

Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Corporate elites in the context of religion and secularism in Turkey

Abstract

Drawing on discourse analyses of 36 in-depth interviews with elite businesspeople from Turkey, the study identifies the networking patterns of new and established business elites in the context of economic liberalization and socio-religious transformation of the country. Through a comparative analysis of the so-called secular and religious elite networks, we demonstrate the role of institutional actors, such as the government and identity networks, based on religion and place of birth, in shaping the form and content of social networks among business elites in Turkey. In order to achieve this, we operationalize Bourdieu's notion of the theory of practice and Granovetter's theory of social networks, illustrating the utility of combining these approaches in explicating the form and content of social networks in their situated contexts in which power and divergent interests are negotiated.

Keywords: Business elites, Turkey, social network, social capital, cultural capital, business people association

Introduction

Studies on business elites seem to have attracted limited attention in spite of the appeals by prominent authors (Pettigrew, 1992; Whittington, 2004; Savage and Williams, 2008; Zald and Lounsbury, 2010). Whittington (2004:62) stresses the need for a sociological agenda interested in "understanding strategy's elites", since their actions may have important repercussions for society. Drawing on a field study with in-depth interviews, we identify the liberal policies and conservative forces prevailing in the Turkish context on business

networks of the corporate elites. The adoption of liberalization policy in 1980, with Islamic tendencies increasingly surfacing in the same period, makes the Turkish business milieu a valuable setting in which to investigate the impact of the context on corporate elite business networks. Businesspeople's¹ associations, together with their respective ideologies and member profiles, are investigated in a way to assess the interplay of their form and substance with the changing conditions, primarily borne out of the liberalization of economic policies and an increased emphasis on religion.

By exploring multiple actors and their positions, we are able to reveal relationships of power in its given emic context, drawing on Bourdieu and Granovetter's scholarship, and we bring an assessment of power and context in order to develop social network theory by adding to it a macro-context. We believe that this is important in understanding contexts such as Turkey, which falls outside the traditional image of Western theorization. Assessing history and place when reading social networks can help us draw an emic understanding, which emanates from the original framing of social phenomena drawing on local data, of relevant processes, and freeing our theorization from etic, which draws on established frames based on Western concepts of social network formation, the transposition of which may not be so suitable in the case of Turkey. We believe that the absence of a macro perspective in social network theorization is also problematic at the source of much social network theorization. In fact, providing a macro context in Western theorization can delineate fine distinctions between countries and histories which shape our understanding of social networks in the Western world, which is not a monolithic, uniform entity. We demonstrate that in order to understand social network, we need to move towards a multi-institutional and identity framework and

¹The original title of these associations can be translated as "Businessmen" associations. However, all of them have female members as well. For this reason, throughout the paper, we prefer to use the term "Businesspeople".

explore the significant role of identity, based on religion, secularism and even place of birth, in the case of Turkey, as well as over-arching aims, such as capitalist expansion and political domination in shaping the form and content of social networks.

Given the multidisciplinary nature of the work, we draw on theories from sociology, political science and management. Thus, using elite theories (Carroll, 2008; Scott, 2008), and social network perspectives, we unveil the relationship between the context and elite networks. The analysis of our findings is organized around levels of macro, meso and micro relations among corporate elites. We have chosen this multi-level perspective as our thematic focus, as religious and secular identity features differently in corporate relations at each level.

Drawing on Granovetter and Bourdieu in order to understand corporate elites' networks

Two divergent approaches are evident in the theorization of social networks in their given setting. First, Granovetter's theory of social networks explains that human relations are not conjugated only in terms of instrumental rationality, but also of sociability, approval, status and power (Granovetter, 1985). Second, Bourdieu's theory of practice illustrates the relative stability of capitals, choices and chances of individuals and networks across fields of relations, with particular reference to his work on elite reproduction (Authors, 2006). Dynamism and stability are evident in both authors' scholarship. While power and resources present the stable component for both authors, sociability in Granovetter's work and deployment of resources in Bourdieu's work represent the dynamic aspect of social relations. Economic, cultural, social and symbolic capitals constitute a complementary system of actors' acquisitions and capabilities in different levels of the action; money, culture, relationships and titles are thus mobilized as resources. According to Bourdieu, all capitals

function in fact as symbolic capital, as they are socially acknowledged, given that they procure symbolic effects (Bourdieu, 2003:347). Granovetter's notion of sociability and Bourdieu's notion of different forms of capital present us with possibilities of seeing the dynamic practice of individual choice in the context of relatively stable social and economic relations. Combined together, Granovetter and Bourdieu's theoretical approaches promise to capture the coexistence of dynamism and stability, in other words, change and continuity in social networks (Authors, 2012). This study identifies the networking patterns of new and established business elites in the context of economic liberalization and socio-religious transformation of the country. Through a comparative analysis of the so-called secular and religious elite networks, we demonstrate the significance of context in understanding social networks as sites, where power and interests are negotiated. Developing Granovetter's theory of social networks, we mobilize concepts from Bourdieusian sociology and demonstrate the significant role of the field, presented as institutional actors such as the government, and identity formations based on religion or place in shaping the form and content of social networks among business elites in Turkey.

Instead of emphasizing similarities that engender trust in human relationships, Granovetter initially stressed that action develops, rather, in a network of seemingly less-affective, or weak ties, and that the use by actors results in a type of relationship involving a greater number of individuals (Granovetter, 1973:1369). He also argues that not every weak tie, but rather the ties capable of establishing direct and unique links between unconnected actors (bridges), have the capacity to shape an effective relationship (Granovetter, 1985:208). Bourdieu's theory of practice and the field illustrates, however, that an individual's endowment of symbolic and material resources (i.e. different forms of capital) renders their actions predictable among a milieu of actors.

Although the emergence and development of business networks in Turkey have some divergent aspects vis-à-vis Granovetter's weak ties approach, the crucial role played by bridges in a network of business relationships seems to display similarities. Instead of communal relationships, which are based on proximity, familiarity, and trust, newly emerging networks of businesspeople in Turkey offer their adherents quite a different type of cooperation. Although they seem to have in their formation implicit, yet ideologically-driven qualities, such as religious orientation, conservatism, protectionism, secular and modern conceptions of the world, they, in fact, tend to form a new kind of ad hoc entity to resist the pressures and necessities of globalization. Drawing on Bourdieu, it is possible to explicate how a new set of rules, forms and substantial network relationships emerge with new elites. While Granovetter accounts for the dynamism in networks, Bourdieu's approach allows us to present dynamism in the context of stability in the broad field of relations. Lounsbury and Ventresca (2003) claim that Bourdieu's approach to the concept of capital, and, consequently, to the meaning of social relationships, instigated the rise of a new structuralism in management studies. This approach emphasizes the comprehension of the connection between intra-organizational networks and broader societal dynamics that influence the prospects for voice in specific surroundings. The impact of Bourdieu's theory (1979, 1980) on the production of domination through social capital has thus interwoven a wide range of critical reflections in management and organization studies.

