toplumsal alan, siyasal alan ve iktidar alanları arasında, karşılıklı etkileşime ve özerkliğe dayalı, nitelikli bir ilişki geliştirdiği öne sürülmektedir. 2010'lar itibariyle ise bu nitelikli ilişkilendirme kapasitesinde bir dönüşümün yaşandığı, bunun da muhafazakâr siyaset içerisinde kritik bir bölünmeye yol açtığı iddia edilmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Muhafazakâr siyaset, Türkiye siyaseti, siyasal dönüşüm, total siyaset

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## Introduction

Conservative politics[1] stands out today as one of the main actors that shaped the last two decades of Turkish political history. Conservative politics has positioned itself as one of the carriers of the transformation within the structural transformation process in Turkish politics, which began in the 2000s and extended to the end of the 2010s. It is possible to say that conservative politics played a decisive and consolidating role in the demilitarization[2] and socialization of Türkiye's political structure, moving it away from a military-judicial-based bureaucratic center, opening it up to the competition of social groups, and acquiring a plural/multiple character in this respect.

Looking retrospectively, it is possible to say that conservative politics had relatively intense accumulation of political resources in the fields of civil society, economy and culture as of the beginning of the 2000s. After 2000, it has followed a political course that developed a common political vision in the context of fundamental freedoms, equal citizenship, democracy, and that created alternative publics, established political interactions with different segments around democratic politics, struggled for power with the bureaucratic center to demilitarize politics, developed a center of gravity within the system in time, transformed the system in this sense and aimed to solve structural problems. It then faced new challenges and new levels of competition in the political arena, turned in on itself at this point and shifted towards a more authoritarian political attitude. Within this political route, which has transformed the political structure and shaped the history of politics in Türkiye, conservative politics has also undergone critical transformations within itself. It has evolved into a different shape in its internal interaction processes, in the way it relates to politics and power, and in the way of formulating the relationship between society, politics and power, compared to the point where it started twenty years ago. Today, conservative politics has entered a new era with new political actors, new political quests, new styles of politics and new political relations. The question of why and how conservative politics ended up at its current point is one of the main issues academic and intellectual circles deal with and come up with answers within certain intellectual/political perspectives.

Starting from this fundamental problem, this article seeks to answer the fundamental question, how/why has conservative politics transformed since the early 2000s? In this context, this article aims to explain the transformation of conservative politics in the last two decades, the basic dynamics of the transformation and the point it has reached in the end, around a certain conceptual framework. The article proposes to explain the aforementioned transformation around the analysis of "total politics", which presents a framework of analysis for Turkish politics through social group behaviors.[3] It argues that conservative politics in Türkiye is shaped around in-group and out-group (inter-group) power relations of conservative groups at the levels of the social sphere, political field and power field. Thus, it explains the transformation of the last two decades in conservative politics based on this thesis.

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1   In this study, the conceptualization of "conservative politics" is employed to express the political behavior and representation-interaction relations of social groups that define themselves with Islamic-conservative values. Therefore, the concept describes the politics and power relations of Islamic-conservative groups.

2   In this text, the concept of "demilitarization" means the abolition of the means of influence and intervention of military institutions on civilian political institutions and political power.

3   For a comprehensive conceptual framework of total politics analysis, see: Karakoç, 2023a.

## Literature Overview: A Party-Based Regime Reading

When we examine the literature on Turkish political life, it is seen that important studies have been made in the last 20 years on the course and transformation of conservative politics. It can be said that these studies are the works that deal with conservative politics generally based on the party and democratization-authoritarianism discussions. In other words, these analyses mainly examine the transformation of the Justice and Development Party (JDP & Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi - AK Parti), as a political actor of conservative politics, around the democratization-authoritarianism debates in the last two decades. Ziya Öniş is one of the prominent figures in the analysis of the JDP politics. Öniş argues that the JDP politics followed a democratization course around the policies of "global integration" with Europe in the first 10 years, and in the second 10 years it evolved into an authoritarian and populist character in the context of "strategic autonomy" policies against the West (Öniş, 2007: 252-253; Kutlay and Öniş, 2021: 1085, 1088, 1091-1094, 1099-1102). Menderes Çınar is another name who deals with the political transformation in the JDP. Çınar stated that the first term of the JDP was shaped by the democracy agenda based on the overthrow of the tutelary order; He argues that afterwards, the Party evolved into an electoral democracy understanding around the discourses of "civilization" and "national will" and an Erdogan-centered "leadership and dominance politics" (Çınar, 2015: 7-40; Çınar, 2020). Based on a similar perspective, Hatem Ete states that the JDP has undergone a three-stage transformation in the last two decades. Ete stated that in this process, the Party first came to the fore with its democratic transformation policy; It then turned to an Erdogan-centered policy through the developments at home and abroad; With the presidential system, Ete claims that it "resigned from democracy" and shifted to a security-oriented, "Kemalist politics" track (Ete, 2020).

Another name who analyzes the transformation in the JDP is Cihan Tuğal. Tuğal claims that with the passive revolution the JDP carried out in Türkiye, instead of secular hegemony, a new, liberal hegemony was established on the basis of Islamic liberalism; however, he argues that this established hegemony has "inevitably" evolved into authoritarianism over time due to its neoliberal/capitalist origins (Tuğal, 2016: 21-23, 27, 29, 93-98, 100-108, 262, 297, 306-309). Adem Çaylak, who has a similar starting point with Tuğal in terms of a capitalism-oriented analysis framework, also presents a transformation framework through the relationship established by the JDP with the capitalist order. Focusing on the moral dimension of the transformation in question, Çaylak argues that conservative Muslims have become morally corrupted and deprived of justice and equity with the power and capital power that they gained by within the capitalist system, capitalist culture and world of values (Çaylak, 2016: 89-90). Furthermore, the transformation in the JDP has been analyzed through an ideological transformation within Islamism. According to this framework proposed by Fethi Açıkel, the JDP has shaped its political career in an ideological lane starting from Islamic liberalism to pan-Islamic populism and then Islamist nationalism. Therefore, according to Açıkel, the JDP anchored in an authoritarian populist politics, on a plane where the "state becomes personal" by advancing mainly on an Islamist route, the main intersections of which are liberalism, pan-Islamism and nationalism (Açıkel, 2023: 9-60, 155-214).

Ergun Özbudun, who has been following the political life of the JDP for a long time, stated that the Party has evolved from representative democracy to electoral democracy within 20 years and has shifted to "competitive authoritarianism" with the

Presidential system; In this context, he argues that it has evolved into a politics where power is centralized and accountability is weakened around a populist and personalized management approach (Özbudun, 2017: 127-128; 2021: 173-186). There are also names in the literature who analyzed the long 20 years of JDP politics on a democratic plane. Burhanettin Duran is one of these names. According to Duran, the JDP has undergone a political transformation consisting of three phases based on the approaches of "conservative democracy", "civilization perspective" and "local-national politics", depending on the cyclical needs, during its 20-year long rule in Turkish politics. During these three periods, the Party displayed a political character that evolved from the "seeking for harmony/ integration" with the order, to the "reflection of self-confidence" and then to the "idea of struggle and resistance"; thus, it has become the advocate of a national policy aimed at "deepening democracy" and ensuring "social integrity" in the country.[4] According to this approach, the JDP does not move away from democracy, but "deepens the content of democracy in the face of the problems it has encountered" (Duran, 2018: 47-73).

