

## THE REAL POLITICS OF JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT PARTY POLITICS AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE LANGUAGE OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE: 2009-2016<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Melike KAYIRAL<sup>2</sup>

### ABSTRACT

This study, which analyses the transformation in the political discourse of the Justice and Development Party, which proceeds along the line of liberal-conservative values, focuses on the real political developments between 2009 and 2016. The aim of the study is to investigate the factors that are effective in this process which started to transform after 2009 as the liberal-conservative discourse, evolves into a nationalist discourse. 2010 is an important milestone in the fight against tutelage and legal regulations. While the Justice and Development Party has undertaken important reforms in the fields of human rights, democracy, women's rights, fight against corruption and public sector, it has unabatedly continued its regulations and policies in the fields of military and law. When the imperative tenses reflected in political discourse are blended with words such as “we will” and “we will be” in the future tense, an embracing and commanding style of expression has emerged. However, the political language constructed with this style of discourse, combined with the charismatic leadership of the party leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, has become an important strategy in influencing voters. In this framework, that was investigated the impact of real political developments between 2009 and 2016 on the language of political discourse.

**Keywords:** Justice and Development Party, Political Discourse, Real Politics.

### ÖZET

Liberal-muhafazakâr deęerler çizgisinde ilerleyen Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi'nin siyasal söylem dilindeki dönüşümün araştırıldığı bu çalışmada, 2009-2016 yılları arasındaki reel politik gelişmelere odaklanılmıştır. Çalışmanın amacı, 2009 yılı sonrasında dönüşmeye başlayan liberal-muhafazakâr söylemin, milliyetçi söyleme doğru evrilirken bu süreçte etkili olan faktörlerin araştırılmasıdır. 2010 yılı, vesayetle mücadele ve hukuki düzenlemeler noktasında önemli bir dönüm noktasıdır. Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, insan hakları, demokrasi, kadın, yolsuzlukla mücadele ve kamu alanında önemli reformların altına imza atarken, askeri ve hukuk alanlarında düzenleme ve politikalarına hız kesmeden devam etmiştir. Politik dile yansıyan emir kipleri, gelecek zamanı içeren ‘‘yapacağız-olacağız’’ gibi sözcüklerle harmanlanınca ortaya hem kucaklayıcı hem buyurgan bir hitap şekli çıkmıştır. Ancak, bu söylem tarzıyla inşa edilen politik dil, parti lideri Recep Tayyip Erdoğan'ın karizmatik liderliği ile birleşince seçmeni tesir altına almadaki önemli bir strateji haline gelmiştir. Bu çerçevede 2009-2016 yılları arasındaki reel politik gelişmelerin siyasal söylem dili üzerindeki etkisi araştırılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, Siyasal Söylem, Reel Politik

<sup>1</sup> While creating this research article; the analysis of the transition of the Justice and Development Party from liberal conservative discourse to local and national discourse was used from his doctoral thesis.

<sup>2</sup> meliksahleyla5880@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0003-2147-0928

## INTRODUCTION

The Justice and Development Party is a political party with a long ruling period in Turkish political life. The Justice and Development Party, which has led Turkish politics through critical transformations with its liberal-conservative and nationalist identity, has also transformed its political discourse. The visions presented to the voters in elections and referendums include the strengthening of the political institution and the fight against tutelage. It is possible to state that the Justice and Development Party, which sees its success in elections as a means of legitimacy, emphasises discourse in line with the spirit of each period. When we look at the effects of real political developments in the 2009-2016 period on the language of political discourse, we see the dominance of nationalist language especially towards the end of 2009. It is possible to position the liberal-conservative discourse, which started to transform after 2010, on the nationalist axis. It can be said that the ideological transformation and discourse change shaped according to the current conditions have developed based on the reflex of responding to certain challenges. In this context, the party, which highlighted “civilisationalist” tones during the Arab Spring and “nationalist” tones when it faced the July 15 coup attempt, blended the emphasis appropriate to the spirit of the period without abandoning one another.

