



**ISTANBUL MEDENIYET UNIVERSITY**  
**INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

# Impact of Social Capital on Subjective Social Status in Turkey

Master's Thesis

**Reyta Akdeniz**

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**Reyta Akdeniz**

Supervisor

**Prof. Dr. Lütfi Sunar**

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İmza

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# GENİŞ ÖZET

## Türkiye’de Sosyal Sermayenin Öznel Sosyal Statü Üzerine Etkileri

Akdeniz, Reyta

Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Sosyoloji Anabilim Dalı

Danışman: Prof. Dr. Lütfi Sunar

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Bu tez temelde Türkiye’de sosyal sermayenin öznel sosyal statü üzerine etkisini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. ISSP’nin Sosyal Ağ ve Sosyal Kaynaklar veri setinin 1521 katılımcıyı kapsayan son dalgasını kullanan bu çalışma, sosyal sermayenin kişinin kendi statüsüne dair değerlendirmesini ne yönde, düzeyde ve spesifik olarak hangi türü ile etkilediğinin analiz etmekte ve tartışmaktadır. Literatürde son yıllarda popülerleşmeye başlayan sosyal sermayenin bu anlamdaki etkisine dair tartışma toplumsal tabakalaşmanın ekonomik olmayan belirleyicilerine dikkat çekmesi açısından önemlidir. Ayrıca hiyerarşik toplumsal konumlanmayı ifade eden statü kavramına dair alternatif bir parametre ve yaklaşım sunan öznel sosyal statü de tabakalaşmanın objektif göstergelerinden ve yapısal tartışmalarından ziyade bireyi ve bireysel algıyı merkeze alması bağlamında önemli açılımlar sağlamaktadır.

Klasik sosyoloji teorilerindeki toplumsal sınıf ve çağdaş çalışmalarda onun yerini alan sosyoekonomik statü kavramlarından bütünüyle kopuk olmamakla birlikte, bireylerin toplumdaki hiyerarşik konumuyla ilgili olarak materyalist boyutundan ziyade ideayı, algısal boyutu, mutlak ölçütlerden ziyade göreceliği ve yapısal tartışmalardan ziyade aktörü vurgulaması ile farklılaşan öznel sosyal statü de özellikle Türkiye literatüründe pek fazla kullanılmayan bir kavramdır. Bourdieu’nun bireyin statüsünü belirleyen farklı sermaye tipleri tanımladığı yaklaşımı içerisinde önemli bir yer tutmakla birlikte özellikle Coleman ve Putnam’ın çalışmaları ile popülerleşen sosyal sermaye kavramı aynı zamanda farklı tanımlamalar ve ölçümler ile de çeşitli alanlarda ampirik çalışmalara

konu olmuştur. Bu anlamda, sosyal sermayeyi bireylerin ediniminde ve dolayısıyla bireyler arasında eşitsiz dağılımı söz konusu olan, bu yüzden de olumsuz sonuçları da doğurabilen bir olgu olarak gören Bourdieu'dan farklı olarak Putnam'ın çalışmalarında sosyal sermaye toplumun veya çeşitli toplulukların kolektif olarak sahip olduğu, sosyal entegrasyon ve dayanışma ile ilintili ve hemen her zaman olumlu olan bir özellik olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Coleman'ın ise hem bireysel hem de kolektif yönlerine vurgu yaparak bu anlamda daha ortada durduğu söylenebilir. Sosyal sermayenin, Putnam'ın da bu konudaki en önemli kavramsal ayrımlardan biri olarak altını çizdiği, iki temel tipi bulunmaktadır. Bunlardan bağlayıcı (bonding) sosyal sermaye bireyin halihazırda içinde bulunduğu sosyal ağın ve ait olduğu toplumsal grubun içerisindeki bireylerle kurduğu güçlü ve yakın sosyal ilişkilere karşılık gelirken, köprü kuran (bridging) sosyal sermaye bu ağın ve grubun dışındaki kişilerle kurdukları zayıf ve uzak ilişkilere karşılık gelmektedir.

Sosyal sermayenin bağımsız değişkeni, öznel sosyal statünün ise bağımlı değişkeni temsil ettiği çalışmada sosyal sermayenin üç aşaması yaklaşımı geliştirilmiş, bu aşamaların her birinin algılanan sosyal statüyü açıkladığı ve aynı zamanda kendisini takip eden aşamadaki göstergelere de ortam hazırladığı öne sürülmüştür. Bu aşamalarda, sosyal sermayenin genelleştirilmiş güven, sosyal katılım ve sosyal ağın yapısal özellikleri olmak üzere üç temel alt-gruba ayrılmış ölçütleri analiz edilmiştir. Temelde Hiyerarşik OLS Regresyon modelinin kullanıldığı çalışmada aynı zamanda kullanılan tüm değişkenlere dair tanımlayıcı analizlere ve korelasyon matrisine de yer verilmiştir. Bireylerin kendilerini metaforik bir sosyal merdiven üzerinde kaçınıcı basamakta konumlandıkları sorusuna verdikleri yanıtlar ile 1 ile 10 arasında değer alan öznel sosyal statünün bağımlı değişkeni oluşturduğu regresyon analizinin dört hiyerarşik basamağının ilk modelinde kontrol değişkenleri olarak modele dahil edilen yaş, cinsiyet, medeni durum, etnik köken, yerleşim yeri, çalışma durumu, dini eğitim ve ekonomik durum demografik değişkenleri yer almaktadır. Bunlardan eğitim ve ekonomik durum aynı zamanda sosyoekonomik statünün temel göstergeleri olarak kabul edilen değişkenler olmaları ve bu anlamda objektif sosyal statüyü de kontrol etmeleri nedeniyle

de önemlidir. Takip eden 3 basamakta ise belirtilen sosyal sermaye aşamaları, genelleştirilmiş güven, sosyal katılım ve sosyal ağ değişkenleri sırasıyla eklenmiştir.

Bunlardan genelleştirilmiş güven 4-basamaklı Likert skalası ile ölçülen ilgili değişken ile analize dahil edilirken sosyal katılım kişinin gönüllü faaliyetlere ve müzik spor gibi bir takım sosyal aktivitelere katılım olmak üzere 5'er basamaklı iki ilgili sorunun bileşiminden oluşturulmuştur ve 2 ile 10 arasında değer almaktadır. Son aşamada ise sosyal ağ ile ilgili 3 değişken yer almaktadır. İlk değişken kişilerin ebeveyn, kardeş, yetişkin çocuk, yakın arkadaş ve diğer akrabaları olmak üzere 5 soruda yakın sosyal ilişkileri ile iletişim sıklıklarının ölçen değişkenlerin bileşiminden elde edilmiştir ve 1 ile 40 arasında değer almaktadır. Bu aşamadaki diğer iki değişken sosyal ağ desteği ile ilişkilidir. Bunlardan ilki kişilerin yardıma ihtiyaç duydukları belirli durumlarda belirtilen bir takım kurum ve kuruluşlardan birine mi yoksa yakın sosyal çevrelerine mi başvurduklarını soran yine 5 ilgili sorunun dikotomik kodlanmasının sonrasında ardından toplanması ile, diğeri ise yine kişilerin yardıma ihtiyaç duydukları başka birtakım durumlarda sosyal ağları içerisinde kimden destek aldıklarını soran ve yakın ve bir başka deyişle güçlü ilişkilerden, uzak ve bir başka deyişle zayıf ilişkilere doğru sıralı cevap seçeneklerini barındıran yine 5 sorunun bileşimi ile kişinin sosyal ağını tanımlayan bir uzaklık parametresi oluşturulması ile elde edilmiştir. Çok değişkenli ve hiyerarşik analiz modelinin kullanılması sosyal sermayenin bu üç aşamasının, yani farklı göstergelerinin etki ve açıklama kapasitelerini karşılaştırmalı olarak değerlendirilmesine olanak sağlarken, aynı zamanda hem bahsi geçen demografik ve sosyoekonomik statü değişkenlerinin hem de analizin bağımsız değişkenlerini oluşturan sosyal sermaye göstergelerinin kendi içinde kontrol edilmesi ve bu anlamda daha sağlıklı çıkarımlar yapılabilmesi açısından önemlidir.

Bulgular, sosyal sermayenin, ekonomik parametreler de göz önüne alındığında dahi öznel statüyü önemli ölçüde etkilediği ilk hipotezini ve sosyal sermayenin kişinin bu anlamdaki öz değerlendirmesini genelleştirilmiş güven, sosyal katılım ve sosyal ağın yapısal özellikleri olmak üzere üç aşamada belirlediği ikinci hipotezini, modelin ve tüm aşamalardaki ilgili değişkenlerin istatistiki anlamlılık değerleri ile doğrulamaktadır. Yine

modelin açıklama kapasitesinin her aşamada istatistiki olarak anlamlı bir artış gösterdiği ve açıklama kapasitesine en yüksek katkıyı ise sosyal ağın yapısal özelliklerinin ölçüldüğü son aşamanın sağladığı R-kare ve R-kare değişim değerlerinde görülmektedir. Üç aşamadaki ilgili bağımsız değişkenlerin etki yönüne bakıldığında ise bulgular üçüncü hipotezi doğrular şekilde güven, sosyal katılım ve uzaklığın öznel sosyal statüyü olumlu yönde etkilediğini göstermiştir. Değişkenlerin standardize edilmiş beta katsayı değerlerine bakıldığında en önemli belirleyicinin uzaklık parametresi olduğu gözlemlenmiştir. Son olarak, kişinin yakın çevresi ile iletişim sıklığının ölçüldüğü değişkenin istatistiki olarak anlamlı bir etkisinin bulunmaması, takip eden yakın sosyal çevreden yardım alma düzeyinin olumsuz etkilemesi ve yine son değişken olan uzaklık parametresi ile öznel sosyal statünün doğru orantı göstermesi değişkenlerinin tamamı, dördüncü ve son hipotezi doğrulamakta, öznel sosyal statüyü artıran sosyal sermaye tipinin spesifik olarak köprü kuran sosyal sermaye olduğu, bağlayıcı sosyal sermayenin ise aynı etkiye sahip olmadığı ve hatta aksine kişinin statüsüne dair öz değerlendirmesini olumsuz yönde etkilediğini göstermektedir.

Sonuçlar doğrultusunda, Burt'un "yapısal boşluklar" ve Granovetter'in zayıf bağların gücü teorilerine paralel olarak Türkiye'de bireylerin kurdukları uzak ve zayıf sosyal ilişkilerinin yani köprü kuran sosyal sermayenin kendilerini statü anlamında daha yüksek basamaklarda konumlandırmalarına, yakın ve güçlü sosyal ilişkilerin ise bu anlamda sosyal statüleri ile algılarını olumsuz etkilediği görülmektedir. Granovetter'in belirttiği gibi güçlü bağlar üçlü kapanma ile sonuçlanmaya, bu anlamda homojen ve kapalı ağlar ve gruplar içerisinde kalmaya mahkûm iken, kapanmaya maruz kalmaksızın farklı sosyal gruplar arasında köprü oluşturabilen zayıf bağlar, Burt'un altını çizdiği gibi, bu ağlar arasındaki boşluklardaki stratejik konumları ile hem kendileri hem de bağlı oldukları diğer nodlar için önemli fırsatlar sağlamaktadır. Ayrıca toplumun farklı fragmanları ve tabakaları arasında köprü oluşturmaları toplumda entegrasyonu sağlamaları ve sosyal hareketliliği mümkün kılmaları açısından da oldukça önemlidir. Bu durum köprü kuran sosyal sermayenin, literatürde sosyal sermayeyi iş bulma, akademik ve mesleki başarı gibi bir takım kazanımlarla ilişkilendiren çalışmalara paralel şekilde hem pratik anlamdaki getirileri ile kişinin statüsünü artırdığı hem de kişinin

kendi içinde bulunduđu sosyoekonomik grup ile daha yukarıda bulunan sosyal tabakalar arasında köprülerin var olması nedeniyle algısal düzeyde kendini bu statü ve tabaklardan bütünüyle uzak ve kopuk görmemesini, aksine bu sosyal basamakları erişilebilir ve sosyal hareketliliđi mümkün görmesini sağladığı şeklinde açıklanabilir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sosyal Sermaye, Öznel Sosyal Statü, Köprü Kuran Sosyal Sermaye, Bağlayıcı Sosyal Sermaye, Sosyal Ağ,



## **ABSTRACT**

### **Impact of Social Capital on Subjective Social Status in Turkey**

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Master's Thesis, Department of Sociology

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The objective of this study is to explore the impact of social capital on subjective social status in Turkey. Using a hierarchical OLS regression as the main analytical model and analysing the last wave of the Social Network and Social Resources dataset of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), it examines to what extent and in its primarily which form social capital explains one's perception of self-status. This thesis is built around the two major conceptual framework and related literature; social capital and subjective social status, which also constitutes the independent and the dependent variables of the study, respectively. An approach of three stages of social capital is developed in the scope of this thesis to analyse three groups of measures of it that are claimed to be explaining the subjective social status and to be facilitating the measure or the set of measures added in the following stage. Based on the results of the multivariate analysis proving the main hypotheses, it is argued first, that the social capital in its all three stages is a central determinant of self-placement in social hierarchical order controlling for the economic indicators and also, that it is the bridging type of social capital consisting of the distant and weaker ties, compared to the bonding type of it, that positively impacts one's perceived social status.

**Keywords:** Social Capital, Subjective Social Status, Bridging Social Capital, Bonding Social Capital, Social Network

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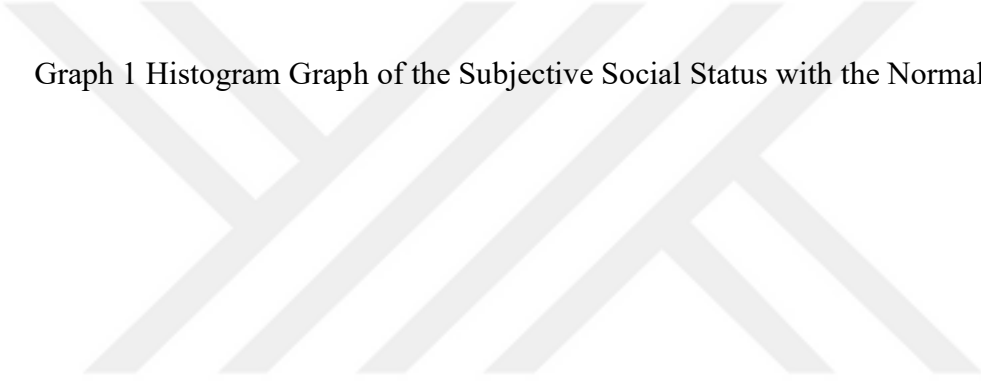
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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Inequality and the social structures related to it have always been a major concern of social scientists, including sociology since the classical theorists. While it was, for the early theorists of sociological thought, more about the models of inequality and social stratification that the new modern capitalist system brought, the current social reality certainly requires a much broader approach to the matter since these structural and macro perspectives do not do justice to the complexity of utterly individualised societies of this era. At this point, social status, as a concept that provides a more comprehensive sense, than the classical Marxist term of class, of one's social position based on a quite multidimensional evaluation is a substantial apparatus, thereby quite frequently instrumentalized to reflect the equally multidimensional existence and practices of social divisions that appear among the members of society. Moreover, social status, particularly its subjective sense as in the focus of this thesis, provides a remarkable ground for comprehending not only the individual level experiences and practices but also the thoughts and perceptions, which is essential to be able to discern non-monetary determinants of it.

This multidimensional approach and the comprehensive conceptualisation of status, therefore, also suggests that the social position and divide cannot be depending merely on the distribution of economic resources and property, but rather a collection of various kinds of assets in social and cultural senses along with the economic possessions, which is the fundamental premise of the Bourdieu's (1986) theory of status and species of capital. Social capital, from this point of view, is a critical concept that is defined and redefined by many scholars, to refer to a type of non-material asset.

It is understood and utilized in various ways, particularly in relation to whether it is viewed as an asset owned by individuals and unequally distributed, along with other forms of capital, as seen in Bourdieu's (1986) conception, or as a collective property, as described in Putnam's (2000) interpretation. Coleman (1988), another prominent figure in the field, on the other hand, stands somewhere in the middle, considering it to be a societal quality that emerges through individual interactions and networks, ultimately benefiting individuals as well. Nevertheless, in all, it is mostly conceptualized around the different forms of social relationships and interactions that occur among people. There is a very central and commonly referred distinction between the types of social capital in this regard, which Putnam (2000) emphasizes in order to assess its various forms and outcomes. It is the distinction made between the bonding social capital and the bridging social capital. The former pertains to social relationships formed within a defined group, functioning horizontally, while the latter relates to ties established with individuals outside the tightly connected social group, operating in a vertical manner.

