



**Araştırma Makalesi • Research Article**

**Nationalism in Political Advertisements: The 2018 Presidential Election Advertisements of The Nationalist Movement Party and Justice and Development Party**

**Siyasal Reklamlarda Milliyetçilik Teması: Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi ve Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi 2018 Cumhurbaşkanlığı Seçimi Reklamları Örneği**

Tolgay Durmuş\*

**Öz:** Siyasal reklamlar, seçmen kitle üzerinde pozitif bir etki yaratmayı hedeflemektedir. Siyasal reklamcılık etkinliklerinin değerler, dil, mitler, millet ve inanç gibi kültürel unsurlarla bağlantı içinde olduğu bilinmektedir. Kültür olgusu bir toplumun dilini, dinini, inançlarını, mitlerini ve değerlerini kapsayan toplumsal olgulardır. Milliyetçilik olgusu, siyasi seçim kampanyalarında en çok kullanılan temalardan bir tanesidir. Siyasi liderlerin, halkın milli değer ve inançlara vermiş olduğu önem doğrultusunda hareket etmeleri, seçmen kitlesini kendi partilerinin tarafına çekmeyi amaçladıklarını göstermektedir. Parti liderleri, seçim dönemlerinde ajanslar ile birlikte hareket ederek, halkın duygusal bağlarına dokunacak reklam çalışmalarını gerçekleştirmektedir. Çalışma, Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (MHP)'nin ve Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP)'nin hazırlanmış oldukları seçim reklamlarında milliyetçilik temasını hangi unsurlar çerçevesinde kullandığını ortaya çıkarmak ve genel olarak hangi milliyetçi gösterge ve değerlere yer verildiğini tespit etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma göstergelerinde, MHP'nin bayrak, ulus milliyetçiliği ve Cumhuriyet sonrası dönemlerde kazanılan bağımsızlık göstergelerini vurguladığı görülürken, AK Parti'nin ise Osmanlı dönemine vurgu yaparak Türk ulusunun yeniden doğuşuna, siyasi ve teknolojik gücüne vurgu yaptığı görülmektedir. Çalışmada milliyetçilik ve siyasal reklam kavramlarına değinilmiş ve 24 Haziran 2018 Cumhurbaşkanlığı seçimi sürecinde AKP ve MHP'nin yayımladığı reklamlar analiz edilmiştir. Çalışmada reklam üzerinde yer alan milliyetçilik göstergelerinin incelenmesinde göstergebilimsel analiz yöntemi kullanılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Siyasal Reklam, Kültür, Seçim, Milliyetçilik, Göstergebilimsel Analiz.

**Abstract:** Political advertisements aim to create a positive impact on the voting public. It is known that political advertising activities are in connection with cultural elements such as values, language, myths, nation and belief. Cultural phenomena are social phenomena that include the language, religion, beliefs, myths and values of a society. The phenomenon of nationalism is one of the most used themes in political election campaigns. The fact that political leaders act in line with the importance that the people attach to national values and beliefs shows that they aim to attract the electorate to their party. Party leaders work together with agencies during election periods to carry out advertising activities that will touch the emotional bonds of the people. The study aims to reveal the elements within which the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) and the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) used the theme of nationalism in their election advertisements and to determine which nationalist indicators and

\* Lecturer Doctor, Bitlis Eren University, Vocational School of Güroymak, Department of Audiovisual, Techniques and Media Production. ORCID ID: 0000-0002-1703-6996. [t.durmus@beu.edu.tr](mailto:t.durmus@beu.edu.tr)

**Cite as/ Atf:** Durmuş, T. (2023). Nationalism in political advertisements: The 2018 presidential election advertisements of the Nationalist Movement Party and Justice and Development Party. *Anemon Muş Alparslan Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 11(3), 659-672 <http://dx.doi.org/10.18506/anemon.1275614>

**Received/Geliş:** 02 April/Nisan 2023

**Accepted/Kabul:** 10 September/Eylül 2023

**Published/Yayın:** 30 December/Aralık 2023

values were generally included. In the study indicators, it is seen that MHP emphasizes the flag, nation nationalism and the indicators of independence gained in the post-Republic period, while the AK Party emphasizes the rebirth and political and technological power of the Turkish nation by emphasizing the Ottoman period. In the study, the concepts of nationalism and political advertising were touched upon and the advertisements published by AK Party and MHP during the 24 June 2018 Presidential election were analyzed. In the study, semiotic analysis method was used to examine the nationalism indicators on the advertisement.

**Keywords:** Political Ad, Culture, Election, Nationalism, Semiotic Analysis.

## Introduction

Political parties compete with each other because they want to prove themselves to their constituents, influence their thinking and attitudes, and gain their support. To compete, political parties need to be strategized. Political communication, which involves consistent and precise methods, is the most critical strategy. Political communication concentrates on changing thoughts and behavior. It is an approach belonging to political institutions specialized through different ideological outlooks (Vodinalı and Çötük, 2015).

Political parties appeal to nationalist rhetoric in their advertisements. However, nationalistic rhetoric should not be limited to political advertising. Nationalism can be found in any advertising. Political parties appeal to nationalism in advertisements to develop and communicate their agendas according to their positions. Although nationalism is a political view or ideology, it can bring together people who do not share the same political view. This is because it appeals to the masses. For example, flags are nationalistic themes that mean something to everybody (Tokatlı and Akyol, 2018).

