

AKP'S CHRONIC IMPASSE:  
THE STRUGGLE FOR CULTURAL POWER

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## ABSTRACT

### AKP'S CHRONIC IMPASSE: THE STRUGGLE FOR CULTURAL POWER

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In this thesis, I examine the reasons why the AKP, the ruling party of Turkey for 20 consecutive years, failed to establish its cultural power despite having political power. For this purpose, I trace how the 'legitimate culture' is determined along with the source and the main purpose of popular culture from the perspective of Bourdieu, who offers an extremely comprehensive set of concepts related to the 'cultural field', in order to analyze the ongoing cultural power struggle in Turkey. I examine the reasons that lead to the melancholic nostalgia of the Conservative/Political Islamists by analyzing what kind of strategy and the historical background of it that AKP decided to apply in order to establish its cultural power, and I argue that this strategy is the main reason for the failure. I examine the project of reviving traditional archery as an example, and analyze the special importance and support given by the State to this project. The efforts to popularize traditional archery are exemplified by a comprehensive news and discourse review, and it is explained why the dominant culture cannot be changed through popular culture.

**Keywords:** cultural power, legitimate culture, popular culture, AKP, traditional archery

## ÖZ

### AKP'NİN KRONİK ÇIKMAZI: KÜLTÜREL İKTİDAR MÜCADELESİ

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Bu tezde, Türkiye’de 20 yıldır kesintisiz olarak hükümette bulunan AKP’nin, siyasi iktidarı elinde bulundurmasına karşın neden kültürel iktidarını kurmakta başarısız olduğunun nedenleri incelenmiştir. Bu amaçla, Türkiye’de süren kültürel iktidar mücadelesini çözümleyebilmek için, kültürel alanla ilgili son derece kapsamlı bir kavram seti sunan Bourdieu’nun perspektifinden, meşru kültürün belirlenme yolu ve popüler kültürün kaynağı ve temel amacının izi sürülmüştür. AKP’nin kültürel iktidarını kurabilmek için nasıl bir strateji izlediğinin ve bu tercihin tarihsel arka planı analiz edilerek, Muhafazakâr/Siyasal İslamcılarının melankolik nostaljisini besleyen sebepler incelenmiş, bu stratejinin başarısızlığın temel nedeni olduğunu savunulmuştur. AKP’nin izlediği stratejinin cisimleştiği örnek olarak geleneksel okçuluğun ihyası projesi incelenmiş, Devlet’in bu projeye verdiği özel önem ve destekler analiz edilmiştir. Geleneksel okçuluğun popülerleştirilmesi çabaları, kapsamlı bir haber ve söylem taraması yapılarak örneklendirilmiş, popüler kültür yoluyla hakim kültürün neden değiştirilemeyeceği açıklanmıştır.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** kültürel iktidar, meşru kültür, popüler kültür, AKP, geleneksel okçuluk

*To My Dear Son Yankı*



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AKP	Justice and Development Party
ANAP	Motherland Party
CHP	Republican People's Party
DİSK	Revolutionary Trade Union Confederation
DYP	Right Path Party
FP	Virtue Party
IBB	Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality
MHP	Nationalist Movement Party
RP	Welfare Party
TBMM	Grand National Assembly of Turkey
TESK	Turkish Confederation of Tradesmen and Craftsmen
TİSK	Confederation of Turkish Employers' Associations
TMSF	Savings Deposit Insurance Fund
TOBB	Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey
TOKI	Mass Housing Administration
TRT	Turkish Radio and Television Corporation
TÜRK-İŞ	Turkish Confederation of Trade Unions

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In his speech at the 38th General Assembly of the Ensar Foundation in 2017, President of the Republic of Turkey and leader of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said; “To be in power politically is another thing. Social and cultural power is something else. We have been in political power for 14 years without interruption. But we still have problems with our social and cultural power.”

It is interesting that a concept such as ‘cultural power’ has become an important subject in daily politics of AKP, which has been ruling Turkey for 20 years, and to the leader of the AKP, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who draws the attention of his party supporters to this issue frequently. The fact that he stated that they could not establish cultural power makes it an issue worth investigating why a political movement that managed to establish power in political, economic, and many other fields during its administration could not achieve this success in the cultural field. The AKP’s failure of establishing cultural power is pre-accepted in this thesis since Erdoğan openly stated it, and the question of why the political movement led by the AKP could not establish cultural power is discussed as the main issue. Likewise, there is no evidence that the AKP has been able to establish its cultural power. An argument that daily life and social relations have become conservative does not result in a change in power. Because their influence on who has cultural power is very limited. Who has the cultural power and how it is obtained is examined in detail in this thesis.

Today, the struggle to establish cultural power rises to a position that needs to be examined more specifically, especially in a country like Turkey, where political positions and cultural capital and values are intertwined. This situation, which is a result of Turkey's historical background, has brought along cultural positions and antagonisms to occupy an extremely important place in all kinds of opposition and relations between social classes. Therefore, it is very important both academically and politically to find answers to the questions of what kind of strategy the AKP is pursuing to establish its cultural power and why it fails.

In this context, my research aims to explain why the political movement led by the AKP could not establish its cultural power and what strategies and methods are followed in this effort. The questions of how and for what purpose traditional archery is tried to be popularized, what are the factors that feed this desire in the background, why and how the AKP wants to create its own popular culture, and what kind of identity the cultural power to be established has, are also answered in this context.

Bourdieu's studies on the cultural field are taken as a basis while discussing these questions. Since Bourdieu is a relatively contemporary scholar in studies related to culture and power, his works are suitable for this thesis. In addition, his analysis and concepts about which class determines the dominant culture, how the dominant culture is legitimized, and how popular culture is formed accordingly constitute a very suitable framework for analyzing the ongoing cultural power struggle in Turkey. AKP's efforts to popularize a cultural value that is taken from the past and resurrected in order to seize cultural power, and their desire to determine the dominant culture by doing so, fits this framework perfectly. According to Bourdieu, some cultural practices, values, and products are more legitimate than others. This legitimacy is determined by the value attributed to them by the social classes, but mainly by the ruling class. Therefore, the impossibility of determining what is legitimate with the strategy applied by the AKP is a subject that this thesis analyzes.

Another issue to be considered in the thesis is the use of the concept of 'power' instead of 'hegemony'. The reason for this is that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan states that they "could not establish their cultural power", therefore the ongoing debate in Turkey continues over this expression, and Bourdieu's use of the concept as it is. In fact, it can be said

that Bourdieu's use of 'power' refers to hegemony in a larger extent. The legitimation of the culture by the dominant class and the acceptance of it by other classes, 'legitimate culture' by Bourdieu's conceptualization, overlaps with Gramsci's concept of 'consent'. However, in this thesis, Bourdieu's concepts are preferred to analyze this ongoing debate and struggle in Turkey.

Oskay (1980) states that popular culture contains elements of the dominant ideology, but at the same time it has a liberating side and can be a field of resistance against the hegemony created by the dominant culture. Therefore, popular culture has an obedient function and simultaneously carries the possibility of being an area of resistance against hegemony (Özer, Dağtaş, 2011: 129). According to Bourdieu, popular culture is not a culture that constitutes a separate existential status against the dominant culture that is consciously defended but consists of scattered fragments of an old high culture that are selected and reinterpreted (2015). Popular culture is not a separate culture, autonomous from the dominant culture. According to Bourdieu, there is no popular class culture that has survived the influence of the ruling class and exists alone (Swartz, 1997). Popular culture is a production formed by the influence of the dominant culture and aimed at perpetuating the distinctions between classes. From this point of view, the main question of this thesis is whether AKP can establish power in the cultural field with a bottom-up model, through a popular culture that is not formed by the influence of the ruling class and an attempt to disseminate it by the power and possibilities of the State, and whether it is possible to determine the dominant culture in this way. For this purpose, the project of reviving traditional archery is examined in detail as an example of a cultural practice that the State tries to popularize. The second chapter of the thesis examines Bourdieu's studies on power and social classes, which should be known while seeking an answer to this question; thus, the concepts of 'interest', 'capital', 'cultural, and symbolic capital', 'habitus', and 'field' are explained. Although all these examined concepts of Bourdieu are related to each other, they play a key role in analyzing the cultural power struggle in today's Turkey.

In the thesis, the AKP base is categorized as Conservative/Political Islamists. Although the AKP officially describes itself as a "conservative democrat", conservatism and Islamism are too intertwined in Turkey to be considered completely separate. In the

second chapter, the reasons for this unity are explained. Aktay (2017), who also served as the Deputy Chairman of the AKP, states that Islamism in Turkey never existed under the name of Islamism, neither in the establishment of the Republic nor after it, and that the most valid and legitimate channel that Islamism could find to express itself was conservatism. Similarly, Yılmaz (2005) defines AKP as a landmark on the outer borders of Islamism. By its very nature, Conservative-Political Islamism has a deep nostalgic melancholy, and it also contains an understanding of the "spirit" that is often reflected in Erdoğan's rhetoric. This understanding of the "spirit", which constantly feeds the melancholic state, constitutes a goal beyond reaching political power, the idea of a "red apple" that should be sought and found. As stated in the thesis, Erdoğan insists that this spirit that existed in the past has disappeared and that this deprivation is experienced in culture, literature, and art. This mood, which Açıkel (1996) describes as "sacred oppression," is both a source of strength and a reason for the AKP's failure in its struggle for cultural power. Although the belief that the more suffering, the more persecuted, and the more the "spirit" is squeezed, the more strength will be gained (Bora, Erdoğan, 2017) constitutes a source of strength in the struggle, but the 'state of oppression' experienced by Conservative/Political Islamism, is also one of the reasons for failure because it creates an introverted situation that prevents creativity.

AKP is the party that held political power for the longest period in the Republican era, excluding the single-party period between 1923 and 1950, and it continues to maintain this position today. Being in political power alone for such a long time brought the State power to be used with all its means in the effort to establish power in every field. In the third chapter, the intense influence of a 'sensation of tardiness' in the AKP's cultural power struggle is discussed. When this situation and the "exclusion" brought about by struggling against an already dominant culture are combined, maintaining political power for Erdoğan and his party becomes vital for success in the struggle for cultural power and reveals the party's strategy.

Before discussing what this strategy is, it is explained how and when the AKP, whose base is formed by Conservative and Political Islamists in Turkey, began to struggle for dominance in the cultural field. The thesis argues that AKP's struggle for cultural power became a priority after 2012, and before that, it aimed to establish and



consolidate power in the political and economic fields. The reason for choosing this date is that the AKP fully established its political power after the 2010 referendum, Erdoğan started to make statements on cultural power after this date, and it was the period when the initiatives related to traditional archery, which is taken as an example in this thesis, started. In this process, a great deal of dominance was achieved as a result of intense pressure on the media, the judiciary, the army, and all institutions that stood in the way of establishing power. The reason for this difference in priority is not that the cultural field is underestimated, but the effect of the experience gained during the Welfare Party (RP), which can be called the predecessor of the AKP, and the February 28 process, which is called the "post-modern coup". This experience has shown that it is not possible to establish dominance in political, economic, and cultural fields without fully controlling the dominant power centers within the State. For this reason, Erdoğan and his party preferred a more evolutionary model and followed a long-term path in the power struggle.

As a result of the preferred long-term plan, AKP, which managed to control the dominant power elements in the State in the 10-year period until 2012, now can use the State power definitively. It is one of the defenses of this thesis that the strategy pursued by the AKP, which started to take more visible steps for cultural power after gaining this power, has both similarities and divergences with the Kemalism practices implemented with the establishment of the Turkish Republic.

The Republic of Turkey, which was established after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War, entered an accelerated westernization process under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Although there have been intense debates in the academic field over the years that this process is not a westernization but a "Westernism" and a "break from national-spiritual values", this thesis accepts that this process is "despite the people," but also considers the "for the people" feature. In the struggle for modernization in a country that has missed its industrialization process, it is quite normal for the idea of "lateness" to prevail. In the third chapter of the thesis, the practices followed by Kemalism, which was active with the establishment of the Republic, and the practices followed by the AKP are discussed the means of their

similarities and divergences, although they are on opposite poles in terms of politics, ideology, and culture in today's Turkey.

When the thought underlying the strategy followed by the Conservative/Political Islamists in their effort to seize cultural power is examined, the idea that it is about creating a culture, value system, and economy that will express the daily routine (Çakırca, 2020) becomes evident. However, when viewed from the perspective of Bourdieu, it is not possible for the 'legitimate culture' which is created by the dominant class to be determined by the lower classes with a bottom-up model. In this thesis, it is argued that Kemalism's efforts to spread western cultural values to the whole society by using the power and resources of the State are similar in strategy to the AKP's efforts, albeit for a different culture, by using the same opportunities. However, it is explained in detail that the main difference at this point is that Kemalism wants to spread an already 'legitimate culture' to the society, and AKP tries to raise another culture to a dominant position, against the 'legitimate culture' with "destructive strategies." It is argued that this difference is one of the main reasons why AKP cannot establish cultural power.

Globalization, which deeply affected Turkey in the 1980s, caused Conservative/Political Islamists to be heavily influenced by this capitalist transformation process and caused the cultural tastes of the western dominant class to spread to all segments of the society within popular culture packages with the widespread mass media. Another claim of the thesis is that this is one of the reasons why the AKP failed to seize cultural power.

The final part of the third chapter of the thesis examines the 'revival of traditional archery' project as an example of popular culture that AKP tries to create in order to establish cultural power, in the context of the strategy described in the previous chapters. It is explained how this project, carried out by the Archers Foundation, which Bilal Erdoğan, the son of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, is a member of the Board of Trustees, was supported both politically and financially by all the power of the State. The discourses of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Bilal Erdoğan, and other important people who took part in this project, on traditional archery and related culture were examined. In addition, traces of this strategy were sought in the contents of the Conquest Cup and

Malazgirt Victory Celebration Ceremonies organized by this foundation. This chapter aims to show that AKP is trying to create a popular culture in order to establish cultural power and spread it to all segments of society; to identify the traces of melancholic nostalgia that can be clearly seen in the effort of Conservative/Political Islamists to bring a past value back to life; to prove how the power and resources of the State are mobilized to establish cultural power with the opportunity provided by keeping the political power within that strategic framework.

### **1.1. Methodology**

In order to find answers to the questions in this thesis, a large-scale newspaper archive research and discourse analysis is carried out. Following the establishment of the Archers Foundation, all news and articles about the foundation and traditional archery in 40 national newspapers published between 01.01.2013 and 31.12.2021 in the archives of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM) are examined. In the archive research, the keywords "Archers Foundation, archery, archers and ethnosport" are used to access related news and articles, and 1,234 newspaper clippings are examined. These newspapers are: Akit, Akşam, Anayurt, Aydınlık, Birgün, Cumhuriyet, Diriliş Postası, Dokuz Sütun, Dünya, Evrensel, Fotomaç, Gazete Harbi, Gazete Pencere, Günboyu, Güneş, Habertürk, Hürriyet, İstiklal, Karşı, Korkusuz, Millet, Milliyet, Ortadoğu, Önce Vatan, Posta, Radikal, Sabah, Sol, Sözcü, Star, Takvim, Türkgün, Türkiye, Vatan, Yedigün, Yeni Asya, Yeni Birlik, Yeniçağ, Yeni Şafak, Yurt.

Regarding which of the clippings in the nationally published newspapers in the archives of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey are included in the thesis, matters such as property status, political opinion, adherence to the principle of impartiality are not taken into account. Because the language or neutrality of the news in which the discourses take place has no effect on the subjects examined in this thesis. The aim of the analysis of the newspapers is to determine the traces of anti-Westernism, declaration of interest, "domestic and national" popular culture, the religious identity of the desired cultural power and the popularization of a dominant class sport, which are reflected in the discourses in the context of the strategy pursued. The discourses examined are the source of the arguments summarized in the thesis about what kind of

strategy was followed in this effort, as well as the basis of the answers given to the question of why the AKP still has not established its cultural power. Therefore, the news clippings containing these topics are included in the thesis without any newspaper discrimination, and the clippings containing the same discourse are not shared more than once.

## CHAPTER 2

### LEGITIMATE CULTURE, AND SPIRIT OF TURKISH RIGHT-WING POLITICS

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter, firstly, Bourdieu's theories on culture and social classes are examined in order to explain the theoretical framework necessary to understand the AKP's attempt to create a popular culture to establish its cultural power and the reasons for the failure of this effort. Bourdieu's concept of 'legitimate culture' is the basis for explaining why the bottom-up model that AKP pursues as a strategy has failed and why cultural power cannot be established in this way. In addition to what 'legitimate culture' is, how and by whom it is determined is extremely important in order to analyze the course of the struggle for cultural power in Turkey. For this purpose, Bourdieu's view of popular culture was examined in comparison with other popular culture views in the academy, and the role and influence of the ruling class on this culture were explained.

Then, it was emphasized that the concept of 'soul', which is present in conservatism, can be seen frequently in Erdoğan's discourses, and the historical analysis of the oppressed mood, which is thought to be culturally present, is conveyed. The determination of the positions in the cultural power struggle that continues in Turkey and the origins of cultural opposition were traced. Likewise, the detection of the existence of this opposition also reveals why the strategy choice, which will be explained in the next chapter, is remarkable. In addition, the reasons why

Conservatism and Islamism are mentioned together in the thesis are also explained in this chapter.

## **2.1. Bourdieu's Sociology of Social Classes**

The basis of this thesis is Bourdieu's studies on culture, power, class, power relations, social structure, and actions. Understanding his concepts and, more generally, his sociology is the key to analyzing the cultural power struggle in today's Turkey, which is examined in this thesis. For this reason, in this section, the concepts of 'interest', 'capital', 'cultural and symbolic capital', 'habitus', 'field', and social classes, which Bourdieu has explained in many of his works over the years, will be discussed.

There is a huge corpus in the academic literature on what culture is. According to Eagleton (2019: 15), who gives a micro-summary of what the concept is tried to be explained with these complex and different definitions, "the sum of cultural, artistic and intellectual works; the process of spiritual and mental development; It can mean a set of values that direct people's lives and a lifestyle in itself". However, the subject of this thesis is about the use of culture as a tool of domination rather than explaining what culture is, which can also be expressed as the field of communication and mutual interaction between people.

Culture shapes human life. It is the determinant of what a person does, eats, drinks, thinks, and talks, daily life, pleasures, in short, all states and actions of people. However, culture is also a source of determining and maintaining a hierarchy when viewed from the perspective of social relations.

For Bourdieu, culture is not only the ground for communication and interaction between people but also a source of domination. Religion, art, science, and all the elements that form culture, as well as being the basis of interpersonal communication, also provide the formation and reproduction of social divisions. Culture not only mediates practices that bind individuals and groups to institutionalized hierarchies but also embodies power relations. These cultural practices also constitute autonomous areas of power struggle, and intellectuals play a very important role in shaping these areas and thus hierarchies (Swartz, 1997: 1).

### **2.1.1. Interest**

Against the class reductionism of classical Marxism towards culture, Bourdieu carries the concept of 'class' to a much broader perspective from its position stuck in the relations of production. While explaining all areas of social life, Marxism puts material structures at the center, and therefore the concept of 'interest' is limited to its material dimension. Although Bourdieu accepts the inference of classical Marxism that cultural practices legitimize class inequality, he does not accept the idea that it is in an infrastructure/superstructure dichotomy that is completely separate from and even derived from the economic structure. Bourdieu finds it insufficient and provides a new viewpoint on the Althusserian separation of infrastructure/superstructure in which elements of the superstructure like culture, religion, ideology, and politics can gain relative autonomy from the infrastructure and play a more dominant role in class relations in certain historical situations. According to him, separating culture and economy with thick lines, that is, making a categorical distinction such as superstructure and infrastructure, is not the right method to analyze social life and class relations (Swartz, 1997: 38-40).

The concept of 'interest' is very important to understanding Bourdieu's systematics. In explaining this, he expands on Weber's concept of 'religious interest', which he argues is "underdeveloped" (Bourdieu, 1987a: 122). Weber removed 'interest' from being limited to material goods and expanded it to include intellectual goods. Weber, who said, "It is not ideas that directly determine human behavior, but material and intellectual interests" (Gerth & Mills, 1970: 280), states that even the simplest forms of behavior motivated by religious or magical factors are directed towards this world we live in, and the actions on this issue generally have an economic purpose (Weber, 1978: 399).

Based on this, Bourdieu (1977: 178) defines the concept of 'interest' to include all goods, whether material or symbolic, that are considered scarce and worthy of pursuit within the social formation. Thus, Bourdieu, who defines human actions as profit-oriented, whether economic or not, expresses an action as a strategy. Although these strategies seem like a set of conscious actions, Bourdieu does not think that individuals act consciously for self-interest. On the contrary, strategies work in an implicit,

subconscious way, and individuals often do not realize that they are pursuing an interest. In fact, the further individuals are away from the idea and consciousness of self-interest in their actions, the more likely that action will be successful in terms of interest. While expressing that there are interest-oriented strategies in subjects such as high culture and science, he says that they provide legitimacy thanks to the belief that these pursuits are higher and more valuable than economic pursuits. Like the understanding of investment and profit in the economy, all cultural and scientific productions aim to make a profit, whether material or not (Swartz, 1997: 100).

The important point in Bourdieu's concept of 'interest' is that he is against the behaviorism that we encounter in Watson and Pavlov, which is based on the observation of mechanical action-reaction instead of consciousness in human actions. Human action is not a reaction to certain external influences; they are internal behaviors that can be summarized as predispositions such as habits, culture, and beliefs that people have.

However, in the context of the AKP's strategy, it is seen that the concept of 'interest' is in a position that determines success and failure. The AKP's efforts to create a popular culture by using the power of the State, with direct and above intervention, and to try to gain cultural power in this way, make its interests obvious. This conscious and planned effort is an open struggle to gain cultural power, as we can see repeatedly in the discourses of Erdoğan and other representatives of the movement. Sharing with the public the reasons why this struggle is fought, why it is needed, and how it will be done, greatly reduces the possibility of the action being successful in terms of profit.

### **2.1.2. Capital**

Finding Marxism's approach to culture inadequate and aiming to create his perspective, Bourdieu, not only used the concept of 'interest', which is an economic concept but also expanded the concept of 'capital', which is also an economic concept from the economic field and opened it to cultural, symbolic and social fields. According to him, individuals or groups use these areas to maintain or improve their position in society. Therefore, these areas can be define as capital when they are a means of struggle in the context of a social power relationship.



Owning the means of production, income distribution or access to income sources in modern societies cannot be explained by economic capital alone; Cultural and social capitals, which will be explained later, are also effective. Bourdieu says that it is impossible to explain the structure and functioning of the social world unless we evaluate capital in all its forms, considering only economic theory. Evaluating this situation only in terms of economic capital causes a narrow perspective while defining power. According to him, capital is the labor that can be accumulated, which the individual uses in all his struggles, which includes the effort to maintain his class position and to rise. Capital can be accumulated, used as an investment in all areas of life besides its economic meaning, and can be converted into each other among capital types. As will be explained in the third chapter, the concept of ‘collectible capital’ provides an important opportunity to understand the ongoing cultural power struggle in Turkey. Bourdieu defines capital types as follows;

Depending on the field in which it functions, and at the cost of the more or less expensive transformations which are the precondition for its efficacy in the field in question, capital can present itself in three fundamental guises: as economic capital, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights; as cultural capital, which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications; and as social capital, made up of social obligations (“connections”), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility (1986:16).

In addition to these, Bourdieu also mentions the existence of a symbolic power that provides legitimation of economic and political powers and states that there is symbolic capital used in this field.

#### **2.1.2.1. Cultural Capital**

Bourdieu develops the concept of ‘cultural capital’ during his research into the unequal academic achievement of children from different social classes. Academic success is more dependent on the amount of cultural capital inherited from the family than on the individual's intelligence or abilities.

Bourdieu (1986), who states that there are three different states of cultural capital, defines them as embodied, objectified, and institutionalized. The embodied form of

cultural capital is the sum of the predispositions that the individual acquires through socialization and that form the general state of understanding and tastes covering all areas of life. The accumulation of cultural capital in this state begins with the investment of time spent by the family in childhood. Of course, this can have a positive as well as a negative impact. The prospects of the education market can make the investment a waste of time and create a situation that compels more effort to fix, or it can save time and get you started one step ahead. The important detail here is that the length of time of an individual's cultural capital accumulation process depends on the length of time, free from economic necessity provided to him by his family, and that is leisure time. In other words, class-based economic inequality also creates cultural differences between classes.

At this point, it can be thought that Bourdieu's view that the economy is not in a position that stands alone as the main determinant and is completely separate from other fields is damaged. However, Bourdieu already admits that cultural capital is in a secondary position to economic capital, especially in western capitalist societies. The cultural sphere is ultimately subordinated to the economy, despite it has certain autonomy.