Granovetter (1983) has further developed his initial theoretical model with other empirical data, which confirm that weak ties in inter-firm relationships facilitate the creation of cooperation and coordination in the national network of economic actors. The capitals of Bourdieu (1979) are utilized to assess characteristics of network members, as well as their

actions towards domination. Deployment of capital to accrue symbolic power in a relatively stable field of institutional relations presents the dynamic aspect of Bourdieu's conceptualization. Drawing on Bourdieu's theory, we show the importance of social capital, as well as economic and cultural capital, in shaping the context of power and influence in Turkish business elites. Our analysis on the formation, structure and functionality of business associations in Turkey reveals both an articulation with the network-basis perspective especially that developed by Granovetter, and a re-evaluation and micro-adaptation of Bourdieu's notion of capital in today's changing Turkish business world.

Burt (2005) proposes, in his challenging but complementary approach to Granovetter, a consideration of a relatively underestimated aspect of the network system, and focuses on "structural holes". He accentuates the contribution of network relationships to the enrichment of social capital. According to Burt, a network rich in holes (unconnected persons or clusters of relationships) is more promising than that paved by familiar connections, because relatedness depends on the communicative capacity offered by the discontinuous network. Unknown, unexplored identities and beliefs can be an effective source of multiplying social capital (Burt, 2005:17). On the other hand, Townley (2002:561) criticizes the taken-for-granted characteristic of the modernist rationalistic and mechanical models which try to analyze the macro-structures, but often underestimate the importance of the "micro-physics of power." However, in this study we draw attention to power and domination within and around the businesspeople networks, which are characterized by a unique set of divisions across identity lines in Turkey. We illustrate how business networks, which are seemingly divided across identity lines of Islamism, secularism and communitarianism, have interconnections in the form of joint projects and shared aims such as market expansion.

Drawing a distinction between price system (universalistic instrumental rationality), associative system (particularistic instrumental rationality), moral system (universalistic substantive rationality) and communal system (particularistic substantive rationality), Biggart and Delbridge (2004) classify major forms of exchange based on the openness of the group towards outsiders (universalistic/particularistic) and their relation to instrumental logic (direction of the calculus between means and ends). Most Turkish business associations seem to be characterized by a blend of moral and communal systems. The newly rising ones, in particular, appear to prioritize in-group harmony through an apparent ideological or moral motivation, paving the way to integration with the global market.

Instead, she proposes a notion of organization which is complex, interactive and dynamic, consisting of multiple and complex interactions and circular causality.

Drawing on Bourdieu allows us to re-theorize context as a significant aspect of network relationships: political context, in particular the interplay of religion, state, trade unions and employers, is ignored, or remains limited to narrow conceptions of stakeholder approach (Rowley, 1997; Borgatti and Halgin, 2011; Moliterno and Mahony, 2011) in network theory, which assumes that context is fixed, and not relevant to such theorization. In the European setting, we need to consider context more keenly, as the institutional differences are often outcomes of unique historical paths. For example, in their review of the diversity management field, Authors (2011) identify that discourses and practices in this field of management are shaped by both macro-economic forces of liberalization and social changes, such as the decline of social solidarity and a surge of individualism. They also demonstrate that institutional actors, such as trade unions, employers' unions, professional bodies, universities and consulting businesses, play important roles in negotiating the form and structure of the field. They use the Bourdieusian concept of the field in order to bring a macro-economic and social dimension to our understanding of social networks. The concept

of the field allows us to bring in history, place and relationship among actors in order to understand how certain practices and network ties are maintained.

We draw on the concepts used by Granovetter and Bourdieu, in order to frame stability and change in the context of corporate elites in Turkey. Instead of taking each theoretical point of view as an exclusive reference to stability or dynamism, we prefer to conceive of them in a more dialectical perspective. In other words, we did not try to polarize both thinkers as representatives of stability and dynamism, but we extracted conceptual aspects from their theory through which change and structure have been seen as complementary forces. Bourdieu, especially, can be easily misunderstood because of his emphasis on the structural components of social facts. He conceives social action to be derived from actors' intentional reasoning. However, such an individual orientation of action is limited as it operates in structurally determined, yet never absolutely frozen, social frameworks. Two such frameworks are *habitus* –internalized assumptions in a given cultural heritage (Bourdieu, 2003:200; Bourdieu, 2000:263), and *field* – a domain of action in which different kinds of capital are deployed in, more or less, the same logic (Bourdieu, 2003:24). Moreover, we took into account that Bourdieu developed his theory in the relatively more established social equilibrium and less dynamic class structure of France in the 1970s. Although it has been conceived in, and for, a specific historical and social context, Bourdieu's theory has larger conceptual extensions. We did not profit from Bourdieu's macro-sociological analysis simply for its historical specificity, nor for its emphasis on stable aspects of social facts. We tried to understand the economic elites of Turkey in a stability-change dialectical axis, as both complementary and conflicting forces, that make the existing complexity and interpenetration of social networks and relations in the business world. As summarized in Table 1, we show through Granovetter's and Bourdieu's theoretical frameworks that economic elites'

associations act as both processes of structuration and matrixes of new actions. We conceptualize business associations not as static and impermeable structures, but, on the contrary, as highly active and communicating fields. In such a context, besides their capacity to keep social structural peculiarities in their institutional dimension (reproduction of a certain in-group culture), they also have the potential to animate new quests, demands and orientations which create dynamism (change). Thus, while emphasizing the capacity of the association to generate *power*, we show that this implicates a naturally formed *status* and *approval* within and outside the business network, which functions as a *field* that keeps a certain balance of capitals. The field furnishes the necessary framework of action for the perpetuation of approval and status, together with, the constant maintenance of power-generating mechanisms (e.g. keeping the relationships dynamic and convertible in business actions through the know-how and business opportunities created by the association). The same field also acts as a matrix of change, due to its capacity to instigate *cooperation* and *coordination* between members. For this, capitals that serve to keep a structure are also used to realize operations of readjustment through their dynamic aspects, resulting in the establishment of new opportunities and benefits. The latter is not only conceived in a material sense, but also as a possibility to create a sphere of *sociability*. A business association is also a social milieu, which is exclusively reconfigured through the capacity of the actor on *deployment of capitals*. In sum, aspects of *stability* are tightly dependent on those of *change*.