The objective of this study, at this point, is to explore the relationship between social capital and subjective social status, with a focus on Turkish society, intending to answer a set of questions: How significantly does social capital determine subjective social status? What are the major indicators of social capital predicting one's perception of self-social status? In what ways and levels, specifically, do these indicators influence self-assessed social status, in Turkey? Finally, how do the bridging and bonding types of social capital comparatively impact subjective social status?

It is significant to understand this relationship between social capital and subjective social status due to several reasons. Firstly, it is critical to underline the perceptual side of inequality structures in society. Sen (1983) and Townsend (1979) discuss, around the concept of relative deprivation, that poverty cannot be understood and assessed simply based on some absolute standards, rather one's economic condition is a relative notion that can only be assessed dependently to the conditions of the others in society. Subjective social status, similar to this approach highlights the placement of self, relative to others in society without any reference to any objective or absolute measures.

It is also argued in this study that it is even more socially and relatively determined when it comes to a broader notion of one's position in society than merely economic, status; and even more when it comes to the personal assessment of it, subjective status, since people inevitably perceive and assess their self-situation compared or in reference to others around them, not according to some absolute line or numbers declared by some formal or scientific authorities. Thus, subjective social status and this study suggest a perspective of inequality that is not defined by the unequal distribution of economic resources and opportunities, but rather one that is defined by the variance in people's self-perceptions in terms of their share in that distribution.

Another reason to pay attention to individual perceptions, in this regard, is that social actions, including political attitudes and political behaviours and more collective social actions like social movements, are also driven by the perceptions, beliefs and expectations of people as well, not by some predefined standards. Therefore, although it is not the main objective of this study what it tries to point out is also provides some contributions to the field of social policy.

Secondly, it also provides a perfect base to discuss non-economical determinants of these structures of social hierarchies, since it is those factors that make people have different perceptions and attitudes about the same or similar economic circumstances they have, which is why subjective social status exists as and indicates a distinct concept from the objective social status. The question, at this point, is what those factors are and how they affect one's perception of self-status. This study, in this regard, focuses specifically on social capital, arguing that it has a remarkable influence on one's self-assessment of status, keeping the objective indicators in check as well. Moreover, since these structures of social positions are socially and relatively determined in specifically their perceptual dimension as pointed out above, they are, in fact, also quite linked to the relational dynamics among the members of society and so are formed majorly within the social interactions and relationships, which makes it important to analyse the relationship between these social relations and self-perceived social status. This argument can be understood within the relational sociology approaches. Donati (2011),

for instance, as a prominent figure of this approach, attempts to recentre sociological thought around the social relations as them being the source of both the social structure and social action and argues that these relations need to be the focus of analysis to understand the society and social structures. This study at this point aims to reveal what specific social interactions and relationships result in what specific impact on this perceptual social status.

The discussion around the salient issue of social inequality and its consequential patterns of social stratification is a prevalent issue in the context of Turkey as well, also receiving considerable attention and engaging scholarly discourse. It can be argued, when the Gini indexes are observed, that there is a noticeable degree of income disparity in Turkey. This is evident from the Gini coefficients of 41.0 in 2019, which corresponds to the year when the ISSP survey was conducted in Turkey, and the of 41.5 in 2021, representing the most recent available data on income inequality provided by the TURKSTAT (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2023). Although this study emphasizes that subjective social status is not solely measured by income, the Gini index values undeniably attest to the presence of inequality, rendering it a significant and extensively debated issue in the context of Turkey. Despite numerous empirical studies examining primary indicators and patterns of Turkish stratification from its historical roots (Mardin, 1967; Kıray, 1998) to contemporary structure mainly around the socioeconomic status measures (Kalaycıoğlu et al, 2010; Sunar, 2016b) that are going to be discussed in the third chapter, one aspect that has received relatively little attention is how individuals perceive and position themselves within this existing social hierarchical order. This thesis addresses this gap by emphasizing the significance of these perceptions and their underlying factors. The main argument of this study is that a set of social capital measures significantly determines the variance in people's self-placement at the different levels of a 10-step hierarchical social ladder.

Social capital is defined and measured, in the literature, mostly through the social trust (Fukuyama, 1995; Putnam, 1993; 1995; 2000; Coleman, 1988; Cox and Caldwell, 2000; Glaeser et al., 2000; Falk and Guenther 1999; Newton, 2001); membership and

participation to social activities and organizations (Putnam, 2000; Baum and Ziersch, 2003; O'Connell 2003; Price, 2002; Warde et al., 2003; Wollebaek and Selle, 2003), (Burt, 2000; Borgatti, S. P. et. al. 1998; Lin, 2017), and social network relationships, corresponding to the social engagement, social norms, reciprocity, position generating and resource generating aspects of it. These prominent indicators, in this regard, are selected as the key measures of social capital representing the three stages in which social capital is measured in the scope of this study. They are focused within and utilized through the conceptual tools of generalized trust, which is the trust that we have in strangers in society; social participation, as in the sense of engagement with the other members of the society; and the structural features of social network relationships in specifically the distance of social ties in order to assess the type of social capital, bridging and bonding.

The main hypotheses of this study, answering the research questions stated above, are formulated as follows: Clearly, this thesis hypothesizes, first and foremost, that social capital does significantly influence the perception of self-status, taking the economic determinants into account as well (H1). Secondly, I hypothesize that social capital predicts one's self-assessment of social status in three stages, corresponding to the three different measures, and these are the generalized trust, social participation and the structural characteristics of the social network in specifically terms of the distance of the ties providing support and frequency of contact with the close circle of social relationships (H2). Each stage also is claimed to be facilitating the following stage. Moreover the level of generalized trust, of social participation and the distance of the ties defining one's social network all positively impact subjective status (H3). The third indicator, distance, along with the measure of the frequency of contact with close network ties, also constitutes the main basis of the last hypothesis that it is specifically the bridging form of social capital that significantly increases the perceived social status, while bonding form of it does not have the same influence (H4).

At the first of the defined stages, the generalized trust, which is commonly used as the central measure of social capital within the field as detailed above, is analysed to

understand how the trustworthiness of people in general and at a cognitive level as it is an evaluation by the respondent, correlates with self-reported social status. It is the initial stage because it is a requirement for obtaining social capital through engagement and interaction with people. It is also why it facilitates the second stage, where a more practical dimension of social capital is examined in terms of its influence on the subjective social status. It is the participation of people in a range of different social activities which is instrumentalized to measure the level of engagement of the respondent with other people which would create the connections and ties, thereby bringing about the third and the last stage. At this stage, the capability of certain characteristics of the social network, namely the sociability level with family and friends and the distance of the social relationships which is also related to the strength measure of the social network, to predict one's subjective social status are analysed. Here, social capital is measured in terms of not only the practical presence of relationships but also specific types of defined relationships and evident resource exchange opportunities it generates or amplifies.

This quantitative study uses a four-step hierarchical OLS regression model to analyse how the selected social capital measures along with a set of demographic variables altogether and controlling for each other predict the self-placement in social hierarchical order. 9 control variables; gender, age, marital status, ethnicity, residential area, employment status, religiosity, educational level and economic condition, and 5 independent variables are selected from the Social Network and Social Resources survey of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) conducted in 2019 in Turkey (GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, n. d. c). After necessary recordings and computations of the variables, the demographic control variables are placed in the first step of the four-step model, while the independent variables are examined in the following three steps corresponding to the three stages described above. While the generalized trust variable is kept in its original form and measured in the first stage, the rest of the independent variables are indexed by merging a set of items in the dataset. Social participation, examined in the second stage, is constituted by two items about

respondents' participation in two different kinds of social activities; voluntary and leisure. At the last stage, the remaining three variables, about the characteristics of the social network of the respondent, are analysed by the frequency of contact with close network ties, including five items corresponding to the five different types of close relationships; the support by the social network consists of five previously dichotomically coded variables and lastly, the distance of support provider networks, 6-point scale variable developed for this study out of another five items is measured at the final stage. In addition to preferring a multivariate analytical method to observe how all these variables collaborate in predicting one's self-assessment of social status, hierarchical steps enhance the understanding of the comparative contribution of each stage to the model and so, to the subjective social status as well.

Despite the wide literature on the various models of inequality and of structures of social hierarchical positions explained by a set of diverse demographic and social variables, this thesis intends to touch on three distinctive and relatively less studied points within the field. First and foremost, the concept of social capital, in fact, has a quite short history in the literature, which is even shorter in Turkey, and therefore, it has not been fully explored yet, in terms either of its defining measures, or of its determinative power on social structures, particularly in the concern of this thesis, on social divisions. Thus, while research and studies focusing on the economic-related variables, or in other words, the economic and to some extent cultural capitals dominate the field, this study underlines the critical role of social relations in the formation of social structures and practices as relational sociology perspectives suggest. Furthermore, having diverse understandings and various measures corresponding to them, even the present empirical works on the matter mostly focus on one or two aspects of it, employing some descriptive and bivariate analyses. This thesis, however, utilizing a multivariate analytical model and theorizing three subsequent stages of social capital seeks to create a multidimensional explanation of how a range of substantial indicators of it all together and simultaneously controlling for each other predicts the self-assessed social ranking. Thirdly, social stratification is explained heavily in reference to objective indicators of it,

mostly an index of income, education and occupation, and the subjective social status, the dependent variable and main point of research of this study, is relatively overlooked in the field of sociology, especially in Turkey. Due to the fact that societies are more and more individualized, or in other words that the individual becoming the central unit of social analysis and less and less bound by the collective identities and societal structures as in the individualisation theory of Ulrich Beck (1992; Beck, U. & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002), subjective evaluations are utterly critical in present societies.

This study comprises seven chapters. After this introductory chapter, which provides background information on major concepts and the related field, an overview of the study's objectives, methodology, and structure, the second chapter delves deeper into the theoretical framework and key perspectives regarding the subjective social status and the social capital. It also presents major works in the field and the most commonly instrumentalized measurements of social capital. The third chapter centres on Turkey, offering a comprehensive review of existing literature to position this thesis within the field. It explores the significant studies and identifies the gap in the present literature and the contributions of this study to it, while also stating the theoretical approaches they have taken and the measures they have used with reference to the previous chapter. The fourth chapter provides a detailed explanation of the methodology, including a description of the data source, variables used in the study, and the modifications, computations and indexes employed. Additionally, it introduces the analytical approach and the OLS regression model developed for this study. Moving on to the "Results" chapter, it presents the conducted analyses and findings. Prior to presenting the results of the main multivariate analysis, the chapter also provides univariate and bivariate statistics to establish a solid foundation for understanding and interpreting the subsequent analysis. The sixth chapter, titled "Discussion," offers an interpretation of the results and explains what these statistical findings reveal about subjective social status in the context of Turkish society. Finally, the thesis concludes with the seventh chapter, which summarizes the main argument, provides insights on its application to social reality, and identifies areas where there is a need for further research.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THEORETICAL CONTEXT AND THE LITERATURE**

This thesis is built upon the theoretical context of two major concepts; social status in its specifically subjective sense and social capital which is served by three other sub-concepts; generalized trust, social participation and social network, as its empirical measurements.

#### **2.1. SUBJECTIVE SOCIAL STATUS**

The social position of individuals within society has always been a quite central issue in sociology, especially in regard to social stratification and inequality. One of the initial apparatuses to think about diverse positions of people in society ranking from bottom to top is certainly class. Within the economic determinist thought of classical Marxism, to begin with, focusing primarily on the economic system, social classes are formed and defined based on people's roles within the production process (Marx, 1996; Engels & Marx, 2015). Therefore, the social position of people is determined primarily, if not only, by the possession of the capital which is merely economic in Marxian thought since it is basically about the ownership of the means of production. Later sociological theorists, on the other hand, have developed broader senses of class structure. Weber (1946; 1978), in this regard, has added two more elements to the picture and brought a more multidimensional approach to social stratification, stating that it is constituted by the combination of three factors wealth, prestige and power, which led to the emergence of alternative concepts like socioeconomic status in the field. Especially the second component, prestige, corresponding to the social presentation of an individual, is critical to offer a pathway to point out non-economic social assets in the formation of hierarchical social positions. Another key figure, at this juncture, is unquestionably Bourdieu (1984; 1990), who has taken that pathway and theorized a more comprehensive system of status hierarchy that is still formed and maintained by the

capital, but it being not limited to the means of production. Rather, he introduced the four species of capital, namely, economic, cultural, symbolic and the one central in the scope of this particular study; the social capital, and argued, through his concept of habitus, that there is a continuous cycle of production, in a way, of status, dispositions of people and their total capital composed of the four sub-types (Bourdieu; 1984; Bourdieu 1986).

Subjective social status, on the other hand, defined as one's perception of the self in terms of their place in the hierarchical order of status (Davis, 1956) is another matter having its genesis in the discussion of social stratification and classes outlined above, but also having critical distinctions from it. Being an issue of concern in various disciplines and studied in relation to subjects related to psychology and health, (Adler et al. 2000; Liu et al. 2004; Singh-Manoux, et al. 2003), it is confronted in the field of sociology mostly as a concept regarding the social stratification discussions (Jackman & Jackman, 1973; Yang, 2021; Hout, 2008; Evans & Kelley, 2004).

Subjective social status differentiates from the notion of socioeconomic status or class primarily for not being concerned with the objective structures or accurate calculations of one's ranking in society, rather focusing on one's own perception of self in terms of status, which is affected by but still apart from the objective facts and parameters. Once more taking it from classical Marxism, to which what is central is the exploitative structures of the existing system and the social stratification it brings, the peculiarity and the autonomy of individuals are overlooked as in most of the macro-theories of the modern era. Moreover, despite his dialectical philosophical approach, standing somewhere in between Hegel's idealism and Feuerbach's materialism, and his conceptualisation of class consciousness referring to a start of change at the cognitive or ideological level within the proletariat; Marx (1964), still viewing material structures as prior to and foundation of it, placing ideologies, beliefs and politics in the superstructure, and treating ideology as just an instrument of ruling class to exploit the proletariat, still has a very material and objective sense of class and undermines the significance of ideology and cognitive comprehension and realization of the members of

lower classes. Subjective social status, at this point, brings a remarkable and distinct dimension to the matter, underlying what individuals believe about their social position based on their unique experiences and thoughts.

Subsequent theories even in Marxist thought, however, have evolved to be a bit more concerned with ideologies, agencies and perceptions. Neo-Marxist theorists, like Gramsci or Lukacs, in this regard, brought alternative perspectives to the Marxian approach, with more emphasis on ideology and self-consciousness and their utilization within the power relations. Gramsci (1971) introduced some major concepts like hegemony to refer to the centrality of 'ideological illusions' in producing subordination, consent to stress that the hegemony does not merely take place through coercion but relies on the cognitive approval and compliance of the working class, and lastly, the counter-hegemony to point out that what proletariat conceives and believes also matters. Lukacs (1971) also, neutralizing, in a way, Marxian critical perception of ideology, developed a bilateral perspective emphasizing the class-consciousness of the proletariat as a counter to the reification of the ruling class at the ideological base and also defining the proletariat as the subject-object of the totality. Thus, these later interpretations of Marxian thought are claimed to be granting more significance to cognitive recognition and assessments of those ruled.

Weber, also, although being a theorist of modernity, has a more ideology and agency-based perspective, interpreting social change to capitalism and modernisation primarily based on rationalisation and Protestant work ethic (2001) and developing ideal types and categorizing social actions to explain the change through the individual motives of social action (1968). In addition, Bourdieu, on the other hand, proposes an understanding of social action between objectivism and subjectivism through his apparatus of habitus, claiming an escape from both a fully structural without agency and fully rationalized and intentional explanations of action (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). This whole theoretical discussion on ideology, cognition and subjectivity is critical to acknowledge the value and utilization of what is called self-assessment items and -also attitudinal items- like the subjective social status constituting the focus of this study, in social research, as they

provide a fundamental base to explain the individual reasoning and rationalisation of the social action which in the end forms the collective structures and change.

All in all, as the overly structural grand theories of modernity, it is argued by many approaches, are not really relevant anymore to the quite individualized and complex social reality of especially the current times, or in the words of the popular claim of postmodernism, as the metanarratives have died, recent perspectives and analysis of the social require an increasing emphasis to the individual level, not only perceptions and actions as the focus of social deconstruction, like Beck (1992) points out, but also interactions and relationships as emphasized in relational sociology approaches. These approaches argue that relations and interactions constitute the core of social entities and contribute to the formation of society (Tilly, 2002; Donati, 2011).

In addition to its emphasis on agency and ideology, a subjective assessment of self-status also serves for the relativity aspect of social ranking. The concept of relative deprivation discussed by Townsend (1979) and Sen (1983), in this regard, points out the significance of one's position in society relative to others in comparison to the absolute measures of poverty. One's perception of self in terms of ranking in society is also shaped substantially through observation and recognition of others and placement of self relatively to them. Although this study does not use the position generator techniques or items and so the social positions of the network members are not the focus and cannot be compared to the focal nod, it is still possible to make a deduction about the diversity of the network based on the bridging social capital. Moreover, Amartya Sen's capability approach also provides a critical contribution to the field for bringing a comprehensive understanding of deprivation and welfare proposing an evaluation based on a range of economic and non-economic criteria, including social connections.