The discourse of ‘our civilisation’, which became more influential after 2007 and became more prominent during the Arab Spring, was important in the period when nationalist language was dominant. While the Justice and Development Party-Nationalist Movement Party (NMP) alliance seems to have influenced the nationalist discourse, the liberal-conservative discourse was not completely left in the background. Although the nationalist language is perceived as the new shaping of nationalism with the Justice and Development Party, the presence of the sense of nationalism can be seen at every stage of the transformation process that started with the liberal-conservative period. The Justice and Development Party government reconceptualised the “common we” and “nationalist” discourses in a unique way, but did not blend this with the alliances it periodically entered into. It is possible to say that the party assumed a dominant character at the point where internal and external factors created the perception that “we are under attack” and deepened the sense of solidarity. These reasons, which can be associated with terrorism and coup attempts, were effective in the formation of the nationalist language. The nationalist discourse, which is shaped by the discourse of “one nation, one flag, one homeland, one state”, corresponds to the feeling of nationalism on the axis of Türkiye's survival issue, even though it corresponds to loyalty to local values. In this context, the aim of this study is to examine the effects of the developments in the real political plane between 2009 and 2016 on the political discourse of the Justice and Development Party and the change it caused.

## DISCOURSE THEORY

The concept of discourse is stereotyped groups of words. The language and the use of language in different ways are important in the formation of socio-cultural codes in a society. Discourse is a set of processes that transform into action in interaction with the concepts of exchange of ideas, mutual communication, declaration, knowledge, ideology and power (Sözen, 1999: 20). Since language is flexible in terms of its usage area and content, different meanings may arise even if the same words are used. The discipline of philosophy has had an impact on the inclusion of the word discourse in academic studies. Since the 1970s, researchers who started to think about the shaping of the meanings of words have underlined that discourse should be considered as a social reality. For this reason, it was emphasised that discourse, which is a

relative concept, can differ from society to society (Foucault, 1987: 40). Discourse is defined as an effort to make sense of the world with an approach that can change, attribute different meanings to the basic dynamics of society and enable the existence of multiple realities. Knowledge structures that change, transform and are exchanged within a discourse are analysed. In discourse analysis, the semantic structure of texts is analysed. The linguistic and socio-cultural dimensions of discourses are discussed (Sözen, 2017: 15-16). Considering the historical background of the concept, in the IX<sup>th</sup> century, positivism measured scientificity with quantity. Accordingly, quantitative analysis methods have developed and gained validity. In the transition from modernity to post-modernity, a pluralistic thought structure was adopted from the thought structure based on the understanding of opposites. With this transition, binary thought systems based on opposites such as nature-culture, rational-irrational have started to be analysed. In the modern period, quantity was accepted as the criteria of objectivity and scientificity. According to post-positivist thought, which developed in the XX<sup>th</sup> and XXI<sup>th</sup> centuries and continues its influence today, social reality is accepted as the basic data. Thus, quantitative analyses have been replaced by qualitative analyses (Van Dijk, 1985: 1-2). Scientificity is not a concept that can be measured only by numerical values. The concepts of social reality and context are also parameters included in the field of scientificity. Objectivity has been abandoned and subjectivity has started to be accepted due to the inadequacy of explaining people with the laws of nature. Post-modern thought suggests that human beings are voluntary and unpredictable beings. Quantitative analysis makes instantaneous measurements. Qualitative analysis focuses more on the process (Arslan, 2020: 6). Discourse analysis, one of the methods of qualitative analysis, is based on interpretation. The concept of discourse originated from the Latin concepts of “discurrere” meaning going back and forth and “discurcus” meaning melting and has been expressed in various ways over time. Although the history of discourse analysis can be traced back to Ancient Greece, it developed in the social sciences in the 1960s and reached its current scope (Van Dijk, 1985: 1-7). The concept of discourse became widespread as a term when Foucault used the word discourse as a substitute for the word ideology (Sözen, 1999:12). Therefore, it has a semantic content that points to the existence of realities rather than a single reality and reveals the different approaches of the parties. It is seen that the discourse itself has different semantic positionings depending on the periodical and historical conditions in order to define a situation and share the problem. It is possible to state that discourse has a quality that is reproduced in continuity and gains different meanings with its dynamic and variable structure (Mursül, D., 2022: 4). Discourse gains meaning from the language of the actors who utter it. It gains political power in its own social context (Baran, 2009: 85). Discourse is in relation with many social, cultural, economic and political fields. Discourse is defined as processes related to language practices that are transformed into action through the exchange of ideology, knowledge, dialogue, expression, style of declaration, negotiation, power and exchange of power (Mursül, D., 2022: 5). Political discourse is shaped through we and the other. It always constructs the power and power relationship in a hierarchical framework. When we take into account the functionality of political discourse in creating social reality, language practices that turn into action can give rise to ideologies with different approaches to the same situation. Thus, the hierarchical relationship between groups and different social identities emerge (Akar and Martı, 2015: 243).