Table1: Concepts of Granovetter and Bourdieu in order to understand stability and change

Scholars	Stability	Change
Granovetter	Power Approval Status	Cooperation and Coordination Sociability
Bourdieu	Different forms of capital The field	Deployment of capitals

Thus, using Bourdieusian concept of the field, we bring a macro-economic and social dimension to our understanding of social networks in the case of corporate elites. Drawing upon the view that “elites are those groups that hold or exercise domination within a society or within a particular area of life” (Scott, 2008:32), we have defined business elites as the leading executive figures (such as chairperson, vice chairperson and CEO) of the largest companies. This definition is also consistent with previous studies, which perceive corporate elite as “a configuration of capitalists (major shareholders and top executives) and organic intellectuals occupying positions of ultimate authority within leading corporations” (Carroll, 2008:47). Savage and Williams (2008) claim that although elites are associated with “the holding and exercising power”, elite research seems to overemphasize the power. In fact, business elites and entrepreneurial class in late-industrializing countries prosper under the direction and influence of the state (Öniş and Türem, 2002), which may significantly constrain the power of the corporate elite. In the Middle East as well, power is concentrated at the national level and incumbents of top state positions are outstandingly powerful (Harik, 1980). Corporate elites’ power base is very dependent on their relationship to their governments in Middle Eastern countries like Kuwait and Saudi Arabia (Ali, 2010), Egypt (Kaboub, 2013) and Turkey (Buğra, 1994), among others. Case (2005), showing government support to the business elites in Malaysia, another predominantly Islamic country, points to the ethnic fault lines among the corporate elites. In fact, Savage and Williams (2008) state that elite research seems also to overestimate the cohesion. Elites may be internally split along the lines of ideology, religion and ethnicity, among others (Scott, 2008), which, in turn, may influence elite networks in terms of change and stability.

Turkey, as a late-industrialized country in the Middle East, has a strong state tradition that makes the business life dependent on the state. Furthermore, the business elites display

factions with different characteristics that limit their cohesion as a group. Therefore, studying elite networks in the changing context of Turkey contributes to our understanding of their change and stability in relation to the institutional environment. The following section presents the dynamics of the Turkish context and formation of different elite networks.

Contextual assessment of Turkey in the process of economic liberalization and socio-religious transformation

Turkey is a country of civil law, and its legal system contributes to the central role of the state in the Turkish business system (Authors, 2012). Consistent with the predictions of the Legal Origins theory, the economy is mostly guided by state-desired allocations rather than market-based outcomes (La Porta et al., 2008). Turkish business context is typically characterized by family-controlled, diversified big business groups (Guillén, 2001), whose development is encouraged by the state (Buğra, 2002; Başkan, 2010; Buğra, 2010). The intervention of the state in business life is through “particularistic relations” with businessmen rather than “rule based formal institutional arrangements” (Buğra, 2002:188). The state forms partnerships with these businesses and provides credit from state banks and low cost inputs (Buğra, 1994). The intricate nature of the relationship between the state and the business firms necessitates a careful handling of this link, and forces owning families to take part in the management of their companies (Buğra, 1994). Despite the relatively stable characteristics of businesses where the state is extremely powerful and dominant, there have been significant changes in the political, economic and social life in the last two decades in Turkey which have affected corporate elites’ networks.

These basic characteristics of the business system in Turkey continue, in spite of the major macroeconomic policy shifts. Turkish economic policy reached a breaking point at the beginning of 1980. The preceding decade was subject to a high inflation rate, coupled with the erratic regulatory regimes caused by political instability, which made high levels of uncertainty the basic characteristic of doing business in Turkey (Yurtoglu, 2004). Abandoning the import substitution policy that had been focusing on the domestic market, a trade liberalization programme based on export promotion was launched in the early 1980s (Yurtoglu, 2000). Turkey was to adapt herself to the realities and requisites of the global economy and globalization process, which demanded a “restructuration” of the national economy.

Therefore, the system of mixed economy was abandoned, state economic enterprises were privatized, and a series of neo-liberal policies were launched in order to abandon the existing “nationalist development model” in favour of the transition to global capitalism (Türe, 2008:89). In 1986, the Istanbul Stock Exchange was founded. Economic liberalization also introduced notions such as human resource strategies into the Turkish business context (Ercek, 2006; Kaya, 2006; Kaya et al., 2010; Collings et al., 2010; Küskü and Ataman, 2011; Gürbüz and Mert, 2011). Throughout these large- scale reforms, which were also supported by the majority of the economic elites, the control on foreign currency was abandoned, the value of the Turkish Lira was determined by the market, foreign capital entry controls were suppressed (Öniş, 2004).

The same period was also characterized by an attempt to combine Islamic identity with a liberal economy (Buğra, 2002; Laçınok, 2007; Özcan and Turunç, 2011; Başkan, 2010). This tendency was further enforced by the victories of pro-Islamist political parties in the 1990s

and 2000s. In particular, the pro-Islamist AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi - Justice and Development Party) that took power in 2002, promised to respect the neo-liberal economic policies deployed since the 1980s. Prior to AKP rule, pro-Islamic parties were banned several times by the Constitutional Court under previous governments, on grounds of anti-secular activities destined to install an Islamic regime. Weary of these politically risky discourses, conservative Anatolian entrepreneurs needed a political organization that allied Islamic belief with pragmatism, but gave priority to private enterprise, free market, competition and profits (Kumbaracıbaşı, 2009).

Following economic liberalization, industrial production – which had formerly been primarily limited to Istanbul and the adjacent cities in the Marmara region - became scattered throughout Anatolia. This was due to the proliferation of export-oriented small and medium size enterprises operating in various industrial zones that reflected the dynamism of ambitious entrepreneurs moving from local to global markets, in some cases bypassing the national market (Keyman and Lorasdağı, 2010). This proliferation was also stimulated by the large businesses of Istanbul and the Marmara region, which outsourced part of their production to Anatolian companies (Buğra and Savaşkan, 2010), while competing in international markets.

The transition to a liberal economy, and the attempts to combine an Islamic identity with such a liberal economy, had a considerable influence on business networks (Başkan, 2010; Özcan and Turunç, 2011). A proliferation of businesspeople's associations with a religious accent characterized the period following this economic and social transformation. The new Anatolian conservative economic and political elites, who once felt that they were socially and culturally “excluded”, savoured their common triumph and openly displayed their interest in securing their position among the established elites. The religiously conservative

entrepreneur groups, not only those dwelling in Anatolian cities, but also those operating in Istanbul and the Marmara region, were also willing to improve their social networks. As an alternative to the secular and pro-Western “Turkish Association of Industrialists and Businesspeople” (TÜSİAD-Türkiye Sanayici ve İş Adamları Derneği), founded in 1971 by the modernist, established economic elites of the Istanbul area, the Anatolian entrepreneurs, allied with the leading pro-Islamist Welfare Party (RP-Refah Partisi), created MÜSİAD (Müstakil Sanayici ve İş Adamları Derneği) “The Association of Independent Industrialists and Businesspeople” in 1990 (Öniş and Türem, 2002; Pamuk, 2008). The first three letters of the designation “Müstakil”, meaning “independent”, was also read as “Muslim”. For these conservative entrepreneurs, Islamic identity served as capital, which could be deployed to satisfy the need for power, status and approval. By providing the grounds for work sociability, and consequently cooperation and coordination, this new network introduced dynamism and change. It also provided the opportunity to interact with the state apparatus during the rule of pro-Islamic parties, and to influence policies (Başkan, 2010).