Considering all these aspects of subjective social status, this thesis asserts that along with the fact that the social and other types of non-economic capitals are consequential elements of social hierarchies, when it is specifically the subjective consideration of self within it, social connections are even more critical. This study claims first, that social capital is a central predictor of self-placement in social hierarchical order and second,

among the different types and forms of relationships and networks, the relatively more distant relationships, the looser connections, the weaker ties, which usually form a sparse and larger networks in oppose to the close relationships, tight connections, the stronger ties, which are usually associated with the dense but smaller networks results in higher subjective social status, when controlled for the income. So, it shows that, independent from the actual economic capital one owns, having weaker but diverse ties, which is conceptualised as the bridging social capital within the field brings higher subjective self-status than the dense networks of close and strong relationships of bonding social capital.

### **2.1.1. Measurement of Subjective Social Status**

The subjective social status is almost always measured with the same variable of self-reported placement on the social ladder. It is originally referred to a single-item scale, called the MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status, which was developed by health psychologist Nancy Adler and her team (Adler et al., 2000).

It is designed as a visual interview item, applied by showing to the respondents, a picture of the ladder with 10 rugs that metaphorically represents the social hierarchical order of status and asking them to place an X where they think they stand.

## **2.2. SOCIAL CAPITAL**

Social capital, defined by Bourdieu (1986) as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition” (p. 248) to refer to any kind of social relationships and connections through which other forms of capital are acquired and made use of for social status or mobility, as all four are intertwined and convertible to each other in his theory, is later developed and redefined by some other social scientists and instrumentalized within a range of different fields of study.

Coleman (1988), whose work on social capital has been quite influential, also noting different types of capital like Bourdieu, brought economists’ theory of rational choice to the field to analyse the social system and structures based on the social actions

rationalized through the social relations of actors. For him, social interaction and relationships are sustained as long as it benefits all parties involved. Coleman's approach to social capital centres around the idea that social structures and relationships provide resources that individuals can access for their own advantage to achieve their goals. He highlights the importance of trust, norms, and social relationships in creating cooperation and collaboration, which are the foundation of social capital.

Putnam's contributions on the matter are considered utterly critical as well. From a political science perspective, Putnam (1995) utilized the term to investigate both interpersonal and organizational cooperation and networks shaping the civic and political culture. He highlights the importance of social networks, trust, reciprocity and civic engagement in building social capital which he believes produces more cohesive and resilient communities and societies by facilitating collective action.

There are some remarkable departures of these two scholars' conceptualizations of the social capital from Bourdieu's version. First of all, while Bourdieu perceives it as an individual asset that is unequally distributed among people, Coleman (1988) and Putnam (1993) refer to it as a property owned collectively by society. Nevertheless, it needs to be noted that Coleman takes a more intermediate approach in this regard. In his version, social capital is both public and private since he emphasizes its origin in and benefits to the actors in his examples even though it is still a characteristic to be found in society. Another major distinction between these two perspectives on social capital, which is closely connected to the previous point, is that in Bourdieu's theory, social capital reproduces inequality due to its uneven distribution among members of society, hence it is not solely a positive phenomenon, while in Coleman's and Putnam's view, in contrast, it is almost invariably favourable attribute, since they approach it as a societal quality, which is aligned with Durkheimian notions of cohesion and solidarity. Despite these deviations in the understanding and application of the term, it is possible to centralize them all, around the main reference to the social interactions and relationships of all kinds.

Ghoshal and Nahapiet (1998) categorize various components and facets of social capital under the three dimensions that are commonly utilized in the field by many scholars. This categorisation helps to discuss the diverse aspects and functions of it. They define the mode and the feature of relationships such as respect, trust and friendship under the relational dimension; the shared meanings, norms and values that people have under the cognitive, and lastly the properties and characteristics of the network structure and the linkages between the persons, or nodes in the social network terminology, under the structural dimension. This perspective of aspects of social capital is kept out of the scope of this study for a couple of reasons. In addition to the fact that these dimensions are overly interrelated as stated also by Ghoshal and Nahapiet, and do not really provide a categorisation for different indicators of social capital so it is already difficult to place any specific measure under these dimensions; specified dimensional grouping does not really serve the objective of this thesis due to the interpretation of social capital at a micro level and the alternative analytical tool of stages of social capital suggested in this study. Nevertheless, it is possible to say, despite the general tendency in the literature to place our first stage measure of trust in the relational dimension, that this thesis mainly focuses on the structural features, particularly the distance, of the social network ties.

Another distinction, however, stressed by Putnam (2000), with reference to Ross Gittel and Avis Vidal (1998), which is the distinction made between the bonding and bridging social capital, referring to the two different types of social capital applies completely to the purpose of this thesis and is instrumentalized as the central conceptual tool for discussing the findings and making the ultimate argument of this thesis. Putnam states that it is the most critical distinction to comprehend the different forms in which social capital may be found within the society. Of the two, the bonding social capital corresponds to the horizontal relationships that are within the already existing social network or the same social environment, and the bridging to the relationships that occur across the different social network groups and are looser if existent. There are various theories on which contributes more and in what ways they benefit people. This distinction and the related theories are going to be made use of with further detail in the introduction of measures and the discussion of results, in this thesis.

### **2.2.1. Stages and Measurement of Social Capital**

Parallel to the variety of understandings of the concept, a range of distinct measurements of the social capital are applied within the quantitative research. Five of them, measured in three stages, are selected to explicate the relationship between social capital and self-placement in the social ladder.

#### **2.2.1.1. Generalized Trust**

Trust, to begin with, is quite commonly perceived as one of the most significant indicators of social capital. Along with some major works in the field, like those of Fukuyama (1995), Putnam et al. (1993; 1995; 2000), Coleman (1988), claiming trust to be a central aspect of social capital, there are also many empirical studies that measure social capital by the level of social trust (Cox and Caldwell, 2000; Glaeser et al., 2000; Falk and Guenther 1999; Newton, 2001).

Generalized trust specifically, referring basically to the trust one has in the other members of society in general, as opposed to the other components of social trust like the particularized trust that people have in their own social network relationships or the institutional trust that people have in formal and social organizations and institutions, has been discussed in a variety of fields of studies in addition to the social capital, especially within the politics and economics, regarding to its relation to political culture, political participation, economic and economic growth. In the context of social capital, Putnam (2000), argues that social trust is a valuable asset and a critical part of social capital since it creates a society with its members believing in generalized reciprocity which would eliminate the “transactions costs”, borrowing the term from the economics, and make cooperation possible.

As the general tendency of approaching the concept is usually at the structural level of analysis as an asset that the society in general has or not, in relation to the political and economic system and practices, it might seem to fall more in Putnam’s definition of social capital, since it demonstrates in a way the general level of trust presented in the society. However, it occupies a critical place in Coleman’s (1988) social capital discussion as well. He considers trustworthiness as obligatory for transactions to take

place and for productive activity to occur since it helps reciprocity to function among people making them believe that the favours they do are going to be returned and debts are going to be repaid.

Being built upon a micro-data analysis and aiming to discover the impact of social capital at the individual level from a point closer to Bourdieu's and Coleman's sense of the term, an alternative approach to the utilization of this particular measure of capital is proposed and hypothesized for the analysis in this study. Since what is tested in the study is how social capital predicts individual perception, trust is still considered as a central measure, especially at the first stage. The reasoning behind it is twofold. First; it is still thought to be a major component of the social capital of an individual, indirectly even if not directly, due to the fact that it indicates the availability of social capital for people since the higher level of trust in the other members of the society correlates, with the higher frequency of participation in social activities and level of sociability, all which would bring the social capital. It is mainly because those with higher trust engage more in society, to begin with, since the trust present in society is significant, as Coleman (1990) argues, to lessen the risk perceived by people in interaction, cooperation and exchange of opportunities among each other. In other words, it facilitates the other two stages. Thus, the idea is to measure the its on the dependent variable as the primary phase of the social capital and also to check for any mediation effect it has with the other independent variables. Second, the general level of trust one has in other members of society is in fact a display of the general level of fairness they believe to exist overall in society, which in a way shows their perception of inequality and so their placement of self relatively to the others. Thus, trust being the first phase of social capital also provides a critical control for the dependent variable of this study.

This measure is placed in the first stage on account of the fact that it is yet about the cognitive stage of acquiring social capital and there is not an actual behavioural element of social capital at this point but it is, in a way, a precondition for them to take place, for interactions to occur and for relationships to be established. Still, in terms of the type of social capital, generalized trust can be considered within the bridging form, as it is about

the trust in strangers and determines the occurrence of ties most likely to those outside of one's own social group. The generalized trust is measured with the same question asking whether "generally speaking, people can be trusted or not" in almost all research studies, which is the same variable used in the ISSP and so in this study.

#### **2.2.1.2. Social Participation**

Another frequently utilized indicator of social capital, which served as a measurement in a range of empirical studies (Putnam, 2000; Baum and Ziersch, 2003; O'Connell 2003; Price, 2002; Warde et al., 2003; Wollebaek and Selle, 2003), is membership or participation to certain types of organizations or institutions or activities. Labelled as social participation in this thesis, and also referred to as social engagement, this measure constitutes the second stage of social capital that is argued to be affecting subjective social status in the scope of this study. In addition to being a quite central matter in sociological thought, starting from the classical theorists, as Durkheim, for instance, basically builds his whole theory, through instrumentalization of the term solidarity, upon the way people engage in society as a whole and sustain it and its transformation from traditional to modern societies. In this regard, social participation also stands in between the macro and micro approaches of social capital. While it may refer to and always linked to the overall presence of solidarity and cohesion in society, it is utilized as an individual quality indicating one's personal level of engagement in order to measure its personal returns and benefits.

Social participation can be found as expressed with different concepts in different studies, however, equally emphasized. Putnam (2000), allocates a whole chapter to discuss civic participation patterns of the American society that he analyses in terms of the social capital, and he refers to organisational memberships including voluntary and leisure groups, as "a useful barometer of community involvement" (p. 49). In addition to the fact that involvement in certain types of organizations and activities naturally brings social acceptance and prestige, which are also remarkable capitals providing status, engagement in these kinds of collective activities is also the most prevalent way

of acquiring new and potentially diverse social networks and ties, which makes it, it can be argued, a critical prerequisite of bridging capital.

At this stage, we move from a cognitive level of evaluation, by the individual, regarding the availability of social capital in society in general based on an attitudinal assessment of the trustworthiness of people, to the practical attainment -or non-attainment- of it through social engagement. Thus, although the characteristics of the relationships, like the type, closeness or strength, are still unknown and not examined yet, it is behavioural, by this point, as practical interaction occurs, presumably generating new network ties. There were two related items, that are separate yet uniformed in structure, in the utilized dataset, of which the first asks about the participation of the respondent in leisure activities while the second asks about the participation in voluntary works. The two merged into a variable measuring one's level of social participation.

### **2.2.1.3. Social Network**

Finally, being the last stage of this study, the social network is the prominent component of the analysis of social capital where we actually start dealing with the evidently existing social connections. Despite many studies on it being a measure of social capital (Burt, 2000; Borgatti, S. P. et. al. 1998; Lin, 2017); and also some empirical studies on it being a determinant of social status (Lin, 1999; Pinguart M, Sørensen S., 2000), there are almost no studies analysing its relation to specifically the self-perception of social status.

At this stage, the social network ties, in terms of their strength, closeness and resource-generating impact are analysed for their influence on perceived social status. It is also the most critical part of the hypothesis of this thesis, as we investigate what type of relationships based on what structural characteristics bring more status.

Social network referring to the collection of nodes, which are actors, and ties, which are the connections between those actors, is in fact a very distinct subject of study with its own terminology and analytical methodology in the field of sociometry and has a range of different measures regarding to its size, density and diversity along with the strength, type and distance of ties in it. These structural features of social network relationships

are also discussed and analysed as a critical indicator and assessment of social capital in the literature. While Coleman (1988), discusses the varying impact of closed and open networks in terms of their fictionality of norms and sanctions. He favours what he calls “network closure” for effective norms to exist in society, which he considers to be a central element of social capital, referring to norms of social support as well. Burt’s (2000) quite influential work also specifically focuses on the network structure, refereeing all kinds of features from the size and density of networks to the strength and distance of the ties. He emphasizes, in contrary to Coleman, the structural holes as critical providers of resources and benefits, which is going to be elaborated and utilized in the objective of this study in the Discussion chapter.

In this study, it is viewed particularly in terms of the distance aspect of it, which is in fact linked to the other measures as well, since distant relationships are usually the weak ties constituting sparse and diverse social networks, while close relationships are the closer ties forming dense and more homogeneous networks. These structural characteristics of the network are thought to be in a causal relationship with subjective social status and the distance of ties specifically selected as the focus of this study to explicate the ways and forms in which social network influences one’s perception of self-status. These structural features of the network also provide the ground for our assessment of and major discussion on the type of social capital. Three measure is included in this last stage.

The first is one’s frequency of contact with social network members, measuring the sociability level with already existing relationships. Since all of the items in this set are related to quite close forms of social ties, like family members and close friends, which are also referred to as strong relationships, in opposed to weak ties of relatively formal relationships like acquaintances from work or neighbours, this variable measures the impact of specifically the closer circle of network ties and sociability with them. Thus, moving from the previous stage of social participation, which is also about the sociability of the individuals but typically with a larger and more diverse network

including distant and weak ties, to this one, we also switch to a fully bonding type of social capital.

Nevertheless, in this particular variable, we are still not analysing for social network's resource-generating feature yet, which is going to be examined throughout the following two measures. There are two separate sets of variables about what is conceptualized as social network support within the field. The first set of questions designed to detect whether the respondent receives, in a range of different situations, help from a close network member or one of the other different kinds of sources like governmental institutions, non-governmental institutions or social organisations, is utilized to discover at what scale, i.e., in how many of the situations if any, the individual tends to receive help from their social network and how does that correlate with their level of subjective status. The other merged variable regarding the social support, on the other hand, asking the preference of the social tie to turn to in case of need for support, is designed to assess not the occurrence of social network support, but rather the distance of the social tie from which the support is received, and how these different forms of social relationships, measured in a scale of distance, predicts the subjective self-status. Thus, these last two indicators of social capital are the ones that actually analyse for the resource exchange capacity of the social network. Also, this point, having both vertical and horizontal forms of relationships in the measures, the comparative prediction capacity of bonding and bridging social capital is also going to be observed.

Existing works regarding any of the three conceptual stages modelled to measure social capital in this thesis, being already mentioned in related sections, there are not many studies bringing all these measures together. Putnam's work (2000), at this point, is critical as he develops a multi-dimensional social capital index (SCI) consisting of 14 variables of 5 groups, which can be argued to be the most comprehensive empirical model applied within the field of social capital. Among these groups there are ones measuring the engagement and participation of individuals in various kinds of communal, organizational and public affairs and activities, and also a group of variables for measuring social trust. Although Putnam (2000; 2001) includes the network as a

component of social capital in his conception, he is not really concerned about the characteristics of particular social connections -like type, strength, distance etc.- and so there are not any variables in his index particularly to assess the type of networks or ties. Rather he uses apparatuses like ‘generalized reciprocity’ to identify a society-level feature of networks that overall exists in society, in accordance with his conception of social capital.



## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND RELATED LITERATURE IN TURKEY**

#### **3.1. SOCIAL STRATIFICATION**

Social stratification is a critical topic in Turkish sociological literature as well although it is not as developed as in the international literature. Kalaycıoğlu (2010) grounds this deficit in the literature on the prevailing belief that Turkish society is a classless society with no capitulations to any specific social group. She and many other scholars, however, argue that it is not the social reality and have some critical studies about the social stratification of Turkey.

It can be argued that the first major studies regarding the matter are mostly the historical analyses of the stratification of society from Ottoman to modern Turkey. Mardin (1967), to begin with, starts even further back from the pre-Islamic Turks to understand the roots of the diverse stratum in Turkish society. He argues that there was a nobility-based dichotomous stratification in the history of Turks since Oğuz. This dichotomous model had also been transmitted to the Ottomans, as the two major social classes of rulers and the ruled formed the foundation of the Ottoman society's social stratification structure, while more complex features and layers were also added to it over the long years of the Empire. Mardin explains the Empire's social stratification around several characteristics. It encompasses elements of nobility as already stated, hereditary in especially the upper class, certain occupational groups such as merchants and esnaf constituting the middle stratum and lastly the conflict between newly emerging bureaucrats and the aristocrats. The latter, tension between the traditional elite and new executive class, Mardin highlights, is a quite definitive characteristic of the stratification of Turkish society which stayed as the fundamentals of Turkish social structure even after the revolution of Young Turks, and, in fact, after the establishment of Republic of Türkiye as well.