## **POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS BETWEEN 2009-2016 AND THEIR EFFECTS ON POLITICAL DISCOURSE**

The tensions that continued during this period became the main orientations that dominated the party's general policy. The Ergenekon Trial process started in relation to the suspicion of the armed forces to overthrow the government and stage a coup d'état. Official reports stated that the criminal organisation called Ergenekon would launch mass mobilisations on 7 July. The waves of arrests that were initiated occupied the media agenda throughout 2009, lasted for many years and the Ergenekon case became one of the main policy items and part of the political discourse of the Justice and Development Party. A closure case was filed against the party for being a focus of anti-secularist activities in 2008. In 2008, a closure case was filed against the party for being a focus of anti-secularist activities. The indictment of the Chief Public Prosecutor of the Court of Cassation, Abdurrahman Yalçınkaya, included a provision to ban a group of 71 people, including Erdoğan and Abdullah Gül, from politics for 5 years. The Constitutional Court did not order the closure of the party, but ruled that half of the Treasury aid be withheld (Babacan, 2022: 71-73). Another important development of the period was the headscarf liberalisation. The Justice and Development Party, which had not taken any initiative in this direction in the first period of its rule, brought the headscarf issue to the parliament with the support of the NMP and accordingly, Article 10 and Article 42 of the Constitution were amended. Subsequently, the Constitutional Court ruled for the cancellation of the relevant amendment and the lifting of the ban was postponed to the next stage on the grounds that it was contrary to the principle of secular state understanding of the Constitution. Another important event of 2009 was the Davos Crisis. A session on “Gaza: A Model for Peace in the Middle East” was held at the World Economic Forum in Switzerland. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan objected to the fact that he was not given enough floor time, while the Israeli President Shimon Peres, who was invited to the same session, was given more floor time. The “One Minute” outburst occupied a large place in the public opinion (Çaylak, et al., 2018: 736). Ahmet Davutoğlu's ideal of becoming a “regional power” and the discourse of increasing effectiveness in foreign policy have directed Turkish foreign policy towards the real political option. The norms of consensus, democracy, human rights and the expansion of freedoms have brought it closer to the ideal politics (Erdağ and Kardaş, 2012: 66-68). Ahmet Davutoğlu argues that wars and conflicts are preventable phenomena. In order to prevent wars and conflicts, strategic planning is needed. A new concept of power can be created by constructing fixed and variable data (2001: 17). Davutoğlu sees international co-operation in regional and global terms as necessary. The use of new foreign policy instruments and the strengthening of the role of international organisations are important for the implementation of inter-state policies. Davutoğlu's “zero problems with neighbours” approach represents a new paradigm in the national and international arena. The aim of Türkiye's zero problem policy with its neighbours is to increase dialogue and cooperation to minimise problems with neighbours. Simultaneously, the zero problem policy with neighbours is seen as a tool to ensure regional and global security (2014: 197-205). On this axis, a new strategic culture was formed in Türkiye between 2002 and 2010. Türkiye's strategic culture aims to eliminate the threats of the strategic environment and turn them into opportunities. It points to the importance of soft power in preventing conflicts and wars. It is emphasised that international organisations should play a more active role in international relations (Erdağ and Kardaş, 2012: 70). It is aimed to strengthen economic and trade relations on a regional and global scale. Strategic decision-makers emphasise peace and stability while advocating the importance of preventing conflicts and wars in foreign policy. Ensuring the sustainability of peace and stability

