CHAPTER 7

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF
BOURDIEU’S CONCEPT OF HABITUS:
A STUDY ON CLOSED FACEBOOK GROUPS
FOR FREECYCLING

Nilnur TANDAÇGÜNEN KAHRAMAN*

*Assoc. Prof. Dr., Istanbul University Faculty of Communication, Department of Advertisement, Istanbul, Turkey
e-mail: nilnur.tandacgunes@istanbul.edu.tr

DOI: 10.26650/B/SS07.2020.013.07

ABSTRACT

This chapter is the result of an attempt to understand patterns in virtual platforms based on collective
mind consciousness that digitalization allows. Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of habitus has been adopted as
a frame of reference for analyzing the forms of online communication produced by digital culture. The
theme is the evaluation of the virtual socialisation practices of digital culture, based on the categories
of language, interaction and capital production, and within a Bourdiesian frame where social capital,
field and doxa form the digital habitus. The study adopts closed Facebook groups based on interest in
freecycling as a population. The data was evaluated using netnography to offer an informed, descriptive
analysis.

Keywords: Pierre Bourdieu, digital habitus, freecycling closed groups
Introduction

In the digitalizing world, communication and processes, which are the dominant elements of socialization, are changing as a result of the effect of technological innovations. In a network society, which has incorporated the possibilities of new media into everyday life practices and transformed them into a habit (Castells, 2008, p. 463), (Dewdney & Ride, 2006), technology shapes society, and society affects the development processes of technology. While conducting research on social media in the network society characterized by the variability and diffusivity of time and space, it is important to address it in terms of its relationship with society. This is because social media offers a rich research universe to social scientists as a new medium that also meets the social needs of individuals such as awareness, appreciation and adaptation.

Current digital transformations have turned the new media into an important tool for socialization. According to the approach defending the benefits of participation in digital culture through online social networks, social networks have created new opportunities for communication among individuals and for knowledge sharing such as obtaining information/learning from close and/or distant friends, respect for intellectual rights, increase in intercultural transitivity, acquiring new daily life skills, political sensitivity and conscious citizenship. This is because of the fact that, in spite of cultural differences, interactive communication opportunities emerge more intensely than traditional socialization fields in virtual environments. Although the individuals of the virtual world have differences in their way of thinking and life styles, they are capable of producing more effective practices in regards to gathering around common values (Deuze, 2006; Gere, 2008; Timisi, 2005, pp. 89-103). This situation is considered to be an important factor affecting the socialization process.

This study aimed to examine the group dynamics developing within digital culture on the basis of the concept of “habitus” used by the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and to understand the cultural production areas within social life as well as the concept of “capital” produced within the habitus. In order to do this, a specific group based on freecycling was selected. Our choice of group was based on the fact that freecycling/sharing groups have the most direct and realist identity presentations in the relation patterns established on social media platforms like Instagram, Tinder, Facebook and Twitter. This selection allowed for a more objective observation of the characteristics of digital habitus, which is at the focus of the research.
Digitalization and Its Effects on Socialization

It is obvious that in the process of socialization, individuals are influenced by their cultural environment and these effects shape their decision-making. Online environments established on digital platforms have revealed a new dimension of socialization. The individual who has the freedom to share in the virtual world is now experiencing a process which is referred to as inactive socialization (Bakardjieva, 2003, pp. 291-313), (Binark, 2007). Research data indicate that individuals are increasingly choosing this new form of socialization where they have the opportunity to socialize without leaving the fields where they belong over face-to-face communication.

Understanding this transformation requires taking a closer look at the relationship of the individual with the concept of socialization. Social processes have major effects on the formation of an individual’s personality. The socialization process is completed as a result of the acceptance of social norms and the individual’s compliance with these norms (Tezcan, 1993). The socialization process, which has a guiding position in learning the human values of the individual, is directly proportional to the communication that the individuals establish with other individuals, common admiration and tastes. Individuals take into account these common tastes while helping others in the socialization process (Field, 2006, p. 3). It is possible to categorize the main factors affecting socialization process into family, school, groups of friends, social communities. During the course of history, the emergence of mass media has led the effects of media on socialization to be the object of research and media has been accepted as secondary socialization tool (Aziz, 1982), (Genner & Süss, 2016, p. 3). Social media, which is the focus of today’s research, presents a new form of socialization with its structure based both on the moment and on interaction, which is unlike traditional mass media. The interactive communication environments that develop with increasing speed of access to information creates a new form of faster and easier socialization (Karagüle & Çaycı, 2014, p. 5), (Okur & Özkul, 2015, p. 220). When evaluating the new media, the content production that the individual makes use of by interacting with other individuals in online environments is observed to become a new form of socialization because the communication paradigm of a network society is bi-directional, personalized, interactive and contextual. It is content that keeps users connected.