While TÜSİAD’s membership size is relatively small and composed of large firms located mainly in Istanbul and the surrounding areas, MÜSİAD’s membership size is larger, geographically widespread, and composed mainly of SMEs (Öniş and Türem, 2001, 2002; Sönmez, 2010) and young companies (Buğra, 2002). However, TÜSİAD’s members manufacture 65 per cent of the total industrial production, and their share in total exports is approximately 85 per cent (Buğra and Savaşkan, 2010). Although TÜSİAD has considerable economic power, it lost the political support of the state apparatus during the pro-Islamist governments. As an alternative strategy, it has extended its international reach and has adopted a democratic discourse (Başkan, 2010). MÜSİAD has close ties with the pro-Islamist

parties, and intends to play a political lobbying role on behalf of its members (Öniş and Türem, 2001, 2002; Buğra and Savaşkan, 2010).

Another business network that shelters religiously conservative entrepreneurs, “The Confederation of Turkish Businesspeople and Industrialists” (TUSKON-Türkiye İşadamları ve Sanayiciler Konfederasyonu), was founded in 2005. Its founders and members mostly belong to the Fethullah Gülen²'s religious community, however, and keep a certain distance from MÜSİAD (Buğra and Savaşkan, 2010). According to Mango (2006), Gülen maintains a concept of the secular world as “dar-ul hizmet” (the abode of service to mankind), which he substitutes for the traditional notion of “dar-ul harb” (the abode of war against infidels). This perspective is similar to the basic tenet of other religiously inspired business networks, such as the Opus Dei, for the members of which all work should be performed as divine service (Mango, 2006). In TUSKON, Islamic references are secondary to the deployment of nationalist discourses: Islam is characterized as an important element of Turkish nationalism (Buğra and Savaşkan, 2010:104). TUSKON provides a network for local SMEs willing to reach out to foreign markets and to source raw materials for their production. The impressive educational institutions created by Gülen's followers in five continents, from Asia to Africa, and from Australia to America, are also helping to provide additional contacts for infiltrating global markets (Buğra and Savaşkan, 2010). In these schools, the language of instruction is Turkish (along with English) and the curriculum familiarizes students with Turkish culture. These educational institutions are often attended by the children of the local elite, who can therefore easily be reached by TUSKON for business opportunities.

²Former imam and preacher who established an internationally active and politically powerful religious community

A widely shared idea about the role of religion in Turkey is that it functions as a basis for the generation of a closed and defensive world concept. Consequently, religion has long been conceived as the main theme of a polarization between a modern attitude and a conservative posture (Mardin, 2004:82). Nevertheless, recent studies assert that religion in Turkey is not only coalesced with self-protectionist anti-modernism, but is also instrumental in providing personal inner guideline through a rapidly changing society, and facilitates integration in the globalized world (Göle, 1991, 2000). In the last decade, it appears that religious movements in Turkey have started to manifest themselves primarily within civil society organizations, and have distanced themselves from the strict ideology of political Islam (Yılmaz, 2005). In particular, the religiously rooted business associations have managed to produce a secularized discourse. TUSKON linking with the Gülen's movement is an appropriate example of this new discourse. They put great emphasis on the secular premises of business, rather than making Islamic values evident. Exploring the impact of this newly emerging religious middle class in the business world may also bring a new perspective to our understanding of network theory. Gülen's movement and its business associations seem to represent, in this context, a new kind of brotherhood, a modern solidarity circle, within which traditional provincial conservatism, mostly nourished by small-scale subsidiary commerce, has closed around itself a protective shell against aggressively expanding modern/urban capitalism. It has been reconfigured through weak ties, as outlined by Granovetter, in the globalization process during the 2000s. In a TUSKON-type of business association, the members get together, not on the basis of close relationships such as familial links, or mutual relationships. Their cooperation is based on a market-based logic of interdependencies, which, on the surface, appear to share a conservative mixture of religious and national themes. In this sense, Turkey provides a rich context in which to study elites in the process of social, economic and political change. Evidence of differences between the new and the old elites allows for an

understanding of how elites change, or struggle to retain their elite status through their networks, which are influenced by the national context.

Methodology

The study sample was drawn from the owners and top managers of the largest Turkish companies, as part of a larger study on elites. A comprehensive study on Turkish business elites was conducted with the grant provided by the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey in 2009-2011. We conducted open-ended interviews with key informants who have executive roles, such as CEOs, chair or vice chair of the board. The research sample consisted of 65 companies, taken from the 500 largest Turkish firms ranked by the Istanbul Chamber of Industry, and investigated elites pertaining to different dimensions, such as relations with state and globalization, networking patterns, entrepreneurial attributes, and business and society interactions, among others. Stratified random sampling according to the regional breakdown of the 500 largest companies was used to ensure a country-wide representation of the sample. A sub-sample of 36 interviewees who are the members of TÜSİAD/MÜSİAD/TUSKON was used for the present analysis, and this article is based on the area of data investigating elite networking patterns. In this sample, the numbers of TÜSİAD, MÜSİAD and TUSKON members were 25, 4 and 7 respectively, which represents the changing elite-network composition. Among the 500 largest companies, the respective number of firms affiliated with TÜSİAD, MÜSİAD and TUSKON are 142, 31 and 92. Elite networks are assessed through the membership of the largest businesspeople associations in Turkey: namely, TÜSİAD, MÜSİAD and TUSKON. The data concerning businesspeople's associations were gathered both through interviews and secondary information sources. The life story of the person and the company, and the questions concerning relations with the

business networks constituted the basis of this analysis. The interview protocol was a broad guideline, which provided us with the opportunity to start with more general questions, and to ask for further details when necessary. To improve the accuracy of the responses, we assured each interviewee that their replies would be kept strictly confidential. We have replaced the names of the interviewees with pseudonyms, and we have hidden any identifying information in our research report. The interviews were conducted in the office of the interviewee. This has given us the opportunity to take field notes in relation to the office and the company. Two of the researchers participated in each interview, with the exception of two cases, where there was only one researcher. Interviews were tape-recorded, except in two cases, during which detailed notes were taken. Interviews lasted for two to three hours. Each researcher also took observation field notes independently. An extensive documentary search was conducted in relation to each interviewee and firm. The data obtained through interviews was also cross-checked with the archival data (such as member lists of TÜSİAD, MÜSİAD and TUSKON, company reports, etc.) and observation field notes.

In this study an exploratory qualitative research design was adopted, since the aim was to explore a research topic or theory, rather than being a test of it (Myers, 2009:23). Discourse analysis was applied to the interview data in order to examine the stability and dynamisms behind networking patterns, capitals and context. Following the suggestions of Boyatzis (1998), we have created codebooks from data as well as from theory. Each code was labelled and described. For reliability, the data was coded separately by two different researchers. As suggested by Boyatzis (1998), the theme was left out if the researchers could not reach a consensus on it, or it was re-formulated until an agreement was reached. Inter-rater reliability was over 80 per cent.