is seen as a key role in terms of economic development and increasing regional prosperity. “Zero problem policy with neighbours” aims to revive trade relations that have been restricted due to security concerns and to create new trade areas (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs). In line with these objectives, it is seen that a new foreign policy understanding has been put forward that focuses on soft power, expands the environment of cooperation and dialogue, transforms the possible risks of the international environment into opportunities, and increases economic and commercial relations. Türkiye became a member of supranational organisations such as the UN and NATO and followed Western foreign policy principles for many years. Türkiye has switched to a multi-party political system, which is a democratic form of government, as a political manifestation of Westernisation. Türkiye's membership in NATO is one of the important stages of the Westernisation project as well as a strategic partnership. Early examples of Türkiye's multifaceted identity include its membership in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which reflects its Islamic identity, and its involvement as the founder of organisations such as the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organisation (BSEC) and D-8 (Keynman, 2009: 35-42). In the period under review, the developments that increased the debate on “Türkiye's direction” were the transformation of the definition of “strategic alliance” into “model partnership” in relations with the USA and the adoption of an active attitude in relations with the countries in the region and the Middle East (Balçı, 2012: 117-120). The understanding of the Middle East as a potential problem area has been replaced by the responsibility of “dealing with the problems of others”. This approach, which is seen as a requirement of Türkiye's historical and cultural responsibility, has deepened the dimension of the debates. Türkiye's understanding of reconciliation and its position as a mediator to bring the parties together on the axis of Palestine, Iraq, Iran, Israel-Lebanon, Israel-Syria problems strengthened its key role in the region (Kardaş, 2010: 124). Davutoğlu explained that the signs of strategic culture would be incompatible with the new Turkish foreign policy approach with the phrase: “*do not be active, do not intervene, do not be involved, do what you are told to do*” (2010: 14).

The “Action Plan for Combating Religious Unrest”, which became a part of the Ergenekon Case, occupied the agenda among the political debates in 2009. It was alleged that the document, prepared by the General Staff, contained plans to end the Justice and Development Party. Justice and Development Party officials filed a criminal complaint and Colonel Dursun Çiçek was interrogated. As a result of the investigation, the Military Prosecutor's Office of the General Staff reported that the “Action Plan for Combating Religious Unrest” had not been prepared at the General Staff. On the other hand, the law was amended to change the trial process for military personnel. It became possible for military officers to be tried in civilian courts. The then President of the Republic, Abdullah Gül, approved the amendment. He stated that the amendment in question was based on the condition of “*limiting the jurisdiction of military courts to the military-related duties of military personnel*”, which was necessary for the harmonisation process with the EU. With this move, the power and legitimacy of the military administration was weakened (Çaylak, Dinç and Güngör, 2018: 736). Another allegation is that the organisation known as Ergenekon has been carrying out plans under code names such as Ayışığı, Yakamoz, Sarıkız, Eldiven and Kafes. The suspects held responsible for the Balyoz plan operation were put on trial in the Balyoz case. The indictment of the Balyoz Coup Plan was accepted in July 2010. The Ergenekon and Balyoz cases were merged in 2012 and started to be referred to as the Ergenekon case. The discourse of the Justice and Development Party stated that “democratisation increased as the military tutelage was removed”, while the power of the military was weakened (Özipek, 2018: 694-695). Within the context of developments related to

