

**“SUITS EVERY POCKET, SUITS EVERY HABITUS?”: ETHNOGRAPHY OF  
A PRIVATE UNIVERSITY IN THE SOCIAL/SPATIAL PERIPHERY OF  
İSTANBUL**



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**KOÇ UNIVERSITY**

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A PRIVATE UNIVERSITY IN THE SOCIAL/SPATIAL PERIPHERY OF  
İSTANBUL**

**by Ceren Gülbudak**

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This thesis presents an ethnographic analysis of a newly founded and low-ranked private university. There is a global trend of educational expansion in terms of increasing schooling rates and student numbers. In Turkey as well, this trend has been at stake over the last 15 years; and the proliferation of private universities is one of the important carriers of this expansion. Observations on the case university indicate that although privatization is regarded as “commodification of education,” education becomes an “absent commodity” in the low-ranked, peripheral, roadside, building universities of İstanbul. This absence creates a gap between students who have “double loss” and institutions who get “double gain”. Therefore, this thesis tries to understand what mediates this gap which incorporates low-income students and sustains the system, by participant observation and in-depth interviews. Firstly, by looking at the historical and structural transformation of the education system in Turkey, this thesis explores the context in which the emergence of such an institution is possible. Secondly, by the utilization of the Bourdieusian concept *habitus*, this thesis tries to illustrate the dispositions which urge low-income students to be contained by the private higher education institutions. Lastly, through the analysis of the relationality between *individual habitus* and *institutional habitus*, it elaborates on how this system which is based on education as an abstract commodity is sustained.

**Keywords:** higher education, privatization, neoliberal transformation, neoliberal subjectivity, low-income students, student experience, institutional habitus, sociology of education



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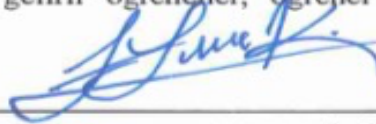
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**“HER KESEYE, HER HABİTUS’A UYGUN (MU?)”: İSTANBUL’UN  
TOPLUMSAL-MEKANSAL ÇEPERİNDE BİR ÖZEL  
ÜNİVERSİTENİN ETNOGRAFİSİ**

**CEREN GÜLBUDAK**

Bu tez yeni kurulmuş ve alt sıralamalardaki bir özel üniversitenin etnografik çözümlemesini sunmaktadır. Okullaşma oranlarının ve öğrenci sayılarının artırılması bakımından küresel anlamda bir eğitimsel genişleme eğilimi söz konusudur. Bu eğilim son 15 yıldır Türkiye’de de kendini göstermektedir ve özel üniversitelerin sayısındaki hızlı artış bu genişlemenin önemli taşıyıcılarından birisidir. Örnek üniversite üzerine yapılan gözlemler göstermektedir ki her ne kadar özelleştirme “eğitimin metalaştırılması” olarak değerlendirilse de İstanbul’un, çepersel, yol kenarı, alt sıralamalardaki bina üniversiteleri düşünüldüğünde eğitim “namevcut meta” haline gelmektedir. Bu namevcudiyet “çifte kayıp” yaşayan öğrenciler ve “çifte kazanım” içindeki kurumlar arasında bir boşluk yaratmaktadır. Bu nedenle, bu tez düşük gelirli öğrencileri bünyesine katan ve sistemi sürdürülebilir kılan bu boşluğa nelerin aracı olduğunu katılımcı gözlem ve derinlemesine mülakatlar yoluyla anlamaya çalışmaktadır. Bu tez, birinci olarak, Türkiye’deki eğitim sisteminin tarihsel ve yapısal dönüşümüne bakarak böyle bir kurumun ortaya çıkmasını mümkün kılan bağlamı incelemektedir. İkinci olarak, düşük gelirli öğrencileri özel yükseköğretim kurumlarınca içermeye yönlendiren temayülleri Bourdieu’nün *habitus* kavramını kullanarak betimlemeye çalışmaktadır. Son olarak, *bireysel habitus* ve *kurumsal habitus* arasındaki ilişikiselliğin çözümlenmesi yoluyla, namevcut bir meta olarak eğitim üzerine kurulu bu sistemin nasıl sürdürüldüğü üzerinde durmaktadır.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** yüksek öğretim, özelleştirme, neoliberal dönüşüm, neoliberal öznellik, düşük gelirli öğrenciler, öğrenci deneyimi, kurumsal habitus, eğitim sosyolojisi



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# CONTENTS

<b>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1. ....	
Literature Review .....	5
1.2. Habitus: An Analytical Tool and Conceptual Frame .....	9
1.3. Methodology and Field.....	12
1.4. Organization of the Thesis.....	17
<b>CHAPTER 2 EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND NEOLIBERAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM.....</b>	<b>19</b>
2.1 Institutionalization of education: modernization of nation and development of the state .....	19
2.2 Neoliberal transformation in the global context.....	24
2.3 First wave of neoliberal transformation of education in Turkey-80s .....	29
2.4 Higher Education, Neoliberalism, AKP Period - 2002 and onwards .....	36
2.4.1 Expansion of Universities and Students.....	40
2.4.2 Making of Entrepreneur University: Having a self-created Budget .....	43
2.4.3. Expansion of private universities: “private education” for low income clients .....	45
2.5 Conclusion.....	48
<b>CHAPTER 3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: HABITUS AND WIDENING PARTICIPATION .....</b>	<b>51</b>
3.1. Introduction .....	51
3.2. Habitus: Structured Dispositions of Education .....	52
3.2.1. Temporality of Habitus: Past, Present and Future.....	54
3.2.2. Education: Field and Autonomy .....	56
3.2.3. Habitus: Structured/Structuring, Education and Reproduction .....	58
3.3. Aspiration and Transformation of Habitus.....	61
3.3.1. Institutional Habitus and Higher Education .....	63
3.3.2. Education and Cultural Capital .....	65
3.3.3. “Fish in the water”: Correspondence between Field and Habitus .....	67
3.4. Educational Expansion and Widening Participation .....	68
3.4.1. Working Class Participation .....	69
3.4.2. Massification and Stratification of Higher Education Institutions.....	71
3.4.3. Neoliberal Individuality and Habitus of Uncertainty .....	74
3.5. Conclusion.....	77

<b>CHAPTER 4 ANALYSIS OF THE FARTHEST UNIVERSITY THROUGH LENSES OF INSTITUTIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL HABITUS .....</b>	<b>80</b>
4.1. Structured Habitus of the Students.....	80
4.1.1. Family History and Family Portrait: Culture and Economy.....	81
4.1.2. Educational History before Enrolling in the University .....	87
4.2. The Path to the University .....	91
4.2.1. Enrolling in an University: “Nothing else to do” .....	93
4.2.2. Enrolling in a Private University: Diverse Concerns .....	95
4.2.3. Female students and the stimulation of Mothers: “To not be Like Me” .....	97
4.2.4. “Jobs Taken for Granted”: Making Decision on Departments .....	100
4.3. First Coming to “The Farthest University”: Encountering New Habitus? .....	103
4.3.1. The Spatial Organization of the University: “In the Middle of Nowhere” ..	103
4.3.2. First Encounter with the Field: Prep Year.....	106
4.4. Being a Colleger: Expectation and Reality .....	109
4.4.1. Being “Civilized”, “Respectful” and “Self-sustained” .....	109
4.4.2. Alternative life? (If not university) .....	111
4.4.3. Escape from Family Habitus.....	114
4.4.4. “Fish in the Water” and Feeling Nothing.....	118
4.4.5. The Cold-battle Field: Students and Instructors.....	120
4.5. Private University and Tensions .....	123
4.5.1. Failing to Pay Instalments.....	123
4.5.2. Working Part-time in the Market, Studying Part-time in the “University”	128
4.5.3. Awareness of Stratification between Universities.....	131
4.5.4. Self: Both the Saviour and the Devastator .....	137
4.5.5. Divided Habitus.....	141
4.6 Conclusion.....	143
<b>CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>147</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>153</b>



## LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Figure 1. Variations of foundation university numbers between 1980-2000.....	33
Figure 2 Gross schooling rate of higher education in Turkey between 1950-201.....	39
Figure 3 Variation of students in Higher Education between 1974-2013.....	40
Figure 4 Numbers of public and foundation universities between 1933-201.....	44
Figure 5 Percentage of high school groups of child development students.....	84
Figure 6 Child development students according to educational field in high school.....	85
Table 1 Higher education budget and MEB investment expenditures.....	41
Table 2 Numbers of schools and students according to education levels.....	45
Table 3 Educational attainment of mothers .....	80
Table 4 Educational attainment of fathers.....	81
Table 5 Reasons of university preference.....	87
Table 6 Do you think location of university is satisfactory?.....	98
Table 7 How would you evaluate academically in comparison to other universities?..	128

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This thesis examines the engagement of students in the neoliberal macro-transformation of higher education and widening participation, through a newly established private university located in the periphery of İstanbul. And also, via understanding this engagement and experience, it also aims to show what kind of institutionalized relationships are formed through such institutions in terms of social reproduction or transformations. While taking into consideration the historical and structural transformation of the higher education in Turkey which enables the proliferation of private universities, how students get attached with the system via enrolling into such institutions also have been analysed.

There is a great tendency of educational expansion of higher education in global terms. Educational expansion is widening the participation of different segments of society and increasing the amount of students in the education system. In that sense, we talk about both qualitative and quantitative expansion. We observe this tendency also in Turkey with increasing number of students each year. According to 2017 statistics, 6 million students are enrolled in higher education in Turkey. Moreover, this number is expected to increase in accordance with government policies and discourse on education. This expansion is sustained by both state funded public universities and private education institutions.

However, although the number of students are increasing in Turkey as well, formal education is a meritocratic system in terms of the structured way that it is socially

and politically organized. Selection, inclusion and exclusion on the basis of University Entrance Exam is internalized by both families and millions of students. University entrance exam and chances to get into a university is a source of huge stress, costs lots of financial, mental and emotional investments. First there are not enough quotas in order for every student to get their placement in universities. Secondly, universities as institutions are stratified, they are not equal in terms of symbolic capital, education quality, locational advantages and sub-structural facilities. These two axes, create a fierce competition that students are surrounded with once they start to participate in education system.

Privatization of education, as in terms of overall privatization policies regarding most of the public rights and services, has been discussed in terms of benefitting the ones who have the money to spend on those services. And the line of inequality is drawn between the different segments of society who can or cannot afford the privatized services. In addition to the agreement of these aspects in terms of privatization and neoliberalism, this thesis argues that, private education now has started to contain the lower-income groups as the only rational and sometimes possible chance to attain higher education. However, there is not enough research on expansion of education in Turkey which analyses this educational expansion with regard to experiences of lower-middle class in Turkey who engage with education through private schools and universities. I argue that this aspect of the privatization and neoliberal transformation of education seems to be ignored both in academic literature, public debate and political discussion. Therefore, I try to understand how, via which policies, subjectivities, social conditionings and dispositions, lower-middle class students integrate into paid education. This is an important issue to investigate, in order to understand how

neoliberal policies are penetrating the lives, choices and experiences of people, since neoliberalism is not only an abstract term in itself. Rather, it occurs only with the containment, participation and active mobilizations of flesh and bone people.

While structural and legal process enables the appearance of these kind of educational sites, in the meantime mediated by the immense marketing of private education institutions through media, billboards, consultation services of high schools; there also exists the students who somehow enrolled in those institutions. I think it is important to understand the process which makes students entailed in the structural transformation of education and also their experiences within the field which again in relation to structural reproduction of the social and cultural differentiation.

Therefore, it should be stated that the expansion of education is not simultaneously and consensually emerging out of private and public universities and students. The fact that we are all surrounded by the proliferation of private universities, and that they play an important role in the widening participation in education demonstrates that such a widening of private education institutions is not separated from the neoliberal transformation of education. The demand and supply side of higher education, between students and universities is not separate from the very logic of the market and the making of commodity. While focusing on my case in a field of a private university where the education explicitly designates a commodity, the market condition between demanders and suppliers emerges to be so much more fictitious than ever before. So much so that while both sides are explicitly conscious of it, they still keep mum to maintain the existing state of affairs. While the commodified fetish designates a form of “as if,” the product contains a form of value, in case of my ethnography in that specific university, “sellers” and “buyers”, that is, university and students are well aware

of the “valuelessness” of the education. In my interviews, most of my students explicitly declare that “the university offers nothing in terms of education and anything.” Very cautious of not developing or deducing results based on a possible “irrationality” of the subjects, or “desperation,” even when they verbalize it as such as a mode of expression, I chose to inquire into what keeps the relations between “buyers” and “sellers” of the educational field continuously operating. Especially since both are aware of there being no actual commodity present. What keeps them “together” on “nothingness”? Moreover, while I explore on widening participation, educational institutions, private universities, neoliberal transformation, the process of reproduction; and at same time, the practices and experiences of the students, their desires, drives, thoughts, the form of beings and subjectivities and the social formations they come from, at large, I particularly tried to understand the *gap* between the University and the students. A gap which emerges between “offering nothing” by the University and “being aware of it” by the students, but still keeps being sustained by both sides. How is this gap or lack transformed into a commodity and marketised in the educational field? What is the role of neoliberal transformation of education and widening participation? Why are low-income classes, living in the peripheries of the city, or provinces of the centre targeted by private universities? Why do private universities have tendencies to turn higher education into vocational expertise and professional training? All these questions I asked serve to understand how this gap is sustained and therefore enables the market between producers and buyers to work on the commodification of “nothingness”?

### **1.1. Literature Review**

Literature on the sociology of higher education is diversified on various approaches and methodologies. A considerable amount of studies focus on the general neoliberal transformation on education and its effects. While the vital effects of the neoliberalism is drawn on the inequality of accessing higher education, attainment of working class and low-income groups is taken into subject of the studies (Blanden & Machin, 2014; Lynch & O’Riordan, 1998; Nicole Ingram, 2011; Reay, 2011, Archer, 2007).

The considerable studies on attainment of the working-class in higher education take education as self-sufficient material or source that should be “equally” distributed. Such normative approaches take education and social classes as self-sufficient and pre-given formation, but via the new policies of “widening participation” after 1980s, the relation between working-class and education is thought to become contingent and arbitrary. What these studies are problematized, despite this taken granted relationship between higher education and working class/low income groups as contingent with widening participation, is the stratification of higher education in terms of the insufficient and inadequate conditions for working-class students in higher education to be contained. Blanden and Machin (2014), in their studies on widening participation in the United Kingdom, come to a conclusion that despite educational expansion and widening participation, there is still an enormous gap between low and high income groups in the containment of the higher education. Bratti, Checchi and de Blasio (2008), in their studies on Italy, highlight the inequality that the low-income groups encounter difficulties, not in enrolling to university, but to obtain a university degree. The procedural studies of them takes the exclusionary formation of the higher education in

terms of finalizing it. Therefore, although they take widening participation as an enhancing chance to enroll for the low-income students, they emphasize that still the education institutions are lack of sustainable conditions. On the other hand, Lynch and O’Riordan (1998) attempt to study on the barriers for accessing and sustaining higher education for the low-income groups. While they count on three barriers as social and cultural, economic and educational for low-income groups, their research presupposes a vicious circle between the low-incomes and higher education.

One of the primary effect of neoliberal transformation is packed with emergence and expansion of private sector and private higher education institutions. De Cohen’s (2003) study on Argentina focuses on private higher education institutions as counterpart of the public universities. For de Cohen (2003), offering “elite” educational environments by private universities provide a “prestigious public” for higher income groups. The studies which take Latin American experience of neoliberal transformation focus on the private market of the education, on the other hand, the North American and European studies concentrate more on gender, race and cultural differences in higher education attainment. McCowan’s (2007) study on higher education in Brazil, handles the subject of the private universities as only attainable for the students coming from high-income families. The Brazil higher education system is constituted of private and public universities. The public universities, like in Turkey have very limited place, and could be entered via competitive exams. While the demand for university is still alive in Brazil, affording to the fees of private universities becomes impossible for considerable amount of the society.

Many researches focus on the individual determinations and experiences for carrying on educational process. Personal and unique stories of low-income students and

their biographical statements are considered as exceptions within the so-called restricted working-class background. While the methodological findings seem much grounded to the field, the attempts to make generalisation becomes extended. The “failure” of the working class students is assumed to be grounded on the background of working class, and the “success” of them is seen as an exception. Valimaa’s (1998) research on the culture and identity takes higher education as an institutional existence and applies an institutional analyse as methodological approach, but focusing on also cultural formation and tradition of the institution. However, Valimaa takes the relation between subjects and institution culture as one of transmission despite one of formation of subjects. On the other hand, Reay (2001) still focus on individual effects of working-class students in their relations to the higher education. She looks for the unconscious dimensions of the class and psychological effects of subject formations. Taking the formation of the institutional habitus and unconscious effect of the working and also middle-class students, “fitting in” and “standing out” becomes the primary investigations of the researches (Reay, Crozier & Clayton, 2010).

Some researches that make a link between education and equality, takes higher education as mediation that has the levelling effect for considering it as an equaliser. For instance, Knight and Sabot (1983), in their quantitative studies attempt to show the equaliser effect of the higher education, that the education provide smiler chances for students via widening participation. The closed boundaries and frameworks of their studies, with taking higher education institutions, ignore the continuing results of the cultural effects of the economic lacks. Taking universities spared from the structural formation of its tradition which is socially and economically established, paves the way of perceiving it as self-contained formation within its inner structure. Institutional



analysis therefore becomes another avenue to study on higher education. Widening participation and discourse of the equality generated around the participation is discussed on the conundrum of “equality” and “diversity”. Archer (2007), in his study, problematizes these discourse of the equality in the institutions for it causes the diversity of experiences and subjects. The very pragmatics of discourse of equality while proposes “social justice”, it serves to establish “social control” in neoliberal era. Therefore, research on identity, subjectivity, social control, governmentality, disciplinary becomes increasing to explain the reproduction of the society compatible with neoliberal formation of the market and society.

The effects of the neoliberal transformation on education, on the other hand, is studied on the themes of privatisation of the higher education and growth of private market as disadvantageous of working-class students (Reay, 2004). While those studies concentrate on the marketization of education, they attempt to deal with “reproduction” process of the structural formation and the subjective being for the market. Such constructionist approaches take Bourdieusian sociology as framework and conceptual tool to analyse social formation in higher education institutions. Therefore, the higher education is taken as a catalyser for the reproduction of subjects, class and society. And the approaches that takes education in terms of social reproduction include multi-layered factors for the analyses of phenomenon. Raey’s (1998) field study is designed as an ethnographic style which focuses on the very narrow number of students, but is deepened on gender, class, race and the very observable experiences of students. All these layers designate a very complex and multi-layered mediations which take familial and institutional habitus into consideration (Brown, Reay & Vincent 2013). Bourdieusian sociology, especially gives the very substantial contribution to the

researches on the education and schools. For instance, Bathmaker, Ingram & Waller (2013), in their studies show that the middle class is more privileged to access these capitals. Capitals, and peculiarly cultural capital becomes the key concept for many research on the higher educations. Especially, the researches framed with the concept of the mobilisation, cultural capital which can be extracted from the educational process.

### **1.2. Habitus: An Analytical Tool and Conceptual Frame**

In order to refrain from the deterministic approach to the puzzle of low-income students attaining higher education, habitus as an analytical tool and conceptual frame has been utilized. Habitus as a socialised body, provides us with the perception of a field by the agents within it, and possible actions which are open to them (Bourdieu, 1998a). While it gives us the chance to see how familial habitus and social class play roles on the educational attainment and dispositions of a student, it also shows how education may or not pave the way for habitual transformation. Therefore, Bourdieu and his conceptualization of habitus provide opportunities to understand the field and the social formation of subjects who enter in that field. Especially, higher education experience as a topic is a highly contesting one, when we think it appears to be just like a transitory phase in the lives of lots of young individuals. However, higher education phase is an important phase which is at the heart of interaction between past, present and future. Because of that, it is also a fruitful field in terms of thinking with Bourdieu and his conceptualization of habitus.

Employing Bourdieusian sociology as an analytical tool frames the emergence of social, individual and institution, and provides an analytic method to follow the patterns of reproduction and transformation. As I approached the field of the university within

spatial and temporal dimensions, the concept of the habitus enabled me to focus on the intersections between spaces of living and of the university, and between past, presents and future of the social formations which students come from. The educational history of the students, the familial habitus, sketches an accurate map to trace the conditions which makes the gap between the university and students operate without practical benefit despite contentiously and pervasively verbalized feelings of dissatisfaction by students.

However, in a general sense, the possibility of obtaining cultural capital from education creates the emergence of possibility of dispositions in the field (Bourdieu, 1990b). Therefore, cultural capital is the primary equipment for surviving or to be existed in the field as a future projection. The students' daily talks and the concrete structural conditions of the universities demonstrate that it is far to obtaining cultural capital. Despite all aspirations and motivations of the students to enter higher education, and the discursive construction of ideality and necessity of higher education by students, they do not believe any future possibilities would be affected positively via the education they are now getting in the university which they enrolled in.

While widening the inclusion of working and low-income classes in education leads to transformation of higher education to be more "adaptable" to these classes. Therefore, the sense of "fish in the water" which is to say the field does not contain any distinctions and weight to be felt by the agents (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). On the other hand, despite being uttered out loud by students, dissatisfaction does not produce any bodily reactions (for instance leaving the university), on the contrary, they keep paying the university, although it creates an enormous economic burden on family budget. But, being like "fish in the water," they internalize and naturalize the

condition of the field, which is to mean that the university is assimilated in their familial habitus. The spatial and social periphery spaces of familial habitus of working and low-income classes are likened to the field of the university as well. That is to say, the spatial, cultural and social dimensions of the university are “provincialized” not only for sustaining cheap private education, but to adapt the “provincialized” space of working and low-income groups of the peripheries, to maintain the social reproduction of social classes within neoliberal frame.

“Divided habitus” as the situatedness of the body at the intersection of two fields with different *modus operandi* (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Bourdieu, 1999, 2000; Reay, 2004; von Rosenberg, 2016) also becomes an important tool to explore the experiences of the low income students in private higher education institution. Students are also positioned in the two different fields as family and higher education. Utilization of divided habitus in this thesis enables us to understand whether current institutional habitus in which low income students are engaged, creates a transformative or reproductive tension through the university experiences of students. However, if the institutional habitus adapts itself to the habitus of the students, it leads to emerge adaptation of the students to the university which is to say the reproduction of the students and of their habitus, but prevents any transformation possibilities because nothing is different from the habitus they come from. Moreover, divided habitus also has tendencies to explain why students, while being aware of that university does not offer any cultural capital, but keep staying there. In the neoliberal market conditions, the divided habituses always lead to the probability of conflictual spaces between “buyers” and “sellers”, or “suppliers” and “demanders” which comes from distinctions and differentiations, and from the possibility of transformation. Therefore, to eliminate the

possibilities of emergence of divided habitus maintains the relation between the students and the university.

### **1.3. Methodology and Field**

The questions and thoughts regarding the relationship between private university and students, have caught my attention during my working experience in the institution. The institution had been founded as a “Vocational Higher School” in 2008 with the legal act numbered 2547 by the Ministry of National Education. With the legal code 6114, the institution has been transformed into a university with three faculties, three institutes, four different schools and a vocational school.

Since the University is located spatially at the very periphery of the city, the transportation to reach there, became an adventure for me, via metrobus, bus and minibus; and still there was a considerable walking distance. I first thought the coming students were living in close districts around the University, but then I became aware that most of the students have the same adventure on the way to the University, surviving class without any energy and attention, just like me, because of that “endless” route and routine. The second thing I noticed was about the architectural properties of the University - a single building with many floors, with huge classrooms, and the lack of even the most basic educational technologies and infrastructures. It looks like a civil servant office, yet has thousands of students. Taking all these into consideration, it was clear that the main objective of the university, despite offering a capital extracted from formal educational processes, seemed to be offering a “dream”, yet not accepted by many students, whose impressions were impossible to miss during lectures. Dissatisfaction of the students weren't always voiced by them during the lectures in the

classroom but also after class and outside of the University when I sometimes had the chance to meet with them to spend time. The third thing that surprised me most was when the dean of the University asked me to instruct a methodology course for the Engineering Department. My trailing reply in amazement was that “I am a sociology student”; and silently telling myself that “I just get 30 TL for an hour to instruct in anthropology courses”. The reply of the dean was scandalous: “you can google ppt methodology of Engineering in English, and you can just read it in the class”. It seems the only things that the University offered were a “dream of the dream”, and there were lots of buyers in economic terms.

After those impressions on me when I first decided to research formally, I declared and informed students and officers of the University for the research. To understand how one can be the buyer of the “dream of the dream” I attempted both the regularities and irregularities of the field in a Bourdieusian sense. While the regularities indicate the structured formation, positions, regulations, rules and norms of the Universities, the irregularities of the field are probabilities created by the students of the University. Therefore, I investigated carefully the structured positions of the field -regularities-, and dispositions of the students -irregularities. Therefore, my research methodology was built, on the one hand, on institutional analysis and on the other hand, on subjective practices, thoughts, desires and dispositions of the agents to uncover embedded relations of both. Therefore, the empirical data which is gathered via various ethnographic methods from the field shaped the study within the approach of *Grounded Theory*. Bourdieusian concepts and frames, despite determining my field and the research, in time, became analytical tools to move with.

The methodology of the thesis is based on participant observation, in depth interviews with 15 students, survey conducted with 59 students, legal documents of YÖK and data collected by TÜİK. My participation lasted 5 months during which process I worked in this private higher education institution as an hour-based contract instructor. My short-term existence and experience within the field, without a permanent contract, has offered me a unique chance to engage with the field from within. I was teaching 10 hours a week, three different courses which were: Introduction to Social Anthropology, Review on Social Service Environments and Social Structure of Turkey. 31 of my “student fellows” were first year students in the Social Service Department and they were taking all of the three courses I was teaching. The other 46 “student fellows” that I had the chance to meet with were first year students in the Child Development Department and they took only the Introduction to Social Anthropology course which was a joint course for both departments. My positioning in the field as the instructor allowed me to observe and experience the classroom environment which gave me insight in terms of the positioning of students in the collective learning environment, how peer relations are constructed and how their engagement with the learning process was. Also resulting from the topics of the courses, it gave me a chance to be engaged with their views, attitudes and positioning in terms of social topics such as gender relationships, political engagements, family related issues and cultural standings. Another chance that position gave me was, to be able to stand in interaction with four important components of the university: instructors, students, administrative staff and infrastructural waged labourers. This position allowed me to get acquainted with the atmosphere and “institutional habitus” in the sense of “breathing it”.

Moreover, our conversations during breaks, at garden and canteens of the institution opened up the space for getting to know students better and get acquainted with their daily talks and practices. We had some gatherings such as attending events together. Also the long metrobus commutes where I have spent some time with the “student fellows” were also moments that I could interact with them. The conversations entailed their families, their pasts, future plans, friend circles, daily problems, school related problems and emotional knots.

My communication with other instructors, although they are not the main components of this research, was also very influential for the research since they were the inexplicable part of the students’ experiences and institutional habitus and macro structural situation of the higher education regime.

All of the students were at the end of their first years after language school, so it was the second year they had spent in the institution. Although this may affect the findings of the study in terms of their uncertain positioning and recent enrolment in the university, it also allowed me to have more knowledge of their decision making process, familial attachment and preliminary expectations which are still vividly remembered and experienced. Moreover, the fact that my observation and experience with them basis a stronger epistemological ground for the study, rather than senior students with whom I do not have such connection.

Interview questions were semi-structured and open-ended. The interview questions aimed to understand students’ educational and familial past before they had enrolled in the university; their path to the university in order to understand how their decision making process on attending university and case university; how their families played a role throughout the preparation and enrolment process; if university experience



changed their life or not; how their relations with the administration and instructors are; how they give meaning to their university experience; what their future expectations and dreams are; and how close they feel to their dreams.

To tackle some ethical concerns, as an instructor of the students, I carefully avoided impacting their decisions on participation. While most of them are in their first year of the university, the possible effects of a “role model” as an instructor is hard to prevent. However, the relation which I attempted to construct with them was based on a carefully devised equilibrium. Despite always remaining in the position of an instructor, I also spent time with them outside class, endeavouring to be their friend, and trying to demonstrate that I am “like them,” sharing my troubles and failures, dreams and desires. On the other hand, when I kept myself away from their privacies, during my ethnography, in case I came across a private story and narration during our conversations, I removed it from the public sources, not to use it as empirical data of the field if they are not willingly share it during interviews.

In order to sustain the anonymity of the students and the institution, the case university will be named as The Farthest University throughout the thesis. This name was chosen in order to state the distance of this kind of a private institution under sociological sight. Also socio-spatial positioning of the institution within the periphery played a role on choosing this name. In Turkey those non-state institutions are named both as private and foundational universities. Throughout the thesis, I choose to name them private universities instead of foundational universities. The reason behind the preference is that, naming these institutions as foundational works in a way to conceal their profit making and tuition-fee based budgeting.

#### **1.4. Organization of the Thesis**

Second chapter lays a ground which maps and overviews the historical formation and structural transformation of education system with a particular emphasis on higher education. The aim here is to understand the structural transformation which enables a private higher education institution as such to be established. Firstly, the historical institutionalization of education in Turkey related to nation formation, modernization and unification between early republican period until the 1980s is outlined. This period is the institutionalization of education in Turkey as well as education as a carrier of social and national development has been constructed. Secondly, I discuss the emergence of neoliberalism in the global context in order to contextualize the neoliberal transformation in Turkey. Then I cover the overall neoliberal transformation from primary to tertiary education in Turkey, in order to depict the domino effect of which creates the emergence and proliferation of private universities. Overall, the second chapter aims to show the social, cultural and economic context which makes possible the emergence and proliferation of private higher education in Turkey.

The third chapter examines the theoretical framework in order to link the structural and historical emergence of the institution and integration of the low-income students into the institution as such. Habitus as a socialized body, has been discussed in relation to temporality in terms of its intersection of past, present and future. The temporality of habitus, divided habitus, transformative or reproductive aspects of habitus and institutional habitus is discussed in relation to existing literature in order to construct the theoretical tools. Moreover, literature on working class participation in higher education, stratification of higher education and neoliberal subjectivity formed by overall tendencies of educational expansion is covered.

Fourth chapter presents the findings of ethnography, analysed with the analytical framework that habitus provides and contextualized within the neoliberal transformation of education. In this chapter, first the familial habitus in terms of familial educational attainment and socioeconomic statuses of the students are presented. Accordingly, educational history of students before enrolling in the university in terms of high school type and educational environment, exam preparation processes are portrayed. Consequently, the motivations, decision making processes, concerns that lie behind the enrolment in the university are discussed. After the educational and familial backgrounds have been portrayed, first impressions, first encounter with the field are discussed in order to track the habitus related dynamism through this transitional phase. Last part covers the tensions at the intersection of institutional habitus and familial habitus in terms of payment problems, working part-time during studying, awareness of stratified institutions/diplomas, neoliberal subjectivity and divided habitus.

## CHAPTER 2

### EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND NEOLIBERAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

In this chapter, I attempt to provide a sketch of general transformation of education in Turkey, since private university case under my analyses cannot be comprehended separately from the general trends and transformation in the realm of education. By doing so, I will try to contextualize the structural changes in both local and global context that paves the way through the emergence and proliferation of private universities in Turkey. I will trace the historical trajectory of education in Turkey, from education as a public good to a private commodity via discussing the education in Turkey within a historical and global context. This chapter aims to understand the social, cultural, political and economic circumstances and developments that facilitate the emergence and proliferation of private higher education in Turkey.