The phenomenon of socialization is a fundamental issue addressed from different perspectives in sociology, anthropology, psychology and political science. Contemporary sociological studies are discussed in terms of the process of learning social roles that regulate
socialization and adaptation to the physical and socio-cultural environment of the individual and within the framework of self-formation (Inkeles, 1969, pp. 615-616), (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1996). The psychologist Jean Piaget, known for his work in the field of cognitive development, evaluated the individual’s socialization process in four stages: 1) The stage of irregular and discontinuous individualism, (2) The stage of self-centering, (3) The stage of collaboration and adherence to the rules, (4) The stage of familiarization of rules. The individual passes these stages and completes the socialization process (as cited in Ergil, 2012, pp. 51-62). Individuals who are new to the online environment also go through the socialization process mentioned above and adapt to this new field. Explaining socialization requires mentioning social interaction. Social interaction refers to the situation where individuals perceive the actions of other individuals and appropriately react to these actions. In fact, F. H. Giddings (1897, pp. 41-70) argues in his main work called Socialization Theory that the process of socialization cannot occur without inter-individual interaction. These processes are as follows; (1) The process of gaining value: The individual’s adaptation to his/her environment and the maintenance of these values, (2) The process of gaining benefit: Individualization of the external world and making it suitable for the survival of the individual, (3) Characterization process: This individual makes himself suitable for the changes in the external world and interaction with the outside world. 4) Socialization: it is possible to summarize this as the process of accepting other individuals by an individual. The fact that the individual has a position in the society and that the other members are aware of his/her existence ensures the continuity of the process.

The virtual communication environments offered by the Internet lead to the transfer of real-life social ties to these environments and the formation of a new level of socialization. This new form of socialization is defined as virtual socialization. By its nature, new media environments, which enable individuals to communicate more freely, transparently and equally, also affect individuals’ level of participation in social transformation processes. New media tools have the capability of creating strong public opinion power. The individual has the power to communicate and act with individuals or groups close to his or her own way of thinking through online environments. With the increase in interaction, the various forms of communication carried out by the individuals are transformed. The transformations in the patterns of dependence and freecycling can be cited as examples (Harper, Hamill, & Gilbert, 2013, p. 8), (Field, 2006, p. 4). Individuals with social roles that complement each other develop their creative aspects by accessing new information through social media, communicating with other individuals with the same likes without the problems of time and
space, helping each other by exchanging information and ideas, and developing these roles through new social skills acquisition.

**Pierre Bourdieu and the Concepts of Habitus, Field, Capital**

In contemporary cultural theories based on the social science paradigm shaped around Durkheim’s anthropological heritage, actors/individuals are treated as “agents” who can take different and flexible positions in social relations rather than passive receptors of cultural elements. The aim is to reestablish the relationship between cultural symbols and social action, with a view to focusing on the intersection of symbols and the preferences of the actor.

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, with a reflexive sociological perspective that is shaped by Emile Durkheim’s and Marcel Mauss’s anthropological tradition and Max Weber’s field interpretations, examines the relations between cultural judgment and social hierarchy in a comprehensive social space. In fact, in his Outline of a Theory of Practice, he emphasizes the importance of a combination of theoretical framework and field research (Bourdieu, 1977). At this stage, the concept of habitus, which the active actor takes advantage of in explaining individual or collective behaviors, refers to the social formations that nourish and support the types of cognitive and motivating actions (Bourdieu, 2017), (Jenkins, 1982). Based on this view, actors/individuals acquire the ability to adapt to the specific attraction of each field while being positioned in different fields. They then use these acquisitions to develop social self and predisposition. At this point, it is necessary to take a closer look at the concepts of habitus, field and capital, which are the most important concepts of Bourdieu and form the basis of the study. Bourdieu’s extensive fieldwork in Algeria was the period in which these concepts were grounded. When examining events or phenomena, the sociologist argues that in-depth knowledge of their entire historical background is required. There is no need to have an unlimited universe of propositions and examples to explain theories.

‘Field’ (Champ) is one of the most important concepts in Bourdieu’s sociology. It determines the characteristics of the environment in which Habitus emerges. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the characteristics of the field before habitus. These properties are more structural. The field refers to the arenas where information, service and status are produced

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1 Reflexivity Principle, explains the need for scientific researches to have scientific knowledge about the methods they use. The researcher who conducts a sociological study according to his philosophical principle creates a new habitus by including his own scientific experiences and habitus in the research process. In order to understand Bourdieu’s sociological point of view, it is necessary to deeply investigate the different concepts and to take into consideration the relations of these concepts with each other. “One of the difficulties encountered in understanding Bourdieu stems from the fact that he is equally alien - and opposed - to two epistemological traditions, positivism and hermeneutics.” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2003), (Wacquant, 2007, pp. 53-77).
by individuals and the positions that individuals struggle to win in competition (Swartz, 2011, p. 167). It is observed that the concept was developed in the 1980s and that its analysis aimed at researching the interrelations of the fields in different disciplines such as education, art and social strata. In Bourdieu’s works, the concept of field stands out as a step towards positivism. Emphasizing that it is not possible to do science without relationality, the thinker tried to understand the changes and effects of fields in relation to cultures while researching the concept of field. Bourdieu says that the common ground of all fields is struggle. When we look at the actors on the field, there is always a struggle between new entrants and those who have a certain place in the field (Jenkins, 2013). When examining the concept, he pays attention to investigating the relationships that are invisible but that shape actions.