the Kurdish movement, the Democratic Society Party (DTP) won the majority of Kurdish votes in Southeastern Anatolia in the 2009 local elections. While the Justice and Development Party (AKP) was providing services to address the region's problems such as highways, health, education and social needs, the region also had a demand for identity. Due to the escalation of conflicts, the Constitutional Court decided to close down the DTP on 11 November 2009 (Constitutional Court Decision E.2009/4). Ankara and Israel experienced the “Mavi Marmara Incident” in 2010, which increased tensions between Türkiye and Israel. A group of people from many countries including Türkiye, organised by the Human Rights and Freedoms Relief Foundation (İHH), set sail on the Mavi Marmara to deliver humanitarian and medical aid to Gaza, and the ship was attacked by Israel in international waters. The Palmer Report prepared by the UN in 2011 on this incident, which created a diplomatic crisis between Türkiye and Israel, stated that Israel should apologise to Türkiye and pay compensation to Türkiye on the grounds that the armed attack was inappropriate (Aksar, 2012: 24-26). The Justice and Development Party has pursued a strategy of “economic liberalism with a high social dose” in the economic field. It has focused on physical infrastructure investments and the encouragement of private investments in the production and service sectors. The Justice and Development Party has begun to advance on a policy line that targets global integration through the demands of international economic organizations and institutional reforms. In the global crisis environment, developments that opened new export markets for the Turkish economy are economic cooperation agreements and “High Level Strategic Cooperation” agreements signed with neighboring countries that are not members of the World Trade Organization. In the context of energy transportation, projects such as Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan, Nabucco and Blue Stream have provided long-term geostrategic and economic political opportunities (Ünay, 2012: 105-108). Many political changes that occurred after the 2011 general elections, the Justice and Development Party-FETO conflict, and the changing balances in terms of the Kurdish issue brought about a new period and discourse. This period is different from other periods due to the conflicts, unexpected tensions and trials that occurred. The process from the Kurdish issue to the referendum, general elections, Gezi Park Incidents and the July 15 Coup attempt witnessed quite tense periods and many political changes. The developments brought with them a new discourse language that was highly authoritarian and evolving towards nationalism. In an environment where the power and authority of the bureaucracy are limited to a certain extent, the constitutional arrangements made, the inclusion of actors who go beyond legal boundaries in the investigation process, and the public awareness in the face of external interventions in politics have significantly weakened the tutelary regime. The tensions inherited from the previous period have spread to almost all of the party's policies. In this period of power that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan calls the “Mastery Period”, as can be understood from the repeated emphasis on “Constructing a New Türkiye”, the language of being “powerful” is now dominant. Indeed, expressions such as “we know, we did, we brought, we organized, we developed, we will advance etc.” mentioned in Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's statements show that the political language used is effective and accepted by the citizens. The acceptance and ownership of the practices, legal regulations and reforms put into effect by the citizens caused the Justice and Development Party to start using a more confident language. While the goal of being powerful in power increased the imperative moods in political discourses addressed to certain segments, only the “Nation” was taken as the subject.

Making it tutelary as of 2012 for the Court of Accounts to audit army houses, military casinos, military camps and military canteens, and including performance audits in the field of duty of the Court of Accounts in addition to financial and conformity audits are aimed at

determining the compliance of the accounts and transactions of the public administration with the laws and other legal regulations (Republic of Türkiye Court of Accounts Annual Report 2012). When the position of defence expenditures in the central budget is analysed, it is observed that 2011 was 5,1%, 2012 5,1%, 2013 4,8%, 2014 4,7%, 2015 4,5%, 2016 4,5%, 2017 4,5%. Therefore, while there has not been a significant increase in the share of defence expenditures in the central budget, the goal of moving towards domestic production, especially in the field of defence, has come to the fore in this period (Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye, Presidency of Treasury and Budget, Economic and Social Indicators 2018). The stance of the Justice and Development Party, which states that the relocation of barracks and military units outside the city centre, training and firing in barracks located in the city centre has become difficult and disturbing for citizens, and therefore it has become imperative to move the barracks located in the city centre outside the city, can be seen as a reaction to the armoured units that participated in the coup attempt on 15 July 2016 (Anadolu Agency 2018).