#### **2.1 Institutionalization of education: modernization of nation and development of the state**

The recognition of education as a public duty was first discussed after the Royal Tanzimat Decree and free and compulsory primary education was declared with The General Education Regulation of 1869 (Gök, 2002, p. 247, 2007, p. 94). Law on Unification of Education in Turkey after the establishment of Republic dates back to 1924 (Gök, 2007, p. 94). Unification, modernization and centralization are the key terms which highlight this process. The pre-existing dual form of education in Ottoman Empire, divided to secular and religious, has been eliminated by the unification process. With the modernization process based on national and secular, education have been

modelled after the western systems. And thirdly, with the foundation of Ministry of National Education, all of the existing schools after the abolishment of the religious ones, have been consolidated under the control of this central institution. It is important to state that, this construction of education was very vital for the project at stake, that is, formation of Turkish republic, society, economy and politics. Centralization of education system enabled the state authority to manage the population in favour of a well-cultivated and seemingly enlightened version of it. Actually, for the ethnically and religiously dispersed formation of the population, the initial process of making of modern nation, education became the key apparatus for the state capacity. The centralization of the educational system was not only desired out of necessity of cultivated and professional subjects for maintaining the newly formed bureaucratic and market institutions, but also the ideological formation of the population around modern and secular “Turkishness” required it for a central state authority. Thereafter, education became an apparatus that allowed the state to keep the population on the projected line of progress --modern, secular and national. Approaches based on ideological formation and intervention in population consider education organized around state power under the problem of governance. For deploying modern governmental techniques, education had become a vital apparatus for state power.

The period of the single party regime, which consists of the years between 1923 and 1946, has been marked by this understanding of education on three pillars which aimed to modernize and enlighten the newly established nation-state. Socially, politically and culturally dispersed formation of the society, on the process of making a unified nation, was still the key problem of the early Republic. Both the inadequate institutional structure of the state and the lack of professional staff paved the way for the

government to conceptualize education around the homogenization and stabilization of these culturally, socially and politically diverse populations. According to Gök, “educational policies of the mono-party era were based on the conceptualization of education and training as facilitating the adoption of new social, political and cultural values and supporting the establishment of the institutional structure in the formation of the newly created nation-state. The political and cultural socialization function of education was the leading theme.” (Gök, 2007, p. 248) This period was the period of populism which also discursively deemed education very important in order to elevate people to higher levels of enlightenment. The transformation from the socially, economically and culturally “below” to the “above”, that is the “social transformation”, was discursively constructed, believed to be actualized with education. The “the dream of the Republic” which was a project of bringing an urban population out of rural one, came up with discourses that the ignorant ordinary could escape ignorance with education. Therefore, the educated subject was also viewed as having the opportunity to attend to, have position in, or be part of the state, which was inaccessible for the ignorant ordinary. Recognition of the state institutions, which provided high positions to be part of it, was situated at a locus of glory that could only be attained by education in this period of modernization and development. Education and the educated subject were reflected to be the only criteria for being a part of the state institutions, which was thought to be only available to a particular elite group and class. Wealth, family networks, being an aristocrat or among the elite were not primary criteria of being part, but education was constructed to be the primary qualification to attend these institutions.

Of course education of the republican period was not merely a project of nation building and enlightenment, it also had economic substance which was intrinsic to the

foundation and organization of the nation state. The early Republic still faced the inadequateness of human resources for the service and industrial sectors. Especially the low productivity in agriculture and the lack of technical skill in the industry sector were planned to be overcome by training programs and extended educational facilities. Qualified and educated subjects were also crucial for the newly established departments of the state and bureaucratic institutions. Therefore, education was not barely a subjective desire of self-cultivation and enlightenment, which could be thought of as a Bourdieusian self-intrinsic capital attached to the cultural, social and intellectual. However, the need for educated subjects was constructed as the key step for the development of the state —like that of the Western Nations. The education of the subjects of the state was a precondition for economic development. As Gök states:

[I]t is a stark fact that education is vital for an economically poor country with limited physical, human and financial resources. It is necessary for individuals to be trained as capable professionals for every industrial and service job. Also it is crucial that agricultural and industrial production be increased. In the training programmes directed at Turkey's villagers, emphasis was placed on making them more productive. Mobile Village Women's Classes (Gezici Köy Kadınları Kursları) and Village Men's Training Classes (Köy Erkek Sanat Kursları) introduced in 1938 and 1939 by the Ministry of Education were amongst such efforts. (Gök, 2007, p. 248)

While for the industrial sector the education programs were designed for the urban residents, the rural villagers were inspired to attend the education programs specializing in agricultural productivity. Therefore, the officially recognized policy of unification of education system seems to become diversified in accordance with economic productivity. The requirements for the state development was reflected on education that proceeded in parallel to the modernization of the nation. But, thinking on human resources, there were neither educated and professional staff to build and design

modern higher education institutions like universities, nor enough staff to work in these institutions. As can be inferred, such supply for the army, law, health, and foreign western consultants were of utmost importance.

The attempts to extend and modernize education programs were observable during the first years of the Republic. Especially since, higher education and modern western universities were not part of the educational experience of the early Republic, making use of western consultants as catalyzers of the new establishment. The education policies of these period, had been deeply marked by John Dewey, as a specialist on education and his reports and recommendations for the basis of education in Turkey (Gürsen Topses, 1999; Turan, 2000). For instance, the Darülfünun was the only higher educational institution and in 1931 it was converted to İstanbul University (Özen, 1999, p. 266). This process indicates the start of construction and institutionalization of the higher education of the modern Turkish state.

Despite the attempts of nationalization of education in this period, few independent minority and foreign schools were also founded. Much of them evaded intervention with the guarantee of the Lausanne Treaty. Following the mono-party period, there were more serious attempts in terms of private education. The 1950s marked the beginning for allowing space for private education. The continued established structure of the education system was transformed with the formation of Educational Colleges (Maarif Kolejleri-Öğretmen Liseleri) and Anatolian Secondary Schools (Anadolu Liseleri). According to Gök, those “school can be classified [as] ‘private state secondary schools’” which led to “a significant change in the provision of public education” (Gök, 2007, p. 249).



Privatization of higher education, on the other hand, formally started with the First Article of the Private Education Institutions Act (no. 625) in 1965, when we observe the first private higher educational institutions in Turkey beginning to emerge (Birler, 2012; Yalcintan & Thornley, 2007). The popularity of private universities radically increased, and by 1971, there were 41 private universities attended in the educational system of Turkey. The enrolled students in these universities were around fifty thousand. However, the increasing rate of universities in 6 years included vital inadequacies for a qualified higher education. Birler's studies on these universities reveals the nature of the faith in them. Accordingly,

During those six years, as an emerging and rapidly growing sector, these institutions failed to reach the required standards for higher education. Many were established in apartment and office buildings and lacked the proper infrastructure for research and academic human resource development. Faced with such serious problems, the Constitutional Court canceled the Act in 1971. (Birler, 2012, p. 140).

## **2.2 Neoliberal transformation in the global context**

The significant neoliberal turn in Turkish education is not separable from the neoliberal policies in all realms of Turkey. And this overall transformation can only be acknowledged in the global context. The genealogical and theoretical explanation of transformation of "public good" to "private good" requires us to delve into neoliberalism in various angles. Education did not spare a different path than other public goods. Following the 1980s, the attempts at minimizing the state capacity, especially within the framework of economic fields and public expenditure, on the one hand legitimized the understanding of privatization of a public good, that is education, and on the other hand it led to the expansion of the field of private education. However, while neoliberal

policies opened comfortable paths for privatization of education, it did not mean that only an institutional privatization was the outcome. The formation and understanding of education was substantively transformed as well. That is to say, educational programs and materials, the desired and expected capital obtained from, the subjectivity constructed by the governmentality of education underwent radical changes. Before dealing with education in a neoliberal context, tracing the transformative force of neoliberalism within enlarged frameworks in terms of policies and effects will provide a grounded space to analyse the educational field.

As discussed by many scholars, neoliberalism emerged as a political choice (Centeno & Cohen, 2012) and projected itself as inevitable, or as Thatcher stated, under the motto of “There is no alternative” (TINA). Its characteristic as a political choice is based on the restoration of the class power of the ruling class as Harvey states and as a way to manage the hegemonic decline of US as Wallerstein points out.

Neoliberalism was not put in action all around the world in similar ways: In peripheral countries we observe coercive implementation and collaboration with authoritarian regimes as we have seen in Latin America (Pinochet example) or Turkey. On the other hand, we see the rise of Thatcher and Reagan in Britain and USA which were supplied by the production of the consent of particular segments of society. As Thatcher appealed to the middle class in Britain emphasizing individualism, private property, personal responsibility and family values, The Republican Party in US sought an alliance with the “moral majority” of the Christian right, deepening the nationalism of the white working classes with latent sexism, homophobia and racism (Harvey, 2006, pp. 7–10). Harvey states clearly; “Not for the first, nor, it is to be feared, for the last time

in history has a social group voted against its material, economic and class interests for cultural, nationalist and religious reasons” (p. 10).

Centeno & Cohen point out that this cultural hegemony has been constructed and exercised through three levels: “within expert communities and the academy, within policy and government circles, and (most importantly) as an expression of popular culture.” (2012, p. 328). The intellectual dimension builds on the epistemology based on mathematics, formal models and positivism, undermining the historical and structural accounts, signifying a shift from Keynesianism and privileging the econometrics, monetarism and efficient market hypotheses, leaving no place for approaches focusing on regulation and market organization. A supervening norm that is built on this approach was the normalization of market as an unquestionable entity and de-politicisation of economy (Centeno & Cohen, 2012). The trust in governmental organization nominally decreased as such. For example, arguing that government corruption and fraud was intervening in the realm of economics has led to the misinterpretation of the economic developments of the Asian Tigers, due to the deliberate ignorance of the state impact on their success in comparison to Latin America, Africa and post-Socialist countries. The story was told in a way attributing the success to the neoliberal free market (Centeno & Cohen, 2012). Democracy was being pronounced with the market, emphasizing the indistinguishability of these two entities. While trade unions were declared as villains, private financial entrepreneurs and innovators came to be the heroes of the neoliberal setting (p. 330). Finally, the discourse of individualism has confronted social solidarity and organization while nationalism emerged as exception since it has played a crucial role in the acceptance and application of the neoliberal economic system. Consumption that was supplied by loans has emerged as a signifier of individual freedom; leisure time

has increased in the context of increasing consumption and the market has been sacralised (p. 330).

We see that the category of public goods as services and commodities that can be produced in order to gain profit is recognizably narrowed down within the neoliberal world (Fred Block, 1994, p. 692). The discussion of capitalist accumulation and primitive accumulation is important here, since Wallerstein argues that we are in the epoch of solely capitalist accumulation, Harvey says that there has always been over-accumulation as it was faced in the 60s, and the capitalist always expands into the non-capitalist spheres and spaces which means the primitive accumulation is always there in order to make new investments which will be profitable in the long term. I argue, within this context, that we should understand the enlargement of capitalism through the redefinition and reorganization of what the commons that cannot be profited from are. For example, the shift from “urban managerialism” to “urban entrepreneurship” after the 1970s in European cities, is an example of how the former was related to commons that are rights of the peoples and responsibility of the governments and municipalities in terms of electricity, infrastructure, water supply etc. With the latter we see the privatization of them as they are opened to profit making (Harvey, 1989). In line with the privatization of public services, we see the decline in the state’s responsibility in terms of citizen rights to healthcare, education, employment, infrastructure etc.

As Howell and Laccaro demonstrated in their study, the mediating role of institutions and isolation from the global economic pressures in terms of national political economies within the neoliberal framework, has been challenged by the practitioners of industrial relations, particularly trade unions arguing “a sea change in the recent past in which the balance of power between class forces has shifted toward

employers, unions have largely been on the defensive, and collective institutions and forms of labour market regulation have been weakened” (Baccaro & Howell, 2011, p. 522). As mentioned before, neoliberalist war on trade unions and labour organizations was very central to the social, political and cultural re-organization of the public sphere. In the developed countries, we observe that the relocation of material production to peripheries has resulted in the deskilling of many labourers, creating new kinds of skilled workers who are subjected to purchase training in order to reach higher positions in terms of management and innovation. Although this polarization has been adopted by the peripheral countries later, at the beginning we see export leading the economies and low wages here, since it is the very first thing that attracted the interest of the capital of developed countries.

Moreover, as I have discussed above, neoliberalism based itself on authoritarian regimes, dictatorships and coercive powers in peripheral countries. When we think of core countries, particularly the US, we see the production of consent on the basis of conservatism, “moral majority” Christendom and nationalism. So we see that individualism, citizenship and human rights defined in economic terms such as entrepreneurship and mobilization in terms of freedom within the borders of the market on the basis of both profit making and consumption. Whether in authoritarian regimes or core countries, representative democracies, although neoliberal discourse is based on the individualism and state-free action, in order to organize such diversity that would come out from the multitude of individual aims, desires, choices or identities are suppressed by the neoliberal agenda that favours further accumulation of capital.

As discussed by Harvey, the profoundly anti-democratic basis of the neoliberal state, representative democracy is corrupted by money power via the government by

executive order and judicial decision (Harvey, 2006, p. 15). The institutions are created which are out of the reach of democratic influence and accountability, organizing an economy deliberately and so neatly dispossessed from its historical, social and political context and questionability such as IMF, WTO etc.

### **2.3 First wave of neoliberal transformation of education in Turkey-80s**

In relation to the aforementioned global context, implementation of the neoliberal policies and economic doctrine in Turkey has started with the 1980 military coup d'état. Of course neoliberal policies did not only target education, but all levels of economics, politics and social life in Turkey. The period which began with the 80s is the fundamental rupture from the practice and discourse on education as a public good and social right. Since neoliberalism means the abdication of state from the public services and sources, adoption of neoliberalisation also resulted as the gradual decrease of financial resources allocated to education.

Higher education in Turkey was not outside these tremendous effects of neoliberalism. Tekeli (2003) says that the university has been under radical transformation in relation to the hegemonic crisis of world capitalism during 1970s. In order to portray this transformation, Tekeli (2003) talks about four scenarios which shape the transformation of universities: “1. Transition from industrial society to information society, 2. Transition from Fordist accumulation to flexible accumulation, 3. Transition from world of nation-states to global world and 4. Transition from modernity to postmodernity” (Tekeli, 2003, p. 124).

Although this global and local process of educational transformation has started earlier, it took some time for the phenomenon to be held under the microscope by

critical social sciences. Neoliberal transformation of education in developed countries has been scrutinized by several scholars starting with 90s (Slaughter, 1998; Clark, 1998; Magrath, 2000; Apple, 2004; Giroux, 2008). However, the period in which the neoliberal transformation of education in Turkey was brought to the fore was mid-2000s (Ünal, 2005; Yolcu, 2007, İnal 2012, Birler, 2012; Aslan, 2014).

This trend had tremendous effects on all levels of education, from primary to tertiary, and also on all of the counterparts related with education, students, educators, families and institutions etc. The compensation of education gradually got out of state budget's hand, and created a form of social and familial responsibility for subvention of education. As Gök (2007) states, the side effect of corresponding educational expenditure affects the poor more profoundly. She said that;

[t]he decline in public funds pushed the schools in poor neighbourhoods to ask for money from parents, who were unable to meet such demands. Arguably, the decline in public spending on education is a major assault on poor citizens' right to education. (2007, p. 151).

On the other hand, while the cost of education was delivered to families and societal network, the workers of educations, that are official and private educators, were receiving low salaries which were almost under the threshold of poverty. The symbolically well-capitalized teachers, which amounted to a very small number, were able to be placed in positions where they could receive high salaries. Gök (2007) continues that “[e]xpenditures on salaries make up most of the national education budget in Turkey. Yet the salaries of teachers, as is the case with all public employees, are extremely low and far from providing a decent living” (Gök, 2007, p. 251).

While the source of financing education changed from the state budget to relying on personal expense, the educational system was substantively transformed on the basis

of organization and conduct. Centralization of education under the “higher council”, first cracked the autonomy of the university, and second, reorganized the higher education in a governmental frame. Further, the fields and curricula of higher education, that is to say, all dimensions of the university have been subjected to a higher council. Following the 1980 military coup d’etat, we see a period of centralization and unification in terms of higher education in an immense way. With the Higher Education Act number 2547 all higher education institutions have become tied to the newly founded Council of Higher Education (CoHE-YÖK) (Birlir, 2012, p. 140). Önal (2012) summarizes the structure of the CoHE, and how it works well:

CoHE has been the driving force behind the transformation of higher education ever since, particularly so because its authority over the higher education system is nearly absolute. The president of the CoHE is the immediate superior of all the university presidents, he appoints all the faculty deans at all universities, and presents three candidates to the president of Turkey when a new president is to be appointed to head a university. When a new university is to be established, the CoHE is the institution that approves it before the establishment process comes to the parliament. <sup>7</sup> The CoHE also controls the Student Selection and Placement Center (OSYM), the national body that tests and places students in higher education institutions; therefore, all student access to higher education is through the CoHE (Önal, 2012, p. 130).

Institutions of higher education, universities, from the establishment to selecting students and workers and governance, all stages of the university were settled by CoHE. Conducting university from the top council, paves the way for the reorganization of it in line with macro governmental policies, which is the restructuring of state and society within neoliberal premises. And thereafter, the reorganization of the university would be conducted in governmental forms; depoliticized and market-based. According to Balyer and Gündüz (2011, p.73), the formation of CoHE and legislative transformation which provides basis for the formation of private/private universities was the signifier of



transformation of higher education model in Turkey from the Continental European Model to a more Anglo-Saxon System.

While this model constitutes the inner formation and running procedure of the university placed in a field of marketing organization, or company, it also makes the university have a close relationship with market organizations. In neoliberal terms, the first attempt to transform higher education in terms of reliance on the budget of the family and student, was the introduction of the tuition fee, with The Higher Education Law (no.2547) passed on 1981 (Önal, 2012, p.131). This was a significant change when we think that higher education was tuition-fee-free before. The second step that was taken was the legal reorganization of the law in accordance with paving the way for higher education. According to the article 130 of the 1932 constitution, state had the sole right to establish universities and according to the article 120 of 1961 establishment of private higher education institutions were forbidden (Birler, 2012, Önal 2012). However, with a minor amendment on the article, foundations were also given the right to establish private higher education institutions with an indication of non-profit nature. The indication of the non-profit nature of institutions points the institutions to account on the last instance. At the beginning, the person who demands education from these non-profit institutions, has to pay the cost, but at the end, the cost that institution demands from the person must not turn into investment or profit. The strange thing about this is that the non-profit of the institution cannot be traced, but it is only officially declared. The real function of that non-profit discourse creates a symbolic realm for legitimation. As Birler (2012) incessantly states, the legitimation was not only created by the non-profit nature or discourse, but also proposing “global competition” was a reason for founding private universities. Because despite the sphere of public (universities), the sphere of private or

market (universities), is a sphere of competition in accordance with neoliberal mentality.

Accordingly,

The legitimation of the amendment was achieved on the basis of two arguments: Turkish higher education institutions were inefficient and globally uncompetitive. The existing universities, it was argued, could not satisfy the increasing demand for higher education. Nor could they compete with the rising standards of the global era (CoHE 2007). Therefore the establishment of the private FUs, with the legal constraint that preserved their non-profit character, was beneficial for both the society and the existing institutions. (Birler, 2012, p. 140).

In 1984, the first foundation university of Turkey, Bilkent University has been opened in Ankara. After its foundation, two cases were opened in Constitutional Court against the foundation of this university. Constitutional Court decided that such kind of universities had to be established according to law (9<sup>th</sup> February 1991, Official Newspaper no: 20781). Following the verdict of Constitutional Court, in 1992 with the Law number 3285, Koç University and Kadir Has University have been established.

This case opened against the foundation universities in Constitutional Court was a sign that their formation was not welcomed in the social and political levels. The end decision of the Court relies on the formal amendments that has been enacted by legislative organ, despite interpretation of the content. With this in mind, it is important to note those criticisms since they still resonate within the current discussions revolving around privatization of education in Turkey.

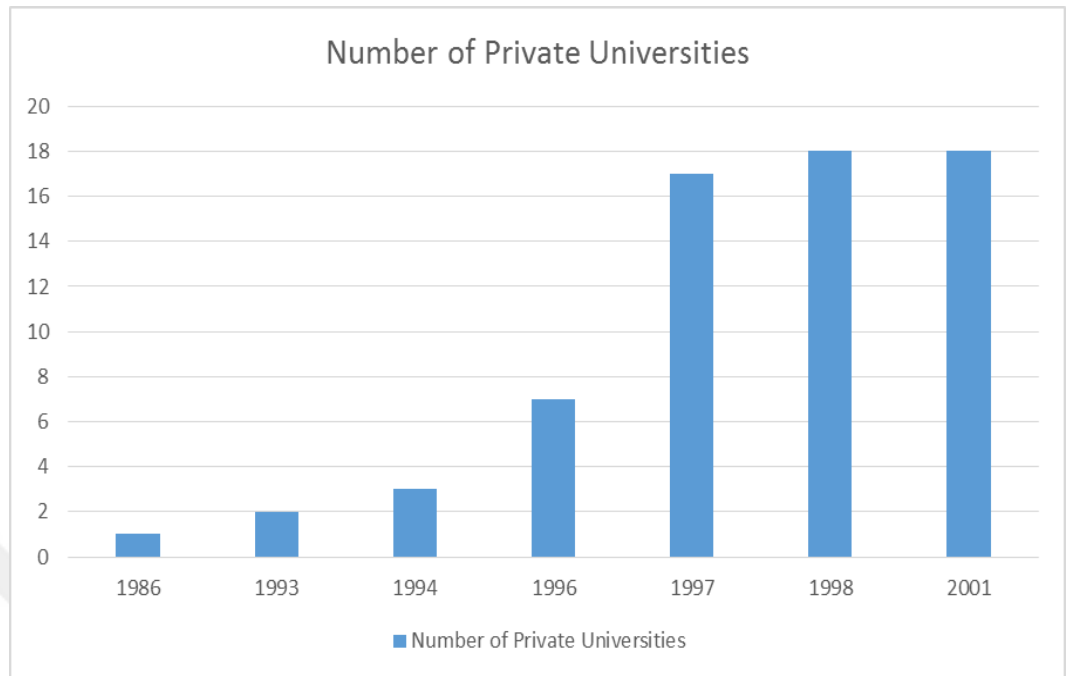
The conception of education in society is still based on the idea that it is a public good considered as a right, and therefore should be free of charge. The ongoing debate focused on the equality of obtaining education. Private universities were seen as an obstruction for equal opportunities in education which could lead to public injustice. As Birler (2012) notes in relation to the first objections towards private education: “The

involvement of the private sector in higher education can lead to social injustices that can have a negative impact on public university students, who are mostly from middle- and lower-income families” (Birler, 2012, p. 142). Gök (2002) also argues that “elitist and competitive system of education” which was realized and peaked by foundation of private and private universities could not increase the quality of education at large. Accordingly,

In a country where the distribution of income is so unequal, where there is already an elitist and competitive system of education, it is not possible to educate and train the young generation and to expect to enhance their potential by relying heavily on market forces (Gök, 2002, p. 103).

Another critic about removing barriers for instituting private universities involved the argument about raising the quality of higher education. While the state capacity was thought to be inadequate to establish new universities, or to enhance the quality of established public universities; how could private capacities, or market could meet the demands of high standards and qualities in education? Despite discourse on the limit of the state capacities, Birler puts that it is a “political choice”.

The public subsidies available for FUs [Private Universities] were causing a fundamental inconsistency. If the state universities were no longer sufficient to meet the demands of the higher education standards, the decision to allocate public revenues for the establishment of private FUs instead of improving these public institutions could only be explained as a political choice that favoured the free-market system” (Birler, 2012, p. 142).



**Figure 1.** Variations of foundation university numbers between 1980-2000.

The analysis of the location of those universities also gives the substance to understand how they are neoliberalism-oriented and market-based. While the amendment that permits and regulates foundation of private universities prescribes high educational standards and quality, and favour of society and state, the locations of private universities were carefully chosen on the criteria of centrality of the capital and market. The places where capital was accumulated intensely became the places where private universities have been founded (Ercan 2005, Yalçınan and Thornley 2007, Şenses 2007, Birlir 2012).

Of the 20 universities established between 1984 and 1999, 19 of them are found in two metropolitan cities of Turkey, that is, Istanbul and Ankara 19. Although the regulations pertaining to FUs aimed to prevent their establishment only in metropolitan areas by requiring them to obtain comparable levels of research and educational capacities with the public universities in their locality, the unspecified criteria of comparison render the regulation weak and have led to a major concentration of FUs in large cities (Yalçınan and Thornley, 2007 as cited in Birlir, 2012, p. 145).

According to Birler, the place of concentration of capital “plays a vital role” for private universities for various reasons. First, the prospective students and their family for these expensive universities were living in the metropolitan areas of central cities. The second, according to Birler , “the desire to be in the center of capital not only increases their competitiveness in terms of attracting prospective students, but also adds to their reputation as their graduates become a part of the same market” (Birler, 2012, p. 145).

#### **2.4 Higher Education, Neoliberalism, AKP Period - 2002 and onwards**

In light of the aforementioned process, AKP period has its significance in terms of education and neoliberal turn in this realm. AKP came into power with the elections in 2002, with an election manifesto stating that: “The obstacles regarding the right to education will be eliminated, education will be accepted and promoted as a lifelong process, and horizontal and vertical mobilization between the levels will be supported<sup>1</sup>” (AKP, 2002, p. 80) and “At all levels of education, opportunity and means of education will be sustained; service of maximum education according to capabilities of everyone will be provided<sup>2</sup> (AKP, 2002, p. 80)”. Therefore, the AKP appealed to the voters with

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<sup>1</sup> “Eğitim hakkının kullanılmasının önündeki engeller kaldırılacak, eğitim hayat boyu sürecek bir süreç olarak kabul ve teşvik edilerek, kademeler arasında yatay ve dikey geçiş imkânları sağlanacaktır.”

<sup>2</sup> “Eğitimin her kademesinde imkân ve fırsat eşitliği sağlanacak, herkese kabiliyeti ölçüsünde alabileceği maksimum eğitim hizmeti sunulacaktır.”

<sup>3</sup> “Eğitimin her alanında özel teşebbüs desteklenecek ve özel teşebbüsün eğitimdeki payı artırılacaktır.”

<sup>4</sup> “İdealim, belli sayıda insanı üniversiteye taşımak. Diğerlerini, yüksek teknik okullara ve meslek yüksek okullarına yönlendirmek. Bedava okul da olmaz. Amaç sadece belli sayıda insanı üniversiteye taşıyarak olabilir. Okullar bedava. Hiçbir yerde görülmemiştir.”

<sup>5</sup> “annem ev hanımıydı şimdi çalışıyor ama. Babam matbaacı. Çocukluğumdan beri matbaada çalışıyor, kendi matbaası yok, işçi. Annem ben çocukken çalışmış, sonra ara verdi. Şimdi yine başladı işe maddi durumlardan dolayı. Konfeksiyonda işçi olarak çalışıyor. Yüzde elli bursluyum, yaklaşık on iki milyar

their understanding of the inequalities and obstacles regarding education, and with a promise to resolve such social problems. Moreover, it was stated that: In terms of higher education, AKP states that their policies will consider the proliferation of universities nationwide and adds that they will enhance objective criteria in terms of establishment of new universities (AKP, 2002, p. 81). This was a promise to accelerate schooling and therefore to expand educational participation. However, with the following statement, the prospective government was giving hints about the trajectory of this educational expansion: “Free enterprise in all sectors of education will be supported and share of free enterprise in education will be accelerated<sup>3</sup>. (AKP, 2002, p. 81) Starting with the first election propaganda, education in general, and higher education in particular have been one of the core social terrains which AKP regime discursively, practically and structurally transformed and politically utilized.

In order to comprehend the neoliberal transformation of the higher education, firstly we should state the fact that, the field of education was from bottom to top intertwined and interconnected. It is weaved from pre-school education to higher education, and transformation of education in all levels need to be understood in order to examine a specific step of the education process. Gök (2010) states how immensely the primary and secondary education have been privatized, and how private preparation sector (dershane) for the University Entrance Exam which was generating gross burdens on families and students (Gök, 2010).

Stratification, elimination and rating through examination in Turkey plays a vital role in understanding the educational system. Passages from primary to secondary level,

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<sup>3</sup> “Eğitimin her alanında özel teşebbüs desteklenecek ve özel teşebbüsün eğitimdeki payı artırılacaktır.”

and from secondary to tertiary level, are all mediated by exams. Although exam-centric competition in Turkey started in the aftermath of 80s, it has been accelerating in the AKP period. In 2013, higher school entrance exam has been restructured as TEOG and spread to three end-of-year exams (it was a single session before) and increased the psychological and financial burden on families. Moreover, while it was possible to attend ordinary high schools without taking the exam before, they were connected to the rating system via the prerequisite of an exam score. This change contained the families and students from lower income groups, who could escape it before, into the competitive system through private preparations market (Çelik, 2016, p. 74). The fact is that the differentiation between curriculum and the educational program that were carried out in primary and secondary schools enormously differ from the issues held in University Entrance Exam. The radical gap between educational program and the central formal exams to attend university, inexplicably presupposes the need of private preparation educational programs and institutions. The need to fill the gap between formal secondary education programs and university attendance led to the emergence of a tremendous market working on supply and demand based on the product of education. Commodification of the education with private preparation educational programs expanded educational market as a ‘mandatory’ sector. While the private and private universities were a “choice” and determined by the social and the economic class of students and their families, private preparation education programs were free from economic and social class of clients since it had become mandatory to attend universities. Poor and low-income families were also left with no choice but to register their children in these programs although it required a high family budget. Strategically using family budgets; restricting it or replacing, reducing other life requirements,

informal networks, and loans were coping and surviving mechanisms generated by families against these unequal and harsh conditions. It seems marketization of education at large started with these transformations targeting the primary and secondary levels.

The marketization of the education did not only give rise to the internal structure of educational system on the basis of a neoliberal market, but also sustained the orientation to the needs of the external market which was in turn provided with work power via that very educational system. When we look at the secondary schools, such as high schools, Bulut states that vocational high school education has been transformed in a way that makes the education more integrated into the corporations and the capital (Bulut, 2010) and “school reforms fail to offer the possibility of structural improvement for working-class students but rather prepare them for flexible labour markets that demand flexible personalities, willing to work for unpredictable futures” (Bulut, 2012, p. 71). On 2008, CoHE President Prof. Dr. Yusuf Ziya Özcan declared that:

My ideal is to carry certain amount of people to the university. The rest to be directed to the higher technical schools and vocational higher schools. Free education is not possible. The aim is to direct certain amount of people to the university. Schools and education are free. Nowhere has it been like this<sup>4</sup>. (“New CoHE President Spills the beans”, 2008).

The function of the universities is not only considered as a place of higher education, but also to provide workers having technical and vocational skill to meet market demands of intermediate staffs. In so far as under this educational regime containing primary and secondary levels, higher education was also reshaped and transformed.