The objectified form of cultural capital, on the other hand, has a characteristic that is defined in relation to embodied cultural capital. Giving an example of a painting collection, Bourdieu points out the difference between cultural goods and material goods and says that the painting collection can of course be transferred economically, but this will only create a state of ownership. However, cultural capital is being able to 'consume' that good, that is, to have the ability and skills to comprehend its meaning.

Pointing to the educational system in the institutionalized form of cultural capital, Bourdieu, with his studies on higher education, determined that the spread in this field can cause changes in social class structures. Families invest in education in this direction so that their children can get ahead in the job market and try to make a profit from it. Again, this is the stage of transforming economic capital into cultural capital.

The important point for the thesis is that Bourdieu expresses that cultural capital is one of the main positions in the separation of social classes, increasing day by day, and he

argues that this is a historical trend. Because the unequal distribution of cultural capital types among social classes constitutes one of the basic dimensions of inequality in society. Along with the historical flow, the emergence of markets in which the possession of cultural capital is determinant and the institutionalization of education brought along an area of autonomy for intellectuals against the domination of the bosses who have economic power (Swartz, 1997: 113). In the case of Turkey, the fact that conservatives, who had the opportunity to join the bourgeois class with Turgut Özal in the 1980s, obtained economic capital, but were among those with less cultural capital in the ruling class, constitutes a very important deficiency in the ongoing struggle for cultural power. The lack of capital in the cultural field and the need for a long time to acquire this capital is one of the main factors for success or failure in the struggle to have the ability to determine what high culture is. However, it must be said that Conservative/Islamists are struggle in a different way to determine what is high culture and what is legitimate. As we see in the traditional archery example, that is not a struggle of intellectuals in the cultural field, but an effort to dominate that field through popular culture.

#### **2.1.2.2. Symbolic Capital**

According to Bourdieu, having power and being able to use its blessings depend on legitimizing this power. Using the expression of symbolic violence, he tries to explain how the dominated classes accept this situation and why they see the existing power as legitimate. According to him, symbolic violence is a legitimating power that makes the political and economic power invisible, enables the situation to be accepted without questioning, and shapes social life in this direction (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992: 167).

Symbolic power is a complementary form of power that is separate from economic and political powers and serves to legitimize them. It is not possible to talk about complete power without symbolic power, because, without a structure and force that will hide power relations and transmit them for generations, it is not possible for social classes to submit to domination definitively.

This process is related to Bourdieu's concept of 'interest'. Symbolic practices make the interests-based practices in that area seem like disinterested actions, no matter what

field they are related to. This brings legitimation and contributes to the reproduction of the current power situation every time. According to him, this process is a process of misrecognition. The self-interested nature of the actions appears as if they are disinterested thanks to misrecognition, and they achieve success in a symbolic sense and gain legitimacy. If the pursuit of interests becomes apparent, many practices become unsustainable (Swartz, 1997: 129-132). Actions such as sponsoring cultural and artistic events and sports clubs under the name of "philanthropy" by wealthy people, supporting higher education institutions and campaigns for violence against women, and having extensive scholarship programs can be given as examples. Since personal gain is generally associated with material gain, this may be viewed by society as disinterested philanthropy. In fact, as Bourdieu points out, wealthy people may think that they are not doing this for a benefit. Ultimately, however, this is the process of transforming economic capital into symbolic capital for the ruling class to gain prestige from other classes and legitimize the existing power. The fact that the wealthy think that they have no interest in this process increases the chance of success of the action in terms of interest. Therefore, symbolic capital is as important as other types of capital for the legitimation and reproduction of social stratification and the power that exists.

### **2.1.3. Habitus**

Bourdieu defines 'habitus', which is a system of predispositions in the most basic sense, as follows;

The conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence produce habitus, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles that generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to attain them. Objectively 'regulated' and 'regular' without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor (Bourdieu, 1990: 53).

'Habitus' is a constructive structure that is not innate, acquired within the socialization area of the class, not only in discourse but also reflected in practice, thus forming the actions of the individual. The actions produced by 'habitus' are not based on consciousness; this is a concept that points before the threshold of human thinking. It

is a set of predispositions that an individual acquires by experiencing in his own class social space, intruding into his body in the abstract sense, framing both the operational possibilities of the class he is in and the breadth of imagination. Since this situation combines the boundaries of the dreams and expectations of the individual with the boundaries of the class, the current structure creates class-specific predispositions in the individual, and these predispositions create an endless circle by recreating the objective structures of that class (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). In the end, 'habitus' prevents and makes it difficult for the individual to rise in a class sense, enabling him to adopt the class he is in, accept the existing class power, and obey directly.

The fact that the individual stays within the boundaries of the practical and the world of thought of the class he is in, places thoughts that are "not from us", "do not belong to us" and "not suitable for us" in mind and actions against everything outside these boundaries. This ensures that the individual maintains his class position and the existing order continues. The cultural choices and tastes made by the individual arise from the class 'habitus'. 'Habitus' is a structure that not only determines the taste and the actions arising from it but also regulates them. It also ensures the establishment of a link between tastes and practices, and the formation of a lifestyle that shares with the social class in different areas of life. The food that a working-class individual eats and the way he eats it, the sport he does or loves, and how he performs this action in practice are different from the way a business person from the ruling class consumes and expresses them, and this creates classifying schemes and produces different pleasures. These different judgments of taste can determine, for example, what is respectable and what is rude, according to individuals from different classes themselves. However, as a result of these value judgments, which are not identical and change according to which class one belongs to, symbolic differences and a class-specific language are formed (Bourdieu, 2006: 21). From here, the following conclusion can be reached; 'habitus' can create situations where the body can rise in classes but the mind cannot. As can be seen from the discourses reviewed in the third chapter, the notion of 'not from us', 'not belonging to us' and 'not suitable for us' is clearly present in Conservative/Political Islamists, who rise in their ranks by increasing their economic capital. The continuation of such an opposition to the dominant

Western culture creates a state of 'purgatory' that is physically rised but cannot be mentally.

One of the important points for the thesis is that the 'habitus' is resistant to change. 'Habitus' has defense strategies when faced with new situations, and this unconscious process tends to gradually shape the individual's predispositions rather than completely changing them (Swartz, 1997: 153). Therefore, what is necessary for the change of 'habitus' is time. However, the AKP's 'need to hurry' and its desire to establish its cultural power as soon as possible while maintaining its political power creates a conflict.

#### **2.1.4. Field**

Bourdieu's concept of 'field' is at a very important point in his sociology. The field is the area of expressing and taking control of the types of capital held by individuals. Therefore, there are as many fields of struggle as there are types of capital. In the field of science, scientists with scientific capital are in a struggle. Individuals such as artists, writers, painters, who have cultural capital in the intellectual field, and religious leaders in the field of religion are in a struggle. Fields are arenas where individuals struggle to determine what is legitimate in that field and to seize the right to use symbolic violence (Swartz, 1997: 174). In other words, it is possible to see areas as local conflict zones within the general social class struggle, as different fronts of the war.

There is a constant conflict between those who have the power to determine what is legitimate within the fields and those who try to achieve this power. This conflict takes place through two main strategies of struggle, namely conservation and destruction. Those who already hold power and dominate in the field try to keep the power to determine what is legitimate and defend the continuation of the status quo in the field. New entrants to the field, on the other hand, want to change the way they operate in the field when they think that they cannot take their place among those who dominate the field. Those who implement the strategy of destruction are defined as 'heretics' with a religious reference because they question the hierarchy in the field and try to change

the rules of the game. In all areas, this opposition exists as a natural process (Jourdain & Naulin, 2016: 127).

When we look at the struggle in the cultural field, the productions of those who struggle in this field also reflect their position there. Actors in other fields make choices in accordance with their social class while consuming these productions. Those who are in a dominant position in the social hierarchy consume the production of those who are in a dominant position in the cultural field, while those who are in a subordinate position consume the production of those who are in a subordinate position. Therefore, this situation creates cultural distinctions at the scale of society. The struggle between those who dominate the field of culture and who defend orthodoxy and heretics who apply the strategy of destruction produces implicit forms of ideological struggles between social classes (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:106). Although the fields are autonomous from each other, they also contain similarities in terms of the positions of the actors.

The fact that there is a similarity between those who produce cultural products and those who like and consume those products brings about the production of social stratification. However, this does not involve conscious activism. Cultural producers may claim that they are totally disinterested and strive only for art. However, this does not change the fact that they respond to the expectations of a particular class and constantly reproduce class distinctions even if they are not aware of it. As a result, the struggles of cultural producers in their fields, with the influence of those who consume cultural products, cause the reproduction and legitimation of the existing class structure (Bourdieu, 1984: 233). Just like the concept of 'interest', this process works much better in an environment where it is not acted on consciously.

Consequently, the cultural sphere is where the struggle for cultural power takes place, and those who dominate it can determine what is culturally legitimate. What is examined in this thesis is the struggle to determine what will be culturally legitimate in Turkey and which group will have the right to use symbolic violence. However, it is obvious that the ongoing struggle in Turkey is not given in the right area in the context of the project of reviving traditional archery. The AKP's efforts to interfere

with the "use of this right" as a party where Conservative/Political Islamists are integrated will be explained in the following sections.

### **2.1.5. Class and Taste**

Bourdieu's theory of social classes is shaped by the idea that Marxist class theory is incomplete in explaining this stratification. According to him, it is extremely insufficient to explain classes only in terms of production and its place in social relations and to position it from a purely economic point of view. In many of his works, he stated that the place of production in social relations, that is, economic power, with the conceptualization in his sociology, is only one of the factors that make up social classes. The symbolic dimension cannot be ignored in explaining class stratifications. The accumulation of non-economic goods and resources as capital is another factor. The existence or absence of property alone cannot be a criterion in the provision and protection of power (Swartz, 1997: 206). Thus, social classes emerge through the accumulation and expenditure of both economic, symbolic, and other capitals.

In Bourdieu's sociology, social classes are similar positions that emerge as a result of similar life conditions and the conditionings that arise from them, similar dispositions and, accordingly, similar practices. (Bourdieu, 1987b: 6). At this point, the status of the capital owned by the individual also gains importance. Even in social stratification, many sub-positions such as age, gender, nationality, language, religion, income level, and neighborhood come into play, which Bourdieu calls secondary capital types. However, none of these alone constitute a social class. The total relationship structure of all features, which adds its specific value to each of these and the practices they affect, constitutes the social class (Bourdieu, 2015: 164). In other words, neither the abundance of economic capital, nor the place of residence, nor the level of education is an indicator of a class. These constitute different positions within the social class they belong to. However, it is a fact that the two most important types of capital in the formation of social classes are economic and cultural capitals.

Depending on the amount of capital, the distinctions between classes are determined. Bourdieu mentioned the existence of three classes; the ruling class (*bourgeoisie*), middle class (*petty bourgeoisie*), and working class. Each of these classes has a



specific class culture specific to their living conditions (Jourdain & Naulin, 2016: 82). Within these classes, there are also positions according to their capital accumulation. The individual in the dominant class must have a certain amount of accumulation in all types of capital. However, within the dominant class, there may be individuals with relatively high economic capital volume, low cultural capital volume, or vice versa, and they occupy positions at different poles within the same class. For example, professional groups such as artists and academics are at one pole of the dominant class, while big business people are at the other pole. They and those in intermediate positions engage in an internal struggle both to develop their position of power and to gain the ability to determine what is culturally legitimate. In addition, the same positioning is found in the middle class.

Bourdieu defines the working class as a class of individuals with the lowest total capital volume. For Bourdieu, who states that class distinctions do not only occur economically, the volume of economic and cultural capitals is decisive in this regard. However, he does not refrain from expressing that economic capital is more important, but not completely separate, and accepts that the economic difficulties experienced by the working class prevent cultural capital accumulation.

Bourdieu explains taste, lifestyle, and consumption practices through social classes, but he does this in his way. According to him, cultural consumption and lifestyle patterns differ similarly on the axis of social classes, that is, there is a structural similarity between them. It explains the concept of 'structural similarity' in terms of opposition to the preferences of other classes rather than harmony within classes. The fact that it contains a systematic contrast with the preferences of other classes, rather than which sport the dominant class prefers, determines the main distinction and tastes.

He states that the existence of a multitude of lifestyle tastes stems from a structured social space in which classes and those in different positions within those classes struggle to legitimize their tastes. The tastes and consumptions of the classes are of course also related to the income level. However, it is the predispositions formed by the 'habitus' that constitute the tastes and consumption practices of the class members. Although they have the same income level, the existence of individuals with different consumption practices as a result of different 'habitus' is a clear indicator of this.

Preferences are determined by likes (Swartz, 1997: 228-229). Individuals do not consciously aim to assimilate all consumption practices in life with the practices of other members of the class they are in, and they do not make a special effort for this. Because there is already an objective harmony between them, and these decisions depend on 'habitus', not on consciousness (Bourdieu, 2015: 258).

To carry out a practice or to reach a product, the presence of time and various capitals may need to be high in volume. If the individual can't reach these, due to the absence of various capitals and the obligations related to the struggle for livelihood, this is an obstacle. Obstacles turn into preferences unconsciously, and preferences turn into predispositions to the living conditions. Predispositions also eventually form tastes. The fact that the individual in the working class finds golf meaningless and dislikes it is the result of a predisposition brought by 'habitus', even if he is not aware of it. This indicates the existence of two basic types of taste; a taste for freedom and a taste for necessity.

The fact that the dominant class is free from material barriers brings with it the possibility of stylizing life and adding a sense of exclusivity to them. Style is emphasized over function. Apparel tastes become a way of emphasizing style, not comfort. Basic human activities such as feeding are removed from this form and turn into a ritual that is ritualized with etiquette (Swartz, 1997: 233). The working class, on the other hand, is always in a livelihood rush as a result of its lack of financial means. This creates a taste of necessity. While contrasting the practices and tastes stylized by the dominant class, function rather than form is emphasized. It is thought that the meal that comes in a very expensive but small portion in a luxury restaurant is extremely meaningless because the priority is to be satiated. As a result of the unconscious taste of necessity, the working-class individual prefers it not because he can't afford the meal in the luxury restaurant, but because he finds it more saturating to eat potatoes or beans. Likewise, in the context of traditional archery, which is the main case study of this thesis, the acceptance of this activity by the bourgeoisie and being considered a legitimate product of high culture cannot be ensured by pressure from other classes. This is only due to the bourgeois taking it under his own protection and making it inaccessible to other classes, but only to be imitated. Today, traditional archery is an

activity/sport that is desired to be popularized by the whole society with the great support of the Erdoğan family and the State. Therefore, it is not possible for the bourgeois to accept an activity/sport that everyone is interested in and share with the lower classes.

The important point for the thesis is that the tastes of freedom and necessity do not change depending on mere materiality. A newly rich person cannot change their tastes and consumption habits at the same speed. The individual, who has the 'habitus' that penetrates him and that he has internalized since birth, cannot quickly break away from the tastes of necessity, that is, from the tastes of the lower class, even after enrichment. This conversion usually takes a very long time. Those whom Bourdieu describes as "upstarts" need to spend a lot of time realizing that the practices that they used to see as wasteful are in fact primary expenditures of necessity for the ruling class, and are especially necessary for acquiring symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 2015: 540-542).

The ruling class, while interpreting the tastes of the working class with ignorance, deems them inferior. However, while the tastes and lifestyles of the ruling class are seen as meaningless and unsuitable for the working class, they are seen as superior and legitimate by other classes. The scarcity of cultural capital not only causes the tastes of the ruling class to be considered legitimate but also causes them to be dominated by this culture. The lower class decorates their tables with delicious meals at the beginning of the year, prepares plates decorated with nuts and various fruits that they can reach for a limited number of days during the year, and organizes "banquets", the middle class works hard during the year and travels abroad for a week with it, and offers goods and services that they do not normally consume in their daily life, is an indication that the dominant class culture is legitimized and other classes emulate it.

Conservative/ Political Islamists, whose economic capital has increased rapidly with the effect of the new version of capitalism, especially since the 80s, are experiencing a 'habitus' crisis. Other individuals in the lower class do not experience such a deep 'habitus' crisis when they can increase their economic capital. Although these individuals have internalized lower-class tastes and values, the cultural barrier of Conservatives/ Political Islamists belonging to this class is higher. The reason for this height of the cultural barrier is that some Conservative/ Political Islamists refrain from

imitating practices such as celebrating New Year's Eve for religious reasons and therefore avoid some popular culture products.

## **2.2. Legitimate Culture and Determination of Popular Culture**

Bourdieu's theory of social classes also shapes his sociology of culture. He redefines the concept of 'legitimacy', which he took over from Max Weber, as symbolic power. According to him, there is a hierarchy between cultural practices and products, just like in social classes. Some practices and products are more legitimate than others. This legitimacy is determined by the value attributed to them by social classes, but mainly by the ruling class. Therefore, Bourdieu is against the view that works have inherent value (Jourdain & Naulin, 2016: 82-83).

Having the power of the dominant class to determine legitimate tastes means having the power to determine the social hierarchy and to reproduce it continuously. There is also an internal struggle within the ruling class to determine legitimate tastes. Mann's ruling class includes the economic, political, and military elites (Mann, 1988: 189-190). Bourdieu, on the other hand, makes room for intellectuals and cultural elites within the ruling class, even if they are in a subordinate position. According to him, some are in a different position in terms of the volumetric distribution of economic and cultural capital within the dominant class. Bourdieu defines intellectuals as the subordinate part of the ruling class because of their lack of economic capital. In other words, when viewed from the general social framework, intellectuals are both in a dominant position and a subordinate position in their class. However, with their struggle within the intellectual field, they strive to obtain the authority to determine what is legitimate and what is not legitimate in cultural production. This struggle within the field takes place between the intellectuals who dominate and maintain their place in the field and those who challenge and apply defeatist strategies (Swartz, 1997: 311).

The hierarchy of cultural practices and products parallels the hierarchy of social classes; that means there is homogeneity between goods and practices. Choosing according to their tastes is a matter of locating goods that are suitable for their location and that match each other (Bourdieu, 2005: 342). Therefore, just like its three basic

classes, there are three different types of taste; legitimate likes, average likes, and popular likes. Legitimate taste is directly proportional to the level of education and reaches its highest level in the people with the highest educational capital among the ruling class. On the other hand, popular culture is inversely proportional to educational capital (32-33).

The ability to have culturally legitimate tastes is acquired unconsciously and in the family, first at a young age by being included in a cultured environment. The individual acquires the "correct" tastes through experience and validation in his environment. In other words, it is the availability of opportunities in the environment that enables the individual to reach this competence. An individual's appreciation of 'legitimate culture' appears to be a spontaneous process, even though it is not innate but an acquired acquisition within the family. Although the taste may seem like freely made decisions, according to Bourdieu, it is an internalization of cultural arbitrariness (Jourdain & Naulin, 2016: 86-87). The education received at school and the academic capital acquired to have the effect of reinforcing this internalization.

There is a differentiation between the two aspects of cultural production among those who are confronted in the intellectual field and who struggle to determine what is legitimate; limited production and mass production. Limited production refers to the science and "art for art's sake" markets, which require a higher level of specialization, while mass production describes works that require less specialization and are more commercially and popularly profitable. As in social classes, the struggle in this field also includes dominant and subordinate positions, in which limited production is on the dominant side. Therefore, limited production areas dominate legitimate cultural forms, and universities perform the task of preserving and sanctifying the legitimacy of these productions (Swartz, 1997: 311-318).

“Knowing” and “accepting” culture are two different situations, and it appears as one of the elements that differentiate social classes from each other. The lower classes adopt and accept the 'legitimate culture' without being aware of it. This effort to adapt also brings about domination submission. Classes other than the dominant class have a desire to rise in the social hierarchy, which allows them to legitimize the dominant culture and accept its superiority. Bourdieu defines this desire and effort of the middle

class as "cultural goodwill". One of the clearest indications that the culture that the dominant class considers legitimate is also seen as legitimate by other classes, is the tendency of even those with the least cultural capital to hide their ignorance and indifference. When asked, they tend to choose the one that best fits their legitimate definition from the pool of cultural products and practices they know. Bourdieu defines cultural goodwill as follows (2005: 461-465);

Cultural goodwill is expressed, inter alia, in a particularly frequent choice of the most unconditional testimonies of cultural docility (the choice of 'well-bred' friends, a taste for 'educational' or 'instructive' entertainments), often combined with a sense of unworthiness (, paintings are nice but difficult' ) commensurate with the respect that is accorded. The petit-bourgeois is filled with reverence for culture.

The petty bourgeoisie, which lacks the necessary qualifications and opportunities for the practices of the 'legitimate culture', tries to imitate the ruling class with the minor versions of these practices and products, with empty goodwill. For example, photography instead of painting, operetta instead of opera. This attempt at imitation is similar to a younger child imitating his older sibling or father. This imitation leads to the emergence of simplified and reduced versions of 'legitimate culture' since those who are not in the ruling class do not have sufficient cultural capital to perform legitimate cultural practices and consume legitimate cultural products. This process not only reinforces the symbolic power of the dominant class but also makes the ruling class have a say over the cultural practices and tastes of the lower classes. The tastes of the petty-bourgeois are those that have been reinterpreted and integrated into their worldview of the dominant and legitimate taste, but which ultimately do not go beyond being scattered parts of an old enlightened culture (Bourdieu, 2005: 563).

Although being imitated provides legitimacy for the ruling class, it appears as a threat to the classes. Because if a taste and practice become too widespread, it loses its value. Neither the ruling class nor the petty bourgeoisie wants the lower classes to have access to their practices and tastes, so as not to lose their privileges. For this purpose, classes activate the separation mechanism to keep the distance between them and the subclasses and to prevent them from closing. To distinguish themselves from the lower classes, they tend to change the products and practices that are imitated and are in danger of losing their privilege, consuming new products, and developing new tastes.

There are many different opinions in academia about what the concept of ‘popular culture’. While explaining popular culture approaches in academia (2009: 5-13), Storey first conveys the view that defines popular culture in the context of its relationship with high culture. Accordingly, popular culture is a residual category that does not include and is excluded from high culture. The way to identify what is popular culture is to decide what is high culture; because leftovers that are not the high culture will become popular culture. Popular culture is positioned as a low culture because it cannot meet the standards that make up the high culture. The distinction between the two is obvious; While popular culture is mass-produced culture produced for commercial purposes, high culture is the result of an individual production with aesthetic values. Also, it is transhistorical and fixed for all time.

However, according to another view, it is no longer possible to distinguish between what is popular and what is the high culture in the conditions of postmodern culture. Giving the example of William Shakespeare, Storey reminds us that although his works are seen as a high culture today, he was a part of popular theater from his time until the nineteenth century. A similar situation was experienced in the example of Italian tenor Luciano Pavarotti. Despite being one of the most iconic names of opera, which is a high culture product, he has become a popular culture figure with the popularity of his album *Nessun Dorma*, which he released in 1994, and the concerts he organized for a hundred thousand people. Therefore, it can no longer be said that there is a clear distinction between these cultures.

Another view is the view seen in the work of Frankfurt School theorists such as Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse that popular culture is a mass culture that has been put on the market for commercial purposes, for the masses, with mass production just like automobiles. Based on Marx's analysis of commodity fetishism, Adorno brought a sharp critique of culture. Bernstein, in his presentation on “Cultural Industry-Cultural Management” (2007: 14), says;

In capitalism, all production is for the market; Goods are produced not to satisfy human needs and desires, but to make a profit, and to acquire more capital. Production for exchange rather than use is characteristic of nearly all economic forms; But what makes capitalist economies unique is the universal trend of production for exchange rather than use.

For example, a painting that is the product of the culture industry is an object that has already been produced with the motivation and desire to be sold in the market, rather than a commodified work of art. Even while the painting was being made, it was thought out according to the expectations of the market and was put on the market to be sold when it was finished, that is, the understanding of "art for the market" prevails.

According to Adorno, the culture industry deceives people, expressing that it contains all the needs of people, making them consumers waiting at the door. This is not only meeting the consumption need, satisfaction, or satisfaction of pleasure, but also a system that makes people content with what is given to them, and makes them objects that do not make a sound and do not leave the door. Adorno says: "The customer is not king, as the culture industry would like to believe; It is the object, not the subject, of the culture industry." According to him, the culture industry promises people an escape from everyday life. But in fact, it is the culture industry itself that determines what everyday life is. He uses the following example to explain this: "Just like in a cartoon in an American humor magazine: it is the father of the girl who ran away from her father's house, holding the ladder that she descended in the dark. The culture industry presents everyday life as paradise."

The culture industry, which determines what daily life is, is also effective in the design of leisure time. Capitalism imprints on the minds what to do, how to do, and what to consume in spare time through the culture industry. People are driven to adopt the established order and pre-coded culture and to be included in this system in harmony. Adorno uses exactly the following sentence; "Consciousness is replaced by adaptation, thanks to the ideology of the culture industry." The design of the human mind from childhood is also a part of this process. Adorno gives an example of an incompetent hero being beaten and beaten in cartoons. He says that the constant breaking of individual resistance in cartoons is the condition of living in society and that watching the beaten hero is accustoming the person to the beating.