In short, the prominent studies on conservative politics, whose main framework can be summarized in this way, are mainly party-centered analyzes based on an analysis framework shaped around the JDP. In addition, the analyses in question are formed over the democratization-authoritarianism debates regarding the JDP. In this regard, these studies mainly focus on the issue of how/why the JDP, as a ruling party, became or did not become authoritarian; Conversely, they focus on the issue of how it moves away from democracy or does not.

This article proposes to consider conservative politics with a holistic perspective with its different components. In this context, it gives priority to analysing conservative politics on the basis of the "social group" (Islamic conservative group) as a general unit of analysis, not centered on parties or leaders, but also encompassing the conservative civil/social field. Therefore, the article primarily focuses on the intra-group relationship and interaction between the layers of civil society, the political sphere and the power of the Islamic conservative group (conservative politics), and the transformation there. Secondly, the article deals with the relations and interaction processes of the conservative group with other groups (out-group) in the sociopolitical field. As a result, it examines the effect/reflection of this in-group/out-group relationship and interaction on the political power, profile and style of conservative politics in the political arena in general. Based on all this, the article focuses on the 20-year political power, profile and influence capacity of conservative politics in Turkish politics and the transformation here. For this reason, in this article, the 20-year adventure and transformation of conservative politics is analyzed in a holistic time frame and at equal levels.

## Total Politics: A Conceptual Framework

Total politics is a framework of analysis that prioritizes explaining politics through social groups and social group behaviors. It argues that politics in Türkiye is shaped around the interaction processes and power relations between cultural identity-based social groups. According to total politics analysis, political power is essentially the

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4   For a similar analysis framework that deals with the JDP politics from the perspective of "local-national politics" shaped on the level of democracy, see: Aslan, 2018: 77-104.

result of in-group political resource accumulation, group integration and disintegration, intergroup struggle, convergence and divergence, in short, "group behaviors" and "group interactions". The analysis of total politics is based on the assumption that politics takes form through power relations carried out at three different levels/areas: Civil society, the political sphere and the state / power sphere. Ultimately, total politics argues that politics in Türkiye is shaped around in-group and inter-group power relations between social groups at the levels of civil society, the political sphere and the power sphere. In this context, in terms of total politics analysis, politics emerges as a sum/result of multiple political actors, their political behaviors, interactions and alliance processes in multiple fields of struggle (Karakoç, 2023a: 359-360). It can be said that this multiple character of total politics analysis is fed by the perspectives of pluralist theorists, like Arthur Bentley, David Truman and Robert Dahl, in the background. According to them, politics refers to the processes of political behavior, competition and interaction of different social groups at different levels (Bentley, 1935; Truman, 1993; Dahl, 1961).

Around these explanations, it is possible to say that total politics analysis consists of three basic dimensions: the social sphere, the political sphere and the power sphere. In other words, it can be stated that the analysis of total politics deals with politics in three areas: the social sphere, the political sphere and the power sphere.

According to total politics analysis, social groups with a certain cultural identity follow, in the first stage, the course of developing an institutional influence and interaction network in the social field. In this context, they organize and institutionalize in different sectors of the social field, establish mutual connections between these sectors, and connect different areas of civil society (through their own identity networks), thus creating a political resource accumulation in the social field. In this framework, social groups follow the course of organization and institutionalization in different areas of civil society, especially in the sectors of economy, education, profession, culture, media and publication. In this way, social groups tend to create a multifaceted domain and network in the social field (Karakoç, 2023a: 361). This multiple political resource accumulation of social groups will also shape their capacity to influence politics (Dahl, 1961).

According to total politics analysis, social groups, in the second stage, organize in the field of politics in order to develop a direct political influence and representation. Social groups, which are organized through their own identity visions at different points in the field of civil society, organize and gather around political parties that directly represent the characteristics of their own identity, priorities, and visions in the field of politics. Thus, social groups develop a course of linking and articulating civil society and the political sphere. In this way, social groups both develop a relationship of political interaction / representation with a political party leadership structure and get involved in the general representation and the processes of politics in the political field through this political party (Karakoç, 2023a: 368-370). According to total politics analysis, the relationship between political parties and social groups is not necessarily one-way, but rather it exhibits a reciprocal and transitive nature. Periodically, while social groups may exhibit a significant capacity of influence on the discourse and policies of political parties in certain periods, in certain other periods, a political party may develop the power to influence and direct the preferences and approaches of the social groups that it represents,

through its own discourse and vision (Karakoç, 2020: 22). The intra-group interaction processes of social groups and the civil society-political party relations periodically vary (Bentley, 1935:402-422; Truman, 1993:270-272, 350-351; Dunleavy and O'Leary, 1987:41-49).

In the third and last stage, according to total politics analysis, social groups based on cultural identity develop intergroup relations and interaction processes in the political field (within the competitive environment there). At this stage, social groups or political parties that are representatives of these groups tend to develop interaction and alliance relations with other social groups, especially in order to be effective and dominate the field of power. All social groups tend to exert influence and dominance in the field of power by forming alliances with other social groups (under a political party or at an inter-party level). Therefore, social groups based on cultural identity shape the system, legislative and executive processes in accordance with the alliance capacities of the political parties representing these groups (Karakoç, 2020: 22).

According to total politics analysis, the relations and interaction processes between multiple social groups with different cultural identities are generally shaped around certain axes of alliance. These axes of alliance can be categorized into two levels: *identity axes* and *normative axes*. It is possible to conceptualize the identity axes as the axis of *religion* and the axis of *ethnicity* in general. Normative axes can be conceptualized as the *sovereignty* axis and the *legitimacy* axis in general. In this context, according to the total politics analysis, political alliances in Türkiye are shaped around four main axes of alliance, two of which are identity and two are normative. These four axes operate by forming lines of dual configuration (structuring, alliance and separation) between social groups. While the axis of religiosity (concerning where and how religion will be positioned in the social and cultural sphere) produces configurations of *Islam* and *secularism*, the axis of ethnicity (related to the social and cultural positioning of ethnic affiliations) develops configurations on the basis of *Turkishness* and *Kurdishness*. While the sovereignty axis creates configurations of *authority* and *freedom*, regarding where (around authority/ state or around freedoms) the political sovereignty (legislative, executive and judicial powers as political sovereignty) will be defined, the axis of legitimacy, on the other hand, produces configurations of *globality* and *indigenousness*, based on where political legitimacy will be defined (whether it will be defined around globalism / Europeanness or around indigenousness / nationality). Through these configuration lines, social groups both reveal their political identities and perspectives and develop power relations with other groups. They converge with each other and form alliances or diverge from each other and transition to the level of conflict. The power field is formed around these relations of alliance. In other words, a "political power alliance" that will rule the power field emerges (Karakoç, 2023a: 383-385).

According to total politics, the relationship between the power field and the social sphere, in other words, the representation relationship between the political power and the social groups that it represents, is not one-dimensional. While political power may display a high sensitivity in conveying the demands, expectations and priorities of the groups it represents to the decision-making processes, it may also develop at other times a course of guiding, shaping and managing social groups and political processes around

its own political priorities and objectives (Karakoç, 2020: 22). Therefore, the relationship between social groups and leadership structures / political parties that represent these groups has a highly variable and flexible character (Bentley, 1935:402-422).

