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Understanding Conservatism in Turkish Society in the Light of Pierre Bourdieu's 'Habitus'

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With the social effects of liberal policies and being integrated into the capitalist system, particularly after the 1980s, Turkish society has experienced a change both culturally and structurally. This transformation has paved the way for orientation to religion, tradition, and conservatism among the working class and the capital class owners. Therefore, the conservative wing that tries to associate religious values with consumer values and enables the emergence of a hybrid eclectic culture began to create a lifestyle for themselves with the impact of consumer society values. As cognitive structures themselves have their roots, and the societal reality structure is not a void, conservative people's societal realities were shaped by their acquired patterns of thought, behaviour, and taste that determine their habitus. Accordingly, this article shows the relationship between conservative social lifestyle and Pierre Bourdieu's 'habitus' that plays a significant role in deciding lifestyle, the emerging and planning choices of everyday life.

Keywords: Conservatism; Habitus; Lifestyle; Consumer society; Social structure**Introduction**

Habitus is in interaction with conservatism which may change depending on the era, specific context, and social conditions that it has arisen in. In this interaction, habitus is, at times, affects and determines conservatism and is affected by it. This interrelation which is seemingly contradictory at first glance stems from the complex nature of both concepts. To grasp the habitus of the conservative circle in Turkey and the mutual relationship of habitus with conservatism, this article, firstly, will describe a conceptual framework for definitions of habitus and conservatism. Secondly, the paper will discuss the relationship between conservative social lifestyle and Pierre Bourdieu's 'habitus' that determines the current article's main problem.

What is "Habitus"?

The habitus concept goes back to the Aristotelian-Thomist

tradition and is time to time used in sociology and philosophy to point out an acquired and stable disposition [1]. Habitus is a set of predispositions to act in specific ways that people develop by experiencing social institutions [2]. Pierre Bourdieu defines the habitus in his book called Outline of a Theory of Practice (1977) as a set of behaviour, taste, and acquired patterns of thought that constitutes the link between social structures and social practices. According to Pierre Bourdieu (1977), habitus is how social actors (an individual, a group, or any large collectivity) calculate and determine future actions depending on rules, values, and existing norms. However, he specifies that rules, values, and existing norms are integrated into the actor's frame of reference and represent general social standards as well as personal experiences. Bourdieu explains the habitus by embodying it through a provincial French accent which may put one at a disadvantage. One who grew up in

a village trains his vocal apparatus to pronounce sounds in specific ways by literally embodying the local culture. This illustration shows how the social actor's subjective reality reveals based on an objective reality came out by existing structural elements in society [3].

Habitus, as internalised social structure, enables humans to perform regular behaviours. Bourdieu [4] illustrates this by explaining that habitus causes the regulation of behaviours with no following the rules consciously; behaviours seem to be an orchestra that acts together without any maestro. The social class and social position individual involving becomes influential in the formation of habitus. On the other hand, Bourdieu claimed that this situation in question leads to continuity of the social structure, class distinctions, and lifestyles.

What is "Conservatism"?

It is not possible to find concepts that describe conservatism in the frame of the agreed opinion. This concept changes and varies depending on the different communities, eras, and social and political conditions. However, for a definition that points out an outline of the concept and more or less embeds it into all descriptions, we can specify its significant characteristics.

Conservatism is a current in political and social life that advocates the existing legal status quo and doubtfully looks at radical changes. In this sense, it implies a sceptical doctrine regarding changes in the existing traditions, rules, and institutions. It is a doctrine embracing traditional institutions in the society that should be respected and emphasises worry for any changes or reforms that can lead to deformations in these institutions such as family, education, religion, etc [5]. If the concept is taken as terminological and is looked at its Latin origin, it is seen that the concept comes from "conservative" and "conservatism" words, and the word means that 'protecting' or 'conserving as it is' [6]. It also does make a broad meaning in the history of modern political thought.

In the modern sense, it has emerged with reaction to policy and government understanding that has come out with the French Revolution in 1789 that brings human reason into prominence through the Philosophy of Enlightenment [7]. In contrast to the French Revolution, conservatism is subject to social change that is more moderate, constitutional, and evolutionist, criticising Enlightenment and French Revolution [8]. One of conservatism's main ideas is that a society cannot be stable without a central power and authority system.

Habitus and Conservative Society in Turkey

Particularly after the 1980s, with new political and economic orientations based on liberalisation and capital system, Turkish society has experienced a set of changes [9]. One of the most crucial of these changes is Turkish society's transformation into a consumer society and consumer culture starting to gain prevalence. The flow of change has gained more momentum, specifically after 2002 with the AKP (Justice and Development Party). Conservative portions also have been affected by these changes and integrated

into consumer culture through new socio-economic developments in Turkey. Therefore, conservatism is one of the key concepts in understanding Turkish society's habitus from past to the present.