Political advertisements include both visual and auditory elements. Moreover, auditory elements (sound and music) make advertisements more effective and memorable. Political advertisements aired on television are also published and shared by party advocates on their own pages on social media platforms. The Internet has become ubiquitous through smart devices. It makes individuals open to messages anytime and anywhere. Repeated broadcasting of political advertising messages in more than one place and channel increases the memorable effect of the message (Uztuğ, 2004)

The purpose of this study is to identify the phenomena in which the Justice and Development Party [*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (AKP)] and the Nationalist Movement Party [*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi* (MHP)] included the theme of nationalism in their campaign advertisements prepared for the June 2018 presidential election, and which nationalist indicators were addressed the most. The advertisements entitled "Phoenix: It is time for Türkiye" (*Phoenix: It is Time for Türkiye Vakti*) and "Let the Sky Go in and Red Come Out" (*Gök Girsin Kızıl Çıksın*) were selected using purposive sampling because they included the theme of nationalism. The method of semiotic analysis based on Ferdinand de Saussure's signifier and signified configuration was used to examine the themes of nationalism in the advertisements.

## Political Advertisements

Nowadays, the highly effective use and development of mass media have undermined personal relationships and group bonds. Social life has been subject to uniformity and rationalization. Differences between parties have been gradually on the wane. Since political parties need to inform their voters, political advertising has become very important in this context. Therefore, political parties have been in favor of advertising. There are several reasons why political advertising has become increasingly important. First of all, political advertisements are rich in content. Second, they are easy to reach the target audience. In this context, political advertising is a joint creation of parties, candidates, and advertising agencies. The candidates supervise the messages. Monitoring allows parties or candidates to correct negative, inaccurate, or incomplete information about them. Moreover, candidates or parties can position themselves in the media as they wish, in contrast to the media's positioning of them (Erdoğan, 2010).

Political advertising allows parties, candidates, and leaders to promote their projects or services during elections. Candidates or political parties seeking votes and support from voters use media such as television, newspapers, the Internet, outdoor advertising, or billboards. They aim to inform, influence and persuade voters about their political ideas, projects, and services according to their ideology. Political advertisements are essential during elections. They are an important element in distinguishing a leader, a party, or a candidate from his or her competitors. Therefore, political advertisements receive much attention from candidates and political parties. Political parties or leaders have prepared political advertisements for different issues related to specific concepts to reach their target audiences (Doğan, 2015).

The use of communication tools is prevalent because parties are very interested in the analysis of their target groups. Political actors must decide which mass media to use to reach their constituents. The most fundamental element of reaching the audience is identifying the right mass media. In doing this, a party should determine the characteristics of its targeted audience in every aspect and conduct a detailed analysis of its cultural and economic aspects. For example, a political leader who wants to reach out to and influence the electorate in a country should determine in detail the people's education level and what kind of written or visual means of communication they prefer. Then, he/she will decide what channel or means will best deliver the message to the target audience. Voter education is essential for political advertisements. Language should be appropriate, and various elements (symbols, colors, music, and cultural codes) should be considered to ensure the political message is perceived positively (Özkan, 2017).

Political Advertising helps parties or leaders reach the masses to get elected. Parties can reach all parts of the country simultaneously through mass media. Therefore, parties should analyze their voters' geographic location, education level, and age demographics. As a result of rapid technological advances, everyone has at least one television. Television advertising is one of the most widely used channels by which political parties or political leaders can reach out to their voters. In order to attract voters, political parties in Türkiye prepare advertisements around the phenomenon of nationalism. To attract and mobilize voters for their parties, AKP and MHP use nationalism.

### **Functions of Political Advertisements**

Political advertisements have a positive impact on voters. Their purpose is to have voters vote for candidates or parties. There are different ways of thinking and judging how political advertising affects voters. The basis of these thoughts and evaluations is that it is accepted that there is a common idea about the effects of political advertisements on voters. However, there is still a debate about the extent of this idea (Semetko, 2002).

If we analyze political communication, we can see that political advertisements can be divided into positive and negative (Balcı and Bekiroğlu, 2012). Positive political advertisements highlight the positive aspects of candidates, create a positive atmosphere for the future, and leave a positive impact on voters. Moreover, positive advertisements are about all values that address what candidates or parties will do for the disabled or elderly, how candidates are committed to families, and what help they will provide to those in need (İşliyen, 2014).

There are three subcategories of negative advertising that verbally and visually target competitors. They include implicit comparisons, direct comparisons, and direct assaults. Direct attack advertisements directly target the opposing candidate or party without comparison. The central theme of an attack ad is criticism or aggression. Direct comparison advertisements create an environment for party/candidate comparison. In this way, the candidate or party emphasizes its strengths and advantages while highlighting the opponent's shortcomings and weaknesses. Finally, negative comparison advertisements (Tokat, 2009) criticize any characteristic of the opponent while encouraging or praising the same characteristic in the criticizing party.