In the field analysis, which requires a deep conceptual background, Bourdieu underlines the social conditions that shape culture. According to him, the fields that can occur both between institutions and within institutions themselves are formed around certain capitals as an arena of struggle (Ali, 2007, pp. 397-421). He considers the existence of the struggle shared by the dominant and subordinate persons in the fields as an indicator of the unequal distribution of capital.

Bourdieu, who states that there are rules that determine the boundaries of fields, attaches importance to empirical research while determining these boundaries. Participants in the field always try to differentiate themselves from other participants therein because those who are involved pay a price. Restriction and/or exclusion strategies in the field are likely to vary over time. The most important limit of the field is the entrance rules. These rules vary depending on the types of fields and may be sharper or more flexible. There is a positive correlation between convenience and ambiguity of rules. There is also a ‘class struggle’ within the field. Those who have already been active in the field and who have a certain power are likely to be defensive against newcomers. On the other hand, new entrants in the field are opposed to the power therein and seek to shake the ‘doxa’ that provides reproduction (Kaya, 2007, pp. 400-401).

Bourdieu mentions three strategies in defining the concept of field. These strategies are ‘preservation,’ ‘monitoring’ and ‘overturning.’ Those who want to have a significant status in a field adopt the conservation strategy. Those who adopt the field are cautious towards newcomers and want to follow them. The overturning strategy is established by marginalized groups that have a place and are not very prominent in the field. However, this process may

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2 Doxa (Fixed Opinion); Preliminary assumptions expressing belonging within the field and the way the field operates. It is a phenomenon that alleviates the social pressure in the field and expresses the naturalness of the mobilities in the field (Koytak, 2012, p. 91). It also finds expression as the invisible rules of the game.
not develop at the same rate according to the doxic structure of the field. According to the sociologist who uses the definition of the ‘field of power’ as the organizer of all fields, this field is very important for the balance of power between the classes. The field of power is defined as the ‘game arena’ for opponents. Those who want to be a pioneer in the field develop and implement strategies for this. This ensures a balance of power between the players involved. The field offers the individual a variety of personal gain, attitude and movement. In addition, it enables the individual to maintain the gains (Bourdieu, 2006, pp. 394-404). The fact that the field has a constantly changing structure means that the ones involved are always in competition. The consistency effort within the field emerges as the product of competition. Groups with status within the field often pose a threat to other groups. On the other hand, these dominant groups, which are in the forefront of the field, are always cautious of any innovations outside their control (Palabıyık, 2011, p. 137) because a possible change has the potential to mean the loss of authority in the definition, distribution and reproduction of capital.

Bourdieu was influenced by Mauss’ anthropological perspective in developing the concept of habitus. He uses this concept and interprets it as the end of the subjectivity-objectivism debate which is an important topic in social sciences to explain the “system of permanent and transferable tendencies” formed through the world we are in. In fact, he defines habitus using expressions such as “the product of the structure,” “the re-producer of the structure,” “the regular improvisation” and “practice - producing principle” (Calhoun, 2007, pp. 77-130). Bourdieu speaks of the existence of a different class habitus that meets all social positions.

There is a relationship between habitus and intuition. He uses the metaphor of ‘game’ to explain the relationship between the concepts of habitus and field. According to Bourdieu’s theory of the game, which manifests itself in every aspect of life, each type of behavior and every act of individuals is an effort to win the game (Calhoun, 2007, pp. 77-130). He states that habitus is the capacity of the players moving in the game to perceive the next steps. The habitus, which is the sum of features that occur as a result of repetitive movements over time and which the individual did not have before, draws its boundaries under the influence of the environment (Naulin & Jourdain, 2016, pp. 77-89). Habitus is the sum of the common behaviors that individuals have during the formation of common aspects as a result of mutual relations. Here we see the ‘field’ as a concept which is important in the formation of common tastes of individuals. The importance of the relationship between habitat and field is therefore emphasized repeatedly in all relevant texts.

The influence of social rules on the direction of individuals’ behavior is highly significant. Individuals participate in the areas they want to be active in only by taking the dominant
thought into consideration (Bourdieu, 2013, p. 127). The habitus that develops over time is also effective in the formation of a person’s social status. Therefore, the word ‘susceptibility’ has key importance in explaining the habitus (Swartz, 2011, p. 152). The concept associated with ‘structure’ and ‘tendency’ draws the boundaries of action and gives birth to practices that are the beginning of socialization.

Understanding the concept of habitus in Bourdieu sociology requires taking a closer look at the concept of capital. Capital is the most important component of power, and power can only sustain its power by turning capital into symbolic capital. In order to understand the structure of the social field, capital is required to be evaluated not only economically but also culturally and symbolically (Bourdieu, 2014, pp. 192-204). ‘Symbolic capital’ emerges as a set of habitus-induced trends, behaviors instilled through family or school. When evaluating capital, it is necessary to consider the relationship between field and area. Bourdieu defines the main fields of capital as ‘economic capital,’ ‘cultural capital,’ ‘social capital’ and ‘symbolic capital.’