As a result, total politics analysis considers Turkish politics as the sum of multiple political actors, their political behaviors in multiple fields of struggle, power relations and interaction processes. Moreover, this framework of analysis is based on the idea that the political power of a social group is linked to its ability to first penetrate all layers of civil society and then connect these social lines of power with the political society through mutual interaction. In the next part of the article, the political transformation of conservative politics from the beginning of the 2000s to the present time is examined based on the total politics analysis in question. To reiterate at this point, the main thesis of the article is as follows: "Conservative politics in Türkiye is shaped around in-group and out-group power relations in which conservative groups live at the social, political, and power levels." The two sub-theses defended under this general thesis are as follows: When the intra-group relations between civil society and the political sphere in conservative politics (autonomy, upward dynamism, mutual interaction and common vision) are shaped comprehensively, the power, influence and rising process of conservative politics in the political arena can be seen. However, when these relations were shaped around "dependence, pacifism, direction and leadership authority" against civil society, the power and influence of conservative politics weakened and dissolved. This has increased the out-group dependency (at the party level) of conservative politics. Within the framework of these basic arguments, the 20-year course of conservative politics, its transformation and the point that it has reached are examined from an intra-group and inter-group perspective.

## Conservative Groups and Social Space:

### Political Resource Accumulation in the Early 2000s

It is possible to say that conservative social groups came with a dynamic political resource accumulation in the fields of economy, civil society and culture / intellectuality (especially in the post-1980 period) at the beginning of the 2000s. In this period, it is seen in the field of economy that conservative groups experienced an expansion and enrichment in financial capital accumulation. The liberal economy model based on global markets, which was implemented in the economy after 1980, transformed the capital distribution monopoly of the state in general. The new production and capital accumulation processes that emerged in the early 2000s allowed the emergence of many capital actors with conservative identities concentrated in provincial cities. In this period, the Association of Independent Industrialists and Businessmen (MUSIAD) stood out as an important capital organization representing the development of the said Islamic conservative capital accumulation. Considering the member structure of MUSIAD in the late 1990s, it can be seen that 2450 of 2897 member companies were established after 1980 and 1706 of the 2450 companies were established after 1990 (Özdemir, 2006: 63, 67; Buğra, 1998: 529, Yavuz, 2005: 131; Gümüşçü, 2010: 841).

The financial capital accumulation in question in the conservative community has a critical importance in the transformation processes of the conservative environment into a relatively political actor in this period. In this context, it can be expressed that the capital

accumulation in question allows for more intense development and effectiveness of non-governmental organizations, which primarily reveal the identity of the conservative environment in the social / public sphere. In addition, it can be stated that the conservative community developed cultural tools such as newspapers, magazines, radio, television and publishing houses in order to convey their voice and identity demands to the public. Similarly, in this period, it can be stated that the capital accumulation in question translated the social demands of the conservative environment into political language and provided an opportunity to expand the political channels that made the political representation of these demands possible.

The field of civil society is the second field which conservative groups entered in the early 2000s with a dynamic accumulation of political resources. In this period, it is possible to say that conservative groups developed a vibrant, rich and effective organizational capacity at different points of civil society around their economic capital accumulation. In the field of civil society and public space, the institutionalization process based on their own cultural characteristics, world views and social visions, which dates back many years, gained a different dimension by gaining intensity in terms of quantity and quality after 1990. Conservative groups, which do not have a homogeneous nature in themselves, and are generally composed of different religious communities, order structures, non-religious and non-order community structures, established civil-religious tendencies, new foundations, associations, private schools, dormitories, courses, private hospitals, medical centers and trade unions (Yavuz, 2011: 77, 81-82; Göle, 2000: 97-112).

Conservative groups offered modern education opportunities in urban centers to the widespread young population in the country through organizations such as foundations, associations, private schools, dormitories, guesthouses and private teaching institutions established in the field of education during this period. In addition, conservative groups undertook a serious civil initiative function between the poor and the needy in Türkiye and the state by developing foundations and associations with the goal of social aid. They developed aid organizations to reduce the daily problems of the poor and needy population, especially in the suburbs of the cities, due to the gap in income distribution in society. They created social formations for the distribution as well as the production of welfare through social aid activities. They established response organizations in cases of disasters and emergencies. Furthermore, in an environment where there are serious problems and blockages in the field of health in the country, especially in big cities, they created alternative, efficient and regular medical institutions with the newly established medical centers, polyclinics and private hospitals (Çaha, 2005: 491; Cizre-Sakallıoğlu, 1996: 244; Şimşek, 2004: 122; Türkmen, 2006: 227-255; Yaşar, 2005: 328, 333-339; Yavuz, 2005: 196; Yavuz, 2011: 80).

Also, in this period, these groups gained visibility by institutionalizing at different points in the field of civil society with the organizations of foundations and associations operating in the fields of history, thought and literature, and new life / culture organizations that they developed in the fields of informatics, tourism, culture, science, art and fashion. During this process of organization, Islamic conservative identity acquired an institutional appearance in different sectors of the social sphere around new knowledge production networks, educational models, professional formations, and holiday and entertainment

environments. In addition, many associations were established, operating in a wide range from scientific research to women's problems, from urbanization to human rights, and from environmentalism to the protection of historical artifacts. In this context, conservative circles created a tendency to socialize and develop a social legitimacy around their own values, symbols and practices (Çolak, 2009: 310; Yavuz, 2011: 77-78, 81; Şimşek, 2004: 121-122; Demir, Acar, and Toprak, 2004:177-178; Göle, 2000: 13-14; 107-108; Yavuz, 2005: 137-138).

Additionally, it is possible to mark the media and broadcasting sector as the third area where Islamic conservative groups came to the beginning of the 2000s with a lively accumulation of political resources. In this period, it can be said that the groups in question showed an important development in organizing in the field of media and broadcasting within the framework of their own world understanding, future visions and cultural characteristics. Islamic conservative groups consisting of different communities, Sufi orders, civil initiatives, ideological attitudes and cultural organizations with different connections with Islam at ideological and cultural levels, founded / published in this period, intellectual / academic journals such as *İzlenim*, *Değişim*, *Bilgi ve Hikmet*, *Bilgi ve Düşünce*, *Anlayış*, *Türkiye Günlüğü*, *Tezkire*, *Yeni Türkiye*, *Divan*, newspapers, radio and television broadcasts such as *Yeni Şafak*, *Milli Gazete*, *Radyo 7*, *Marmara FM*, *Akra Radyo*, *TGRT*, *Kanal 7*, and *Kanal A*. They also established / founded many new publishing houses such as *Iz*, *Vadi*, *İnsan*, *Kitabevi*, *Şehir*, *Küre*, and *Klasik*. In the early 2000s, new ones were added to these magazines, newspapers, radios, TVs and publishing platforms. With the spread of internet journalism, many internet platforms were established. Through these media and broadcast channels, conservative groups have developed environments to be involved in public debates in accordance with the qualities of their own identity and worldview, to bring their own cultural and political visions to the public sphere, and thus to influence the public (Yavuz, 2005: 151-155; Yavuz, 2011: 79; Çaha, 2005: 484-492).

As a result, within the framework of these developments in the fields of economy, civil society and culture, it can be said that conservative groups gained an intensive knowledge on organization / institutionalization at different points of the social sphere as of the beginning of the 2000s. It can be stated that they linked different areas of the social ground (through their own identity networks) with each other, and in this way, they tended to create a multifaceted domain of influence and interaction in the social area.