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

Findings and Discussions

Different business networks (in the form of businesspeople's associations) accomplish specific functions, with sometimes complementing and mostly conflicting interests. Nevertheless, business associations are subject to the same contextual forces, such as the world economy, dynamics of international relations, and political setting, crises and social movements, as well as ideologically-driven trends on a national level at the same historical moment. However each business association is at a different stage of organizational evolution: whilst a long-established one like TÜSİAD is at the peak of its integration with the global market and is sufficiently mature, new associations, like MÜSİAD or TUSKON, are in a growth phase, as they take effective steps to be more active in the global market. In each emerging business network, we observe a gradual passage towards institutionalized relationships. Consequently, every new businesspeople association represents a transposition of peer-to-peer relationships from mostly affective proximity (family ties, ethnic mutuality bonds, etc.) to functionally conditioned trust networks. In other words, businesspeople associations are signs of a social change from traditionally determined forms of solidarity to institutionally circumscribed sociality, that help to carry out capitalistic actions in modern, formal or semi-formal structures. Ideology here functions as an apparently discursive coverage and a catalyst that accelerates the involvement of economic actors into global markets. In the context of global integration of Turkey, trust, which is indispensable for the creation of new relationships of solidarity, seems to be assured not exclusively by affective ties, which were once thought to be the sole criterion of eligibility between economic actors.

Now, it is also secured by institutional regularization through a certain ideological discourse. This discourse manifests itself as a secular, pro-Western, old-established bourgeois point of view in the case of TÜSİAD, as Islamic faith adapted into capitalist reasoning in the case of MÜSİAD, and as Islamic faith fused with a desire for internationalist position-taking with a slight emphasis on “Turkishness” in the case of TUSKON. In every new formation, weak ties, as Granovetter stressed, seem to have a more determinant role than traditional strong ties. Again, in every new network system, the logic of economic action is concretized through the formation of new social capital for establishing the ideological setting of domination in Bourdieusian terms. Each new cultural capital is generated in the conceptual framework of a businesspeople association. The degree of internationalization plays a major role in mobilizing resources with the aim of constituting such a social capital through weak ties. Table 1 displays differences between TÜSİAD, MÜSİAD and TUSKON in relation to their level of development on an international and national scale.

We provide a three-layered framework through which we examine business networks in terms of their form and content in the global, national and association level relationships in the concluding section of this paper. We also elaborate how these layers of relationships interplay with each other.

Macro-Global context of business network relations

The business associations are about domination which leads to an exclusion of those who do not culturally conform, and they generate a feeling of incompatibility on the part of those who hit the barrier of the domination (Authors, 2011). Consequently, a new network, defining itself as ‘other’ than the one preceding it, emerges as sufficient need is condensed

around a motivational force towards a global market. This being ‘other’ is not only explicitly encoded in cultural assets, but also in specific needs, such as integration with the global and national economy as experienced by this specific group of businesspeople.

Different networks agree on the aims of an economic mutuality for a growing business and global integration. This is how we can explain the synchronic existence of a series of networks, diverging culturally or ideologically, but completing an evolutionary landscape of the business world. As mentioned above, these businesspeople networks differ in the type and level of their needs. TÜSİAD members are big players, who are well connected with the rest of the world. They have mostly Western cultural references. Several of them have led major international associations in their business fields. They also appear to be members of the major international NGOs in their sector.

It is interesting to note that there was no affiliation of international associations among MÜSİAD and TUSKON members. There is a lack of integration with global networks. MÜSİAD/TUSKON members seem to be less familiar with foreign markets and cultures. In contrast to TÜSİAD members who had experienced foreign collaboration, even before the economic liberalization, newcomers like MÜSİAD and TUSKON members have mostly appeared in the largest companies list in Turkey, or grew after the policy change in 1980 (and grew even faster during the AKP rule after 2002). Being new in both national and international markets appears to be a constraining factor, especially in international business. However, particularly in the case of TUSKON, this is being overcome, thanks to the schools of Gülen all over the world (Buğra and Savaşkan, 2010) which are attended, particularly in less developed countries, by the children of local elites. In fact, a careful examination of the web page of TUSKON reveals that international relations with potential trade partners are

created and maintained by the activities of this association. Therefore, TUSKON serves as a business community, with strong religious ties and functions as a provider of access to international business networks. Thus, its members do not act individually in the international arena, but rather they are introduced to international markets through community-based activities offered to each member.

“TUSKON performs great internationally. (...) Through business trips to many countries [organized by TUSKON] we had the opportunity to establish many new links. We have learned how to compete internationally.” (*S1-Chairman of a manufacturing company-TUSKON member*).

Since the business contracts are assured through collective business trips, to or from a country, that are organized by TUSKON, participants reported investments in similar countries, for example Brazil, among TUSKON members. On the other hand, TÜSİAD members enjoyed the benefits of being members of an old association integrated with the world. Their “establishedness,” experience, and economic size provide the necessary means to conduct business through the community (TÜSİAD) and individually.

“I have many partnerships. Many people cannot get along with Westerners but I work very well with them. I have a partnership with the major player in the sector in Germany. (...) This year, I have also been appointed to the International Communication Committee at TÜSİAD.” (*S2-Chairman of a large group. TÜSİAD member*).

TÜSİAD members did not only establish individual trade partnerships, but they also acted as leaders in promoting trade relations with specific countries. Their efforts were also recognized by different states. Social capital, together with cultural capital, appears as crucial assets to mobilize intensified weak ties for improving business benefits, materially as well as symbolically.

“I have been awarded the Royal Order of Merit of Spain by the King for promoting trade relations between the two countries.” (*S2-Chairman of a large group-TÜSİAD member*).

They are also able to act as a liaison person in connecting the political leaders of different countries.

“I am member of NGOs in Germany (...) As a successful entrepreneur I am quite influential. I have weight in political scene. In a book about me written by young people it is stated that I brought together the prime ministers.”(*S15-Chairman of a large group-TÜSİAD member*).

Globalization and increasing international exchanges appear to be the main factors leading to stability and change in networks. The compatibility/incompatibility of such macro tendencies with the deployment of the capitals necessitates reconsideration of existing capitals and the potential of a network.

Meso-National context of business network relations

Business associations are also subject to the legacy of their foundation. We observe that the period of foundation, as in specific time and historical moment, institutes a different organizational habitus in each association. TÜSİAD was established in 1971 in an unstable

context characterized by social unrest and employer-employee conflicts, where social democrats and liberal conservatives used to compete for government. TÜSİAD was established to provide a network for the private sector, rather than to represent the interests of businesspeople (Buğra, 1998). Both MÜSİAD and TUSKON emerged after 1980 when religious tone was remarkable in the discourse of government, together with the global rise of neo-liberal policies. Each network was established as a semi-reactionary movement towards the secular cultural codes represented by the older network. Therefore new forms of social capital as new quests for both integration with the global market and domination are achieved through functional exploitation of weak ties.

Based on these perspectives, the present study investigates the inner dynamics of the Turkish business networks, as well as the forces in the context contributing to their survival. The changing political and economic climate after 1980 facilitated the rise and growth of new networks. The rise of Islamic tendencies at government level further encouraged new businesspeople networks, which appear to base their discourse on religion. This supportive environment was also reflected in the comments of the interviewees from MÜSİAD/TUSKON.

“During the crisis the president of the republic visited us and showed his emotional support.” (*S3-Chairman, TUSKON member of a large industrial holding*).

While he was proud of enjoying the support of the actual president, he was openly expressing his disappointment at the neglect of a previous president who did not share Islamist tendencies.