Broadly speaking, political advertising can be analyzed in two distinct ways: issue and image advertising. Image advertisements usually examine the candidate's or leader's personality and abilities. They are designed to help voters develop positive attitudes toward the candidate or leader. Issue advertisements, on the other hand, present the candidate's or leader's stance on political issues and examine how citizens feel about social, economic, and societal problems. In response to these two types of advertisements, positive or negative opinions about a political party may be expressed. For example, when image advertisements want to praise a party or a leader, they focus on the good aspects of the candidate or the party. They talk about the knowledge, skills, or experience of the party or the leader to glorify them.

Conversely, in the case of defamation, the negative and bad aspects of the party or leader are exposed to the public. Issue advertisements identify an issue that the party or leader in power failed to solve in the past and criticize the government, raising hopes that the opposition candidate will solve it. On the other hand, issue advertisements can also be used positively (Erdoğan, 2010).

### **Relationship Between Political Advertisements and Television**

Television is significant for entertaining and informing because it combines visual and auditory elements. Therefore, it is more critical than other mass media (Turam, 1994). Television provides an opportunity to reach large masses because it is an essential public information source. Because it combines auditory and visual elements, television is the central pillar of mass media that has the most impact on people (Kazancı, 1982). Television can send messages to individuals not involved in politics and voters who are critical of politics. Therefore, television is the mass media used most frequently and effectively, especially during the electoral period (Topuz, 1991).

Through political advertisements, candidates or parties can raise their voters' awareness and provide them with access to the political information they need within the framework of daily events and debates. Simultaneously, they inform them about parties' or candidates' services, projects, and promises (Doğan, 2015).

Television advertising allows candidates or political parties to reach their constituents and audiences not interested in or critical of politics. Political parties use TV advertisements to communicate their platforms, including their past accomplishments and plans, to voters. By incorporating various factors (body language, gestures, tone of voice, choice of clothing, etc.), television commercials allow political parties or candidates to express themselves better. Candidates or parties appear on certain shows and answer questions and criticism. In this way, they can eliminate negative impressions (Eroğlu, 2006).

While political advertising creates a positive image, it also provides voters with the political information and supports that they need and want. Voters are the primary target of political parties. However, parties also want to reach people uninterested in politics. Through television commercials, candidates can reach out to all segments of society and direct them in line with the views of their party. They try to reach out to voters by appealing to national values or beliefs. Political advertising is a common method in this regard.

### **Nationalism**

Nationalism is not only used to create "others" and "enemies. In constructing a national identity, it also emphasizes the similarities among members and the differences in external factors. Rituals and symbols are crucial elements in the process of constructing national identity. Symbols are words, signs, or objects deciphered by those acquainted with social traditions and codes. To those who ascribe meaning to them, symbols have meaning and value. Symbols distinguish between members and non-members, external and internal factors, in short, between us and others. Symbols thus allow people to reinforce the idea of belonging, sensitivity, and awareness. However, it is misleading to see symbols only as factors that represent an object because symbols represent objects or persons and allow individuals to construct a certain part of meanings in their minds (Cohen, 1999).

Symbols do more than just replace or stand in for different elements. Of course, if that were all that symbols did, they would cease to exist. Symbols come to mean through human experience. In other

words, different people can interpret them differently. Thus, symbols create meaning rather than explain it (Cohen, 1999)

Nationalism has no specific definition or ideology. Many writers and thinkers define it differently. Nationalism is always in a state of flux. Therefore, there are different types of nationalism and different understandings of nationalism in different countries. In general, there is no precise definition of nationalism, and there will not be one in the future (Nieguth, 1999).

Nationalism is still relevant today, even though it was thought that it would lose its influence and importance with globalization. In many countries, right-wing and nationalist parties have won or increased their share of the vote in recent years. Political parties often resort to nationalist rhetoric and policies in their election campaigns. The Republican People's Party (RPP) bases its policies on Atatürk's nationalism, while the AKP has a conservative understanding of nationalism. The MHP and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) also take a nationalist position (Tokatlı and Akyol, 2018).

### **Literature Review**

The literature review yielded studies similar to this one. For example, Barış (2018) used a semiotic analysis method to analyze the AKP's ad entitled "Phoenix: it is time for Türkiye." The difference in our study is that we analyzed both AKP's "Phoenix: It is Time for Türkiye" and MHP's "Let the Sky Go in and Red Come Out" advertisements within the framework of the nationalist theme.

Tokatlı and Akyol (2018) conducted a study titled "AKP's activities on the constitutional referendum under the theme of nationalism in political advertisements." They employed content analysis to examine which nationalist themes were included in the advertisements prepared by the AKP before the constitutional referendum held in 2017.

Doğan and Aslantaş (2015) conducted a study titled "Representation of Nation and Service in Political Advertisements as a Persuasion Method." They used a semiotic analysis method to determine how political advertisements represented the codes of service and nation in the narrative.

Selfiye and Özkan (2017) conducted a study titled "Semiotic analysis of cultural elements in political advertisements." They performed a semiotic analysis to analyze the ad "Say Yes to a Strong Türkiye" (*Evet ile Güçlü Türkiye*) broadcast by the AKP during the constitutional amendment and referendum process.