Bourdieu’s conceptual background of his sociological view of symbolic forms is based on French structuralism. He develops his first views on ‘social capital’ during his research with James Coleman and Robert D. Putnam. According to Bourdieu, social capital, which is the product of collective interaction, is supposed to be examined with habitus and field components (Bourdieu, 1991). Social capital, which expresses the relations of individuals with friends or business circles, develops with the strengthening of social relations between individuals and varies in size and importance depending on the interaction rate.

Bourdieu’s approach to ‘economic capital’ is a continuation of Marxist discourse. However, it transcends the reductionist view of capital to the economic dimension and provides a comprehensive definition of all the gains achieved as a result of the individual’s participation in the social field and competition within the field (Bourdieu, 1977). The thinker, who is reluctant to distinguish economic capital from other types, underlines the contrast between cultural capital and economic capital that exists in most areas (Göker, 2016, pp. 277-302). At this stage, he emphasizes the importance of symbolic capital in the reproduction of social inequality.

**The Features of Digital Habitus Constructed in Network Society**

The nature of digital technologies requires digital social science to continue evolving as an interdisciplinary field. In parallel, Bourdieu’s approach was inherently interdisciplinary, and
this allows his theoretical framework to engage with different fields of social sciences and to serve as the foundation for digital social science (Ignatow & Robinson, 2017).

Bourdieu’s development of the interrelated concepts of “habitus,” “field” and “capital” has paved the way for what is increasingly termed as “digital sociology” (Daniels, Gregory, & Cottom, 2016; Lupton, 2015; Marres, 2017). The term ‘digital sociology’ can refer both to research on the social aspects and impacts of digital communication technologies and to the application of digital technologies to research methodologies across social sciences.

In applying the concept of habitus as a foundation for how socialization can gain power within social media, it is first necessary to look at the development of internet technology and social media platforms and their integration into the daily social lives of individuals around the world. As social media has become a central aspect of our communication norms, elements of habitus have taken form within this space. By examining the socialization of the space within social media and the transference of social and cultural identity into social media, Bourdieu’s habitus forms a basis for showing how social interactions in online groups can use this habitual space to cooperate and socialize.

An individual’s culture, class and environment are transferred into the field of social media and create social relations that produce the initial relational positions within the field and which then develop through the internal mechanisms of the field itself. As a result, there are social structures and relations of power within the space, which are accentuated by the mirrored self that individuals project into social media. Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus, capital and field show the conditions under which this interaction can develop (Geukjian, 2013).

Nowadays, the “hybridizing” habitus in the network society has a flexible relationship with the social space. In institutionalized class structures, the common sense of taste and judgment is replaced by a higher type of adaptation (Adams, 2006, pp. 511-528). Cultural elitism, defined by a relatively more specific specialization, is replaced by a conception of cultural capital with heterogeneous and popular elements. Presenting a more flexible relationship between different fields such as specialization and education, today’s individuals have a more dispersed and transitional structure, which requires in-depth expertise rather than a cultural boundary with more specific borders. In the social practices of cultural capital in this ‘hybrid habitus,’ the capacity to manage cultural diversity comes to the forefront rather than cultural expertise (Budak, 2015, pp. 22-40).

In terms of the structural features of the field, one of the greatest opportunities offered by the internet is the possibility of creating a virtual community in online environments
both easily and in a variety of ways. Individuals communicate with other individuals in the communities in which they meet and in accordance with their various needs by producing content and by sharing and commenting (Nicoleta, 2014, p. 4). In the new media area, individuals have the freedom to decide which of the items of information are correct or which topics are worth talking about, and the rate of influencing or transforming the structure of the field is higher.

In the relationships established in the digital habitus, a highly acclaimed profile, the number of shares, the ability of individuals to interact in the group and the language of communication used in this process are indicators of social capital. Increasing social capital is determined by criteria such as having many likes or comments or high number of views in online environments (Güzel, 2016, p. 93). The connection of individuals through communication networks and sharing their common values with other individuals also contributes to symbolic capital (Field, 2006). Looking at the group structures indicates that the community has its own group rules: the language of communication and the limits and rules of the shares are determined. The difference between online communities and real-life communities is that membership is easier, the qualifications of the members can be more variable and membership is more powerful when the aim of the community becomes clear (Baym, 2015). Studies demonstrate that creativity, learning and sharing are more important in the structuring of the network community. Indeed, research on network society emphasizes five basic features. These are: (1) Technological changes are intertwined with daily life practices (2) There is a constantly renewed flow of information (3) Individuals are constantly changing and interacting by building new networks (4) Mobility and transferability within the network enables continuous new environments to be created and thus freedom and flexibility. (5) Thanks to the network structure, different information systems have become a transitive whole (Castells, 2008, p. 91).

It can be seen that studies on the effects of digital communication technologies on socialization processes are aimed at understanding the structure of the individual’s identity and the structure of the field (Van Dijk, 2006). Individuals who want to have power in any field aim to have the capital that carries this power to all fields. Individuals involved in the communication processes in online environments also reveal their social capital with the desire to be noticed among other individuals (Cavanagh, 2007). As a result of this, they show their presence by realizing the virtual communication process with their being liked and with feedback based on the comments made on the content they share and produce. Thanks to the features offered by the online domain, individuals with different capital fields can
communicate with each other. Individuals having strong bonds in virtual environments shape their social capital accumulation.