The ratio of budget deficit to GDP, which increased to 5,5% in 2009 due to the global crisis and the recession in the world economy, decreased in the following years and fell to 1,1% in 2016 (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Treasury and Finance 2017 Budget Justification). The global crisis is the main problematic reason why the inflation rate for 2009 and 2010 remained below the target. Growth rates, inflation, current account deficit and unemployment fluctuations in 2010-2011 did not progress in a positive direction. The policies implemented to balance external and domestic demands slowed down the growth rates in 2012-2013. It is seen that economic growth was achieved in the period between 2013-2017, but on the other hand, inflation, unemployment, exchange rates, interest rates and per capita income decreased. Despite the realisation of growth, fundamental problems in the economy persisted. The inability to compensate for import substitution caused a current account deficit. Economic stability was directly affected in terms of direct investment and foreign capital inflows, especially in this period, due to the suspended relations with the EU and the lack of success in influencing foreign investors. When the targets set by the Justice and Development Party government in the economy and the realisations are examined, the inflation rate moved away from the 5% target and increased to 8,5%, except for the years 2010 and 2017 (CBRT Inflation Report 2018). Unemployment rate in 2010 was calculated as 10,7 %. The Justice and Development Party made a serious effort to reduce unemployment to 10% and was able to consolidate this recovery process for 20 months (TurkStat, <https://data.tuik.gov.tr>, Access Date: 01.10.2023). The ratio of current account deficit to national income was realised as 5,2% in the 2012-2017 period. On a yearly basis, the current account deficit was 6,2% in 2010, 9,7% in 2011, 6,1% in 2012, 6,8% in 2013 and 5,5% in 2017. The decline in performance cannot be attributed solely to the Justice and Development Party government. The current account deficit becoming a chronic problem, the inability to attract portfolio investments and foreign direct investments due to the deteriorating relations with the Western world, and the attempts to destabilise the government in domestic politics such as the coup attempt are the factors that negatively affected the process. The largest share of 2012 conditional aids was family and child aids with 38 %. This was followed by assistance for the disabled and incapacitated with 34,8 %. Afterwards, pensions and elderly benefits took the next place with a rate of 9.1 %. It is highly probable to be able to talk about the negative effects of the mentioned issue on the economy (Ministry of Family and Social Policies Annual Report 2013). Criteria such as the inability to increase growth without increasing the current account deficit, the inability to increase welfare in the middle income trap circle, and external financing problems have led to increased fragility. Therefore, it is possible for liberals to

be statist and statist to be liberals, which is specific to the socio-economic character of Türkiye, and the Justice and Development Party has made primary interventions in the market, especially in this period. To sum up, it can be seen that stability in the Turkish economy could not be sustained and the goal of an economy reaching the standards of OECD countries could not be achieved during this period. In terms of the transformation of the political system in Türkiye, the popular election of the President for the first time in 2014 was an important step. In the 10 August 2014 election, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan received 51,8 % of the votes in the first round and was elected president without the need for a second round. In the 7 June and 1 November 2015 elections, transition to the Presidential System was one of the commitments of the Justice and Development Party. Emphasising the tutelary structure of the current system, it was declared that it would be possible for the President to be directly elected by the people and that problems could only be overcome through the presidential system (Justice and Development Party General Election Declaration 2015). As a result of the 7 June 2015 elections, the parliamentary arithmetic necessitated a coalition government and President Erdoğan gave Ahmet Davutoğlu the task of forming a government, thus starting coalition negotiations between the parties. The NMP, People's Democratic Party and Republican People's Party did not approach a coalition with the Justice and Development Party and after forty-five days of negotiations, Erdoğan announced the date of early elections as 1 November. Subsequent to the 1 November elections, the establishment of a new Constitutional Consensus Commission for the new constitution was brought to the agenda in the Parliament, but the Commission, which could not determine its working procedure due to the Republican People's Party's disapproval of the idea, was disbanded (URL-140, 2016). Binali Yıldırım became the President of the Justice and Development Party on 22 May 2016. One of Yıldırım's important agenda items was to bring the de facto status of the president in the political system in line with the Constitution (Justice and Development Party GNAT Group Meeting 24 May 2016). The event that brought the transformation of the political system in Türkiye back to the public agenda was the 15 July coup attempt. The coup attempt carried out by FETO was repelled with the 'resistance of the nation'. This event brought the fight against FETO and the restructuring of the state to the forefront and strengthened the dialogue mechanisms in politics and society. The coup attempt pushed political parties towards reconciliation and unity, and this unity was concretised with the "Democracy and Martyrs Rally" held in Yenikapı Square in Istanbul. Upon the invitation of President Erdoğan, the leaders of Republican People's Party, NMP and Justice and Development Party attended the rally (Democracy and Martyrs Rally 2016). NMP leader Devlet Bahçeli, in the aftermath of the coup attempt, beyond his support for the Justice and Development Party in the fight against terrorism, renounced his negative stance towards the constitutional amendment that includes a transformation in the political system and brought the presidential system debates back to the agenda. Bahçeli stated that Türkiye is struggling for its survival and underlined that the problems in the current system of governance may turn into a major crisis of governance in the future. Bahçeli declared that he was ready to negotiate on the amendment proposal and started a new process in terms of transformation in the political system (Devlet Bahçeli Press Conference 2016). Thereupon, Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım and Bahçeli discussed the new constitution at the Çankaya Mansion on 17 October 2016 and the Justice and Development Party began work on the draft. The draft constitutional amendment proposal was submitted to the NMP for negotiation on 15 November 2016. The constitutional amendment proposal, which includes the Justice and Development Party-NMP consensus and the transformation of the political system, was announced to the public at a joint press conference on 10 December 2016. In this proposal, the