Kıray (1998), on the other hand, focuses more on the social stratification in the process of Turkish Modernisation specifically and points out the industrialisation and migration from rural to urban as the determinant features of the new social stratification of Turkey. Although her primary definitions and historical discussions regarding the different social classes are around the participation in production processes and relations, she also underlines the diverse consumption relations which can be considered as a broader perspective to the matter since it corresponds, at this point, some other dimensions of representation of classes in line with the concepts like prestige of Weber, or cultural and symbolic capital of Bourdieu (Kıray, 2005).

Sunar (2016a), also points out the lack of intellectual interest of regarding stratification in Turkey, especially in the early republican years, and explains it with the social and political circumstances of the era. He states that the objectives of both establishing a nation-based society that is unified around Turkishness and avoiding Marxist and socialist ideologies with which discussions about inequalities and stratification are usually associated have caused the rejection of seeing and studying the stratification of Turkey for a long time. There are still many notable studies on the historical development and empirical analysis of the socially stratified structure of Turkey following these primary works of the early years of the Republic.

Kalaycıoğlu (2002) distinguishes social class from the other models of stratification primarily for being an “achieved” form of social placement rather than the “ascribed” forms as in, slavery, caste or estate systems of stratification. It can be argued that this transition is also observed with the transition from Ottoman to modern Turkey as well since elements of nobility, feudalism and caste -although its origin is different- systems structures are all seen in the Ottoman society as Mardin discusses (1967), while economic relations became more prominent in the social structure of Republic of Turkey with the industrialisation impacts as in the rest of the world which constitutes the base of Kıray’s (1998) analyses and discussion.

Boratav, is a critical figure in the social stratification studies in Turkey, as he has studies on the matter that are not merely historical but also empirical with a focus on more

recent Turkish society. He is the first to make a detailed and structured analysis of Turkish society in terms of its stratification and define the different hierarchical groups. After distinguishing the concepts of social class and social stratum, he defines the former as the primary distributional relations consisting of three different types of relation creating dichotomous social classes and the latter as the secondary distributional relations that are either sub-groups within those classes or groups in between them (Boratav, 1991). Since his scheme of stratification is based mostly on production relations, especially in the primary stage, it can be argued that his approach has a root in Marxian thought in this regard. This tendency can be observed in also his empirical study on villages of İstanbul and Anatolia, in which he focuses specifically on the comparative impact of changes and transformations of the 1980s on capitalists and proletariat and concludes that these transformations are all in favour of the capitalist class (Boratav, 1995).

As Sunar (2016a) underlines, the central concept in contemporary stratification studies has switched from class to socio-economic status (SES), which provides a broader evaluation of social hierarchical structures. There have been lots of attempts and studies to measure socio-economic status and several socio-economic status scales were developed within these studies. The empirical study Kalaycıoğlu and four other scholars have done taking Ankara city centre as their sample, in this regard has a critical place in the literature (Kalaycıoğlu et al., 2010). They included 5 criteria in their SES index; education, income, occupational status, properties (owner-occupied residential property, rental residential property and automobile), and other possessions. After application of the index to the determined sample, retrieved scores are divided into five interval groups, corresponding to 5 hierarchical SES groups and the demographic characteristics along with the defined major variables observed in each group were discussed comparatively in the study. Despite its restricted focus on Ankara city centre and other limitations that the authors underlined, it can be argued that the study has a mark in the literature to do one of the earliest systematic analyses of socio-economic status in Turkey with components applicable to Turkey.

Another critical contribution to the field, at this point, is Kaya's (2008) study that examines the social stratification of Turkish society underlying the changes by and after the year of 1980. Although he uses the concept of social class, not the socio-economic status, the EGP (Erikson–Goldthorpe–Portocarero) Scheme he uses to evaluate the diverse hierarchical social groups in society is a system of evaluation of people's social positions based on their employment and occupational status, latter of which, in fact, constitutes one of the major components of SES indexes in almost any studies. He concludes that due to the impact of economic globalisation, reliance on lower labour costs low skilled labour, both the reliance and so the share of low-skilled labour in society has increased in society, along with the higher-level occupational classes like managerial and professional, and lastly informal employment which Kaya considers as the evidences of two mostly referred expected results of globalisation in least developed countries; proletarianization and polarisation.

One of the most comprehensive empirical studies to measure and analyse the socio-economic status in Turkey in general was a TUBITAK project led by Sunar in 2016. The study is significant to respond also another need in the literature linked to the SES studies, which is to develop a scale of occupational status that is designed for Turkey taking its cultural and social dynamics into account. Despite the facts that occupational status is a critical component of SES indexes and that there are some very well-designed scales developed internationally, specifically like the regularly repeated ISCO scales of ILO (International Labour Organisation), there have not been any attempts to develop a national scale for Turkey until this study. Since the validity and applicability of these scales to Turkey were limited due to the unique cultural, social, and political characteristics, the first stage of this project in which the Occupational Prestige Scale of Turkey (TMİS) is developed is critical to serve this gap. (Sunar, 2016b)

Then, in the second phase of the project, where the ultimate objective of developing the Socio-economic Status Index of Turkey (TSES) takes place, an index with three component variables is developed. After a set of tests, they concluded that Socioeconomic Status is indicated at the household level by the highest level of

education in the household, the highest level of occupational prestige in the household and the mean of the household income and they excluded the property variable from the index since the tests showed that it is not statistically meaningful in explaining the socioeconomic status in contrary to some previous studies. Finally, they find that there are four major status groups in Turkey based on the SES scores derived from the previous tests, and these are; upper, upper-middle, lower-middle, and lower SES groups. This study is a significant contribution to the field for developing occupational prestige and SES indexes that are specifically designed for Turkey and to draw a current picture of Turkey's social structure and stratification based on very comprehensive and detailed statistical tests. (Sunar, 2016b)

After this brief exploration of the social stratification literature in the context of Turkey, several significant conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, contrary to early republican views, it becomes evident that Turkey possesses a distinctive social stratification framework that is intrinsic to its own societal dynamics. Moreover, gaining a comprehensive comprehension of the contemporary state of stratification requires not only an insightful examination of its historical underpinnings but also an acknowledgement of the pronounced shifts that have unfolded within Turkey's social, political, economic, and cultural spheres over time.

Notably, the evolution in stratification studies goes beyond the alteration of the societal elements of Turkey as the subject matter of studies; it also encompasses the transformation of fundamental concepts and methodological paradigms within the field. As explained earlier, the central concept of the field has shifted from the traditional notion of social class to the broader concept of socioeconomic status, incorporating dimensions beyond mere production relationships, such as education and occupational prestige, in Turkey as well. The trajectory of studies in the field seemed to be focused more on the development of standardized measurement tools and scales, such as the SES index, for measuring the socioeconomic status of individuals and analysing the stratification patterns within societies. Finally, it can be concluded that despite valuable historical analyses and empirical studies in the literature, a discernible need for

advancement within the Turkish context remains. This requirement is underscored by the imperative of further discussions and alternative perspectives, in order to refine, augment and challenge existing findings and contributions.

### **3.2. SUBJECTIVE SOCIAL STATUS**

While there are some significant works regarding the inequality and stratification studies in Turkey, despite some deficiencies as discussed above, reviewing the existing literature it is found that there is an apparent research gap concerning the subjective sense of social status in Turkey, since it is a relatively new concept that has not yet been fully defined and positioned in the field, and it definitely requires more attention, as emphasized in the previous chapter. Only a few studies are found in that sense in the Turkish literature of sociological studies.

One is a recent study by Şahin and Nasır (2019), investigating the relationship between objective and subjective social status by analysing the three components of objective status, namely income, education and occupation in terms of their individual and merged correlation with the subjective social status, which is a significant contribution to the field in terms of providing a comprehension of the concept based on its relation to and departures from the classical notion of social status. Also, a collaborative methodological study analyses that builds upon field research in high schools in a selected region. The data collected from the high schools is analysed to test the validity and reliability of the subjective social status scale, which was originally developed by Goodman (2001) and also previously adapted by Sweeting (2011) and colleagues in Scotland, and to adapt it to Turkish in both language and culture and concludes that it is valid and reliable, and thus applicable to Turkey (Turkay et. al., 2018). However, both the original scale and the given study revolving around it focus exclusively on the subjective status of the youth in reference to the dynamics and measures related to them. The scale is mostly utilized in the context of schools and includes seven items, popularity, power, receipt of respect, academic achievement, troublemaking, attractiveness or style and sportiness/ sport status, which reflect specifically to and

thereby being limited to this particular context. Thus, there are almost no studies examining the main determinants of perception of self-status apart from the objective status indicators, and analysing them at a multivariate level.

### **3.3. SOCIAL CAPITAL**

On the subject of social capital, on the other hand, although it is a still developing field of study in Turkey as well, it is possible to find relatively more studies in the literature. Ağcasulu (2017), to begin with, in her study provides a good overview of the conceptual framework and the historical development of the concept thereby highlighting the scientific significance of the matter in the field. She explains and discusses the various understandings of and approaches to the matter in a comparative and critical manner. There are some other theoretical and conceptual studies like of Şen (2020) arguing that social capital makes it possible for people who own it to influence and change the institutional logics, and of Kitapçı (2017) pointing out what he calls the failure of the social capital. Of these, while Şen treats social capital as an asset owned by individuals and underlines its returns in terms of bringing extra capacity for altering institutional logics, Kitapçı thinks of it as a public good and underlines its negative outcomes through the exclusion effect in society, which recalls the discussion elaborated in the previous chapter, regarding the distinctions among the perspectives of Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam.

This distinction in conceptual approaches to social capital is also apparent in empirical studies that examine its relation to a diverse range of social factors and outcomes. There are many pieces of research, for instance, analysing the contribution of social capital to economic growth and development. Akar and Ay (2018), conducted a cross-national analysis involving fifty-two countries to test the relationship between the two. Also comparing developed and developing countries, they showed that social capital along with innovation increases economic growth. Another research, focusing on Turkey and on a selected period of time, uses some bivariate analyses to point out the positive impact of social capital on GDP per capita (Kartal et al., 2017). Eşkinat, (2015) also

provides, with her theoretical review article, an insight into the causal relationship between the two. A recent master's thesis, approaching the matter from the perspective of the discipline of economics, leads to a different conclusion that social capital, in contrast to physical and human capital, has a negative impact on economic growth, majorly due to its presence heavily in its bonding form in Turkey (Vural, 2021). All of these studies, apparently understand social capital as a collective property and a quality that serves the society at a structural level, like in Putnam's to some extent Coleman's theory, thereby analysing its functions at a macro level, which is like Putnam's methodological approach as well.

In addition to economic growth, social capital has been argued to be a critical factor in producing and supporting developments at some other structural and systemic levels of social matters as well, particularly in relation to politics and society in general. For instance, in his article, Aslan (2012) theoretically discusses the role of social capital as a catalyst for democracy. He examines social capital specifically in relation to civil society, which he identifies as one of the main sources of social capital, emphasizing the role of non-governmental organizations in this regard. However, he notes that the relationship between civil society and social capital does not always lead in a democratic direction. While it supports democratic values in an already democratic system and society, in non-democratic and authoritarian regimes, it may even have an adverse impact instead, supporting anti-democratic activities and elements in society. This study in fact is quite in line with the perspective and studies of Putnam (1993) who also have written about democracy and civil society with reference to social capital. A doctoral dissertation, on the other hand, specifically focuses on women non-governmental organizations and their contribution to the development in all of the economic, political, social and cultural terms by producing social capital (Gök, 2014).

Ceylan (2020) also takes the collective-property approach in defining social capital in his study concerning the promotion of social integration, particularly in multicultural societies, which is an increasingly growing problem and a major concern for states in the world today. His study, in that sense, recalls the approaches discussed in the previous

chapter that view the social capital in relation to social cohesion in society. He investigates the correlation between social capital and multiculturalism and concludes that states that exhibit a good quality of multiculturalism, based on liberal, social democrat, and egalitarian social policies, tend to have a higher level of social capital, particularly measured by social trust. He argues that social capital and multiculturalism are the two most significant parameters of social integration, which are definite requirements for sustainable development and stable peace.

Many other Turkish scholars, on the other hand, have studied social capital with a more micro perspective, which is closer to the way Bourdieu originated the term and also again to some extent Coleman since his perspective stands somewhere in between as it is explained in the previous chapter. In its individual-asset sense, social capital has been mostly studied in terms of its positive impact on employment or occupational success.

While Baştürk (2018), at this point, in his quantitative research finds that the social capital brings access to the labour market for not only the middle class but also the lower-class youth in Turkey despite different opportunities and sectors, Akçıkaya and Bağrıyanık (2019), focuses on a specific occupation group to investigate how social capital functions in the production, growth and contraction of the tradesmen (Esnaf) based on the tradesmen in Konya. Another study, similarly, shows that social capital influences occupational success positively, based on field research on the success of university employees (Bilgin & Kaynak, 2008).

Similarly, Özdemir (2007) analyses the impact of social capital on the success of academics in both social and natural sciences. While she focuses on the social network characteristics of the academics as the indicator of their social capital, she measures the success by the number of articles they have published which she conceptualizes as knowledge creation. After conducting a set of statistical analyses, she found that the heterogeneity of the university and the strength of the ties within the university is positively correlated with the number of both single-authored and co-authored articles.

Social capital has been recognized as a crucial determinant not only of occupational success but also of educational and academic achievement. For instance, Öz and Boyacı

(2018) found that social capital is one of the major factors explaining school dropouts of students. Through qualitative research conducted in high schools, they examined the interpersonal trust, norms, and values within students' social networks encompassing their family, school, and community. Based on their study, they identified the relationship between the school and family, as well as the relationship between the student and teacher, as prevalent reasons for students to drop out of school, while it is also where to look for potential solutions to this problem.

There is also a very comprehensive research project conducted under the TUBITAK and led by Çelik (2019), which investigates the strong relationship between the social class and academic achievement. Examining various schools and comparing the students with upper, middle and lower class, they conclude that whether the students succeed in central examinations or not is extensively influenced by the social capital of the families especially formed by the relationship between the families and the school.

Günkör (2011), on the other hand, in his Master's thesis based on the review of the present literature on the matter and theoretical and descriptive analysis of them, takes an alternative point of view to the matter and suggests an opposite direction of the causal relationship between the education and social capital. Underlining the strong relationship between occupation, level of trust and education, they argue that educational factors have a critical influence on the formation of social capital indicators like social network, civic participation and social trust.

Lastly, Özgören (2014) in her thesis points out the relationship between education and social capital, while also particularly in relation to civil society. Through analysing the literature, she discovers that there is a two-way relationship between education and social capital, as they both impact and are influenced by each other. Since her study also includes a third element of civil society and its relation to the other two social phenomena, she in fact has the collective approach of those discussed earlier in this chapter. She posits that due to the positive relationship among these three, education and non-governmental organizations function cooperatively by producing social capital to create a civil, cohesive, democratic and developed society.

In terms of the two major types of social capital, elaborated in the previous chapter, while not many studies could be found discussing the bridging form of social capital and examining its relation to some other social variables, there are several researches investigating how familial and religious ties, which fall under the bonding type of it, creates social capital. There are several works on the religious minority of Alevies in Turkey, at this juncture. Aktürk (2017), for instance, asserts based on his findings that the Cemevis play a critical role in increasing social capital for both the Alevi individuals and also the public. Balkanlıoğlu (2014) also leads a similar conclusion at the end of his qualitative research on the Alevi organisations in Istanbul. Aydemir and Tecim (2012) also emphasize the importance of family and religion in the constitution of social capital especially in Turkey due to its cultural patterns, benefiting from some descriptive statistics despite of not including any further analyses at the bivariate or multivariate level.

Although there are not many as stated, a study that focuses on the bridging type of social capital is that analyses its impact on the psychological ownership and the person-organization fit. Examining the students in Police Vocational Training Centres, they found that there is a positive correlation between the social capital and psychological ownership and that this relationship between the two is mediated by the person-organization fit (Uludağ, et al., 2021).

Another theme that is quite frequently studied in relation to the social capital in Turkey is the immigrants, since the social capital is a major indicator of the level of integration of immigrants into the society, which has always been one of the central concerns of the social sciences, especially under the migration studies. Palaz, (2022), in her doctoral dissertation using a cross-national dataset and taking a comparative approach among the countries, discusses how civic participation impacts the social capital of the immigrants in Europe focusing on the older adults, specifically those over the age of fifty. She observes in the results that the civic participation, especially measured by the diversity of the types of activities participated, is a significant determinant of the social capital

measured by the social trust and generalized reciprocity, which also brings a higher level of subjective quality of life.