In the research section, based on these arguments, an investigation was made to understand the variables affecting the structure of social capital, especially in closed groups, which is one of the most suitable areas for habitus development, by focusing on the language of communication developed among individuals on digital platforms.

**Aim and Methodology**

The aim of this study is to define the characteristics of the construction of the field, doxa, and social capital in digital habitus constructed on Facebook for sharing/freecycling in order to understand the digital transformation of habitus based on Bourdieu’s theory. In this respect, the descriptive method was used to make sense of the relationship patterns, communication between actors, and the structure of the field and social capital production of closed groups, which are examples of socialization processes in digital habitus.

Within the framework of the purpose of the research, an attempt was made to answer the following research questions:

- How does the field structured in a digital platform affect habitus?
- What are the motivations of actors to share and comment?
- What are the variables that determine the level of commenting on shares?
- What is the communicative importance of the visual and literary content of the shares?
- What are the factors that determine the symbolic capital of interactive communication?

In this research of online culture, a netnographic analysis was conducted to monitor the actors in their natural environment in order to identify the rules and boundaries of the field as well as to observe the tendencies, motivations, social capitals of actors and the structure of the struggle in order to identify new propositions and to gather data in the natural environment. Netnographic research method, which is the digital version of ethnographic method developed to examine online environments and communities, was chosen (Kozinets, 2015, pp. 4-18) because the netnographic research method developed by Kozinets, allows researchers to examine online communication not only as content but also as social interaction and culture building process in group patterns.

The research universe was limited to sharing within freecycling closed groups on Facebook which were founded by Turkish participants. The universe was limited to the first three groups with the highest number of participants. In the first phase of the study, between November
2018 and August 2019, with the permission of the founders of the group, detailed observations were made about the rules of the field as well as the actors’ tendencies, tendencies and habitus expressed in their social capital. In the second phase, the research was limited to the findings of sharing and commentary for one month between 15 July and 15 August 2019 due to the high number of daily shares and comments.

In this study, which employed a descriptive method, the findings were textually interpreted according to the themes, and a categorical content analysis was conducted in order to evaluate highly dense numerical data. In order to understand the structure of digital habitus, an evaluation was made on the axis of “language of communication”, “interaction among actors” and “social capital production” in the field. During the design phase of the research, membership request was made to various groups that are closed facebook groups and which were found through our search using the keywords freecycle, sharing, exchanging gifts. These groups included the “Kitap Freecycle” (Book Freecycle) (closed group, 4,408 members), “Askıda Ailesi” (Suspended Family) (Closed group, 7,637 members), “Freecycle İstanbull” (proper noun) (Goods sharing network), “Kadıköy Freecycle” (closed group, 1,559 members), “Atmaver” (Don’t throw away Give, open group, 69,186 members), “YardımRail/Yardım Dükkanı” (AidRail/Aid Shop) (closed group, 97,816 members), “Shall We Yardım” (Shall we help) closed group, 36,460 members), “Atma Paylaş” (Don’t throw away Share), “Herşey Dahil Hediyeleşme” (All Inclusive Gift Exchange) (34,308 members - closed group).

This research, conducted between 15 July and 15 August 2019, was limited to the first three groups with the most members in Turkey. Since Atmaver turned into an open group in the process, although the number of shares was high, it was excluded from the research. The closed groups Shall We Yardım, Atma Paylaş and YardımRail were examined. All the shares in each group were recorded on a daily basis and in order to better understand the demographic characteristics of the actors of the field, the comments and member profiles of the three groups that received the most comments each day were also evaluated.

**Findings**

The findings were evaluated in accordance with the themes and the problems of the research, which were determined according to the literature within the scope of the aim and method. In the light of this:

- “The effect of the field structured in the digital platform on habitus” and “the motivation of the actors to share and comment” were evaluated in the theme of Social Capital.
• “The variables that determine the level of commenting on the shares” were evaluated with the theme of Interaction Level.
• “Importance of the visual and literary content of the shares” and “The elements determining the symbolic capital of interactive communication” were evaluated with the theme of Language of Communication.

The profile and sharing contents indicate that there is a significant relationship between the demographic characteristics of the group founders and the characteristics of the participants. It is evident that the founders of Atmapaylaş group, which is the third closed group and has the highest number of members, are female members of C2 and D (SES) socio-economic status (“SES Report of…,” 2019). Although there is no participation limit, it is clear that the participants are also women like the founders and have demographic characteristics belonging to C2-D-E SES group. This, as Bourdieu stated, gives information about the homogeneity of the demographic structure of the field where the habitus is constructed. YardımRail/Yardım Dükkanı and Shall We Yardım groups have an equal distribution of gender, the majority of which are in the A, B and C1 SES groups, and university graduates or students aged between 20 and 45. The socio-economic status index assessments determined by education, occupation and income level of the individuals reflects only the average information obtained from members whose profile information is accessible.