Tatlı (2013) conducted a study titled "The Use of Nationalist Discourse in Political Party Advertisements: France, Germany, and Sweden." He used semiotic and discourse analysis methods to assess how advertisements reflected nationalism through nationalist discourses in political advertisements.

### **Research Purpose**

We addressed the political advertisements broadcast by MHP and AKP for the June 24, 2018, elections. The goal was to address how the advertisements perpetuated the notion of nationalism. Based on a literature review, this study focused on "Let the Sky Go in and Red Come Out" by MHP and "Phoenix: It is Time for Türkiye" by AKP.

### **The Analysis of Political Advertisements Method**

Semiotic analysis is a popular method for accessing messages in advertising visuals. Semiotics explains communication processes and reveals messages. Researchers with semantic integrity (literature, theater, cinema, and architecture) use this method in many fields. Language and semiotic studies constitute a unity (Güneş, 2013).

Ferdinand de Saussure took the first step towards structuralist approaches in linguistics between 1857 and 1913. Saussure defines language as sounds explained by thoughts and concepts. In Saussure's view, language is a set of signs that are the means by which thoughts and concepts are communicated.

Signs are the result of the relationship between the Signifier and the signified. The Signifier is made up of sounds or signs, while the signified is made up of thoughts and concepts. There is no necessary connection between words or sounds and the thoughts and concepts they express. Saussure is more interested in language structures than words or speech. Meaning and language arise from language structure. Saussure calls the branch of science that studies symbols and signs semiology, also known as semiotics. He refers to the science that studies the structure and nature of these symbols as the science of linguistics. Roland Barthes, who says that the emergence of meaning occurs within a syntactic organization and selection, also accepts the system and syntax approach in his unique studies. Moreover, he distinguishes between 'denotation' and 'connotation.' He says that all statements have connotations besides their plain meaning. He says connotations are used as a higher language to convey ideologies (Yaylagül, 2013).

This study analyzed AKP and MHP advertisements in line with nationalistic themes. In order to uncover meaning, we used an analytical method based on the binary structural relationship between the Signifier and the signified. We focused on AKP's and MHP's political advertisements aired on televised and online channels during the presidential elections held on June 24, 2018. We analyzed AKP's "Phoenix: It is Time for Türkiye" and MHP's "Let the Sky Go in and Red Come Out" commercials.

A signification analysis was conducted for analysis. Verbal dialogues, texts, visuals, and signifiers support advertisements. We selected these advertisements from among those that have been broadcast on YouTube and television channels. In order to examine which themes of nationalism are used more effectively in the advertisements, we analyzed the two advertisements using a semiotic methodology that consists of a binary structure of relationships between the Signifier and the signified.

## Results

### A Semiotic Analysis of AKP's "Phoenix: It is Time for Türkiye"



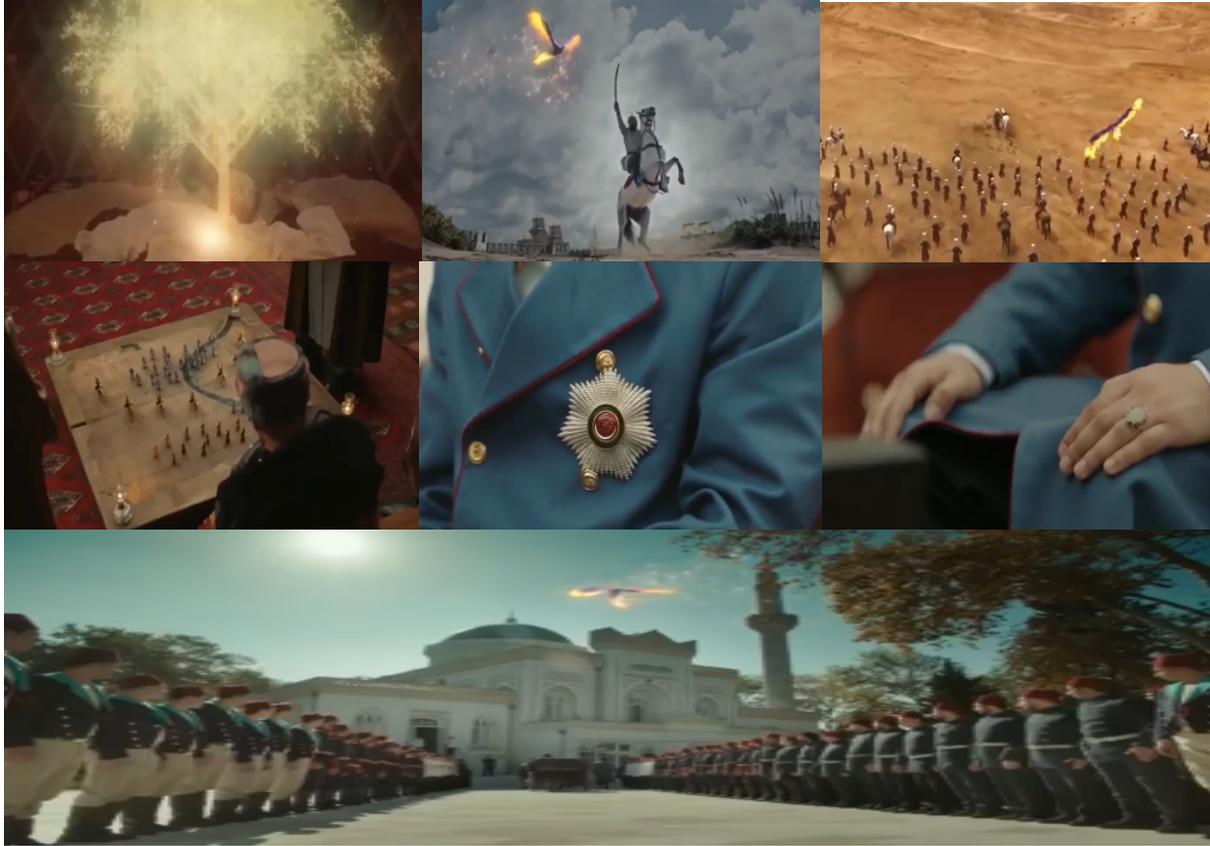
**Image 1.** AKP Phoenix: It is Time for Türkiye