“Even though I create employment and export a considerable part of my production, previous president [of the republic] never invited me to the presidential palace. However, the actual president invites.” (*S3-Chairman, TUSKON member of a large industrial holding*).

The old elite businesspeople network, TÜSİAD, did not appear to benefit from the same level of political support in the 2000s. The discourse of several of its members indicated a lack of support, even a counteraction from government. This is an explicit indication of the importance of the context-dependent nature of network and social capital.

“The government wants to eradicate us.” (*S4-CEO of TÜSİAD member of a large industrial holding*).

It is also argued that the new religious business class is the reason for the emergence of AKP (Başkan, 2010). In the post 1980s political atmosphere, the affinity between politics and religious businesspeople appears to be very appropriate for liberal policies. In fact, our research focuses on the transformation of the economic elites’ networks following the contextual shift, delineating a significant change in the relative position of religion among Turkish businesspeople. Despite the manifestation of nuanced attitudes, religion (the Islamic faith) in general seems to have become the primary common denominator in the new elites’ networks.

“I am a TUSİAD member... TUSİAD is different. Since MÜSİAD,etc. have political inclinations I would not like to be involved in them. But I interact with all kind of groups in Ankara.” (*S5-Chairman of a group*).

According to the findings of our study, the newly emerging economic elites, who are mostly from a provincial origin, adopt a more or less manifest religious attitude in their self-expression and manners. The majority of MÜSİAD/TUSKON members in our study state that they fully practice their religious beliefs. However, they are highly motivated to construct business networks that aim for integration with the global liberal market, instead of preserving the reactionary conservative point of view. The apparent motive for rejecting the older social networks is always due to cultural heritage and ideological essence, because this does not offer, to the newcomer, the opportunity to establish new weak ties and a guarantee of economic and political power. New positioning needs the adoption of new values, while those evocative of the old social capital are reformulated. The non-members of TÛSİAD, for example, try to coalesce their conservatism with global values based on tolerance and democracy.

“I am a faithful person. I fulfill all my religious duties, however, I am not fanatic. I would not mind for example going to a restaurant where alcohol is served. Or when I have a foreign client and we go for a dinner. He drinks alcoholic beverages at the same table. I would respect him. I have respect for every belief. I do not mind that he is Christian or Jewish or Armenian. I do have respect to all of them. Thanks God I am not fanatic.”(...)*I am not a member of TÛSİAD. I do not share some of its views. TÛSİAD is not democratic. But I am not against trading with them.” (S6-Chairman of large group).*

Networking is not always a strict adherence to a certain business association, with or without political connotation, but, for some of our interviewees; it was a question of developing a sufficiently diversified social capital, as a safeguard against contextual fluctuations.

“I do not have a membership in any association. However, my cousins, brothers [all partners in the same business group] are members somewhere. My cousin is a member of TUSKON, my brothers are member of TÜSİAD.” (*S7-Chairman of a large group*).

Micro-association context of business network relations

Every network is comprised of main components, the systematic cooperation evoking the establishment of a social capital, allowing in those who share the same cultural codes (cultural capital) and excluding those who do not. Similarly, those not sharing the same characteristics do not dare, or want, to become a part of the network. This was quite evident in the discourses of the businesspeople who did not join TÜSİAD, in full conformity with Bourdieu’s argument on the subjective evaluation of one’s probabilities in life practices being mostly legitimized by a corpus of discursive formulations or schemas of action, as in the example of “this is not for us”. (Bourdieu, 2000: 259)

“TÜSİAD is too big for us.” (*S8-Chairman and CEO in a holding from Istanbul*).

In fact, there are significant discrepancies between the economic, social and cultural capitals of the adherents of TÜSİAD, MÜSİAD and TUSKON in our sample. Given the overlaps between the MÜSİAD and TUSKON members, and the commonalities in their religious tone, we preferred to put them together. Our findings show that TÜSİAD membership is associated with the largest economic power. Its members in our sample are usually from companies whose sales exceeded 500 million or even 1 billion USD. The association with relatively

smaller sized companies is worth noting in the cases of MÜSİAD and TUSKON members. Quotes of the TÜSİAD members often underline the size of their businesses:

“We have the largest factory in the world in a single site.” (*S9-CEO of a large group*).

It is interesting to note that they tend to express the size of their companies in comparison to the global or European scale. They make it explicit that they are able to compete in global markets. They also express their economic capital in terms of their international market share:

“We are the largest 3rd in market share in Europe.” (*S10-Chairman of a large industrial group*).

The divergence between the respective cultural capitals of these different networks' members is also considerable. TÜSİAD members appear to have an undergraduate degree, often from a university in the USA or UK. They are also likely to have a graduate degree. The majority of TÜSİAD members are also graduates of prestigious high schools, where the language of instruction is foreign. This is consistent with the fact that the majority of this group seem to be able to speak more than one foreign language.

Amongst this group, there seems to be a trend for collecting paintings and (to a much lesser degree) antiquities, as well as establishing private universities or museums bearing the name of the family. The growth of a cultural capital and its refinement into rare tastes plays a determinant role in the symbolic construction of domination, which also functions as an indication of the belonging of the actor to a well-rooted system of social relationships, and not to a newly emerging one.

“My interest is highest for plastic arts. (...) I visit art exhibitions, select artworks in national and international biennales and art fairs. I have a great interest in [classical] music but unfortunately only as a spectator. I do not play any instrument. I am also interested in literature (...) I practise two types of sports: first is the one I do regularly as eating, sleeping (...) I have also favourite sports: I practise equitation since my childhood. My father introduced me to it. I do sailing since long time. I played soccer (...). I like skiing.” (*S11-Chairman of a large industrial group-TÜSİAD member*).

While similar discourses have often been observed among TÜSİAD members, MÜSİAD and TUSKON members mentioned different tastes. The latter are usually interested in more popular sports and types of music, unsurprisingly, when we consider Bourdieu’s theoretical emphasis on the scale of sports practice and cultural tastes from the finest to the most popular, during the construction of the distinction.

“I walk three days per week in the health club of the X Hospital. (...) I listen to the Turkish traditional popular music. (...) I do not have any other relationship with art.” (*S12-Chairman of a large industrial group- TUSKON member*).

MÜSİAD and TUSKON members in our sample seem to differ considerably from TÜSİAD members concerning the cultural capitals. A large majority of the members do not have an undergraduate, or a graduate degree. The distance of the university from the home city appears to be a major problem, accounting for the limited time spent in educational institutions. The expectation that the older son should work in the family business was another reason which prevented further studies.

TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

However, it is also worth mentioning that the children of MÜSİAD and TUSKON members seem to achieve better education levels. They have undergraduate degrees, some of them preferring US universities. They thus have a better education record and are able to speak foreign languages. Half of the TUSKON members in our sample could not speak another language. Most of them seem to have spent little time abroad, and then only for business trips. When we evaluate the presence of elite tastes as defined by Bourdieu, we see that such tastes are inexistent. For example, in contrast to TÜSİAD members, they do not collect paintings or antiquities. However, the trend of establishing universities is also observed amongst TUSKON members. While TÜSİAD members tend to establish their own private universities bearing the name of the family, TUSKON or MÜSİAD members favour a collective effort in similar endeavors. They get together with others of similar link to create new universities, usually for a “foundation” and get actively involved in the board of trustees. Their more collectivistic orientation is worth noting.