Another popular culture view adopts the concept of 'folk culture', as opposed to the concept of 'mass culture'. According to this view, which rejects the structure of culture imposed on individuals from above, popular culture derives from below as authentic folk cultures. Storey sums it up as follows; "This is popular culture as folk culture: a



culture of the people for the people”. A total tribute to popular culture, this viewpoint of a highly romantic working-class culture that claims popular culture derived from authentic folk culture is engaged in a symbolic struggle against contemporary capitalism (Bennett, 1980: 27).

Another popular culture view based on Gramsci's theory of hegemony states that culture is neither imposed on people from above nor is it derived from below by the people themselves. According to this view, popular culture is a part of the struggle for hegemony. According to another view, in the postmodern culture process, we are in, it is no longer possible to distinguish between authentic folk culture and popular culture produced for the market.

Bourdieu's approach to popular culture can be described as "in essence, putting the most direct illusions of an extra-blessed rhetoric pulled out of neoliberal cultural and social policies for reckoning, which he describes as 'an utopia of unlimited exploitation that is taking place', as a goal" (Köse, 2020). Cultural tastes are directly tied to class positions as "choices of necessity". While this choice functions to perpetuate the distances between classes, it is also the unwitting adoption of benefits that are not universally distributed equally.

Popular culture has a structure that paralyzes those who are consumers and is based entirely on the desire for commercial gain. This situation also determines the aesthetics of popular culture. Bourdieu defines this situation with the concept of 'cultural fast food';

Cultural fast-food is presented to the average taste of the audience by being standardized as much as possible, its content is simple, easy to understand, and quick to forget, by re-blending the folklore or oral culture products of the past, together with the artistic expression forms of the elite culture in the effect of 'speed'. It can be defined as a cultural food that is easy to digest, and pre-thought for a large audience, which is generally spread by visual mass media to all segments (Köse, 2004: 269).

Therefore, Bourdieu is aware of how the culture industry, which Adorno and Horkheimer describe as enlightenment as mass delusion in the Dialectic of Enlightenment, covers the cultural field today. Trying to provide legitimacy to popular culture by making populist praise of popular culture is the product of a conscious

effort. This effort is organized by the bourgeoisie to prevent the access of other classes to the products of the high culture area, to place a sense of distance in their subconscious, and thus prevent the deterioration of their cultural values. The cultural legitimacy discourse, which claims that the cold barrier separating popular culture from high culture has been overcome, has been riddled with unofficial readings of Bourdieu's "Distinction" (Fabiani, cited by Köse, 2020).

Popular culture is nothing but the devalued form of the dominant culture, and the effort to warm the lower classes to these 'surplus' products is one of the most effortless methods of creating a 'legitimate culture'. Hence, popular culture is used by the bourgeois to maintain the distances between classes. Bourdieu says (2015: 563);

Those who believe in the existence of a 'popular culture', a paradoxical notion that imposes, willy-nilly, the dominant definition of culture, must expect to find if they were to go and look--only the scattered fragments of an old erudite culture ( such as folk medicine), selected and reinterpreted in terms of the fundamental principles of the class habitus and integrated into the unitary world view it engenders, and not the counter-culture they call for, a culture truly raised in opposition to the dominant culture and consciously claimed as a symbol of status or a declaration of separate existence.

If popular culture is something created by the bourgeois to protect its class boundaries, it cannot be said that popular culture corrupts the cultural values of the dominant class. The use of a Mozart's work, which is actually the product of high culture, as a jingle in a television advertisement does not indicate that high culture is under attack, but that its now depreciated products are allowed to be popularized like crumbs of bread for the partial satisfaction of the lower classes' desire to reach the upper-class cultural tastes. The tendency of the lower classes to imitate the practices and tastes of the upper classes leads the upper classes to make breakthroughs and develop new practices. As a practice becomes widespread, it loses its distinctiveness and therefore loses its legitimacy. This move of abandonment can be a work of Mozart, or it can happen for clothing brands that were owned and distinctive by the bourgeoisie at a certain period of time. As a matter of fact, in *Distinction*, Bourdieu defines Johann Strauss's 'The Blue Danube' as "intellectual music that loses its value by becoming widespread". Likewise, sports such as football and boxing were sports specific to the nobility when they emerged in France, but these positions changed over time and lost their value in

the eyes of the ruling class by becoming widespread and popular. Therefore, it is not possible for a popular and widespread cultural activity, such as traditional archery, as examined in this thesis, to establish legitimacy. The spread of cultural artifacts, values, practices, or activities among the public reduces their value. An expectation is that a cultural activity such as traditional archery, which the whole society is expected to adopt and practice, will gain legitimacy as the dominant culture will only remain a desire.

Works of art do not universally carry intrinsic values. The source of legitimacy of a cultural practice comes from the social legitimacy of those who practice it. Just as the dominant class has the power to determine what is 'legitimate culture', it also has the power to sanctify and legitimize the tastes and practices previously adopted by the lower classes by adding some changes. Therefore, as will be explained in detail in the following chapters of the thesis, it is not possible for the lower classes to determine the cultural legitimacy determined by those with high cultural capital among the dominant class, without the contribution of those with high capital, in other words, without the influence and contribution of the ruling class. The source of legitimacy for a cultural practice, value, or product is not the desire of those who hold political power. As a result, it is not possible to create cultural legitimacy by State. The state can only consolidate the legitimacy of a culture.

### **2.3. Melancholic Nostalgia of Conservatism and Islamism**

Conservatism, as Mannheim (2002: 251) also states, is an idea that does not have a utopia and that a better world is possible. Therefore, it is not very possible to define conservatism as an ideology. However, as a way of thinking, it has the flexibility to be articulated with other ideologies (Bora & Onaran, 2017). Conservatism tends to accept the existing conditions and preserve them. The establishment of conservatism as a category of thought also took place with the emergence of revolutionary ideologies, and the reactivity to these ideologies determined the structure of this thought. Conservatism, whose lifeline is past history, has attempted to revive the social memory rising from the past and to remember the past optimistically, in the face of revolutionary attempts to erase the past with sharp changes and make it forgotten. An irreversible past, with all its elements, becomes a branch to which a nostalgic feeling

clings. In this respect, conservatism is the name of a romantic reaction against political and social relations. Likewise, the magnitude of the retrospective loss is proportional to the effort to compensate for it with memories. Therefore, conservatives are always in a state of discontent and restlessness (Beriş, 2010).

For conservative thinking, the past is a memory that is always perfect, even if it is not. This romanticism brings with it the understanding that society has a spirit in its essence, and according to Edmund Burke, the real constitution of a nation is in its spirit, not on paper. Therefore, society is not explained with rational concepts such as 'contract', but with a common spirit logic that is thought to exist. It is not written rules that hold society together, but spiritual values, and the thought that this common spirit has been lost, create a profound effect of unhappiness, helplessness, and depression. As it will be explained in the next parts of the thesis, the rhetoric of "The spirit of conquest will live" and their efforts regarding archery, which were repeatedly expressed by AKP administrators, especially Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, fully comply with the "spirit" myth of conservatism and reflect the belief in the perfection of the past. Conservatism, which is always in contact with nationalism, always strives to create and keep alive a memory of its glorious past. This contact, which is embodied in the Cumhur Alliance<sup>1</sup> in today's Turkish politics, becomes even more evident in the commemorations of the Battle of Malazgirt<sup>2</sup>, which has become more and more important in recent years, in the praise of the Seljuk State and traditional archery initiatives.

Considering the conservatism in Turkey, it can be stated that Bergson has profound effects. In his opinion, it is correct to look at history as a whole, without a disconnect between the present and the past, in the pursuit of conservative modernity. Bergson, using the concept of 'duration', states that time is indivisible and its disintegration will mean that it loses its quality. The past is also part of the present. The republican

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<sup>1</sup> The Cumhur Alliance is an electoral alliance between the Justice and Development Party (AKP) and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP).

<sup>2</sup> The Battle of Malazgirt was the battle between the Great Seljuk State and the Byzantine Empire on August 26, 1071. The war, which resulted in the victory of the Seljuk State, ensured that the Turks entered Anatolia definitively.

revolution symbolizing a radical break with the past in every field has turned into an element that feeds the anxiety of conservatism to break away from the past.

At this point, it should be stated that in the case of Turkey, when the Republican period is in question, conservatism and Islamism are so intertwined that they cannot be considered completely separate from each other. As Akay also stated, "The most valid and legitimate channel that Islamism, whose legal basis was completely abolished in the Republican era, could find to express itself was conservatism." Conservatism, as a 'self-identifying adjective', has been the closest discourse to providing legitimacy to Islamism. Although there are clear differences of opinion between them and conservatism, they never existed under the name of Islamism in the political arena during the Republican period. Even 'National Vision' (Milli Görüş) parties, which have an Islamist ideology, tried to exist in the political arena by calling their ideology the Just Order, but they could not escape being shut down.

Therefore, in its establishment, AKP tried to avoid the definition of Islamist as much as possible and highlighted legitimate conservatism. Therefore, when examining the AKP in particular, it would not be meaningful for this thesis to make a special distinction between conservatism and Islamism, although the AKP calls itself "a conservative-democratic mass party that positions itself at the center of politics"<sup>3</sup>. Likewise, Yılmaz (2005) defines the AKP as a landmark in the outer borders of Islamism in political terms. Therefore, the feeling of melancholy and exclusion experienced not only by conservatism but also by Islamism can be conveyed in this section.

In the 1950s in Turkey, migration from rural areas to cities began to increase rapidly and the Islamic movement began to gain strength in the outskirts of cities. The masses who migrated from the village to the city took refuge in religion as an effort to resist and survive in the face of modern urban life and accepted religion as a way of expressing themselves. The sense of 'placelessness and homelessness' created by the failure to settle, the 'intermediate-lives' encountered in the cities, the failure to meet the expectations, and the disappointments caused by the existing modern conditions of

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<sup>3</sup> See: 2023 Siyasi Vizyonu Belgesi from <http://www.akparti.org.tr/media/272148/2023-vizyonu.pdf>

the dynamics of life in the city have left their mark on the works of Islamist writers (Aktaş, 2009).

One of the most important thinkers for conservatives and Islamists is Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, whom Özdenören (2005) describes as "the first example of Muslim thinking on the intellectual plane in the Republican era". Shortly defined by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as the "Master" and "Sultan of Poets"<sup>4</sup>, as, in the Conservative-Islamist communities, Kısakürek has influenced this mass in a way that continues even today with his Büyük Doğu<sup>5</sup> Journal. Büyük Doğu, beyond being a journal, has become the name of a political and cultural movement that creates and directs conservative and Islamist thought. While taking its philosophical foundation from the re-emergence of the east, it also supported the enmity towards westernism and the west as a whole. The conception of the "east" in Kısakürek's mind includes an understanding of the "construction of the spirit of civilization" and a search for emotion. According to this, the Büyük Doğu appears as the symbol of the "spiritual cause" of the Anatolian people who do not want to be separated from their individualism. This 'soul search' of Kısakürek can also be seen in the discourses of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan today, as will be explained in later chapters. Discourses such as "moral spirit, national creed" that he frequently voiced, especially towards the youth from his party, take their source from Necip Fazıl. In addition to achieving political power, it is that spirit that is sought and must be provided. Erdoğan also insists that that spirit is lost, that this spirit cannot take place in culture, literature, and art, and that the desired level cannot be reached. Therefore, an understanding of the spirit that is lost and needs to be found creates a mood that feeds the melancholy of the Conservative/Political Islamists community, creates a state of deprivation, and adds a nostalgic element by fueling a nostalgic longing for the past. This feeling causes Conservative/Political Islamists to remain in a constant state of defense against modernism, to think that they are faced with oppression, exclusion, and contempt, and ultimately position themselves as the

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<sup>4</sup> Anadolu Agency. (2022) 'President Erdoğan: Necip Fazıl showed this nation that it can exist with the strength and courage, gets from the root of the soul', May 13 [Online]. Available at: <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/gundem/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-necip-fazil-bu-millete-ruh-kokunden-aldigi-kuvvet-ve-cesaretle-var-olabilecegini-gosterdi/2587391>

<sup>5</sup> Great East.

oppressed. The line "Strange in his homeland, a pariah in his homeland" in Kısakürek's famous Sakarya Poetry is one of the clearest examples of this sense of oppression and oppression.

Açikel (1996) defines this state as "sacred oppression", "which has been subjected to social, cultural and imaginary deterritorialization in the face of the violence of late capitalization and rapid modernization; It is the moment of transformation into an oppressive-neurotic political ideology that represents the power demands of the masses, who have rapidly lost the material ground under them by being dispossessed". Dissatisfaction with the current situation leads these "oppressed people" to keep the "injustices suffered" alive with the help of historical narratives. These historical narratives not only aim to create a common memory but are also important for the establishment of targeted practices and gains in the political field.

The state of suffering that appears with the definition of "holy oppression" underpins the antagonistic society imagination that forms the backbone of conservative populism (Bora & Erdoğan, 2017). The oppressed conservatives, who have always been left alone, in pain, in longing, and who have suffered from "homesickness for at least nine hundred years" (Arik, 1974: 140), have a traumatic mood. Topçu (1970: 88, 93, 185) describes this state of mind as "with the rabid attack of the Godless", the values of the spirit being violated, "the nation's heart is cut down" and the world is under the rain of persecution that never ceases. "Holy torment" appears as "the sweetest food" of the conservative (1970: 112). It is so because for the conservative, this "holy torment" is also his source of legitimacy and power. The more suffering, the more persecuted, and the more the "spirit" is compressed, the more strength is gained. Therefore, oppression and pain, which are believed to fuel the belief of being born from the ashes and increasing power, are exalted.

One of the factors that fuel the melancholic feelings of oppression of conservatives and political Islamists is the inability to raise qualified people, especially in the field of culture. According to Ayvazoğlu (2017), "Anatolian children" who benefited from the opportunities opened after the 1950s could not show creativity in art and literature because their cultural infrastructure was insufficient. Conservative families directed their children to the fields of medicine and engineering and did not respect social

sciences. Plastic arts, theatre, novels, cinema, and many other artistic fields have been abandoned to the 'left'. Conservatives, on the other hand, tried to exist with poetry and preferred traditional arts such as calligraphy and 'tezhip'<sup>6</sup>. However, since the values that are wanted to be preserved are not looked at from the outside, conservatism has been experienced as a process of introversion that prevents creativity.

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<sup>6</sup> In manuscripts, the pages are decorated with gilding and paint.



## CHAPTER 3

### THE STRUGGLE FOR CULTURAL POWER AND THE POPULARIZATION OF TRADITIONAL ARCHERY

#### **Introduction**

In this part, which constitutes the most important part of the thesis, firstly the process leading to the establishment of the AKP is evaluated. The purpose of explaining this process is to provide an understanding of the difference in strategy between AKP and its predecessor National Vision parties in the struggle for power in all areas. It is explained what were the effects of closure of the National Vision parties, the trauma caused by the February 28 process, which is called the "post-modern coup", to the Conservatives/Political Islamists, and the opposition between the Reformists-Traditionalists in the Welfare Party, on the strategy followed by the AKP. Also in the chapter, details of why the AKP started to take concrete steps to gain cultural power in the period after 2012, and the evidence for this, are explained through discourse analysis.

In the continuation of the chapter, the meaning of the bottom-up model, which was stated earlier in the thesis, and the strategic similarities and differences with Kemalism which established the Republic of Turkey, despite the fact that AKP is at the opposite pole both politically and culturally, are explained in detail. Determining how the two ideological poles, which constitute the main opposition in Turkish politics and even cultural positions, follow similar strategies in order to achieve cultural power, enables us to see the success or failure of this issue clearly.

Then, traditional archery, which is one of the important examples of the AKP's strategy to establish cultural power, is examined. For this purpose, it is explained how Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's special interest in this subject and how the Archers Foundation, of which his son is on the board of directors, and thus the popular culture that is wanted to be formed, are supported by using the State power. In addition, the speeches of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the representatives of the movement between 2013-2021, following the establishment of the Archers Foundation, about traditional archery and its cultural value were analyzed in terms of discourse.

### **3.1. Transition From the 'Milli Görüş' to the AKP and Formation of the Struggle Priorities**

Today, debates on power in the context of the struggle for dominance over the cultural field take place much more intensely, especially in countries such as Turkey, where political positions are closely tied to cultural contrasts. In Turkey, especially in recent years, the concept of 'cultural power' has become one of the main agenda items of politics. The insistence of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the Chairman of the AKP, who has ruled the country alone for 20 years, that they could not establish cultural power, raises the question of how a movement that dominated the political and economic sphere could not establish dominance in the cultural field, to the top of the issues worth to research.

AKP has been the party that held political power for the longest time in the post-Republican Turkish political history, excluding the single-party period between 1923 and 1950. In this period when Conservative/Political Islamists had the opportunity to rule the country alone for such a long time, it has become very important for the AKP to be able to use the State's power with all its resources in the struggle for cultural power. The belief that success in the struggle for cultural power is inseparable from having political power also shapes the party's strategy in this area.

However, the AKP did not make a great effort to seize the cultural field in its first period, which we limited before 2012. It gave priority to establishing and strengthening its dominance in the political and economic fields, took steps to influence the media, judiciary, army, and institutions, and then started to concentrate on the cultural field.

The reason for this preference is not that the AKP considered the cultural field unimportant in its first term. On the contrary, the ultimate goal was to establish cultural power, but a different path was followed, taking into account previous experiences. The previous experience is the RP and the ‘February 28’ period called the ‘post-modern coup’.

The RP, which defines its ideology as ‘National Vision’ and has a radical Islamist line, has increased its votes over the years and won the mayoralties with Melih Gökçek in Ankara and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in Istanbul in the 1994 Local Elections. In the 1995 General Elections, RP entered the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM) with 21.4% of the votes<sup>7</sup>. Declaring a coalition with the Right Path Party (DYP) and establishing the “Refah-Yol” government, the RP caused deep polarization in the society with its practices and discourses. Prime Minister / RP Chairman Necmettin Erbakan's trip to Libya, the Iranian President's visit to Turkey, the ‘iftar’ dinner given to the leaders of the sects in the Prime Ministry, the D-8 initiative, the "One Minute of Darkness for Permanent Light" protests that started after the Susurluk accident on 3 November 1996, the demonstrations of various extremist groups with the slogans "We Want Sharia" and the ‘Jerusalem Night’, greatly increased the tension (Bölükbaşı, 2012).

Large-size portraits of Hamas and Hezbollah leaders were placed in the hall during the event, which was organized under the name of 'Jerusalem Night' on January 31, 1997 by the Sincan<sup>8</sup> Municipality under the leadership of the RP, and the Iranian Ambassador attended at the invitation of the Mayor Bekir Yıldız. The Ambassador also made a speech praising the Iranian regime and against Turkey's secular state order. As this event caused great public outrage, Mayor Yıldız was dismissed by the Minister of Internal Affairs, Meral Akşener, upon the instruction of Deputy Prime Minister Çiller. In addition, judicial investigations were initiated against Bekir Yıldız both by the Office of the Chief Public Prosecutor and by the Office of the Chief Prosecutor of

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<sup>7</sup> Yüksek Seçim Kurulu. (2002) ‘1994 Local Elections and 1995 General Elections Results’. Available at: <https://www.ysk.gov.tr/tr/1983-2007-yillari-arasi-milletvekili-genel-secimleri/3008>

<sup>8</sup> Sincan is a district of Ankara, the capital city of Turkey.

the State Security Courts on charges of “membership in the Hezbollah Terrorist Organization” and “aiding and abetting terrorism”. Then, on February 4, tanks affiliated with the Armored Units School and Training Division Command passed through the streets of Sincan as the army's message to the government. Deputy Prime Minister Çiller used the following statements in the Group Meeting she held after the event;

There is one unfortunate event that our country has experienced in the last period, the Sincan case. We cannot ignore the case in Sincan. We cannot underestimate the case in Sincan. We must also agree when the case in Sincan is perilous. As long as we don't digest it, we will get through all of these things. If this indispensable feature of our state is put to the test, we will make life unbearable for those who attempt it.<sup>9</sup>

As a result of the rising public reaction and the message given by the army in Sincan, the Jerusalem Night in which even the coalition partner Çiller reacted severely, was one of the most important reasons for the RP's closure by the Constitutional Court.

However, these events are just the tip of the iceberg and acted as triggers. The real problem is that a fundamental opposition becomes visible. The confrontation between the western modern bourgeoisie, which is dominant in the political, economic, and cultural fields, and the Conservative/Political Islamist bourgeoisie, which is getting stronger, opened the door to the February 28 period. According to Bölükbaşı, the main dynamics of the February 28 period should be sought in the fact that the ‘authentic Anatolian bourgeoisie’ became strong enough to challenge the modern bourgeoisie and that ‘National Vision’ could not adapt to post-Cold War politics as much as necessary.

After the National Security Council meeting held on February 28, 1997, a statement titled "Measures to be taken against anti-regime reactionary activities" was reported to the government as a recommendation decision. Prime Minister / RP Chairman Erbakan refused to sign the document. (Cumhuriyet, 05.03.1997) Upon the escalation of tension, the Supreme Court of Appeals Chief Public Prosecutor's Office filed a closure case against the RP on the grounds that "it became the focus of anti-secular activities

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<sup>9</sup> Milliyet Newspaper. (1997) ‘Secularism is under our political guarantee’, February 6 [Online]. Available at: <https://www.milliyet.com.tr/siyaset/ankara-milliyet-5387948>

and dragged the country into a civil war environment". (Cumhuriyet, 22.05.1997) In June, coalition partner Tansu Çiller suggested that Erbakan resign and become prime minister herself. Erbakan accepted the proposal and resigned. However, President of the Republic of Turkey Süleyman Demirel gave the mandate to form the government, not to Çiller, but to Mesut Yılmaz, Chairman of the Motherland Party (ANAP). Thus, the RP government came to an end. Afterward, the Constitutional Court closed the RP with its decision dated January 16, 1998, banned many deputies from politics, and all the party's properties were transferred to the Treasury. (Cumhuriyet, 17.01.1998)

According to Özipek (2005), February 28 is different from previous coups. This difference is that the armed forces choose to make "civilian" forces do what will happen after the coup, instead of taking over the government themselves. Thus, democracy was given the appearance of being protected in form and it was aimed to create an institutional and non-military structure that would prevent the reappearance of 'undesirable' people in the field of politics. At this point, the most effective task was undertaken by the Five Civil Initiatives formed by the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB), Turkish Confederation of Tradesmen and Craftsmen (TESK), Turkish Confederation of Trade Unions (TÜRK-İŞ), Confederation of Turkish Employers Associations (TİSK) and Revolutionary Trade Union Confederation (DİSK). Bora (1999) stated that this initiative undertook the public relations task of the 28 February program.

In this process, National Vision also experienced a Virtue Party (FP) trial. Upon understanding that the RP would be dissolved, the FP was established on 17 December 1997, one month before the decision. Just one week before the establishment of FP, on December 6, 1997, Istanbul Metropolitan Mayor Recep Tayyip Erdoğan recited a poem containing the following lines; "Minarets are bayonets, domes are helmets, Mosques are our barracks, believers are soldiers"<sup>10</sup>, in Siirt<sup>11</sup>. Because of this poem, he was sentenced to 10 months in prison for "openly inciting the people to hatred and

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<sup>10</sup> Although Erdoğan says that these lines belong to Ziya Gökalp, they actually belong to a poet named Cevat Örneç.

<sup>11</sup> Siirt is a city in Turkey's Southeastern Anatolia Region.

enmity by discriminating against religion and race". Erdoğan's inability to personally represent the 'Reformist Wing' at the FP congress held on May 14, 2000, and the loss of the 'Reformist Wing' led by Abdullah Gül accelerated the process leading to the establishment of the AKP. After the congress, the 'Reformist Wing' started to work on the new party, thinking that they could not achieve what they wanted under the umbrella of National Vision. On June 22, 2001, the FP was also closed by the Constitutional Court, and the AKP was established on August 14, 2001.

As a result, as soon as the newly emerging Islamist bourgeoisie stepped into the ring against the existing ruling class, it was faced with the violent reaction of the existing institutional structures and was forced out of the ring. The elimination of political Islamists in cooperation with all the institutions of the State and civil society has led to two consequences. First, the aggrievements that became more evident in the February 28 period and deeply affected the lives of a large group of people, caused an accumulation of anger that would affect the political field in Turkey. Secondly, the 'Reformist Wing' within the RP and FP, led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Abdullah Gül, found the environment they needed to pursue a different style of politics, and they also found support from their party alignments on this path. The consolidation brought about by "anger" inside and the propaganda opportunity provided by "victimization" outside enabled the 'Reformist Wing' to exist as a separate party from the National Vision line and with a new identity.