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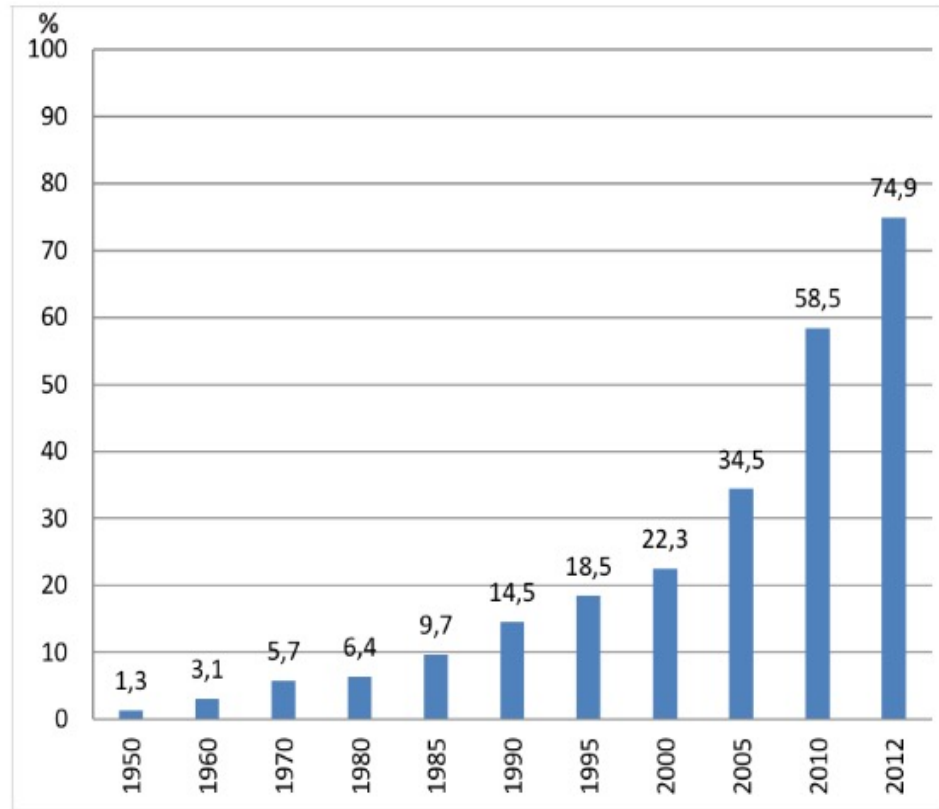
<sup>4</sup> “İdealim, belli sayıda insanı üniversiteye taşımak. Diğerlerini, yüksek teknik okullara ve meslek yüksekokullarına yönlendirmek. Bedava okul da olmaz. Amaç, sadece belli sayıda insanı üniversiteye taşımak olabilir. Okullar bedava. Hiçbir yerde görülmemiştir.”



#### **2.4.1 Expansion of Universities and Students**

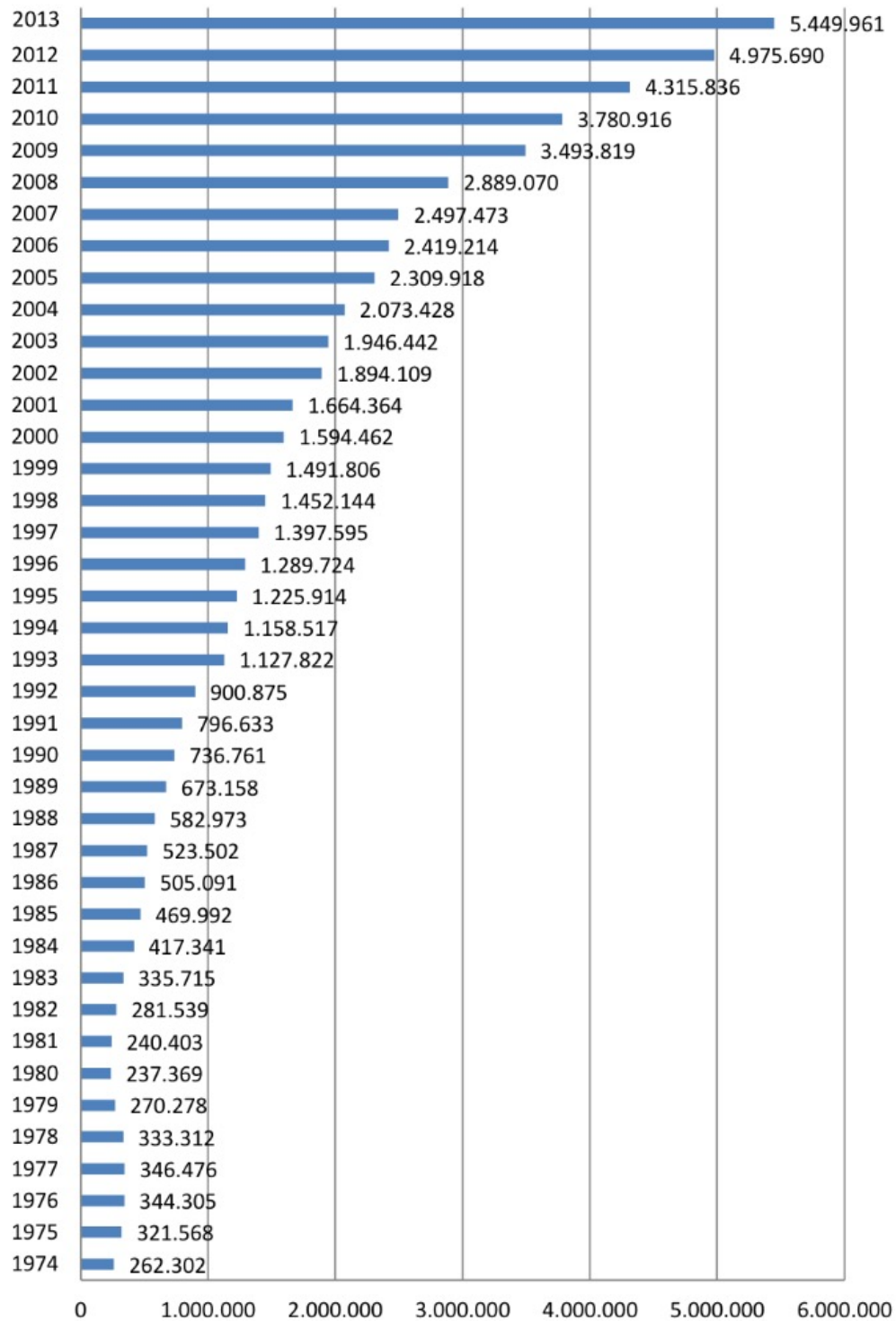
The following period was marked by the glorification of the proliferation in the number of universities during their rule by AKP. The quantity of the universities that increased each year were carefully represented in the reports, Party's manifestos and elections propagandas. For instance, between 2002 and 2007, establishment of 7 private universities and 32 public universities, and of totally 39 universities are indicated (AKP, 2007, p. 86). For each year, the increase of universities takes place in these reports and manifestos, in the part focused on education. The fact is that the newly established public universities, for a considerable amount, are the faculties of the old public universities, especially in the provinces of Anatolia. The distribution of faculties to the newly established universities increased the quantity of universities in a meiotic fashion. The geographically dispersed faculties of old universities in provinces of Anatolia provided meiotic attempts, dividing one university into two. That is to say, quantitatively it was equal to the division of one university into two or more. However it is obvious that the number of students also increased, not merely because of an increase in the number of the universities, but due to the increased quota for each university. In fact, CoHE significantly increased the department quotas of universities each year regardless of capacities.

Therefore, the universities have become more crowded than ever before. The augmentation of the number of students, for private, private and public universities, resulted in their becoming clients, for the university and also for the market. Put it again, the quantity also indicates the political manoeuvres in terms of reform and propaganda at large.



**Figure 2.** Gross Schooling Rate of Higher Education in Turkey Between 1950-2012 (Çetinsaya, 2014, pg .43).

In 2003 there were 60 public universities, and since then 51 new public universities have been established. And in order to talk about the neoliberal transformation of higher education, it is also important to note the fact that public higher education institutions also could not escape the neoliberal restructuring and policies implemented regarding the organization and function of the university. In terms of educational expansion, acceleration of public universities played a vital role as well. To some extent, increasing the numbers of public universities, strengthened the government's hand on provisional policies concerning foundation universities with the excuse of public universities not meeting the demand of students. The government exerted itself fully by opening new public universities.



**Figure 3.** Variation of students in Higher Education according to years (Çetinsaya, 2014, 53).

### 2.4.2 Making of Entrepreneur University: Having a self-created Budget

In line with this educational expansion in terms of both schooling and student participation, public universities as well have been subjected to neoliberal transformation with corporation culture (Giroux, 2008, pp. 85-118). Turkish academics were expected to act more like entrepreneurs, externally funded and more in collaboration with the industry (Aslan, 2014, p. 272; Birler, 2012; Önal; 2012). Science Parks and KOSGEB which connect the public universities' research facilities to the capital functioned as the path on the way of reorientation of the universities alongside market. An example of this has been the introduction of "Entrepreneur and Innovative University Index Indicator Set" on 2012, which grades and scales universities in terms of their performances and their entrepreneurial capacities.

**Table 1.** Higher Education Budget and MEB investment expenditures

Of the Higher education Budget			Of The MEB Investment Budget		
Rate in Total Education Budget	Rate in GDP	Rate in Consolalidated Budget	Rate in Total Education Budget	Rate in GDP	Rate in Consolalidated Budget
1997	39.5	0.69	3.18	15.0	-
2000	31.5	0.63	2.25	19.9	28.35
2005	35.1	0.80	3.34	8.27	12.13
2010	33.1	0.85	3.26	6.32	8.06
2012	32.5	0.89	3.63	6.34	8.09

Another important dimension of this transformation of higher education on the basis of neoliberalism, was the pressure and instruction of the global and local markets and agents. So, policies and structural adjustments have been oriented to the needs of market forces such as MUSIAD, TUSIAD and World Bank. As İnal states: "... capitalist

actors voice a consensus: The curricula of programs in Turkish higher education are not labour market-oriented, the system needs to be massified, and the primary objective of programs should be to provide students with necessary vocational skills (WB 2007, 3–4; CoHE 2007, 186; TUSIAD-EUA 2008, 22; MUSIAD 2007, 34)” cited in Nevzat Evrim Önal, 2012, p. 134)”

In order to solve the problem of increasing and sustaining the interaction of capital and university, CoHE proposed to establish advisory board models into the public universities (Nevzat Evrim Önal, 2012, p. 134). As Önal states:

This scheme was developed further by the Turkish Industrialists’ and Businessmen’s Association (TUSIAD), which suggested that these boards should include representatives of the stakeholders in higher education, take the boards of trustees in private universities as a model, and balance the power of the president and the academic senate, which only represent faculty members (TUSIAD-EUA 2008, 22 and 103).

When the proposal was finalized by the CoHE and sent to universities, the need for advisory boards was justified through the Bologna Process, and the proposed advisory boards included the chairpersons of the local chambers of industry and trade (CoHE 2009).”(Nevzat Evrim Önal, 2012, p. 134). And also, in AKP’s election bulletin of 2011, it was stated that;

Starting from more developed universities, boards of trustee will be generated in the public universities as well. Legal regulations which allow the establishment of private universities will be enacted and the proportion of the private and foundation universities within the higher education will be increased.[3] (AKP, 2011, p. 135)

Though back to the date it was proposed, the implementation of the board of trustees in public universities was cancelled due to the rising criticisms. However, according to the recent developments, first honorary board of trustee in a public university has been enacted, with the aim to collaborate capital and university, at Gedik

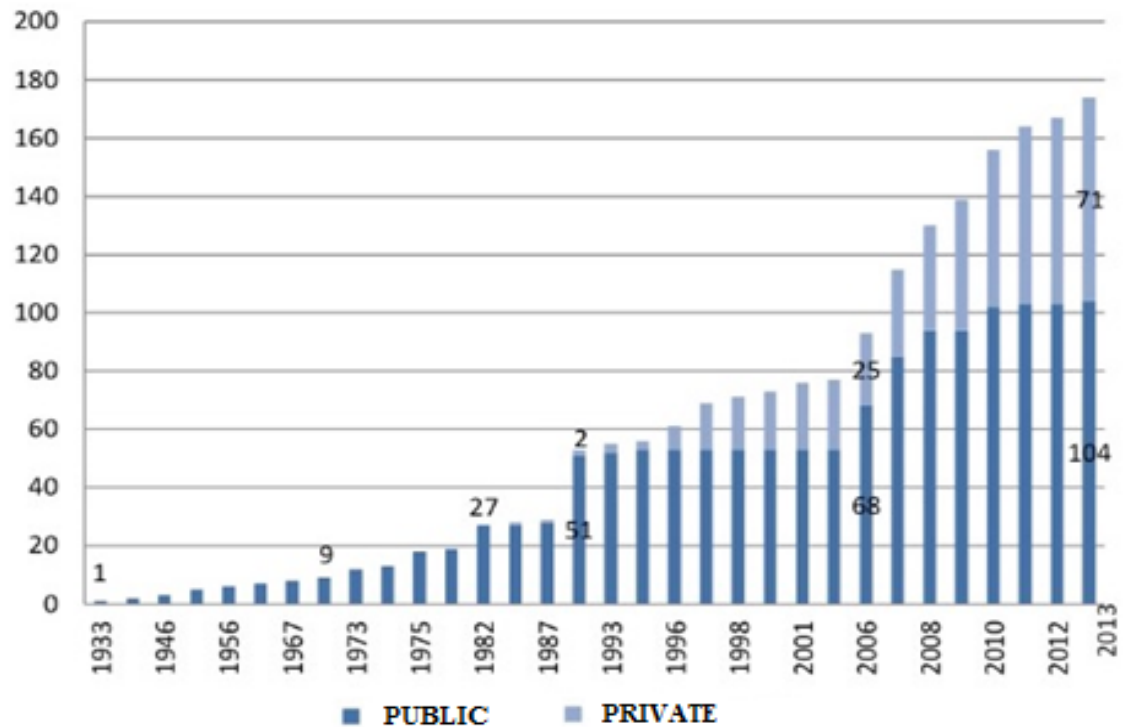
University. Statement of Rector Prof. Dr. Cevdet Coşkun which says that it will present an example for other universities, shows that integration of the board of trustees to public universities is still on agenda.

#### **2.4.3. Expansion of private universities: “private education” for low income clients**

However, the transformation of the public universities is not the only carriage of the neoliberal transformation of higher education in Turkey. In line with the case of public universities, an immense reliance and provision on the foundation of private universities has marked the AKP period and educational reform in Turkey. The massification, universalization and neoliberalization of higher education doctrine in global context, expanded the necessary spending on educational area. This expanded expenditure has reflected firstly on the administrative connectedness and loss of autonomy of public universities. The second outcome of this process was the question of financialization of immensely expanding the higher education realm. In order to understand, we need to recall the idea of regarding neoliberalism as a political choice, and look at the solutions generated by capital and state collaboration through this idea. The question of financialization was resolved by the diversification and privatization of higher education. The first solution for the public universities was to restrict the state budget and direct public universities into outsourcing themselves via collaboration with capital. The second resolution was to let more and more private education institutions to participate in education (Çetinsaya, 2014, p. 26).

The transition of private universities, as Birler calls it, from the “first generation” to the “second generation” private universities introduced a new form of market universities. While, according to Birler, in the first generation, teaching and research

were gradually commodified, and contained some obstructions to market relations, the second generation private universities with all process and functions completely and massively were marketized. Birler states that, “Under AKP rule, the second generation of FUs completed their integration into global markets through research funds, accreditation systems, ranking agencies, and the introduction of a global for-profit higher education company. In this sense, the AKP regime has certainly reinforced the role of FUs in the neoliberalization of higher education” (Birler, 2012, p. 148).



**Figure 4.** Numbers of public and foundation universities between 1933-2013 (Çetinsaya, 2014, 46)

Again when we are talking about the first generation private universities, which indicates a quantitatively low number, the clientele of these university represented a certain economical and societal class -upper and upper-middle class. Therefore, the

clientele for these universities represented a restricted group of people. However, the second generation private universities widened their clientele independent of income ranges. The competitive labour market conditions which presuppose university degree for any low skill jobs and positions and the competitive formation of university entrance exam for public universities, attract families to these universities, which are comprised of a single building located on the streets or outskirts of the cities, as a place to obtain university degree. The relation of these university to the students and their family, although educational, is constituted on the basis of demanding degree and supplying it. The pure observable marketization of universities rises on the commodification of university degree.



**Table 2.** Numbers of Schools and Students According to Education Levels (Aslan, 2014, p. 266)

	Years	Public		Private	
		School	Student	School	Student
Preschool	1986-				
	1987	332	98.036	105	6.531
	2012-				
	2013	1,884	953,209	1,403	124,724
	<b>Increase rate<sup>viii</sup></b>	4.7	8.7	12.4	18.1
Elementary education	1986-		7,786,97		
	1987	54,239	3	232	57,847
	2012-		10,829,2		
	2013	44,260	21	1,896	331,675
	<b>Increase rate</b>	-0.2	0.4	7.2	4.7
Secondary education	1986-		1,114,63		
	1987	2,692	6	91	23,109
	2012-		4,838,95		
	2013	9,385	8	1,033	156,665
	<b>Increase rate</b>	2.5	3.3	10.4	5.8
Non-formal education	1986-		1,219,42		
	1987	1,268	5	1,135	328,120
	2012-		4,755,50		3,316,00
	2013	1,614	1	12,118	7
	<b>Increase rate</b>	0.3	2.9	9.7	9.1
University*	1986-				
	1987	27	356,967	1	386
	2012-		2,718,83		
	2013	105	8	72	228,824
	<b>Increase rate</b>	2.9	6.6	71.0	591.8

## 2.5 Conclusion

This chapter attempted to show the historical and structural transformation of Turkish education system in total, via addressing the global context and local dynamics. In its newly started adventure of development, of modernism and of making the national identity, education was thought to be a key and essential step. While education was a program of civilization of the nation at large, it was also the proper address for development and modernization. The bureaucrats of the early Republic considered that education would contribute to increasing industrial and agricultural products, as well as

helping to modernize the mentality, attitude and worldview of the subjects. In the newly established nation state, it was regarded as the right of a citizen, therefore it was seen as public good. So the first period of educational institutionalization laid the foundation of modern Turkish system and also reflected the developmentalist and Keynesian economic policies. However, education was not accessible for the majority of the population, rather it remained available to the elite segments of the society.

Following the institutionalization section, it is stated that with the global crises of capitalism in 70s, we have seen the rise of the neoliberal doctrine, which shrinks the role of state on public goods and change over every aspect of social rights, from health to education. 80s, with the military regime, Turkey has adapted to this global phenomenon of neoliberalism. And within this context, we have seen the neoliberal transformation of education in general, and higher education in particular. How specific institutions such as CoHe and how specific legal procedures such as changing the Higher Education Law in order to allow private education institutions, played a vital role in terms of consolidation of neoliberalism in the educational field. And it is argued that, this period between 80-2002, has paved the way for furthering the policies during AKP era.

Lastly, this chapter attempted to shed light on legal, political and social aspects of the AKP period and educational transformation. From primary to tertiary level, policies of AKP have immensely transformed the education system into a neoliberally engaged, competitive and inequality reproducing make-up. While primary and secondary educations have been stratified via the changes in examination procedures and differentiation of school types, by-product market of exam preparation institutions has expanded. This has resulted in the reliance on the success of the family budget and detrimental effects on the psychologies of students and parents. On the other hand, in

terms of higher education, public universities have been forced to rely on and be engaged with the market sources due to budget deficits and legal restructuring which entails the integration with capital.

This was the setting in which we have experienced the rise of privatization of education in all levels, and particularly in higher education in terms of gross schooling rate and expansion of student numbers. While this educational expansion was promoted as an egalitarian development which strengthened the government discursively, the social reality was entailing the reliance of families to their self-sources and their strategic engagement with the external markets. In the case of universities, we see that more and more students are attending private institutions with ranging tuition fees in this ever diversified menu of neoliberal education setting.

Within this structural and historical setting, the case university under scrutiny, emerges in the scene of higher education. In other words, aforementioned developments made possible the emergence of the subject university. However, since structures and institutions cannot exist without the existence of the individuals, families, groups, to sum up units of subjects, in the following chapters, I will explore via which strategies, projections and aspirations, people are getting engaged with private higher education institutions.

## CHAPTER 3

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: HABITUS AND WIDENING PARTICIPATION

#### 3.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to lay out the theoretical framework and cover discussions in which we can understand the current educational transformation in Turkey which has been discussed in the second chapter, and locate the situation of the students in it. By doing so, I will discuss the useful analytical concepts which equip us to understand the phenomenon under scrutiny. At the same time, the theoretical and conceptual framework will contribute to uncover the motivations, desires, dreams and aims that all current prospective and retrospective investments behind structure of education and of agency of the students which I traced ethnographically in foundational higher educational institutions. On the other hand, the organisation of education in general, and of school in particular, became an important unit to analyse the constitutive, re/productive and transformative relations between agent and structure.

However, the way I take ‘agent’ and ‘structure’ into consideration, is no less than a self-sustaining and self-emerging formation without historical circumstances. Here, I will employ Bourdieu’s contributions on how social, individual and institutional emerge, work, reproduce and transform. *Habitus, field, capital* become explicatory concepts to delve into education, university, and agency of students. The spatial and temporal dimension of a societal formation as *habitus* enables us to comprehend the process of making of positions, actions and perceptions of the agents and subjects with taking multi-dimensions of possibility of emergence into consideration.

*Field* and *habitus* contain both settled and dynamic movements of sociality. While structured dimensions indicate the settled positions of the field, and of habitus, the possibility of structuring structured positions demonstrates the dynamics of the field. Therefore, positions and operations in the field are prone to reproduction and transformation. However, social reproduction and transformation cannot be considered different processes; since transformation is attributed to reproduction. In the end, considering reproduction to be different from making “exact copies”, opens up possibilities for the changing of the habitus in the field. That is to say, while reproduction of the social is necessarily indispensable, transformation becomes the surplus of that indispensability of reproduction.

Higher education is regarded as a powerful supplier that enables agents to have equipment to obtain positions in a field. Cultural capital is attained through education while theoretically having the possibility to dispose of it, and having the ability to restructure the structured positions in the field. However, with the increasing number of higher education institutions claiming expansion towards participation of working and low-income classes, education becomes a form of a survival strategy to obtain places in the neoliberal market. And, consistently, education procures or reproduces the agents not only for the need of the neoliberal labour market, but also a mode of individuality that internalizes the precarity and uncertainty of neoliberal sociality.

### **3.2. Habitus: Structured Dispositions of Education**

Perception, sensation and action of the subject in a specific environment, according to Bourdieu, are generated within structured material and non-material conditions of a specific environment. While the concept of habitus draws an analytical

tool to comprehend societal existences, within its distinctions in its externalities, and its similarities in its internalities, it also classifies and compartmentalizes those societal existences both in vertical and horizontal forms. The concept of habitus suggests a map to trace the internal structure of a societal formation within its developed and functioning relations, as well as giving substantial explanations to make distinctions with the others. Social mechanisms of reproduction and transformation, that is, the produced continuations and the transformative distinctions, could be unveiled via a theoretical and conceptual framework which habitus provides. Therefore, the sociological research becomes a “find up” activity that strives to “uncover the most deeply structures of the different social worlds that make up the social universe, as the 'mechanisms' that tend to ensure their reproduction or transformation” (Reay, 2004, p. 431).

Bourdieu calls habitus as “socialised body” which by no means is a structure without relations. The relationality that is embedded in habitus makes it as working style of a dynamic organic arrangement. For Bourdieu, habitus is a socialised “structured body (...) which has incorporated the immanent structures of a world or of a particular sector of that world -a field- and which structures the perception of that world as well as action in that world” (Bourdieu, 1998a, p.81). Therefore habitus does not mark a closed system of a living formation of sociality within certain boundaries, but gives the possibility of realising the way of perceptibility and liveability of that specifically recognised field of the social. On the other hand, habitus constitutes the emergence of possibility of practice to be related to capital and field (Bourdieu, 1990b, 116) which determines “the regimes of existence” for the subjects of the field (Laval & Dardot, 2013, p. 292). Bourdieu articulates that “the workings of habitus that practice (agency) is

linked with capital and field (structure)". In relation to the charge of determinism, Bourdieu (1990b, p. 116) argues that "habitus becomes active in relation to a field, and the same habitus can lead to very different practices and stances depending on the state of the field" (Reay, 2004, p. 432). The field which was practiced by the habitus indicates and stabilises a form of existence in which practice developed, acts and is reproduced.

While stabilization habitus, which points to a form of "regime" that consistently inheres constituted modes of perception and of action, at the same time the possibility of emergence of new forms of an action and perception are comprised, since a specific habitus has always relations with the outside. Therefore, as Reay comes up with the emergent action that constrains and transforms the certain habitus simultaneously (Reay, 2004, p. 433), it is because each subject has endless relations that react to the outside world. That is to say, while habitus generally is recognised as a self-sustaining system of action and perception, or put in another way, as a regime of existence, individuals encounter the world outside in any part of life (Di Maggio, 1979). Therefore, rather than addressing only "action" and "perception" of habitus, suggesting "wide repertoire of possible actions" (Reay, 2004, p. 433) and possible perceptions as well, it enables the comprehension of contingency of reproduction and possibility of transformation.

### **3.2.1. Temporality of Habitus: Past, Present and Future**

The emergence of a habitus is embedded in the composition of temporal dimensions; past, present and future. However this periodisation is not chronologically lined from past to present, but is perceived by the individual who is the personification of a certain habitus, that it has a normative tendency for the future, for whom it is

possible to proceed in the ways of the messianic and the sublime. Therefore, while the past does not necessarily or directly shape the present, there is always a possibility for future to be shaped by previous temporal dimensions of habitus. The futurity of time consists of aspiration, devotion and glorification of the present that leads to all periods of the time, past, present and future intersecting. Bourdieu and Wacquant state that “in habitus the past, the present and the future intersect and interpenetrate one another” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 22).

Bourdieu’s definition of habitus as “a power of adaptation” points to a non-linear temporality consisting of the amalgamation of past and present (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 88). Habitus has possibility to disperse in the future which is a process of completion that never finishes and never reaches an end point. Reay takes this endless and non-complete process of habitus as identity formation which is also non-completed. For her, “there is no finality or finished identity” (Diane Reay, 1998, p. 521). The contained elements of that identity formation are the premised “family legacy and early childhood socialization”, however includes “set of complex, diverse predispositions” (p. 521) which are structured for the past, living in present and prospective for the future. Therefore, it is not about the departure point or destination, rather habitus is more related to the stations, pace, route in a relational way all along the road.

Harker’s differentiation between “mediating construct” and “determinate construct” uncovers the temporal dimensions of habitus clearly (Harker, 1984, p. 120). While “determinate construct” draws the *moment* of realization which starts and ends, “mediating construct” presupposes a processed continuation which never ends. Therefore, action, practice or perception of the specific habitus cannot be reduced to the moment of determination. Habitus always contains a history, experiences a present and



invests/prospects/disposes a future. While habitus horizontally (spatiality) and vertically (temporality) is dispersed in many forms, any certain practice, according to Harker, “cannot be reduced to either habitus or through habitus to objective structures, since historical circumstances play their part in its generation. Nor can it be reduced to specific historical circumstances or forces, since the perception of these is filtered through the habitus” (Harker, 1984, p. 120).

Education is settled in the middle of temporal process of habitus, between past and future and directly experienced within present. Especially increasing participation with expansion of higher education institutions, the mass attempting to obtain cultural capital through education indicates the aspiration to rescue the future from the structured past. Therefore, education is presupposed to disassociate the desired future from the consistent temporality of habitus. The dispositions of education engenders both subjective and objective possibilities to reverse the conditioned positions of habitus.

### **3.2.2. Education: Field and Autonomy**

While the uniqueness attributed to each specific habitus, it is clear that each has its *modus operandi*, and cannot be reduced to another one. The reaction to the field is flourished on mode of action and perception which indicates habitus. Therefore, field can be defined as composition of agents that contain temporal and spatial dimensions which operate by its self-sustaining logic. The mode of logic, of operation and the hierarchical positions of agents in that field are based on certain capitals (symbolic, social, cultural and economic capital) (Bourdieu, 1984, Bourdieu, 1986). Thus, cultural capital becomes a key capital to have a desired position, or to dispose the structured positions of the field. Maton defines the operation of the field around capitals, in which

each agent, either individual or institution, is “struggling to maximize their positions” (Maton, 2005, p. 689). He continues that “agents are defined by their relational position within the field’s distribution of capital (resources conferring power or status) and from which they derive properties irreducible to intrinsic characteristics of the agents themselves. The structure of a field is given by relations between these positions, where such relations are not reducible to interactions” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, cited in Maton, 2005, p. 689).

Therefore, the will to have a powered position at the same time triggers the will to gain capital in case the possibility emerges to attach himself/herself to that position. On the other hand, thinking that capital is the product of the habitus, at the same time, constructs seemingly pre-given possibilities for pre-given positions. However, as I mentioned before on the dynamics of the habitus, there always consists dispositions in that specific habitus due to pursuing acquisition of capital, particularly cultured capital through educational process. Bourdieu clarifies that “each field is characterized by the pursuit of a specific goal, tending to favour no less absolute investments by all (and only) those who possess the required dispositions” (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 11). Von Rosenberg also states that “Entering the field requires a more or less radical transformation of the habitus, depending on its constitution and its fit” (von Rosenberg, 2016, p. 1490). Therefore, according to von Rosenberg, the mode of operation and struggle maintained in the field are like a game that produces its own “motivation for actors to get involved in it” (von Rosenberg, 2016, p. 1490).

In the end, the field has a certain autonomy that has its own agents, *modus operandi*, practices, values and moral ethical stance. However, according to Maton, that economic and political power/capital forms the field alongside with values (Maton,

2005, p. 689). The operated and the principal indicators of the field gain their autonomy around two main capitals that gives a second function to the autonomy of the field.

Accordingly,

The two main forms of capital circulating in a field represent competing principles of hierarchization: an autonomous principle looking inwards to the ostensibly disinterested activities of the field (such as ‘knowledge for its own sake’) and a heteronomous principle looking beyond the field’s specific activities and towards economic and political success (such as generating research income or wielding administrative power). (Maton, 2005, p. 689).

By considering higher education as a field, it becomes possible to trace the map generated in that educational institution. It has its own mode of operation, agent, relations, values and the positions structured over certain power and capitals. Since the dominant capital seems to be cultural capital in an educational field, taking this for granted resembles quite an “ideal type”, because, economic and political capitals also becomes indicators which shape the structure and principles of the field, especially for a private university. For these reasons, the attempts by the agents that pursue cultural capital for the possibility of structuring disposition may turn into a vicious circle of reproduction.

### **3.2.3. Habitus: Structured/Structuring, Education and Reproduction**

The effect of the encountered outside on habitus structures habitus within continuing dynamics of relationality. The reflexivity of the subjects of that habitus reproduces and/or transforms that reflective structural formation (Di Maggio, 1979). While Bourdieu defines habitus as the property of social agents, he composes all those agents, individuals, groups, institutions as the operation of “structured and structuring structure” (Bourdieu, 1994b, 170). While past and present of habitus depends on

structured positions and operation, present, but mostly future of habitus get attached with process of structuring. Therefore the present intersects with both the structured and the structuring. The prospective future of desired operations and positions for the agents generates the disposition in present. That is to say, future is invested from today. Michael Grenfell clearly articulates and explains the relationality of the Bourdieusian terminology of dispositions, structured, structuring and habitus;

It is “structuring” in that one’s habitus helps to shape one’s present and future practices. It is a “structure” in that it is systematically ordered rather than random or unpatterned. This “structure” comprises a system of dispositions which generate perceptions, appreciations and practices (1990c: 53). The term “disposition” is, for Bourdieu, crucial for bringing together these ideas of structure and tendency: It expresses first the result of an organizing action, with a meaning close to that of words such as structure; it also designates a way of being, a habitual state (especially of the body) and, in particular, a predisposition, tendency, propensity or inclination. (1977b: 214)” (Michael Grenfell, key concepts of Bourdieu, p. 51).