### Conservative Groups and Political Sphere:

### The Emergence of JDP in the Early 2000s

Conservative groups, which underwent a dynamic organization process through their own identity visions at different points in the social sphere throughout the 1990s, took a new organizational path in the field of politics as of the beginning of the 2000s, as well. In this context, they founded the JDP in order to directly carry and represent their own identity, discourse and vision within the current political arena and gathered around it.[5]

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5　Islamic conservative groups, which were involved in the political representation and interaction processes through the Welfare Party (WP & Refah Partisi - RP) throughout the 1990s, experienced a contraction and compression in the current political structure in the period from the second half of the 1990s to the beginning of the 2000s, around the party closure penalties given to the WP movement, and then JDP was founded

The main axis that brought together Islamic conservative groups consisting of different religious communities, Sufi orders, non-communal initiatives, ideological approaches and cultural organizations with different connections with Islam at ideological and cultural levels, under the umbrella of the JDP was undoubtedly *the identity axis*. This identity axis based on religion produced a configuration alliance, rapprochement, and consensus line centered around *Islam*, among conservative groups, whose center was the JDP. This Islamic-centered configuration line essentially expressed a common perspective/stance on where and how Islam would be positioned socially and culturally as a set of values and norms, as well as the Muslim individual's understanding of society and politics. In this context Conservative groups organized a political organization around the JDP leadership structure, based on conservatism, democracy and based on common perspectives such as, "attaching importance to Islam as an identity feature, an existential quality, a social value"; "expansion of the social sphere and sociability to include religious values, preferences and tendencies"; "recognition of religious identity as a legitimate component in the social and public sphere"; "inclusion of religious circles in the public sphere and political representation, decision and administration processes as an equal and legitimate actor"[6] (Akdoğan, 2010: 71-74, 86-91).

Conservative groups came together under the JDP leadership structure, based on a common vision based on the shaping of politics and political legitimacy around social preferences and demands, in other words, the politics of "people's sovereignty" and "national will". In addition, the basic mission of developing a fair, moral, inclusive and exemplary management model based on harmonizing the state structure with social demands, demilitarizing and limiting the state power, establishing the rule of law, ensuring institutional autonomy in the field of civil society formed the common ground of the political representation and interaction relationship between the Islamic conservative groups and JDP (Akdoğan, 2010: 61-62).

Thus, conservative groups acquired the opportunity to connect and articulate civil society and the political sphere around the JDP as of the beginning of the 2000s. In this way, they both developed a political interaction / representation relationship with the JDP leadership structure and also became involved in the general representation and political processes in the political field through the JDP. It can be said that the most basic feature defining the representation relationship between the JDP and conservative groups in this period is that the political demands, priorities and visions of the conservative groups had a decisive and central position in this relationship. In this period, it is possible to say that the impact and influence capacity of conservative groups on the discourse and policies of JDP was high (the representation process was shaped from the bottom up) (Karakoç, 2019: 215).

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within Islamic conservative groups in 2001. In addition, the Felicity Party (FP & Saadet Partisi - SP), as the new successor of the WP, was positioned as an alternative in the political arena to represent the Islamic conservative groups, especially those that were in the Islamist line.

6   In this period, it can be said that Islamic conservative groups underwent a transformation at the identity level and evolved into a political identity based on conservatism instead of an Islamist-based political identity and developed a relationship with politics and society in general on the basis of conservatism and democracy. For the identity transformation in question, see: Karakoç, 2023b.

**Conservative Groups and the Domain of Power:**

**The JDP as a Power of Political Alliance in the 2000s**

Conservative groups organized / gathered around the JDP in the political arena as of the early 2000s developed intergroup political interaction processes and relations of political alliance with different social groups based on cultural identity in society, again through the JDP in this period.[7] In this period, conservative groups formed a political alliance, a power alliance around the JDP with Kurdish social groups, liberal democratic groups and leftist social groups in general. It is possible to say that this power alliance developed by the Islamic conservative groups with the said groups centered around the JDP, was essentially an alliance that rose on *normative axes*. These normative axes, which consisted of axes of *sovereignty* and *legitimacy*, produced a *two-layered* configuration, alliance, rapprochement, consensus line, whose epicenter was the JDP, between conservative groups and these social groups on the basis of *freedoms* and *globality / Europeanness*. The freedom-based configuration line expressed a common perspective among these groups regarding the definition of political sovereignty (legislative, executive, and judiciary as the authority to exercise political sovereignty) on the basis of social and individual freedoms. The line of globalism / Europeanness provided a common framework between the groups in question, based on the definition of political legitimacy on the basis of globalism / Europeanness, in other words, around "Western global political norms" (Karakoç, 2023a: 385-386).

These two configurations and lines of alliance also shaped the framework of the political representation and interaction relationship between the JDP and social groups. In this context, the main objectives such as the demilitarization of the state structure, which included the powers to exercise political sovereignty (legislative, executive, judiciary), limitation of state power, socialization of the political system, harmonizing the state structure with changing social demands, dynamics and trends, arranging the public sphere on the basis of fundamental freedoms, establishing a state of law in accordance with the rule of law, ensuring institutional autonomy in the field of civil society, and developing an open society profile created a common ground for political interaction, representation and alliance between the JDP and the aforementioned social groups. In addition, developing social equality in terms of participation in representation, decision and management processes within the political system, in this context, providing an institutional solution framework for the demands of identity recognition among different segments in the public sphere and the search for a legitimate actor status, realization of the necessary legal and constitutional arrangements, and the common agendas of returning from terror- and violence-based organizational tendencies to democratic politics brought together the conservative groups, Kurdish social groups, liberal democrats and leftist social groups around the JDP. [8]

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7   The political interaction and alliance process in question was shaped around the transformation of the bureaucratic state structure that dominated the political life, the EU membership process, the course of Europeanization, and democratization policies.

8   It is possible to see this the JDP-centered political alliance in the support given to JDP at that time by civil society and media organs representing these groups, regarding the policies and agendas stated here. Also see, Uslu, 2015: 7-13 for similar analyzes on the alliance relations between the groups in question at the time.

In 2002, the JDP government, which was the institutional expression of this political alliance, started to rule in the political arena by relying on the political demands, priorities and visions of the said social groups in the social sphere and by gathering them around a political discourse and program. In other words, the alliance of power that formed around the JDP realized many institutional and constitutional amendments in the context of the demilitarization of state power, the democratization of the political system, the development of a political structure in accordance with the rule of law, the regulation of the public sphere on the basis of fundamental freedoms, the establishment of institutional autonomy in the field of civil society. In addition, the comprehensive ruling alliance centered around the JDP became the bearer of policies aimed at ensuring social equalization by including social segments that had been excluded in the political arena for many years.[9]

As a result, in this period, the JDP has established dominance in the field of power by developing a political representation and alliance relationship with conservative groups on the identity axis on the one hand, and on the other hand with Kurdish social groups, liberal democratic groups and left social groups on a normative axis. It can be said that the main feature that defined the alliance relationship between the JDP and the social groups that it represented in this power alliance was that the political demands, priorities and visions of these social groups had a decisive and central position in this alliance relationship. It is possible to state that in this period the JDP government showed a high sensitivity in carrying the demands, expectations and priorities of the groups it represented to the processes of representation and decision making.