The shock wave created by the February 28 period showed that it is not possible to establish power in political, economic, and cultural fields without being effective on the dominant power centers within the State. Therefore, a more evolutionary model formed the basis of the new identity to be adopted by the 'Reformist Wing'. At this point, the group led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was restructured with liberal rhetoric and a "conservative democrat"<sup>12</sup> identity, taking a structure similar to the Christian Democrats in Europe as an example.

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<sup>12</sup> AKP: '2002 General Elections, Election Declaration'. Available at: <https://www.akparti.org.tr/media/318780/3-kasim-2002-genel-secimleri-secim-beyannamesi-sayfalar.pdf>

Abdullah Gül's interview with Milliyet Newspaper<sup>13</sup> on 27 July 2001 contains statements summarizing the new identity of the AKP. Stating that the new party reflects innovation in the form of rationalization of some ideas, Gül underlined that they broke away from the tradition of National Vision with the phrase "Change that goes beyond make-up". "We are more rational, realistic and modern. The understanding of partisanship, like an Islamic monastery, whose shoes are taken off at the door, has changed." stating that a new style of politics will be followed, Gül said, "We have seen that doing politics based on religion does not benefit religious people and Turkey.", gave the signs that 'the goal' will be achieved with an evolutionary model. What Erdoğan said in his party's consultation camp on May 16, 2003, is also important in terms of understanding the new identity. At this meeting, Erdoğan defined National Vision as "political and ideological fantasies" and said, "We have nothing to do with National Vision. We are not a marginal party.". Erdoğan stated the AKP government period is the "Second Menderes"<sup>14</sup> period, he emphasized that the party was positioned as a center-right party (Cumhuriyet, 17.05.2003).

Aktay, who has served as a Member of Parliament, AKP Chairman's Advisor, and Vice-Chairman of the AKP, draws attention to the fact that the Islamist political movement seeks a legitimate and possible language as the most important reason why the AKP has become the meeting point of Islamism and Conservatism. In the face of the power used by the rulers of the system, AKP has defined its existence by finding a way in which it can benefit from this power and be included in the center of politics (2017).

Erdoğan sees that the power over the political, economic, and cultural fields cannot be achieved by engaging in an open war against the existing institutional structures, and he sees it as delusional to believe that this will happen. It seems that the ruling class in Turkey is very powerful in all institutional structures of the State and civil society and that these forces will come up against them again at every step to be taken with the

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<sup>13</sup> Milliyet Newspaper. (2021) 'Secularism also binds Tayyip', July 27 [Online]. Available at: <https://www.milliyet.com.tr/siyaset/laiklik-tayyip-i-de-baglar-5277403>

<sup>14</sup> Adnan Menderes is the Chairman of the liberal conservative Democrat Party (DP), who served as the Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey between 1950-60.

National Vision identity. The post-modern coup of February 28 and the period of closing the RP-FP confirmed Erdoğan's belief.

The signs of the new identity are also seen in the founding program of the AK Party<sup>15</sup>. In the program, full membership to the European Union was set as the target, and democratization, ensuring fundamental human rights and freedoms, secularism, and freedom of belief were especially emphasized. “We reject the divisions based on the old political rationale created by the Cold War era.”, was stated that a new understanding of politics would be applied.

Özipek (2005) also states that the fact that the intervention that led to the closure of the RP was not applied to the AKP does not mean that this party was approved by the dominant powers. He stated that the pro-EU policies ensured that the party was welcomed warmly and that the reasons such as the western countries' seeing the AKP as a "Muslim democrat" were effective. The movement, which avoided the possibility of an intervention similar to February 28 by changing its identity, gained the opportunity to come to power on its own by receiving a high vote of 34.28% in the General Elections held on November 3, 2002.<sup>16</sup>

The steps of the AKP, which formed the government, after this date was built on being able to establish its political power over all institutions and not experiencing another February 28. For this purpose, steps were taken for democratization and full accession to the European Union, while efforts were made to dominate the institutions. Ergenekon, which started in 2007, and the Balyoz and Military Espionage (Askeri Casusluk) cases in 2010, the army was largely liquidated. The Coup and Memorandums Investigation Commission was established in the Grand National

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<sup>15</sup> AKP. (2002) ‘Development and Democratization Program’. Available at: <https://acikerisim.tbmm.gov.tr/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11543/926/200205071.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

<sup>16</sup> Yüksek Seçim Kurulu. (2002) ‘2002 General Election Results’. Available at: <https://www.ysk.gov.tr/tr/03-kasim-2002-xxii-donem-milletvekili-genel-secimi/3009>



Assembly of Turkey<sup>17</sup>, and the trial process of the soldiers who took part in the February 28 post-modern coup attempt has also begun.

Efforts have been increased to become the dominant power in the media as well. Doğan Group which had a 37% market share in newspaper circulation, 22% in the audience ratio, and 43% in the advertising market in 2008, was put under pressure by tax investigations and penalties (Sönmez, 2013) . ATV television and Sabah Newspaper, owned by the Savings Deposit Insurance Fund (TMSF), were also sold to Çalık Holding, which was the sole participant in the tender held in 2007. It is noteworthy that the CEO of Çalık Holding was Berat Albayrak, the son-in-law of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. While striving for the development of the bourgeoisie close to him, he gained the sympathy and support of the business world with the neoliberal policies he followed.

With these initiatives, the AKP established its political and economic dominance to a large extent and provided an environment where it would not encounter an intervention similar to February 28. The AKP, which has hegemonized the bureaucracy, army, judiciary, and civil society, has become ready to take more visible steps to establish its cultural power as of 2012.

### **3.2. AKP's First Steps to Establish Cultural Power**

In the preface of the book, which was published by the AKP after the International Symposium on Conservatism and Democracy in 2004, Erdoğan said, “A segment of the society that cannot be underestimated; It demands a modernity that does not exclude tradition, a universality that accepts locality, a rationality that does not reject meaning, a change that is not radical.”. It is understood from this sentence that Erdoğan envisions a new kind of modernity and universality that includes local values and traditions instead of universalized Western cultural norms. However, as will be discussed in detail later, this situation creates a contradictory result that, on the one hand, partially accepts the existing, and on the other hand, wages an all-out war on it.

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<sup>17</sup> See: <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2012/04/20120417-1.htm>

This confusion not only shapes the strategy pursued by the AKP but also complicates the effort to establish cultural power.

The change of dominance of one field in social life does not guarantee that this change will occur in other fields as well. Among the political, economic, symbolic, and cultural fields that Bourdieu (2015) counts as the four basic fields of social life, the political field seems to be the field where dominance can change most easily, while the cultural field is the most difficult. This is because to dominate in a field, you need to have capital in that field. While the types of capital are convertible to each other, they alone are not sufficient to accumulate cultural capital. Because of this, it is necessary to have a certain preliminary capital and ‘habitus’, which can be obtained through a familiarity inherited from the family or through education (Wacquant, 2014: 65). Therefore, cultural capital is a type of capital that is very difficult to acquire in one generation.

It is understood that to dominate the cultural field, first of all, it is necessary to have capital related to that field and to have a ‘habitus’ suitable for this field. However, the Conservative/Political Islamist movement thinks that it is essential to be able to use the power of the state to come to a dominant position in the cultural field. The underlying reason for this is the belief that in case of a possible loss of political power, the goal of seizing cultural power will not be achieved. This belief causes the Conservative/Political Islamist movement to act hastily and to feel the need to accelerate the process, which requires several generations to accumulate capital and ‘habitus’ to be formed, by using the power of the state. Çakırca (2020) states this idea; “Because the harmony of political power is essential for the establishment of cultural power, the absolute provision of political power is related to the continuation of the cultural struggle by building a cultural front existing with its economic power.”.

Based on this understanding, the AKP has given its priority to seizing the political and economic fields. One of the important indicators that the cultural field is not the main priority for the AKP is that Ertuğrul Günay served as the Minister of Culture and Tourism for approximately five and a half years, between 29 August 2007 and 24 January 2013. Günay, who is also one of the previous CHP (Republican People's Party) General Secretary in the past, and later left the CHP and transferred to the AKP, was

the name of the Minister of Culture and Tourism for the longest period of the AKP government, as a person who did not come from the conservative community. It is noteworthy that the termination of Günay's ministry took place precisely in the process that began in 2012.

However, this situation changed in the year 2012. Erdoğan got what he wanted in the referendum held in 2010, has largely completed its organization within the state, established full control over the Legislative-Executive-Judiciary, and greatly influenced the army and all other institutions. After this period, AKP, which fully established its political power, made the effort to change cultural power to their main agenda.

The AKP Youth Branch Congress was held in 2012, where it was officially declared that action was taken for the AKP's goal of establishing cultural power. Addressing the youth at this congress, Erdoğan, expressed his desire to raise a pious and spiteful generation by adapting the words of Necip Fazıl Kısakürek (1999) and said;

Most importantly, we envision a youth that protects its national and moral values, keeps them alive and shapes its future with the strength, pride, and inspiration it draws from its past. I underline; that I'm talking about modern, religious youth. I am talking about a youth who is the plaintiff of his/her religion, language, brain, science, chastity, home, grudge, and heart.<sup>18</sup>

The AKP, which has struggled to obtain and consolidate political and economic power until today, has openly declared with the above words of Erdoğan that they will engage in the struggle to obtain cultural power, together with the power it derives from other fields where it has established power. In the process that started with these declaration-like words, many practices were encountered, from architecture to television programs, from invitations with famous musicians and actors to efforts to popularize traditional sports, from attempts to revive traditional arts such as tiles and miniatures to new historiography, while the concept of 'cultural power' continued to find a place in Erdoğan's discourses.

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<sup>18</sup> Anadolu Agency. (2012) 'President Erdoğan: We do not sacrifice the Elected to the Appointed', February 19 [Online]. Available at: <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/politika/secilmisleri-atanmislara-kul-etmeyiz/380604>

A month after this statement, the Secretary General of the Presidency Prof. Dr. Mustafa İsen, in his speech at the Istanbul Suriçi Group Platform Meetings, said that Turkey has made progress in many areas for 10 years, has achieved success in legal and economic fields, and that now there is a need for cultural development as well. İsen also included the following sentences in his speech; "If we can talk about conservative democracy, just as the conservatives have an understanding of democracy, then we have an obligation to talk about something called 'conservative aesthetics' and 'conservative art', and to create its norms and structure."<sup>19</sup> The statement of İsen, who held important bureaucratic duties during the AKP period and also served as a Member of Parliament, is clear proof that the AKP now wants to be in power in the cultural field.

One of the indicators of the transition to a new process can be found in the speech given by Aziz Babuşçu, who is AKP Istanbul Provincial Chairman, in a program attended. As Özipek stated (2005), the AKP, which set out with an alliance with the liberals during the founding of the party, openly announced that they would part ways with the liberals as they entered this new period, which we can call the process of returning to its essence. Babuşçu used the following expressions in an invitation he attended in April 2013;

Those who share with us in one way or another during our 10-year period of power will not be partners with us in the next 10 years. Because in these past 10 years, there has been a liquidation process and there were stakeholders in what we do around the discourse of freedom, law, and justice. Although they cannot accept us; Let's say liberal sections have been a stakeholder in this process in one way or another, but the future is the construction period. The construction period will not be as they wish. Therefore, those stakeholders will not be with us. Those who walked with us in one way or another yesterday will be partners this time with the forces that are against us tomorrow. Because Turkey to be built and the future to be revived will not be a future or a period that they will accept.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Habertürk. (2012) 'İsen: We must build the structure of conservative art', March 26 [Online]. Available at: <https://www.haberturk.com/polemik/haber/728209-muhafazakar-sanatin-yapisini-olusturmaliyiz>

<sup>20</sup> T24. (2013) 'Babuşçu: The next 10 years will not be what our former partners like liberals wished for', April 1 [Online]. Available at: <https://t24.com.tr/haber/babuscu-onumuzdeki-10-yil-liberaller-gibi-eski-paydaslarimizin-kabullenecegi-gibi-olmayacak,226892>

These words, which are clear expressions of the 'return to the self', are the declaration that the liberal practices that have been used as a tool until today will be left behind in the new process that the AKP calls "revival". The Gezi Movement<sup>21</sup>, which started about a month after these statements, became one of the most important phases of the cultural power struggle in Turkey. After the Gezi Movement was suppressed by the power of the State, which resulted in the death of many people, the AKP increased its efforts to dominate the cultural field and started to put it into practice much more actively. After this process, Erdoğan's reproachful warnings toward his base became more frequent.

In his speech at the 2016 Presidential Culture and Arts Grand Awards ceremony, AKP Chairman Erdoğan criticized the fact that western cultural values have been imitated in Turkey in the past, and said, "At the end of this process, we faced the danger of transforming into a country and a society that has anything to say to the world, neither in substance nor in form."<sup>22</sup>.

A year later, at the 3rd National Culture Council, Erdoğan continued to emphasize the importance of the issue persistently and said;

Political power can be achieved through elections, votes, and ballot boxes, but we need a very different experience, effort, and hard work for cultural power. We must rediscover and reconstruct in a universal language our indigenous and national cultural values against cultural alienation and cultural imperialism. The fact that the form of a cultural product is indigenous and national does not prevent its meaning and message from being universal.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> The resistance, which started on May 27, 2013 for the purpose of defending the park as a result of the AKP government's desire to build a construction site on the site of Gezi Park in Taksim, Istanbul, and then turned into a social action demanding freedom across Turkey after the disproportionate use of force by the security forces.

<sup>22</sup> Anadolu Agency. (2016) 'President Erdoğan: I'm sorry to say, we cheated in culture and art', December 28 [Online]. Available at: <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/gunun-basliklari/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-uzulerek-soyluyorum-kultur-sanatta-kopya-cektik/715703>

<sup>23</sup> Culture Council of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. (2017) 'III. National Culture Council Started', March 3 [Online]. Available at: <https://kultursurasi.ktb.gov.tr/TR-175196/iii-milli-kultur-surasi-basladi.html>

These statements show that Erdoğan still pursues his goal of universalizing domestic and national values despite the passing years. As stated at the beginning of the chapter, Erdoğan, who defined this goal as “a universality that accepts locality” in 2004, is aware of the fact that the struggle is on a universal scale and that beyond seizing political power, it is necessary to acquire cultural capital, but there is a contradiction in terms of the tools he uses in the struggle and he is in an impossible situation. Because the belief that there is an obligation to hurry overwhelms this awareness.

A few months after this speech, Erdoğan said at the 38th General Assembly of the Ensar Foundation, "To be in power politically is something else. Social and cultural power is something else. We have been in political power for fourteen years without interruption, thank goodness. But we still have problems with our social and cultural power."<sup>24</sup> The use of the expression has definitely brought the cultural power debate to the agenda of the public.

Erdoğan brought the issue to the agenda once again, this time with a much higher level of importance, at the Ministry of Culture and Tourism Special Awards ceremony in 2019;

Despite this, as I always say, when I look at the past 16 years, I always regret and sigh because we haven't made enough progress in the field of culture and arts. I see the issue of culture and art as an important issue of survival for our country and nation, at least as much as the fight against terrorism, foreign policy, and basic service areas. Hopefully, we will make up for this deficiency in the new period and bring culture, art, architecture, and urbanism to the level they deserve in our country.<sup>25</sup>

Thus, the issue has risen to a position that attaches the same level of importance to the fight against terrorism in terms of AKP politics.

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<sup>24</sup> Anadolu Agency. (2017) ‘President Erdoğan: Our vision for 2053 has become our new red apple’, May 28 [Online]. Available at: <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/gunun-basliklari/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-2053-vizyonumuz-yeni-kizil-elmamiz-haline-donusmustur/827817>

<sup>25</sup> Anadolu Agency. (2019) ‘President Erdoğan: Culture and Art is an important matter of survival’, January 10 [Online]. Available at: <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/gunun-basliklari/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-kultur-sanat-onemli-bir-beka-meselesi/1361022>

President Erdoğan continued to express his interest in that issue persistently and at the Opening Ceremony of Ibn Haldun University Complex in 2020, he said;

We have a young population, but we cannot realize our civilizational vision. (...) Our media does not reflect our voice and our breath. We face similar problems in science, art, and culture. "We can't explain ourselves to the world. That's why I think we still haven't established our intellectual power.

In the same speech, Erdoğan underlined that the current cultural situation is "uncontrolled westernization" and said;

At the end of the day, we found ourselves in an uncontrolled westernization storm as a country and nation. It is the greatest loss of our Republic that the way to raise generations with free ideas, free knowledge, and free conscience has turned into a Western imitation from the most sheltered, vulgar, and crooked way.<sup>26</sup>

Expressing his similar discomfort at the Painting and Sculpture Museum Post-Restoration Opening Program at the beginning of 2021, Erdoğan said, "I say that one of the issues I regret the most during our governments period is not being able to show the development we desire in the field of culture."<sup>27</sup>.

Continuing his views on this issue at the Culture and Art Grand Awards Ceremony at the end of 2021, Erdoğan said;

(...) The stronger you are in culture and art, it means that you can influence, direct and manage your environment equally. As a matter of fact, when we look at the emergence, rise, and collapse of great civilizations in the past, whatever the apparent reason may be, we see that the main determinant of the process is culture. It is a clear fact that today, the most powerful weapons of those who rule the global system are cultural tools with their music, cinema, literature, and fashion. These tools, which we describe as 'soft power', turn into more

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<sup>26</sup> In this statement, Erdoğan makes a negative reference to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's famous words, "Teachers, the Republic demands from you generations with free ideas, free conscience, and knowledge".

<sup>27</sup> Anadolu Agency. (2021) 'President Erdoğan: The real wealth of societies is measured by their contribution to civilization', January 15 [Online]. Available at: <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-toplumlarin-asil-zenginligi-medeniyete-yaptiklari-katkiyla-olculur/2111138>

effective means of operation than military power, technological power, and financial power when appropriate.<sup>28</sup>

Using the phrase "The body of a person whose soul is captured cannot be free", President Erdoğan states that a breakthrough in culture and art is needed to liberate the "spirit", which is one of the most important elements of the Conservative/Islamic language. In the continuation of his speech, Erdoğan says;

The great breakthrough we have made in the field of democracy and development in the last 19 years is the expression of a success that will go down in history. From now on, we need to concentrate and concentrate on the fields of culture and arts, and education, which are transmitted from generation to generation. (...) Our 2023 goals, which we attribute to the 100th anniversary of the founding of our Republic, consisted mostly of our material development elements, I hope education and culture will be the main carriers of our 2053 vision.

In Erdoğan's speech at the opening of the 2nd Yeditepe Biennial held in the courtyard of the Süleymaniye Mosque, able to see the sense of "spirit" that feeds the nostalgic melancholy of the conservative/Islamic ideology, which beliefs are lost and should be sought and found, as stated in the previous section. Erdoğan said;

Our duty is to search for our cultural and artistic treasures and the climate that produced them, like all the elements of our civilization values, wherever we have lost them. If we try to look in other places for our values which lost in our geography, in our hearts, in our minds, we will only be wasting our time. That is why we always express the aim of our struggle as the restoration of our ancient civilization heritage and its stronger reconstruction with today's possibilities.<sup>29</sup>

When these expressions of Erdoğan are examined, two issues emerge clearly. First, Conservative/Political Islamists have not yet achieved cultural power and have not been successful in taking the necessary steps in this regard. Erdoğan's reproaches and confessions of failure against his base are very clear. However, when we look at the

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<sup>28</sup> Anadolu Agency. (2021) 'Presidential Culture and Art Grand Awards found their owners', December 21 [Online]. Available at: <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/gundem/cumhurbaskanligi-kultur-ve-sanat-buyuk-odulleri-sahiplerini-buldu/2453362>

<sup>29</sup> Anadolu Agency. (2022) 'President Erdoğan: We will protect our cultural and artistic heritage and carry it forward', January 7 [Online]. Available at: <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/gundem/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-kultur-sanat-birikimize-sahip-cikip-daha-ileriye-tasiyacagiz/2467841>



course of the discourses over the years, the existing failure was expressed as sadness at first, but it gradually turned into anger and reproach with impatience. This change in sentiment further strengthened Erdoğan's belief that it is necessary to hurry, and the processes of cultural capital and 'habitus' formation were completely thrown into the background, leading to a process in which State power was used more effectively.

Bora (2017) states that the cultural power discourse expressed by Erdoğan is a "victimization discourse" that points out that those with Western cultural values, who are seen as the "opposite party", still have some power opportunities, rather than making a problem of a deficiency. According to this victimization, the class that holds the power and is grouped under the image of "White Turks" renders the culture, which is called domestic and national, invisible. Despite having the media, universities, bureaucracy, and vast financial means, the inability to produce a product that will change this power brings along the process of "cultural hegemony through the police".

Presidential Communications Director Fahrettin Altun, who is on Erdoğan's close working team, posted a phrase on Twitter on 5 July 2018, "Your political hegemony is over, your cultural hegemony will also end."<sup>30</sup> This statement clearly shows that the struggle for cultural power is perceived as a war against the existing ruling class in the field of culture for the AKP.

From the point of view of the consensus of the movement, it is obvious that this situation is positioned as a new victimization identity. However, as embodied in Erdoğan's discourses from the past, cultural power for him is a determined goal that is aimed at reaching and overthrowing the current ruling class, rather than acting like such victimization. However, as Bora also states, the transformation of the process into an effort for cultural power by the State, as stated above, is the accelerated path that Erdoğan chose when the breakthrough he expected from his base did not materialize, and which he believed would lead to the goal.

It should be stated that the statements given above are sufficient to answer whether the AKP has a desire to achieve cultural power. It is obvious that this desire has been

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<sup>30</sup> See: <https://twitter.com/fahrettinaltun/status/1014916512598167555?s=20>

expressed very clearly, especially by Erdoğan. However, these discourses support the conclusion that a long-term plan has been made to achieve cultural power and that effective steps will be taken in this field. But there are tangible examples of this inference. In the second term of the AKP, which is classified as after 2012 in this thesis, the implementation of a new historiography by using various tools and the effort to disseminate the narrative developed against the historical narrative of the republic are examples of this. This effort also aimed to achieve power by using popular culture, not to gain power through the production of high culture, as expressed in this thesis.

One of these tangible examples, is the re-emphasis of the Malazgirt Victory celebrations by Erdoğan, as an event where traditional archery is also heavily involved. The Malazgirt Victory in 1071 has different meanings for various ideological movements in Turkey. While nationalists highlight this victory as the opening of the door of Anatolia to the Turks, political Islamists see it as the Islamization of Anatolia. The date of the victory is also important in this respect. After the Republican Revolution, August 26 was remembered as the anniversary of the Battle of the Commander-in-Chief<sup>31</sup>, which was identified with Atatürk and was a part of the War of Independence, and the Malazgirt Victory was not highlighted. Erdoğan, on the other hand, aimed the opposite, and since 2017, the Malazgirt Victory has been celebrated with much more spectacular ceremonies and wide participation. It is possible to see this change in the difference between the celebrations of the 945th and 946th anniversary of the victory. In the 945th Anniversary ceremony held in 2016, a wreath was laid on the Atatürk monument in front of the Malazgirt Government House with the participation of the Muş Governor, deputies, and the city bureaucracy, and then a cortege march was held. President Erdoğan sent a written message to the ceremony<sup>32</sup>.

However, the 946th-anniversary ceremony, which took place a year later, was raised to a rather different degree of importance. Erdoğan indirectly criticized the efforts to

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<sup>31</sup> Başkumandanlık Meydan Muharebesi.

<sup>32</sup> Anadolu Agency. (2016) '945th Anniversary of Malazgirt Victory Celebrated', August 26 [Online]. Available at: <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/malazgirt-zafarinin-945-yil-donumu-kutlandi/635827>

establish historical relations with pre-Islamic civilizations such as the Hittites in the period when the Republic was newly established and used the following expressions;

The Malazgirt Victory was neglected for a long time. The effort to bypass Malazgirt and take it back to ancient times was perhaps well-intentioned, but it was futile. Even though the rulers of the state forgot Malazgirt, this nation did not. Today, the nation is in Malazgirt. You have created this servant of yours as a member of this nation. Hopefully next year Malazgirt will be different. We will deal with the development of this place with a different project. We will make these ceremonies very different.<sup>33</sup>

Erdoğan, who gave the message that the Manzikert ceremonies would be celebrated in a very different tone and that a special area would be built with construction projects, declared that 2071, the thousandth anniversary of the Malazgirt Victory, is a "Red Apple" target for them. Stating that the Malazgirt Victory opened the door to a process that included the conquest of Istanbul, Erdoğan said, "This region, which is the key to our Prophet's good news of conquest, will hopefully become the symbol of our new future that we will build together."