Since a large number of Syrian people have migrated to Turkey due to the civil war in the last decade, their adaptation to Turkey, Turkish society, and the social issues regarding this process have become widely discussed matters, as well. While Eroğlu (2022) compares the social capital of Syrian immigrants in Istanbul and Şanlıurfa comparatively, Düzgün (2018) focuses specifically on women Syrian immigrants and how their level of social capital has changed after migration to Turkey.

The former, measuring social capital by a range of different variables like social trust, participation in voluntary organizations and some social network relationships like neighbours, reveals that the participating in voluntary work is low for both groups in both of the cities. Trust, and practical relations between the Syrians and the native people, however, are found to be existent in Şanlıurfa despite being not very high, while in Istanbul there seems to be no social capital for and created by the Syrian immigrants. Eroğlu asserts that these low levels of social capital primarily result from the disconnectedness between the two groups and the perception of Syrians by the natives, which tends to be prejudicial.

Düzgün, on the other hand, highlights the limitations that the women Syrian immigrants confront in engaging with society and developing social capital, primarily because they tend to be entangled in their close circle of social network, such as family and friends, and cannot find an opportunity to attain bridging form of social capital which would provide their integration to the society. Although the language barrier that seems to affect their participation in the society negatively, as well as applies to both women and men Syrians, she argues that some traditional and cultural practices of Syrians that they carry out in Turkey as well, make women more disadvantaged than men in terms of attaining social capital in Turkey.

Although a considerable number of the research and studies outlined above have references to the unequal distribution of the social capital and its relation to disadvantaged groups in society, there are only a few works in the field that specifically

focus on the impact of the social capital in the formation of social stratification or inequality. Yıldırım's (2019) master's thesis, at this point, is a critical contribution, since he explores the relationship between the inequality and different elements of social capital, including trust, participation in social networks and neighborhood relations. Despite the strong relationship between the two, he highlights the possibility of the use of social capital to both increase and decrease inequality in societies based on the results of bivariate statistics he utilizes.

Measurements of social capital is also a very problematic issue in Tukey, as Şan and Akyiğit (2015) discuss, since there is a diverse range of understandings and utilization of the term in different fields of study which is, in fact, the case also in the international literature. While those who define the term as a public good and who come from a more economics-related point of view tend to measure it by some overall indicators, quite commonly by the generalized trust (Akar & Ay, 2018), along with some other total numbers reflecting the society like life-satisfaction and total memberships to organisations, (Kartal et. al., 2017), those taking the individual-asset approach use alternative measures to conduct micro level of analyses. Özdemir (2008) for instance, focuses on the social network characteristics to assess the influence of social capital on varying success of academics. Furthermore, some studies measure social capital with a range of different aspects of it, like Öz and Boyacı's (2018) study and also the studies on immigrants. Bilgin and Kaynak's (2008) study, on the other hand, takes several aspects into account such as the social participation and close network ties.

Nevertheless, it can be argued that the majority of studies tend to select and focus on one particular aspect of social capital that specifically would serve and is related to their main research topic or due to any other methodological or contextual reasons, which is not necessarily a limitation, but still needs to be considered while interpreting and generalizing the results since it might also result in conflicting conclusions from different studies. Baştürk (2018), to illustrate, builds his study merely upon the variable of whether the respondent has found their job basically through the social network support or not. In short, while there are multiple ways and examples of

instrumentalization of the concept of social capital in the literature to examine a range of different types of social interaction, cooperation and organization, it is difficult to point any unanimously accepted measures or indicators of social capital, which is the inevitable result of diverse contexts of studies and socially adaptive nature of the concepts.

In conclusion, it can be argued that there is a lack of studies in the field on both the individual asset sense and bridging form of social capital, as it is underlined by Şan and Akyiğit (2015) as well. They argue that the studies in Turkey majorly focus on the internal social capital and relatively overlook the external form. Moreover, despite some remarkable contributions in elaborating theoretical discussions and distinctions, and also many empirical works and field research on its relation to some demographic characteristics and also to more specific social issues like age, gender, education, academic achievement, occupational success and immigrants in addition to economic growth and democracy, there are not many study examining its unequal distribution in society in general or socially stratified structures it brings or relates to, which is the objective of this study.

Although Yıldırım's (2019) work is an exception to this as stated, he utilizes only descriptive and correlation analyses in his study, which prevents him from reaching certain or precise conclusions about how the indicators of social capital function altogether and explain the inequality in society. It brings us to another major contribution this study intends to address, on specifically the methodological side of the matter. Since correlation or other bivariate level of analysis makes calculation with two variables only and does not include the other variables, the results do not say how these several social dynamics explain the social inequality, or any other dependent variable subjected to any particular study, all together and controlling for each other, and for the demographic indicators. It also can be misleading due to overlooking the mediations that might be existent among the variables.

In conclusion, it is evident that there are still many gaps in the literature on social capital, and numerous aspects of it to discover, owing to being a concept that has gained

popularity relatively recently and continues to draw increasing attention in scholarly works. While all of the referenced works centralise diverse indicators of social capital depending on the field and the focus of the research, there is not any attempt to analyse the most common ones all together in a multivariate and comparative way to assess their capacity to influence individual status at any sense in Turkey. This thesis mainly aims to contribute to the field in specifically this regard, by filling the gap, to some extent, in these three terms by developing a multivariate model to calculate perceived social ranking in Turkey based on a collection of several significant measures of social capital. In addition, it does not only measure the level of social capital one has and its impact on one's subjectively assessed level of status, it also examines, based on the structural features of social networks, the types of social capital for their comparative impact on the subjective social status.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **METHOD**

This study is built upon a multivariate analysis to explore the level of capacity of the three selected aspects of social capital to predict subjective social status based on a 2019 social survey conducted by the International Social Survey Programme.

#### **4.1. DATA**

I use the Social Network and Social Resources dataset of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) (GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, n.d. a), which is one of the cross-national social survey modules that the programme conducts in a range of different social research topics.

The survey has been repeated, with minor changes, in the years of 1986, 2001 and 2017 (GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, n.d. b). This study, focusing on the sample of Turkey, uses the latest wave of the study, which is also the only one Turkey has participated in. Although the data collection process was held in 2017 for most of the 32 participating countries, in Turkey the survey was conducted in 2019 after the rest of the module had already been published, which is why it is not included in the integrated file but still available as a separate dataset on the ISSP website (GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, n.d. c).

The dataset consists of 103 variables about the structures, norms and types of social networks and relationships, and various kinds of social resources drawn from these relationships along with some attitudinal questions about the social issues and a wide range of items that collect information about the demographic features of the sample, which are included in every module of survey the programme conducts. The interviews in Turkey were conducted with a representative sample of 1521 respondents.

## 4.2. ANALYTICAL APPROACH

The main analytical model that is built for this study, is a hierarchical OLS regression that predicts the perceived social status based on a set of social capital indicators. Independent variables of the model are analysed in four steps. Following the first step of the control variables, each model corresponds to one of three stages of social capital that are defined in the “Theoretical Context” chapter; generalized trust, social participation and social network. While the first and the second stages examine only one indicator each, which are a single item variable and a merged one of two items, respectively, the third stage includes three variables that measure the different aspects of social network dynamics.

Arguing that social capital has a range of different indicators affecting one’s self-assessment of social status and that they influence the dependent variable despite the economic factors, this study uses a multivariate analysis in order to analyse the impacts of these social capital measures collectively and to develop a multivariate model that predicts one’s self-placement in ten-step social ladder from a range of social capital variables, as also controlling for an array of demographic variables and objective socioeconomic status indicators.

The reason why a hierarchical analytical approach is taken is in fact linked to the theoretical perspective of stages of social capital developed in this thesis. In addition to being able to assess whether there is a statistically significant impact of each factor on the dependent variable and their comparative capacity to predict the respondent’s subjective social status in an ordinary regression analysis without the hierarchical steps, a hierarchical model renders it possible to test and discuss the statistical meaningfulness and explanatory power of each stage separately and comparatively along with their contribution to the explanatory power of the overall model.

In the whole composed model, there are fourteen predictors. Nine of these are the control variables. While gender, age, marital status, ethnicity, residential area, employment status and religiosity, are included as the demographic variables, educational level and economic condition are controlled as the objective indicators of

economic status. The remaining five measures are the independent variables that test for the main hypotheses of this study. The generalized trust is added in the 2nd model, social participation is in the 3rd model and the remaining three variables of social network are included in the last and the 4th model where it is possible to see and interpret how all the variables act together in predicting the dependent variable.

Except for a few that are kept in their original form, the variables are mostly modified by me through necessary recodings and computations in order to either convert the categorical variables into dummies to be able to use them in the calculative analyses or to reverse code them to avoid double negation and to convey an easier, clearer and more concise understanding while interpreting the results. Also, several index variables are formed from related items through necessary modifications in order to develop the intended measures like the distance scale.

Before the regression analysis, the study provides a set of pretests to enhance understanding of the variables, their interrelations and further analysis, and also to display credibility for the main multivariate model. At the univariate level, namely, the descriptive statistics of numerical variables and frequency analysis of the categorical variables are reported. Later, all the variables are analysed in a correlation matrix to assess the bivariate relations that the variables have among themselves. This is also critical to check the multicollinearity of variables, which needs to be absent to fulfil one of the main assumptions of the regression analysis. Before the detailed analyses and presentation of results in the next chapter, this chapter provides a detailed explanation of all the variables, including the survey question they are derived from, answer categories, missing values, the original form and any modifications made by me, along with their role and utilization in the study.

### **4.3. VARIABLES**

There are fifteen variables included in the model in total; the dependent variable, five independent variables, and nine control variables.

#### **4.3.1. Dependent Variable**

##### **Subjective Social Status**

The dependent variable of this study is subjective social status derived from the question of;

*“In our society, there are groups which tend to be towards the top and groups which tend to be towards the bottom. Below is a scale that runs from bottom to top. Where would you put yourself now on this scale?”*

Responses were collected on an ordinal scale of ten, as 10 represents the highest level of self-evaluation of status and 1 represents the lowest. This variable is used exactly as it is coded in the dataset without any changes.

#### **4.3.2. Independent Variables**

Social capital constitutes the conceptual framework of the independent variables of this study. It is measured in three stages. Variables corresponding to each stage are added and analysed in a cumulative hierarchical model.

##### **Generalized Trust**

Respondent’s level of trust in people in society in general is measured in a 4-step Likert scale by the following question;

*Generally speaking, would you say that people can be trusted or that you can’t be too careful in dealing with people?*

Answers were coded in a decreasing ordinal scale of level of trust as;

- 1 *“People can almost always be trusted”*,
- 2 *“People can usually be trusted”*,
- 3 *“You usually can’t be too careful in dealing with people”* and
- 4 *“You almost always can’t be too careful in dealing with people”*.

I reverse-coded the answer values for higher values to mean higher levels of trust.

### **Social Participation**

Respondents were asked about the frequency of taking part in a set of activities in the last year. The social participation variable consists of the combination of the following two items regarding their participation in two different kinds of social activities;

*In the past 12 months, how often, if at all, have you taken part in activities ...*

- a. ... of groups or associations for leisure, sports or culture?*
- b. ... of charitable or religious organizations that do voluntary work?*

5 response options from 1 “Once a week or more” to 5 “Never” were provided in descending order of level of frequency. These variables are also reverse-coded before the combination to assign higher values to the higher level of social participation. Answer values of the index variable range from 2 lowest to 10 highest level of social participation.

### **Social Network**

The impact of the respondent’s social network on self-reported social status is measured in three variables; frequency of contact to measure the impact of the sociability level of respondent, and two separate variables of social network support to measure resource generating impact of social network based on their relation to the respondent.

#### **Frequency of Contact**

Frequency of contact with the social network is also an index variable created from 5 items regarding to respondent’s frequency of contacting 5 representing types of social ties with different levels of closeness and distance. The four of the items were about sociability within the family and kinship network, while the other one measures sociability with friends.

*“Think about the parent you have contact with most frequently: How often do you have contact with that parent, either face-to-face, by phone, internet or any other communication device?”*

The same question is repeated for siblings, adult children aged at least 18, any other family member other than a spouse or partner, lastly for the close friend. Responses to these questions were also collected on an 8-point scale of frequency from daily to never.

Answer values of;

95 *“My parents are no longer alive”*

96 *“The parent I have contact with the most frequently lives with me”*

for the parent,

95 *“I do not have any brothers or sisters”*

96 *“The brother or sister I have contact with the most frequently lives with me”*

for the siblings,

95 *“I do not have any adult”*

96 *“The adult child I have contact with the most frequently lives with me”*

for the adult child,

95 *“I do not have any other family members”*

96 *“The other family member I have contact with the most frequently lives with me”*

for other family members,

95 *“I do not have any close friends”*

96 *“The close friend I have contact with the most frequently lives with me”*

for the close friend are coded as missing values and treated as 0 in computation creating the composed variable. Also, 8-step frequency level answer values are reversely coded for increasing numbers to mean higher levels of frequency. Answer values of the index variable ranges from 1 to 40. The reliability of the computed scales is checked by testing for the Cronbach's Alpha value and is found to be .827 which is way above the acceptable level for the reliability of the scale (Taber, 2018).

### **Social Network Support (Presence)**

There are two different sets of questions in the dataset regarding the resource generator function of social network, of which both are included in the model in different formats through different modifications.

The first set of questions was designed to ask to whom or where the respondent turns to among the options of not only the persons in their social network but also various sorts of organizations, institutions, and the government, when they seek support.

Items in this first set, regarding the social network support are as follows;

*Who or where would you turn to first to ...*

- a. ... help you if you needed to borrow a large sum of money?*
- b. ... help you if you needed to find a job?*
- c. ... help you with administrative problems or official paperwork?*
- d. ... help you if you needed to find a place to live?*
- e. ... look after you if you were seriously ill?*

And the answer choices are provided in 7;

- 1. Family members or close friends*
- 2. Other persons*
- 3. Private companies*
- 4. Public services*
- 5. Non-profit or religious organisations*
- 6. Other organisations*
- 7. No person or organization*

These variables are all recoded dichotomously as 1 reflecting the first category of answers, meaning that the respondent turns to their inner circle of social network for support, and 0 reflecting the rest of answer categories from 2 to 7, which means the respondent does not rely on social network support in case of need and rather turns to institutions or other persons. Five items are computed into an index variable of which the values range from 0 to 5, with 5 indicating the highest level of reliance on social

network support. This variable is aimed to measure the impact of reliance on social network as a resource generator, upon the respondent's perception of their social status.

### **Social Network Support (Distance)**

The other set of questions regarding the social network support is designed, on the other hand, not to ascertain whether the help received from the social network or not, but to assess type of the social relationships, which also corresponds to a scale of social distance and the strength of the social ties, from which the social resources and support is accessed. These items asking about the who is the prior preference of the respondent to ask for a range of different practical, emotional and informational support are as follows;

*Who would you turn to first to ...*

- a. *... help you with a household or a garden job that you can't do yourself?*
- b. *... help you around your home if you were sick and had to stay in bed for a few days?*
- c. *... be there for you if you felt a bit down or depressed and wanted to talk about it?*
- d. *... give you advice about family problems?*
- e. *... enjoy a pleasant social occasion with?*

A collection of response options reflecting the different types of interpersonal relations were provided;

1. *Close family member*
2. *More distant family member*
3. *Close friend*
4. *Neighbour*
5. *Someone I work with*
6. *Someone else*
7. *No one*

Five items are combined into a single scale variable of social network support that measures the closeness of the relation of the person from which the support is drawn by

the respondent, in an ascending level of distance of the relation from 1 to 30. Prior to creating the index variable, answer options are recoded to switch the values of the close friend and the distant family member as the former indicates a closer form of social relationship and also to exclude the value of 7 “No one” from the ordinal scale of responses by coding it as a missing value. This variable, in the model, is aimed to assess how the distance of the resource-generating social ties, and interpreting from it, the structure of the respondent’s social network (dense or sparse) impacts subjective social status. The Cronbach’s Alpha value of this developed scale is .630, which is at the acceptable level for the reliability of the scale (Taber, 2018).

### **4.3.3. Control Variables**

A set of demographic variables are added to the model as controls. Categorical variables are recoded into dummy variables to be able to be included in metric calculations of regression analysis.

#### **Age**

The scale variable of age of the respondent ranges from 18 as the minimum age of the participant interviewed for the survey to 87 as the oldest. The variable is used in its original form without any recordings.

#### **Sex**

Respondents were entered in two categories of sex as male or female. The variable is recoded into a dummy variable of *male* to measure the impact of being male (1) as opposed to being female on the dependent variable.

#### **Marital Status (Married)**

The marital status of the participants was obtained from a categorical variable question with six options according to their legal partnership status;

*1 Married,*

*2 “Civil partnership”,*

*3 “Separated from spouse/ civil partner (still legally married/ still legally in a civil partnership)”*,

- 4 “*Divorced from spouse/ legally separated from civil partner*”,
- 5 “*Widowed/ civil partner died*”,
- 6 “*Never married/ never in a civil partnership, single*”.