In the particular case of schools, the study by Bourdieu and Boltanski shows that, educational facilities in schools depends on “economic downturn” that makes school oriented towards the economic field and market (Bourdieu & Boltanski, 1981, p. 142). While it is not the direct and sudden adaptation of education to the market, the structural formation of mode of production has an effect on the system of education. In general education, and particularly higher education, despite bearing the claim of providing cultural capital to equip agents with dispositions of structuring which is by all the possibility of transformation regarding habitus; the claim of a school turns into providing vocational training for the need of the market. Despite production of transformative power over cultural capital, the production of education consists of the continuation of the structured positions of the habitus. Bourdieu and Boltanski (1981, p. 142) name this a “time lag” in dialectical change between “changes in the production

apparatus and changes in the education system. Therefore, the emergence of school and school habitus in general is so strictly structured that does not leave any condition and possibility for the agents to exercise school as accumulating cultural capital to transform their habitus. In contrast, education becomes a temporal space that serves “for the production of producers” (Bourdieu & Boltanski, 1981). Harker also states that “The main interplay between the systems 'education' and 'production' is the conjunction between formal qualifications and jobs—the area in which the time lag is perhaps the greatest, and which is most susceptible to the influence of the dominant habitus” (Harker, 1984, p. 123).

Education investment on the individual, in a capitalist industrial society, is to maintain to produce agents that are replaceable for required and structured positions. It serves at the same time, not only the market rationality for the skilled subjects, but also, to maintain the existing form of society which could production of social. Bourdieu & Boltanski define this as social production. According to them,

(School) fulfils not only functions of reproducing skilled labour power (technical reproduction), but also functions of reproducing the positions of the agents and their groups within the social structure (social reproduction)—positions which are relatively independent of strictly technical capacity—the educational system depends less directly on the demands of the production system than on the demands of reproducing the family group. (Bourdieu & Boltanski, 1981, pp. 142-143).

Therefore, any unit, individual, institution, family and community of society, becomes important substances for maintaining the larger clustering of the whole society. The production of society, therefore does not become the issue of macro-level political interferences, but of the production of micro level units or habitus.

### 3.3. Aspiration and Transformation of Habitus

Habitus, as the product of social conditionings, and thus of history . . . is endlessly transformed, either in a direction that reinforces it, when embodied structures of expectation encounter structures of objective chances in harmony with these expectations, or in a direction that transforms it and, for instance, raises or lowers the level of expectations and aspirations. (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014, p. 199)

According to Bourdieu, while, in general, habitus provides dispositions, the disposition of education is “a cultured habitus” (Bourdieu, 1967, p. 344). The structured positions in the habitus which were constructed, for Bourdieu, were always corresponded with “the genesis of new creative responses that are capable of transcending the social conditions” (Reay , 2004, p. 435). Educational field, habitus of the person and the pursued and gained cultural capital shape the mode of practice which was evaluated by Bourdieu as a “logic of practice” (Bourdieu, 1990b). Therefore, the field of education generates the contestable possibilities and initiative attempts of restructuring for the structured positions constructed in the habitus. Education or more conceptually, cultural capital contains the disposition of structuring habitus -- “capabil(ity) of transcending the social conditions” (Reay , 2004, p. 435). Despite a pure stable formation of habitus, it is the dynamics between conditions, positions and dispositions that create the probability even of ephemerality for the habitus. According to Bourdieu,

“The relation between habitus and field operates in two ways. On one side, it is a relation of conditioning: the field structures the habitus, which is the product of the embodiment of the immanent necessity of the field (or of a hierarchy of intersecting fields). On the other side, it is a relation of knowledge or cognitive construction: habitus contributes to constituting the field as a meaningful world, a world endowed with sense or with value, in which it is worth investing one's energy” (Bourdieu, in Wacquant, 1989, p.44).

The dynamic formation of habitus is also, according to Diana Ray, because of “a rich interlacing of past and present, individual and collective, interiorized and permeating both body and psyche” (Reay 1998, p. 522).

While the internal structure of the habitus creates the social, this internal structure is also open to the external effects of outside. It is not only the outside as one probable condition of transformation and change in the habitus; the division of interests, the strict and tense formation and the conditions of being in that habitus also internally lead to raise the stimulations, resistances and movements to change it. All these require substantial equipments which are believed to be obtained or gained by education. Therefore, education has also a dimension of being a habitus by itself, as self-sustained, self-contained and self-bordered, and also has a dimension of traversing, changing, or making better, that is, re/structuring the structured habitus. Specifically, higher education, lies at the intersection between all these dimensions, the possibility that consisted of dispositions to the positions of habitus, placed in between past and future, in the present.

While the extensive critics assume and therefore target “deterministic” and “structuralist” formations of habitus, and also while the operation in the habitus is marked as a process of “reproduction”; the agency still has certain dispositional affects to restructuring, and according to Harker, “Reproduction is never perfect—never an exact photocopy. There is always a 'slippage' toward a compromise with specific historical circumstances, and it is in this discontinuity, this gap, that production is possible, that human agency has room to move” (Harker, 1984, p. 121). And also, the relation between field and habitus is not always like a relation that produces harmony and accord, but also tension and conflicts. For Lois McNay it is these conflicts and

tensions that contain the possibility of transformation. She states that, “there has been an increasing emphasis in Bourdieu's more recent work on moments of disalignment and tension between habitus and field, which may give rise to social change” (McNay, 2001, p. 146).

### **3.3.1. Institutional Habitus and Higher Education**

Habitus is not only an individual theoretical concept, but also can be thought with institutions as many of the scholars has discussed. In other words, not only individuals have habitus, but also institutions have it. Institutional habitus while designates the societal of macro group of people, class, community, it also refer to operations, networks and the agents of organizations. According to Reay et al. “...the impact of a cultural group or social class on an individual’s behaviour as it is mediated through an organization” (Raey et al., 2001, p.2) defines institutional habitus. Therefore, the organization of the schools designates an institutional habitus that “refers to educational status, organizational practices and expressive order, expectations, conduct, character, and manners” (Çelik, 2017, p.12).

Yet, school habitus as an institutional habitus is a collective formation of various cultural habituses as well as individual histories, familial structure, and different backgrounds. The impact of different collectivities, while consisting a totalized sociality, also “provid(es) a ‘semi-autonomous’ means” because “class, raced and gendered processes are played out in the lives of students...” (Reay et al., 2001, p.2). Therefore, taking higher education as an institution that has its own and relatively autonomous mediation and organization, the students who enrol in have different and social expectations structured in their early life. (Grant, 2017, p. 294). These established



expectations at the same time form their expectation of higher education itself, however the mediation between expectations of institutions and of students can be resolved depending on the degree of differentiations between individual and institutions habitus.

Institutional habitus is therefore attributed to a form of self-contained organization that has certain self-determined rules, principle and operations; its constitution designates a structural formation. The encounter of individual and habitus, displays the moment of interaction of agent and structure (McDonough, 1996). The reciprocal relation between students and school, agent and structure, depending on the degree of variations between habituses, bearing the potential to become conflictual or harmonical, disruptive or productive, and reproductive or transformative. Here it should be noted that when the gap between degrees become too high, the conflicts and disruptions may cause transformation, and when the degrees are lower, like “fish in the water,” where there is no reason to feel any weight, despite minor transformations, the contingency of reproduction is the more possible case.

On the other hand, researches have been conducted on working class students in elite universities, demonstrating that the transformative potential of individual/students habitus is not based on high degrees of discrepancies between habituses between elite universities and working class students, but rather because of the agents in these elite universities like instructors and professors. That is to say, the contribution of the agents that work in elite universities is more that the institutions themselves. Whether the workers of the universities can be counted as part of that institutional habitus or not is another question, yet “ as we have seen, it was often the support and effort of one individual teacher” (D. Reay et al., 2009, p. 1110).

### **3.3.2. Education and Cultural Capital**

Taking education as a socialization process, it generates first the space where cultural capital could be attained, second, it makes it a space of habitus by its own operations and positions. According to Moore, habitus and cultural capital are “continuous with each other, as moments” of societal formation (Moore, 2008, p. 105). The connection between habitus and cultural capital incorporates the formation of that specific sociality as taken for granted and self-sustained. However while education or school generates a permanent habitus for certain groups and individuals, i.e workers, it becomes an ephemeral habitus that only serves the process of accumulating cultural capital, which further serves the aspiration to change the structured borders of one’s habitus - as is the case of students. That is to say, for later, accumulation of the experience of education produces a return; “what the ‘capital’ metaphor adds to the picture is to highlight that dispositions themselves are valuable assets, or resources, that can realize returns for the actor in particular fields of social action” (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014, p. 207).

Cultural capital provides a certain space or positions for the agents in the field that are relatively spared from personal habitus. The practices that are generated in the field by agents, on the one hand, provide dispositions for structured habitus, and on the other hand, generate or contribute to the principles that specify the nature of the field. That is to say, the cultural capital empowers the agent to effect for both normative constitution, and material condition of the field. Therefore, also, the relation between habitus, cultural capital and the field is a dialectical one. Edgerton and Roberts exert that,

In the dialectic between field and habitus, cultural capital functions, in part, like a price signal that modulates adjustment of the dispositions of the habitus within a particular field. Practices, and the dispositions underlying them, that are valued (rewarded) in the field are reinforced or encouraged, those practices and dispositions that are valued less or not at all are discouraged (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014, p. 209).

Therefore, cultural capital becomes both a source and legitimation of adjusting the positions for the agent, and determine the material and normative frame of the field. The distribution of hierarchical space of the field depends on the right and force of the agents that Z has been gained through capitals in the Bourdieusian sense. The capital attributes certain form of power that embedded in the position of the agents. Yet, it does not provide only the right or the force to structure the field, or not to be only existed in that field with empowered equipment, capital leads to normalize, normativize, essentialize all frame and structure of the field, as if that it is the unique and the inevitable. While that is the clear ideal type of having capital in the field, the all cases willingly attempts to close the gap between the desired and the objective over the capital, more particularly cultural one.

Despite the rising value of cultural capital for the field however, it should be stated that, cultural capital in today's neoliberal market society, becomes only a form of survival strategy. Professionalism, expertism, technical skill, know-how, and more abstractly the degrees become titles that enable the circulation of the agents in the market field. Closing the gap between cultural capital and Marxist literature on the “abstract value”, it becomes clear to forward or to propose the circulation of agents/subjects, like as it happens in abstract form of the value of the commodity, it becomes suitable for the circulation in the market.

### **3.3.3. “Fish in the water”: Correspondence between Field and Habitus**

“Fish in the water” demonstrates a moment of encountering between agents and new habitus, which is to mean it is the encounter of two habituses. The homogeneous structure of the social formation of the agent and of the habitus do not differentiate the conditions. Bourdieu and Wacquant, by the phrase “fish in the water”, reflect on the metaphor that the weight of the water cannot be felt and therefore cannot presuppose any change for the agents (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.127). Such adaptation between agents and habitus, naturalizes the condition as self-consistently and self-evidently granted. The emergence of possibilities for the transformation of habitus is the most unlikely if the agents do not encounter any disruptive and challenging circumstances in the field that contrasts *Z*'s habitus. Similar social realities “encounters a social world of which it is the product, it is like a 'fish in water': it does not feel the weight of the water and it takes the world about itself for granted" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 127).

The variety of social realities exist twice for Reay, “in things and in minds, in fields and in habitus, outside and inside social agents” (Reay, 2004, p. 436) overlap as if there is only one reality for the case of “fish in the water”. The similarities, or close degree of intensity between field and habitus generates a form of subjectivity, exist in the social reality without any stimulations and drive to any extent of change (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014, p. 199). Theoretically the equation which is located in between field and habitus that leads the agent to be in any imagination of changing the dispositions of the field, depends on a degree of lack and excess. Both excess and lack of the habitus, and of the agent in the field stimulate the drive and desire of transformation, since both make the difference of the field recognizable.

Researches have been done, according to Edgerton and Roberts, showing that, the adaption to higher education schools, for middle class students is more sustainable, but contains less drives towards transformation. For Puwar, these students “at least, partially mirror and clone the self-image of the hegemonic norm” (Puwar, 2004, p.128). On the other hand, “whereas the working-class student with a less congruent habitus is, without sufficient adjustment, liable to experience less academic success, increasingly negative attitudes toward school, and lower levels of educational attainment”, but contains the possibilities of driving towards transformation (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014, p. 199). The lack of low-income, or working class students for higher education, on the one hand, constrains the adaptation, on the other hand, that lack includes the probable to change the dispositions of the field. While middle class students see “the people like them, in the higher educational, working class students are totally strange”. Being strange makes fitting to that strange field deficiency, orientation because of the lack, to compare with the field.

### **3.4. Educational Expansion and Widening Participation**

The global phenomenon of educational expansion and claims of widening participation are important to consider when discussing differentiated institutions and students' positions through the lenses of habitus. It is important to understand, how working class integration to higher education realized in the context and discourse of widening participation. This discussion is necessary in order to understand how different habitus operates in the differentiated educational fields. On the other hand, a part of this process is the massification of the higher education institutions, which creates dispersed, differentiated and stratified fields and institutional habitus. Lastly, the relationship

between widening participation and how it contributes to the generation of neoliberal subjectivity and habitus of uncertainty will be discussed.

There are lots of examples on how expansion in higher education does not guarantee the equal distribution of educational rights and opportunities. Boliver states that, the higher education expansion in Britain around 60s and 90s maintained the social class inequalities in enrolment to higher education. While quantitative inequalities in higher education enrolment stayed stable in 60s, it has slightly declined during 90s expansion. On the other hand, “qualitative inequalities in the odds of enrolment in more prestigious higher education programmes and institutions, that is on degree programmes and specifically those at ‘Old’ universities, proved persistent throughout the expansion of both the 1960s and the early 1990s.” (Boliver, 2011, p. 241).

#### **3.4.1. Working Class Participation**

Within the setting of higher education expansion, it does not mean that, different social classes are experiencing the same process. Although education rhetoric implies at least “the possibility of equality” or promise “equalization”, the whole process of education, as a total sum of past, present and future does not experienced by different segments of the society. As Hayton and Paczuska (2002) states:

Young people from working class families and disadvantaged backgrounds take a financial risk if they decide to go to university. It has been argued that these groups take more risk and are more debt averse than their middle class counterparts and are less certain of the benefits of higher education. In addition they do not have role models within their families and communities for successful participation in higher educations and careers (p. 41).

Apart from the issue of under which circumstances of risk taking occurs in terms of attaining to higher education, the experience of working class students during

educational process also differs. As Reay states, even working class students develop differentiated positions which is more critical within the elite institutions, their energies seemed to be directed towards conforming to middle-class educational norms in order to succeed academically (D. Reay et al., 2009, p. 1114). This energy that is spent while engaging is explained by Diane Reay (2009):

“The (working-class) students may be engaged in a constant fashioning and refashioning of the self (Bourdieu, 1990b), but their habituses still appear to retain key valued aspects of working-class self. While their habituses were clearly being continually modified by their encounter with the field of elite higher education, there was not ‘the wholesale escaping of the habitus’ that Friedmann (2005) writes about in relation to upward social mobility. Far from disappearing into a new world (Friedmann, 2005: 318), these students seemed determined to hold on to former aspects of self even as they gained new ones” (p. 1111).

Again, even if students from disadvantaged backgrounds could get into prestigious universities, they are “playing at *deplacement*” (playing an away game): it takes time and energy to get oriented to the unfamiliar field. Study conducted by Leathwood and O’Connell (2003) gives beneficial insight in terms of working-class backgrounds and from minority ethnic groups participation in a post-1992 university which strongly claims access and extended participation:

A theme that runs through the data is a sense of students determined to get all they can from their studies, not simply because of their desire to learn and their sense that they are privileged to be at university, but also because of the underlying insecurity that comes through most of the students’ accounts. Paula explained, ‘I just want to pick up as much as possible and just be ready to go out there and work’. This insecurity can be seen to stem from experiences of struggle, of financial risk, of feelings of never being good enough or never knowing enough to make the grade as a graduate. (p. 611)

These in-between experiences of the working-class or low-income students in higher education bring us to the concept of “divided habitus”, or cleft, torn habitus (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 127; Bourdieu, 1999, 2000). Von Rosenberg states

that: “a habitus has not one but several overlapping modi operandi that may well be contradictory” (von Rosenberg, 2016, p. 1489). So when a student encounters with a different habitus then, it is not like stabilizing into a habitus, but rather we find in the individual body the co-existential territory of two habituses which results in tension. Diane Reay discusses the divided habitus through Shaun's story, who is a working class student in an elite university: “divided habitus caught between two very different but equally compelling fields, and the ensuing internal conflict. Shaun is situated at a point in two overlapping fields where the contradictions between white working-class male solidarity and the neo-liberal impetus to self-improvement and academic excellence are painfully apparent. This has resulted in a heightened emotional sensitivity in order to cope with such conflict” (Reay, 2015, p. 14)

The insecurity, low self-esteem, and feeling of not fitting in a different environment the students from working class or disadvantaged backgrounds find themselves in, translates itself into working and working so hard, which results in not the acquiring of the dominant cultural capital but focusing on and stressing out the courses and requirement that need be accomplished (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). In other words, in order to get distinguished, they tend to focus so much on academic achievement that, they miss the opportunities which generate cultural and social accumulation. On the other hand, their effort and need to distinguish themselves can be read as the very fact of the feeling of lacking something (Bourdieu, 1990b, pp.10–11).

#### **3.4.2. Massification and Stratification of Higher Education Institutions**

Another dimension of massification of higher education is the increasing numbers of higher education institutions. I discussed earlier that, the expansion of higher



education institutions in Turkey, realized through the proliferation of public and private universities, while former strengthens the hand of the government, the latter provides an opportunity to the capital in terms of investment. However, it is beneficial to look at the examples in other contexts and situate the local phenomenon into global setting.

The massive expansion of the Higher Education institutions is not a phenomenon peculiar to to US and Europe, but also the developing countries with an overall result of stratified and segmented Higher Education Institutions (OECD, 2016).

The study of Paez and Teelken (2016) which examines the private higher educations in the Colombian context, is a good indicator of how this expansion via privatization has resulted in the fragmentation of institutions:

While the number of private institutions is growing, their average quality is not improving. The quality of the education they provide is differentiated and stratified (Bonilla, 2007). The HEIs in the private sector are of two types: 1) a small number of private institutions that offer high-quality education for a small number of individuals at a very high cost; and 2) low-fee education offered through a large number of private institutions for many students that come from low-income families. Once graduated, students from the first type of HE gain access to the highest incomes and social recognition; but this is not the case for the second group (See for example Hanushek and Woßmann, 2012). In this group, universities are only fulfilling the minimum requirements for quality (i.e. qualified registration). (p. 604)

Their detection on how this stratified private institutionalization resulted in the clustering of low-income students in the low-quality institutions which is important and relevant. For the low income families who cannot access public education and high-quality private universities since their costs are high, cheap and low-standard private universities become the only viable choice. But when it is considered that they are low-earning groups, even the low tuition fees becomes a burden on family budgets (Páez & Teelken, 2016, p. 606).

So, it can be concluded that, educational expansion, although it looks positive in nature, is not experienced the same way by families with low income, who see the low-fee private institutions as the only choice for their children. Paez and Teelken conclude that: “when viewing the impact of HCT within a neo-liberal discourse, the further growth of a private but accessible HE sector can reinforce stratification and differentiation of opportunities, instead of creating more equality amongst the population” (Páez & Teelken, 2016, p. 612).

In the context of Brasilia, Tristan McCowan states in a similar way that, the expansion without equality, is actualized through the expansion of private universities, student loans and Prouni initiative which makes tax reductions for the scholarship students at private universities, do not sustain equality of opportunity during and after higher education for the low-income students (McCowan, 2007).

Archer, while analyzing the equality discourse on the phenomenon of widening participation in Britain, states that “hierarchical institutional ‘diversity’ mitigates against equitable treatment of diverse student populations” (2007, p. 643). He states that, most of the working class or students from disadvantaged backgrounds are clustered in the post-1992 universities which are lacking the quality, resources in comparison to the old-elite universities. Again we see the educational expansion carried out by the vertically ordered institutions, which in return results in the opposite of its claim of equality.

When we take habitus as the embodiment of the culture in the individual, as Harker (1984, p.118) states, the role of the school or institution is important in terms of accumulation of cultural capital into the individual habitus. In other words, some habituses could accumulate cultural capital as long as the school plays an active role in doing so, and others do not. This explains unequal positioning within the institution

according to the different habituses. And the concern of the school also takes us back to the concept of institutional habitus, which is important to understand the differentiated institutions within the framework of massification and stratification of higher education institutions.

### **3.4.3. Neoliberal Individuality and Habitus of Uncertainty**

Mathieu Hilgers (2010) mentions the cultural anthropological approach to neoliberalism, and how studies within this approach shows how education plays a vital role on the transmission and expansion in the formation and circulation of neoliberal culture (355). Education in a sense, is a fundamental carrier of the neoliberal logic from the setting in which individuals are positioned, from the way institutions are organized and neoliberal relations are generated in the field.

While widening participation and educational expansion promise the deterioration of the social and structural inequalities, it feeds, supports and enlarges the neoliberal subjectivity. In other words, while education comes to be more and more accessible, individualization of success and failure of the students at school and after graduation, makes the structural inequalities more and more invisible. For example, when students from poor, low-income, disadvantaged backgrounds start to enrol in old and prestigious universities, it creates the idea that, educational enrolment is not shaped by the social, economic and political structure: *if he/she can do it, then there is no boundary*. And this directly leads to the neoliberal individualist or meritocratic discourse that: *if you study well, or if you are smart enough, you can success since there is no obstacle*. It has nothing to do with your social class, ethnicity or gender. Also the differentiated experiences of the socially disadvantaged students in getting where they

are or how they survive in there gets neglected. Moreover, differentiation and inequality between the institutions in which students from differentiated backgrounds cluster, gets more and more esoteric. Promotion of education as an itinerary to social mobility and bettering yourself, is the way how contemporary neoliberal logic and policy individualizes the responsibility to solve the problems which are caused by structure (Holloway 2014, p.387).

When we look at the individual (or rather individualized) level of this process, the world constructed around widening participation has enormous impact on the emotional state of the students. For example, Brown (2011) underlines that, widening participation phenomenon, stimulates hopes and expectations in young people from disadvantaged backgrounds with promises of employment, independence, social mobility. Cairns (2013) investigates, via analyzing a career education programme, how neoliberal subjectivity imputed to young students by acknowledgement of uncertainty and personification of success/failure scenarios.

Pimlott-Wilson (2015) clearly formulates the emotional burden and affective processes young people have been put into within this uncertain framework of success and failure:

Young people articulate the emotional blame and shame they personally anticipate experiencing should they fail to meet normative benchmarks of success. Failure in the education system is associated with a future inscribed with failure. This illuminates the affective operation of neoliberal governance, which seeks to address collective problems at the scale of the individual. It also makes visible the resilience of young people, who, in facing structural constraints and responding to global processes operating at the local scale, are developing their own subjective strategies in order to secure the future they envision (p. 4).

Hilgers (2010) discusses the neoliberal governmentality and studies from this perspective, are based on the terrain in which individuals try to optimize their best

chances in the competitively perceived field through knowledge. Which in return comprises the “logics of competitiveness, commercial rationale, and risk calculation” (p. 358).

While analyzing the individualized responsibility for future success puts pressure on young people in the circumstances of contemporary labour market which necessitates educational capital, Pimlott-Wilson (2015) states that:

In responding to the risks associated with the global socio-economic landscape, young people internalise their need to perform well academically despite structural forces that may impede their progress, such as inequalities in the education system and labour market.... The pressure to attain traditional markers of adulthood in times of economic uncertainty impacts on the emotional subjectivities of young people. Meritocratic neoliberalism impacts on young people imagining their futures, which are infused with anticipated emotional burdens (p. 4).

This ‘responsibilisation’ as fundamental part of the formation of self-governance and neoliberal subjectivity has been discussed by several scholars (Rose 2007, Shamir, 2008) and Trnka and Trundle (2014) generated the discussions on “the multiplicities of responsibility” and “competing responsibilities” (148) making a note on the intersection and interrelatedness of multiple connections of sights. For example, the more the education becomes the responsibility of the family unit, a student lives a process of not only taking his/her own responsibility as an individual, but also feels responsible for the family or the community that he/she is a part of. This creates the multiplying effect on the anxiety, stress, tension created by the responsabilization and individualization process.

Internalization of uncertainty and creation of a habitus of uncertainty, has a mutual and reflexive relationship with neoliberal individuality. The more future turns vague and accepted as it is, individual responsibility to invest yourself, to take risks is

thought to proceed away from failure in the axis of success/failure. But of course, it is never certain to escape from the possibility of failure.

### **3.5. Conclusion**

This chapter outlined the theoretical framework which mediates the structural transformation of higher education and the experiences of the students in a field emerging out of the interplay between structure and agents, in order to generate a comprehensive analysis of the case under scrutiny. In order to understand the educational field, I have discussed how habitus as the social embodiment, shapes the tendencies of certain students clustering in certain kind of institutions. Habitus, at the interconnectedness of past, present and future, does not determine the future concretely, but shapes certain dispositions which structure the structure. This is not actualizing consciously, instead, social agents are acting with the motive of transforming their habitus via educational attainment. In that moment, societal dynamics which plays role in the composition of clusters, and we see the social and cultural reproduction which is of course not the same of the previous one.

However, in order to understand the societal dynamics, the present also should be understood. That is to say, in order to understand the social and cultural reproduction, and the distinctive elements of the process which makes the outcomes differentiated, we need to investigate what's going on at the field. And the key to understand this differentiated reproduction, autonomy of the field serves the fundamental theoretical approach. Therefore each field has its autonomy and this autonomy consists of different habituses encountering.

Moreover, aspiration which contains the transformation of habitus, gives its dynamism to societal beings and social world. It is a driving power which gives subjects the direction and energy of their action/movement, and also in return it becomes the power of the broader framework which is based on the desired actions of the subjects that constitute it. However, in the educational field, institutions have their habitus like individuals, which sometimes does not correspond with the habitus of subjects, or does correspond in a way it is not desired by the subjects. While the former enables the transformation of and tension on individual habitus, the latter reproduces the individual habitus towards an updated (not in a linear normative understanding of temporality) version of itself. The institutional habitus, is the atmosphere, the taste, the sound of an institution which is not very visible but definitely perceivable.

When we situate the global phenomenon educational expansion and widening participation to the theoretical framework of Bourdieusian analysis, we see that claim of the equalization fails to actualize itself. Integration processes of the working class or from disadvantaged backgrounds students and their experiences within the educational field and their further life chances are not the same with the students from advantaged backgrounds. Even if those students could attain to prestigious, elite higher education institutions, tension resulted from the encounter of individual habitus and institutional habitus reflects itself on the possible life chances and their positionings in the field.

Other than the examples of students who could attend top universities, there is also the issue of massification of higher education institutions based on hierarchical diversification. The new public or private universities established are carriers of student expansion, clustered by low-income students. Moreover, the private higher education began to contain the poor, low-income students who cannot enter old, prestigious

universities or high quality-high fee universities as a result of the examination system and low family budget as we can see in many examples in both developing and developed contexts. The overall process has created a neoliberal subjectivity by internalization of uncertainty and individualization of responsibility for the future.





## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS OF THE FARTHEST UNIVERSITY THROUGH LENSES OF INSTITUTIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL HABITUS

As it has been discussed in the previous chapter, Bourdieusian sociology tries to see the waves, the transition, the energy movement between structure and subject, in a way trying to abstain from reductionist or determinist approaches. Therefore, aim of this chapter and overall thesis is to analyse the phenomenon of private higher education in the axis of such a sociological approach. From a common sense-based or structuralist approach, these private higher education institutions may be read through mere privatization, consumerism, or the purchase of diploma by “spoiled and rich” students. However through conceptualizations of institutional habitus and individual habitus, we can have a more dynamic understanding of what's going on in the realm of education in this specific case.

This specific case consists of a field, university, as a structural organization of institutional habitus, and of student’s historically formed social, economic and cultural being. My investigation focuses on the very meeting of that structurally organized field and historically constituted subjects, and continues with development of the relation between both, with consideration of subjective expectations and objective conditions.

#### **4.1. Structured Habitus of the Students**

Before enrolling in the farthest university, each student has a peculiar form of habitus established within family structure which is located in specific cultural, economic and social milieu. While the university also has an institutional habitus that

creates the ability to transform and reproduce student's habituses, the degree and the direction of this transformation depends, first, on the possibility of providing opportunities/cultural capital to the university, and second, on degree and intensity of structured habitus of students.

Students from very different backgrounds come to university with many motivations, expectations and aims and desires but the gap between these future projections and both university and student's habituses mediates the realization based on reproduction and transformation. While discursively and symbolically, the university claims to suggest a new form of self-formation embodied by cultural capital, it depends firstly on how the university's habitus answers those demands in its institutional structure. Thinking the university as the supply side of cultural capital, it is shaped not only by the demand of those enrolled and their family in symbolic order of discursive levels, but on the habitus which shapes the demands.

It is important to ask, which familial backgrounds, educational histories and social biographies makes these students attend such private higher education institutions. How do they make the calculations of cost and benefit? How do families play a role? Through such questions we can understand how educational institutions are clustering certain students from certain backgrounds.

#### **4.1.1. Family History and Family Portrait: Culture and Economy**

Families of the students can be economically situated in low-income circles. While most of their mothers are categorized as "housewives" who do not obtain economic income, most of the fathers work in labour intensive jobs, having very limited economic income. On the other hand, some students' mothers do piece works at home

which can be categorized as informal and irregular hand craft. Respondent B, for instance, tells her family's economic condition;

My mom used to be a housewife for a while, but now she works. My father is a typographer, since my childhood, he doesn't own a printing house, he works as a worker. My mom used to work when I was child, then she took a break. Now she started again because of our economic situation. She works as a garment worker. My scholarship is % 50, so we pay approximately twelve thousand. And I work as well. My father is illiterate, and my mom is a dropout from 3rd grade at primary school but she is literate. How do I evaluate our economic situation: we cannot afford<sup>5</sup> (Respondent B, 21, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, İstanbul, Regular High School)

However, the economic burden of covering the expenses, is dispersed through other family members; sisters and brothers. Therefore, the families of the students, generally and relatively are large but they can still be labelled as nuclear families. Each student on average has at least more than one brother and sister who also works and contributes to family budget. More remarkably students also work at part-time jobs after classes in week days, and also in the weekends. As a student of a private foundational university, working in free-times, to gain his/her allowance, support the family budget, or contribute in the payment of tuition fee of the university does not create a paradox for them since their educational and familial history has such cases of working during going to school.

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<sup>5</sup> “annem ev hanımıydı şimdi çalışıyor ama. Babam matbaacı. Çocukluğumdan beri matbaada çalışıyor, kendi matbaası yok, işçi. Annem ben çocukken çalışmış, sonra ara verdi. Şimdi yine başladı işe maddi durumlardan dolayı. Konfeksiyonda işçi olarak çalışıyor. Yüzde elli bursluyum, yaklaşık on iki milyar giriyor. Bir de ben çalışıyorum. Tek çocuğum. Babam hiç okuma yazma bilmiyor. Annem de okula üçüncü sınıfa kadar gitmiş okuma yazma biliyor. Ekonomik durumumuzu nasıl değerlendiririm: yetmiyor.”