Interaction Level

To increase interaction in all groups, sharing, related or unrelated pictures and videos are made more visible and up-to-date with the aim of more comments. Especially in Atmaver group, the members in the categories “Founder”, “chat initiator” and “story teller” share posts on average 2-3 times a day, mainly in the morning such as: “Good morning, have a nice day,” “Hello today, how are you?,” “Are you good ladies?” In particular, the founders of the AtmaPaylaş group express that they are the rule-makers in the field, while determining the language of interaction using the statements such as: “Let us know the reasons why you complain about their mother-in-law?,” “What is the average age of the women between us?,” “Come on everyone, write down your ages,” “To the members who don’t share anything, let’s be a little more active, for your information, if you don’t share anything but continuously send requests for posts, these requests will be removed.” In their own discourses, they sometimes direct the field with humor-based videos, jokes, and sometimes sets of questions to measure the group’s demographic tendencies. The Moderators of the Shall Group, on the other hand, try to make the group attractive by posting posts and practical information to gather members to other groups established under the name of Shall We group (friendship, travel etc.).
YardımRail moderators are observed to mainly share the postings that define the boundaries of the field in the reminder content of group rules.

**Language of Communication**

Despite the discourse differences among the groups, we observed the existence of a common symbolic capital language, which is a basic indicator of the fact that role sharing and interaction motivations in the field are based on competition. In all groups, to increase interpretation, interaction, sharing and motivation, a symbolic hierarchy language was created between the participants and the categories “new member,” “admin/moderator” (memberships, moderators, settings and posts managers), “chat initiator” (constantly initiating meaningful conversations) “visual story teller” (constantly sharing images and videos valued by people), “rising star” (members who interact with posts within the first month after joining the group). Those who share with a certain quota and those who produce content have these titles in turn and bear these expressions (along with their symbols) under their profile. When they get these titles, comments such as “I finally started a chat, hurray” or “Hey friends, I come with contents that suit a story-teller” are examples of how important it is to be accepted and popular within the group. See Table 1 for the numerical data of the symbolic capital distribution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbolic Capital Codes</th>
<th>Manager</th>
<th>Chat initiator</th>
<th>New Member</th>
<th>Rising Star</th>
<th>Visual storyteller</th>
<th>The number of members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atma Paylaş</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>482</td>
<td>652</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>34.308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shall We Yardım</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>NONE</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>36.460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YardımRail</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>NONE</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>97.816</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the point of view of the policy makers and followers of the field, it was observed that habitus is a language of discourse and actors act according to these rules. Although this language is a group of Turkish-speaking people, it contains references in English, the common language of the digital universe. While the posts are called “post,” the word “up” is used by the other members to keep their shares up-to-date, and “ref” is preferred to refer to a member’s share. The founders of the field have the authority to intervene when there is a comment, an insulting share or a response that requires a commercial content or medical information on the shares, to remove the “post” or by using the expression “Do not make comments that will threaten your health and require expertise and ignore such contents.”
Social Capital

It was observed that the social capital production of AtmaPaylaş group differed significantly from the other two groups. The first element that determines the social capital of this group and distinguishes it from other groups is the dominance of religious motifs in content and interpretation. Statements such as prayer requests for the sick and dead such as “Can you read Surah Yasin?” “Let’s have a little chat with girls, what kind of problems are you going through in the world that tests you?” or “You can give me your hijab clothes, my dear friends” are frequently used. The second dominant element of the interaction is discourses of conflict and competition. For example, “I see that there are those of you who have left this group and have found a group among us, it’s a shame” or “why isn’t my request approved despite all my sharing?” “To the notice to the admins, you are getting on my nerves”, “Why is there no answer to all this sharing?,” “Why is this jealousy?” “Those who can’t stand with me can leave the group,” “the group was attacked by the evil eye, I had better pour lead to repel the evil eye” are observed to be the most frequently used statements. The third element is the humorous sharing in a group for charitable purposes that is not related to the group’s purpose. In particular, Tik Tok videos shared by the founders, moderators and visual storytellers are made with the strategy of dominating or directing the group.