As can be seen, the AKP and its leader Erdoğan have begun to add an ideological meaning to the Malazgirt Victory. 'Remembering Malazgirt' has been one of the most concrete actions of the AKP's goal of seizing cultural power. Traditional archery has also become an integral part of the Malazgirt Victory ceremonies, and the Archers Foundation has come to the fore in the organization of these ceremonies.

### **3.3. Similarities and Differences Between Kemalism and AKP in the Effort to Establish Cultural Power**

Erdoğan, who is seen as the sole and unchangeable leader of today's Conservative/Political Islamist movement, has been voicing the issue of 'cultural power' with increasing emphasis over the years, has become one of the most important research areas in Turkey to why Conservative/Political Islamists, who have been in power for 20 years, cannot establish cultural power. In order to find an answer to this

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<sup>33</sup> Yeni Şafak Newspaper. (2017) 'Historic day in Malazgirt', August 26 [Online]. Available at: <https://www.yenisafak.com/gundem/malazgirtte-tarihi-gun-2786256>

question, it is necessary to examine the strategy followed by the AKP to achieve power in this area.

It can be said that the strategy pursued by Erdoğan and AKP for this purpose has both similarities and divergences with the Kemalism practices that took place after the proclamation of the Turkish Republic. Detecting how they followed a similar strategy, despite being at opposite poles both politically and culturally, is an issue worth examining and also shows why AKP failed to establish cultural power in terms of this thesis.

After the de facto collapse of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War and officially with the proclamation of the Republic, a new state was established under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. In this transformation process, the cultural and daily life practices of the West, which started to enter the country in the Ottomans, continued in a sense by changing the format in the Republican period. Understanding this format change is important to understand the similarities and differences in the strategy we're going to examine.

The westernization movement in Turkey was not seen for the first time in the Republican period. Although there were large-scale territorial losses during the so-called 'period of regression' of the Ottoman Empire, the beliefs of the old glorious days did not disappear so quickly. It was not intended to be accepted that the West was superior in every sense, and it was shown that the West had military and technological superiority, from a narrow perspective, as the reason for all these defeats. At the beginning of the 18th century, the Western military institutions and the efforts to bring weapon power to the Ottoman Empire also caused the daily culture of the West to enter the country during the Tanzimat period that started in 1839. Clothing, household goods, the use of money, the style of houses, and interpersonal relations became "European". (Mardin, 1991: 15). However, it cannot be said that it was the aim of the Tanzimat that the daily culture of the West entered the Ottoman Empire. According to them, the West meant a civilization that provided the freedom of the individual and thus strengthened the States. However, although they understood this correlation, they failed to see that what really needed to be changed was society. They believed that the transformation of the state would be sufficient and did not aim for a social

transformation. Taking the science and industry of the West was deemed sufficient to transform the State, and this is the purpose of examples such as sending students to Europe (Berkes, 1975: 194-196).

Although the Tanzimat reformers did not aim for this, the culture and daily practices of the West began to become the 'new normal' in the Ottoman Empire. Especially, the young people who were sent to Europe for the above-mentioned purposes, experienced the social life in Europe and brought this culture to the Ottoman Empire. With the influence of Ottoman journalism, in which the Young Ottomans had a large share who also criticized the Tanzimatists' efforts to be "European" were superficial and that they only wanted to take the technique with a defensive reflex, and the literary works they produced, information about the West and its practices began to spread to the segments of society (Mardin, 1991: 16). They stated that culturally westernization is needed, and tradition, as well as institutions need reform.

Turning to the West in order to get the empire out of the crisis started with taking the technique and institutional structure as an example, but the opened door caused the daily life, art, aesthetics, and culture of the West to enter inside. Deren (2007: 386) quotes Cevdet Kudret as follows;

Wearing a jacket, trousers, a French shirt, a tie, growing hair, cutting a mustache, going to the theater, living on the side of Beyoğlu, built a stone house, using French words when speaking and writing, eating with a fork, doing gymnastics in the morning, marrying a foreign woman, husband and wife walking arm in arm on the street, shaking hands between unmarried men and women, hugging each other and dancing with music, wearing low-cut clothes with open arms and breasts, counting 12 o'clock at noon and midnight, wearing a hat were all considered 'alafranga'<sup>34</sup> in the past.

It is understood from this that the "elite" discourse directed from the lower classes to the upper classes today was also expressed as "alafrangism" in the past. This situation underlines two facts. First, western culture is widespread and accepted by the upper class of the Ottoman elite. The power to legitimize the cultural practices of the

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<sup>34</sup> It is an expression used in the Ottoman Empire for people who have adopted European civilization and have been brought up with European education.

dominant class in the eyes of society is also seen at this point. Second, is that the western culture, which the lower classes define as 'not from us' and which includes a separate and 'other' behavior systematic, is generally accepted as the culture of the elite, and in this sense, it has begun to become the legitimate dominant culture. As stated earlier in the thesis, the lower classes adopt and accept the 'legitimate culture', albeit not consciously, and this effort to adapt also strengthens the power of the dominant class.

The difference of the Republic in this process of change is that westernization has become a total goal and the western culture which has become a 'legitimate culture' whether aware of it or not, is to be removed from the monopoly of the Ottoman elite and spread to the whole society. The following words of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Republic, are announcing that the modernization movement is both a necessity for independence and that its ties with the past must be broken for progress;

Our nation's goal, our nation's ideal; to be a fully modern social society in the whole world. You know that the existence, value, right of freedom, and salvation of every society in the world are possible with contemporary works that they will make in accordance with their essence. Nations that lack the ability to create civilized works are doomed to be separated from their freedom and liberation. The history of humanity confirms all that I have said throughout. Walking on the path of civilization and being successful is the condition of life. Those who wait on this road, or those who are ignorant and careless on this road to look back rather than forward, are doomed to drown under the flood of civilization.<sup>35</sup>

As can be understood from Atatürk's words, the goal of modernization was designed as a holistic transformation movement that would include society. Berkes (2005: 525) states that the preconditions for modernization are provided by shifting Turkey from the orbit of Eastern-type societies to the orbit of Western-type societies through revolutions. Likewise, the leaders of the revolution think that modernization can only be achieved by taking place in the Western world. Because modernization is a process that can be realized as long as it can be moved away from traditional values.

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<sup>35</sup> Cumhuriyet Newspaper. (2019) 'Atatürk told about August 30: I saw the enemy commander struggling', August 30 [Online]. Available at: <https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/ataturk-30-agustosunu-anlatti-dusman-komutanin-cirpindigini-goruyordum-1556376>

The founders of the Republic set the goal of "rising to the level of modern civilizations"<sup>36</sup> as the main principle, but a natural sense of "historical belatedness" was reflected in practice. The fact that the West has made an extraordinary gap on the path of civilization has made it a necessity to do whatever needs to be done urgently. The answer to the questions about whether the path the New State will follow in the context of social transformation will be revolutionary or evolutionary, Atatürk underlined the fact of timelessness and pointed out as "revolution" (Sevük, 1981: 67). This situation shows that the westernization steps and innovations are taken to reach the level of modern civilizations will be carried out "for the people despite the people" with a "top to down" model (Köker, 2009: 175).

The cultural revolution of the Republic aimed to spread the western cultural values, which became widespread in the Ottomans by the elite, and which began to be seen in the middle classes with the acceptance and influence over time, to the general society. Although this effort, which necessitates a state intervention in the ordinary course of life, has created a corpus of criticism both in daily life and in academia, it should be seen as a fact that it was the result of an obligation due to the conditions of the period. As stated above, it is clear that a society that is in a 'historical belatedness' needs accelerating tools in order to achieve the benefits of a development that has spread over centuries in the West. Moreover, this sense of 'historical belatedness' is not unique to Turkey. It has been felt to a certain extent in every society that started the modernization process after England and France (Koçak, 2009).

The cultural revolution, which started with the Republic, has taken steps in every field to break the bond with the traditional, due to the necessity of "destroying the old" which appears as a necessity of every revolution. The transition to the Latin alphabet, the laws on clothing, the rights are given to women especially to vote and be elected, the stopping of the broadcast of Alaturka music on the radio, sports events, balls, and many other areas, the "old" was buried in the ground and a "new" was created. However, what will be addressed in this thesis is the method of making them, rather

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<sup>36</sup> The expression of the President of the Republic of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, in his speech at the Ankara Hippodrome on October 29, 1933, during the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the republic, indicating the historical purpose of the Republic of Turkey.

than examining the changes made by the revolution in cultural life. With all these sudden changes, Kemalism carried out its efforts to westernize the society with a 'top to down' model by using the power of the State. It has attempted to fulfill a demand that does not yet exist in society, with the opportunities provided by the revolution and the establishment of a new state, with an institutional organization by creating an environment where history is almost reset. Understanding this 'top to down' model offers us the opportunity to understand the similarities and differences between Kemalism and AKP in their efforts to establish cultural power.

Stating that social engineering practices were legitimized for the moral renewal of the nation at the beginning of the 20th century and this practice was seen in Kemalism as an example of radical culturalism in Turkey, Taşkın said, “An extreme voluntarism fed the mental background of these practices. Nationalist conservatism took over this voluntarist mentality from Kemalism.” (2019: 37). It should be taken into account that during the years of power, which we call the second period of the AKP, the nationalist discourse mostly took place in party policies and eventually became concrete enough to form a coalition with the MHP under the name of the Cumhur Alliance. Bora (1998) states that Islamism, conservatism, and nationalism are the three states of the Turkish right, that they can transform into each other according to place and time and include each other. Nationalism was monopolized by the Turkish left until the mid-1970s, making it synonymous with anti-imperialism. Likewise, nationalism, which is one of the six arrows that are the principles of the CHP, takes this anti-imperialist form from the Kemalist revolution as "Atatürk nationalism". However, in the second half of the 70s, the meaning of nationalism changed completely, and it became a concept against communism depending on the developments in the world. The name of the coalitions formed by the right-wing parties between the 1971 and 1980 coups is the 'Nationalist Front' is an example of this (Tünay, 1993). Therefore, in the 70s, nationalism was almost pulled by the left and right parties, and ultimately this concept remained in the hands of the right. The right-wing party ANAP, which came to power in the first elections after the 1980 coup, also has the claim and project to unite liberals, nationalists, Islamic fundamentalists, and social democratic tendencies.



From this point of view, it is possible to interpret the area that Taşkın narrowed as nationalist conservatism in a way that extends to the whole of conservatism and includes the AKP. Therefore, in the background of thought of conservatism, it can be said that while Kemalism is hostile on the grounds that it is a western modernization project and an effort to destroy tradition, its application systematic can be embraced when necessary.

Açikel (1996) explains this situation as "Historically Turkish-Islamic Synthesis is the second modernization-capitalization discourse of the Turkish Republic, following the 'Enlightenment Kemalist Modernization'". Göle (2011: 42), who states that the segment she calls the Islamist elite constitutes the anti-elites in the ruling class, also states that social movements want to direct the society by taking over the State and they think this change is not dependent on the participation of social actors, but from the top to down, depending on the state apparatus. For Göle, the Islamist elite is almost the mirror image of the Republican elite (2011: 111).

At this point, it should be stated that especially when we look at the example of Turkey, the use of culture as a means to ensure and legitimize political power, although it is an ultimate goal, has led to the excessive politicization of culture and, accordingly aesthetics. Deren evaluated this process through the pole of westernization and said, "Westernization has always manifested itself in the form of acculturation or transformation of political conflict to cultural conflict since its first appearance in the Ottoman Empire.". Therefore, culture in Turkey has become an element that determines positions in the political arena, creates distinctions and associations, and includes much more than its own sphere of influence. It is very important to understand this process in order to understand the importance of the cultural power struggle given with the political power in Turkey.

It is a reality that the AKP is trying to benefit from Kemalist practices in order to establish cultural power. The example of archery, as one of the fields where this fact is reflected, will be explained in detail in the next section. However, the question of what are the deadlocks caused by the similarity with the practice of Kemalism for Conservative/Political Islamists is one of the main topics of this thesis.

When the thought behind the strategy followed by Conservative/Political Islamists in their effort to seize cultural power is examined, a determination made in this community draws attention. As we find traces of such an example in Çakırca (2020), “The way to build and establish or regain domination against cultural power is to create a culture, a scale of values and an economy that will express the daily routine.”. The perception that the way to achieve cultural power is to change the daily routine opens the door to the process that determines the path followed by the Conservative/Political Islamist movement in this struggle. This understanding, which confines cultural power to a set of visible concrete practices, has a belief that ‘legitimate culture’ can be determined by the lower classes.

One of the discourse arguments used to achieve this goal is "domestic and national". This discourse, which Erdoğan frequently uses and which has almost become one of the mottos of his party, expresses opposition to the dominant ‘legitimate culture’ in the cultural sense as well as the political elements it contains. It reflects the idea that what is local and national is not the western cultural values that dominate today, but the past cultural values that were wanted to be left behind with the Republican revolution. However, Conservative/Political Islamists, who define the revolution as a process that restarts by resetting history and tries to impose a western culture, which is not from us and not unique to us, to the masses under the name of modernization, have such an ahistorical view, as Bora (1998) states that, “they see the historical process of the local, only as much as they can and want to see behind the veil of their nostalgic-melancholic vision of 'locality' and authenticity”. However, the steps of modernization that started before the revolution and accelerated with the revolution are also a part of history, unique to us and local. Although it came from the West, it took a form blended with elements unique to us. Therefore, the struggle for cultural power, which is undertaken with a nostalgic-melancholic imagination and an understanding of nationality that freezes history, cannot correctly evaluate the ground and breadth of this struggle.

The capitalist modernization and globalization process, which affected Turkey as well as the rest of the world in the 1980s, caused the popular culture, which the dominant class used as a tool to legitimize their own culture, to carry the western cultural values

to all the capillaries of the country, together with the spread of the mass media. It is also noteworthy that a center-right government led by Turgut Özal is behind the accelerating steps of capitalistization and globalization in Turkey. This process initiated by the center-right government, although this is not its goal, has led to the consolidation of the cultural tastes of the western dominant class in the eyes of the society and has also led to intense influences on the Conservative/Political Islamists. Bora defines this process as follows;

(...) first of all, the country itself has become extremely 'alienated' culturally! The instrumentalizing, commoditizing, and re-evaluating influence of the market, capitalist relations, and the media has detached the cultural material deemed 'unique' and 'genuine' from its 'authentic' context and dispersed the shelters of authenticity. Maybe in this way, many materials bearing the 'local' stamp became circulated and became visible, but these are no longer special 'local' values that distinguish those who know and share them from the foreign/metropolitan/cosmopolitan world.

Sungur (2017) states that the rising religious elites in the political and economic sense have adopted all the values that they were in opposition to in the past, even if it is not claimed to be exactly like the dominant culture, and this process shows a similarity with the history in which the liberal policies and consumption culture started to be implemented in our country. Therefore, one of the difficulties that Erdoğan faces in his struggle for cultural power is that Conservative/Political Islamists are also affected by this capitalist transformation process, with the process that started in the 1980s, and their cultural practices, values, and acceptances are transformed whether they are aware of it or not. When viewed from the perspective of popular culture products that the Western dominant culture uses as a tool to legitimize itself, 'baby shower' parties with sherbet<sup>37</sup> among the Islamic bourgeoisie, Islamic rap, and hip-hop songs, conservative clothing fashion shows, five-star 'haremlük-selamlık'<sup>38</sup> conservative hotels are some examples of this influence and transformation.

In addition to these, the Conservative/Political Islamist movement thinks that it is essential to be able to use the power of the State in order to come to a dominant position in the cultural field. Çakırca (2020) states this idea: "Because the establishment of

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<sup>37</sup> A type of non-alcoholic sweetened fruit juice.

<sup>38</sup> An expression describing that men and women in the same building or location but in separate places for religious reasons.

cultural power and the harmony of political power are essential, the absolute provision of political power is related to keeping the cultural struggle current by building an existing cultural front with its economic power.”. The belief that the life of political power and success in the struggle to establish cultural power are inseparable also shapes the strategy of the party in this area, which is the reason for the rush seen in this movement. While still holding the political power, the struggle in the cultural field is desired to be successful, and the AKP preferred a top to down model by using State power for cultural power. This model is similar to the 'need to hurry', which is also seen in the Kemalist practice after the Republican revolution, which is required to establish a new regime and which arises with the reflex of breaking ties with the past.

However, what will be examined in the thesis is the main difference between the two periods, although the AK Party repeats the Kemalist model in its struggle for cultural power. The dominant class, especially during the Tanzimat period, brought western cultural values to the level of 'legitimate culture'. Then, with the Republican revolution, Kemalist social engineering tried to spread a culture that was already "legitimate" to other classes of society. Rather than whether this attempt succeeds, what is certain is ultimately further consolidation of cultural legitimacy. However, what Erdoğan and his party are trying to do today is to popularize and become "kitsch" the culture they want to spread, and to demolish the existing cultural legitimacy and build another 'legitimate culture' in its place, even though it is similar to the Kemalist systematic as a model. While Kemalism is trying to spread the existing 'legitimate culture', Erdoğan and his party want to replace the existing 'legitimate culture' with a new 'legitimate culture' emerging from the lower classes. Therefore, although there is a similarity in practice, the current conditions and the aim to be achieved are at two opposite poles. The subject of 'revival of traditional archery', which is one of the examples made for this purpose, will be discussed in the next section.

At this point, the important thing is that the lower class tastes and practices, which were not the dominant and legitimate cultural values, even in the pre-revolutionary period, were desired to be revived in the struggle for cultural power and longed for with melancholic-nostalgic feelings, are desired to be dominated today. In the next section, activism that draws strength from the past and strives to revive the past can be

seen against today's 'legitimate culture', as can often be seen in the statements of Erdoğan and AKP administrators, which will be conveyed in detail by making a discourse analysis, especially in the expressions emulating the Ottoman period. However, as Bourdieu pointed out, what is legitimate is determined by the bourgeoisie, the consent of the lower classes to this domination is produced, and cultural power is based on this legitimacy. Therefore, re-introducing illegitimate cultural values and practices, neither in the past nor today, by including them in the 'domestic and national' discourse package, cannot go beyond the effort to reproduce lower-class practices that have lost their origin and purpose.

Another impasse of the AKP is that it did not have the political and social opportunities of Kemalism, which had the opportunity to use the power of the State in the effort of cultural westernization in the 1920-30s. In the founding of the Republic, there were wide opportunities brought by the Revolution and the establishment of a new State in terms of social engineering practices. It is much more possible to apply social engineering in an environment where the mass media has not yet developed and become widespread, the literacy rate in the society is very low and the State can have a monopoly in every field. However, in the conditions of the 21st century, especially considering that the mass media has developed tremendously, the possibilities in this direction have become extremely difficult even for the States. Today, in regimes open to the world, it does not seem possible to implement a social engineering practice by the state and to achieve success in this. From a cultural point of view, for example, while there is the General Directorate of State Theaters affiliated with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in Turkey, municipalities also have City Theatres, and there are also many private theaters. However, in the founding years of the Republic, the dependence of artists on the State was quite high. The state provides financial support to artists, provides various opportunities at home and abroad, assigns administrative duties, and even appoints them as ambassadors, and enables them to become deputies in the parliament (Koçak, 2009). Therefore, in the founding process of the Republic, art is completely under the command of the State, since the above-mentioned liberating opportunities have not yet been technically possible. Today, the situation is much different. It is now very difficult to establish a monopoly on the theater by the state

and to provide a cultural construction from there. Today, especially in terms of cultural production, the areas of freedom to break monopoly have expanded to a great extent.

As a result, the social engineering project of Kemalism, which aims to westernize, first opened a white page free of tradition for the cultural reconstruction of the society. The abolition of alaturka music from schools in 1926, and then the cessation of its broadcast on the radio in 1935, is just one example of trying to remove the traditional from daily life and social memory and to create a purified field. With the rejection of tradition and the obstruction of the channels to reach it, an ideal consisting of western cultural values and forms was tried to be presented to society by the State. Whether this effort has been successful or not is not the subject of this thesis, but as stated above, it can be said that the westernization project of the Republic has ensured the reinforcement of this legitimacy by trying to spread a culture that has already been adopted by the ruling class and has become legitimate. However, today, Erdoğan and the AKP have four deadlocks in their struggle for cultural power. First, the revolutionary conditions of the 1920s are no longer valid today. There is neither a newly established State nor an environment that can enable to open of a white page. Secondly, Kemalism tried to spread a culture that was already legitimate after the revolution to the whole society, and this legitimacy was consolidated. Today, however, Erdoğan and the AKP are trying to overthrow the dominant 'legitimate culture' and legitimize a new culture, trying to achieve this through the construction of popular culture from the bottom to up, with the opposite model. Thirdly, at the beginning of the 20th century, the possibility of the State establishing a monopoly, especially in the cultural field, became extremely difficult in the globalizing world of the 21st century and the rapid spread of mass media. For this reason, the escape opportunities of individuals and groups have increased in terms of social engineering practices to be undertaken in the effort to establish cultural power. Fourth, with globalization, the struggle for cultural power has moved from the local to the universal. Today, when the world is evolving into a bipolar process again, it is inevitable that conservatives will be affected by the spread of universalized western cultural values in Turkey, which is located in the western camp. Likewise, Erdoğan's many reproachful statements about conservatives, whom he sees as his party base, in this thesis are proof of this. Therefore, from these four perspectives, it is obvious that Conservative/Political

Islamists repeat a practice similar to Kemalism's set of practices in their struggle to establish cultural power, but it is also seen that this is not possible due to the reasons listed above.

### **3.4.1. Archers Foundation**

The foundation, whose official name is Okmeydanı Sport and Education Foundation, but uses the name Archers Foundation, was established on September 5, 2012. This date is one of the reasons for my claim, expressed in the thesis, that the AKP's struggle for cultural power has entered a new phase as of 2012. While the establishment of the foundation was published in the Official Journal dated 19 December 2012, it was stated that the assets of the foundation were 70 thousand Turkish Liras in cash. The founders are Hüseyin Ersan Topbaş, Necmeddin Bilal Erdoğan, Ahmet Misbah Demircan and Haydar Ali Yıldız.

The statement published in the Official Journal as the purpose of the foundation clearly reveals, the project of reviving traditional archery, which is a past value, and how it is intended to be used culturally;

To work for the understanding of ancestral sports, especially archery, with their national, historical, sporting, artistic, cultural and educational qualities and to adopt them as a cultural awareness, to make ancestral sports, especially archery, and all sports branches popular among today's and future generations, to train athletes, to support financially and morally, to establish educational and sports facilities, to restore ancestral facilities and areas in accordance with their originality, to revive the Archers School, which has served in Okmeydanı for hundreds of years with a foundation culture, but lost its specialty over time like every other institution, to keep alive the values we inherited from its elements of our civilization, to raise spiritually and physically healthy generations equipped with these values, to prepare our athletes for national and international competitions, to promote the country, and to contribute to the protection of natural life. (Republic of Turkey Official Journal, 19 December 2012, number: 28502)<sup>39</sup>

The aims of the foundation, emphasizing that traditional archery is the ancestral sport and the fields related to archery are ancestral heirlooms and that the revival of these sports and their fields is to keep the values inherited from civilization alive, shows that

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<sup>39</sup> Resmi Gazete. (2012) Foundation Establishment Announcement. Date of Publish: January 12. <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/ilanlar/eskiilanlar/2012/12/20121219-4.htm#%C3%A701>

Conservative/Political Islamists are in an effort to resurrect the cultural forms that remained in the pre-westernization period. The details of this effort will be conveyed in the next section by making a discourse analysis.

In the History section of the foundation's official website, it is stated that Okmeydanı was one of the camps of Fatih Sultan Mehmet during the Conquest of Istanbul. According to the information contained herein, Okmeydanı is the first foundation in Istanbul that was established by Fatih Sultan Mehmet right after the conquest of Istanbul, due to the success of the archers in the war. The perimeter of the area was determined by the boundary stones and recorded in the foundation records. For many years, archery continued as a sport in this field after the withdrawal of the bow and arrow from the battle scene with the development of firearms, which was stated to be of great interest by both the sultans and the notables of the state and the public.

In the History section, which makes a negative reference to the Republican period, it is stated that the Okmeydanı land was neglected due to the financial difficulties experienced in the Republican period and unplanned urbanization took place. While it is stated that the Archers Lodge and its affiliated structures began to be “revived” again in 2007, it is stated that the works were completed in 2013 and the institution came back to life under the name of the Archers Foundation.

The main subject of this thesis is how and for what purpose traditional archery is used by AKP as a popular cultural activity. However, the cultural functions of the Archers Foundation, who its founders are, how it was established, the aid of the State institutions to this foundation, and the close relations of public officials with this foundation are also important topics. Likewise, the support given by the AKP to this foundation by using the power of the State occupies a very important place in the construction of archery as a new popular culture.