In Turkey, religious socialisation and religious orientations have significant impacts on the dressing style, parlance, consumption habits, and thinking way of individuals and as well as social class. An individual or group can gain conservative traits by affiliating with a family, foundation, association, mosque, school, and political party. According to Bourdieu [10], this is because social class and social position that humans are a part of become effective in determining habitus. These religious perceptions and forms of religiosity have determined conservative people's social life forms and, accordingly, their habitus. For example, the perception and action of a man/woman or Islamic/Christian regarding the world refers to a broader social formation such as the formation of the family, relationship with social life, design of the house, etc., about them [11]. The conservative wing has shaped their behaviour, taste, and patterns of thought under social life, with the effect of consumer society-oriented values. Thus, this circle tried to associate religious values with consumer values and enabled the emerging of a hybrid eclectic culture. Lifestyle in question sometimes involves transforming religious values such as reducing veiling to a beauty accessory, transforming Haj and Umrah into faith tourism [12]. Also, since conservatism involves habitus, conservatism and religious orientations are not apart from one's habitus.

Furthermore, since religious perceptions and forms of religiosity within society itself vary, different habitus has emerged based on a set of different lifestyles in the social life forms of conservative people. To illustrate, conservative forms in the traditional societal structure and conservative in modern societies are different from each other. This bilateral situation has rendered two different habitus in the conservative circle. Both habitus of the conservative wing are related to social structure (different institutions of kinship, religious, economic, cultural, and political). Their religiosity perceptions have an intricate relationship with the social structure in question. On the other hand, the common point of these two circles is to be a consumer society. According to Baudrillard (1988), this is because today's society's most fundamental feature is to be a consumer society.

As the cognitive structures have their specific roots, the acquired patterns of thought, behaviour, and taste that determine conservative circles' lifestyle refer to their habitus (Aydn & Emiroğlu, 2003). Social vision and divisions that socially produced based on some divisions such as gender, ethnicity, nationality and religious affiliation [11] that are highlighted particularly in conservative societies determine the link between social structures and social action or practice [13]. Indeed, their sociological importance lies precisely in the patterning social space at large through habitus formation [14]. To illustrate, the rise of the veiling-fashion industry in Turkey has come out with neoliberal economic restructuring and the Islamic worldview's resurgence [15]. The growth of consumer culture in increasingly commodified forms for the pious and the secular alike is affiliated with ever-increasing veiling-fashion [16]. This socio-economic process with neoliberal

capitalism has affected religious worldview, the way of fulfilling religious practices, and even the business and trade character. In this regard, veiling-fashion marked the arising of a new female image that interiorises some phenomena such as modesty, piety, urbanity, femininity, sexuality, class, age, taste, and distinction of social status [15]. Acculturation tendencies of meta have emerged due to cultural values created by media and advertisements; thus, meta has been consumed as a social status indicator rather than physical needs among the conservative portion [12]. In this frame, [15] interviewed veiling-fashion salesclerk to show how Muslim women become a part of consumer society and culture and showed how their behaviour and taste are shaped. The salesclerk told the story of how veiled women's styles and sensibilities have changed in the two years [15], and stated that:

Just like women who are not dressed in tesettür follow fashion trends-fashion is always changing-women in tesettür lately began to act the same. We used to be able to satisfy them with a skirt-jacket combination. We cannot satisfy them with the same styles anymore. They want different and changing styles now.

She compares the period in the early 1990s when the styles were limited and conservative with the year 2009 when she also has abandoned her overcoats for more colourful and varied pants-tunic and skirt-jacket combinations [15]. By applying habitus to Turkish society's lifestyle, we can better understand the changes that society underwent, transforming the conservative wing. This phenomenon is carrying importance in Turkish society, which is their lifestyles and modes have transformed into a consumer society, especially with a post-modern approach.

Conclusion

The social effects of liberal policies to be integrated liberal and capitalist system, particularly after the 1980s, has caused an orientation to religion, tradition, conservatism among the working class and the capital class owners. This process of social transformation has involved an adaptation of neoliberal capitalist lifestyle into the conservative lifestyle and taste as well as the transformation of religious practice and values. Thus, the conservative circle tried to associate religious values with consumer values and emerged from a hybrid eclectic culture. The context of conservative identity and the shifting boundaries between conservative ethics and the imperatives of neoliberal capitalism shed light on which conditions conservative people's lifestyle, social structure, taste, behaviour, and thought patterns are shaped. In this context, it can be said that the social class and social position that humans are a part of have become effective in determining habitus [10] for the conservative portion and other societal portions. On the other hand, according to [10], this condition enables the continuity of the social structure, class distinctions, and lifestyles. Since habitus is in interaction with conservatism and time to time affects and determines the conservatism, and is time to time affected by it, conservatism and religious orientations are not apart from one's habitus. This interrelationship is a cornerstone

in the understanding of the habitus of the conservative circle in Turkey [17-19].

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Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest.

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