**The Signifier:** Sunrise, Phoenix, Anatolian Seljuk State Flag, Otağı

**The Signified:** The sunrise and the Phoenix symbolically herald an eternal beginning because the sunrise symbolizes a beginning, while the Phoenix symbolizes eternity. With the sentence "Türkiye! You are now at the beginning of the road that echoes in eternity", it is emphasized that it is the harbinger of a road that will progress towards the future. The double-headed eagle in the symbol represents the Anatolian Seljuk State with its flag.

In Turkish society, the double-headed eagle represents power and strength. The phrase "You are Alparslan who has opened the gates of Anatolia" refers to the battle of Malazgirt, a critical battle that opened the gates of Anatolia to the Turks. The Turkish otak (tent) resembles a large earth due to its

round shape. By saying, "You are Melikşah who glorifies your ancestors," it is emphasized that during Melikşah's reign, the Great Seljuk State reached the broadest borders, established a great dominance over its enemies, and glorified its nation.



**Image 2.** AKP's Add Phoenix: It is Time for Türkiye

**The Signifier:** Gazi Osman, Sycamore Tree, Horse's Charge, Sword, Fatih Sultan Mehmet, Army, Fatih Sultan Mehmet's dismount, Suleiman the Magnificent, Abdulhamid

The signified: at the beginning of the ad, Gazi Osman is asleep. A plane tree grows out of his chest, emphasizing the establishment of the Ottoman Empire. This emphasis is a reference to Ottoman nationalism. Here, in Gazi Osman's dream, it is seen that one end of the moon, which comes out of Sheikh Edebali's chest and grows into a crescent moon, enters his chest, and a sapling that comes out between him and Sheikh Edebali Hazretleri turns into a plane tree, and the branches of this plane tree spread over three continents and shade many nations (<http://www.islamveihsan.com>) and this dream is referred to with the "What you dream is a good omen" phrase.

The plane tree symbolizes order, authority, and power. The phrase "As your sword curves in the air to keep your homeland, Istanbul watches your army in your address adorned with love" highlights the sword and Istanbul. These lines underline the conquest of Istanbul. They emphasize the wars and how much the Ottoman army wants to accomplish this conquest because Istanbul is considered the center of the world and because of the words of the Prophet Muhammad for the conquest of Istanbul. The Turkish Nation is a nomadic and warrior society. Therefore, the horse and sword have always been essential in Turkish culture.

Yavuz Sultan Selim dismounted from his horse while crossing the desert with his army out of respect for the Prophet (s) because the Prophet (s) crossed the Sinai desert on foot. This judgment is also supported by the saying, "Dismount from your horse out of respect for Allah, even when crossing the desert. Here, the visual emphasizes that the Turkish nation respects its religious and cultural values. It

is emphasized that another Ottoman Emperor, Suleiman the Magnificent, worked on strategizing how to wage war. This image emphasizes that Turkish society is very successful with the sentence "May you promise yourself victory under all circumstances like Suleiman", that the Turkish state works in advance to be successful on battlefields, develops war tactics, and achieves victories through its army. In Abdulhamid Khan's picture, the mosque, ring, and tughra symbols show how sensitive the Ottoman Empire was to its religious and cultural indicators.



**Image 3.** AKP's Phoenix: It is Time for Türkiye

**The Signifier:** Bandırma ship, Atatürk, Phoenix rising from the ashes, Turkish State and Turkish Flag

**The Signified:** The Bandırma ship in the darkness is the harbinger of the state's liberation from the darkness it is in because Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk started the liberation war struggle by going to Samsun with the Bandırma ship. It is foretold that Atatürk will come to Samsun and bring hope to get rid of the dark times the State is going through and lead to better days. This judgment is supported by the saying: "You are the phoenix, a hope that rises from the Bandırma ship. You are the trench of the liberation struggle".