While some of the students living in peripheries of İstanbul such as Beylikdüzü, Avcılar, Esenyurt, and Başakşehir where accommodation is relatively cheap and sustainable, quite a lot of students' families has migrated to these peripheral spaces of İstanbul from provincial cities of Turkey. Many of these migrated students define themselves as Kurds and Alevis. While some of them have been living in İstanbul for long time, others have come to İstanbul without their family.

Families are always narrated as “conservative” by students, and almost all female students complain about them for they were never permitted to go out except for university. The interference of the parents in the students' lives becomes one of the most important reasons to go to university - to find a space of freedom. The formal education of the family history seems quite limited. The words of Respondent A tell an inclusive sample about the educational records of the family;

My father is a worker at municipality, my mom is a housewife... My father is a dropout from middle school and my mom has never been to school. But she went to school later and after 45 years old, she took primary school diploma.<sup>6</sup> (Respondent A, 23, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, Mardin, Regular High School)

Only 5% percent of the parents, and most of them fathers, graduated from an undergraduate institution. 10% of the parents, and most of them mothers, have never attended an educational institution. Most of the parents only have experience of primary school. Therefore, families of the students have very limited experience and knowledge to advise or to motivate their children on their educational path, but still the expectations stay in a manner of pre-given form -the things that are expected from an undergraduate

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<sup>6</sup> “Babam belediyede işçi, annem de ev hanımı. Onların zamanında ortaokuldan terk babam, annem okul okumadı fakat daha sonra okula gidip, kırk beş yaşından sonra ilkokul diploması almış.”

son and girl under very sterile and accepted conditions. Respondent R articulates her family portrait, paying attention to their economic condition and educational record.

My mother is a housewife, my father used to be a plumber. They were born in a village in Diyarbakır. My father graduated from primary school, my mom has never been to school, she knows a little Turkish. Since my father was not earning much as a plumber, he started to work as a security guard in order to earn money more regularly. The employer was an acquaintance from Diyarbakır. Then he was imprisoned because he was slandered in relation to a murder. He has been in jail since 9 years. I have five brothers and sisters. Only my brother works, he is working as a worker at a metal factory. My sister is married and she is living in Urfa. She is a housewife. Her husband has a cotton field, they are financing my tuition fee. My little sister is now with them, she is taking care of her baby and getting prepared for the university entrance exam. We don't have a room to study at our house, it is very crowded, since then she is with them right now.<sup>7</sup> Respondent R (21, İstanbul, Child Development, %40 Scholarship, Regular High School).

Respondent E did not tell a very different story of her family:

My mom is illiterate, her family didn't send her to school. My father has studied until middle school. He passed away a while ago. I have three siblings. My sister is 22 years old, she is divorced and now living with us. She is working at a cosmetic shop in a shopping mall. My brother is 16 years old, he is working at a barber shop. My mom was baby-sitting until now, but now the family moved so she is not working. My uncle is helping us financially in order to pay the tuition fee.<sup>8</sup> Respondent E, (21, Child Development, %50 Scholarship, İstanbul, Vocational High School)

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<sup>7</sup> “Annem ev kadını, babam ise tesisatçıydı. Diyarbakır’da bir köyde doğmuşlar. Babam ilkokul mezunu, annem ise hiç okula gitmemiş. Çok az Türkçe biliyor. Babam çok fazla kazanmıyordu tesisat işinde çalışırken. Daha düzenli bir gelir olsun diye güvenlik görevlisi olarak çalışmaya başladı. İşveren Diyarbakır’dan bir tanıdıktı. Sonrasında babama iftira atıldı, bir adam öldürme olayı vardı, tutuklandı. 9 yıldır cezaevinde. Benim beş tane kardeşim var. Yalnızca abim çalışıyor, bir metal fabrikasında. Ablam evli ve Urfa’da yaşıyor. Ev kadını. Kocasının pamuk tarlası var, onlar karşılıyor benim okul paramı. Küçük kız kardeşim de onların yanında kalıyor şuan, hem bebeğe bakıyor hem de ÖSS’ye hazırlanıyor. Bizim evde çalışacak yer yok, çok kalabalığız, o yüzden ablamların yanında şuan.”

<sup>8</sup> “Annem okuma yazma bilmiyor, onu okula göndermemiş ailesi. Babam ise ortaokula kadar okumuş. Bir süre önce vefat etti babam. Benim üç kardeşim var. Ablam 22 yaşında, yeni boşandı ve bizimle kalıyor şuan. Bir AVM’de kozmetik dükkânında çalışıyor. Erkek kardeşim 16 yaşında, berberde çalışıyor o da. Annem evde çocuk bakıyordu bugüne kadar. Ama o aile taşındı, şuan çalışmıyor annem. Amcam yardım ediyor bize, okul parasına falan.”

We see that extended family and kinship networks play an important role in shaping the lives of students. While the living home consists of a nuclear family, they are intensively connected to their kin. Students always talk about their kin and the degree to which they are effected by them. Kin support in payment of tuition fee, intervene in the educational projection of the students, and has marks on the life outside of the university.

**Table 3.** Educational attainment of mothers

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Illiterate	6	10.2	10.2	10.2
Literate but never been to school	3	5.1	5.1	15.3
Primary school	22	37.3	37.3	52.5
Middle school	10	16.9	16.9	69.5
High school	13	22.0	22.0	91.5
High school dropout	1	1.7	1.7	93.2
University dropout	1	1.7	1.7	94.9
University Graduate	3	5.1	5.1	100.0
Total	59	100.0	100.0	

**Table 4.** Educational attainment of fathers

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Illiterate	4	6,8	6,8	6,8
Literate but never been to school	1	1,7	1,7	8,5
Primary school	11	18,6	18,6	27,1
Middle school	12	20,3	20,3	47,5
High school	17	28,8	28,8	76,3
High school dropout	2	3,4	3,4	79,7
University dropout	2	3,4	3,4	83,1
University Graduate	6	10,2	10,2	93,2
Post Graduate	4	6,8	6,8	100
Total	59	100	100	

Most of them are either the first person to continue higher education or among the first generation in their extended family to attend higher education. This fact itself is prompting us to think in terms of structural dynamics of the habitus, while getting transformed within the orbit of past constructions, it also carries transformative practical capabilities. In this sense, students are challenging their familial habitus by getting into higher education. However, it is important to keep in mind the fact that, while habitus is getting transformed, it still carries the imprints of the past which makes us talk about reproduction albeit not in the shape of an exact copy.

There is the internalized necessity to get a university diploma in order to achieve a better position in the society and market by the students. However, although there is no differentiation in terms of social class when we trace the familial stories, while some families are regarding education as important and holy, others may see it unnecessary thinking it is better to start working and contribute to the family budget right away. Especially in the case of woman students, family may become an obstacle. In terms of the latter, the position of the mothers are an important factor which makes possible the higher education of students. Mothers are playing a vital role, in terms of directing their child into higher education. This contains creating non-formal ways of finding money to support their children, challenging the husband or extended family. Students as well share the same position.

#### **4.1.2. Educational History before Enrolling in the University**

Educational history of students can be traced on the one hand, through the discourses that students declare about their relations to education, on the other hand, through the structure of education, their economic class, social and cultural habitus. While discourses that students convey, obviously depend on the later mediations of past education experience. They sometimes remark that their educational history is a reflection of their very instinctive drives/non-drives about their present relations to the education, and to the university. “I have never liked to study” or “one should have instinctive drives” (*insanın içinde olacak*) are quite common phrases to personalize their relationships to education. However, when they narrate their former educational experiences and conditions, they sometimes talk about bulks and hindrances originating from their social and economic class. While no one has mentioned if they had a private



room, or even a study room at home, working at a part-time job seems mandatory during high school and preparation to entrance exam for university. Respondent R's story of the past educational experience uncovers many obstacles;

I was a regular high school student in equal-weight class. I took the exam without studying even a bit. I never opened any book. Because, my life was over after I started to work at Burger King. I was always sleeping at school. I was a student at the morning shift. I was waking up at 7 am, going to school then to work. I was returning to house at 12 pm, then I was very tired. Burger King is totally different story. Because of that I couldn't get prepared at all and I got 260 points.<sup>9</sup> Respondent R (21, İstanbul, Child Development, %40 Scholarship, Regular High School).

Respondent R, at the same time, is still working at Burger King during her ongoing university education at the Farthest University. The obstacles that she confronted during her high school education and her then studies, still continue to haunt her during her studies at the foundational university.

In general, the past educational performance is stated as “catastrophic”, either because of “personal” or “non-personal” reasons. One of the commonly articulated non-personal reasons is the educational inadequacy of high school. Listening to Respondent D, provides us with an understanding of the conditions of high school from which they came. Reflecting on these conditions in present temporality, may seem retrospective, but for Respondent D, it is also the reason of why he is at a university “in the middle of nowhere”, which constitutes a continuity for him from past to present:

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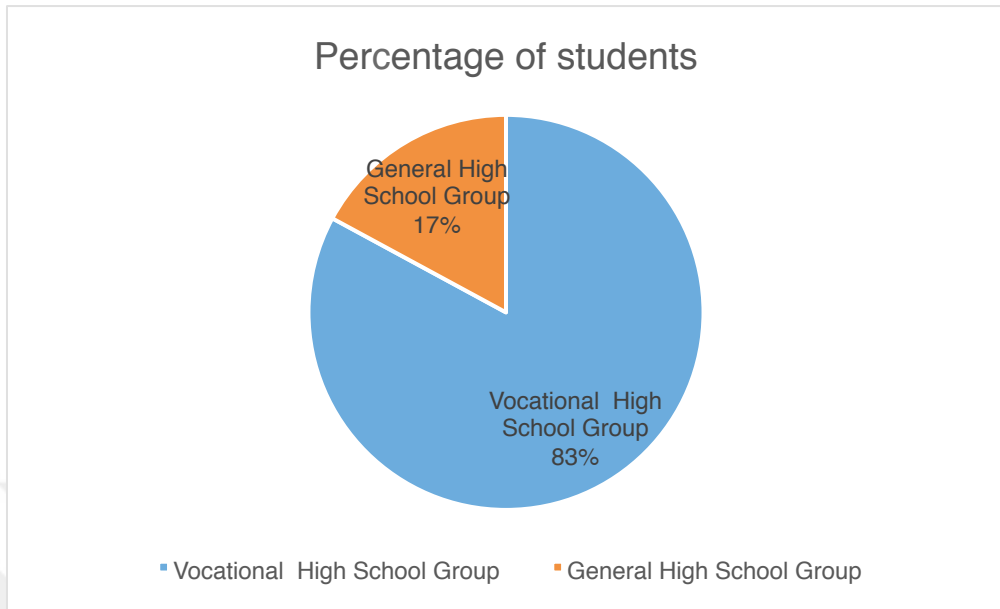
<sup>9</sup> “Ben düz lisede okudum eşit ağırlıkta. Çünkü ben o sınava da hiç çalışmadan girmiştım. Hiç kitap ağzı açmadım. Birincisi zaten Burger King'e başladıktan sonra benim hayatım bitti. Hiçbir şekilde okulda zaten hep uyuyordum. Sabahçıydım. 7'de kalkıyordum. Okula gidiyordum. Akşam 12'de eve geliyordum ve bütün gün yorgunsun. Burger King zaten o apayrı bir şey. O yüzden hiç çalışmadan bu yorgunlukla bu sıfır ilgiyle 260 puan yaptım en azından birazcık daha çalışırım.”

When I first began high school it was a regular one, later when I was at fourth grade, it was transformed into Anatolian High school. Before, educational quality was really low, almost nothing. It was very low. They were lacking teachers. Sometimes, we were going to classes but there was no teacher. My high school education continued like that, at the last year I got better a bit, but later it was the same.<sup>10</sup> (Respondent D, 23, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, Şırnak, Regular High School).

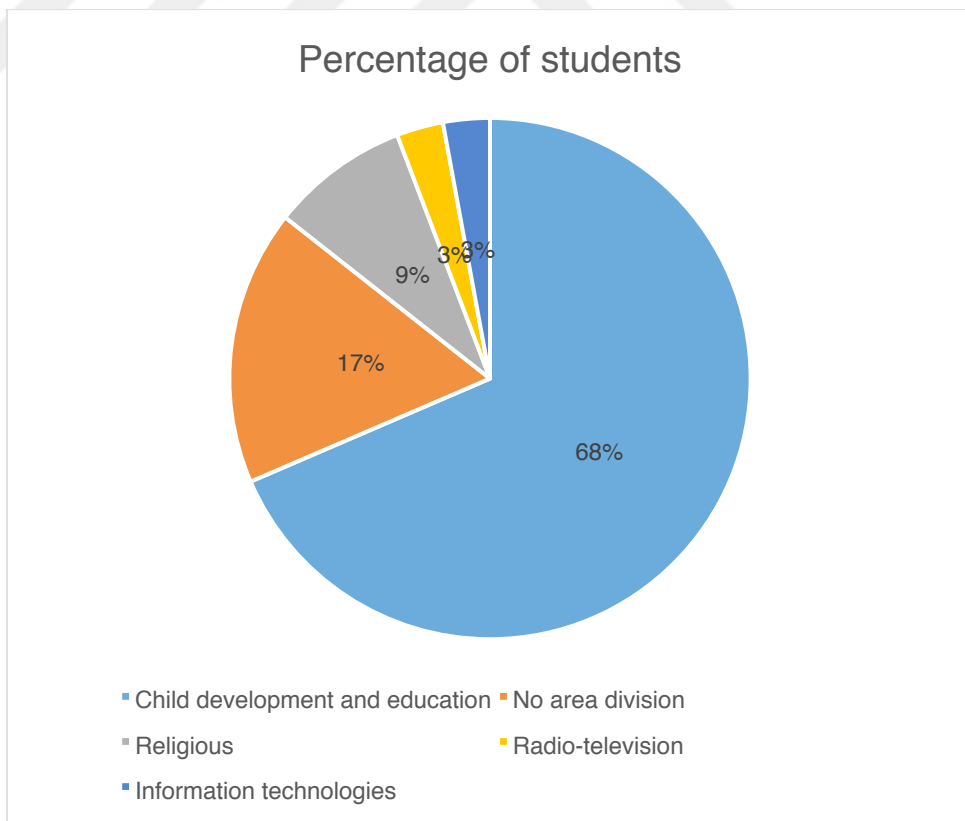
Most of the students of my research in the Farthest University come from regular, vocational, and recently transformed “non-prestigious Anatolian” high schools. Despite economic difficulties, all students went to preparation institutions but none of them took private tutorial courses which was even more expensive. Another common fact is that they all entered the University Entry Exam twice. While they felt disappointed in their first score at the entrance exam, the second also was not recognized as satisfactory either.

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<sup>10</sup> “Ee, daha öncesinden ben ilk oraya girdiğimde düz liseydi ondan sonra, ee, ben 3. Sınıfa, şey 4. Sınıfa geldiğimde orada Anadolu Lisesi olarak değişti. Daha öncesinden eğitim kalitesi gerçekten hani hiç yoktu. Çok düşüktü. Öğretmenleri bazen eksikti. Bazen, ee, okula gidiyoruz diye gittiğimizde dersler yoktu. Bu şekilde eğitim hayatı devam etti ta ki 4. Sınıfa kadar. 4. Sınıfta biraz da olsa düzelmeye çalıştım ondan sonra hala aynı.”



**Figure 5.** Percentage of high school groups of Child Development Students



**Figure 6.** Percentage of Child Development Students according to educational-field in High School

While the families can be recognized as the only determinant to choose high school, keeping in mind that the parents have very limited educational experience and knowledge, other preferred practical reasons, such as “proximity to home” becomes very important. Respondent E says that she was actually able to enrol in a more qualified high school which was far from the home, but there was also a close high school that her parents decided for her to go:

High school... So nice that I thought of it today. I studied the high school just down there to our house. I could go to Anatolian high school. I was a hardworking student, I mean I could do it. However, my mother sent me to the vocational high school down the street. She said “go, it is near to house. So I studied at the vocational high school down the street.<sup>11</sup>  
Respondent E (21, Child Development, %50 Scholarship, İstanbul, Vocational High School)

Within this educational and cultural background constituted by their familial habitus, the path that takes to the university and in particular to a private one, is quite complex on many terms.

#### **4.2. The Path to the University**

The reasons and motivations lying behind going to the university diverge in the form of personal narrations. All of those personal narrations have certain common grounds as an effect of being in the same habitus. And this fact in a way, has a levelling effect on the narrations of students and experiences. Although each student has a specific familial habitus, the stimulations that led to bringing them all in that university

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<sup>11</sup> “Liseyi... Çok güzel bugün de onu düşündüm. Liseyi hemen bizim evin aşağısında bir yerde. Anadolu’ya falan da gidebilirdim. Ben çalışkan bir insandım hani yapabiliyordum. Annem evin aşağısındakine gönderdi Meslek’e. Git git, yakındır diye. Meslek lisesinde okudum bizim evin aşağısındaki.”

are intersecting and parallel. The observable cultural, social and economic homogeneity among students makes me think that the habitus which they are now ephemerally and momentarily outside of, for they have just been in the university for a little while, is somehow close to each other. The similarity of narrations in terms of familial history, educational patterns in the past, economic records, the reasons behind being in that university, their dreams, desires, and future projections enable us to map the habitual composition of the institution under scrutiny.

**Table 5.** Reasons of University Preference

	Frq.	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
My family wanted	9	15.3	15.3	15.3
I wanted	6	10.2	10.2	25.4
My school counselor advised	10	16.9	16.9	42.4
My score was only enough for this university	28	47.5	47.5	89.8
Our economy was only enough for this university	3	5.1	5.1	94.9
Others	3	5.1	5.1	100.0
Total	59	100.0	100.0	

While the question of “why university?” in general received responses of subjective desire and subjective programs for the future, the specific question of “why that university” included very diverse replies which were stimulated and determined

over family, school consultancy, economic concern, networks, and the performance in the University Entry Exam. Only 10% percent of the students declared “I wanted to come to this university” in the field. However, to attend university in general, to that university in particular is still operated in process of decision making mediated with both “subjective” and “objective” criteria. Subjective criteria are the likes of having a job, escaping his/her habitus due to “lack” and “incapability” which they themselves coded as such, or getting his/her own “autonomy”. On the other hand, objective criteria are more determinant, such as economy, previous educational performance, and family educational history and so on.

#### **4.2.1. Enrolling in an University: “Nothing else to do”**

While the general motivation behind having degree from a university is to get a “job” to earn his/her living in future, the specific university now they enrolled in is represented as a “last chance”. Not only their families but most of the students have working experience in labour market and are well aware of harsh working conditions, difficulties in finding a job, the intense degrees of exploitation in working at “non-qualified” jobs without diploma and degree. While being so aware of working and market conditions, and economic conditions of their families, university is invested in excessively for an economic prospective. Respondent G, one of my interviewees in the university among my students, studying Child Development, first explains the difficulties in working at a nonprofessional job, and then later how working would be better if she gets a certificate or degree. Her observations are based on her experience of working at her family’s ticket shop in the small working class neighbourhood they are dwelling:

Out of necessity (decision on university). I mean even if we own the shop, it is very hard. I mean it makes you rot. Your brain rots because of dealing with people. But when you acquire a profession, you will either become an officer or something else... Evet people look at you in a different way.<sup>12</sup> Respondent G (21, Child Development, %50, İstanbul, Regular High School).

Initially, Respondent G evaluates her working experiences in the past and present as backbreaking. Then she transmits these experiences to the prospective future as a reminder of how she would suffer in the case of not having a profession. This is to say, all motivations for Respondent G seem to allude to having a job, but not like she has experienced before. Working with a profession that suits her is more likely to be attained with a degree or diploma, and is placed opposite past experience, albeit only on the level of working. Respondent A is another interviewee who implies the harshness of market conditions regarding finding a job “outside” at his age without “proper” education:

Of course as I grow older, I decided that I cannot find employment, and I started to study harder for school. I mean, like planning a career.<sup>13</sup> Respondent A (23, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, Mardin, Regular High School).

He seems to be sure about the “impossibility” of working at his age, at 23. He thinks it is late to start to attain the abilities for a job without a university degree. Without any vocational capacities, which accordingly should have been obtained at a

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<sup>12</sup> “İster istemez yani Şuan mesela iş yeri bizim olsa bile gerçekten çok zor. Yani insan çürütüyor, beyin çürüten bir iş yani insanlarla uğraşmak falan derken. Ama sen bu mesleği edindiğinde memur olacaksın yada onu olacaksın ..İnsanlar bile farklı bakıyor yani.”

<sup>13</sup> “Tabii büyüdükçe, yaşım ilerledikçe iş bulamayacağıma karar verdim. Bu yüzden okula daha çok asıldım. Yani biraz kariyerini planlamak gibi.”

very early age, at least earlier than 23, the university becomes the promising facilitator that endows one with sufficiency in wanted jobs.

#### **4.2.2. Enrolling in a Private University: Diverse Concerns**

One of my interviewees, Respondent N tells me why she preferred to choose the Farthest University. She explains: “Actually, I didn't consider the other private universities much. Also, this is closer to my home.” (Respondent N, 21, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, İstanbul, Girl’s Vocational High School). Therefore sometimes only the closeness becomes a reason for choosing a university. However, the Farthest University has very peculiar shortcomings in terms of promising educational quality, cultural capital, and university and campus life, social activities and so on. Therefore, the question of what initially makes the students and their family to invest excessively in that university is critical to analyse.

First, according to the students, the consideration of university for the families is a space of “self-fulfilment” for obtaining enough capital to gain at least an economically modest life for their children, without differentiating between any universities in mind. Therefore, for the parents, at least for a considerable number, university is not a specific and concrete institution that is diversified over various peculiarities. For them, university is an abstract formation of a facilitator in any condition without any distinctive circumstances. There is no “this” and “that” university but only “university” as an abstract and universal entity. Taking family as the main determinant to prefer university specifies one of the critical reasons behind enrolling in the Farther University. It is important to state that, while the scale of possibilities are constrained by the exam score, families predominantly decide in terms of protective concerns. For instance, Respondent



B's mother is the one who chose the university, with the reason of "closeness to home", in order to make Respondent B staying "in front of the eyes":

My entrance exam grade was only enough for public universities in faraway cities, like Kastamonu or Zonguldak. Mom said, 'it is better to keep you in sight, at least I can know you get to the house in the afternoon, also it will be the same amount with the expenses spent far away'.<sup>14</sup> Respondent B (21, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, İstanbul, Regular High School).

The calculation of going to university is made by parents in a manner of cost-benefit analysis. While each university is abstracted at the same level, the cost-benefit and the importance of being close to the family plays a role on university preference. Respondent M has the same story in choosing university and the decisiveness of her family:

My exam grade was not enough for four-year public education in İstanbul. There were only two-year departments my family did not prefer. Four year public universities were in Bingöl, Manisa, Konya, cities which are not great. I mean it could be worth it if it had been cities like İzmir or Ankara. But my parents didn't want me to go for example to Bingöl. They did not support that. I was not into it either. Because of that, I came to Farthest University. And it is of course my last choice among the private universities.<sup>15</sup> Respondent M (20, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, İstanbul, Private High School)

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<sup>14</sup> "Devlet üniversitesine, uzak şehirlerde yetiyordu, Zonguldak Kastamonu olsun. Annem de dedi gözümün önünde ol daha iyi, oraya ettiğimiz masraf aynı gelecek, en azından gözümün önünde akşam eve geldiğini bilicem dedi."

<sup>15</sup> "Dört yıllık olmuyordu İstanbul'da. İki yıllık olan bölümler vardı. İki yıllık bölümleri ailem istemiyordu. Yanlış hatırlamıyorsam Bingöl işte, Konya, Manisa gibi böyle üç dört tane sayılabilecek, çok da harika olmayan illerde dört yıllık üniversiteleri de tutturmuşum puan ama il dışına gidip bir de hani İzmir, Ankara gibi büyük şehirler olmadığı sürece mesela Bingöl'de gidip üniversite eğitimi almamı istemediler, desteklemediler. Ben de çok yanlısı değildim. Onun için yüzde elli bursla bu üniversite oldu. Bu da tabii ki özel üniversiteleri yazarken seçtiğim özel üniversitelerin en sonuncusuydu bu üniversite. Ve o oldu. Eğer o olmasaydı devletlerden iki yıllıklar İstanbul olacaktı. İki yıllık devletler kesin geliyor, biz annemler iki yıllık istemedikleri için önce dört yıllıkları yazdık. Ve İstanbul'da dört yıllık devlet olmadığı için özel dört yıllıkları yazdık. En sonuncusu oldu, keşke olmasaydı ama."

Seeing the Farthest University as “the last exit before the bridge” indicates the indispensable conditions. These indispensability comes from a very vital imagination that problematizes the mode of being, and of existence. While not to enrol in a university is reflected as an end, of “being nothing”, enrolling in that university saves one from that “nothingness”. Therefore, in any circumstances, that university is going to be chosen by the prospective. Even in Respondent N’s story, while she was not informed about the university, her family, and consultancy of the school had decided where Respondent N was going to enrol in:

I mean, everybody goes and talks with their school counsellor, they make a list of universities. I had a surgery that year. I was resting at home. My father and my mother went to see the counsellor. The teacher made a list of universities. My parents brought it to me. And I looked at the list. I looked at the departments. I liked social services. I thought it is a nice department. This is why I chose it. Of course, I googled it.<sup>16</sup> Respondent N (21, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, İstanbul, Girl’s Vocational High School).

So, since there are not many possible choices present, students are not included in the process of decision making. The bureaucracy of preference becomes a play that is performed by families.

#### **4.2.3. Female students and the stimulation of Mothers: “To not be Like Me”**

Everybody should study at university. I think it is very important to get a profession, graduate from a desired department, especially for a woman to become financially independent, to live without getting dependent on a

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<sup>16</sup> “Şimdi ben zaten hani herkes gidiyor rehber öğretmeniyile konuşuyor, işte çıkartıyorlar üniversiteleri falan. Ben ameliyat olmuşum o sene. Evde yatıyordum. Benim annem-babam gitti. Hoca da çıkartmış üniversiteleri. Getirdiler bana. Ben de baktım. Bölümlere de baktım. Sosyal hizmet benim hoşuma gitti. Güzel bölüm diye düşündüm. O yüzden seçtim. Araştırdım ama internetten.”

man, either father or husband.<sup>17</sup> Respondent N (21, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, İstanbul, Girl's Vocational High School)

The path to university as I have mentioned before, is much differentiated on the basis of gender as well. When we think of the position of female students at the intersection of gender and economic inequality, mothers play a key role in their path to the university. Self-investment of mothers in terms of their children's education is one of the prominent factors which makes the female students enrol in higher education even under the most difficult conditions. The stimulation of mothers either enacts students directly via active motivation and labour of mothers involved, or through the observations of female students in terms of their mother's harsh positions within the family.

This direct contribution of mothers sometimes consists of the economic investment in the education of the students in diverse ways: creating alternative sources via finding support through networks or landing an extra job. As we see in the case of Respondent B, whose father was unemployed for a while and who couldn't get into a four-year department in the first year of entrance, her mother creates alternative sources and solutions in order to finance the preparation courses via doing piecework at home and returning to her former job as a sweatshop worker:

I studied at a regular high school. I did not file a choice in my first year. I've prepared for one more year. My grade was low and I couldn't ensconce myself in a department that I wanted. So my mom said 'you can prepare for one more year, you don't have to go to a two-year program' my mom overindulges me, in order to make me continue my education,

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<sup>17</sup> "Herkesin üniversite okuması gerekiyor. İnsanın mesleğini eline alması, mezun olması istediği bölümden, özellikle bir kadın için ekonomik özgürlüğünü kazanması, bir erkeğe bağımlı kalmadan yaşaması babasına ya da kocasına, çok önemli olduğunu düşünüyorum."

bless her soul. I went to preparation school that year. She financed it through piece-work at home. I was also helping her. There are not so many educated people in our family. My father's side did not want me continue my education. My father either. He exceedingly hampered when I wanted to continue to higher education.<sup>18</sup> Respondent B (21, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, İstanbul, Regular High School).

As we see in Respondent B's story, her mother does not solve only economic problems, but also challenges the father and the extended family since they disapprove of the educational progress of female students. Mothers imbue and sermon their children via referring to their own experiences and situations of having difficulties by becoming dependent within the family, and this creates inspiration for female students in terms of attaining higher education:

My mom always says: 'study so you don't have to lean on anyone. This is why I am studying. In order to pull myself up by my own bootstraps, to do something good. In order to make my dreams come true. In order to stand on my own feet.'<sup>19</sup> Respondent E (21, Child Development, %50 Scholarship, İstanbul, Vocational High School).

The exemplification of mothers as the consequences of not studying for a woman, studying higher education gains the value as the way in order to escape their mother's fate:

I mean, mom always gave examples from her own life. She was always saying: 'Look how I am crawling' Because it is really hard for a woman

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<sup>18</sup> "Düz bir lisede okudum ben, annem eğitime çok düşüyor, eğitimimi tamamlamam için üzerime düşüyor. İlk sene tercih yapmadım. Bir daha hazırlandım. İstedğim bölüm de gelmedi puanım da düşüktü, annem istersen bir daha hazırlan dedi, illa iki yıllık okumana gerek yok dedi. Sağ olsun. O sene dershaneye gittim. Annem bunun için evde parça başı iş yaptı. Ben de ona yardım ediyordum fazla okuyan yok ailemizde. Baba tarafım pek istemiyor. Zaten babam da pek istemiyor okumamı. Fazlasıyla zorluk çıkardı."

<sup>19</sup> "Annem sürekli der: Okuyun hani muhtaç olmayın kimseye. O yüzden okuyorum ben de. Bir yerlere gelebilmek, iyi bir şeyler yapmak için. Hayallerimi gerçekleştirmek için. Kimseye muhtaç olmamak için."

to obtain a footing, at least without education, not only high school but without studying university. Because you're worn out a lot, so this is how I was raised.<sup>20</sup> Respondent G (21, Child Development, %50, İstanbul, Regular High School).

Another important aspect specific to attaining paid education here is, since families are low income groups and gendered in terms of attitudes of their families regarding the educational attainment of women, studying at a private university with a tuition fee, doubles the burden on female students and the role of mothers as well. All in all, both the interviews and field notes show that, the path to university, and particularly to a private university is differentiated in terms of gender when we think of the experiences of the female students.