The posts and comments of the three groups imply that Shall We ranks first in terms of number and theme variety. The least sharing is performed in YardımRail. Depending on the data, it can be said that there is a direct correlation between the post ratio of the groups and the theme diversity. It was observed that both groups received 35-45 posts per day and between 10 and 250 post comments per day respectively. In this case, it can be said that there were approximately 3,600 posts and 36,000 comments recorded within a month. Due to the intensity of posts and comments, the social capital data of the groups were categorized into ten main titles according to their themes and examined in order of intensity.
### Table 2: Social Capital Distribution by Sharing Subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sharing Categories</th>
<th>Atma Paylaş</th>
<th>Shall We Yardım</th>
<th>YardımRail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Request for sharing foods</strong></td>
<td>Children’s and women’s clothes, stationery materials, toys, child care and household goods, cosmetic product, food, wedding dress, dowry</td>
<td>Household goods, medicine, food, technological products, discount coupon, medicine, free internet and broadcasting code, pet care equipment</td>
<td>Garment, household goods, cosmetic product, food, stationery, technological product, medicine, dowry, wedding dress / grooming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional Information / Expertise</strong></td>
<td>Care</td>
<td>Health, law, education, technology, insurance, trade, real estate, plant / animal care, outdoor sports, patient care</td>
<td>Health, law, education, technology, insurance, trade, real estate, logistics, tourism, bank, finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health</strong></td>
<td>Prayer for patients, Home accidents, diet, doctor / hospital advice</td>
<td>Psychological problems (social phobia, suicidal ideation, depression with loss, anxiety disorder), home accidents, drug side effects, expert physician advice, emergency blood assistance</td>
<td>Drug side effects, home accidents, specialist physician advice, diet, psychological problems, emergency blood assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emotional Issues</strong></td>
<td>Family problem, love, prayer for sick / dead</td>
<td>Gender change, love, family problem, disputes regarding friends and work</td>
<td>Help for love, celebration and apology videos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Insight into product / service experience</strong></td>
<td>Clothing and accessories</td>
<td>Accessories, clothes, technological products, internet program, photographer, sports Vehicle, technology, travel, 2nd hand shop, movie, book, computer game equipment / facility, vehicle, school, military service, animal shelter, restaurant, hotel, bank, transportation, camping equipment, language course, computer game, book &amp; film directions</td>
<td>Vehicle, technology, travel, 2nd hand shop, movie, book, computer game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emergency aid</strong></td>
<td>Housework, education, children food</td>
<td>Health, use of technological products / services, travel problems (wallet, passport stolen, trapped in the airport, vehicle breakdown), animal shelter or food aid / request, business aid / request</td>
<td>Vehicle, use of technological products / services, legal advice, emergency blood, travel problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content Motivating Group</strong></td>
<td>Video with humor, chat initiator questions, info / warning reminding group rules</td>
<td>demographic survey, new group presentation, content that gives practical information, chat initiator questions, information / warning reminding group rules</td>
<td>Information / warning reminding group rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approval / Like Requests</strong></td>
<td>clothing, birthday, Celebration preparations for engagement, marriage etc., food</td>
<td>Physical appearance (Hairstyle, tattoo model), design / creative ideas</td>
<td>NONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creative ideas</strong></td>
<td>Suggestion for child’s name, surprise and gift idea</td>
<td>Proposal of marriage, idea of surprise and gift, opinion on new design</td>
<td>Name / logo proposal commercial product, for idea, for surprise gift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Request for Accommodation / Transportation</strong></td>
<td>NONE</td>
<td>Hitchhiking, temporary searching for roommate stay, being/</td>
<td>hitchhiking, temporary accommodation, roommate, transport request</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These data imply that the most frequently performed shares are based on freecycling requests for/sharing of goods. In terms of the density of posts, it is possible to note that “share goods” post theme is followed by professional expertise, emotional issues, product/service experience and emergency aid posts. These themes can be said to be directly proportional to freecycling and sharing motivation. AtmaPaylaş group significantly differs from the other two groups in that it only consists of women and has a different socio-economic status. These data indicate that there is a correct correlation between the demographic features of the groups and their social capitals.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

The concepts that were developed by Bourdieu, an important name in contemporary sociology with his studies on social stratification, education and social policies, were frequently referred to in the researches of different disciplines of social sciences in order to understand the sociology of digital with the emergence of network society (Daniels, Gregory, & Cottom, 2016; Ignatow & Robinson, 2017). The majority of these studies are on digital capital and digital divide in education (Paino & Renzulli, 2013), digital inequality and social media usage habits and usage areas of digital communication technologies (Benson & Neveu, 2005), (Villanueva-Mansilla, Nakano, & Evaristo, 2015). There are media studies focusing on the digital dimensions of social capital on social media platforms such as Facebook or Twitter (Brooks, Hogan, Ellison, Lampe, & Vitak, 2014), (Hofer & Aubert, 2013). Gender, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status research on Facebook users focuses on the relationship between individuals’ network behaviors, demographic characteristics, and social capital (Lewis, Kaufman, Gonzalez, Wimmer, & Christakis, 2008), (Nissenbaum & Shifman, 2015).

These studies demonstrate that understanding the structural transformation of social media and digital habitus constructed in this environment, which stands out as a means of socialization, remains significant for social sciences. This study aims to contribute to the literature by examining how the concept of habitus is shaped in social networks, from the communication perspective in the context of the closed groups by suggesting that there will be less class differences. Individuals socialize through online environments, with the possibility of establishing an unlimited number of new connections without the problem of space and distance. The emergence of social networks transforms the way individuals communicate. These changes include the transfer of cultural values through online environments. In virtual spaces where digital habitus develops, individuals/actors who socialize around different themes interact more intensely with each other. Freecycling platforms have come into
prominence and form part of the collective intellectual practices developed by the lonely modern individual with the need for socialization.

Closed freecycling/sharing groups, which are exemplary for the socialization processes in digital habitus, were selected since individuals tend to retain their real identities and objectivity is preserved in these groups. In this way, the aim was to eliminate factors which might have influenced the objectivity of the field such as showing-off and pretending which are commonly observed behavioral patterns among individuals on social media. In the present study, the obtained data were assessed under the subtitles of “interaction level,” “language of communication” and “social capital” to understand the capital produced in the field and the implications of this capital on the habitus by employing the concepts used by Bourdieu with the aim of making sense of relational patterns among individuals, communication among the actors of the field, structure of the field and social capital production.