“My son is the head of the board of trustees in our university.”

(S12-Chairman of a group-TUSKON member).

They are usually proud of contributing to these joint efforts of founding new universities, which are mandated by the government, but often sponsored by large holding companies. However, although these are joint efforts, they tend to emphasize their own contributions. For them this is clearly a symbolic capital through which they gain legitimacy and reputation.

“I have constructed a Business and Economics Faculty. Ten people, we have provided 4 trillion Turkish Liras (\$2.2 million).” (*S13-Chairman of an industrial company-TUSKON member*).

Significant differences are also observed along the social capital dimension between TÜSİAD and MÜSİAD/TUSKON members in our sample. The notion of social capital appears to be the underlying concept of Bourdieu’s thinking on the phenomenon of domination (Bourdieu, 1979). He conceptualizes social capital as a sum of actual or potential resources deriving from the very fact of possessing a more or less institutionalized network of durable relationships. Social capital creating useful links displays various characteristics for the businesspeople networks we analyzed. One of the dimensions we wanted to assess is the father’s profession. In the case of TÜSİAD members, the fatherly profession appears to be “industrialist”. On the other hand “merchant” or “craftsman” appears as the father’s profession for the MÜSİAD/TUSKON members in our sample. The farmer is the only exception. Another dimension to assess social capital is the city of birth. Interestingly, we see that more than half of the TÜSİAD members in our sample were born in big cities (metropolitan areas). On the other hand, all the MÜSİAD/TUSKON members in our sample were born in small cities and towns (non-metropolitan areas).

Interrelationships between macro, meso, and micro levels

Given the findings of our study, we developed a model which is composed of interconnected parts, akin to a network that involves parts tied together with needs and functions that necessitate a form of organization, based on the use of cultural signs and a shared habitus to

nurture a trusting system which generates legitimacy, credibility, economic cooperation and ideology.

The existing metropolitan-origin established business networks display mundane and Western-oriented cultural characteristics, while the new formations use religious themes and the explicit conservative attitude as a kind of ingredient of articulation with capitalist relations on a world scale. In other words, conservatism functions, in the rapidly changing social-economic context of Turkey, as a protective cocoon, a kind of anti-shock armour for the sufficiently motivated individual who desires to be integrated into the global market, but does not possess the necessary cultural equipment to support the logic of competitiveness. Even though the conservative new elite appear to refer to religious codes, they follow the old elites' consumption style and "surround themselves with luxury brands, new villas and private beaches" (Özcan and Turunç, 2011: 77). Conservatism presents an appearance and a strategy of adaptation to the global economy and culture. We think that, from the bottom up, this represents an inevitable conflict triggered off by social change and forms of adaptation shared by conservative strata. Conservative elite networks provide the necessary tools to become integrated into the global economy.

In spite of such a leaning towards the non-material aspects of globalization, the apparently conservative economic elite seems to approach values relative to a pluralistic point of view, with a remarkable tendency towards moral tolerance, and a systematic recognition of cultural differences, often intellectually supported through traditional humanism reminiscent of the Sufi philosophy of Rumi, or other historical Anatolian half-mythic references, which have produced a flexible stance towards Islam for centuries. In fact, Turkish Islam has a traditional orientation towards the state that facilitated its pragmatic and flexible tone. In

other words, because Turkish Islam, as represented by religious functionaries, has traditionally done the state's bidding, it accepted the secularist order without demur (Mango, 2006:56). This flexible stance is also visible in the discourses of the MÜSİAD/TUSKON members:

“...I do practise my religion, however I have many friends who do not. For example, I often go out with them for a dinner, they drink alcoholic beverages and I don't and I do not mind it. Everybody is free to do what he/she wishes.” (*S14-Male, chairman of an Anatolian company*).

This flexibility appears even when they sign up new members for the business associations. The president of a sub-federation of TUSKON states that:

“We have one criterion when we sign up a new member; we don't look at the political view, nor ethnicity. What we are looking for is straight/honest business history of the man/woman. This is the only criterion. We have members from different political views (left or right wing political parties). We have “Alevi” (A Turkish Shia sect). We have Kurds as well... We have members consuming alcohol, or smoking. But I personally don't drink or smoke.”

This trend may also be interpreted as yet another confirmation of the underlying attributes of a certain *Volkislam*, based on tolerance and flexibility, perpetuated by a series of mystical beliefs (Mardin, 1986:114). However, what remains to be explored is the centrality of the different groups to power and influence in the networks in which they are located. There is a difference between being included and being supported. It has been observed that, in the

same company, one partner preferred to join the secular TÜSİAD and the other was a member of TUSKON. The basic motivation here is to get access to economic wealth and global markets. The possession of the necessary economic, social and cultural capitals provides access to a specific network. For example when the company gets large enough economically, and the person has acquired cultural and symbolic capitals such as university diplomas, titles, etc., he/she may prefer to become a TÜSİAD member. It is also worth noting that these networks are not isolated communities and there are exchanges between them. The dynamic nature of the macro, meso and micro contexts stimulates and necessitates interrelations between networks, even though they appear as different cultural spheres. We outline below in a multilevel framework the role of the context in business networks and the respective significance of Granovetter and Bourdieu's framing.

Table 4: A layered framework for outlining the form and content of business networks

Types of network Levels of context	The old business network, i.e. TÜSİAD	The new business networks, i.e. MÜSİAD/TUSKON
Macro-global	Mature relationships based on formal ties High sociability (both individually and networkwise) with international economic actors	Emergent relationships with innovative and informal ties Emerging sociability (mainly networkwise) with international economic actors
Meso-national	Strong but weakening relationships with the state, based on economic interests.	Strong relationships with the state, based on shared religious and regional

	Declining power base and stable status	affinities Increasing power base and status
Micro-association	Power and sociability based on economic interests, size of business, and a reputation for being secular, progressive and modernist	Power and sociability originally based on religious and regional affinities. But more recently wider membership based on economic interests
Interrelationship between layers	Struggle to retain its traditional power and influence on government, through its economic influence and by building collaborations with the state	Struggle to join the national and global economic elite, with new interest in secularized discourse.
Granovetter	Intensified weak ties with actors in the world economy, weak ties with religious networks	Strong ties with the state, weak ties with the global economy

Bourdieu	Old elite subject to new contextual pressures and different set of tastes and capitals, which are subject to change	New elite subject to new contextual pressures and different set of tastes and capitals (including old elites'), which are subject to change
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Conclusion

We presented a triple-layered framework, which summarizes our findings on the form and content of new and old business networks, across macro, meso and micro levels of the context (See Table 3). The table also elaborates on the interrelationship between these levels and explicates how we combine the theorization of Granovetter with that of Bourdieu in order to account for continuity and change in business network relations in a dynamic political economy. Drawing on Granovetter, we illustrated how network relationships have changed, and by mobilizing Bourdieu, we showed that the emerging networks of elites did not only generate their own logics but also interfered with old elites in multiple ways, sustaining the logic of the elite field in the country.