#### **4.2.4. “Jobs Taken for Granted”: Making Decision on Departments**

Consideration of the university as a job facilitator, pushes both families and students into choosing a department in the university that is thought to offer guaranteed jobs such as “Child Development”, “Social Service”, “Culinary”, “Logistics” that imply vocational departments gathered under the Vocational School and Vocational School of Health Services of the University. Generally the education in the University concentrates on training students for intermediate jobs. While in theory, human resources were provided by vocational high schools for these positions, now acquiring these positions in the market require university degree and diploma. Keeping in mind that a considerable number of the students are coming from vocational high schools, the pursuits of looking for a guaranteed job becomes more understandable. The situation of the university, for

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<sup>20</sup> “Annem bana hep kendi örneğini verirdi. ‘Bak sürünüyorum’ derdi deli gibi. Çünkü gerçekten bir kadının en azından okumadan yani lise mezunu da değil üniversite okumadan bir yere gelmesi çok zor. Çünkü çok yıpranıyorsun çok şey oluyor diye bu şekilde yetiştirildim.”

instance, in promotional days of the University, or in the advertisements, the presentation of university is demonstrated as providing training for vocational jobs which are thought to be guaranteed in the market. Therefore, all obstacles of the world for the future, would be swept away for Respondent K:

I came to have a profession in the future. Consequently, I am studying now. I am making plans according to the course of events. I have prepared for two years, I have won in my second year. It was a tough process. I have been affected by the people around. I have laid the burden on myself, this is how I decided. It was a responsibility I took with the purpose of thinking for myself, thinking of my family. I consider it as an additional support. All in all, I will marry and start a family, I will set on my way, and I will get independent within family. This is how I decided.<sup>21</sup> Respondent K (21, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, Mardin, Regular High School)

Seranay, while she is not sure about the future yet, rhetorically puts the desired future as a moment and a place where one cannot be unemployed with a profession. She states that,

I think now there is no possibility to become unemployed with this profession but what happens in future... I don't know.<sup>22</sup> Respondent G (21, Child Development, %50, İstanbul, Regular High School)

Respondent C has a different case. While she wanted to study psychology, her father thought that job was not efficient and in demand. Therefore she enrolled in

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<sup>21</sup> Gelecekte bir meslek sahibi olma amaçlı geldiğim bir yer. Sonuç olarak okuyorum şuan. Gidişata göre planlıyorum. İki sene boyunca hazırlandım, ikinci senemde kazandım. Zor süreçti. Çevrenin etkisi oldu, bir sorumluluk yükledim kendime, öyle karar verdim. Kendimi düşünme amaçlı, ailemi düşünme amaçlı aldığım bir sorumluluktu. Ek bir destek olarak düşündüm. İleride sonuçta ben de bir aile kuracağım, bir düzenim olacak ailede bağımsızlaşacağım. Ondan ötürü öyle bir karar aldım

<sup>22</sup> “Bence şuan bu meslekle işsiz kalmak çok ihtimal değil, ama gelecekte ne olur... Bilmiyorum...”

“Social Service”, because of her family, but now she internalises that the department is promising:

My family affected me, of course they did. I wanted to study psychology, I didn't want to study in this department. My father said, ‘what will you do by becoming a shrink?’ Then I chose this private school, so my family was highly determining in my case. Social Service is a promising department, I mean it is in demand.<sup>23</sup> Respondent C (22, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, Ankara, Anatolian High School).

“Promising”, “in demand”, “in fashion” and “requested” are the common terms to define their departments. All these terms address a guarantee for the future to get a job. Respondent K again talks about the guarantee of the job and the opportunity it offers for the future:

I mean it was striking my fancy, since it is offering an employment opportunity, it is promising, and I came to this department. I didn't consider entering the exam a third time, I didn't think that I could take the pressure once again, still I think the same.<sup>24</sup> Respondent K (21, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, Mardin, Regular High School)

When we comprehend that these students come from low-income families, it makes sense that having a guaranteed job in future is one of the important motivations to enrol in a university which puts the family budget under constraint.

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<sup>23</sup> “İkinci yıl da biraz zorlandım çünkü ben psikolojik olarak etkilenen bir insanım. Ailem etkiledi, bunu etkileyen tabii ki ailemdi. Ben psikoloji okumak istiyordum, bu bölümü okumayı istemiyordum. Babam dedi deli doktoru olup ne yapacaksın kafasındaydı. Ben de işte özeli seçtim. Aile benim için çok belirleyici. Ama sosyal hizmet gelecek vadediyor, yani baya revaçta.”

<sup>24</sup> “Yani hoşuma gidiyordu geniş bir iş imkânına sahipti, geleceği parlak bir meslek olduğu için bu bölümü seçmiştim. Devlete gitmek için üçüncü sene hazırlanmayı düşünmedim. O psikolojiyi kaldıramayacağımı düşündüm hala da öyle düşünüyorum.”

### **4.3. First Coming to “The Farthest University”: Encountering New Habitus?**

Following the socio-economic background of the students and their subjectivities in terms of decision making process, here comes the first encounter with the university. The first impressions, sensations and perceptions are the habitual encounters before the individual habitus starts to shape, intermingles with the institutional one or vice-versa. Spatiality and spatial organization as well, is an integral part of institutional habitus, which also shapes the possible actions, dispositions of individuals and relationality between them.

Institutional habitus is the atmosphere of an educational institution, which is not spoken of frequently or out loud, but rather felt, unconsciously acknowledged or acted accordingly. It consists of student profile, educational perspective, design of curricula, organization of the space, posters on the walls, facilities of the classrooms etc. Within the moment we enter to the building, we can sense it, smell it and acknowledge it even without thinking.

#### **4.3.1. The Spatial Organization of the University: “In the Middle of Nowhere”**

When I came here, I never dreamt a university like this. Because our university’s preparation courses are on the minus 2 floor. You go down to basement. I mean, this was not the university in my dreams. It is like a roadside ‘dershane’ (preparation course). I was dreaming, expecting more like a university with a campus. So when I came for registration, it was a disappointment.<sup>25</sup> (Respondent R, 21, İstanbul, Child Development, %40 Scholarship, Regular High School)

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<sup>25</sup> “Okula geldiğimde üniversiteyi hiç böyle hayal etmemiştim. Çünkü bizim okulun hazırlığı eksi 2 eksi üçüncü katta. Böyle bodruma giriyorsun. Çünkü bir kere burası istediğim hayalimdeki üniversite değildi. Çünkü yol kenarında dersane gibi duruyor. Ben daha çok böyle kampüsü olan hep bu şekil hayal ettim. Biraz hayal kırıklığına uğradım kayıta geldiğim zaman.”



It is not a consequence that with the recent proliferation of private universities, we see that their locations are more peripheral and significant in socio-economic terms. The case university is located along the route of the Metrobus, towards the very end of it, near the industrial zone, in a building of a former auto-gallery and tax institution. There are no cultural sites close to university, mostly shopping malls and independent shops. It is not even close to metrobus stops, there you could walk along the E-5 road, or you can wait for the shuttles of university and get in if you are lucky enough. It is usually very hard to fit into those shuttles, since they are not quantitatively or qualitatively organized.

**Table 6.** Do you think location of your university is satisfactory?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	11	18.6	18.6	18.6
No	47	79.7	79.7	98.3
No answer	1	1.7	1.7	100.0
Total	59	100.0	100.0	

Around the university, there are two big shopping malls. Since the course schedule is not very well organized, there are long breaks between the courses and since the university lacks the common areas to spend time during the breaks, those malls are the only options that students have during breaks:

There is nothing around the school, nothing, where could you go. You know, we have 3 hours of a break, there is nowhere else to go to but Koska. If we go to the shopping mall, our return becomes an issue. But then you get used to it. Now I don't have that impression.<sup>26</sup> Respondent P (22, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, Mersin, Vocational High School).

The university has two main buildings, separated by a public way. One is the rectorate building which also consists of departmental units, classrooms, *mescit*, library and two canteens. The other building is the Health Sciences High School. Down to the industrial site, there is also a small campus consisting of one building as well.

Another important dimension of spatiality is in terms of educational infrastructure. The organization and facilities of classrooms tell a lot about the approach of the institution towards education. Classrooms are so large in a corresponding way with the mass education approach which puts more than enough students and departments into one classroom at the same time. I had encountered lots of problems related with the infrastructure of the learning environment and listened to lots of stories told by students. In almost all of the classrooms we had problems such as broken beamers, windows or seats, torn curtains, dead sound systems etc. Classrooms are not isolated well, so that it is sometimes impossible to continue class since a lot of noise comes from next-door classrooms, or from corridors. Even if the building is silent, there is always the E-5 road traffic noise coming from windows.

This spatiality, does not provide any room for students to culturally and socially flourish. Looking at the way the institution is spatially organized, the nature of the

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<sup>26</sup> “okulun çevresinde de bir şey yok, hiçbir şey yok nereye gidebilirsin. Hani 3 saat aramız var, koska’dan başka bir alternatifimiz yok. E avm’lere gitsek geri dönüşümüz sıkıntı biraz geri dönmek istemiyoruz. Ama sonra çevreye falan alışınca, geçti şuan öyle bir izlenim yok yani kafamda”

approach towards education and students is quite evident. But also, while students are verbalizing their dissatisfaction in the discursive sense, it is not a very vital necessity since they do not spend their free times in the campus. Because of economic and familial responsibilities or since the university's location is peripheral, they hurry back home after classes. The overall compositions of both individual and institutional dispositions can be traced by the spatiality.

#### **4.3.2. First Encounter with the Field: Prep Year**

When I asked about their first impressions and experiences in the university, majority of the students depicted their experiences with similar words: “disappointment”, “*dersane*”, “extension of high school” etc. One of the components of this feeling of indifference is the spatial organization which lacks social and educational facilities: a university without a campus and which consists only of buildings:

Preparation year was like high school 5th grade for me. It was a disappointment. While I was expecting a university environment, we were on the minus 3 floor at the basement. We were down to magma. It was totally a disappointment because during a 10 minute break you could only reach the surface. I encountered with people from every different culture. It was my first out of family experience, I have never been outside before. When I got into the atmosphere I've felt out of place. There were people like high school 5 year teenagers. I was in that category as well, I see myself in a similar way. English is a different language, a language that I don't want to learn. Being around people who know and also don't know was making me feel bad. But I could fit in with the crowd. But of course I had lots of troubles regarding the courses. The education was not in the level I've expected. You only need to have 70 points and you pass. It was not difficult.<sup>27</sup> Respondent P (22, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, Mersin, Vocational High School).

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<sup>27</sup> “Hazırlık benim için lise 5 gibi bir şeydi. Hayal kırıklığıydı, bir üniversite ortamı beklerken, karşı binanın eksi üçüne gittik. Yerin yedi kat dibindeydik yani. Resmen hayal kırıklığıydı çünkü on dk aranda anca yukarı çıkabilirsin. Her kültürdeki insanla karşılaştım ki bu benim aile dışı ilk deneyimim, daha önce hiç bir yere gitmedim. Biraz tabi ortama gelince garipsedim. Lise 5 gibi ergen ergen insanlar vardı. Ben de o kategorideyim, kendimi öyle görüyorum. İngilizce tabi farklı bir dil, istemediğim bir dildi. Etrafımda

This analogy has been drawn between the university and high school/dershane is based on education as well. The fact that students couldn't learn English during preparation year, was causing great difficulties in terms of the courses that I've held with them and for their other courses on which I've listened tons of stories from them. My solution, as with other non-native instructors who teach in English, was to teach the course in English while trailingy translating words to Turkish. And whenever I asked students about their English training, they declared that they had lots of idle classes during that year. As Respondent P told above and Respondent L indicates below, this low level of education that is underlined by students also illuminates one of the aspects through which they see their university like a high school:

I haven't thought it like a university. I mean it was very similar to high school. There is no campus life here... I also think that preparation courses were not sufficient. We have not received a sufficient education. It's like continuing to high school<sup>28</sup> Respondent L (21, Child Development, %40 Scholarship, İstanbul, Regular High School).

Moreover, in addition to the spatial and educational insufficiency, “atmosphere” of the institution in terms of other students also contributes to the feeling of an extension of dersshane/high school:

Now I mean, when you say university, you imagine very different things necessarily. But I didn't expect so much from here since it is a private university. When you first come and look at the school, it is obvious from

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böyle bilen bilmeyenler arasında olmak da kötü hissettiriyordu. Ama her ortama ayak uydurabiliyorum yani. Ama ders açısından tabi çok sıkıntı yaşadım. Okulda da eğitim beklediğim düzeyde değildi eğitim olarak, önemli olan 70 alıp da geçmekti. O da zor bir şey değil.”

<sup>28</sup> “Ya bir üniversite gibi olduğunu düşünmedim açıkçası. Hani yani liseyle aynı gibiydi. Bir kampüs hayatı yok çünkü burada.. Hazırlığın da yetersiz olduğunu düşünüyorum aslında. Yeterli bir derecede eğitim görmedik. Liseye devam etmek gibi.”

the way it looks or other aspects. Students are very young. Since I've been through a lot, I see myself a bit (older)...For example, in the first week, girls are behaving in different ways. I mean, I find some stuff so redundant anymore. I thought that here is not a school, this is not university. Our school is exactly like a dershane. I don't know the other universities but as people tell, other private universities are similar. I mean, instructors are not so good with students. Exactly like a dershane. For me, it is not different from any high school or dershane in any way.<sup>29</sup> Respondent G (21, Child Development, %50, İstanbul, Regular High School).

These three dimensions of first impressions which are spatial, educational and social, collectively refer to the habitus: both the individual and institutional ones. In other words, this imagining of the university, expectation of difference from high school/dershane, also refers to the former habitus of students which poses students with a meaning attributed to a new university. However, in their first encounter, they instantly experience that it is ordinary, not differentiated, and like an extension of the previous experiences.

Of course, as they indicate, it is the first experiences of sociality, in which, far away from the family, they interact with people who are not known to them. So this creates a sense of difference when they first mention their preparation year as we can see in the articulations of “encountering different kinds of people”. My argument here is not that there isn't any difference among students and their social backgrounds. However,

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<sup>29</sup> “Şimdi mesela öyle üniversite deyince çok farklı şeyler hayal ediyorsun ister istemez yani bir üniversite ama benim çok bir beklentim yoktu çünkü burası özel üniversite. Okula da ilk girip baktığında da belli oluyor bizim okulun görünüşünden de olsun şeyinden de olsun. Öğrenciler çok küçük hani belki de çok erken bir şeyler yaşadığımdan dolayı kendimi biraz daha insanlardan şey görüyorum.. İlk hafta mesela kızlar böyle değişik hareketler işte şeyler falan sınıftaki herkes böyle şey. Yani bir insan yanında böyle bazı şeyler bana boş geliyor artık hani bu şekilde görüyorum. Dedim ki hani burası okul değil, üniversite bu değil bence. Gerçekten de öyle oldu. Baktığınız zaman dışarıdaki üniversitelerde çok farklı. Dershane gibi aynı bizim okulumuz. Diğer okulları bilmiyorum ama anlatılana göre diğer okullar da öyleymiş hani özel üniversite anlamında. Hani hocalarda çok seninle şey değil. Gerçekten dersane gibi yani. Benim hiç bir liseden ya da dershaneden bir farkım yok şuan gördüğüm üniversite.”

there is the taste and atmosphere of the university, which is institutional habitus. And since this institutional habitus is overlapping with their individual habituses in terms of education, spatiality and social coherence, this creates a sense of “high school/dershane”.

#### **4.4. Being a Colleger: Expectation and Reality**

##### **4.4.1. Being “Civilized”, “Respectful” and “Self-sustained”**

Education does not only contain cultural capital to benefit from and a future projection to survive, but from now to later, it is narrated and virtualized as if it contains values which can be both socialized and individualized. The consideration of the university for the students firstly provides concrete opportunities: Skill, profession and knowledge, that is, cultural capital. While this form of capital can be attached to the use-value of education, the surplus values become, according to the students, social capital. The link between education and civilization is an abstract one, but it also makes a distinction between the uneducated and educated. Therefore, education is not only an investment that pertains to individual concerns, but also it maintains a space of community consisting of civilized subjects. The relations between these subjects of the civilized community, are hypothetically composed over the levelling effect of being a student of the university. Such an “imagined community” of “civilized” university students is thought to be existing in a self-proclaimed manner.

Respondent E insists that when one has a diploma, one may not get advantages of it, or its use value, but it becomes possible for “one who hates you” to “at the same time respect you”:

Diploma does not guarantee everything, but it works in terms of increasing prestige and respect. Because even if people hate you or don't like you, they respect you if you graduate from university.<sup>30</sup> Respondent E (21, Child Development, %50 Scholarship, İstanbul, Vocational High School).

Respondent R compares people who have a degree from university and who don't. For Respondent R, while people who haven't been in the university show respect to the university students, they also admire them. While people who did not graduate feel useless without any aims for life, for Respondent R, they think the opposite for university students. Useless and useful, having aims and being aimless are the sort of dichotomies that determine the distinctions between university students and others – the self-sustained person and the lacking person:

Of course it is better when you win the approval of the people around you... ‘Well done, you are studying at university.’ It makes you feel good. Because people who do not attend university are regarded as loafers. Indeed, loafers. They regard them as people who do not have any purpose in life, people who don't even care about their own wishes.<sup>31</sup> Respondent R (21, İstanbul, Child Development, %40 Scholarship, Regular High School)

The burden of the phrase in Turkish “study and be a man,” meaning “become an accomplished person” is carried by Respondent E. Culturally appraising the value of education comes from the desire of being an accomplished, self-fulfilled person. Self-confidence, self-sustained form of personality designates someone as a person who

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<sup>30</sup> “Diploma bazı şeyler için garanti değil ama saygınlığın artması konusunda. Çünkü insanlar sizi sevmese bile sizden nefret etseler bile üniversite mezunu olduğunuz için size saygı duyuyorlar.”

<sup>31</sup> “Etraftakilerin takdirini alınca daha da bir güzel oluyor tabii ki.... Aferin üniversite okuyorsun. Güzel oluyor. Çünkü üniversite okumayan insana artık boş insan olarak. Gerçekten öyle boş. Hayatla ilgili hiçbir amacı olmayan kendi isteklerine dahi değer vermeyen insan olarak görüyorlar.”

stands on his/her own feet. Kura's story shows the rapture in her life; before university and after university.

I mean, there is a saying like 'becoming a man by studying', I want to be like that. I don't want to receive orders from anyone... I used to be a very shy person, extremely shy, I used to never speak with people. Now, even mom says 'she never quiets down'. For example, among my friends (from neighbourhood or high school) I am the one who can do everything comfortably. I do things I would never do. I mean, I plucked up courage a bit, self-confidence. Not just a bit of self-confidence but a lot of it. It is a lovely thing to become a college student. I mean I am not sure if it is directly connected to university, but it rose with it.<sup>32</sup> Respondent E (21, Child Development, %50 Scholarship, İstanbul, Vocational High School).

#### **4.4.2. Alternative life? (If not university)**

Here, the alternative life is not the promising one, but is what they think that would happen to them if they hadn't come to university. Surely, it is their projection of what they would do "if not university". At the same time, this narration of the alternative life enables us to trace their habitus and the positions imagined and possible in that habitus. Without any difference, all students picture these alternative lives as working in the labour market without any advantage, being exploited in a form of precariousness without any social security. And, some female students, additionally imagine themselves to be already married with children. It seems puzzling that, while they are aware of the limits of better life promised by graduation of that particular university, still the life without it is regarded, comprehended as a "catastrophe".

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<sup>32</sup> "Yani okuyup adam olmak derler ya öyle olmak istiyorum. Hani insanlardan emir almak istemiyorum... Ben çok utangaç bir insandım, çok aşırı utangaçtım, asla konuşmazdım insanlarla. Şu an hani annem bile diyor asla susmuyor. Bir şey en rahat yapabilen benim mesela arkadaşlarımda. Hiç yapmayacak şeyler yapıyorum. Hani cesaret geldi bana biraz özgüven. Özgüven biraz değil çok çok geldi. Güzel bir şey üniversiteli olmak. Yani bunu üniversiteye bağlamak istemiyorum ama onunla birlikte geldi."



Respondent A is one of them who states that the alternative life is a “horrible” case. The designation of the world for Respondent A is twofold; “oppressed” and “oppressor”. Alternative life for him is remaining within the “oppressed” side. He is sure that in order to escape being “oppressed” he has to be equipped with capital which he thinks the university education would provide:

Most likely, I would work as a subcontracted worker, trying to stand on my own legs. Because there are not many things that I can do. Under the conditions in Turkey, there isn't much to do. Either we will be oppressed or oppressors.<sup>33</sup> Respondent A (23, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, Mardin, Regular High school).

Respondent C is telling the “most possible” scenario for her alternative life. According to her as well, alternative life is surrounded with non-qualified and low-paid work without any security.

I can imagine myself selling stuff in some shops. It is the most probable, easiest thing I can do. Selling stuff in the shops.<sup>34</sup> Respondent C (22, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, Ankara, Anatolian High School).

Working in a “small shop” is a common expression to an extent and is more probable in the alternative life. It is the least and the last for surviving. Surviving at the limit of a “small shop” designates the provincial space of the “private university”.

Respondent H also tells about the “small shop”:

I would be in Ereğli right now; most likely, I would be working in a shop or somewhere like that. It is a very small town.<sup>35</sup> Respondent H (21, Child Development, %100 Scholarship, Konya, Anatolian High School)

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<sup>33</sup> “büyük ihtimalle taşeron bir yerde çalışırdım, ayaklarımın üzerinde durmaya çalışırdım, eleman olarak çalışırdım. Çünkü pek yapabileceğim bir şey yoktu. Türkiye standartlarında yapabileceğimiz pek bir şey yok ya ezilen olucaz ya da ezilen olucaz.”

<sup>34</sup> “herhalde kendimi satış danışmanı olarak düşünebilirdim yani. Yapabileceğim en basit meslek olurdu. Dükkânlarda satış danışmanlığı.”

While all of the students are aware that their families have limited sources to depend on, the alternative life is built on the family strategies — doing the father’s job.

Therefore, university becomes the last opportunity for not doing the father’s job:

I think, if I weren't studying right now, I would do my father's job, I mean it is cultural to do your father's job. The child either continues his father's job or finds another way for himself. I think I would continue my father’s job. I would take over his business.<sup>36</sup> Respondent D (23, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, Şırnak, Regular High School).

Alternative life of Respondent B is located in a limbo. While for her father she should work for family budget, for her mother she should be married. Getting married and having children are common stories about alternative life by female students:

For my father, I would be working in order to support house budget. For my mother, I would get married if I have an auspicious candidate, if I don't have, I would be tied to my mother's apron strings.<sup>37</sup> Respondent B (21, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, İstanbul, Regular High School).

It should be stated while all these alternative lives are presented as “horrible” cases, most of them continue to live a part of that alternative life; while attending university. Respondent E’s case clearly verbalises this paradox:

Maybe I would be working at the stationary shop that I am currently working at. Maybe I would be working at a dress shop. But this is not

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<sup>35</sup> “şuan Ereğli’de olurdum, en iyi bir ihtimalle bir yerde çalışıyor olurdum, markettir şeydir, küçük bir yer zaten orası.”

<sup>36</sup> “Bence şu an eğer okumuyor olsaydım şu an baba mesleği dediğimiz genel olarak bizim orada, ee, kültür olarak yapılan bir şeydir hani çocuk ya baba mesleğini yapar ya da gider farklı bi konuda farklı bi dalda kendini geliştirmek ister, bu konuda bence ben baba mesleğine yönelirdim. Orada onun şu an yürüttüğü işleri ben yürütürdüm diye düşünüyorum.”

<sup>37</sup> Babam için çalışıyor olurdum eve bir katkı sağlardım. Annem için de hayırlı bir kısmetim varsa evlenir çocuk çocuk sahibi olurdum ama okumazdımı dizinin dibinde otururdum.

something for me.<sup>38</sup> Respondent E (21, Child Development, %50 Scholarship, İstanbul, Vocational High School).

#### **4.4.3. Escape from Family Habitus**

Another remarkable aspect of the experiences of students is that somehow, attending university sustains a relative autonomy and independence. It can be read as the escape from the familial habitus within two temporal dimensions. First dimension is the present connected to past, which makes them escape from the expectations, responsibilities of their family and people around. Second is the future they envision, as to the extension of their education, the life they will form without familial habitus related obligations, restrictions and dependencies.

In the first dimension, in which students utilize or see education as a way to escape from their familial habitus on the daily-present basis, story of Respondent G is striking. She was raised in Gazi neighbourhood, which is populated by lots of relatives and acquaintances. And after her mother passed away, all the responsibility related to the house and her 16 years old sister has become her responsibility. In the meantime, she was also responsible for the local bus ticket selling shop which is run by her family. In her words, becoming a university student brought some “relaxation” to her life:

There was a lot of responsibility on my shoulders. I've escaped that. This eased my life a lot. I was raised with a lot of... What you may call it? I was raised under dictation. When you are raised that way... With lots of responsibilities, “you have to do this, this is your duty”... Someone (mom) is directing you and instantly she is gone... You don't know what to do and father doesn't know either... Besides, he got old now, he is 64 years old. He struggled and gave up. All of a sudden, all the

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<sup>38</sup> “Belki o kırtasiyede olabilirdim, belki bir giyim mağazasında satış danışmanı olurum ama hiç benlik değil, hiç yani.”

responsibilities were put on my shoulders. While people were saying “do this, do that” to me, I couldn't even get to chance to mourn my mom. This is why university was my escaping point. Because I was going to the shop, and leave at night. I was coming home, cooking and tidying house. The day ends. Impossible, you cannot go anywhere. There is no one else to help. And you get people used to that. When I say “father, I will go out, you take care the shop,” he replies “no”. Since they get used to you doing everything. They start whining. I mean, it has been like that. This is the way I have been raised since childhood. My sister was born when I was 5 years old, and I directly became the older sister. “She is a child, you do this”. But I am also a child and they don't recognize it. I mean, you are grown up, you are the older sister now. My father is a narrow minded person. In his time, these kinds of things... His father hasn't shown love either. But now, he sees me as a wife in some ways. He consults me on issues. I have grown up.<sup>39</sup> Respondent G (21, Child Development, %50, İstanbul, Regular High School).

While in Respondent G's story, it creates a chance of “relaxation” with the opportunity to escape from family responsibilities, for Respondent M it creates a “flexibility” in terms of staying out, having an individual space:

Now, for example, we go for a walk, we go out. My allowed hours of staying out became longer. Because now there is a university student. For example, we went to Taksim with my cousin. It was so nice that there was a 7/24 open library. And when I mention it my mom, it was so lovely that she let me spend time there. My daily life stretched, became more flexible. Also, I made them feel that it is time for me to achieve

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<sup>39</sup> “Çok fazla sorumluluk vardı, ben oradan kaçtım. Bu beni çok rahatlattı. Çok şeyle büyüdüm. Ne derler ona, dikte mi, o koşullarla büyüdüm.. Bunlarla büyüyünce. Sorumluluklarla işte sen bunu yapmak zorundasın işte bu iş senin. Seni biri yönlendiriyor ve o bir anda gidiyor, ne yapacağını şaşırıyorsun ve baba da bilmiyor ne yağacağını.. Bir de yaşlandı artık 64 yaşında bir adam. Bocaladı yani bıraktı. Bütün sorumluluk bir anda sana kalıyor. Onu yap bunu yap şunu yap derken işte ben acımı yaşadığımı bile hatırlamıyorum yani bundan dolayı. Üniversite de benim bu yüzden kaçış noktam oldu. Çünkü yazıhaneye sabah gidip akşam çıkıyordum. Git eve yemek yap evi toparla. Bitiyor. Yok. Gidemezsiniz hiç bir yere. Başka birisi yok. Buna da alıştırdınca sen.. Dışarı çıkacağım baba sen yazıhaneye bak dediğin zaman hayır oluyor. Hani sen yapıyorsun. Hemen şey oluyor çünkü mızızlanıyorlar ediyorlar falan derken. Böyle gitti yani. Benim küçüklüğümden beri bu şekilde yetiştirildim hani kardeşim ben 5 yaşındayken doğdu. Berfin doğduktan sonra direkt abla konumuna geçtim yani hemen yani. O küçük ona yap. Ama ben de küçüğüm o an onu fark etmiyorlar o an oradakiler. Hani şey diyorlar sen büyüdün ablasın artık falan derken. Ee hani baba geri kafalı bir adam yani. Onun döneminde böyle şeyler. O da babasından sevgi görmemiş. Annem vefat ettikten sonra babamla biraz daha duvar yıktık ister istemez. Hani nasıl diyeyim beni artık eşi gibi görüyor bir taraftan da. Bana artık bir şeyleri soruyor. Ben büyüdüm.”

something on my own.<sup>40</sup> Respondent M (20, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, İstanbul, Private High School)

Along with the daily escape, we see education is taken as a tool in order have a habitual escape in the future. It gives a chance to have a better future, and “better” is imagined with a reference to their habitual formation and positioning of their mothers within it:

For a better future.... Not to have the troubles that my mother has been through, not to stoop like my mother. This is the main reason. My father's side thinks that studying takes you nowhere. I want to show them this is not true.<sup>41</sup> Respondent B (Social Service, %50 Scholarship, İstanbul, Regular High School)

And the burden of the familial habitus shows itself in the tough conditions like father’s imprisonment, its effect on the family life, the violence implemented by the other male members of the family and silence of the mothers under such harsh conditions:

After all I have been through, after my father got imprisoned, I don't know if it is because of puberty or not, I wanted to be free. You want it. And you suffer oppression at home because of that. Back then, I could not make sense of my mother’s fears, but now I get it. My father is gone, she is afraid that if something happens, she is all alone. We never got along with my brother, he is a vulgar person. He never changed, still he is like that. When he gets mad, he comes and hits me. And when I cry, he stands in front of my mother. I never forget, because it is still the same. You study in order not to let those people have some say in your life. You make your own decision. It is a kind of emancipation. Because when you

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<sup>40</sup> “Şimdi mesela arkadaşlarımla geziyoruz tozuyoruz bir yerlere gidiyoruz. Benim dışarıda kalış saatlerim birazcık daha uzadı. Çünkü artık üniversite öğrencisi biri vardı. Kuzenimle Taksim'e gitmiştik. Orada 7/24 kütüphanenin açık olması çok hoştu. Ve bunu anneme hani söylediğimde sadece o havayı benim solumam için Beni orada bırakmış olması bile çok güzeldi. Gündelik hayatımda hani esnemeler oldu. Bir de kendi başıma bir şeyler başarmanın zamanının geldiğini hissettirdim onlara da.”

<sup>41</sup> “Daha iyi bir gelecek... Annemin çektiği sıkıntıları çekmemek, düşük durmamak... En başta bu. Babam tarafı okumanın bir yere getirmeyeceğini düşünüyorlar, ben onlara bunun yanlış bir şey olduğunu göstermek istiyorum.”

earn your own money, if you have an adjective, a label, you are free among people.<sup>42</sup> Respondent R (21, İstanbul, Child Development, %40 Scholarship, Regular High school)

While daily escape from habitus enabled by being a university student saves the day, education as an escape strategy projected into the future is not guaranteed. Here, we see the projection of future within the boundaries of the contemporary habitus. In that sense, these are habitus-bounded understandings of escape which are shaped by the current dispositions. However the current dispositions also shape the boundaries of the desired future emancipation trajectories. For instance, getting married continues to be taken for granted, but there is a possibility to have strategic capabilities in case of a highly probable bad marriage:

My life has not been nice. My childhood was not nice. And I don't want my children to go through the same. I may make a wrong decision tomorrow in terms of choosing the one to marry. I might get divorced. My family would not back me up. Lots of families do not give you support. To what extent can they back you up? You get married. Some have children. And they get divorced. Some do not. You should have a skill to support yourself. Whoever the person you are living along with, you should be able to point to the door. I mean, [be able to say] I am not obliged by you. I am not dependent on you. Actually, I am here in order not to be dependent on anyone<sup>43</sup>. Respondent R (21, İstanbul, Child Development, %40 Scholarship, Regular High School)

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<sup>42</sup> “Yaşadığım şeylerden sonra böyle babam cezaevine girdikten sonra ergenlikten ötürü mü desem böyle bi özgürleşmek istiyor ya çocuklar böyle. Bunu istiyorsun çıkıyorsun. Bir de evden bunun için baskı görüyorsun. Annemin korkularını o zaman çok anlamıyordum şu an anlıyorum da. Baba yok ya bir şey olursa korkusu var tek başına çünkü. Abimle hiç anlaşamazdık. Kaba saba bir insan. Hala da öyle. Hiç değişmedi. Sinirlendi mi gelip vurur. Ve hep ağladığımda annemin karşısına geçer. Hiç unutmuyorum hala da öyleyim çünkü. Okuyacaksın bu insanların senin hayatında söz hakkı olmasına izin vermeyeceksin. Kendi kararını kendin vereceksin. Bir nevi özgürleşme gibi bir şey bu. Çünkü gerçekten insan kendi parasını kazanınca kendi bir etiket bir sıfatın varsa insan içerisinde özgürsün.”