new political system was defined as the Presidential Government System (Miş and Sobacı, 2018: 148). The constitutional amendment proposal was submitted to the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye on 20 December 2016. The 21-article proposal discussed in the Constitutional Commission was accepted with the amendments made. 18 articles were sent to the General Assembly of the Parliament. On 26 January 2017, the accepted proposal was submitted to the President for approval to be opened to referendum, and on 10 February 2017, the Constitutional Amendment Law was approved to be opened to referendum. The Supreme Electoral Council approved the referendum on the Constitutional amendment to be held on 16 April (Law on the Amendment of the Constitution of the Republic of Türkiye 2017). The Presidential Government System has changed the dualist nature of the executive power and enabled the executive power to be exercised by a single person directly elected by the public. This change revised the relationship between the legislature and the executive, the election procedure, duties, powers, responsibilities and supervision of the president in line with the requirements of the new system (Gülener and Miş, 2017: 10-12). In parallel with these developments, the Justice and Development Party started to use a commanding language and address with the power and self-confidence it derived from its legitimacy. The party of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who turned this situation in his favour with his charismatic leadership, has gradually become a dominant political party. Commanding and imperative political addresses such as “Let the Stability Continue, No Stop, No Go, Everything for Türkiye, Dreams Come True, My Brothers, My Nation, My Citizens, One Nation, One Homeland, One Flag, One State” at a time when a gradual smooth transition towards a domestic and nationalist discourse was beginning to take place combined with Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's charismatic personality, and the principle of surrender has been replaced by the principle of submission and the aim of being able to be in power has become the only principle.

## CONCLUSION

The Justice and Development Party is a political party that stands out with its liberal-conservative identity and has been in power for a long time. Nevertheless, it has experienced many breaking points in this process. It differentiates itself from other centre-right parties with its conservative and change-oriented approach. The Justice and Development Party, as a political party that stands out in the line of National Vision politics, makes this difference visible. The liberal-conservative identity of the Justice and Development Party emphasises universal conservative values. Yet, liberal-democratic values are not separated from its core. The Justice and Development Party has experienced many breaking points in the process. It is after 2008 that the liberal-conservative identity started to transform gradually. A tendency towards a nationalist conservative identity has begun. It is possible to mention many dynamics to explain this transformation. This change, which has permeated the language of discourse, has become visible through the concepts of “state” and “survival”. In the first years of its rule, the Justice and Development Party used a more embracing, moderate and inclusive language. In its efforts to legitimise its power, it emphasised its liberal-conservative democratic character. It has been determined that the Justice and Development Party, which has achieved success in the fight against tutelage, gained the support of the people and established its legitimacy in the 2009-2016 period, has experienced a language change. It is seen that the language and rhetoric have become more commanding and more imperative. The Justice and Development Party, which reveals its nationalist identity in this period, frequently uses sentences formed with concepts such as “nation-state-power-democracy-Türkiye” in its discourses. The determination of the promises

given to the voters for the purpose of being able to be in power is noteworthy in the emphasis on the future time. As a matter of fact, with words such as “we and the future” such as “we will do, we will put, we will remove”, it is aimed to “be able to be in power” in unity and solidarity in politics. In the comparisons made through “we and the other”, the reasons of the past and the present were revealed. Negativities of the past were emphasised with words such as “they have done, they had done”. The electorate was influenced with messages of determination that there would be progress towards prosperous times at the point reached with the Justice and Development Party government by emphasising the present tense. Although the imperative tenses reflected in the language of political discourse, blended with words containing the future tense, resulted in both an embracing and commanding form of address, this political language used by the Justice and Development Party is an important strategy in influencing the electorate. Therefore, it has been concluded that the discourses in this period, which is taken as the basis for the analysis, are generally formed with a semantic framework constructed with imperious sentences, and that the Justice and Development Party brings the nationalist identity to the surface.

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