### Transformation of Conservative Politics:

### Transformation of The JDP and the Power Alliance in the 2010s

The 2010s constituted a turning point in terms of the representation - interaction processes and political alliance / power alliance developed by the JDP with the above-mentioned groups. As of the first half of the 2010s, a tendency developed to dissolve the existing political interaction and alliance relations between the JDP and Kurdish social groups, leftist social groups and liberal groups. In other words, a fault line was formed on the normative axes (sovereignty and legitimacy axes) (on freedoms based on these axes and configurations based on globality) that used to enable the political interaction and power alliance between the JDP and these groups. It can be said that the political change that emerged after 2010 between the JDP and the social groups regarding the common agenda/vision based on freedoms and globalism has been decisive in developing this fault line. In this regard, both the constitutional reforms between 2002 and 2010 for the demilitarization and socialization of the bureaucratic state structure around the lines of specificity and globality and the intensified policies for the Solution Process towards the search for the recognition of identities between 2009 and 2013 created a critical crossroads. These two critical turning points, on the one hand, shifted the JDP and the social groups within the alliance to the center of gravity of politics, and on the other hand, brought the issue of how to restructure the demilitarized state and politics as a new and

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9   For a collective presentation of all these legal and constitutional changes, see: Anonymous, Kamu Düzeni ve Güvenliği Müsteşarlığı, 2013.

structural problem before the said political alliance. From this very point on, the social groups that shaped this political alliance based on freedoms and globalism experienced a differentiation of political agenda, position and vision by returning to their own identity approaches on the restructuring of the state and politics in the post-2010 period. Around this differentiation, they started to be involved in power relations and to compete with each other through their own private / group agendas and goals.

In that political environment, the JDP and Islamic conservative groups, which had a wide sociological base, tended to create politics through a political and power perspective based on "the ballot box and national will". Among Kurdish social groups, however, the nationalist political discourse voiced by the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP & Halkların Demokratik Partisi - HDP) tended to gain more weight.[10] However, leftist social groups, which, together with the JDP, had been the bearers of the process of demilitarization of politics on the basis of freedoms and globalism for many years, set their own political priorities and developed a course of political interaction in the direction of expanding the effectiveness of leftist politics within the field of politics and power around it. Similarly, as a result of the process of disintegration that they experienced among themselves regarding the fundamental issues such as the formation of power/sovereignty institutions (legislative, executive, judiciary) around the will of the people, the limitation of these institutions around the distribution of authority, and the processes of using these institutions as a means of struggle for power by social groups, liberal democrat groups diverged in their position as the carrier within the power alliance (Yayla, 2015: 53-59, Demirel, 2015: 107-123). Furthermore, the Gülen organization, which had been leaning itself on Islamic-conservative grounds for many years, emerged with the aim of creating a new bureaucracy-centered political order instead of the old bureaucratic political structure in this period.[11] As a result, these political visions and approaches led to disintegration and separation on the normative axes (freedoms based on these axes and configurations based on globality) that brought the JDP and these groups together and formed a critical fault line.

The social and political events that broke out one after another on this fault line shaped the fate of the political alliance between the JDP and the groups in question, which had been built on normative axes. In the Gezi events that broke out first in June 2013, relying on its power of authority, the JDP government followed the path of freely realizing its own power policies in the social sphere, while the opposition, which also included leftist social groups, handled the events in their local scale within the framework of a policy aimed at forcing the government to resign (Bayramoğlu, 2012; Ertem and Eseyan, 2013: 221-236, 247-253; Tuğal, 2016: 282, 288- 295). However, the Gülen organization, turning into a terrorist organization, attempted to control the political structure in Türkiye through bureaucratic domination, by means of the process of 17-25 December 2013 and later the military coup attempt on 15 July 2016 (Beriş, 2018: 388-399). The Kurdish nationalist political movement, which received the broad support of Kurdish social groups in the 7 June 2015 General Elections, turned to the politics of creating an autonomous / separate

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10 It is possible to observe this situation through the PDP's significant increase in votes in the June 2015 General Elections.

11 For the analysis of the disintegration process in the political alliance relations between these groups centered around the JDP, see: Uslu, 2015: 14-37.

structure from the unitary state structure around the discourse of self-government with the trench events that started after the election (Coşkun, 2016; Mahçupyan, 2015; Tuğsuz, 2017). In this environment of political tension, turmoil, disintegration and conflict, the ruling alliance established around the JDP on the basis of freedoms and globalism disintegrated. This disintegration and the heavy political-social debris brought about by this disintegration clearly undermined the political paradigm in Turkish politics and the JDP movement regarding the construction of political sovereignty (authorities to exercise sovereignty) on the basis of social and individual freedoms, and the shaping of political legitimacy in line with global / European political principles.[12] Afterwards, the JDP movement turned to the configuration/alliance lines at the other end of the normative axes (sovereignty and legitimacy axes) for political interaction and alliance processes, but this time, it adopted a new vision of politics based on authority and indigenousness. This new vision highlighted a political interaction-alliance process based on the authority/ state-centered construction of sovereign powers and the shaping of political legitimacy in the context of indigenousness.

## The JDP and Conservative Groups:

## New Politics in the Second Half of the 2010s

The disintegration process of the JDP with its allies on the line of freedoms based on the axes of sovereignty and legitimacy and on the line of globality also led to a transformation in the political relationship and interaction style it had maintained with conservative groups on the identity axis for a long time. After the disintegration process in the political alliance structure, the authority and indigenousness-based political vision developed by the party also formed the main axis of the political representation and interaction processes between conservative groups.[13] Around this new political vision, the relationship between the JDP and conservative groups was shaped around the idea of protecting the "party as a movement of political cause" and the "civil political order / stability established in the country". This idea, however, led to the concentration and centralization of power within the party organization and management staff around the leadership authority, and led conservative groups to the behavior of directly articulating

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12  Because the 2013 Gezi events, which took place in an environment shaped by the lines of freedom and globality, the judicial operations of the Gülen organization, political crises such as the 2015 trench politics and the 2016 FETO coup attempt, made the issues of "state security, political order and stability in the administration" the main agenda of political life in Turkish politics and weakened the political priorities and tendencies based on "freedoms, rule of law, judicial impartiality".

13  It is possible to say that the lines of authority and indigenousness that rose in Turkish politics in this period, in general, fed and built each other on the political arena. In this period, it can be said that the line of indigenousness and nationality provided a basis for the emphasis of "authority as the defining element of order, relations, values and rights", and thus the instrumentalization of society and identities in the name of authority. In addition, it can be stated that the perspective of authority-indigenousness that dominated the politics allowed a political understanding to come to the fore that authority represented the absolute "indigenous and national", society and the will of society, and allowed the authority to acquire an absolute position in defining the national and the national, thus determining the framework of political legitimacy. Again, this authority-indigenousness equation, on the one hand, enabled the notion of indigenousness and nationality to be mobilized to define political sovereignty on the basis of authority; On the other hand, it can be stated that it opened a corridor for the authority to strengthen and reproduce the indigenousness / nationality line. Thus, it can be said that the line of authority and indigenousness ultimately legitimized and rationalized each other.

with "party and leader-centered" discourse, policies and programs, and integrating with the party[14] (Karakoç, 2023a: 372-374). This situation increased the weight and decisiveness of the party in the party-social group relationship within the JDP and led to the development of a party-centered relationship and interaction style.