<sup>43</sup> “Güzel bir hayat geçirmediğim çünkü. Güzel bir çocukluk dönemi geçirmediğim. Ve çocuklarımı da bu şekil yaşatmak istemiyorum. Benim yarın bugün yanlış bir tercih de yapabilirim evleneceğim insan konusunda. Boşanadabilirim. Benim ailem bana sahip çıkmaz. Çoğu insanın sahip çıkmıyor. Ne kadar

Although the analytical separation has been made between daily escape and future projection, as in the equation above, past, present and future intersect and get interwoven in terms of escape from familial habitus.

#### **4.4.4. “Fish in the Water” and Feeling Nothing**

The debate on the education whether it serves for the reproduction or transformation can be comprehended with the metaphor of “fish in the water”. First it implies the homogeneity and the intensity of the stimulants where there is internally no distinctions. The second, the unconscious adaptation to the conditions of the field while the orientation of agent who enters the field is open to the possibility of transformation. Therefore, the conditions of “fish in the water” foments the very continuation of the structured positions of the habitus, instead of engendering the possibility of disposition of that structured formation.

The case of “fish in the water” for the students I studied with, somehow designates that they reflect the awareness of the continuation of their established habitus. Almost every student says the university is an extension of their high schools or their preparation schools which implies that nothing is different. For instance Respondent B puts her awareness about the university. She does not feel any weight of university to force her or to provide equipment to change her habitus.

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sahip çıkacaksın? Evlenmişsin. Kimisinin çocuğu var. Boşanıyor. Kimisinin çocuğu yok. Senin elinde bir tane bileziğin olacak mesleğin olacak. Her zaman karşındaki insan kim olursa olsun ee kapıyı göstereceksin. Hani benim sana bir zorunluluğum yok. Ben sana muhtaç değilim. Kimseye muhtaç olmamak için aslında özgür olabilmek için buradayım.”

Right now, it doesn't make me feel anything. It's like the follow-up of high school. There may be things that a university does to you in private. Respondent B (21, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, İstanbul, Regular High School).

When I have asked Respondent N what she would do after graduation, she has replied as if she is not accumulating any capital or as if there is no possibility to do it during her experience in the university:

I don't feel myself as sufficient, because my English is very bad. Additionally, it is very hard to find a job in this country. Respondent N (21, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, İstanbul, Girl's Vocational High School).

Being "fish in the water" designates a space of consistency with his/her positioned habitus. The subjects of the new habitus in the first encounter with the field which is the university, do not only produce the possibility of change or reproduction, but as a stranger of the field, the feeling of insecurity becomes the only weight to confront. This is the case when differences between the habitus of agents and the structure of the field contains a considerable gap. The imbalance intensifies between the university environment and students' habitus which does not only produce the motifs of tensions and conflicts, but also a tendency to adaptation --getting over the feeling of strangeness. However, the distinction of the case of Farthest University is that there is not an enormous gap between student habitus and the field. While students do feel like adapting or clashing, the positions are constructed and then mediated to adapt to the habitus of the students. The Farthest University as field and institutionalized habitus always negotiates with the student habitus, and structures itself to become closer to those habituses.



#### **4.4.5. The Cold-battle Field: Students and Instructors**

Relationality of instructors and students within the field show a lot of aspects of the institutional habitus and educational experience. This is a total sum of how instructors regard the students, how students relate to the instructors and classroom encounters which dispose and become disposed by the overall relationality. It is important to note that, here and generally in the study, discussions regarding the instructors are based on my participant observations, encounters embedded in my experience as an instructor in the field and narrations of students. And as I try to keep my point of view as the researcher, it is important to keep in mind the fragile, proletarianized and conflictual positions of the instructors in this neoliberally weaved private higher education field.

The dominating approach to education within the institution is to make it possible that every instructor gives lectures for maximum number of hours per week, and contracted instructors are recruited with low fees without liability taken into consideration. I myself experienced this promotion of superficial organization of class materials and matters in a quick and neglected matter by the institution. In this case, where we do not see any academic, educational and pedagogical concern organized by the administration and organization of the university, it is only in the hands of instructors and their individual responsibility to students and their profession.

Within this ground laid by the institution, we have individuals interfering with each other's work with their habitual dispositions. When instructors and students get together in the classroom, they reach an equilibrium in which educational and pedagogic

concerns are off the table. This moment of equilibrium is narrated so nicely by Respondent G:

Preparation instructor... He was our main instructor. In the beginning he was a bit better. Later he sees the potential of the students, he slackens his ways as well. He was saying, ok let's finish the class and leave, you don't learn anything anyways... but like I said, it was like a dershane. Although people pay money for this, including me.<sup>44</sup> Respondent G (21, Child Development, %50, İstanbul, Regular High School).

Although management/disciplinary content and pedagogic action is not necessarily separable, when the educational/pedagogic side of the encounters fades away into equilibrium, we see that only the disciplinary power of the instructors over the students is left behind. This resembles the teacher-student relationships in high schools. And with the disciplinary positioning of the instructors, students start to regard instructors in terms of their personalities revealed at moments of disciplining action:

At the preparation year, my English teacher was a good person but she was a discriminatory person. She was treating people differently. From person to person, her attitudes were changing. She was a tactful person. I was not intimate with other teachers either. This year it is similar, with some teachers relationships are good. But generally, some teachers are egoists, some are satisfying their ego.<sup>45</sup> Respondent C (22, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, Ankara, Anatolian High School).

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<sup>44</sup> “Hazırlık hocası.. Yaşar hoca diye bir hocamız vardı. Bizim ana hocamız oydu. Bütün main course derslerine o girdi.. İlk zamanlar biraz iyiydi. Sonra sonra hani öğrencilerin de potansiyelini görüyor falan derken o da boşladı. Artık hani şey yapıyordu tamam bitirelim çikalım, yapalım çikalım öğrenmiyorsun zaten, etmeyelim tamam böyle olsun şöyle olsun bu şekilde. Speaking hocası falan bi tane yabancı hoca. İki tane yabancı hocamız vardı. Biri İngiltere oxford mezunu bi kadındı. Diğeri de Suriyeli bir hocaydı. Bayağı tatlı bir hocaydı ama diyorum ya dersane gibi. İnsanlar oraya para ödemesine rağmen , buna ben de dahilim bazen oluyor.”

<sup>45</sup> “Hazırlıkta, geçen yıl, kendi hazırlık hocam iyi biriydi, ama çok ayrımcı olan bir insandı. Ona farklı ona farklı, diğerlerine başka başka ortamına göre ayak uyduran bir insandı. Diğer hocalarımla çok samimi değildim zaten. Bu yıl da aslında öyle, bazı hocalarla ilişkiler iyi. Ama genel olarak bazı hocalar egocu, bazı hocalar ego tatmin ediyorlar.”

As their relationships got more and more tense, what students were looking for or expecting from instructors became more affective, personal and care-related:

Instructors could be more sincere, intimate with students. They can build a warmer relationship. I have friends at other universities, for instance when something happens to them they can consult their teachers. But here, we don't see such things.<sup>46</sup> Respondent J (19, Child Development, %100 Scholarship, Erzincan, Private High School).

With the disappearance of pedagogic relations and concerns, and coercive/managerial/disciplinary power left behind, students begin siding against instructors:

Actually I didn't like my instructor last year, in prep class. She was two years older than me. She was a new instructor, her immaturity was obvious. You could sense it under every circumstance. She used favouritism towards students and we never knew her basis for doing this. But she was doing this excessively. Actually, I didn't like her at all.<sup>47</sup> Respondent P (22, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, Mersin, Vocational High School).

Whole process increasing the emotional distance between students and instructors, precludes the educational relationship and potential between students and instructors at a secondary level. The level was determined by the institutional habitus. This second level is where student and instructors position in opposing camps within the educational terrain which becomes a cold-battlefield:

I can say that, I don't want to go to any teacher's room and talk to them; definitely not. Because they don't strike me as sincere people. Everybody

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<sup>46</sup> “Biraz daha samimi olabilirler öğrencilerle, daha sıcak bir ilişki kurabilirler. Başka arkadaşların var mesela başlarına bir şey geldiğinde hocalarına danışabiliyorlar. Ama ben öyle bir şey görmüyorum bizim fakültede.”

<sup>47</sup> “geçen seneki hocamı sevmiyordum aslında hazırlıktakini. Yaş farkımız iki yaş idi. Toyluğu vardı, yeni bir hocaydı zaten. Bunu her koşulda hissettiriyordu. Öğrenci ayırımını çok fazla yapıyordu ve bunu neye göre yaptığını da bilmiyorduk yani. Ama aşırı derecede yapıyordu. Hiç sevmiyordum aslında onu.”

is here in order to do their job. I feel like they are in the mentality of just to lecture and go home... For example, the instructor who is responsible for our department always says ‘come to my office’ but there is nothing to talk with her. They are after money. Another instructor, who comes from a good school makes criticisms like: ‘you are at “the farthest” university, what could you become anyway?’ But if you are that much unhappy don't continue working here. Or why you came here to teach the students here if you know what kind of a place it is? Or if you came here, why are you insulting the kids here? Their attitudes are like ‘you know nothing anyway, you will achieve nothing.’<sup>48</sup> Respondent M (20, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, İstanbul, Private High School).

## **4.5. Private University and Tensions**

### **4.5.1. Failing to Pay Instalments**

When we consider the way private university students are approached, we see that it is dominated by the idea that students are “consumers” who buy education with their money. However this being consumer issue is not experienced in the first meaning that comes to mind. When I submitted the grades for midterms or finals through the computer system of university, I suddenly received lots of individual emails or requests during the course breaks from students. The reason was that they could not see their grades and required individual notification. This was because they could not pay the instalments on time, and the system would be closed to them. So I had to come to terms

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<sup>48</sup> “Yani şöyle bir şey söyleyebilirim ki kesinlikle burada bir öğretmenin odasına gidip onunla bir şey konuşmak istemiyorum. Çünkü bana o samimiyeti vermiyorlar. Herkes işi için buraya gelmiş. Bir şeyler anlatayım ve gideyim kafasındaymış gibi hissettim... Ama şu an mesela bizim bölümümüzle ilgilenen hoca sürekli ofisime gelin diyor ama ofisine gidip konuşabileceğimiz hiçbir konu yok. İşte sürekli işte o ders başına şu ücreti almak için daha çok ücreti alayımın peşinde. Diğer hoca çok iyi bir okuldan buraya gelmişse eğer [...] Üniversitesi'siniz siz zaten ne olabilirsiniz ki gibi hani eleştirilerde bulunuyor. Oysaki madem böyle mutsuzsun devam etme. Ya da neden [...] Üniversitesi'ni biliyor iken böyle olduğunu gelip buradaki öğrencilere bir şeyler katma çabasına girdin? Ya da sen bu çabaya girdiysen neden çocukları bu kadar aşağılıyorsun? Bir şey bilmiyorsunuz zaten yapamayacaksınız işte falan gibi.”

with the fact that although they are private university students, it is not easy or sometimes even possible for them to make the payments.

Throughout the interviews, the strategies of families and students for financing their education can be traced. We see the enactment of family networks in order to finance the education as is the case for many students. With the contribution and support of the extended family members it becomes possible for the students to enrol in a private university as in Respondent G's case:

We were considering this university for the fees were a bit lower, and then, just like that, I was enrolled. I was very surprised that it happened. My aunts supported a bit. They said: 'write your preferences and go, we will all support (financially)'.<sup>49</sup> Respondent G (21, Child Development, %50, İstanbul, Regular High School).

Balances and dynamics of the extended family determine if the student could get help from relatives. As we see in Respondent B's case, although her mother's side tries to support her educational expenses, her father's side, which does not approve of her education at all, does not provide financial support even during very difficult times:

My father was unemployed for one and a half year. He just found a job, it has been three months. Our relatives from my mother's side are helping us to pay for school. We don't get any support from my father's relatives. Before my mom found a job and my father was unemployed, we were doing piecework at home. I was doing the same job with my mother. Paying for education has affected our budget adversely. I mean, almost all of the income goes to the education payments. There is nothing left when we think of the minimum wage.<sup>50</sup> Respondent B (21, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, İstanbul, Regular High School).

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<sup>49</sup> "Bu üniversitenin fiyatı daha düşüktü filan derken, bir anda oldu yani. Şaşırdım girdiğime falan. Biraz da teyzemler destek verdi. Tercih ver git hepimiz destek oluruz filan diye."

<sup>50</sup> "babam bir buçuk yıldır çalışmıyordu, yeni işe başladı o da üç ay falan oldu işe gireli. Zaten okulun parasını ödemekte de annemin akrabaları yardımcı oluyor. Babamın tarafından hiçbir yardım görmüyoruz. Babam işten kovuldu, bir buçuk senedir iş bulamadı. Yeni başladı. Evde annem işe başlamadan önce,

In the case of students who come from other regions to study, relatives' support is sustained through providing accommodation and daily expenses. While this eases the economic burden on students and their families, it restrains the independence of the student from the family. This issue is one of the main factors which makes students to be in contact with their familial habitus during their university education:

When I think individually, I think I am constraining the family budget. I mean they do not show, but I can see that they are affected. I have a %50 fee scholarship here, but still it is a sizeable amount. I receive a non-recourse scholarship from KYK. I have been living in my aunt's house in Şirinevler since one year ago. I live with my aunt and her family. Accommodation is not an expenditure. Besides I work as a waiter now and again.<sup>51</sup> Respondent K (21, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, Mardin, Regular High School)

Another strategy to cope with the tuition payments and other expenses is the structuring, organizing the budget and distribution of the expenses within the nuclear family:

My father covers the expenses of school. My brother covers the expenses of the house. Of course paying the school affects our family budget, my father either cuts from the house or somewhere else. We could do other things with that money...<sup>52</sup> Respondent A (23, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, Mardin, Regular High School).

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küpür var parça işi, onlarla geçim sağlanıyordu. Ben de annemle birlikte o işi yapıyordum. Çok kötü bir etkisi var okula para ödememizin, yani bütün gelir, yani yaklaşık hepsi neredeyse benim okuluma gidiyor. Yani asgari ücretle pek bir şey kalmıyor elimizde.”

<sup>51</sup> “Yani bireysel olarak düşününce aile bütçesini zorladığımı düşünüyorum. Aile açısından, belli etmeseler de etkilendiklerini fark ediyorum. Burada yüzde elli bursluyum ama yine de yüklü bir para. Kyk'dan dörtüzyirmibeş lira karşılıksız burs alıyorum. Burada bir senedir Şirinevler'de halamın evinde kalıyorum. Halam ve aileyle yaşıyorum. Konaklamada masraf olmuyor. Bir de garsonluk gibi işler yapıyorum buldukça.”

<sup>52</sup> “babam benim okul masraflarımı karşılıyor, abilerim de evin masraflarını karşılıyor... Oluyor okula para vermemizin etkisi, babam ya evden kesiyor, ya da farklı bir yerden kesiyor, o parayla farklı bir şeyler daha da yapabiliirdi.”

This also includes the organization of the sources in a certain way, while retrenching other expenses:

We had some savings. We used it for the payments. But we could use that money for something else. It goes as it comes.<sup>53</sup> Respondent P (22, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, Mersin, Vocational High School).

However even with the support of extended family and strategies of budget structuring, retrenching, most of the students cannot afford to pay the instalments regularly, which in return creates a tension with the university and student, in a way having effects on educational life and student identity:

Of course we hardly afford. I couldn't even pay the last two instalment this year. Last year as well. Because our economic condition was bad. We had lots of debts related to my mother's treatment. It took some time to clear the debts. We had a house in Tunceli. After we sold it, I could pay the instalments. Otherwise there was no way for me to register. We had chance. This year, I mean, I couldn't pay the last two instalments yet. Just like that. We are having difficulty since it is a substantial amount. I mean, one thousand a month, it is quite a lot, since our budget is not that much. Our income is not like five thousand a month. It creates a difficulty, like it or not.<sup>54</sup> Respondent G (21, Child Development, %50, İstanbul, Regular High School).

Administration is not tolerant in cases of late payments, which means not being allowed to register for courses, not being able to see exam results etc.

I will put it that way. I definitely do not think the administration unit of the university regards students as customers. After all, teachers would

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<sup>53</sup> "Biraz birikim vardı, oradan karşılıyor, ama o para başka bir şeye yatırılabilir. Geldiği gibi gidiyor yani."

<sup>54</sup> "zorlanıyoruz ister istemez. Hatta bu sene de işte ilk bu son iki taksiti ödeyemedim daha. Geçen sene hiç ödeyemedim. Çünkü durumumuz çok kötüydü. Annem tedavi olduğu dönem çok borç yapıldı. Onları kapatana kadar.. Sonra bizim bir evimiz vardı Tunceli'de. O satıldıktan sonra ben okulu ödeyebildim. Kayıt yaptıramıyordum yoksa hiç bir şekilde. O şansımız oldu. Bu sene de işte hani bu iki şeyi ödeyemedim daha.. Öyle. Zorlanıyoruz ister istemez çünkü yüklü bir miktar. Yani ayda 1 milyar demek zaten hani çok bir bütçemiz yok. Kalkıp hani 5 milyar maaş almıyor babam. Zorluyor ister istemez."

have behaved accordingly. Because last year there was an instalment I couldn't pay. During registration I came to school. I said I didn't have the opportunity to pay that moment. They didn't tolerate me at all. Either you will pay or they don't register you. If they would see us as customers, they would tolerate such situations.<sup>55</sup> Respondent R (21, İstanbul, Child Development, %40 Scholarship, Regular High School).

Getting support from the extended family or structuring the budget are strategies to afford university fees. However, even in the case of such strategies, unexpected job losses may result in being unable to pay the instalments. This unexpectedness stems from the fact that, many of the parents are working in insecure, irregular jobs as in Respondent E's case, whose father has passed away and whose mother has been babysitting in order to finance their family:

Of course it is causing economic difficulties. It is forcing. Actually before my mom stopped babysitting it was not that bad, but the family stopped paying. This is why I couldn't pay two instalments. Today we will pay. It's really causing trouble. Actually I never thought that I would study in a private university. I was even despising private university students. What is studying at private university, you are studying with your money? I also came here. I mean, our house is rented, I don't know how but bills are so high lately as well. Lots of other expenses come up, a lot of trouble. 12 thousand, 1300 per month, it's heavy on you. My mom has too much difficulty with it. My uncle supports us. We ask him every month we cannot afford.<sup>56</sup> Respondent E (21, Child Development, %50, İstanbul, Vocational High School).

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<sup>55</sup> “Ben şöyle söyleyeyim. Ben okulun idari biriminin de işte öğrenciye müşteri olarak bakmadığını düşünüyorum kesinlikle. Zaten öyle olsa öğretmenler de o mantıkta olurdu herhalde. Neden çünkü ben geçen sene benim ödemediğim bir tane taksitim vardı. Kayıt zamanı geldim. Dedim ki hani şu an kayıt falan yapamam şu anda yok dedim. Okul başladığı zaman hayır dediler. Yani bunun için bana hiçbir tolerans sağlamadılar. Ya ödeyeceksin ya kayıt eski borç varken yeni kayıt yapmıyorlar. Ya ödeyeceksin ya da yeni kayıt almıyoruz dediler. Müşteri olarak görselelerdi daha çok suyumaya giderlerdi.”

<sup>56</sup> “Baya zorluyor. Hatta benim de işe girmemi söylüyor ablamla babam. Aslında işi annem hani çocuk bakmaya gittiğinde iyi gidiyordu ama hani çocuğun parasını vermemeye başladılar. O yüzden iki taksitim duruyor hala, bugün onu ödeyeceğiz. Baya zorluyor. Ben özele geleceğimi hiç düşünmüyordum. Hatta özelde okuyanları küçümsüyordum. Özelde okumak mı olur, paranla okuyorsun? Ben de geldim buraya. Hani bizim evimiz zaten kira, bu sıra faturalar da çok fazla geliyor anlamıyorum niye öyle. Birçok şey çıkıyor bu da çok büyük sıkıntı. 10- 12 bin küsur işte bir para. Aylık bilmem kaç. 1.300. Baya bir zor



#### **4.5.2. Working Part-time in the Market, Studying Part-time in the “University”**

In the light of the fact of having difficulties in affording school, consideration of their working life is important in order to understand their university experiences. My first encounter with the phenomenon was during attendance taking, vis-a-vis the absence of some students. In the process, it turned out to be that there were a lot of students who were employed in part-time jobs like waiting tables, construction labour, sales at shops, babysitting etc. The scales of the jobs and the fact that they were private university students was creating a puzzle before I started to dig in. Working was quite common among the students however, due to their lack of time between school and work, only six of the students among the respondents are from this group. With others, we tried quite hard to meet and conduct the interview, however it was not possible because of their heavy work-study schedule. Their words in terms of working and studying, tells a lot about the intersection of past, present and future.

When we think of the work-school balance and the experience of the present, it changes from the fields of employment and strategies of arrangement:

When there is no class during weekdays and weekends, I work. Because in the construction sector there is no such thing as weekends or holidays, I can find a job any time. I was working with my brother during summer, now they came to Istanbul, I will work with them.<sup>57</sup> Respondent A (23, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, Mardin, Regular High School).

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oluyor. Annem çok zorlanıyor. Amcam destek çıkıyor. Ondan istiyoruz her ay ödeyemeyince hani sen ver.”

<sup>57</sup> “Okulum boş olduğu zamanlarda ve hafta sonları çalışıyorum. Çünkü inşaatta hafta içi hafta sonu diye bir kavram yok. Her zaman bulabiliyorum. Yazın abimin yanında çalışıyordum, yine şimdi abimin burada inşaattaki işine gideceğim.”

It's been a year, because of the financial problems, I started in summer and continued. I work at a clothing store at a shopping mall. I work for two days -15 hours a week. In terms of school-work balance, I work at the weekends. Only during exam period, since some exams are held at weekends. In terms of it, my employers are helpful, arranging. Following the lessons, studying and working are very hard and tiring. I will continue working until I graduate. The money helps the family budget. We put a little bit of money aside. I want it from my mom when I need it. My father's family says that 'if you send your children to private university, then it means you have money.'<sup>58</sup> Respondent B (21, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, İstanbul, Regular High school).

On the other hand, when we think of the decisions made in the past and expectations from the future, work experiences have effects on students' subjective positioning. It can be seen most vividly in the stories of students who have been working since high school years, and also siblings who work in the service sector instead of going to college as in Respondent E's case:

I work in a stationary shop across my high school. It has been around five years, I went there to help. We got acquainted with people there. There are different kinds of people, but they all order you to do things. Working life is very hard. I want to get somewhere by studying.<sup>59</sup> Respondent E (21, Child Development, %50 Scholarship, İstanbul, Vocational High School)

They, in a way, evaluate the jobs which are possible for them if they hadn't attended university, as in Respondent A's case, whose brothers and relatives are also in

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<sup>58</sup> "Bir yıldır çalışıyorum. Maddi sorunlar yüzünden, yaz tatilinde başladım devam ettim. Avm de satış temsilcisiyim, giyim üzerine. Haftada iki gün on beş saat çalışıyorum. Okul iş dengesi, çoğunlukla hafta sonu çalışıyorum. Sadece sınav zamanı bazı sınavlarımız hafta sonu oluyor. Orada da işten yardımcı oluyorlar, onu ayarlıyorlar. Dersleri takip etmek çalışmak anlamında yorucu oluyor zorluyor. Mezun olana kadar mevcut işimde çalışacağım. Evin bütçesine gidiyor para. Biraz da kenara koyuyoruz. Ben paraya ihtiyaç duyduğumda annemden istiyorum. Baba tarafım hala zorluk çekmiyorsun ki özelde okutuyorsun diyor. Babam öyle hocam babamı ne tarafa çekersen o tarafa gidiyor."

<sup>59</sup> "Ben bir kırtasiye var oraya gidiyorum yardıma benim lisemin karşısında. Bir 5 senedir oraya yardıma gidiyorum. Orada artık tanıdıklar oldu. Orada her türlü insan herkes ama emir veriyor işte şöyle yap. İş hayatı çok zormuş. Okuyup hani bir yere gelip belirli bir seviyede olmak istiyorum."

the construction sector. He analyses, differentiates and evaluates the working conditions and studying:

[C]onstruction sector and the department I am studying at are quite different. I don't only think in terms of economy but also it is very tiring if I drop out of university and continue in construction. If I drop out of university I will not have a future. I think I will be more exhausted and torn apart, going to work early in the morning and returning late. Actually this empowers me. If I do not study, I come home with exhaustion, I eat and directly sleep. But if I study, I mean I respect the people who work in construction but, I want to study and without that much effort, I want to build a nicer life.<sup>60</sup> Respondent A (23, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, Mardin, and Regular High School).

The constant relation to the familial habitus and harsh working conditions in the outside world, connects students into the present university education, by linking past-present working experiences under difficult conditions to the future that could be “better, nicer” with the university diploma. In other words, although there are difficulties in payment, although their expectations from the university are not met, they continue their educations with the expectation of finding better jobs, forming better lives with reference to the current working experience.

Now I am working as a babysitter; I go to the house of the child and play games with her. Sometimes I work in jobs which do not require registration and insurance. This covers my expenses. I buy groceries for

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<sup>60</sup> “Okulum boş olduğu zamanlarda ve hafta sonları çalışıyorum. Çünkü inşaatla hafta içi hafta sonu diye bir kavram yok. Her zaman bulabiliyorum. Yazın abimin yanında çalışıyordum, yine şimdi abimin burada inşaattaki işine gideceğim. İşte inşaat sektörü ve okuduğum bölüm çok farklı. Ekonomik olarak da düşünmüyorum ama ilki daha fazla yorucu. Üniversiteyi bırakıp inşaatla devam edersem bir geleceğim olmayacak. Daha çok yorulup hırpalanacağımı düşünüyorum, sabah işe gidip akşam eve gelip hırpalanacağımı düşünüyorum. Aslında beni güçlendiriyor. Ben okumasam o yorgunlukla eve dönüp hiç bir şey anlamayıp yemek yiyip uyuyorum. Ama okursam, hani tabii o da bir meslek grubu saygı göstermek lazım ama bu kadar eziyet çekmeden okuyup ileride geleceğim için daha güzel bir şeyler kurmayı düşünüyorum.”

the house. This school work tempo makes me tired.<sup>61</sup> Respondent H (21, Child Development, %100 Scholarship, Konya, Anatolian High school).

For the students who come from the Kurdish region, familial and hometown based networks are mobilized as a strategy to find jobs, and this means the simultaneity of habituses, in terms of institutional and familial:

My father pays for my university. I work for pocket money; I do not contribute to the house budget. I work in weekdays, when there is no class. I organize my week accordingly. I usually work as a waiter at cafes. It is irregular, I mean the hours are not fixed. When I have a chance, I go. Waitressing, in the service sector. I found those jobs via friends and relative circles. It is getting common among my friends, many of them working such jobs. I focus on exams during exam periods. Other than that, I go every time during school. It constitutes my allowance.<sup>62</sup> Respondent K (21, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, Mardin, Regular High School)

#### **4.5.3. Awareness of Stratification between Universities**

As it is discussed in the earlier chapters, higher education institutions become more and more stratified through imbalanced expansion policies. Students of the Farthest University are also aware that there is a stratification of universities, and the constant comparison of their university with others attracted my attention during participant observation process. However, in order to clearly see how they evaluate their

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<sup>61</sup> “Şimdi işte oyun ablalığı yapıyorum, bireysel evine gidip bir çocukla oyun oynuyorum. Arada böyle hani sigorta yapılmayacak tek tük işler bulup öyle çalışıyorum. Bunlar benim masraflarımı çıkarıyor. Eve market alışverişi gibi yapıyorum ama ortak yani. Bu okul iş dengesi beni yoruyor.”

<sup>62</sup> “okul ücretimi babam karşılıyor. Harçlık olsun diye çalışıyorum. Ama okul parasına bir katkım olmadı. Hafta içinde iş oldukça gidiyorum çalışıyorum, ders dışı zamanlarda gidiyorum, o haftamı dolduruyorum. Kafelerde garsonluktur, genel olarak bunu yapıyorum. Düzensiz oluyor, saati çok belli değil, oldu mu gidiyorum olmadı mı gitmiyorum. Bir garsonluk bildiğimiz hizmettir. Arkadaş akraba çevresinden bulduğum şeylerdir. Bu yaygınlaşıyor üniversiteden arkadaşlarım arasında daha fazla giden var. Okul iş dengesi, final vize haftası sınavlara yoğunlaşıyorum. Onun dışında normal okul zamanı her hafta gidiyorum. Bu benim harçlığım oluyor.”

university with others, I posed comparison questions in the survey I conducted. 48 students out of 59, evaluated their university's level of academic competence in relation to other universities, as mediocre, inadequate or very inadequate.

**Table 7.** How would you evaluate your university academically in comparison to other universities?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very inadequate	7	11.9	11.9	11.9
Inadequate	27	45.8	45.8	57.6
Mediocre	21	35.6	35.6	93.2
Adequate	2	3.4	3.4	96.6
Inadequate	1	1.7	1.7	98.3
99	1	1.7	1.7	100
Total	59	100.0	100	

Although they are aware of the stratification of universities and diplomas, they also think that it is not just that people look down on private university students saying “they are not qualified to get a degree, they are just studying with their money”. They also have a dichotomy here. In some cases, internalization of this attitude by the students can be seen. In other cases or moments, they vehemently disagree and are offended by the insinuations that they've not laboured at all for enrolling or studying in a private university.

The meritocratic education system and the stratification of institutions make students choose from only two feelings: That they “have failed”, or that they were “unsuccessful”. As Respondent E puts it, being a private university student is what “falls to their share”; in this sense it is an unwanted situation that they’ve find themselves in. However, “at least” going to university is better than nothing and provides a kind of closure to the conflict created by feeling unsuccessful:

I mean, if I were studying in a public university, I would be happier. Because I would feel like I successfully got in. If I could get a greater score in the exam, I would go to a public university and I would be happier. What falls to my share is a private university but I think in a way at least I am attending university.<sup>63</sup> Respondent N (21, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, İstanbul, Girl’s Vocational High School).

Even, the full scholarship students see the public university as a better opportunity, because they accept that “clever” students go to public universities and this is generally acknowledged and upheld by society. In that sense, full scholarship students are not free from feeling inferior in relation to their university in terms of market chances:

They are quite different. Public university is advantageous in any case. Because I will give my diploma and it will not say %100 scholarship on it. They (employers) will regard me as a graduate of the Farthest University. People would consider whether it is Marmara University or Farthest University. Of Course Marmara is better. I mean, the guy is already clever enough to manage to enrol in Marmara. They will think that you cashed down and studied. And there is always a difference between who gives money and who studies in public university.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> “Yani devlette okusaydım daha mutlu olabilirdim. Çünkü kendim başarıp girmiş olacaktım. Ben daha yüksek puan yapabilseydim devlete girerdim, daha mutlu olurum. Ama yine özel de olsa üniversiteye gidiyorum. Özele kaldım ama en azından üniversiteye gidiyorum diye düşünüyorum.”