While established metropolitan business elites adopt values directly linked to global-liberal pluralistic ideology, through a mostly Western orientation in education and socialization, the newly emerging counterparts construct ties to the same economic rationale, by preservation

of traditional seriousness, and not overly stabilized pluralism, together with an implicit open-mindedness. It is observed that the degree of integration with the world-scale economic activities of the economic elites (e.g. exportation, distribution, provisory or permanent representation, production in foreign countries) enhances the capacity to develop global and liberal values.

On the contrary, what constitutes the appearance (manifest discourse as well as physical aspects) is more or less furnished with the well-known attributes and symbols of the Islamic conservatism. This is where conservatism serves to establish social ties with ideologically-driven businesspeople associations or networks. Yet, we should also consider that ‘economic institutions do not emerge automatically in response to economic needs’ and structurally embedded individuals seem to have a major effect in the formation of institutional relations (Granovetter, 1992:7). These increased networks, in exchange, drive their high motivation towards the global liberal market, and provide additional tools for the continuation of growing commercial activity, while maintaining their conservatism in scope. The latter leads to promotion of religious matters without creating an explicit contradiction between them and the liberal mind.

In the context of this paper, it would make sense to mention the genealogy of the concept of “secular”, which can be regarded as an unfolding of the essence of religion (Martin, 1978). Gauchet (1997) argues that Western secularism can only be understood through the historicity of Christianity. In his renowned book, *Formations of the Secular*, Asad (2003) explains the evolution of the concept of secularism from being a theological discourse to the freeing of property from church hands into private owners, and argues that every religion produces its own secularism. This historical root of secularism also clarifies the

understanding of “the secular” in the context of one of our conclusions concerning the emergence of the religious business elites in Turkey. Since Islam has a different historical background and dynamics (Metcalf, 2007), the Christian roots of the secular have to be different from the Muslim ones. In the context of the religious businesspeople, this conclusion refers to the Muslim businesspeople’s transition towards a more rational and systematized way of doing business. The new Islamic discourse they have been producing can be regarded as signs of this secularization.

To conclude, our findings show that national context matters (Leat and El-Kot, 2007), and that contextual transformation had its repercussions in both business elite characteristics and elite networks in Turkey. Our study also reveals the significance of emic framing of context and demography, as most of the contextual issues are unique and idiosyncratic, rather than ethic and formulaic (Tatli and Ozbilgin, 2012). Both in-group characteristics and needs and contextual trends seem to influence businesspeople networks. The desire to dominate or the possibility of recognizing different groups is related to the fit between the social, cultural and economic capitals possessed by the group and the contextual forces. We should also consider variability within national culture (Keles and Aycan, 2011). Political context, in particular the interplay of religion, state and employers are ignored in the network theory, which assumes that context is fixed, and not relevant to such theorization. In this paper, we show the need to consider context more keenly, as institutional differences are often an outcome of unique historical paths, and we bring an assessment of power and context to Granovetter’s theorization.

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Table 2. Businesspeople Associations

Name	Established in	Headquarters at	Foreign memberships	Affiliated associations	Foreign representatives	Values	Economic representation
TÜSİAD	1971 President: N.Ümit Boyner (F) 1963 Robert College + University of Rochester Economist. Financial manager	Istanbul Governing Board General Assembly High Consulate Council [Former presidents of TÜSİAD + Former high bureaucrats] 5 female members among 21 board members 2 female presidents	Business Europe Businessmed UBCGE (Black Sea & Caspian)	Local businessmen associations with a –SİAD suffix All Young-SİADs	TÜSİAD Berlin Branch TÜSİAD Beijing Branch TÜSİAD Paris Branch TÜSİAD Washington Rep. TÜSİAD EU Brussels Rep.	Productivity Sustainable economic growth Liberal economy Democratic standards Human rights Integration to EU Secular	Members in industry and services sectors: 85% of corporate taxes 65% foreign trade (energy sector not included) 65% industrial production 50% of added value 50% of registered employment In 2009, 142 member companies were in the largest 500 list.

MÜSIAD	1990	Istanbul Governing Board General Assembly High Consulate Council (no info) No female among 21 board member	İSHAD 3100 members in 33 branches 4700 members of which 1650 are Young-MÜSIAD 15000 firms	92 liaison offices in 43 countries	“National Perspective” (Highly religious tendency favouring an industrial-basis development for an independent national context) Self development as well as national progress	\$3 bn./year of investment \$90 bn. of GNP (15%); 15% of employment 17% of foreign trade Small and middle size firms In 2010, 31 member companies were in the largest 500 list.
		President: O.Cahit Vardan (M) 1962 Istanbul Technical U. + Ohio State U. Industrial.Eng . Businessman				
TUSKON	2005	Istanbul Board of directors Supervisory board Board of regulations General Assembly 2 female/ 42 directors	TİM member Federations: 7 regional business federations Associations: 160 businessmen associations in 80 districts	Brussels Beijing Moscow Washington	Conservative Pragmatist Pro-Fethullah Gülen Community [Influential religious solidarity group] Self interest oriented	25000 businessman and entrepreneur members 624 firms Small and middle size firms Growing companies In 2010, 92 member companies in the largest 500 list.
		President: Rıza Nur Meral (M) 1958 Middle East Technical U. Industrial Eng. Top manager				

Source: Collected from documents provided by TÜSIAD, MÜSIAD and TUSKON and their respective websites.

Table 3: Business Associations and Individual Characteristics of Their Members

Name	Economic capital	Cultural capital Education	Cultural capital Tastes	Social capital Family
TÜSİAD	<p>>500 million - 1 billion USD</p> <p>Mostly large companies</p>	<p>-Undergraduate degree often from a university in USA or UK.</p> <p>-Likely to have a graduate degree.</p> <p>-Often graduates of prestigious high schools where the instruction language is a foreign language.</p> <p>-Majority is able to speak more than one foreign language. Most of them have spent at least one year abroad.</p>	<p>-Trend about collecting paintings and (to a much lower degree) antiquities as well.</p> <p>-Trend of establishing private universities bearing the name of the family.</p>	<p>-Father profession industrialist</p> <p>-Half from non-metropolitan areas</p>
MÜSİAD-TUSKON	<p>Mostly small and medium sized companies</p>	<p>-Large majority does not have an undergraduate degree</p> <p>-None with a graduate degree. (The distance of the university to the city of dwelling appears as a major problem causing this limited time in educational institutions).</p> <p>- Half of the TUSKON members in our sample do not know any foreign language. Most of them seem to have spent little time abroad and only for business trips.</p>	<p>-No collectors</p> <p>-Trend of getting together with similar others to create new universities usually for a “foundation” and getting actively involved in the board of trustees.</p>	<p>-Father profession merchant or craftsman</p> <p>-All of them from non-metropolitan areas</p>