The phrase "Even if your humble body is as dust" refers to Atatürk. The sentence "You are the picture that the Republic will live forever" emphasizes Atatürk's support for the national struggle by putting the feathers of the Phoenix one by one. The rebirth of the Phoenix from its ashes shows that after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the Republic of Türkiye won the war by rising from its ashes as a result of the national struggle. The Phoenix rises and looks down on Türkiye from above, which shows that the borders of the Republic of Türkiye were formed. The Turkish flag in the image is an indication of the establishment of the state. Both the Phoenix and the Turkish flag emphasize the state's power and that it will take steps toward eternity.

### A Semiotic Analysis of MHP's "Let the Sky Go in and Red Come Out"



**Image 4.** A Semiotic Analysis of MHP's "Let the Sky Go In and Red Come Out"

**The Signifier:** Flag, Mosque, Nation, Unity

**The Signified:** A mosque with a Turkish flag appears in the ad. Turkish society values mosques, the Turkish flag, and the call to prayer. The importance of religious and national values, which are very important to Turkish society, is emphasized by the sentence, "When a place is called a Turkish country, my eyes look for the flag, my ears listen for the call to prayer," which was spoken by Devlet Bahçeli in his voice.

Turkish society has always been in national unity and solidarity. This is due to the importance it attaches to its national values, independence, and national struggle. The Turkish flag is waving in the visual. This indicates that the flag is sacred to the Turkish nation and that national values will be protected. Through the arousal of the religious feelings of the nation with the words "There is no victor but Allah," it is emphasized that the Turkish nation can never be defeated.



**Image 5.** Let the Sky Go in and Red Come Out

**The Signifier:** Tank, National Unity and Solidarity, Map of Türkiye, Devlet Bahçeli

**The Signified:** The phrase "You did it on July 15, and you are the ones who will save the country from now on" stresses that the Turkish people defended their country, nation, and flag during the July 15 coup attempt. The phrase "You are the ones who will break the circle and save the country" glorifies the Turkish people and indicates that they will not bow down to the enemies surrounding them. With the phrase "We have no choice but to succeed," the map of Türkiye appears in the visual, emphasizing that the Turkish nation has no choice but to unite against its enemies to protect its borders. The fact that the map of Türkiye is shown in the same color and the party logo is included together is one of the indicators that all Turks, regardless of language, religion, and race, will unite under one roof and act together.

Devlet Bahçeli walks into the screen. He emphasizes that we must take steps together for the future of Türkiye. He sings the lines, "In the way of Allah if we do not walk, in the way of Allah if we do not melt, in the way of Allah if we do not rot, let the sky go in and red come out, let the sky go in, and red come out." The meaning of these lines is the following: it is one of the most important oaths Turkish society has taken in its history. It is one of the most important oaths of Turkish society throughout history. The meaning of this oath, which is taken by holding the hilt of a sword, is: "if I do not keep my word, may this sword enter my body like the sky and come out covered in my blood" ([www.yeniakit.com.tr](http://www.yeniakit.com.tr)).

These lines suggest that Turkish society highly regards "promises" and will keep them. The campaign aims to reach voters through spiritual values, emphasizing the themes of nationalism and religion that Turkish society values.

### Signification

Semiotics recognizes that in all branches of narrative, meaning is produced based on the oppositions and signified-signified relationships revealed in the narrative. Table 1 shows fundamental contrasts in the "Phoenix: It is Time for Türkiye."

**Table 1.** The Fundamental Contrasts İn The "Phoenix: It Is Time For Türkiye

Day	Night
Individual	Collective
Freedom	Bondage
Traditional	Modern
Black	White
Danger	Trust

The concept of "freedom" is the central theme of the advertisement. More than any other theme, independence, and freedom are very important to the Turkish nation. This is a clear expression of the fact that the Turkish nation will never be under the captivity of another nation. In this context, the advertisement clearly shows the strength and power of the Turkish Armed Forces as an "individual" and as a "collective." It is emphasized that the Turkish Armed Forces will emerge as the war's victor. The advertisement refers to the point that the Turkish nation has reached in a traditional and modern sense. The satellite in space indicates that the Turkish nation has reached a technologically advanced level.

The conflict between "Black" and "White" is the first of the main contrasts in the commercial's visual and auditory elements. In Turkish, "AK" means "white." Therefore, "white" represents the AKP. It is also an emphasis on the independence and future of the country. "Black" represents the internal and external forces conspiring against Turkish society.

**Table 2.** The Relationship Between the Signifier and the Signified in Phoenix: It Is Time For Türkiye

Signifier	Signified
Flag	Freedom
Coat of Arms / Ring	Ottoman State
Phoenix	Rebirth
Darkness	Conflict
Army	Independence
Community	Defense
Mosque	Sanctity

Table 2 shows the relationship between the Signifier and the Signified in Phoenix: It is Time for Türkiye. As a symbol, the flag stands for freedom. The Ottoman coat of arms and the ring are symbols of the fact that the Turkish nation was founded by the Ottoman state and is still in existence today. The Phoenix is a sign that the Turkish nation will not be destroyed in any way, will stand against all kinds of influences, and will be reborn with all its strength. In addition to these symbols, the army is a symbol of the strength of the Turkish nation. The mosque and the soldiers standing before it show the sanctity given to our religious and nationalistic feelings.