A dummy variable of being *married*, which is also the most popular answer to the question, is created out of this nominal variable, as the other categories of marital status being the reference groups. The value of is 1 kept as 1 “*married*”, and the values between the 2 and 6 are recoded into 0, as not being married.

### **Ethnicity (Turkish)**

Ethnicity is asked in two levels in the survey. The exact texts of the questions on the ethnicity are as follows, respectively;

- Which of the following groups do you feel belong to?*
- Is there any other group which you also feel belong to?*

Response categories for ethnic groups are prepared country specifically for all participating countries of the survey. Options served in the Turkey questionnaire for both of the questions were; 1 “*Turkish*”, 2 “*Kurdish*”, 3 “*Laz*”, 4 “*Circassian*”, 5 “*Georgian*”, 6 “*Arabic*”, 7 “*Roma/Gypsy*”, 8 “*Bosnian*”, 90 “*Other*”, 99 “*No answer*”.

Creating a variable of *being Turkish* out of the two questions, ethnicity is also included in the model as a dichotomic measure. After recoding the first variables as 1 to represent Turkish and 0 to represent the rest of the ethnic groups, cases indicating Turkish as their secondary ethnic group are also included, through conditional recoding, in the value of 1 in the previously created variable of being *Turkish*. Thus, the variable compares those who feel belong to Turkish ethnicity at either first or secondary level to those who do not consider themselves Turkish at all.

### **Residential Area (Urban)**

Respondents were asked to choose one of the 5 options to describe their living environment to assess the type of community and residence. From the categories of 1 “*A big city*”, 2 “*The suburbs or outskirts of a big city*”, 3 “*A town or a small city*”, 4 “*A*

*country village*”, 5 “*A farm or home in the country*”, 1 coded as *urban* and the rest of the values recoded into 0 representing the reference group of rural, to create a dummy variable.

### **Employment Status (Employed)**

Among a range of various variables regarding the employment of the respondent, the *work* variable that asks about the current status of being employed regardless of the type of employment is selected for the study. It is also recoded into a dummy variable, keeping the answer category of “*Currently in paid work*” in its already coded value of 1 and recoding the 2 “*Currently not in paid work, paid work in the past*” and 3 “*Never had paid work*” values into 0. The new variable measures *being employed* in reference to being currently unemployed.

### **Religiosity (Unreligious)**

Another demographic variable controlling the model is the religiosity. From the original variable asking the religion of the respondent with country-specific options provided in the survey, another dichotomic variable is derived comparing being unreligious to being religious in any of the religions listed all of which constitutes the reference group of the new variable of *unreligious*.

### **Education Level**

Out of the two variables measuring education level, the one derived from an open-ended question collecting responses in the form of the number of “*years spent in formal education so far, including all the primary and secondary schooling, university and other post-secondary education and full-time vocational training, but not including*” *repeated years* is used in the analysis, rather than the ordinal variable of highest level of educational degree attained by the respondent, since former provides a better measure of educational status and the resources it brings to an individual. Values for this variable range from 0, meaning “*no formal schooling, no years at school*”, to 19.

### **Economic Condition**

Economic status is one of the central control variables of this study, due to the fact that, despite the objective of this study to analyse social capital's capacity to predict self-perceived social status, it is vital to control the model with the economic capital and resources owned by the respondent. Although there are two variables asking for the respondent's personal and household income in numbers of local currency, there are not sufficient valid cases in these variables to run the analysis with these variables. Considering that having almost half of the cases missing in these variables risks the credibility of the results, another variable derived from a question asking respondents to report the level of economic difficulty they face in the household is used as a substitute to reflect the economic status of the respondent. The exact question is as follows:

*Thinking of your household's total income, including all the sources of income of all the members who contribute to it, how difficult or easy is it currently for your household to make ends meet?*

Response options were given in a 5-step Likert scale from 1 "Very difficult" to 5 "Very easy", as the increasing number of values represents the higher level of economic status. The variable is added to the analysis as it is found in the dataset without any recoding.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In this chapter, findings of the univariate, bivariate and finally the multivariate level of analyses, respectively, are going to be presented. In the first section of this chapter, a brief introduction and explanation of all the variables utilized in this study, starting from the dependent variable of perceived social status, is going to be outlined through descriptive statistics, in terms of their proportional distribution and statistical trends, to provide an overview and a better understanding of the sample with which we are dealing for this study. Following the descriptives section, correlations between all the possible combinations of variable of two are going to be analysed. The last but definitely not the least section of this chapter, is where the main model of multivariate linear regression analysis built for this study is going to be presented and explained.

#### **5.1. DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSES**

First of all, descriptive data of the dependent variable of subjective social status is provided as both the overall statistics of minimum, maximum and the mean values along with the standard deviation and number of valid cases, and also the frequencies and percentages of the responses in each category of answers, in Table 1 and Table 2, respectively. 1484 respondents answering this question of perception of the social status of the self, defined their position at all the different levels of the social ladder from minimum 1 at the bottom to 10 at the top, as it is evident from the frequency table showing valid cases for all values (Table 2), with a mean of 6 and the standard deviation of 2 (Table 1). As the total sample size of the survey is 1512, 37 number of people did not answer this question, which are coded as missing cases and are going to be excluded from all of the analyses. According to Table 2, the greatest majority of people, with a percentage of 22.4 reported to be at the 5<sup>th</sup> step of the ladder, followed by the 6<sup>th</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> step, while only 2.6 percent of the people placed themselves at the bottom.

<b>Descriptive Statistics of Dependent Variable: SSS</b>				
<b>N</b>	<b>Min.</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
1484	1	10	6.0	2.0

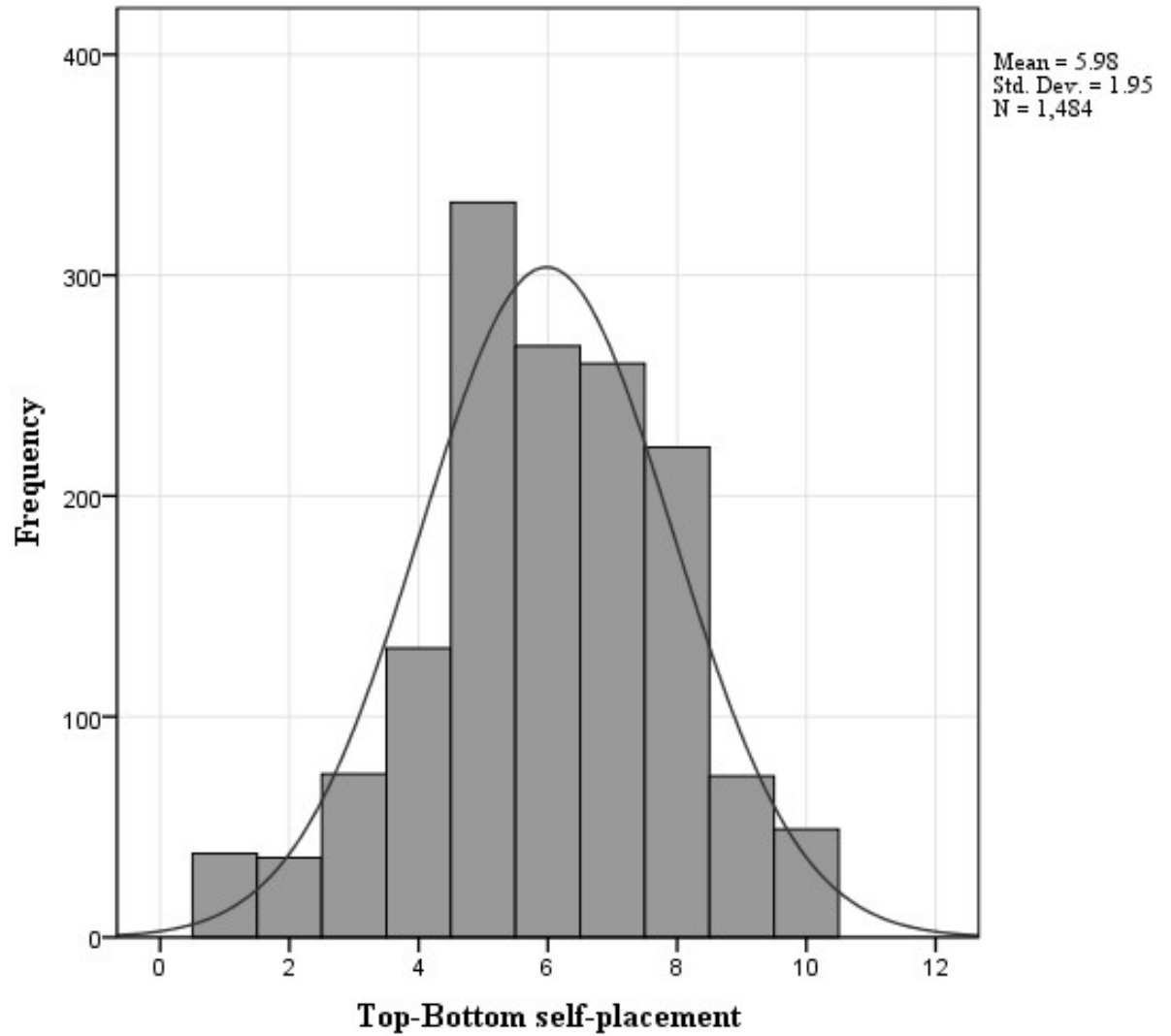
*Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Subjective Social Status*

<b>Frequency Analysis of Dependent Variable: SSS</b>			
		<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>1 Bottom</b>		38	2.6
<b>2</b>		36	2.4
<b>3</b>		74	5.0
<b>4</b>		131	8.8
<b>5</b>		333	22.4
<b>6</b>		268	18.1
<b>7</b>		260	17.5
<b>8</b>		222	15.0
<b>9</b>		73	4.9
<b>10 Top</b>		49	3.3
<b>Total</b>		1484	100.0

*Table 2 Frequencies of the Subjective Social Status*

As it is a prominent assumption of the linear regression analyses for the dependent variable to be normally distributed, a set of tests was run to control for the normality of the distribution of cases in the subjective social status variable. In addition to the skewness and kurtosis values of  $-.257$  and  $.036$ , respectively, which meet the rule of thumb of normality to have a skewness between  $-.5$  and  $.5$ , the histogram graph

illustrated below with a normal curve line, demonstrates the symmetry and obvious cumulation of the cases in the middle, also proving the normality of the variable. A detailed table of the skewness and kurtosis test, along with the P-P Plot of the variable are provided in the appendix section.



*Graph 1 Histogram Graph of the Subjective Social Status with the Normal Curve*

Below the frequency table of categorical independent variables and the descriptive statistics of numerical variables are given.

<b>Descriptive Statistics of Categorical Variables</b>					
	<b>1</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>Total N</b>
	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>	
<b>Male</b>	724	47.6%	797	52.4%	1521
<b>Married</b>	928	61.1%	592	38.9%	1520
<b>Turkish</b>	1375	90.9%	137	9.1%	1512
<b>Urban</b>	818	54.1%	695	45.9%	1513
<b>Employed</b>	650	42.8%	870	57.2%	1520
<b>Unreligious</b>	20	98.7%	1489	1.3%	1509

*Table 3 Frequencies of the Categorical Independent Variables*

Table 3 outlines mostly the demographic features of the sample. As detailed in the previous chapter categorical variables all of which happen to be the demographic control variables, are recoded into dichotomic measures comparing values of 1 to 0. In Table 3, the frequency and the percentages of both defined and reference groups of the dummy variables are displayed, along with the total valid cases for each variable. All of the respondents were coded in terms of their gender, so there are no missing cases from the sex variable.

47.6% of the respondents are male, while the females constitute 52.4% of the sample. Despite being slightly disproportional to the actual population of Turkey, which is usually characterized by a higher number of men than women with a small difference according to the TURKSTAT (Turkey Statistical Institute, 2022), the sample provides a good representation for being still quite close to the real statistics of the society and also

having almost equal representation of the both genders. In terms of the marital status, married people constitute the majority of the sample with a percentage 61.1, which is more than the collection of the rest of the categories of the variable. Only one person did not answer the question.

As expected, Turkish is the most frequent answer given to the question of ethnic groups, as 90.9% of the respondents reported to feel Turkish whether at the primary or secondary level while all the other ethnicities were represented by the 9.1% percent of the sample. 9 people out of all participants are not specified in terms of ethnicity to which they feel belong. More than half of the respondents live in big cities, while the rest defined their living environment as a relatively smaller place of residence. Thus, it is possible to say that the urban and rural populations are also almost equally represented in the sample. The employment rate appears to be remarkably low, however, it needs to be noted that the reference group of unemployed includes all of those who are students and have not participated in the labour force yet, retired people and housewives, of which the last is assumed to be the prominent reason of this low proportion of employed due to the relatively strong cultural norms of gender roles in Turkey.

Lastly, the most radical difference between the compared groups is found in religiosity. The 98.7 percent of the valid cases expressed to be religious in one of the provided options of religions. Although it might be misleading due to a couple of reasons, as a methodological critique of the data collection process of the survey, it is another matter of discussion and requires further research.

<b>Descriptive Statistics of Numerical Variables</b>					
	<b>N</b>	<b>Min.</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
<b>Age</b>	1514	18	87	37.3	13.1
<b>Education</b>	1489	0	19	9.7	4.0
<b>Economic Status</b>	1496	1	5	2.4	0.9
<b>Trust</b>	1503	1	4	1.9	0.9
<b>Social Participation</b>	1505	2	10	3.6	2.0
<b>Frequency of Contact</b>	1518	2	40	24.9	8.0
<b>Social Network Support</b>	1521	0	5	2.2	1.4
<b>Social Network Support (Distance)</b>	1518	5	24	8.5	3.4

*Table 4 Descriptive Statistics of the Numerical Independent Variables*

Moving on to Table 4 which depicts the minimum, maximum and mean values, standard deviation and also the total number of participants who responded to the question of the scale variables that are included in the model of this study. To begin with the age, ranging from 18 the youngest to 87 the oldest member of the sample, it is possible to say to have a fair representation of all age groups with a mean of 37.3 and median of 36 which is quite close to the median age of Turkey population, 32.4, according to the data published by TURKSTAT in 2019, the same year that the research project that collects the data for the dataset in use for this study. In terms of education, our sample seems to have 9 years of education on average with a not too high but still not neglectable variance evident from the standard deviation of 4, which means the university level of education is not received by a remarkable proportion and there is still some level of disparity in terms of access to especially higher education in society. Economic status, which is the last demographic variable to overview, displays an almost normal distribution, applying the rule of thumb of having a variance, a standard deviation value of .9 that is less than half of the mean 2.4, which is slightly below the median value of 3.

The first independent variable indicating the social capital to examine statistically is the trust variable. Statistics show that the variable with the range of 3 is positively skewed as the mean of 1.9 and 0.9 standard deviation show that the majority of the respondents have relatively lower levels of trust in people in society. Variable serving as the measure of the second stage of social capital also occurs in lower frequencies overall in the sample as the average degree of participating in social activities is 3.6 out of 10. In terms of the social network, frequency of contact with family and friends displays a high level of variance which can be explained by 2 of the constituent items of the variables having expectedly too many missing cases, as the item regarding contact with an adult child does not apply to the younger respondents, while many aged people having lost their parents are missing from the question regarding to the contact with parents. Social network support in terms of whether or not having access or reliance on close members of the social network of the self has a distribution very close to normal with a 2.2 mean and 1.4 standard deviation. Lastly, the distance measure of social network from which the social support and resources are attained has a low mean as it is 8.5 very far from the maximum value and very close to the minimum, meaning that a large proportion of people tend to turn to their closer social ties for support.

## **5.2. CORRELATIONS**

A correlation matrix of all variables is given in the Table 5. These results show whether there is a statistically significant correlation among the variables at the bivariate level, the level of strength and also the direction of the correlation; positive or negative.

Before analysing all the variables at the bivariate level, it needs to be noted that none of the correlations in the table are strong or even middle-level correlations, as all are below the limit of 0.03, with a few exceptions of middle-level correlations that occur among the demographic control variables. It is critical to acquire in order to avoid the multi-collinearity in further analysis of regression, the absence of which is one of the four scientifically accepted assumptions of running a linear regression. The limit for the magnitude of correlation to meet the assumption of absence of multi-collinearity is .8, which is far beyond any of my correlations presented below.