The area in Okmeydanı, which is used by the Archers Foundation today, was given to the Provincial Directorate of Youth and Sports for a period of 99 years, free of charge, by the decision of the Council of Ministers in 1964, and then this allocation was removed and the area was given to the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IBB). In 2005, the IBB, led by the AKP, demolished 37 slums around the area on the grounds



that they would be turned into parks. Then, the public garden area and the land used as a ball field were combined and renovated with the cooperation of IBB and Beyoğlu Municipality (Ağırel, 2020). After the renovation, the building and its affiliated areas were allocated to the Archers Foundation to be used in education, sports, culture, and health services<sup>40</sup>. It has been the subject of the news that IBB invested approximately 25 million Turkish Liras for the area renovated as the Archers Lodge (BirGün, 22 January 2014). On May 29, 2013, with the participation of then Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, it was opened as Okmeydanı Archer Training Center.

Ali Haydar Yıldız, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Okçular Foundation, who gave an interview introducing the building to Sabah Newspaper, when asked about what was inside the building, said, “We tried to build it in accordance with its historical state. We used miniatures for this.” he said. (Sabah, 8 June 2013) Yıldız's statement "we tried to build" is important, as he has no duty in IBB or Beyoğlu Municipality other than being the AKP Istanbul Provincial Administrator during this process. This statement reveals that the area was renovated using public resources to be allocated to the Archers Foundation from the very beginning.

According to the "NGO-School-Dormitory Activity Report, 2018" booklet prepared by the IBB, 16,640,457.11 Turkish Liras were transferred from the Municipality to the Archers Foundation in the period covering 2018 and before. 1.1 million liras of expenditures are for Maintenance - Repair and Renovation, 540,522.11 liras for Furnishing, 5.027.765 liras for Sporting Goods and GSM Services, 471.252 liras (2018 year) for transportation, 342.372 liras for Food and Beverage, 20.250 liras for Travel, 4,738,296 TL was transferred for Personnel Support, 4,400,000 TL for the Project (Cash Aid). However, this report has not been announced. This report, published by Çiğdem Toker from Sözcü Newspaper on January 28, 2019, with the title "Service Report from IBB to Foundations", was presented in the Istanbul Metropolitan Mayor Candidates Binali Yıldırım and Ekrem İmamoğlu participated in the open session,

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<sup>40</sup> TBMM. (2014) Reply Text to a Parliamentary Question by Deputy Prime Ministry. <https://www2.tbmm.gov.tr/d24/7/7-40573c.pdf>

which was also shown by İmamoğlu and its content was explained. The entire report has also appeared in the press.<sup>41</sup>

The public resources transferred to the Foundation are not limited to these. As Ağirel explained in detail, Beykoz Municipality, which is under AKP administration, has spent 18 million TL on the Alibahadır Type C Recreation Area, which it rented from the Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs on 29 May 2014, and transferred the right to use this area to the Okçular Foundation until 2043. The area is used as Archers Foundation Riva Facilities today. Emlak Konut, a TOKİ affiliate of the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization, and Climate, has allocated an area of 18 thousand square meters to the Okçular Foundation in the project to be implemented in the Halkalı neighborhood of Istanbul. Another support of the IBB is the construction of the Archers Foundation museum at a cost of 7 million 373 thousand liras. Not content with this, it also donated 1 million 200 thousand liras to the IBB Archers Foundation to be used in the activities between January 1, 2019, and June 30, 2019. One of the affiliated companies of IBB, Metro Istanbul San. ve Tic. Inc. also gave two tenders, worth 875 thousand Turkish liras, to the Archers Foundation for "archery training". Another company of IBB, Istanbul Ağac ve Peyzaj Inc. also held a tender for the Conquest Cup organized by the Archers Foundation, and the tender titled "Conquest Cup Advertising and Promotion Services" was given to the Archers Foundation for 375 thousand liras.

Another important evidence of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's special interest in traditional archery in the struggle for cultural power is that his son, Bilal Erdoğan, is in the management of the Archers Foundation. Bilal Erdoğan is also the President of the World Ethnosports Confederation, founded in 2015 and headquartered in Istanbul. It is stated that the mission of the confederation is "to organize (...) <sup>42</sup> in order to regulate, popularize, professionalize and disseminate traditional sports and games". As it can be understood from the use of words such as popularization and dissemination, it is clear

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<sup>41</sup> Sözcü Newspaper. (2019) 'The document of 1.2 million aid from IBB to the Archers Foundation has been revealed', September 18 [Online]. Available at: <https://www.sozcu.com.tr/2019/gundem/ibbden-okcular-vakfina-1-2-milyonluk-yardimin-belgesi-ortaya-cikti-5339627/>

<sup>42</sup> World Ethnosport Confederation Official Website. Available at: <https://worldethnosport.org/hakimizda>

that the AKP's desire to make traditional archery a popular culture and to adapt it to the general public.

The fact that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan attaches utmost importance to the attempt to turn traditional archery into popular culture has led him to place the supervision, control, and management of this project under the responsibility of his son Bilal Erdoğan, one of his closest people, rather than someone who has expertise in this field. It is understood from the following statements that Bilal Erdoğan was brought to the management of this foundation when he had no knowledge of archery and traditional sports, in a program he participated in on the CNN Türk television channel; "My introduction to traditional sports was with the establishment of the Archers Foundation. Before 2012, I had no interest in traditional sports. In 2012, I learned that a region just above the neighborhood where I spent my childhood was the Archers Lodge."<sup>43</sup>.

The fact that Bilal Erdoğan is the key figure of this project and that he is in a position to represent President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan gains importance in terms of the management and coordination of the support provided by public institutions. In the same TV program, his use of the following statements regarding the Battle of Malazgirt Commemoration reveals how he directed the public institutions;

We, as the Archers Foundation, got up and said that this issue is important. We said to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism that a stage should be set up and a concert should be given, you should do it. We told the Ministry of Transport that the road here needs to be taken care of, and you should do it. We told the General Directorate of National Parks to make this a park area, this is your job, you do it.

It is clearly seen that the Archers Foundation is at the center of the desire to popularize traditional archery, which Erdoğan and AKP see as a "domestic and national" value, and to spread it to all segments of society. The financial and political power of the state is used to support the activities of this foundation, popular culture is created by the state and 'legitimate culture' is tried to be changed in this way.

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<sup>43</sup> N. Bilal Erdoğan. (2019) Interview by Ahmet Hakan, Tarafsız Bölge, October 3. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F-8ZM1HETLA>

### 3.4.2. Discourses of Revival of the Past

In this section, examples from the discourses of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, his son Bilal Erdoğan, politicians and bureaucrats, and representatives of the movement are analyzed about which culture the AKP is positioned against in its effort to establish cultural power and what it is opposed to, how it declares its purpose and interest, how traditional archery is a part of a "domestic and national" popular culture project, the religious identity and background of the culture that is desired to be elevated to a dominant position, that the goal of the struggle is not local but universal, and trying to undermine the legitimacy of ruling class practices by popularizing them, The main question of this thesis is why AKP failed to establish cultural power despite all its efforts. The discourses analyzed in this section are the proof of the judgments put forward in the thesis about what kind of strategy was followed for this effort and constitute the source of the answers given to the question "why".

For this purpose, following the establishment of the Archers Foundation, all news and articles about the foundation and traditional archery published in 40 national newspapers between 2013-2021 were analyzed. A total of 1,234 newspaper clippings containing the keywords "Archers Foundation, archery, archers, and ethnosports" were analyzed. These newspapers are: Akit, Akşam, Anayurt, Aydınlık, Birgün, Cumhuriyet, Diriliş Postası, Dokuz Sütun, Dünya, Evrensel, Fotomaç, Gazete Harbi, Gazete Pencere, Günboyu, Güneş, Habertürk, Hürriyet, İstiklal, Karşı, Korkusuz, Millet, Milliyet, Ortadoğu, Önce Vatan, Posta, Radikal, Sabah, Sol, Sözcü, Star, Takvim, Türkgün, Türkiye, Vatan, Yedigün, Yeni Asya, Yeni Birlik, Yeniçağ, Yeni Şafak, Yurt.

While examining all the newspapers published nationally and also in the archives of the TBMM, issues such as ownership status, political views, and adherence to the principle of impartiality are not taken into account in the selection of the newspapers. Because the language or neutrality of the news containing the discourses has no effect on the topics examined in this section. Newspapers are used as a tool to determine the discourses given as examples in the thesis.

### **3.4.2.1. Anti-Westernism and Announcement of Purpose**

The main subject of this thesis is to show that the AKP is trying to make traditional archery a popular culture with the power and intervention of the State and to explain why the AKP is trying to seize cultural power in this way, but also to prove why it has failed.

Before giving examples from the discourses of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, his son, and the representatives of the movement, which express the aim of making traditional archery popular culture, it is necessary to analyze the factor that feeds this need. As can be seen from the discourses in the examined newspaper news, this effort derives its strength and motivation from anti-Westernism. The main argument is that western cultural values have invaded the country and the nation has been de-identified, uprooted, made memoryless, and tried to be held captive through culture.

Speaking to the members of the press at the Biga Eurasia Archery Competitions held in 2015, Bilal Erdoğan stated that the way for Turkey's growth is to preserve the bond with its cultural roots and said, "We are not a country that will be a European, western copy." (Sözcü Newspaper, August 10, 2015). B. Erdoğan, in the program he participated in the TV channel A Spor in 2017, said, "We want to end the ongoing cultural inequality in the world on the basis of justice, and give this to the whole world as a message." (Sabah Newspaper, May 11, 2017). In his speech at the opening of the Archery Research Institute in 2017, B. Erdoğan used the following statements;

The reason for playing the block flute in music classes in Turkey for years is not a simple thing. Or, the reason why rhythmic gymnastics is emphasized in physical education classes is not a simple thing. Having our own sports, music, musical instruments, and cultural elements here means the real protection and ownership of a nation's independence. That's why we see in the traditional sports and archery journey on the way we started, that our children who come here, our children who do sports here not only do sports but also establish a very healthy relationship and communication with their cultural codes and memories in their minds. It is almost as if they are recreating the formatted and deleted memory. (Milliyet Newspaper, November 4, 2017).

Speaking at the introductory meeting held before the 3rd Ethnosports Festival in 2018, B. Erdoğan said, "We think that these studies are important so that all cultures can continue their lives and not disappear after the 20th century, when we experience the

dominance of western culture in the world” (Akşam Newspaper, April 25, 2018). B. Erdoğan, who later attended the 33rd Ihlara Culture, Art and Sports Festival, said that globalization took place under western hegemony and that the west imposed a cultural standardization in this way and said, “We are against this uniformization. Because we see that this uniformization is triggered not as a natural process, but as an imposed process.” (Güneş Newspaper, September 23, 2018). Stating that traditional archery is not an imported culture and calling on parents to direct their children to traditional archery, B. Erdoğan said, “It is possible to have fun with our own. It is also possible to spend time with those who belong to us. We are not convicted, dependent only on what we import from abroad.” (Yeni Şafak Newspaper, September 23, 2018).

In 2019, at the opening of the Digital Screening Center, where Islamic Science History Researcher Prof. Fuat Sezgin's work and life are told, B. Erdoğan stated that the people he says are "intellectual, elite" say that we are left behind from the West because we are Muslims and Turks, and this is to crush the self-confidence of the nation. Continuing his speech, B. Erdoğan said the following;

Therefore, in order for us to rebuild this self-confidence from our own resources, we need to know how much our ancestors contributed to the sciences. A society without memory cannot claim civilization. It was almost as if our memory was wanted to be formatted. We need to get away from this. Because this lack of memory leads us to anonymity. We have to be us. (Turkey Newspaper, August 2, 2019).

Later, speaking at a panel he attended at Kafkas University, B. Erdoğan increased the dosage even more in opposition to the dominant western cultural values, claimed that westernization was a "cultural genocide" and said the following;

We need to know and learn our essence, our nature, and our identity well. We are caught in the wind of westernization. Today, there are those who dream abroad in the minds of young people. Generations who emulate the West with their dressing, clothing, movies, and music are growing. It is a bit fast, but we have to admit that we are in a Westernization wind transition. Westernization

is cultural genocide. If the aim is to catch the future, we should see that it is possible by protecting our identity and belief. (Star Newspaper, December 26, 2019).

As can be understood from these discourses, an open struggle has been undertaken against the dominant culture, the western cultural values. It is persistently repeated that

Western culture creates a global cultural inequality, that it must be eliminated, and that what is "ours", and "what is at our roots", must be resurrected. It is argued that the westernization process, which has a history of more than a century in Turkey, has created a reset in the memories and that the lost values, namely the cultural codes that come from our essence, will be recreated with projects such as the revival of traditional archery. It is noteworthy that expressions such as "what makes us who we are, what belongs to us", "our essence", "our nature", and our identity" are persistently used in the discourses. As mentioned in the previous sections of this thesis, Conservative/Political Islamists with a deep melancholic nostalgia break the historical process and present a narrative that they freeze the history they yearn for under the name of "locality and nationality". While defining the values that "make us who we are", ignoring the westernization process, which naturally takes place in the flow of history and is unique to us, also makes it unclear who and what is being fought in the struggle for cultural power. When looking at the process from the perspective of Conservatives/Political Islamists, although the set of contradictory values is very clear; The denial of the existence of western cultural values in the "cultural codes of society" and that they have historically been processed into these codes and become "the values that make us who we are" is one of the reasons for the failure in the struggle for cultural power. Culture, like history, is in a non-stationary flow that is always renewed and updated. While defining social culture, it is possible to pick and choose only the practices and tastes of a period within history, but it is inevitable that this will give wrong results. Conservative/Political Islamists trying to impose an "essence" on society by ignoring the flow of history and freezing history just before a process they do not deem appropriate is an example of this. Engaging in an impossible war with the flow of history leads to more fundamentally faulty analysis, to determine an inactive cultural "essence" and ultimately to the failure of the struggle. Given that history is a flowing river, Conservative/Political Islamists row upstream of this river.

Another reason for failure is that the purpose and goal are very clearly stated. Extending Bourdieu's concept of 'interest' from the individual to the mass will allow to see this. The AKP's use of State power to engage in a struggle for cultural power, and while doing this, expressing both the situation and what the target is, as can be seen clearly in the discourses, makes the 'interest' obvious. However, in all actions,

regardless of the subject, the further away from the idea of 'interest', the more likely that action will be successful in terms of 'interest'. The open execution of the strategy followed on cultural production, which is also reflected in the discourses, causes the existence of 'interest' to become obvious, and it is known by everyone that these actions are carried out by pursuing a profit. The fact that the 'interest' is so open makes it much more difficult to succeed in the struggle for cultural power.

On the other hand, there is another point where we encounter the issue of the obviousness of interest. The extraordinarily politicized use of cultural products, such as literary works by conservative intellectuals, by right-wing politicians, especially Erdoğan, and turning them into a tool of polarization, pare away their cultural values. Making these works a part of the political struggle, causes the weight of "political interest" to be added to them, which brings both obviousness and popularization of the works.

#### **3.4.2.2. "Domestic and National" Popular Culture vs. Popular Culture**

This thesis states that the AKP under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan follows a bottom-up model strategy in order to gain cultural power, and for this purpose, tries to create a "domestic and national" popular culture against the popular culture that contains western values, and explains the reasons for the failure of this strategy. Under this title, it will be shown how the efforts of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his son Bilal Erdoğan to produce popular culture are reflected in their discourses.

Participating in TÜRGEV's 2015 Graduation Ceremony and Iftar Program, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said the following in his speech;

We need an understanding of education that satisfies the hearts as well as the minds. Because today, communication tools such as television, the internet, and social media affect children and young people more than their families and educational institutions. By using these communication tools in the most effective way, we must strengthen the family and educational institutions again. Minds left empty by families and educational institutions are rapidly filled by means of communication. That's why, starting from cartoons, music, and computer games, we should transform all the tools that are effective in our children's learning about life and the world, into a part of our own education process. Our 3-year-old, 5-year-old son; should watch cartoons prepared within



the framework of our values and culture, not whatever he finds on television. (Habertürk Newspaper, June 20, 2015).

Speaking to members of the press about the Ethnosport Culture Festival in 2016, B. Erdoğan stated that families do not know what to offer their children, that children are under the bombardment of foreign cultures through television and the Internet, and said, "These activities fill a very important gap in terms of creating content for our children." (Önce Vatan Newspaper, August 29, 2016).

Later, speaking at the opening ceremony of the Ethnosports Culture Festival, which was held for the second time in 2017, B. Erdoğan stated that they wanted to strengthen, popularize and promote the traditional sports of Anatolia and said;

We are watching the economic dominance of Western civilization over the world. We see that this economic dominance does not remain only in the field of economy, but spreads to all cultural fields. If we, as Turkey, are going to be an independent nation in the 21st century, standing on its own feet, drawing its own direction, and making its own decisions for its own destiny, which is how our ancestors' heritage should be, we should not be painted with cultural colors borrowed from the West. We should paint and shape with our own cultural colors. Let's not say, 'These are only formal features.' If it were unimportant, would the economic western hegemony work to penetrate the cultural field so much? (Güneş Newspaper, May 12, 2017).

In an interview with Hakan Çelik from Posta Newspaper in 2019, B. Erdoğan said that they have managed to increase interest in archery in recent years and said, "Maybe it may not be as popular as football, but why not as much as wrestling?" (Posta Newspaper, August 23, 2019) he added.

Speaking at the press conference held for the inclusion of traditional Turkish archery in the "UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List" in 2020, B. Erdoğan said, "Our work is on the dissemination and popularization of traditional sports. We want our children to play mancala and shoot arrows." (Hürriyet Newspaper, January 10, 2020).

These examples of discourse are proof that Erdoğan and AKP are trying to create a popular culture in order to dominate the cultural field. Although the AKP has made changes in the education system with the opportunities provided by the political power, Erdoğan himself states that this is insufficient in the accumulation of cultural capital in the desired direction and that western cultural values "fill the minds" through mass

media. As stated in the previous parts of the thesis, popular culture is an expansionist culture produced for this purpose, which provides legitimation to the culture of the dominant class. Mass media is also the most effective method to ensure this spread. Again, as stated before, it is a fact that since the 1980s, the mass media have spread in Turkey, spreading popular culture to all the capillaries of society much faster. Therefore, Erdoğan's analysis is correct in this respect. However, his suggestion as a solution is to create a popular culture that “belongs to us”. Accordingly, "domestic and national" cartoons, TV series, music, computer games, magazines, and sports should be produced. The project of reviving traditional archery is the product of this popular sport creation initiative. In support of this purpose, as another popular culture product, a series called Tozkoparan İskender is broadcast on TRT (Turkish Radio and Television Corporation), the state television, to introduce archery to children, which includes time travel, superpowers, and fantastic elements. Speaking at the opening of the Traditional Sports Youth and Sports Club Facility in Ankara, B. Erdoğan stated that they attach great importance to the series and said, "TRT's Tozkoparan series has increased children's interest in archery incredibly. I watch it myself, my children watch it too. After the series started, archery clubs in Turkey could not cope with the attention of children.”<sup>44</sup>.

As a result, as it can be understood when these discourses and TV series like Tozkoparan İskender broadcast on TRT are analyzed; The AKP's effort to seize cultural power consists not in legitimizing a dominant-class culture, but in trying to make the culture of the lower classes a ‘legitimate culture’. But, as Bourdieu conceptualized, the dominant class determines what is culturally legitimate. It is not possible to achieve cultural power with a bottom to up model, and this cannot be done by publicizing it with the direct intervention of the State.

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<sup>44</sup> TRT Haber. (2021) ‘Bilal Erdoğan: The facility will give great acceleration to our traditional sports’, January 12. Available at: <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/gundem/bilal-erdogan-tesis-geleneksel-sporlarimizaya-buyuk-ivme-kazandiracak-546537.html>

### **3.4.2.3. The Religious Identity of the Cultural Power Imagined by AKP**

When we look at the content of the cultural power that Erdoğan and AKP want to establish, traditional archery in particular, it is possible to come across many discourses. An understanding of "conquest", which is told with a deep longing and which also feeds the melancholic nostalgia of Conservatives/Political Islamists, also determines the AKP's strategy in the struggle for cultural power. The "spirit of conquest", which was conveyed as a lost value in the past, should be recreated with projects such as the revival of traditional archery. This quest, which is almost like a 'soul summoning/necromancy' ritual, shows how the AKP's desired cultural power is shaped around religious discourses.

Speaking at the press conference held before the Malazgirt Victory Celebrations organized by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Archers Foundation, İBB, and the World Ethnosport Confederation, B. Erdoğan stated that Malazgirt and the year 1071 will play an important role in the formation of the new Turkey's identity and said, "If Çanakkale has become a part of our nation's common identity, once again determining our agenda, we see Malazgirt as the turning point of the Turks becoming an important element of a great ummah" (Fotomaç Newspaper, August 22, 2017). Youth and Sports Minister Osman Aşkın Bak also said, "Malazgirt is a spirit of conquest, it is the beginning of the process."

Speaking at the "Turkish Archery on the World Stage" event in Malaysia within the scope of the "Kemankeş Project" implemented in 16 countries with the cooperation of Yunus Emre Institute and Archers Foundation, B. Erdoğan said, "In the Middle Ages, our archers opened the doors of many dark walls in Europe by Allah's leave. All of this was done so that God's message could reach beyond our borders." (Yeni Söz Newspaper, November 19, 2018).

Later, speaking at the "Understanding the Conquests, Commemorating the Conquerors" symposium organized by the Archers Foundation, Foundation President Ali Haydar Yıldız said, "We, as the Archers Foundation family, are in an effort to fight this struggle with a dream of conquest and consciousness in our hearts. (...) I believe that this symposium will contribute to our understanding of civilization, history, and

homeland.” (Star Newspaper, December 29, 2018). Another speaker, the President of the Turkish Historical Society, Prof. Refik Turan said, “Conquest is understanding, philosophy, lifestyle.” Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, on the other hand, gave the speakers a range arrow within the frame on which the verse "When you threw, you didn't throw, God threw." from Surah Enfal and said the following;

The verse is not just a motto for archery. It is also a life motto. What we do is to understand the things that happen to us, not by ourselves or the intermediaries, but by seeing divine providence. Hopefully, together with the Archers Foundation and other teachers, we will be able to raise generations with this motto. This is how conquerors grow up.

Speaking at the introductory meeting of the 6th International Conquest Cup, organized by the Archers Foundation, B. Erdoğan said, “As the Archers Foundation, we need to promote our traditional archery, remember the bright ages in our past, the times when we were strong in technology, politics, and economy, and revive a consciousness of ummah and civilization once again.” (Fotomaç Newspaper, May 26, 2018).

As it can be understood from these discourses, the project of reviving traditional archery is a product of the AKP's effort to make the values that it declares to include "ummah consciousness, civilization consciousness" culturally dominant. Remembering Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's desire to raise a "religious and spiteful generation", as mentioned in the previous parts of the thesis, the great aim is to build an Islamic dominant culture by overthrowing the dominant western cultural values. The important point is that it is desired to be built on a global scale, not on a local scale. It is aimed that the current 'legitimate culture' dominated by Western values will be replaced by an Islamic dominant culture all over the world. Therefore, the struggle of Erdoğan and the AKP in the cultural field is not local but universal. Considering that, Erdoğan in his speech at the III. National Cultural Council, "The fact that the form of a cultural product is local and national does not prevent its meaning and message from being universal", the breadth of this effort can be seen much more clearly. This huge field of struggle is another reason for the AKP's failure to establish cultural power. This desire, which goes beyond the control area, exceeds the limits of a political movement's influence, although it is tried to be carried to other parts of the world, especially the Turkish geography, as can be seen in the example of the dissemination

of traditional archery. It becomes questionable whether a political movement that cannot establish its cultural power even at the local level and expresses this clearly has the possibility to establish such a power on a universal scale. Especially by competing with popular culture, this is an effort far from success when one remembers how legitimate culture is determined.

#### **3.4.2.4. Efforts to Popularize Ruling Class Sport**

In 2018, speaking at the opening ceremony of the 6th Conquest Cup Traditional Turkish Archery pre-qualifications, B. Erdoğan said, “Horse riding in Turkey was seen as either a society sport or a peasant job. This is not correct. Our ancestors traveled continents on horseback. We will be the pinnacle of both horse riding and archery today.” (Akşam Newspaper, April 14, 2018).

B. Erdoğan, who later made a speech at the 33rd Aksaray Ihlara Culture, Art and Sports Festival, stated that horse riding should not be an elite sport and said the following;

Make sure to bring your children together with traditional sports. Can those who shoot arrows here, those who watch wrestling here today, those who watch equestrian sports and performances here today, can add these to their own lives? Let's do this study. So we are the grandchildren of ancestors who wrote epics on horses. I wonder how many of us are riding horses? Is horse riding only a sport of such a limited elite, or if this is a sport of Turks, is it the sport of all Anatolia? (Yeni Şafak Newspaper, October 9, 2018).