**Table 3.** The Fundamental Contrasts in the "Let The Sky Go in And Red Come Out."

Freedom	Bondage
Danger	Trust
Sorrow	Happiness
Individual	Collective

The visual and auditory elements of the ad are meant to indicate the chaotic environment Türkiye is going through. The audio elements underline that Turkish society is in danger due to the military coup process, but this dire situation has been averted due to the Turkish people coming together. Thanks to the Turkish people's fondness for freedom and independence, the tank image emphasizes that the people

will shield their bodies even against military tanks. The flags waved by the people emphasize that Turkish society will fight against internal or external factors.

**Table 4.** The Relationship Between the Signifier and the Signified Let The Sky Go in And Red Come Out

Signifier	Signified
Community	Defense
Tank/Conflict	Independence
Mosque	Sanctity
A map of Türkiye with an emblem	Unity

The flag and freedom are emphasized in the advertisement. The ad shows that the country and the flag are essential for the Turkish people. The flag symbolizes freedom. The Turkish people coming together and carrying the flag and the Turkish flags being waved individually also indicate this. The people standing against the tanks show that the Turkish people will never be enslaved and mandated. Another similar element is that the indicators of the mosque and the flag are being presented to us together. They show that the Turkish people highly value religious and national values. The MHP's emblem on the map of Türkiye, shown in the advertisement's last moments, shows that the Turkish people will remain united forever and that this feeling of unity will not be disturbed in any way.

### Conclusion

Parties or leaders prepare political advertisements to reach voters and convey their messages. Political advertisements are one of the most critical methods to persuade and influence voters. Developments in the field of communication help political parties or leaders reach their constituents. Political advertisements allow parties or leaders to reach a relatively high number of voters through the Internet and television. Political advertisements contain sound, music, images, and messages. Political advertisements' hidden meanings, codes, and symbols can positively affect voters (Özkan, 2017).

Voters are affected differently by political advertising. However, political advertisements influence undecided voters during elections. Therefore, political advertisements help political leaders or parties communicate their projects, services, and ideas on various issues to voters during elections. Therefore, political advertisements complement political discourse during election campaigns. The advertisements aired by the AKP and the MHP for the presidential elections held on June 24, 2018, were prepared according to these considerations.

Balcı (2006) states that political advertisements have significant effects on the electorate. He says that political advertisements introduce political leaders to the electorate and distinguish them positively from other parties in the election with the indicators they use. The cultural and national indicators used in political advertisements and the positive effects of leaders on the electorate cause this type of advertisement to be preferred and support the findings of the study in this respect.

This study focused on AKP's "Phoenix: It is Time for Türkiye" and MHP's "Let the Sky Go In and Red Come Out" political advertisements. These advertisements were designed in accordance with the discourses of their leaders throughout the elections and appeared in the media channels in accordance with their discourses. The narratives in the advertisements and the discourses that MHP President Devlet Bahçeli and AKP President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan conveyed to voters in television programs and rallies complemented each other (Doğan and Aslantaş, 2015).

The MHP's "Let the Sky Go in and Red Come Out" ad focuses on nationhood and unity of power. It emphasizes that all people living in the homeland should come together around the flag and the call to prayer, which will help them face all kinds of attacks as long as they join forces and join hands. The advertisement shows the nation as a single fist against the July 15th treacherous coup attempt. Devlet Bahçeli's words, "You did it on July 15, and you are the ones who will break the circle and save the country," invite voters to vote because he believes that it is the nation that will save itself.

In a similar study, Vodinalı and Çötök (2015) aim to have a positive effect on the public in the election results of political leaders through political advertisements. It has been tried to create an impact

on the cultural and national values of the people by running their own election campaigns through political advertisements. In this respect, it supports the findings of their studies.

AKP's "Phoenix: It is Time for Türkiye" ad focuses on the theme of the founding of the Turkish nation. The sentence "Türkiye! You are now at the beginning of a path that echoes in eternity" implies that the first steps of the establishment of the Turkish State will be taken and that it is the harbinger of a path that will progress towards the future. "You are Alparslan who opened the gates of Anatolia" refers to the victory of the Battle of Malazgirt, which is very important for Turks. The ad emphasizes that Malazgirt was an important battle that opened Anatolia to Turkish raids and made it the Turks' homeland. The phrase "You are Melikşah who glorifies your ancestors" emphasizes that during the reign of Melikşah, the Great Seljuk State reached the broadest borders, established a great dominance over its enemies, and glorified its nation with the victories it achieved in wars. The words "Know your past so that you can be a light for the future" indicate that we should walk together for the country's salvation.

Lastly, political parties or leaders resort to political advertisements to influence voters and increase voter turnout during elections. During the June 24, 2018, election, slogans, films, and music often address religious and cultural elements to sway voters. In the June 24, 2018, elections, AKP's "Phoenix: It is Time for Türkiye" ad emphasizes the Turkish-Islamic tradition. The ad shows the sultans of the Great Seljuk and Ottoman States glorifying the Turkish nation by referring to its past. The advertisement mentions the victories and power of the Turks and emphasizes that the Turkish nation must believe in itself to win victories in the future.