In this period, it can be said that the Presidency system, which was accepted by the referendum on 16 June 2017 and put into practice in 2018, was also determinant in the authority-based formation of the relationship and interaction between conservative groups and the JDP. With the new government model, the adoption of an approach based mainly on the supremacy of the executive within the political system and the empowerment of the executive / president in this direction provided an institutional basis for the development of the said relationship on the axis of party authority. In this context, issues such as the president's taking on the role of party chairman at the same time, his authority to directly appoint the ministers and senior bureaucracy, the conjunctural strong influence of the government in the shaping of the senior judicial administration, the president's power over capital processes in the context of the Central Bank and the Wealth Fund, will have a critical impact on shaping the representation relationship between conservative social groups and the JDP around the party/leader authority.[15]

With this new relationship and interaction style, an approach to reshaping the management cadres, institutional balances and power relations within the party around the leadership authority, as well as redefining the party's relationship with the social sphere and conservative groups around the leadership charisma became evident. In this context, a new understanding of politics, in which power, initiative and responsibility were defined around the leader and with reference to the leader's authority, came to the fore.[16] The new understanding of politics in question has led to a critical change in the party management cadres, and the founding cadres, who had a strong capacity for interaction between the party and the society and balancing the power relations within the party since its foundation years, lost their position in the party's senior management and decision processes in general, new cadres, who generally developed their relationship with politics

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14 In this context, Islamic conservative groups followed a course of integration and embracing the party, with many declarations of support in favor of the JDP government at the time.

15 For these constitutional amendments, see: 21.01.2017 tarih ve 6771 sayılı "Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasasında Değişiklik Yapılmasına Dair Kanun", (Madde 16, 17): 11.02.2017 tarih ve 29976 sayılı Resmî Gazete.
For the framework of the establishment of the Türkiye Wealth Fund, see: Türkiye Varlık Fonu'nun kuruluş çerçevesi için bakınız: https://www.tvf.com.tr/uploads/file/6741-sayili-kanun-metni-2652022.pdf

16 In terms of this transformation based on leadership authority in the JDP's political understanding, the statement "The JDP is Tayyip's party", which came to the fore in the speech of Minister of Justice Bekir Bozdağ, who was the President of the Congress Council, at the extraordinary congress on May 22, 2016, can be marked as a historical turning point. Starting from this period, many statements based on the "leadership authority" will be made at different times from the JDP administration and organizational units, depending on the developments in the agenda. The statement made by Bülent Turan, JDP Group Deputy Chairman, on September 15, 2019 can be counted among these examples. In his statement, Turan said, "I know that without Erdoğan, Bülent Turan is nothing in Çanakkale. If we walk along with Erdogan, we have value. All of our deputies are of the same opinion." For Bekir Bozdağ's speech, see: "Bozdağ: AK Parti Tayyip'in partisidir", milliyet.com.tr, (22.05.2016), https://www.milliyet.com.tr/siyaset/bozdag-ak-parti-tayyipin-partisidir-2249665 (Access Date: 09 April 2020). For Bülent Turan's speech, see: "AK Partili Turan: İmamoğlu İstanbul'da kazanmadı, biz hediye ettik", sputniknews.com.tr, (16.09.2019), https://sputniknews.com.tr/20190916/ak-partili-turan-imamoglu-istanbulda-kazanmadi-biz-hediye-ettik-1040185499.html (E.T.: 09 Nisan 2020).

and society over the "leadership charisma" and "in the axis of leadership authority", have taken their places. As a result, around this new relationship/representation structure based on the party and leadership authority, the conservative environment has been pushed to the background in the determination of the political agenda, problem, discourse and vision, and the party leadership structure assumed a more active and priority position on its own in this regard. In addition, the party leadership structure developed a tendency towards persuading and directing conservative groups around this assigned agenda, discourse, approach and vision. In this regard, the approach developed by the party on the basis of "leadership authority, indigenousness and nationality" has subordinated daily life standards, human quality of life, welfare and future expectations; instead, it opened the door to a transformation towards supporting party performance for a "strong state" (Karakoç, 2019: 218-219).

The new political vision shaped by the line of authority and indigenousness between the JDP and conservative groups also transformed the established relationship and interaction between the JDP and conservative non-governmental organizations, civil groups and conservative media formations as of the second half of 2010. In this period, it can be stated that the political field and the JDP's weight / determination on non-governmental organizations and the media gradually increased, the institutional autonomy of these areas against politics was eroded, and an institutional hegemony in favor of politics began to take shape over these areas. It is possible to say that some fundamental developments articulated one after the other were decisive in the development of this process. The rise of political and party-related organizations in the field of civil society and media was the first of these critical developments. Another critical development was that political and party-related administrators gained weight in the management of some important non-governmental organizations and prominent media organs. In like manner, the change of staff in the media, at the levels of journalists, writers, and broadcasters, in line with the new vision of the party, formed another part of this critical development. Likewise, in this period, the influence of political-public relations / opportunities in the activity and financial resource processes of civil society movements increased, and non-governmental organizations tended to be organized around various civil platforms such as the National Will Platform, where actors related to politics or political priorities were decisive.[17]

Around these developments, the influence, weight and decisiveness of politics in shaping the positions, agendas, problems, priorities and approaches of civil society and media organizations began to come to the fore. Thus, in these institutional areas, a general attitude towards compatibility with politics, the party and the main perspective of the party (politics/party's agenda, discourse, priorities and approaches) began to take shape. In these areas, a party-centered tendency to articulate with the political field in general and the party leadership authority in particular has become evident. In terms of conservative politics, politics and party structure became determinant and directive in the relationship between politics - social sphere or between the party - conservative civil society. In this regard, there were certain levels of tension and disagreements between the party and some conservative civil formations, and these tensions resulted in favor of the party in accordance with the vision of the party[18] (Karakoç, 2019: 221).

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17 For basic observations on the transformation of Islamic conservative NGOs' relations with politics after 2010, see: Sunar, 2018: 66-67, 73-75.

18 The most critical example in this regard is the tension between the Science and Art Foundation (Bilim Sanat

This transformation, which was developed on the basis of authority and locality in conservative politics, produced a critical fault line and a dissolution point on the established interaction and representation relations between the JDP and conservative groups as of the late 2010s. In this context, A cleavage line developed over the political relationship and interaction between the JDP and conservative groups that had established a relationship on the basis of freedoms and globality, thus attaching importance to the definition of political sovereignty on the basis of socio-individual characteristics and in the context of limited state, and the formation of political legitimacy on the basis of global norms such as "rule of law, auditable power, pluralism, separation of powers and liberal democracy." In like manner, a disintegration line also emerged on the grounds of the relationship and interaction of conservative groups who had established their relationship with the JDP on a religiosity-based idea of "morality, justice, rights, equity, and merit", thus on identity-emphasized perspectives/principles, and became uncomfortable with the practices at the level of government administration, local organizations and local administrations. These fault lines formed between the JDP and the aforementioned conservative segments, first produced "intra-group" conflict grounds at the intellectual and political elite levels in conservative politics, and over time paved the way for political disintegration.[19]

## Conservative Politics, New Era and New Actors:

### 2020s, The Future Party and The Democracy and Progress Party

The fault lines faced in the 2010s by the representation, interaction and alliance relations that conservative politics established on the identity and normative axes of the JDP at the beginning of the 2000s in the field of politics resulted in two severe political disengagements in conservative politics after the beginning of 2020. Two new political parties emerged in conservative politics over these fault lines.