<sup>64</sup> “Çok fark var. Devlet üniversitesi her halükarda avantaj. Çünkü ben diplomamı vericem ama ben de yüzde yüz burslu yazmayacak herhalde. [...] üniversitesinden mezun diyecek. İnsanlar bakar Marmara mı [...] mi . Marmara tabii ki. E bu adam zaten zeki bu bir puanla girmiş okula. Sen bastın parayı okudun diye düşünecek yani. Ki kesinlikle de fark oluyor para verenle devlet okuyan arasında.”

Respondent H (21, Child Development, %100 Scholarship, Konya, Anatolian High school).

This conflict stemming from the separation between the successful and the unsuccessful according to the institution they're enrolled in, was also the case in their experiences with friends from the neighbourhood, high school and hometown even if they cannot escape the same consequences as in Respondent K's case:

Before there was the idea that, ones who went to private university were unsuccessful. But I don't see it like that. There are students with scholarship as well. And when people hear the adjective 'private', they perceive those students to be just as unsuccessful. They ask you where you study, and their response is: "private, eh?". They have a bad, despising attitude, they regard you as unsuccessful. When I return to my hometown, and even during the exam results announced, they instantly say: "he will study with his money". I mean, in the end, you get a score, you have a place in the ranking at least enough to come to a private university. You come here depending on your own resources. There are even jokes in terms of "you are studying with your money". The year I got into university, one of my friends couldn't get in. He also despised me semi-mockingly: "you study with your money". Next year he got prepared and he got into a private university as well. I mean, one should consider how the mighty have fallen. There is a possibility to find yourself in situations you despised in the case of other people.<sup>65</sup> Respondent K (21, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, Mardin, Regular High School)

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<sup>65</sup> "Eskiden Őu psikoloji vardı, özele giden başarısızdır. Öyle bir Őey yokmuŐ hâlbuki. Buraya gelen tam burslu öđrenci oluyor, kalkıp özel sıfatını duyunca başarısız diye algılanıyor. Açıkçası memlekette böyle. Soruyorlar nerede okuyorsun, hmmm özel mi diyorlar. Bir kötü bir, küçümser bir tavırları oluyor, başarısız görüyorlar. Memlekete gittiđimde, hatta tercihler açıklandığında, hemen diyorlar kendi parasıyla okuyacak, öyle okuyacak böyle okuyacak. Sonuçta sen orayı kazanmak için bile bir puan elde ettin, bir sıralamaya girdin. İmkanınla geliyorsun. Mizahi olarak paralı okuyorsun muhabbetleri oluyor. ArkadaŐım, ben o sene yerleŐmiŐtim o yerleŐmemiŐti. Bana demiŐti sen paralı okuyacaksın falan. Sonra o hazırlandı özele girdi. Yani insan biraz ne dedin deđil de hep benim de öyle bir durumum olabilir diye düşünmeli. Yani herkesin, hep gocunduđumuz küçümseyeceđimiz Őeylerin baŐımıza gelebilirdi."

The attitudes by extended family members or relatives also regarding their payment on education as unsuccessful, affects the self-worth of students:

Public university students, studied more, showed more effort than the students here, in my opinion. Studying at a private university doesn't mean much anyways. But the attitudes of others, like you are studying at a private university as if you didn't have an exam score... they say you study with your fathers money; were it not for your father, you wouldn't be able to study. Even my aunt says that.<sup>66</sup> Respondent C (22, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, Ankara, Anatolian High School).

However, students are not merely the recipients of these despising attitudes of people regarding private university students, they are also critical of those people who do not acknowledge their circumstances, life trajectories and difficulties during their educational histories and exam preparation periods. Respondent R is well aware of the circumstances that she took the exam under: Her father was in jail, their economic situation was awful and she had to work long hours at Burger King while she was studying in high school:

I mean I feel bad. That's why I say, I wish I were not attending a private university. At least they wouldn't talk like that. Sometimes I care a lot about what other people say. About their criticisms against me. Actually, it's not like criticism, it is a bit different. They assume you are stupid. Yet, they don't know my situation. I was working during third and fourth grade of high school that I had calluses on my feet. These people don't know this, they don't think like "this girl was working, she entered the exam sleepless". This makes me sad, because people talk too confidently about the issues they don't know. But I shrug it off now. There are people who graduate from public universities but fail to better themselves. They don't attend even a seminar or they don't improve themselves in terms of their occupations. But, there are private university graduates who improve themselves so well and I guess I want to be like them. If only I

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<sup>66</sup> "Devlette okuyan bana göre biraz daha çalışmış, hakkıyla kazanmış, yani özel de okumanın bir şeyi yok bence. Fakat diğer insanların özelde okuyorsun, sanki buraya hiç puanla gelmemişsin gibi davrananlar da var. Baba parasıyla okuyorsun, baban olmasaydı okuyamazdın diyenler var. Kendi halam bile dahil olmak üzere."



could get through this semester...<sup>67</sup> Respondent R (21, İstanbul, Child Development, %40 Scholarship, Regular High School).

In terms of the stratification of institutions, the emotional burden and feeling of inferiority of students is not experienced in a static or linear way. Emotions and thoughts seem to be floating. As Respondent D states, there is a feeling of belonging to a lower level and self-questioning in terms of it, followed by an acknowledgement of not really lacking the potential or capacity:

Not like a differentiation but more like - I think that I am at a lower level since I am studying at a private university, but there are also public universities. The question of “why I am not studying at a public university rather than a private university” comes to my mind from time to time. Because when I evaluate myself, I think my capacity is enough to study at a public university. But I am at a private university. It also touches me emotionally.<sup>68</sup> Respondent D (23, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, Şırnak, Regular High School).

However, as it can be seen in the statements of the students, the current situation of being in Farthest University acknowledged as a low ranking university both by individuals and people around results in the students resigning themselves to the

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<sup>67</sup> “Ya kötü hissediyorum işte. O yüzden de keşke özel üniversitede olmasaydım diyorum. Hani böyle bir şey söylemezlerdi en azından. Bazen çok fazla önemsiyorum insanların ne söylediklerini. Benim için yaptığı eleştirileri. Eleştiri yapmıyorlar burada aslında çok farklı bir mevzu. Sizi salak zannediyorlar. Oysa benim şartlarımı bilmiyorlar o insanlar. Ben lise üçte ve dörtte çalışıyordum, ayaklarım böyle hep nasır tutmuştu yani. Bu insanlar bunu bilmiyor. Bu kızın şartı ne bu kız çalışıyordu. Sınava uyuyarak girdi. Bu biraz beni üzüyor çünkü bilmedikleri şeyin hakkında hemen böyle bir afralar tafralar filan. Ama artık çok da takmıyorum yani. Devlet üniversitesinden mezun olup sonradan kendini geliştiremeyen insanlar var. Ne bir seminere katılan ne mesleki anlamda kendini geliştirmek için bir şey yapan yani yok. Yani devlette de var böyle insanlar hiçbir şey yapmayan insanlar da var. Ama özelden mezun olup kendini o kadar güzel geliştiren insanlar var ki sanırım ben de o kısım da olmak istiyorum. Bu seneyi bir güzel atlatırsam.”

<sup>68</sup> “Daha çok farklılaşma değil de daha çok böyle, ee, alt kademedede olduğumu düşünürüm çünkü özel bir üniversitede okuyorsun ama devlet üniversitesi de var. Ben bunu, ben niye devlette okumuyorum da özel üniversiteden okuyorum düşüncesi bazen kafama giriyor çünkü mm, kendimi ele aldığımda devlet üniversitesinde okuyabilecek bir kapasitede olduğumu düşünüyorum ve ama özel üniversitedeyim. Bu biraz da dokunuyor bize.”

neoliberal subjectivity which creates the hope that you can save or better yourself if you only try harder.

#### **4.5.4. Self: Both the Saviour and the Devastator**

The fact of paying for university education itself is a part of neoliberal integration. However, another dimension of this subjectivity formation, in relation to their familial habitus and the institution's habitus which they find themselves in, is the fact that students are always claiming the responsibility. This is mainly because it is a low-fee and low-quality university and because they sense it quite intensively. Even when they express their dissatisfaction with the university they immediately follow it with how they deserved such attitudes and outcomes. So the process is twofold: Firstly, they are responsible for only being able to enrol in such a university; secondly, since they are at least in such an institution, the least they can do is improve themselves. As they say among themselves: “Diploma is not enough”.

The theme and perception of the current university which “people like us” attend and “what such people deserve”, reveals itself in a number of ways. It can be traced through the attitudes and implications of other instructors who warn me during daily conversations as in: “Do not expect much from them, their capacity is only that much”. In addition to the interviews I have conducted, this phenomenon has shown itself through the daily conversations I have had with students during breaks and out of school times we spent together. Their complaints or problems with the institution were simultaneously accompanied by their self-blaming and feeling of deserved maltreatment by instructors and administration. Of course, certain kinds of criticism and dissatisfaction regarding the institution were also present. But in the last instance,

students were taking full responsibility for the past while they were thinking that they didn't receive scores high enough to attend a better university. In the present, they were responsible for not having enough capacity for the courses. And for future, it is up to them to improve themselves. The reliance on self-enhancement, individual salvation and self-improvement, can be traced by the words of all of the students:

As long as I do not better myself, even if I graduate from the a-1, top-notch university of the world, it wouldn't have an effect. I think it is up to me. It is also up to the instructors as well, but it depends more on me. If I continue to better myself, I see myself in a better place in the future. I came this far even with zero hope. I mean, I've done something so far, but when you look back, I did it with zero self-esteem. If I did this somehow, right now, just by standing up and walking tall, I can reach better places. I mean, if I want it, if I truly want it, I can do it. I think everybody is the same. If a person truly wants, there is nothing that he/she cannot achieve. The only obstacle which stands in your way is, yourself. Only the obstacles in your mind and your own obstacles.<sup>69</sup> Respondent P (22, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, Mersin, Vocational High School).

There is a disconnectedness between the diploma/education and future aspirations. This creates a gap, and looking at this discontinuity we can observe the necessity of filling the gap by the individuals:

I think my education in university is not connected to my dreams or plans. Because, what is important here is your CV: If you build your CV here, you can have a better life in future. I am here for 2 years now, and I also have 3rd, 4th year friends. When I look at them, they are not engaged in social activities. They are trying to fulfil their CVs on their own, with

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<sup>69</sup> "Bu hayalleri planları gerçekleştirmede adlığın üniversite eğitiminin yeri eğitimin yeri. Yani kendimi geliştirmedeğim sürece, dünyanın en en en iyi üniversitenden de mezun olsam, hiçbir etkisi olmaz birazcık benim kendimle alakalı bence. Biraz önce de dedim ya hocaların ne verdiğinin de alakası var ama daha çok benim ne aldığımınla alakalı. Yani kendimi geliştirmeye devam edersem, ben kendimi iyi bir yerde görüyorum, buralara bile sıfır umutla bu şekilde geldim. Yani gerçekten bir şeyleri yaptım ama bakıldığında mantıken sıfır özgüven ile yaptım. Buralara geldim ama sıfır özgüvenle yaptım. Yani ben bunları bu şekilde yaptıysam, şuan bu dik durmayla ve kendime güvenimle iyi bir yerlere gelebilirim. Yani şunu biliyorum, istersem gerçekten istersem yapabilirim. Her insan bence öyle zaten, insan gerçekten isterse yapamayacağı bir şey yoktur. İnsanın önündeki engel bence sadece kendisi. Başka hiç bir engel yoktur. Zihnindeki ve kendi engelleridir sadece."

their own effort.<sup>70</sup> Respondent D (23, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, Şırnak, Regular High School).

While for Respondent D, strategy of filling the gap is filling the CV; for Respondent G it is learning English. In both cases, it is through individual efforts. However, the institution itself is not regarded as the source of those capabilities. It is the individual who is ultimately responsible:

I see the effect of the department, but rather than the university education, it seems it's up to me, my effort. In our university, there is not a good education. I mean an education which would take me somewhere. Because of that, it depends on my own effort, on learning English. Because in Turkey, it is very important to learn English. I don't know what would happen in the next three years, four years but it seems like that for now. I count on it, I think I will realize my dreams through this<sup>71</sup>. Respondent G (21, Child Development, %50, İstanbul, Regular High School).

The avowal for the responsibility of the present shows itself in class and education-oriented terms. The low quality of education and the absence of the pedagogic training of instructors gets mediated through the individualization of educational capacity:

All in all the buck stops here. I extract as much as I am willing to extract. Of course it is also related to what you share with me, but if I don't

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<sup>70</sup> “Bence bu, ee, üniversitede, ee, aldığım eğitimle o hayallerimin bir bağlantısı yok. Çünkü burada, ee, CV var, o CV ne şekilde doldurursan ileride o kadar daha rahat bir hayat sürdürürsün diye düşünüyorum. Üniversitenin 2 yıldır buradayım. 2 yıldır diğer arkadaşlarım ve 3.sınıf 4. Sınıftan, ee, tanıdığım arkadaşlar da var. Onlara baktığımda onlar da bir sosyal aktivite içinde değiller. Kendi bireysel çabalarıyla bir şekilde, ee, CV dediğimiz bir özgeçmiş var. Onu doldurmaya çalışıyorlar.”

<sup>71</sup> “Bölümün etkisini görüyorum ama üniversite eğitiminden çok, bana bu kendi çabamla olacak gibi görünüyor yani hani yukarıda da konuşmuştuk ya hani. Bizim okulda gerçekten şey anlamında bir eğitim yok öyle .. Hani yüksek yapabileceğin bir eğitim yok. Bundan dolayı da bence şey hani kendi çabamla yani, işte İngilizce öğrenerek. Çünkü bizim Türkiye’de İngilizce gerçekten çok önemli, bilmiyorum üç sene sonra ne olur, dört sene sonra ne olur ama şuanda o şekil görünüyor. Buna güveniyorum, bununla olacak hayallerim diye düşünüyorum.”

persist, you don't care much for me, right? You wouldn't care much. If I don't ask, how will I do? It depends only on the three hour course here. I think it depends on me. I think I am extracting something... Or at least I am trying. Our case is tough. We don't know English, but the courses are in English. Nevertheless, I think at least trying counts<sup>72</sup>. Respondent P (22, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, Mersin, Vocational High School).

Dreams are there, but still there is uncertainty for the future. The possibility of unemployment, which reflects itself almost in all encounters with students, is always on the table. It either stems from the opinion that their diploma will not be appreciated or their habitual uncertainties:

At first, I want to open a kindergarten. I want to work there. I guess I am trying to fulfil my mother's dream ...I think I can realize my dreams with my diploma. I mean, there is the possibility of unemployment. But I hope it lasts only a short time. Until I graduate, I will work my current job at a shopping mall.<sup>73</sup> Respondent B (21, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, İstanbul, Regular High School).

Sometimes the student adopts a perspective which evaluates the responsibility of the university and its relation to a better future in a broader sense, again focusing on his/her individual capacity. In this way, the student makes possible the acceptance of the current educational experience, which does not really provide the individual student with necessary tools:

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<sup>72</sup> “Sonuçta her şey bende bitiyor bence, ben almak istediğim kadarını alırım. Hani ben sizden ne almak istiyorsam onu alırım. Hani sizin bana verdiğiniz, tabii bununla da alakalı, ama ben sizin peşinize düşmesem siz beni çok önemsemezsiniz di mi? Hani çok fazla takmazsınız. Hani ben sizden bunu nasıl etcem nasıl etcem demezsem koşturmazsam. Burada en fazla burada geçireceğiniz üç saatle bağımlıdır. Ve bu benimle alakalı bence. Ben bir şeyleri aldığımı düşünüyorum. Ya da çabalıyorum. Bişeyler almaya.. Bizim işimiz zor, hem İngilizce okuyoruz hem zaten dilimiz yok. Buna rağmen hani çabalamak da bir şey bence.”

<sup>73</sup> “En başta, ben kendime bir kreş açmak istiyorum. Orada çalışmak istiyorum. Ben annemin hayalini gerçekleştirmek istiyorum galiba. Bu diplomayla o hayalleri gerçekleştireceğimi düşünüyorum. Yani işsizlik olasılığı var, ama kısa sürer umarım. Mezun olana kadar da şimdiki işimde çalışacağım.”

I mean, I do not think university contributes a lot to a student. I mean, in the end it's up to the student. Student has to improve herself/himself. Ok, we cannot deny that there are top universities. We cannot deny it. Istanbul University, Boğaziçi University but student has to improve herself/himself. If a student is improving herself/himself, I do not think university has a great effect on it.<sup>74</sup> Respondent N (21, Social Service, %50 Scholarship, İstanbul, Girl's Vocational High school).

#### 4.5.5. Divided Habitus

In the case of the farthest university, the discussion of a divided habitus, that is realized when the student enters a different habitus at school than his/her familial one, unfolds in a puzzling way. Before, I had stated that the institutional habitus is like an extension of their familial habitus in many ways, from the relations with peers to the spatial organization of the institution. However, we also witnessed that there is a tension with students' identities or being formed in the university, and their familial network, neighbourhood and former friend circles. In other words, their families are not well educated and it is not common to attain higher education in the extended family. Moreover, within their networks from the neighbourhood or high school, they are among only a few students who continue to higher education. Therefore, although the farthest university does not facilitate sufficient academic accumulation, merely going to university regardless of the quality of the education has significant symbolic value. This symbolic value, and in a way habitus in transformation, creates a tension with their local

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<sup>74</sup> “Yani üniversite öğrenciye çok bir şey kattığını düşünmüyorum. Hani sonuçta hangi üniversite olursa olsun öğrencide bitiyor iş. Öğrencinin kendini geliştirmesi gerekiyor diye düşünüyorum. ... Tamam çok iyi üniversiteler var. Onu inkâr edemeyiz zaten. İstanbul Üniversitesi, Boğaziçi Üniversitesi ama öğrencinin de kendini geliştirmesi gerekiyor. Kendini geliştiren bir öğrenci hani kendini geliştiriyorsa üniversitenin orada çok çok etkisi olduğunu düşünmüyorum.”

relationships. Divided habitus is not a dissonance, rather it is the atonality with their outside world in such moments:

I mean, when you say you are going to university, directly people regard you as “egolu” (a snobb). Directly they ask you this question: Are you egolu? Struggling with this question makes you exhausted. It is not only the case for me, but for my friends in the university as well. My family, my former friends... You know, I have friends who graduated from high school, but did not continue to higher education. They tell me, ‘gal, do not show off, don’t make ego (don’t be a snobb) since you are going to university.’ It’s not like I am showing off. I mean, when you get used to, interact with certain things, you start talking in a certain fashion. For example, a friend from another university says ‘Gal, don’t speak with English words, I do not understand’. I said, we talk like that at school. Naturally, she is mad with me.<sup>75</sup> Respondent F (Child Development, İstanbul, Vocational High School).

What we see in Respondent F’s story on the basis of her personal history, is that, the symbolic value that she gets through merely being a university student, and circulates in a way that creates a tension. But it also forms a basis for satisfaction which was not reinforced by the university experience at all. This symbolic value circulates in a way having her local friend circle marking her with the stigma of “being a university student” and “talking in a new, differentiated language”.

First of all, there is lots of knowledge. I learn tons of knowledge here. When I look at my family, I mean, even the talking style gets a bit different. You could tell by their words and sayings. The information they have is wrong. And when you argue that, they say ‘Now that you’re studying, you claim to be all righteous!’. I am studying child

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<sup>75</sup> “Egoluları yani üniversiteli deyince bazen direktman bazen egolu musun, direktman bu soru geliyor. Hani bu soruyla karşılaşmak insanı yoruyor. Sırf bana dendiğinden değil. Arkadaşlarıma da deniyor. Ailem, arkadaşlarım... Hani mesela liseyi bitirmiş arkadaşlarım var. İşte kızım ego yapma falan, hani üniversitelisin havanı çarpma... Ben hava yaptığımdan değil. Hani belli bir şeylere alışınca insan o tarz konuşuyor. Yani üniversiteden bir arkadaşım, başka üniversiteden... Kızım İngilizce konuşma, anlamıyorum falan dediği oldu yani. Biz alışıyoruz. Sosyal antropolojiye sosyal antropoloji mi diyoruz? Social anthropology. Ya da konulardan Türkçe mi bahsediyoruz. Ben böyle deyince bu bir sinirlendi bana, atar gider.”

development. I mean, I learn something and I want to share it. In order to teach the people the accurate information. My mom and aunt say that “we raised so many children, will we learn how to rear a child from you?” But they are not doing it in the correct way. I think I learn the correct information. For example, sustaining accurate communication. In my house, we always shout out loud to each other. Even I shout a lot. I mean always shouting; we are never speaking in a calm manner. “Thank you, you’re welcome,” we never use such stuff. I learn a lot in terms of daily manners<sup>76</sup>. Respondent E (21, Child Development, %50 Scholarship, İstanbul, Vocational High School).

In Respondent E’s case, the tension is located within the family, with mother and siblings, which creates a differentiation in language and claim to valid knowledge. For other students, like Respondent J, Respondent E or Respondent B, experiences of the attitudes and disapproval of family members, are more about preferring working life and earning money instead of studying. However, in most of the stories, it is also more likely and favorable to get married and form a family. Since most of their peers in the family, neighbourhood or high school chose that path to proceed with their lives, it’s no wonder the tensions persist.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

This chapter analyses the life stories, experiences and chances of students through their narrations and participant observation in three temporal dimension; past, present and future. The aim is to show the habitus related trajectories which plays role in

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<sup>76</sup> “Bir kere çok fazla bilgi. Ben burada her gün binlerce şey öğreniyorum. Onlara bakınca hani konuşma tarzı bile biraz farklı oluyor. Anlayabiliyorsun laflarından sözlerinden. Yanlış bilgi oluyor. Hani söylüyorsun bir kere şey yapıyorlar, işte okuyorsun da başımıza adam oldun. Çocuk gelişimi okuyorum ben. Hani bir şey öğreniyorum onu paylaşmak istiyorum. İnsanlar doğruyu öğrensin diye. Annem teyzemler diyor ki biz kaç tane çocuk yaptık senden mi öğreneceğiz. Ama yanlış yapıyor işte. Söylüyorum olmuyor. Doğru bilgiyi öğrendiğimi düşünüyorum. Düzgün iletişim kurabiliyorum. Mesela bizim evde çok bağırlılar. Çok sesli. Ben bile bağıriyorum aslında çok yüksek çıkıyor. Bağırarak değil de sesimiz yüksek çıkıyor. Hani o bile böyle sesimiz yüksek sakın konuşulmuyor bunları öğreniyorsun. Teşekkür ederim, rica ederim. Bunlar yok. Benim için çünkü çok önemli. Bunları yani gündelik şeyleri bile birçok şey öğreniyorum.”



the containment of the low-income students to enrol and their interplay with the institutional habitus which makes such institution sustainable.

In order to understand how habitus structures the students' educational trajectory, their educational backgrounds, family histories and relations have been examined. Narrations are showing that, most of the students are coming from vocational/regular high schools which are low ranked in the meritocratic education system. Those high schools are not qualified to equip students with the capital which is necessary to succeed in the selection based University Entrance Exam. Also, the socioeconomic conditions in family, shapes their scoring in the exam since some of them was working while they are studying at high school, and none of them had private tutorials which is a highly common investment on students in contemporary Turkey. When we look at if they receive any support within family in order to meet the deficit of cultural capital, we see the levels of educational attainments are remarkably low: most of the parents are either dropout from the primary and secondary levels of education. All in all, students are destitute of educational support in relation to their familial habitus, which emerges as an important dimension of their enrolment in the Farthest University. Therefore, habitus plays an important role in shaping the educational possibilities of students in a restricting way.

This chapter also shows that, in accordance with the structuring effect of the habitus in shaping educational outcomes in higher education, the decision making processes, concerns, calculations and motivations of families and students are reflecting itself as the blending of habitus and strategies of the agents within the field. This strategizing can be explained in three levels: decisions on going to university, decisions

on enrolling in a private university and decisions on the department. Firstly, going to university is taken for granted in order to have a regular, self-sustaining budget in future. Also, the current employment possibilities are not reassuring since they are familiar with economic troubles and the experiences of working in a manual, low grade job. So the decision on going to university is acknowledged with the recognition of the restrictions resulting from current habitus. After the decision of studying at university, what follows is to deciding on the university on the basis of exam score. Students and families are well aware that biennial departments which are the only public university departments available within the exam score scales of the students, are not providing good chances in the employment market. Also, the expenses in case of going a provincial city to have university education is not better then enrolling in a private university in İstanbul. Plus, studying at a university in İstanbul, rather than a provincial city, regarded as more prestigious and chance accumulating. Last dimension of the decision making is the departmental choice in terms of again market chances. Then we see the vocational departments which are providing intermediate job opportunities are chosen in order to guarantee employment in the future. The three dimensions on decision making process, gives an insight in understanding the low-income students containment in the newly emerging, low-fee, low-ranked, vocationally concentrated private universities.

However, narrations also shows the awareness of educational lack and incapability to equip cultural capital to students in the current university. When we try to understand the sustainability with the awareness of “something missing” and feeling of disappointment, analyses of the relationality between the institutional habitus and individual habitus of the students becomes a useful line to follow. Therefore, this

chapter also analyses the gap between expectation and reality, and how it is mediated by the relationality of different counterparts which constitutes the institution. The symbolic value of studying at a university, which is to be respected in the society and being civilized plays an important role in the sustainability. Also the spatial and relational organization which constitute institutional habitus, works in a way to adaptation and sustainability of students within the institution.



## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

This thesis examines the integration of low-income students into the private higher education and their experiences in the field through the utilization of the relationality between institutional and familial habituses. Drawing from the question of how come, while “the absence of the commodity” is acknowledged by all counterparts, sellers as a private education institution, buyers as students and instructors are still coming together in the market, this thesis explores how the experiences of the past and projections of the future of students shapes and reshapes the experiences of students in present.

Since this market and the emergence of the institutions are not separable from the historical, structural and political formations, historical formation and transformation of education system are taken into consideration. The first period of institutionalization and centralization of the education system in Turkey, in a similar trajectory with the global examples, is observed to have emerged as the path to the national and modernist development of the newly founded state. While education has been regarded as a public good, the period following the establishment of the state, with the global transformation of neoliberalism and adoption of neoliberal policies in Turkey, we see the emergence of education as a commodity via privatization of education. With the 1980s in which the neoliberal adaptation process started, 1990s marked the first period of higher education privatization. Institutions of this period mostly contain higher income groups when high tuition fees and claims on qualified education have been considered. It is important to

note that, the institutions of this period were also limited in the number of both institutions and students. However, under the rule of AKP, we see the diversification and proliferation of private universities with the propaganda of educational being served to the citizens. However, this thesis states that, this process and proliferation also contains and integrates low income groups into the neoliberalisation of education.

Following the statement of low-income students' enrolment into the private higher education, this thesis further explored how this enrolment was actualized in relation to their familial habituses and educational past embedded in it. In that sense, habitus is utilized in order to understand how this containment by higher education is happening in terms of the subjectivities of students. It is demonstrated that, students' socio-economic restrictions and low educational attainment of families played a role in their university entrance exam performance and scores. Since the majority of them are trained in vocational and regular high schools which do not supply them with equipment required for high scores in university entrance exam, and since they lacked the economic conditions in order to get private tutorials, their exam grades were not enough for 4 year public universities which are peripherally located or high ranked private universities. Since most of them are the first person or from the first generations to attain higher education in their families, they cannot receive educational support from their habitus either. All these constitute the restrictions and possibilities which are grounded in their familial habitus which paves the way for attainment in the university being under scrutiny.

This thesis also analyzed the process of decision making in terms of the habitual constraints and stimulation of students which played a role in the enrolment in a

university in general and in the case university in particular. In this respect, several concerns play roles such as emergence of the university as the only choice to get a higher position and income, support of mothers for female students and cost-benefit calculations in terms of educational expenses. Narrations of the students, which illustrate how habitual constraints are stretched out and possible paths, are strategized by the agents in the social field in terms of gaining tools towards habitus transformation.

However, first encounters with institutional habitus and individual ones, tracing the emotions, impressions and experiences of the students in the first year, conclude that institutional habitus has been experienced as an extension of the former habitus, creating an indifference instead of expecting change, which can be analyzed as a case of “fish in the water” in terms of overlapping of institutional habitus and familial habitus. This is the moment when the absence of the commodity which has been attributed to transformation, change and symbolic value, (university education in this case), has been noticed by the agents. As the following experiences and narrations of the students show, accompanied by observations on the field, students become more aware but still accept their positions in the field. This is one of the important points which clarifies the sustainability of the institution.

The gap between expectations and reality, in which university education and experience posit an absent commodity, traced from the narrations of students in terms of their relations with the instructors, seems to lack the educational relation and be based on merely personal attitudes. Also the spatial organization which does not sustain the cultural, social and educational flourishing of students fails to meet the expectations of the university in the students’ minds. Also the feeling of being fish in the water, the

feeling of indifference in university which is perceived as an extension of high school shows a remarkable pattern in the narratives of students.

The question of the sustainability of this gap between expectation and reality has been explored on several levels. For some students, going to university functions as a tool to daily escape from familial responsibilities such as taking care of siblings, house and family business. On the other hand, through their alternative life scenarios in case of not attending university, it is revealed that they see their present university experience as a chance to escape from familial habitus in future.

Working part time while studying appears as another finding of this thesis, which also functions as the reminder of the conditions of life without education, at the end also filling the gap between reality and expectations of university experience. Since the jobs they are working at consist of manual labour or service jobs, they also see education as a way to have a better position and income in relation to their current working experiences. Apart from current and previous working conditions and economic restrictions, troubles at affording university tuition fees also makes meaningful their continuation of education.

Divided habitus is another aspect of their experience, which situates the students in a double positioning in terms of being a college student and also a part of their familial/local habitus, in which symbolic value of attaining higher education circulates. However, it also creates the sense of differentiation on the basis of college student identity and knowledge accumulation, which creates an additional meaning for the pursuit of higher education.

By driving on the observations on the field and narrations of students, this thesis argues that, education which is regarded as a commodity in the neoliberal context of privatization, becomes an “absent commodity” instead of commoditization and commercialization of education in the diversified institutions as such under scrutiny. While with the privatization of higher education, institutions are becomes diversified on the basis of which class they appeal and contain.

Based on the habitus related constrained containment and institutional habitus based sustainability, current expansion through “diversified” and stratified private higher education institutions, students from low-income and socially disadvantaged groups becomes contained by the neoliberal educational expansion. Although the findings of the study shows a great tendency in terms of class based social reproduction both in university experience and future prospects, further studies might explore how the mobility and transformation possibilities are opened in the macro scale.

The first layer of neoliberal integration to education of low income families is on the basis of, although the structural and habitus related formations are playing a role on low exam scores, by enrolling in private education, families and students are taking the financial burden of education. The second layer is that, being aware of the low ranked position of the institution which is linked to low employment chances in the market, students are taking the responsibility by referring to their failure and lack of success. The responsibility taken is two-fold: Firstly, the fact that they are enrolled in the current low-ranked university is an outcome of their own failure, so this fills the gap between expectation and reality. Secondly, in order to escape from the disadvantages resulting from the fact of studying in a low-ranked university, they take the responsibility for the



future as well, by necessitating the investment in self. To sum up, students become responsible for the educational failure in the past, dissatisfying and lacking conditions in the present and prospects in the future. The overall process creates a neoliberal subjectivity by the internalization of uncertainty and individualization of responsibility for the future by promising mobility via education within the system based on stratified institutions which promote stratified prospects nevertheless.



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