The MHP's "Let the Sky Go in and Red Come Out" ad also stresses the strength and independence of the Turkish nation. The ad refers to the Turkish nation's stance against the July 15th treacherous coup attempt. It implies that the Turkish nation should always be in unity and solidarity. Political advertisements address cultural and religious elements to make voters feel a sense of belonging. Political advertisements significantly influence swing voters. Therefore, political parties or leaders turn to them to persuade voters to vote for them.

Through this study, information about political advertisements can be obtained. By determining the purpose and importance of political advertisements by political leaders, the effects of political advertisements on the electorate emerge in the post-election periods. Especially after the election, the fact that political leaders remain loyal to their promises increases the power of political advertisements. In the study, the inclusion of cultural and national values in the content of political advertisements increases the power of political advertisements and leaves lasting effects on the electorate. In this respect, the characteristic of political advertisements emerges and it creates preliminary information on political advertisements in terms of future studies.

## Referances

- Balcı, Ş. (2006). Seçmenleri etkileme sürecinde siyasal reklamcılık olgusu 1999 genel seçimleri örneği. *Selçuk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*. (16), 139-157.
- Balcı, Ş. ve Bekiroğlu, O. (2012). İçerikten Anlama Giden Bir Tünel Olarak İçerik Çözümlemesi: 2011 Genel Seçimlerinde AK Parti TV Reklamları Üzerine Bir Araştırma. Ö. Güllüoğlu içinde, İletişim bilimlerinde araştırma yöntemleri (Görsel Metin Çözümleme) S. 268-279. Ankara: Ütopya Yayınevi.
- Barış, Ö. (2018). Siyasal Reklamcılık Alanında Göstergibilimsel Bir İnceleme: Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi 24 Haziran Zümrüd-ü Anka Seçim Reklamı Örneği. *Elektronik Cumhuriyet İletişim Dergisi*, 1(1), 51-63.
- Cohen, A.P. (1999). Topluluğun Simgesel Kuruluşu. (Çev. M. Küçük), Ankara:Dost.
- Doğan, A., and Aslantaş, A. G. (2015). Bir İkna Yöntemi Olarak Siyasal Reklamlarda Millet Ve Hizmetin Temsili. *Akademik Bakış Uluslararası Hakemli Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, (47), 35-52.
- Erdinç, İ. E. (2010). Siyasal İletişim Boyutuyla Siyasal Reklam: Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Oy Verme Davranışına Yönelik Bir Araştırma.
- Eroğlu, Y. B. (2006). Siyasal İletişimin Reklam Boyutuna İlişkin Kuramsal Bir İnceleme. *İstanbul Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Dergisi*, Sayı: 25, 169-180
- Güneş, A. (2013). Göstergibilim Tarihi. *E-Journal of New World Sciences Academy*, Volume:8, Issue:4, 332-348
- İşliyen, M. (2014). Kodlama-Kodaçımı Bağlamında Ak Parti 30 Mart 2014 Yerel Seçim Reklamlarının İzleyiciler Üzerindeki Etkilerine Yönelik Alımlama Analizi: Nevşehir Örneği. *İletişim ve diplomasi 30 Mart 2014 Yerel Seçimleri Özel Sayısı*, 24-47
- Kazancı, M. (1982). Halkla İlişkiler. Ankara: Savaş Yayınları.
- Nieguth, T. (1999). Beyond dichotomy: concepts of the nation and the distribution of membership, *Nations and Nationalism*, 5(2).
- Özkan, S. (2017). Siyasal Reklamlarda Kültürel Unsurların İşlenmesi: AK Parti 2017 Referandum Reklam Filmi Üzerine Göstergibilimsel Bir Çözümleme. *İnsan ve İnsan*, 4(14), 335-351.
- Semetko, H. A. (2002). Election Campaigns and Media Effects. Ed: J.R. Schement, *Encyclopedia of Communication and Information*, New York: Gale Group Thomson Learning, 284-290.
- Tokat, A. (2009). 2007 Genel Seçimlerinde Adalet Ve Kalkınma Partisi'nin Siyasal İletişim Faaliyetleri Ve Mesaj Stratejileri, *Selçuk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Halkla İlişkiler ve Tanıtım Anabilim Dalı, Dnş: Banu Terkan, (Yayımlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi)*, Konya.
- Tokatlı, M., and Akyol, Z. (2018). Reklamlarda milliyetçilik: adalet ve kalkınma (ak parti) partisinin anayasa referandumu reklamları üzerine bir içerik analizi. *Erciyes İletişim Dergisi*, 5(3), 258-274.
- Topuz, H. (1991). Siyasal Reklamcılık, Dünyadan ve Türkiye'den Örneklerle. İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi.
- Turam, E. (1994). Medyanın Siyasal Hayata Etkileri. İstanbul: İrfan Yayıncılık,
- Uztuğ, F. (2004). Siyasal İletişim Yönetimi. İstanbul: Media Cat.
- Vodinalı, S. & Çötük, N. A. (2015). Siyasal Propaganda Bağlamında Siyasal Reklamlar: 2015 Türkiye Genel Seçimlerinde Akp/Chp/Mhp Partileri Tv Reklamları Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme.
- Yaylagül, L. (2013). Kitle İletişim Kuramları, Egemen ve Eleştirel Yaklaşımlar.