In an interview with the Akşam Newspaper in 2019, B. Erdoğan reiterated his statements that horse riding should become widespread and said, “As the Turkish nation, we are number one in the world in horse riding. But now, either those who keep animals in the village or those who have a lot of money in the cities can ride horses. Horse riding became the sport of the rich. There is really no opportunity to ride a horse by giving 3 liras or 5 liras.” (Akşam Newspaper, October 2, 2019).

In B. Erdoğan's statements, he underlines that horse riding, which he associates with archery, is also an "ancestral tradition and skill", but complains that it has become a "bourgeois sport". It is clear that they wanted to popularize horse riding out of the domination of the ruling class as part of their effort to seize cultural power.

According to Bourdieu, sports in themselves are practices that distinguish classes. The evolution of practices, which were folk games in the past, into sports is also the work of the bourgeoisie. Bourdieu (2019: 205-237) said “We can see the totality of sports practices and consumptions offered to social agents as a supply for a certain social demand.”. He adds that the sport, which emerged from the games produced by the public, returned to the public in the form of performances produced for the public, just like in folk music, that is, it was popularized. Sport, which is also used by the ruling class for the control of the masses, makes certain sports inaccessible to everyone with its distinctive character. Sports such as football and boxing, which were previously the sports of the elite, spread to the masses over time, became "vulgar" and abandoned by the ruling class. Therefore, it is not possible for the popularization and dissemination of horse riding to have an effect on determining ‘legitimate culture’ and acquiring cultural power. When the dominant class sees that a sport that is under its dominance has become widespread, it will cut off its relationship with that sport and turn to other sports, as it was in football before, and will regard that sport as a ‘legitimate culture’. The massification of a sport does not take away the power of the ruling class to determine distinctive legitimacy. As a result, bringing a sport dominated by the upper class to the masses through a bottom to up model and popularization cannot undermine the power of the ruling class, nor change the ‘legitimate culture’.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **CONCLUSION**

The question of why the AKP, which has been holding political power for 20 years without interruption, still has not established its cultural power is a fact that needs to be examined in a country like Turkey where the impact of cultural positions on the political arena is major and one of the main factors determining the situation in this field. The fact that AKP Leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has voiced this issue openly and persistently complains about the inability to establish cultural power reveals that this is an existing and undeniable reality. However, it is obvious that there is a gap due to the lack of determination about the reasons for this situation, and this thesis aims to fill this gap. Therefore, in this thesis, I have taken as a presupposition that AKP, Conservatives/ Political Islamists could not establish cultural power, and the reasons for this failure were examined. Multiple answers have been reached in this research, which is supported by comprehensive news and discourse review.

The second part of the thesis provides an overview of the concepts that form the theoretical basis for reaching these answers. Pierre Bourdieu's determinations on concepts such as 'legitimate culture', popular culture, 'capital', 'interest', 'field', and class offer a valuable opportunity to explain the ongoing cultural power struggle in Turkey and the AKP's failure in this area. As reflected in the rhetoric of Erdoğan and other representatives of the movement, the impact of the apparent 'interest' in this struggle; the titles of the lack of cultural capital and the resistance of the 'habitus' to change, the fact that economic enrichment does not lead to the same rapid break with the tastes and pleasures of the previous class, and most basically, the determination of

whether a culture is legitimate or not is determined by those who have a high cultural capital in the dominant class and hold the dominance in this field, constitutes the theoretical foundation that leads to the answer. Likewise, the fact that the dominant class determines its own cultural practices and packs its residual products/practices, and presents them to other classes as popular culture in order to keep the distance from other classes shows that what is called popular culture is actually an illusion that aims to keep class positions stable. The fact that popular culture is a culture that has been produced to fasten class positions and cultural power, rather than to change them, forms the basis of the conclusions reached in the thesis.

There is a "spirit" myth that we can often see in the discourses of Erdoğan and other representatives of the movement. Analyzing what this concept means for Conservatives/ Political Islamists and understanding the melancholic nostalgia they could not get out of historically enabled the determination of the positions in the struggle for cultural power and revealed the roots of cultural opposition. The revealed reality has created a solid foundation for the AKP to reflect its strategy in this struggle and to determine why this strategy has failed.

In the third part of the thesis, firstly, the process leading to the establishment of AKP was examined. The benefit of this has been to reveal the historical background of how the strategy pursued by Erdoğan and his party in their struggle for cultural power was shaped. The parties that were the predecessors of the AKP, taking an aggressive attitude in the cultural field without fully establishing their power in political, economic, and other fields, led to a process that led to their closure and their representatives facing prison sentences. The devastating impact of the February 28 "post-modern coup" has instilled in Conservative/ Political Islamists the idea that cultural power must be achieved in a more evolutionary way. The AKP, which was established under the leadership of Erdoğan, declared a 'break with the past' with the rhetoric of "we changed shirts", adopted a liberal discourse, took a structure similar to the Christian Democrats in Europe as an example, and re-entered the political scene with its "conservative democrat" identity. It was an important break for Erdoğan to see that he could not seize dominance in every field, but especially in the cultural field, by open war. For this reason, in the period until 2012, the struggle for dominance in



political and economic fields struggled, and the efforts in the cultural field remained in the background. Since 2012, this position of secondaries has changed and visible steps have been taken in the cultural field. With full dominance in the political field, especially with the 2010 referendum, and the making of power centers such as the media, judiciary, and the army, it has now been possible to act comfortably in the cultural field.

Erdoğan and AKP think that it is essential to be able to use the power of the State in order to become dominant in the cultural field. The fact that they see the lifetime of political power and the chance of success in the struggle for cultural power in inseparable integrity also shapes the "hurried" strategy pursued by the AKP for this purpose. Ironically, this strategy is similar to Kemalism, which AKP ideologically opposed, which implemented the western modernization project with the proclamation of the Republic in Turkey. The purpose of this determination is to reach one of the reasons for the failure by clarifying the fundamental difference between the two periods. Western cultural values in Turkey have already been brought to the level of 'legitimate culture' by the ruling class even before the Republican regime, especially since the Tanzimat period. Kemalism tried to spread a culture that had already become a 'legitimate culture' to the whole society with the direct intervention of the State. It can be said with certainty that this effort led to the consolidation of the legitimacy of this culture rather than whether it achieved its purpose or not. But the situation facing Erdoğan and his party is fundamentally different. While Kemalism is trying to spread a legitimate culture, today the AKP wants to destroy the existing cultural legitimacy and replace it with another 'legitimate culture'. Although the strategies contain similar elements, the key the AKP holds in order to gain cultural power does not fit in the keyhole.

The dominant class determines the 'legitimate culture'. However, when we look at the AKP's actions and discourses in order to establish cultural power, it is clearly seen that it is intended to create a popular culture and, in this way, to dominate on a global scale. In other words, this effort is an attempt to attack not only the current dominant culture but also the culture's legitimacy system. However, there is no indication of being conscious of this. The aim is to popularize a cultural value/practice that has been pulled

from the past and 'revived' instead of the western cultural values that are said to surround the society, and in this way to change the dominant culture. One of these values/practices and the most important one is traditional archery. The fact that the Archers Foundation, which was established for this revival project, is under the direct influence of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan through his son, and that all the power of the State is being used for these foundations and activities is proof of this.

As a result, the answers of this thesis to the questions about why the AKP could not establish cultural power and why the project of reviving traditional archery could not be successful in this sense are as follows:

- Traditional archery was not created by the ruling class but was designed as a popular culture that was augmented by the power and facilities of the State. As clearly reflected in the discourses, it is aimed to be popularized and it is intended to be spread to everyone. However, 'legitimate culture' is determined by the ruling class. It is obvious that a mass cultural value or practice will not be adopted by the ruling class and will be excluded. Therefore, by following a bottom-up model, it is not possible to determine, change or undermine 'legitimate culture' through popular culture, and ultimately establish cultural power. AKP is almost in the whirlpool of popular culture and tries to determine the dominant culture with only popular value/practice production without producing high culture.

- According to Bourdieu, human actions are for 'interest', whether economic or not. However, people do not act consciously for 'interest'. They work in a subconscious way, and individuals often do not realize that they are pursuing an 'interest'. In fact, the further individuals are away from the consciousness of self-interest in their actions, the more likely that action will be successful in terms of 'interest'. When we expand the concept of 'interest' from the individual to the social scale, the reason for AKP's failure in this area can be clearly seen. As reflected in the discourses, the 'interests' of the AKP are seen, heard, and aware of by everyone, almost visibly. This situation, which we can express as the announcement of the purpose, causes everyone to know what the AKP is against, and what it wants to overthrow and replace. This situation is one of the challenging obstacles that prevent it from succeeding.

- Conservative/ Political Islamists with a deep melancholy nostalgia have the idea that they can freeze the course of history whenever they wish, and that what is "domestic and national" is before that moment. While this view thinks that it can fasten history, it also ignores the fluidity of culture. They do not accept that the process of westernization, which they consider "not from us," is also a part of history and that it has become an element of us by being embedded in our social culture. It is clear that the AKP ignores the historical experiences of the society and tries to impose an "essence" on the society as it desires, by ignoring the cultural values and forms that we have ingrained into our cultural genes by blending them with values from "us," is clearly against the flow of history. There is no obstacle that can stand in the way of history and stabilize it.

- AKP sees the possibility of obtaining cultural power as inseparable from its lifetime in political power. Due to the need to hurry, it is in need of the direct intervention of the State. The project of reviving traditional archery, identified with the Archers Foundation, is so dependent on the power and possibilities of the State that it seems very difficult to continue if the AKP loses political power. Both financial and other support from State institutions and companies, especially ministries and municipalities, keep this project alive. It is extremely difficult for a culture that came out of the hands of the State, not the ruling class, to survive when this support is cut off.

- The conditions of the 21st century we live in and the conditions of the 1920s-30s are extraordinarily different from each other. In the 1920s-30s, when cultural and social engineering practices were encountered in many countries, the influence of the State in this area was quite high. Likewise, in the case of Turkey, along with the Republican revolution, there are also extensive opportunities brought by the establishment of a new State. It is much more possible to apply social engineering in an environment where the mass media has not developed yet, the literacy rate is very low in the society and the State can have a monopoly in every field. Today, however, it is extremely difficult for the State to establish a monopoly in the cultural field and to establish a cultural construction from it, under today's conditions, excluding closed totalitarian regimes. Especially in the internet age we live in, monopoly-breaking freedom areas

in terms of cultural production have expanded to a great extent. Although it is not ignored that the dominant class determines the 'legitimate culture', today everyone can be a cultural content producer in some way, even if they cannot transform the dominant culture. Therefore, it is possible for it to be a manipulation by the State, but not a cultural imposition.

- It is reflected in the discourses of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan that he desires to replace the universalized western cultural values and practices with a cultural set that he conceptualizes as "domestic and national." However, the scale of this demand goes beyond the borders of Turkey and carries a desire for universality. Again, as can be seen in their discourse, it is desired that the current 'legitimate culture' dominated by Western values should be replaced by an Islamic dominant culture all over the world. It is certainly not possible for a political movement that has not yet succeeded in this effort even locally, to achieve this on a global scale. The AKP has neither such power nor the facilities to do so. Especially since the 1980s, the rapid spread of mass media has allowed popular cultural forms adorned with western cultural values to spread to all capillaries of the country. This situation not only widened the acceptance of cultural legitimacy but also caused very serious influences on Conservative/ Political Islamists, whether consciously or not. Especially organizations like 'baby shower' parties with sherbet by the Islamic bourgeois who increased their economic capital in these years and the middle class who unconsciously imitate them, Islamic rap and hip-hop songs, conservative clothing fashion shows, five-star 'haremlük-selamlık' conservative hotels are examples of this influence and transformation. AKP, on the other hand, tries to counteract and change the dominant culture by creating its own popular culture, despite the spread of western cultural forms through popular culture. But fighting popular culture through popular culture is a futile effort. Because while the first popular culture, which includes western cultural values, is formed by the hand and influence of the dominant class; the latter popular culture, which AKP claims to contain "domestic and national" values, is formed by the state and under the influence of the state, as seen in the traditional archery project. This fundamental difference is one of the reasons why the AKP failed to establish cultural power.

- In the discourses of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, his son Bilal Erdoğan and other representatives of the movement, the existence, and power of a global western dominant culture is accepted. However, while struggling against this power, it is ignored that this culture is a part of capitalism. The AKP, which is the executor of capitalist economic policies in Turkey, is experiencing an internal conflict in its struggle. It is an impossible desire to both defend capitalism in an economic sense and try to overthrow the dominant culture with the project of reviving the past, which is conceptualized with the phrase "domestic and national." The current capitalist order and the culture of this system entered the country as a package and spread. Likewise, separating culture and economy from each other with clear lines and evaluating the infrastructure/ superstructure duality in this context is not a correct method in today's society. Therefore, the state of being in-between and the lack of analysis or the inability to give up on capitalism also bring failure.

In conclusion, it is not possible to determine a high culture by the State since continuity cannot be ensured and there is no dominant class contribution. What the State can do in the field of culture is to create facilitating opportunities for individuals to access high culture. In the case of the AKP, what needs to be done in order to change the dominant culture is to create and encourage opportunities that will enable individuals from its own base, who are in the dominant class, with high economic capital and low cultural capital, to increase their cultural capital. The way to determine what the 'legitimate culture' will be is to dominate the cultural field, which consists of those with high cultural capital among the dominant class.

As a result, in this thesis, the reason why AKP failed to establish cultural power was discussed through discourse analysis, and many answers were obtained. In the face of the problems that its predecessors have faced in the past, AKP preferred an evolutionary model to gain cultural power, but despite its 20 years of uninterrupted political power, it has failed in this regard. While investigating the reasons for this failure, this thesis took the efforts to popularize traditional archery, initiated by the AKP as a "revival of the past" project, as an example of this struggle, and concluded that creating popular culture against legitimate culture failed for this purpose and will continue to do so in this way. It is the dominant class that determines the 'legitimate

culture' and creates the popular culture from residual values/products in order to maintain the distances between the classes. Therefore, it is not possible to determine 'legitimate culture' with a bottom-up model by producing a popular culture by the state.

It can be clearly seen from the AKP example that obtaining political power does not guarantee cultural power. It can even be said that the failure of the AKP in the struggle for cultural power will result in the loss of its political power at the end of 20 years. Today, the fact that the party is in a process of dissolution and disintegration can be clearly seen from the fact that the names involved in its establishment broke away one by one and went into different quests. History will show us how the failure of the AKP, which followed a different strategy after the failures of its predecessor parties, to establish cultural power will set an example for the party that will represent the Conservative/ Political Islamists after the AKP.

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## APPENDICES

### A. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP) Genel Başkanı ve Cumhurbaşkanı Recep Tayyip Erdoğan 2017 yılında Ensar Vakfı'nın 38. Genel Kurulu'nda yaptığı konuşmada “Siyasi olarak iktidar olmak başka bir şeydir. Sosyal ve kültürel iktidar ise başka bir şeydir. Biz on dört yıldır kesintisiz, hamdolsun, siyasi iktidarı. Ama hâlâ sosyal ve kültürel iktidarımız konusunda sıkıntılarımız var.” ifadelerini kullanmıştır. Kültürel iktidar gibi bir kavramın bu denli net bir şekilde ifade edilmesi ve gündelik siyasetin konusu haline gelmesi, Erdoğan'ın kendi parti tabanına yönelik olarak defaatle bu eksiklik konusunda çağrılarda bulunması ve bu çağrı dozajının yıldan yıla artması, Türkiye'yi 20 yıldır aralıksız olarak tek başına yöneten ve siyasi, iktisadi ve diğer pek çok alanda iktidarını kurmayı başaran bir siyasal hareketin neden kültürel alanda bu başarıyı yakalayamadığı sorusunu araştırılmaya değer konulardan biri haline getirmiştir. Türkiye'nin siyasal pozisyonlar ile kültürel sermaye ve değerlerin iç içe geçtiği, oy verme davranışlarının da kültürel kimliklerle yoğun paralellik gösterdiği bir ülke olması nedeniyle, kültürel iktidar üzerindeki mücadelenin incelenmesi, hem güncel siyaset, hem de akademik açıdan çok daha önem kazanmaktadır. Bu çerçevede, tezde temel olarak, AKP'nin liderliğini üstlendiği Muhafazakâr/Siyasal İslamcı hareketin neden kültürel iktidarını kuramadığının ve bu çabasında hangi strateji ve yöntemleri izlediğinin açıklanması amaçlanmıştır.

Bu başarısızlığın nedenleri araştırılırken, AKP Genel Başkanı Erdoğan'ın ve diğer parti önde gelenlerinin sıklıkla ve çok net bir şekilde kültürel iktidarı kuramadıklarını ifade etmeleri nedeniyle, bu durum bir ön kabul olarak alınmış, AKP'nin başını çektiği

siyasal hareket kültürel iktidarını kurabildi mi sorusu değil, kültürel iktidarı neden kuramadığı sorusu tartışılmıştır. Bu durumun nedenleri konusunda bir tespitin var olmamasından dolayı bir boşluğun olduğu aşikârdır ve bu tez bu boşluğu doldurmayı hedeflemiştir. Kültürel iktidarın kurulamadığına dair bizzat hareketin liderinin ve diğer temsilcilerinin beyanlarının aksini kanıtlayacak somut gerçekliklerin de olmaması tezin ön kabulünü desteklemektedir. Gündelik hayatın ve toplumsal ilişkilerin muhafazakârlaştığına dair bir sav, kültürel iktidarın el değiştirdiğine dair bir sonuç yaratmamaktadır. Çünkü bunların kültürel iktidara kimin sahip olduğu üzerindeki etkisi oldukça sınırlıdır. Kültürel iktidarın kimde olduğu ve nasıl elde edildiği de bu tezde detaylıca irdelenmektedir.

Türkiye’de Muhafazakâr/Siyasal İslamcı hareketin neden kültürel iktidarını kuramadığı sorusu tartışılırken, öncelikle neden farklı iktidar alanları olduğu irdelenmiştir. Türkiye’de süren mücadelenin anlaşılabilmesi amacıyla, Bourdieu’nun kapsamlı kavram setinden yararlanılmış, kültür, iktidar, sınıf, güç ilişkileri, toplumsal yapı ile eylemler üzerine yaptığı çalışmalar aktarılmış, yıllar içinde çok sayıda eserinde açıkladığı çıkar, sermaye, kültürel ve simgesel sermaye, meşru kültür, habitus, alan ve toplumsal sınıflar kavramları incelenmiştir. Bu tezin ulaştığı cevapların temelini de oluşturan, hakim kültürü hangi sınıfın belirlediği, hakim kültürün meşruiyetinin nasıl sağlandığı ve popüler kültürün bu amaçla nasıl oluştuğu yönündeki çözümlemelerine de yer verilmiştir.

Bugün AKP’nin kültürel iktidarı ele geçirmek amacıyla izlediği stratejinin, geçmişten alınan ve diriltilmeye çalışılan bazı kültürel değer ve pratikleri popülerleştirmek, bu yolla da hakim kültürü belirlemek olduğu pek çok örnekle sabittir. Hakim kültürün ne olduğuna ise Bourdieu’nun çalışmalarında yanıt bulmak mümkündür. Bourdieu, Max Weber’den devraldığı ‘meşruiyet’ kavramını, simgesel iktidar olarak yeniden tanımlar. Ona göre kültürel pratikler ve ürünler arasında da aynı toplumsal sınıflarda olduğu gibi bir hiyerarşi bulunmaktadır. Dolayısıyla kimi pratik ve ürünler diğerlerine göre daha meşrudur. Hiçbir eser veya ürün içsel değerler taşımaz, onlara meşruiyet tanınır. Bu meşruiyet ise, toplumsal sınıfların, ama asıl olarak hakim sınıfın onlara atfettiği değere göre belirlenir.

Hakim sınıfın böylesi bir meşruiyet belirleme gücünü elinde bulundurması, toplumsal hiyerarşiyi belirleme ve sürekli olarak yeniden üretme gücüne de sahip olması anlamına gelmektedir. Kültürü “bilmek” ve “kabul etmek” iki farklı durumdur ve toplumsal sınıfları birbirlerinden farklılaştıran unsurlardan da biri olarak belirir. Alt sınıflar, meşru kültürü farkında olmaksızın, benimseme ve kabullenme tutumu sergilerler. Bu uyum sağlama çabası, tahakküme boyun eğmeyi de beraberinde getirir. Hakim sınıf dışındaki sınıfların, egemen kültürü meşru görmelerini ve üstünlüğünü kabul etmelerini sağlayan, toplumsal hiyerarşide yükselme arzuları vardır. Ancak bu sınıflar meşru kültürün pratikleri konusunda gerekli nitelik ve imkânlardan yoksundur. Dolayısıyla bu pratik ve ürünlerin minör versiyonları ile hakim sınıfı taklit etmeye çalışırlar.

Taklit ediliyor olmak, hakim sınıf için meşruiyet sağlasa da, sınıflar için bir tehdit olarak belirir. Çünkü bir beğeni ve pratik fazla yaygınlaşırsa değerini yitirir. Ne hakim sınıf, ne de küçük burjuvazi alt sınıfların kendi pratik ve beğenilerine ulaşabilmesini, ayrıcalıklarını yitirmemek için istememektedir. Bu amaçla sınıflar alt sınıflarla aralarındaki mesafeyi korumak ve kapanmasını önlemek için ayırım mekanizmasını devreye sokarlar. Alt sınıflardan ayrışabilmek için, taklit edilen ve ayrıcalığı yitirme tehlikesi beliren ürün ve pratikleri değiştirmeye, yeni ürünler tüketmeye, yeni beğeniler geliştirmeye yönelirler. İşte bu noktada, AKP'nin meşru olanı belirleme gücünü elde edebilmek ve hakim kültürü belirleyebilmek için hangi yolu izlediği sorusu öne çıkmaktadır. Bu sorunun cevaplanabilmesi için popüler kültür ve onun işlevi anlaşılmalıdır.

Bourdieu'ya göre kültürel beğeniler sınıfsal konumlara “zorunluluğun seçimleri” olarak doğrudan bağlıdır. Bu seçim, sınıflar arası mesafeleri kalıcılaştırma işlevi gördüğü gibi, aynı zamanda, evrensel olarak eşit dağıılmamış olan avantajların farkında olunmaksızın benimsetilmesidir. Ona göre, popüler kültürün popülist övgüsünü yaparak, popüler kültüre meşruiyet sağlamaya çalışmak bilinçli bir çabanın ürünüdür. Bu çaba, yüksek kültür alanının ürünlerine diğer sınıfların ulaşımını engellemek, bir uzaklık algısını bilinçaltlarına yerleştirmek ve böylece kendi kültürel değerlerinin bozulmasını önlemek için hakim sınıf tarafından örgütlenmektedir. Dolayısıyla popüler kültür, hakim kültürün değersizleşmiş biçimlerinden başka bir şey

değildir ve alt sınıfların bu 'artık' ürünlere ısındırılma çabası meşru kültür yaratmanın en zahmetsiz yöntemlerinden biridir.

Bir pratik yaygınlaştıkça ayırt edici özelliğini yitirir ve dolayısıyla da meşruiyetini yitirir. Dolayısıyla popülerleşmiş ve yaygınlaşmış, özellikle Devlet gücü kullanılarak halka aşılacak istenilen bir kültürel aktivitenin, örneğin bu tezde incelendiği üzere geleneksel okçuluğun, bir meşruiyet sağlaması mümkün değildir. Kültürel eser, değer, pratik veya aktivitelerin yaygınlaşması, onların değerini azaltmaktadır. Tüm toplumun benimsemesi ve uygulaması istenilen geleneksel okçuluk gibi bir kültürel aktivitenin, hakim kültür olarak meşruiyet kazanması bu karşıtlık içeren ilişki nedeniyle gerçekleşmemektedir. Yani hakim sınıf içerisinde kültürel sermayesi yüksek olanların belirlediği kültürel meşruiyetin, sermayesi yüksek olanların katkısı olmadan, başka bir deyişle hakim sınıfın etki ve katkısı olmadan, alt sınıflar eliyle belirlenebilmesi mümkün değildir. Kültürel bir pratiğin, değerini ya da ürünün meşruiyet kaynağı siyasi iktidarı elinde tutanların arzusu değildir. Devlet eliyle ancak meşru bir kültürün, bu meşruiyetinin pekiştirilmesi sağlanabilir. Cumhuriyetin kuruluşunda Kemalizmin girişim ve çabaları da bu pekiştirme işlevini görmüştür. Öyleyse AKP'nin hakim sınıf üzerinden değil de, alt sınıflar üzerinden ve Devlet'in gücünü kullanarak kültürel alanda iktidarını kurmaya çalışmasına yol açan sebepler nelerdir ve AKP'nin bu amaçla izlediği strateji Türkiye'nin hangi tarihsel sürecinde yaşananlarla benzeşmektedir? Bu sorulara cevap bulabilmek için, öncelikle Muhafazakâr/Siyasal İslamcılarının içerisinde bulunduğu duygu hali ve gecikmişlik hissiyatının kökleri incelenmelidir.