**Correlations**

	Age	Male	Married	Turkish	Urban	Employed	Unreligious	Education	Economic Condition	Trust	Social Particip.	Frequency of Contact	Network Support (P)	Network Support (D)	SSS
<b>Age</b>	1														
<b>Male</b>	.021	1													
<b>Married</b>	.387***	-.069**	1												
<b>Turkish</b>	.119***	-.105***	.072**	1											
<b>Urban</b>	-.010	-.011	-.041	.115***	1										
<b>Employed</b>	-.075**	.488***	.005	-.067**	.016	1									
<b>Unreligious</b>	-.017	.029	-.051*	-.065*	.003	.029	1								
<b>Education</b>	-.450***	.122***	-.291***	.046	.157***	.236***	.061*	1							
<b>Economic Status</b>	-.042	.014	-.046	.014	.072**	.010	-.002	.127***	1						
<b>Trust</b>	.007	.020	.058*	.005	.014	.027	-.077**	-.057*	.011	1					
<b>Social Particip.</b>	-.122***	.118***	-.131***	-.180***	.025	.145***	.072**	.124***	.135***	.070**	1				
<b>Frequency of Contact</b>	-.072**	-.007	.061*	-.108***	-.034	.053*	-.068**	.018	-.005	.007	.119***	1			
<b>Network Support (P)</b>	-.116***	-.007	-.051*	-.089***	.048	-.005	.038	.044	.038	-.049	.040	.121***	1		
<b>Network Support (D)</b>	.010	.098***	-.075**	-.061*	-.072**	.063*	.012	.007	.015	.158***	.147***	-.010	-.321***	1	
<b>SSS</b>	-.056*	.013	-.045	.084***	.096***	.086***	-.002	.193***	.228***	.080**	.158***	-.011	-.093***	.151***	1

\*P value<0.05 \*\*P value<0.01 \*\*\*P value<0.001

*Table 5 Correlation Matrix of All Variables*

Starting with the first stage of the social capital, the generalized trust does not correlate with most of the demographic variables, having minor correlations only with being married, being unreligious and the education level. Of all three, only marital status has a positive impact on trust.

Social Participation, on the other hand, seems to have statistically significant correlations at 0.01 and mostly even at .001 level of the p-value, with all the demographics except the living area. The strongest correlation it shows is with the ethnicity, as being Turkish is negatively associated, with a magnitude of .18, with the frequency of taking part in social activities. It might be resulted from the general tendency of minorities to be involved more in communal activities through especially certain types of associations and organizations around which they gather with people of their ethnicity or culture. There seems to be an unequal distribution of social participation also among different gender, age, employment status, marital status, education and expectedly socio-economic groups, as the younger, male, not married, employed, relatively educated and economically better off people tends to have higher level of social participation. Contact frequency, which can be considered a measure of the level of sociability with the close circle of social network ties, also displays a distinct link with only Turkishness, as the correlations with all the other demographic categorizations are too weak to be worth mentioning, even if exist at all. Social network support has statistically significant associations with the age, marital status and ethnicity, while the strength of correlation for the last two is remarkably low. Interestingly, older people report to rely less on their network in terms of social support, preferring to get support from the organizations and the other people, compared to the youth. Distance of the relationships that respondents reported to turn for help in a range of situations variates at very low levels among the demographic groups of gender, marital status, ethnicity, type of place of residence, and employment status, while it does not at all for the rest of the variables.

Moving to the independent variables, it can be observed that the strongest associations are in the row of distance of support, as it is understandably correlated negatively at the

middle level of strength, above the .3 to the social support in occurrence, and also positively related to generalized trust and social participation, with correlation magnitudes of .158 and .147, respectively, all three being statistically significant with p values of below .001. It is evident from these results that less reliance on social network in case of need for support is associated with the more distant social ties the respondent would turn to even if they do, while those who have a higher level of trust in people in society in general and of social participation are, in fact, those who tend to receive social support from the distant networks.

Before ending the section for bivariate analyses, at the bottom row of the table, the correlation of the dependent variable of self-reported social status of self, with all the variables that are in the scope of this study can be viewed. While it does not have statistically significant associations at all with gender marital status and religiosity along with the sociability level of people, appears to be linked quite weakly to the age and being Turkish, urban, and employed despite the statistical significance. It correlates with the rest of the variables. Obviously, it correlates exceptionally strongly with education and economic status which can be labelled as objective indicators of socioeconomic status compared to the subjective social status. Prominent independent variables of the study, besides the contact frequency, demonstrate significant links to the SSS, among which social participation and distance of resource-generating social ties have relatively stronger correlations to it. Thus, it can be depicted that the more the respondent participates in social activities and the greater distance they go in their network for help, the higher they perceive themselves on the social ladder, as both numbers are positive.

### **5.3. REGRESSION ANALYSIS**

In this section, the hierarchical OLS regression model has been presented, testing for the main hypotheses of the study. This multivariate model, giving more reliable results in terms of the relation between the independent and dependent variables since it controls for the other factors simultaneously, providing a base for comparing the factors with regard to their level of influence, and displaying the hierarchical importance and

contribution of the three theorized stages in explaining the dependent variable, is developed to predict one's self-assessed social status from a set of measures of social capital.

### **5.1.1. Assumption Tests**

Before looking into the results of the analysis, to explore how social capital impacts the subjective status at each stage, there are some preconditional tests that need to be run and some assumptions to meet for a hypothetical regression model to be valid. There are four assumptions of the linear regression commonly advocated for statistical studies; normality, homoscedasticity, linearity and absence of multicollinearity. To begin with the normality, there are a bunch of statistical tests and visual inspection methods to check for whether the cases in the dependent variables are normally distributed among the values. Starting with the latter, a histogram graph of the subjective social status has already been presented in the descriptive statistics section of the dependent variable. It is depicted to be fairly close to the ideal symmetric vacuolation of the normal distribution with a clear accumulation at the centre, also following the normal curve line. A P-P Plot where it is expected for dots to cluster following the line for normality, is also added in the appendix. Moreover, the statistical values for symmetry of the distribution are also checked through the skewness and kurtosis, which are found to be  $-.267$  and  $.036$ , respectively. The presence of homoscedasticity as the second assumption also can be visually inspected in the Scatter Plot as the dots, representing the residuals are equally distributed. As the first two assumptions are met, it is possible to conclude that we have also linearity of our data, which is the third assumption. Finally, multi-collinearity, which is proven to be absent in the correlations analysis, can be also checked within the more detailed table of regression added also in the Appendix, through the VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) values, which are required to be below 10, or ideally below 5. Values for my model are way below the ideal limit.

#### 5.4. THE MAIN ANALYTICAL MODEL

As demonstrated in four separate columns, the linear regression analysis has four models of all of which the R<sup>2</sup> values showing the explanatory powers of the models have been provided at the bottom row of each column, along with the R<sup>2</sup> change values to measure the contribution of the variables added in that particular stage to predicting one's subjective status so that it is possible to evaluate which of the three stages of social capital measured in three different models adds greater explanatory power to the perception of the social status of the self.

The results of the regression analysis are summarized in Table 6. First of all, the model appears to be statistically significant at all four stages, with all significance values being below .001. It indicates that the hypotheses are meaningful in terms of the social reality and applicable to Turkish society. Model does calculations with 1165 cases in total when the missing cases are excluded.

According to the multivariate analytical calculations, age, gender, marital status, residential area and religiosity have no impact on the subjective social status in any of the four models, while the ethnicity, employment, education and economic status appear to have significant prediction capacities of perceived social status in the first model where only the demographic control variables were included. Of all, years of education attained by the respondent and the economic well-being are the primary predictors of the placement of self on the social ladder with high values of both standardized betas and actual coefficients. As the household income is expectedly a major determinant of the social status, education being still highly significant at the .000 level and displaying high levels of impact on the dependent variable when economic condition is also controlled, indicates that education level has contributions to the subjective social status apart from its correlated financial benefits acquired through the causal chain of obtaining higher positions of occupations and having higher incomes following a good education.

<b>OLS Regression</b>				
	<b>Model 1 (Control Variables)</b>	<b>Model 2 (Stage 1: Trust)</b>	<b>Model 3 (Stage 2: Social Participation)</b>	<b>Model 4 (Stage 3: Social Network)</b>
	Std. Beta (Coeff.)	Std. Beta (Coeff.)	Std. Beta (Coeff.)	Std. Beta (Coeff.)
<b>(Constant)</b>	3.662	3.212	2.939	2.956
<b>Age</b>	.020 (.003)	.025 (.004)	.027 (.004)	.008 (.001)
<b>Male</b>	-.058 (-.224)	-.059 (-.228)	-.061 (-.239)	-.070 (-.274)*
<b>Married</b>	-.017 (-.070)	-.021 (-.085)	-.013 (-.052)	.002 (.007)
<b>Turkish</b>	.058 (.399)*	.057 (.388)*	.067 (.461)*	.063 (.432)*
<b>Urban</b>	.073 (.284)**	.073 (.282)**	.072 (.278)*	.089 (.343)**
<b>Employed</b>	.090 (.352)**	.086 (.337)**	.077 (.302)*	.074 (.289)*
<b>Unreligious</b>	.019 (.329)	.025 (.443)	.020 (.358)	.020 (.352)
<b>Education</b>	.123 (.060)***	.132 (.064)***	.130 (.063)***	.128 (.062)***
<b>Economic Status</b>	.232 (.474)***	.230 (.470)***	.221 (.451)***	.224 (.458)***
<b>Trust</b>		.094 (.215)***	.089 (.204)***	.065 (.148)*
<b>Social Participation</b>			.077 (.072)**	.063 (.059)*
<b>Frequency of Contact</b>				-.018 (.005)
<b>Social Network Support (Presence)</b>				-.086 (-.123)**
<b>Social Network Support (Distance)</b>				.129 (.073)***
<b>R2</b>	.102	.111	.116	.147
<b>R2 Change</b>	.102***	.009***	.005**	.030***

\*P value<0.05 \*\*P value<0.01 \*\*\*P value<0.001

*Table 6 OLS Regression Analysis*

10.2 % explanatory power had in the previous model with demographics rises to 11.1% in the second model with a statistically significant change of .009 in the R<sup>2</sup>. In this model, generalized trust, having a significant influence on the subjective status, results in .215 units of increase in the perceived social status, controlling for all the demographic variables. The social participation, the second measure of social capital, added at the third model brings relatively higher explanatory power, with the percentage of approximately 1%, raising it up to .116. Also, as it is noticeable from the beta values at this stage, the social participation has a lower capacity to predict self-reported subjective status than the level of trust respondent has in people in general. At the final stage, the third stage of social capital, measured by three social network variables, contributing the highest level of explanatory power out of the three stages and reaching up to .147 R<sup>2</sup> value, with an increase of 3 percent, trust and social participation preserve their statistically significant impact on the dependent variable, although the significance value of the former drops from .001 to .05 level.

The first variable added in this last model, frequency of contact with family and friends does not seem to have a statistically significant impact on the perceived status, as it is already noted in correlations. The other two social network variables, on the other hand, namely the tendency to turn to close social network to get support rather than other persons or organizations and also the distance of the social ties that the respondents prefer to seek support from significantly predict the subjective social status. Among all four significant measures of the social capital, the distance of the social network support seems to have the highest level of prediction capacity, followed by the presence of network support, with the beta values of .129 and -.086, respectively. While the one unit of increase in the distance of the social tie that the support attained from is associated with approximately .07 units of increase in the scale of the perception of the self in terms of social status, one unit of increase in the preference of close network members over other people and organizations results in .123 units of decrease, controlling for the all the

other variables. One unit of increase in social participation is associated with .059 units of increase, in the self-placement in the social ladder.

## 5.5. DISCUSSION

In this section, the major conclusions made through testing the hypotheses held beforehand and proving them true by the analyses in the previous chapter are going to be discussed in detail. To begin with, consistent with the initial hypothesis of this study, the findings that the social capital has a significant influence, along with a decent explanatory power, on one's perception of self-status shows that the social capital is an essential determinant of subjective social status. Moreover, controlling for the education and economic status, the two commonly accepted measures of socioeconomic status in its objective sense, reveals that the social capital influences perceived social status not only by bringing economic capital, or in Bourdieu's words through its conversion to economic capital, and so affecting status indirectly. Rather, it predicts the subjective social status, directly, apart from the economic capital. It means, in statistical terminology that social capital is not fully mediated by the economic indicators, even if it is partially. Since the coefficients show a very low decline as the social capital indicators are added to the model in hierarchical stages, it is inferred that there is not a remarkable mediation impact. Therefore, it is concluded that one tends to rank themselves socially higher based on their higher level of social trust, social participation, and having more distant social ties.

Secondly, the model is meaningful and is significantly value-added in terms of explanatory power at all three stages, so that independent variables are also controlled for each other and still have a notable capacity to predict subjective status. It confirms the second hypothesis that the social capital predicts one's ranking of self in society in three stages with the assigned variables. One exception is the frequency of contact variable here, which seems to have no impact on the self-perception of social status, but it is also an expected result and included in the analysis on purpose since its non-significance reinforces the fourth hypothesis. It is going to be elaborated later on in this

chapter. It also needs to be noted here that even though the first and the second stages of the model, corresponding to the trust and social participation, facilitate their subsequent stages to a certain degree, as previously pointed out, they are still not fully mediated by each other as well, because coefficients of the two variables demonstrate certain levels of decline at each stage but still remained significant. Hence, having social trust leads people to participate more in social organizations and activities but social participation still brings a higher level of perceived status without the social trust as well. It is the same with the social participation leading to acquiring new social relationships, mostly the bridging social ties, but these social ties still raising one's perception of self-status, controlling for the social participation.

The meaningful and independent impact of trust and participation on the subjective status when the other measures are checked as covariates as well is primarily about the social, and so the self-perception of having these particular attitudes and behaviours. It can be argued that the inclination of people with higher levels of generalized trust and social participation to consider themselves as belonging to higher ranks of the social status ladder stems mainly from some social conventions and norms.

Having an equal level of trust, to begin with, in every person in society regardless of their diverse background is a socially approved, favourable and even encouraged attitude. Evans and van de Calseyde (2018) for instance, refer to it as “reputational benefits” of generalized trust. They draw attention to the overlook of reputational consequences of generalized trust in the literature, despite the existence of prior research on the positive outcomes associated with it and they conduct a set of empirical analyses to explore these consequences, focusing on its link to morality, sociability and competence which they claim to be the fundamental facets of social perception of individuals. They suggest based on their findings that there is an evident positive correlation with being perceived as moral and sociable, and even with as competent, although the last is valid only when controlled with some other covariates. Similarly, Krueger and his friends (2008) instrumentalizing the “investment game” by Berg (Berg et al., 1995) to evaluate the social perception of trusting behaviour in society and

conducting interviews, make some critical conclusions about the judgements towards the hypothetical trustor and trustee in a dyadic relationship. It is found in the study that the level of morality attributed to the trustor positively correlates literally with the amount they invest in the trustee, while the judgement of competence of the players displays an inconsistent pattern and fluctuates with nuances as in the other study referred above. Another study introduces three major dispositional typologies based on trust level and behaviours of individuals at the end of the quantitative and qualitative analyses conducted. According to the findings, although the medium trust individualist disposition typology prefers to trust people, mostly due to the rational benefits of cooperation, those in the high trust normativist disposition typology trust people primarily for that they perceive it as the normatively right thing to do (Frederiksen, 2019). Especially the second part of these findings also aligns with the previously referred correlation between the trust and social perception of being moral or acting in a normative attitude.

All these studies point out in the end that the generalized trust brings a positive social image to the trustor as being moral and sociable and so it is considered as a valuable social asset to have. It also applies to the social participation to a great extent. Participating in voluntary activities clearly holds moral and normative representations as well, in addition to the fact that engaging in both voluntary and leisure activities are evident indicators of sociability. It explains the finding of our study regarding the generalized trust and social participation bringing higher perceived status to a remarkable degree apart from their contribution to the subsequent stages since people would consider themselves higher ranked in the social hierarchical order for having this moral and socially respectful attitude and engaging in such social activities. It is expectable that positively perceived social attitudes and behaviours are associated with the higher social status groups.

The third hypothesis is also validated by in fact both the correlation and also the regression analyses. Although the calculations that the two analyses use and consequently the resulting numbers are completely different in bivariate and multivariate

analyses conducted, the direction of the influential relationship between the independent variables of social capital and the dependent variable of subjective social status do not change in both analyses and they affirm that all three of the level of trust, level of social participation and the distance of social ties typically defining one's social network have positive impacts on the self-assessed position in social hierarchical order of status, as it is formulated in the hypothesis.

Finally, the bottom-line hypothesis of this study claims that it is specifically the bridging social capital that brings subjective social status, not the bonding form of it in Turkey. It is, in fact, supported at all three stages, but most evidently at the last stage. The generalized trust, the first measure of social capital, conceptually corresponds, as already explained in the theoretical context chapter, to the trust one has in any random member of society, in other words in strangers. It is about the probability of having, or in other words cognitive level assessment of the availability of social relationships in its particularly bridging form, since having a certain level of trust in people, in general, initiates the interaction and later establishment of a relationship with strangers, and those who believe that "they cannot be too careful dealing with people" as it is put in the survey, would expectedly avoid engaging with people outside of their close circle of network unless it is necessary. Therefore, trust, in specifically its generalized form, is a measure of especially bridging social capital, increasing one's perceived social status.