In this process, first the Future Party (Gelecek Partisi) was founded on 13 December 2019 with the participation of people, most of whom had JDP backgrounds, under the leadership of Ahmet Davutoğlu, who had served as a consultant, foreign minister, chairman and prime minister in the JDP for many years, and left the Party in May 2016 as the general chairman and prime minister due to the power relations within the party.[20] Three months later, on March 9, 2020, with the support of Abdullah Gül, who had also served as prime minister, deputy prime minister, foreign minister and also President in

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Vakfı), which operates in the conservative civil society universe, and Istanbul Şehir University, which is affiliated with this foundation, and the closure of this university in June 2020, with a Presidential decree. See: "Istanbul Şehir University is officially closed", hurriyet.com.tr, (30.06.2020), https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/egitim/istanbul-sehir-universitesi-resmen-kapandi-41553487 (Accessed: 10 May 2023).

19 In this regard, especially in the period between 2015-2019, intellectual and discursive divergences that came to the fore in the conservative media, job changes at the level of writers and administrators, the opening of new newspapers and digital publishing platforms, (at this point, especially the examples of duvardibi.tv and karar.com can be marked) as well as the political preference differences between the political elites within the JDP, staff changes and discursive splits constituted clear indications of the aforementioned "intra-group" disintegration in conservative politics.

20 "Davutoğlu'nun genel başkanlığını yaptığı 'Gelecek Partisi' kuruldu", *ntv.com.tr*, 13.12.2019, https://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/davutoglunun-genel-baskanligini-yaptigi-gelecek-partisi-kuruldu,7hboQfDXEkutwP7B8SRj0w, (Accessed September 28, 2020); "Gelecek Partisi'ni kurdu... Logosu 'çınar yaprağı'", *hurriyet.com.tr*, 13.12.2019, https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/gelecek-partisini-kurdu-logosu-cinar-yapragi-41396427 (Access date: September 28, 2020).

the JDP, the Democracy and Progress Party (DPP & Demokrasi ve Atılım Partisi - DEVA Partisi) was founded under the leadership of Ali Babacan who had served as deputy prime minister, foreign minister and economy minister in the JDP, together with names who had served as deputies and ministers in the JDP for many years.[21]

When we look at the axes that have shaped the representation, interaction and alliance relations of these two political parties with the social sphere, which emerged from conservative politics, it can be stated that interesting interaction lines and concepts emerge over the identity and normative axes. In this regard, the Future Party has established its line of political interaction directly on the identity axis. It relied primarily on the representation of conservative groups in the political arena. It is possible to say that it has aimed to develop a line of representation and interaction with religious circles as the natural social base.[22] However, it can be said that the Future Party, unlike the JDP, aims to establish the relationship between representation and interaction with Islamic conservative groups on the normative sphere, through freedoms and globality/ universalism, and defines and develops conservative politics on the basis of freedoms and globality as a political vision. In this regard, it is seen that there is an intense emphasis in the founding program of the party in the direction of "developing fundamental freedoms, establishing the state organization and political order around freedoms, taking the line of social and individual freedoms as a reference in the use of sovereignty powers". It is also observed in its founding program that the party marked the global and universal political principles as a founding reference point as the basis for defining political legitimacy. In this regard, both in the founding program and in the party discourse, the party heavily refers to political principles such as "the rule of law, separation of powers, transparency in management processes, accountability and more effective participation in decision-making processes."[23] However, regarding the Future Party's political legitimacy and universal politics, it can be said that it attaches critical importance to activating local political accumulation and political values in a universal formulation, with the emphasis on "taking into account past values" and "leaning on the accumulation of the past". In this sense, it can be said that the party claims to carry the indigenous to a universal level, to model it in a way that fills the universal, to give it a universal dynamism, in short, to formulate the indigenous on a universal level and place it on the ground of political legitimacy.

However, it can be stated that the DPP acts directly on the normative axis in order to develop a more general and broad political relationship, interaction and alliance line, and aims to develop an area of political representation and interaction around this axis through the line of freedoms and globality. When we look at the founding program of the party, a

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21 "Ali Babacan DEVA Partisi'ni kurdu", *haberturk.com.tr,* 10.03.2020, https://www.haberturk.com/son-dakika-haberi-ali-babacan-deva-partisi-ni-kurdu-iste-logosu-ve-kurucular-kurulu-listesi-2608978 (Access date: September 28, 2020); "Yeni partinin 'kurucular kurulu' listesi belli oldu", *haberglobal.com.tr*, 09.03.2020, https://haberglobal.com.tr/gundem/ali-babacan-in-partisinin-kurucular-kurulu-listesi-belli-oldu-deva-partisi-kurucular-listesi-33140 (Access date: September 28, 2020).

22 It is possible to see statements in this direction in the interview of the Deputy Chairman of the Future Party, Etyen Mahcupyan, which was broadcast on Karar TV on April 27, 2020. See: https://www.karar.com/etyen-mahcupyan-karar-tv-canli-yayininda-1559263 (Access date: May 05, 2020).

23 Gelecek Partisi Program, December 2019. https://wp.gelecekpartisi.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Gelecek_Partisi_Program.pdf (Access date: December 17, 2019).

political vision in this direction predominantly shows itself. In fact, this political vision shapes the main backbone of the party program. In this regard, in the founding program of the party, a distinctive approach is predominant in the direction of "expanding the areas of basic freedom, creating the conditions of open society, restructuring the power area around freedoms, law and justice, taking the basic freedom areas as a reference in the use of sovereign powers". Similarly, in the founding program of the party, a political line that accepts global political principles such as "pluralism, separation of powers, rule of law, transparency in administrative processes, accountability, participatory democracy" as the basic reference points emerges and global/universal political principles are marked as the founding reference ground for the definition of political legitimacy. This political vision of the party, based on freedoms and globalism, is also evident in the political discourses of the party representatives.[24]

However, it can be said that the DPP does not define this political vision in a way based on freedoms and globalism through a primary identity social group, a certain social segment, but rather based the relationship between representation and interaction on the policy of "interaction with all segments around the axis of freedoms and globality." In other words, it can be stated that the party adopts a political vision to develop a common, equal political representation and interaction relationship with all social groups, including conservative groups, with all segments acting through the perspective of freedom and globalism. Therefore, it is possible to state that the DPP sees not only conservative groups, but also all social groups it can meet on the lines of freedom and globality as an equal natural sociological base, at least that is how it entered the political scene. This approach is clearly seen in the discourses and statements of the party administrators. This approach can be seen in the statements of the chairman of the party and other administrators as reflected in the media: "being a new political party with a new identity, to be established afresh", "being a mainstream political movement in the middle of the political spectrum", "developing a relationship of political representation and interaction all over again, without entering into any identity restrictions from the beginning," "not being imprisoned in identity politics," "establishing relations and interaction with all social segments around the idea of freedoms, democracy, universal norms, open society, social welfare."[25]

To sum up, it can be said that both parties that emerged in conservative politics at the beginning of the 2020s have marked the normative axes (the lines of freedom and globality on these axes) as the founding reference point for the line of political representation and interaction. However, it can be stated that the Future Party prioritized building/developing these axes (the line of freedoms and globality on these axes) on an identity sociological basis, while the DPP took the normative axes itself as the founding ground, and promoted freedoms, democracy and globalism under its own leadership structure and aims at a common representation and alliance relationship with all identity social groups that the

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24 Demokrasi ve Atılım Partisi Program, March 2020. https://cdn.devapartisi.org/14/DEVA-PARTI%CC%87SI%CC%87-PROGRAMI2.pdf (Accessed March 15, 2020).