Habitus, which has a leading role in socialization, is formed by certain thoughts, tastes, behaviors and actions that the individual acquires and exhibits as a member of the class or social group. Habitus, which is a collection of trends and habits, is related to past experiences. The formation of the habitus, which provides an individual’s perspective to life through the experiences he has experienced throughout his life, is not a conscious and planned process. Bourdieu explains that habitus has the possibility of differentiation in the transition from the real world to the virtual world with an emphasis on the variability of the field (Bourdieu, 1977). Individuals in atomized urban life interact with the need for approval, appreciation, sharing and assistance, and virtually socialize in online environments. Formal changes in the field, in part, lead to the reshaping of the individual’s behavioral patterns and the restructuring of expectations in the socialization process. In Bourdieu’s words, the doxa in the field is shaped to reconstruct the rules of the game (Jenkins, 2013). Indeed, when we look at the area and habitus constructed on digital platforms, there are some differences based on the traditional definition. Features such as high interaction rate, flexibility and freedom of virtuality, time and space limitation, and momentum also transform the language of communication. These features allow the construction of hybrid habitus where actors/actors with different social, economic and educational capitals are more flexible and permeable to the rules of the socialization area with the motivation to cooperate (Adams, 2006), (Budak, 2015).

However, it has been observed that the basic framework of the concepts of field, habitus and capital defined by Bourdieu is preserved during the socialization process. In other words, habitus, which is also referred to as the sum of disposition, is shaped by the individual in a permanent or transferable manner. Moreover the habitus is inspired by the past structure
and it is full of information from the past (Bourdieu, 2014). The distinct differentiation of the social capital production of AtmaPaylaş group, which is a homogenous group consisting of only women and individuals from a lower socio-economic and socio-cultural class than the others, when compared to the other two groups is a significant indicator of the impact of cultural capitals on the forms of freecycling/sharing. When the posts in this group having more traditional and conservative cultural features are examined, obvious differences are observed in their freecycling/sharing understandings such as praying for one another. Distinct differences observed in the posts of the members of this group related to child care, daily chores, their dialogues containing gossip as well as competitive and conflicting elements, and their sense of humor also support Bourdieu’s argument that habitus is shaped by past information and experiences to a large extent.

Due to the effect of digitalization, individuals produce and share content in themes that differ according to their social capital, in order to receive acceptance or to attract attention. The motivation of mutual aid democratizes the language of communication by softening the doxa produced in the social classes, political views and beliefs of the actors in the field. Most notably, it is clear that all participants express themselves peacefully and freely by deciding whether the shares are suitable for their social capital. If this is not done, the founders of the fields intervene and maintain the order of the field. The available data shed light on the fact that symbolic capital, the trends created by habitus, and the behaviors instilled through the family or school emerges as a whole, confirming the argument that social capital varies according to the habitus of the actors. In the AtmaPaylaş group, which has a very different socio-economic status from the other two groups, it is observed that the strategy of conflict and competition is prominent. This supports Bourdieu’s thesis that each field has its own rules and boundaries, and the habitus that is constructed in the field determines social capital.

The rules and the manner of struggle of the game between the founders of the field and the new participants determine the predisposition, structure and tendencies of the field. The contrast between cultural capital and economic capital (Bourdieu, 2017), which Bourdieu thinks exists in most areas, is also observed in this study. The proposal that symbolic capital is of great importance in the reproduction of social inequality is highly significant as the question of another study on which this study is based.

The dynamics within the group demonstrate that the actors whose actions are defined in the field with symbolic expressions such as “founder”, “chat initiator” or “visual story teller” gain strength by acquiring symbolic titles in the group. Thus, all the participants of the field are always in competition with their social capital generated in the habitus in which they are
located. The size of this competition increases with the increase in the likes of shares. The social capital produced by the profiles is transformed into economic capital from time to time by serving activities such as exchanging goods and introducing members through new group promotion, although it is in the axis of goods/information sharing and motivation for freecycling. These examples can be interpreted as an indication that the transition among the fields of capital is becoming more fluid and transient with digital culture.

Finally, if it is necessary to evaluate the problems which emerged during the research design stage, it can be seen that there is a direct correlation between the rules and boundaries of the field and acceptance within the field. Actors’ motivation to share and comment focuses on meeting requests for freecycling and appreciation/approval. The variables that determine the level of commenting on the shares are the urgency, importance and attractiveness of the issue. It is clear that the actors support their content especially with video or photography in order to draw attention to the shares. The main determinants of the symbolic capital of interactive communication can be summarized as participation motivations, tendencies, inclinations and skills. Although there are exemplary studies defining especially the production of capital for Twitter and Facebook users in the media studies, this study is a pioneer in terms of addressing the issue with a focus on the impact of the field and capital construction on the habits of closed groups. In this context, this study is expected to contribute to the literature by providing inspiration for further research to be conducted with empirical data.

References