Tezde detaylıca aktarıldığı üzere, Muhafazakâr/Siyasal İslamcı tabanda tarihsel süreç içerisinde şekillenmiş, katılmış ve yaratıcılığı engelleyen bir mazlumluk hali ve buna bağlı olarak büyüyen bir 'geç kalmışlık hissiyatı' bulunmaktadır. Bu hissiyat AKP'nin izlediği stratejinin de kaynağı olmaktadır. Türkiye muhafazakârları üzerinde derin etkileri olan Bergson'un düşüncesinde, muhafazakar bir modernlik arayışında, bugün ile geçmiş arasında bir kopukluk olmaksızın tarihe bir bütün olarak bakmak doğru olmalıdır. 'Süre' kavramını kullanan Bergson, zamanın parçalanamaz olduğunu, parçalanmasının niteliğini kaybetmesi anlamına geleceğini ifade etmektedir. Geçmiş, şimdinin de bir parçasıdır. Cumhuriyet devriminin geçmişten her alanda radikal bir

kopuşu simgelemesi, muhafazakârlığın geçmişten kopma anksiyetesini besleyen bir unsura dönüşmüştür. Muhafazakâr düşünce için geçmiş, gerçekte öyle olmasa da, her daim mükemmel olan bir hatıradır. Bu romantizm, beraberinde toplumun özünde bir ruh olduğu anlayışını da beraberinde getirir ki Edmund Burke'e göre de bir ulusun gerçek anayasası kâğıt üzerinde değil, ruhundadır. Dolayısıyla toplum "sözleşme" gibi rasyonel kavramlarla değil, olduğu düşünülen bir ortak ruh mantığı ile açıklanır. Başta Recep Tayyip Erdoğan olmak üzere AKP yöneticilerinin defaatle dile getirdiği "Fetih ruhu yaşayacak" tarzı söylemler ve okçulukla ilgili çabaları tam olarak muhafazakârlığın "ruh" mitine uymakta ve geçmişin mükemmelliğine olan inancı yansıtmaktadır. Milliyetçilik ile daima dirsek temasında olan muhafazakârlık, daima bir şanlı geçmiş hatırasını oluşturma ve diri tutma çabasıdır. Günümüz Türkiye siyasetinde Cumhur İttifakı'nda cisimleşen bu temas, özellikle son yıllarda git gide daha da önem verilir hale gelen Malazgirt Savaşı anma törenlerinde, Selçuklu Devleti övgülerinde ve geleneksel okçuluk girişimlerinde daha da belirginleşmektedir.

Muhafazakârlar ve Siyasal İslamcılar için en önemli düşünce insanlarından birisi olan Necip Fazıl Kısakürek 'Büyük Doğu' olarak kavramlaştırdığı düşünce, benliğinden kopmak istemeyen Anadolu insanının ruh davasının simgesi olarak belirlemektedir. Erdoğan da özellikle partisinin genç tabanına yönelik sıklıkla dile getirdiği "manevi ruh, milli itikat" gibi söylemleri Necip Fazıl'dan almaktadır. Bu anlayışa göre siyasal iktidara ulaşmanın yanı sıra, asıl aranan ve sağlanması gereken o ruhtur. Erdoğan da o ruhun kaybolduğunu, kültürde, edebiyatta, sanatta bu ruhun yer alamadığını, istenen seviyeye gelinemediğini ısrarla ifade etmektedir. Dolayısıyla kaybolan ve aranıp bulunması gereken bir ruh anlayışı, muhafazakar-İslamcı camianın melankolisini besleyen, yoksunluk halini oluşturan, geçmişe dönük bir hasreti körükleyerek nostaljik unsur katan bir duygu hali yaratmaktadır. Bu duygu, muhafazakar-İslamcılarının, modernizm karşısında devamlı bir savunma halinde kalmalarına, ezilmişlik, dışlanmışlık ve horlanma ile karşı karşıya kaldıklarını düşünmelerine, nihayetinde bir mazlum olarak kendilerini konumlandırmalarına neden olmaktadır. Kısakürek'in ünlü Sakarya Şiiri'nde geçen "Öz yurdunda garip, öz vatanında parya" dizesi de, bu ezilmişlik ve mazlumluk duygusunun en net örneklerinden birisidir.

Erdoğan ve partisi için siyasi iktidara sahip olmayı sürdürmek, kültürel iktidar mücadelesinde başarıya ulaşabilmek için hayati öneme yükselmektedir ve partinin bu mücadeledeki stratejisini de ortaya çıkarmaktadır. AKP, Cumhuriyet döneminde, 1923-1950 yılları arasında süren tek parti dönemi hariç, en uzun süre siyasi iktidarı elinde bulunduran parti durumundadır ve bu konumunu bugün için sürdürmeye devam etmektedir. Bu kadar uzun süre boyunca, tek başına siyasi iktidarda bulunması, Devlet gücünün de her alandaki iktidar kurma çabasında tüm imkânları ile kullanılmasını beraberinde getirmiştir. Öyleyse bu noktaya nasıl ve ne şartlar altında gelinmiştir? AKP'nin önceliği ne olmuştur?

AKP, 2012 öncesi olarak sınırlandırdığım ilk döneminde kültürel alanı ele geçirmek için büyük bir çaba içinde olmamıştır. Önceliği siyasi ve iktisadi alandaki hakimiyetini kurmaya ve güçlendirmeye vermiş, medyayı, yargıyı, orduyu ve kurumları etkisi altına almak için adımlar atmış, daha sonra kültürel alan üzerine yoğunlaşmaya başlamıştır. Bu tercihin nedeni, AKP'nin ilk döneminde kültürel alanı önemsiz görmesi değildir. Aksine, nihai hedef kültürel iktidarı kurmak olmuş, ancak daha önceki deneyimler göz önüne alınarak farklı bir yol izlenmiştir. Daha önceki deneyim ise Refah Partisi ve “post-modern darbe” olarak adlandırılan 28 Şubat sürecidir. 28 Şubat, Refah ve Fazilet Partilerinin kapatılması, Erdoğan'ın Siirt'te, Ziya Gökalp'in sonradan değiştirilmiş bir şiirini okuması ve 10 ay hapis cezasına mahkûm edilmesi gibi gelişmeler, daha sonraları şekillenecek stratejiye giden yolun taşlarını döşemiştir. Yeni gelişen Muhafazakâr/ Siyasal İslamcı burjuvazi mevcut hakim sınıfın karşısında ringe adım atar atmaz, var olan kurumsal yapıların şiddetli tepkisiyle karşılaşmış ve ringeden zorla atılmıştır. Özellikle siyasal İslamcıların Devlet'in tüm kurumları ve sivil toplumun işbirliğinde tasfiye edilmesi iki sonuca yol açmıştır. Birincisi, 28 Şubat sürecinde daha da belirginleşen ve geniş bir kesimin hayatını derinden etkileyen mağduriyetler, Türkiye'deki siyaset düzlemini etkileyecek ölçüde bir öfke birikimine neden olmuştur. İkincisi ise, Refah Partisi ve Fazilet Partisi içindeki, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan ve Abdullah Gül'ün liderliğini üstlendiği ‘Yenilikçi Kanat’, başka bir siyaset tarzı izlemek için gerekli ortama kavuşmuş ve bu yolda tabanlarından destek de bulmuşlardır.

28 Şubat sürecinin ortaya çıkardığı şok dalgası, Devlet içerisindeki hakim güç odakları üzerinde etkin olmadan siyasi, iktisadi ve kültürel alanlarda hakimiyet kurma imkanı olmadığını göstermiştir. Dolayısıyla daha evrimsel bir model, Yenilikçi Kanat'ın sahipleneceği yeni kimliğin de temelini oluşturmuştur. Bu noktada Erdoğan'ın liderliğindeki grup, liberal bir söylemle, Avrupa'daki Hristiyan Demokratlar benzeri bir yapıyı kendisine örnek alarak, 'muhafazakâr demokrat' kimliğiyle yeniden yapılanmıştır. Erdoğan, siyasi, iktisadi ve kültürel alanlar üzerindeki hakimiyetin, var olan kurumsal yapılara karşı açıktan bir savaşa girişilerek ele geçirilemeyeceğini farketmiş ve bunun olacağına inanmayı da hayalperestlik olarak görmüştür. Türkiye'de hakim sınıfın, Devlet ile sivil toplumun tüm kurumsal yapılarında çok güçlü olduğunu ve Milli Görüş kimliğiyle atılacak her adımda bu güçlerin yeniden karşısına çıkacağını görmüştür.

Bu süreç sonrası tek başına iktidara gelen AKP, ilk on yılında siyasi ve iktisadi hakimiyetini büyük oranda kurmuş, 28 Şubat benzeri bir müdahale ile karşılaşmayacağı ortamı sağlamıştır. Bürokrasi, ordu, yargı ve sivil toplumu hakimiyeti altına alan AKP, 2012 yılı itibariyle kültürel iktidarını kurmak için daha görünür adımlar atmaya hazır hale gelmiştir. Bu güce kavuşmasıyla birlikte kültürel iktidar için daha görünür adımlar atmaya başlayan AKP'nin bu amaçla izlediği stratejide, ilginçtir ki, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin kuruluşuyla hayata geçirilen Kemalizm pratikleriyle hem benzeyen hem de ayrışan yönler bulunmaktadır.

Toplumsal hayat içerisindeki bir alanın hakimiyetinin el değiştirmesi, diğer alanlarda da bu değişimin yaşanacağını garantisini vermemektedir. Bourdieu'nun (2015) toplumsal hayatın dört temel alanı olarak saydığı siyasi, iktisadi, sembolik ve kültürel alanlar içerisinde, hakimiyetin en kolay değişebildiği alan olarak siyasal alan gözükmekteyken, kültürel alan ise en zorlu alandır. Bunun nedeni, bir alanda hakim olabilmek için o alanla ilgili sermaye sahibi olmanız gerekliliğidir. Sermaye türleri birbirlerine çevrilebilir olsa da, kültürel sermaye biriktirmek için tek başına yeterli değildir. Çünkü bunun için belli bir ön sermaye ve habitusa sahip olunması gerekir ki bu aileden miras kalan bir aşinalık sayesinde ya da eğitimle elde edilebilir (Wacquant, 2014: 65). Dolayısıyla kültürel sermaye bir jenerasyonda edinilmesi çok zor olan bir sermaye türüdür. Buradan anlaşılmaktadır ki, kültürel alanda hakimiyet kurabilmek

için öncelikle o alanla ilgili sermaye sahibi olunması ve bu alana uygun habitusun varlığı gerekmektedir. Ancak Muhafazakar/Siyasal İslamcı hareket, kültürel alanda hakim konuma gelebilmek için Devlet gücünü kullanabilmenin şart olduğunu düşünmektedir. Bunun altında yatan neden ise, siyasi iktidarın olası bir kaybı durumunda, kültürel hegemonyayı ele geçirme hedefine de ulaşamayacağına olan inançtır. Bu inanç, Muhafazakar/Siyasal İslamcı hareketin aceleci davranmasına, sermaye biriktirecek birkaç jenerasyon ve oluşacak bir habitus gerektiren süreci Devlet gücü kullanarak hızlandırma ihtiyacı hissetmesine neden olmaktadır.

Tezde, Kemalizmin batılı kültürel değerleri tüm topluma Devletin güç ve kaynaklarını kullanarak yaygınlaştırmaya çalışmasıyla, farklı bir kültür için olsa da AKP'nin de aynı imkânları kullanarak benzer bir çaba içerisinde olmasının strateji olarak benzeştiği savunulmaktadır. Ancak bu noktadaki temel farklılığın, Kemalizmin hali hazırda meşru olmuş bir kültürü topluma yaygınlaştırmak istemesiyle, AKP'nin meşru olan kültüre karşı, başka bir kültürü hakim konuma yükseltmeye çalışması olduğu detaylarıyla açıklanmaktadır. Bu farklılığın, AKP'nin neden kültürel iktidarını kuramadığının temel nedenlerinden birisi olduğu savunulmaktadır.

Tezde, AKP'nin kültürel iktidarı elde edebilmek için oluşturmaya çalıştığı bir popüler kültür örneği olarak 'geleneksel okçuluğun ihyası' projesi incelenmiştir. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan'ın oğlu Bilal Erdoğan'ın Mütevelli Heyeti üyesi olduğu Okçular Vakfı eliyle yürütülen bu projenin, Devlet'in tüm gücüyle hem siyasi hem de mali olarak nasıl desteklendiği aktarılmaktadır. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan başta olmak üzere, Bilal Erdoğan ve bu projede görev alan önemli isimlerin geleneksel okçuluk ve buna bağlı olarak kültür üzerine söylemleri incelenmiş, bu vakfın organize ettiği Fetih Kupası ve Malazgirt Zaferi Kutlama Törenleri'nin içeriklerinde bu stratejinin izleri aranmıştır. AKP'nin kültürel iktidarı ele geçirebilmek için bir popüler kültür yaratmaya ve bunu toplumun tüm kesimlerine yaymaya çalıştığını göstermeyi, Muhafazakâr/Siyasal İslamcılarının geçmişte kalmış bir değeri yeniden hayata döndürebilmek için verdikleri çabada açıkça görülebilen melankolik nostaljinin izlerini tespit etmeyi, izlenen strateji çerçevesinde siyasi iktidarı elde tutmanın verdiği imkanla, Devlet'in güç ve kaynaklarının nasıl kültürel iktidar kurabilmek için seferber edildiğini ispatlanması amaçlanmıştır. Bu amaçla, Okçular Vakfı'nın kurulmasını takiben, 2013-2021 tarihleri



arasında belirlenen 40 ulusal gazetede, geleneksel okçulukla ilgili çıkan tüm haber ve yazılar incelenmiştir. Bu çerçevede araştırmada temel olarak, AKP'nin liderliğini üstlendiği siyasi hareketin neden kültürel iktidarını kuramadığı ve bu çabasında hangi strateji ve yöntemleri izlediğinin açıklanması amaçlanmıştır. Geleneksel okçuluğun nasıl ve ne amaçla popülerleştirilmeye çalışıldığı, arka planda bu isteği besleyen unsurların neler olduğu, AKP'nin kendi popüler kültürünü neden ve nasıl oluşturmak istediği, kurulmak istenilen kültürel iktidarın nasıl bir kimliğe sahip olduğu sorularına da yanıt aranmıştır. Bunlarla ilgili detaylı söylem örnekleri paylaşılmıştır.

Sonuç olarak bu tezin, AKP'nin kültürel iktidarı neden kuramadığı ve geleneksel okçuluğun ihyası projesinin de bu anlamda neden başarılı olamayacağına dair sorulara verdiği yanıtlar şunlardır:

Geleneksel okçuluk, hakim sınıf eliyle oluşturulmuş değil, Devlet'in güç ve imkanlarıyla büyütülen bir popüler kültür olarak tasarlanmıştır. Bunun popülerleştirilmesinin hedeflendiği ve herkese yaygınlaştırılmak istendiği de söylemlere açıkça yansımaktadır. Ancak meşru kültür, hakim sınıf eliyle belirlenmektedir. Kitleselleşen bir kültürel değer ya da pratiğin hakim sınıf tarafından benimsenmeyeceği ve dışlanacağı ortadadır. Dolayısıyla aşağıdan yukarıya bir model izleyerek, yani popüler kültür yoluyla meşru kültürü belirleyebilmek, değiştirebilmek veya gücünü sarsabilmek, sonuçta da kültürel iktidarı kurabilmek mümkün değildir. AKP adeta popüler kültür girdabındadır ve yüksek kültür üretmeden, sadece popüler değer/pratik üretimiyle, hakim kültür belirlemeye çalışmaktadır.

Bourdieu'ya göre insan eylemleri, iktisadi olsun veya olmasın çıkar amaçlıdır. Ancak insanlar çıkar için bilinçli olarak hareket etmezler. Bunlar bilinçaltı bir yolla işlerler ve bireyler genellikle bir çıkar peşinde koştuklarını fark etmezler. Hatta bireyler eylemlerinde çıkar bilincinden ne denli uzak olurlarsa, o eylemin çıkar anlamında başarıya ulaşma ihtimali de artmaktadır. Çıkar kavramını bireyselden toplumsal ölçüğe genişlettiğimizde, AKP'nin bu alandaki başarısızlığının nedeni açıkça görülebilmektedir. Söylemlere de yansıdığı üzere, AKP'nin çıkarı neredeyse gözle görülecek kadar bariz bir şekilde herkes tarafından görülmekte, duyulmakta ve farkında olunmaktadır. Amacın anonsu olarak ifade edebileceğimiz bu durum, herkesin AKP'nin neye karşı olduğunu, neyi alaşağı edip yerine neyi geçirmek

istediğinin bilinmesine yol açmaktadır. Bu durum da başarıya ulaşmanın önündeki önemli engellerden biri olmaktadır.

Derin bir melankolik nostaljiye sahip Muhafazakâr/İslamcılar, tarihin akışını diledikleri anda dondurabildikleri ve “yerli ve milli” olanın o andan öncesi olduğuna dair bir fikre sahiptir. Bu görüş, tarihi sabitleyebileceğini düşündüğü gibi, kültürün akışkanlığını da yok saymaktadır. “Bizden olmayan” saydıkları batılılaşma sürecinin de tarihin bir parçası olduğu ve toplumsal kültürümüze işlenerek gayet de bizden bir unsur haline geldiğini kabul etmemektedirler. Toplumun tarihsel yaşanmışlıklarını göz ardı eden, “bizden” değerlerle harmanlayarak kültürel genlerimize işlediğimiz kültürel değer ve formları yok sayarak topluma arzu ettiği şekilde bir “öz” dayatmaya çalışan AKP’nin, tarihin akışına karşı geldiği açıktır. Tarihin akışı önüne çekilebilecek ve onu sabitleyebilecek hiçbir set yoktur.

AKP siyasi iktidardaki ömrü ile kültürel iktidarı elde edebilme imkânını ayrılmaz görmektedir. Acele etme ihtiyacı nedeniyle de Devlet’in doğrudan müdahalesine muhtaç haldedir. Okçular Vakfı ile özdeşleşen geleneksel okçuluğun ihyası projesi, o denli Devlet güç ve imkânlarına bağımlı haldedir ki, AKP’nin siyasi iktidarı kaybetmesi durumunda devam edebilmesi oldukça zor görünmektedir. Bakanlıklar ve belediyeler başta olmak üzere, Devlet kurumlarının ve şirketlerinin gerek maddi gerekse de diğer destekleri bu projeyi ayakta tutmaktadır. Hakim sınıfın değil Devlet’in elinden çıkan bir kültürün, bu destek kesildiğinde ayakta kalabilmesi son derece zordur.

İçerisinde bulunduğumuz 21. yüzyılın koşulları ile 1920-30’lu yılların koşulları birbirinden olağanüstü düzeyde farklıdır. Kültürel ve toplumsal mühendislik uygulamalarına pek çok ülkede rastlanılabildiği 1920-30’lu yıllarda Devlet’in bu alanda yaratabildiği etki oldukça yüksektir. Keza Türkiye örneğinde, Cumhuriyet devrimi ile birlikte, yeni bir Devlet kurmanın getirdiği geniş olanaklar da bulunmaktadır. Henüz kitle iletişim araçlarının yeterince gelişip yaygınlaşmadığı, toplumda okuma-yazma oranının çok düşük olduğu ve Devlet’in her alanda tekel olabildiği bir ortamda, toplumsal mühendislik uygulamak çok daha mümkündür. Günümüzde ise Devletin kültürel alanda bir tekel oluşturması ve buradan bir kültürel inşa sağlaması bugünün şartlarında, kapalı rejimler hariç tutulursa son derece zordur.

Özellikle içerisinde bulunduğumuz internet çağında, kültürel üretim anlamında tekel kırıncı özgürlük alanları alabildiğine genişlemiştir. Meşru kültürü belirleyen hakim sınıf olduğu göz ardı edilmemekle birlikte, hakim kültürü dönüştüremeyecek olsa dahi, bugün herkes bir şekilde kültürel içerik üreticisi olabilmektedir. Dolayısıyla Devlet eliyle bir yönlendirme olması mümkün, ancak bir kültürel dayatma olması mümkün değildir.

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan'ın hedefinin, evrenselleşen batılı kültürel değer ve pratiklerin yerine, “yerli ve milli” olarak kavramlaştırdığı bir kültür setinin geçirilmesini arzuladığı söylemlerine yansımaktadır. Ancak bu talebin çapı, Türkiye sınırlarını da aşmakta, bir evrensellik isteği taşımaktadır. Yine söylemlerinde görülebildiği üzere, Batılı değerlerin hakim olduğu mevcut meşru kültürün, tüm dünyada yerini İslami bir hakim kültüre bırakması istenmektedir. Henüz yerelde dahi bu çabasında başarıya sağlayamamış bir siyasi hareketin, bunu evrensel ölçekte başarabilmesi de pek tabii mümkün değildir. AKP'nin ne böyle bir gücü ne de bunu yapabilecek imkanı bulunmaktadır. Özellikle 1980'lerden itibaren, kitle iletişim araçlarının hızla yaygınlaşması, batılı kültürel değerlerle bezenmiş popüler kültür formlarının ülkenin tüm kılcıl damarlarına kadar yayılmasını sağlamıştır. Bu durum, kültürel meşruiyetin kabulünü yaygınlaştırdığı gibi, Muhafazakâr/İslamcılarda bilinçli olsun veya olmasın, çok ciddi etkilenmelere yol açmıştır. Özellikle bu yıllarda iktisadi sermayesini artıran İslami burjuvalar ve hakim sınıfı bilinçsizce taklit etmekte olan orta sınıfta rastlanan şerbetli ‘baby shower’ partileri, İslami rap ve hip-hop şarkılar, muhafazakar giyim defileleri, beş yıldızlı haremlik-selamlık muhafazakar oteller bu etkilenme ve dönüşüme verilebilecek örneklerdir. AKP ise, batılı kültürel formların popüler kültür yoluyla yaygınlaşmasına karşın, kendi popüler kültürünü oluşturarak karşı koymaya ve hakim kültürü değiştirmeye çalışmaktadır. Ancak popüler kültüre karşı popüler kültür yoluyla mücadele beyhude bir çabadır. Çünkü batılı kültürel değerleri içeren popüler kültür hakim sınıf eliyle ve etkisiyle oluşmaktayken, AKP'nin “yerli ve milli” değerleri içerdiğini iddia ettiği popüler kültür, geleneksel okçuluk projesinde de görüldüğü gibi Devlet eliyle ve etkisiyle oluşmaktadır. Bu temel farklılık, AKP'nin kültürel iktidarı kuramamasının nedenlerinden birini oluşturmaktadır.

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, oğlu Bilal Erdoğan ve hareketin diğer temsilcilerinin söylemlerinde, küresel bir batılı hakim kültürün varlığı ve iktidarı kabul edilmektedir. Ancak bu iktidara karşı mücadele edilirken, bu kültürün kapitalizmin bir parçası olduğu göz ardı edilmektedir. Türkiye’de kapitalist ekonomi politikalarının yürütücüsü konumunda olan AKP verdiği mücadelede bir içsel çatışma yaşamaktadır. Hem iktisadi anlamda kapitalizmin savunuculuğunu yapıp, hem de “yerli ve milli” ifadesiyle kavramsallaştırılan bir geçmişi ihya projesiyle hakim kültürü alaşağı etmeye çabalamak aynı anda gerçekleşmesi mümkün olmayan bir istektir. Mevcut kapitalist düzen ile bu sistemin kültürü tam manasıyla bir paket halinde ülkeye giriş yapmış ve yayılmıştır. Keza kültür ve ekonomiyi net çizgilerle birbirinden ayırmak, üstyapı/altyapı ikiliği bu içerisinde değerlendirmek günümüz toplum yapısında doğru bir yöntem değildir. Dolayısıyla arada kalmışlık hali ve analiz eksikliği veya vazgeçemeyiş, başarısızlığı da beraberinde getirmektedir.

AKP örneğinden açıklıkla görülmektedir ki, siyasi iktidarı elde etmek, kültürel iktidar kurabilme garantisi vermemektedir. Hatta AKP’nin kültürel iktidar mücadelesindeki başarısızlığı, 20 yılın sonunda siyasi iktidarını da kaybetmesiyle sonuçlanacağı söylenebilecektir. Bugün partinin bir erime ve dağılma süreci içerisinde olduğu, kuruluşunda yer alan paydaşların birer birer koparak farklı arayışlara girmesinden de net olarak görülebilmektedir. Öncülü olan partilerin başarısızlıklarından sonra farklı bir strateji izleyen AKP’nin de kültürel iktidarı kurmakta başarısız olmasının, AKP’den sonra Muhafazakâr/İslamcılarını temsil edecek partiye nasıl bir örnek oluşturacağını tarih bizlere gösterecektir.

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