25 Ruşen Çakır, "DEVA Partisi Genel Başkanı Ali Babacan ile Söyleşi", *medyascope.tv*, 11.03.2020. https://medyascope.tv/2020/03/11/deva-partisi-genel-baskani-ali-babacan-ile-soylesi/ (Access date: March 16, 2020); "Nihat Ergün KARAR TV canlı yayınında", karar.com, 04.05.2020, https://www.karar.com/nihat-ergun-karar-tv-canli-yayininda-1560861 (Access date: May 08, 2020).

axes cut horizontally. Therefore, it is possible to state that the Future Party tends to reach a normative interaction ground from an identity sociological ground, while the DPP tends to reach a sociological interaction ground between identities directly from a normative framework.

**Conclusion**

Conservative politics, which almost completely and effectively fulfilled nearly all the parameters of the total politics model during the 1990s and 2000s, developed a high capacity of influence and impact with a dynamic organizational process in the social field on the one hand, and with the formation of a dynamic party (the JDP), it has reached an effective political representation capacity, and acquired authority in the field of power by developing a lively interaction relationship with different social groups in the society, on the other hand. As a result, in this period, conservative politics both developed a high level of influence and impact on the three areas (social area-political area-power area) in which power relations took place, and connected these three areas with each other through mutual representation, interaction processes and by preserving the autonomy between areas. Thus, it has found the opportunity to spread its political influence, representation and influence capacity to all areas of society - politics - power. It is possible to say that a representation and interaction relationship based on freedoms and universality played a decisive role in this dynamic political capability.

When it comes to the second half of the 2010s, it can be said that the critical political developments in Turkish political history in general and simultaneously within conservative politics transformed this style of politics. It can be stated that as of this period, the mutual relationship and interaction between the social sphere - the political sphere - the field of power in conservative politics weakened, and the relationship between these three fields took a "one-sided, one-way" course from "top to bottom." In this context, it can be stated that in conservative politics, the social field has become dependent on the field of politics and the field of politics has become dependent and subordinate to the field of power, that the influence, interaction and impact capacity of the conservative social sphere and the political sphere in general politics and power relations weakened, and the influence and direction capacity of the conservative power field within the politics and representation relations were strengthened. Therefore, it can be pointed out that an authoritative and power-centered understanding of politics gained influence in conservative politics. As a result, in this period, it is possible to state that the conservative society and political area lost blood and dissolved in terms of total politics processes, and as a result, the dependence of conservative politics on authority and indigenousness-based socio-political movements within the general power relations increased.

In this regard, the JDP has emerged as a political actor in the field of politics, relying on the social, economic and cultural resource accumulation and dynamism of the Islamic conservative groups in the field of civil society before 2010. Therefore, the party was formed as an institutional reflection of the accumulation of the power of Islamic conservative groups in the field of politics. In addition, it can be said that the party gained power in the field of politics by relying on the political discourse and energies of large social groups in society around the democratic discourse. When it comes to the

second phase after 2010, it can be said that the party turned its back on its authority/nationality policy and became a dominant political force that dominated and controlled the Islamic conservative groups that had transformed itself into a great power in the previous period. Thus, the party updated its relationship with conservative social groups as a one-sided, top-down and leader-centered one; To this extent, it can be stated that the dynamic and institutional relations between conservative groups and their relations have been disintegrated and weakened. In this political environment, the Future Party and the DPP, which were shaped as an alternative to the JDP in conservative politics as of the beginning of the 2020s, came to the political scene with the vision of ensuring the restoration of both Turkish politics and conservative politics. It can be said that these two new political formations represent both an area of opportunity and a bundle of handicaps for conservative politics and its restoration. It represents the field of opportunity. This is because both parties in question define themselves as "the restructuring of conservative politics on the basis of freedoms and globalism, exiting the spiral of authority, power and dominance; in this context, the conservative social field should be given a dynamic character that can affect power relations around institutional autonomy; reconstructing the conservative political field around social demands and priorities, with a participatory and common sense perspective; and the institutional representative of a policy approach based on the modelling of the power field around the principles of pluralism, horizontal accountability and balance-control. Therefore, new parties identified their political presence in the political scene directly with political restoration. This situation may create an opportunity for the main trend in conservative politics to turn towards the axis of freedoms and globalism in the medium and long term.

Additionally, these two new political formations also represent a bundle of impediments in terms of conservative politics and its restorative possibilities. In this context, first of all, the establishment of the Future Party and the DPP prioritizes "intra-group conflicts and internal conflicts" in terms of the general power struggle within conservative politics. On the one hand, this internal conflict turns into one of the main agendas that structurally define conservative politics; on the other hand, it carries the risk of stabilizing the political positions of the three parties in conservative politics. In this regard, it can be stated that the existence of the Future Party and the DPP in the political scene has a decisive influence on the political position of the JDP and pushes it to be stuck in a certain discourse space.

Secondly, it can be stated that the emergence of the Future Party and the DPP as two separate political parties aimed at political restoration within conservative politics constitutes a critical weak point (a kind of "birthmark") for both parties, which is likely to weaken their social and political influence capacity from the very beginning. In other words, it can be said that the preference for "two separate formations" left the Future Party and the DPP with a weak level of interaction and energy that they could create together in the field of politics, thus making these two parties political rivals of each other from the very beginning, before being a rival for the JDP.

Thirdly and lastly, the division of the main spine of conservative politics into three expresses the dispersion of conservative political resource accumulation and political energy in a political environment where total politics rules and the age of alliances prevail; therefore, it weakens the influence and power capacity of conservative politics in

Turkish politics and makes it more dependent on other political formations in the political scene as vision, discourse and policy. In this regard, it is possible to say that the two newly formed parties are more dependent on new alliance relations in terms of their own political assets. The critical issue here is centered around the question of whether the new parties can establish this alliance under their own leadership structure or at the inter-party level. The first possibility is a major political transformation, which is very difficult to achieve in societies with multiple identity groups such as Türkiye. The second refers to the possibility of new parties being constantly trapped in a "game-bargain-balance" cycle and a populist political wave in the name of the "power" necessary for politics.

Moreover, it can be said that this diversification in conservative politics has the potential to contribute to the rise of the culture of negotiation and cooperation in the field of politics, and to provide an opportunity to strengthen the base of democratization, limited power and good governance in the country.

In this regard, it is possible to say that the institutional transformation of conservative politics constitutes both an opportunity and a handicapped ground for Turkish politics. In the context of being an opportunity space, it can be said that the diversification of actors in conservative politics has the opportunity to contribute to the orientation of the main trend in Turkish political life towards the axis of freedoms, universality, limited state and good governance, and to the strengthening of this trend in politics. As for being a handicapped ground, it can be stated that the aforementioned transformation may deepen the fragmented and disintegrated political structure in Turkish politics, which in turn carries the risk of compressing Turkish political life into a populist power struggle between parties around the idea of authority and political opportunism, instead of a vision of building a future around the quest for limited power and good governance. As a result, it can be said that the historical transformation in conservative politics and the subsequent split represents a contraction in its capacity to associate the social sphere, political sphere and power sphere around the idea of good governance and to channel Turkish politics into the path of good governance. Time will tell in which direction this contraction process will proceed.

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