Following that, participating in social organizations and activities and engaging in different social settings which would bring people with various backgrounds together functions as bridging social capital that brings higher subjective status as well.

At the final stage, where characteristics of the existing social network ties are examined, there are three measures all showing that those with more distant and weaker ties rank themselves higher in hierarchical social order, while having strong and close relationships do not have the same impact. The frequency of contact, for instance, with family and close friends, which indicates the bonding social capital one has with close and strong relationships, does not influence the perceived status as it is found in the results. While it was an already expected result, as stated above, and this frequency of

contact variable is selected especially to display that the bonding social capital does not bring higher subjective social status, the other two social network variables lead to a more assertive point that it, in fact, tends to result in lower levels of self-placement in terms of social status. It is evident firstly with social network variable that shows that the preference of members of the close circle of friends and family in a set of cases of need for support over some institutions that may help in such cases predicts lower subjective social status, which means those who rely on their bonding social capital for support are those who rank themselves lower in society. Lastly, and most importantly, the distance scale developed for this study, which measures the distance of the relationship that the person turns to ask for help, demonstrates that the more distant and the weaker the ties are, which also can be conceived as the sparser and more heterogeneous one's social network is, the higher they tend to place themselves on the social ladder. Consistently, the closer and stronger the ties are, the lower they tend to perceive their own place in the social ladder.

There are some major theories, supporting these arguments derived from the results of the analysis. First of all, Mark Granovetter's (1973) theory of "the strength of weak ties" has a central contribution to the field of social network arguing that the weak ties are of critical importance for both amplifying social integration among the fragments of society and providing opportunities for individuals. He explains through a set of models that strong ties are in a way obliged to end up in triad closures, which prevents any tie in that triad from being a bridge since it means that there is more than one path for any node in a group to go to another. Weak ties, on the other hand, do not have the same problem, so he infers not only that all bridges are weak ties but also that the weak ties are necessary for bridges among different fragments to occur. This theory exactly applies to our results based on the Turkish society as those with weaker ties and so the bridging social capital are the ones with higher subjective social status.

Furthermore, Burt (1995), in his theory of structural holes states that the gap or lack of a direct tie among the members of two clusters of people creates advantages for the only existing weak tie between the two. He also concludes, comparing structural hole

argument of his to the network closure theories like the one of Coleman (1990) and reviewing empirical studies on the matter, that even though closure brings benefits in terms of trust and absence of risk, structural holes surpass closure in terms of performance and opportunities created, which is evidently consistent with the argument of this study, as the qualities associated with the second one are the ones that make people do better or make social mobility possible so that would bring status. He also states that the dense and hierarchical structures of the network are the ones with closure. Therefore, it can be argued that the social mobility and so the status attainment are not as possible in this type of networks. In addition, inconsistent with the highly referred association of bridging and bonding types of social capital with vertical and horizontal forms of network structures, respectively,

Also, Xavier de Souza Briggs's (1997) explanation of the two types of social capital based on the expressions of "getting ahead" for bridging and "getting by" for the bonding social capital, points it out that while the latter is associated with managing to preserve what is already attained or to overcome the difficulties faced at most, the former is the efficient facilitator of achievement of further opportunities and so higher status.

At this juncture, two dimensions warrant elucidation and discussion pertaining to the causal interplay between bridging social capital and perceived status that this study claims in the light of its findings and of the conceptual approaches given above. Primarily, the term 'subjective social status' retains its intertwining within the stratification framework, and it is not entirely detached from socioeconomic status and its objective indicators. Each of the three aforementioned theories posits that the possession of bridging social ties confers noteworthy advantages and opportunities upon the individual. To elaborate, possessing associations with individuals from disparate social cohorts, particularly those of higher socioeconomic strata, confers tangible benefits upon people, that would foster achievement and eventually help to secure a foothold among the upper echelons of the social ladder or embarking on an ascent towards these upper strata. As discussed in Chapter 3, there are empirical studies in the

literature, proving that the social capital brings opportunities in the labour market (Baştürk, 2018), occupational success (Akçıkaya & Bağrıyanık, 2019; Bilgin & Kaynak, 2008; Özdemir, 2007), and academic achievement (Öz and Boyacı, 2018; Çelik, 2019) in Turkey. The argument here is that where these opportunities come from is also significant, since the job and educational opportunities derived from the same social environment would not really provide vertical movement in the social ranking, but rather mean a horizontal exchange. This study, using measures of practical support coming from a range of different distances of social relationships, shows that the support from the distant, weaker, bridging ties provides higher social status, while closer, stronger and bonding ties do not.

Furthermore, as we focus on the subjective sense of social status here, it in fact goes beyond the practical benefits of these social connections. Both Granovetter and Burt highlight the strategical position of the weak ties between distinct social groups and their facilitative attribute of enabling transition across these groups. At this point, it is argued that the presence of such bridges and the potential for traversing them effectively prompts individuals to perceive themselves as occupying higher rungs on the societal ladder. In other words, the possibility of social mobilisation serves as a sufficient enabler for cultivating a more optimistic self-image. These interconnections across different socioeconomic groups hold significance in mitigating the perception of the other, typically upper, socioeconomic status groups beyond one's own as unattainable constructs, thereby preventing individuals from positioning themselves as removed and beneath those constructs. Thus, this study argues, based on its findings, that cultivating weaker but diverse connections with various socioeconomic groups leads to a heightened perception of one's own social status, by diminishing the sense of practical differences and gaps between the self and the member of other status groups, the sense of being confined to the present social stratum and by fostering a belief in the capacity to navigate, regardless of whether such mobility actually occurs.

This thesis, aligning with these perspectives highlighting bridging social capital, demonstrates that its critical role of creating opportunities for the individual and

contributing to their status attainment and self-perception also applies to the context of Turkey to a great extent. It is evident, on the other hand, both from the previous studies in the reviewed literature as outlined in the third chapter and also from the descriptive statistics and frequency analyses of the social network variables in this study that the bonding type of social capital is more prevalent in Turkish society than the bridging social capital. To elucidate further, it can be stated that social capital in Turkey is predominantly sourced by familial and religious bonds, as Aydemir and Tecim (2012) underline, due to cultural reasons and societal norms as kinship and religious affiliations are quite substantial and valued above anything else in Turkish society.

That the strong relationships of bonding social capital, as indicated by the findings, do not possess an ascending effect on the self-perceived status unlike bridging social capital and even exhibit a negative impact, corresponds at the societal level to that these bonding ties being associated with the hierarchical structures due to the closure impact as in Burt's theory, in contrary to the ability of bridging weak ties to ensure social integration as Granovetter outlines. Hence, thinking all this together, what it means for Turkey is that this lack of bridging social capital and the unbalanced presence of strong ties sourcing the social capital within the Turkish society appears to be one of the major reasons of the present inequality and stratification in Turkey outlined in the chapter three.

Moreover, it can be argued that these structural features of social capital commonly held within Turkish society might also be responsible, to some extent, for the tension that currently dominates Turkish society, regarding the economic conditions and unequal, or as more commonly referred, unfair distribution of income and economic opportunities, since when we focus on the perceptual dimension of the matter, absence of connections among fragments of the society stimulates the sense of detachment from the upper-status groups, the way of life associated with those groups and the possibility of transition to those strata of society, as discussed earlier, which would in the end create tension and even polarization among these groups. Thus, considering the proven significance of bridging social capital for both individual and societal levels of development, this thesis

underscores, as the bottom line, the need for the enhancement and promotion of bridging social capital among the people in Turkey.



## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

#### 6.1. SOCIAL CAPITAL AND SUBJECTIVE SOCIAL STATUS IN TURKEY: AN EVALUATION

This study aimed to explore in what ways and through what measures social capital influences the individual's subjective positioning within the hierarchical structure of social status to understand the influence of the distribution of a non-economical asset on the emergence of unequal social structures especially in the sense of personal evaluation of self-position in those structures.

Upon a comprehensive review of the literature, it has been found that both social capital and subjective social status are relatively nascent conceptual paradigms warranting further exploration. Initiated by Bourdieu and primarily developed by Coleman and Putnam social capital is a significant tool for discussing and discovering the non-economical social facets of social stratification formation. Amidst a diverse array of perspectives, encompassing both collective and individual conceptualizations of social capital, and ranging from those focusing on its absolute virtues to those acknowledging its nuanced duality, this study distinctly aligns itself with the paradigm that views social capital as an individual property. Within this intellectual framework, the paramount objective is to probe the advantages that ensue solely for its proprietors, with a deliberate focus on the enhancement of one's self-assessment within the intricate patterns of social status evaluations.

The subjective evaluation of social status, as delineated in this discourse, emerges as a pivotal apparatus as well to apprehend the intricacies inherent in the cognitive and perceptual facets of social stratification. This interpretive framework serves a dual functionality. Foremost, it provides a methodological avenue to scrutinize non-monetary determinants as well by directing its focus towards the individuated self-perception, which is formed majorly in social and cultural constructs, norms, and dynamics, thereby

diverging from conventional objective measures, such as income or educational attainment. Moreover, its utility extends to the examination of discrete ramifications arising from disparities and hierarchical arrangements, because individuals' actions are often predicated upon their personal sensibilities and perceptual constructs regarding these intricate social configurations, not upon absolute numerical metrics that quantify the present inequality and one's position therein.

Methodologically, this study undertook a rigorous approach by utilizing a comprehensive dataset and employing a multivariate statistical analysis. This analytical endeavour yielded not only robust and precise results but also profound insights into the intricate causal interplay between social capital, its central indicators, and their implication for the context of perceived self-status in Turkish society. The analytical approach taken allows a nuanced comparison among the predefined incorporated metrics of social capital, beyond their independent impacts, in terms of both their explanatory power and also the magnitude of their influence upon the construct of subjective status. It safeguards against any potential for misleading effects arising from the confounding of interrelations among these various aspects of social capital, as well as of interactions with numerous other demographic variables, which ensures the validity of the results. It safeguards against any potential for misleading effects arising from the covariance and interrelations among these various aspects of social capital, as well as from confounding interactions with numerous other demographic variables added to the model as control variables, which ensures the validity of the results. This meticulous analytical examination enables us to contribute substantively to the comprehension of the intricate dynamics shaping the relationship between social capital and self-assessment of status within Turkish society.

In the context of Turkey, the prevailing perspective within this domain displays the presence of a distinct and intricate stratification structure that characterizes Turkish society. Consequently, a corresponding body of literature has emerged, seeking to comprehend the dynamics, patterns, and intricacies inherent to these structures, although it seems to be relatively underdeveloped compared to the international discourse

surrounding this subject matter. In addition to the historical analyses, initiating this literature, elucidating the formation and evolution of Turkish stratification and hierarchical patterns, the universal paradigm shift from class to status as the central construct in the field has been discerned within the Turkish literary landscape as well. Recent empirical studies and initiatives aimed at formulating socio-economic status indices tailored for the Turkish context have surfaced, contributing substantively to the scholarly landscape. However, a notable void persists in Turkey's scholarly exploration, particularly concerning the investigation of the subjective sense of social status, marked by only a few attempts to elucidate and comprehend this specific dimension. While the concept of social capital, despite being a newly emerging field as pointed above, garners relatively more attention, its multi-faceted nature remains largely uncharted as well. In addition to that predominant scholarly focus pertains to studies that adopt a collective perspective on social capital, cantering their analysis on its broader macro-level implications like economic growth or political development, with very little attention allocated to the individual-level advantages of it, there exists a conspicuous dearth of discourse within the field concerning the distinct typologies of social capital, namely bonding and bridging social capital—wherein the latter, markedly neglected. This study, in this regard, attempts to address these pinpointed gaps in the literature and constitutes a meaningful and significant contribution towards that.

After conducting the analyses and reviewing the findings, interpreting them through the theories and conceptual tools of the field, as well as the perspectives developed in this thesis, it is concluded that social capital not only serves as a prominent determinant of perceived social status but also exerts a meaningful influence on self-assessed social rank at each of the three defined stages, thereby confirming the first two hypotheses of the study.

Furthermore, the three stages of social capital hypothesized in this study; generalized trust, social participation and structural characteristics of social network are proved to be affecting the subjective social status hierarchically. The use of a hierarchical regression as the analytical model, in this regard, has served well to its objective and displayed that

although there are three stages influencing the self-perceived social standing, the structural characteristic of the social network, specifically the distance of ties has the largest share in prediction capacity among the three.

In addition to the fact that the higher level of generalized trust, higher level of social participation and more distant social ties as the sources of support for the respondent are positively correlated with the self-placement in the social hierarchical order of status as expected, the last measure, along with the frequency of contact with the family and friends leads us the validation of the last hypothesis and one of the central discussions of this study that the different type of social capital, the bonding and bridging forms of it, in fact, results in different outcomes in terms of the one's self-assessment of social status.

That is to say, not all forms of social capital positively impact the subjective social status. The results indicate that while the bonding social capital, consisting of exclusive and close relationships that tend to be strong ties, causes lower levels of Self-evaluated placement in the hierarchical arrangement of social status, the bridging social capital, emerging from the inclusive and distance relations that are looser and weaker connections, tend to bring a higher level of subjective social status. An interesting finding at this point is that while bonding social capital does not have a statistically significant impact on one's self-reported position in the ten-step social ladder when it is measured based on the frequency of contact with close social network ties, it does exhibit a significant yet negative influence when there is an inclination of reliance on this type of social ties in times of need.

The meaning of these findings in the practical context is that those who trust people in general in society and who participate more in social activities, thereby engaging with people more tend to consider themselves with higher social status, which is quite related to positive social representation of such attitudes and behaviours. As discussed, trusting in and engaging with any member of society regardless of their background has socially positive connotations in especially terms of morality and sociability and it is the fact that people perceive themselves mostly through the social perceptions.

The practical implications of these findings within the Turkish societal framework indicate, to begin with, that individuals who exhibit a general trust in other members of society and actively participate in social activities are inclined to attribute a heightened social status to themselves. This observation is significantly associated with the favourable societal portrayal of these predispositions and conduct. As expounded upon, the act of bestowing trust upon and engaging with people, regardless of whether they are a fellow member from their social group or not, carries inherently positive connotations, particularly in the realms of morality and sociability. This is intrinsically linked to the reality that individuals predominantly formulate their self-perceptions through the lens of prevailing social perceptions.

Furthermore, the evident results of the study indicating that bridging social capital substantiates a positive self-evaluation concerning one's position within the social hierarchy, while bonding social capital either lacks this effect or possibly exerts adverse consequences, posit critical and interconnected insights into the prevalent patterns and dynamics of inequality and stratification in the context of Turkey. Beyond the realization that these weaker, distant and bridging ties facilitate strategic openings and upward mobility along the social ladder for individuals, they concurrently assume pivotal societal functions, from a broader perspective, playing a fundamental role in fostering social integration by forging linkages between disparate socioeconomic clusters, thereby moderating the polarization that may ensue among these segments.

## **6.2. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

In light of these findings and discussions elucidated in this study, the subsequent policy recommendations aim to illuminate actionable strategies that centre on fostering increased interactions and meaningful connections among individuals from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. The ensuing recommendations are strategically geared toward the social capital in all three stages contributing to a positive perception of self-status; notably enhancing mutual trust, promoting robust social engagement, and providing the construction of *bridges* among the fragments within the broader societal

context. By prioritizing the facilitation of cross-segment collaborations, these recommendations endeavour to contribute to the cultivation of a more integrated and harmonious sense of society, while reducing the feeling of detachment and consequent tension.

One critical recommendation at this juncture pertains to urban planning. The imperative lies in fostering inclusive and integrated residential environments that actively counteract socioeconomic segregation within our urban landscapes. Therefore, advocating for urban planning strategies that deliberately mixed housing options for various income levels within the same neighbourhood emerges as a compelling course of action. By embracing such an approach, cities can foster an environment where individuals from disparate socioeconomic backgrounds interact and build connections. Designing public spaces and facilities that would naturally prompt such interactions would also play an effective role in nurturing a sense of shared community and network.

Continuing on the trajectory of fostering shared experiences and occasions for diverse groups to build relationships, another pivotal way lies in the realm of education. By discouraging, if not entirely eliminating, the presence of private institutions and implementing a system in which all individuals attend public schools within their respective neighbourhoods, in conjunction with the aforementioned recommendation, a transformative environment can be nurtured. This is not only pivotal for engendering a more equitable educational landscape, an argument frequently encountered in both academic studies and the realm of politics, but also for establishing another significant territory that fosters connections among diverse socioeconomic groups, which is critical since one's school years significantly shape their social capital.

Lastly, municipalities play a significant role in creating occasions to bring these different fragments of society to come together by orchestrating a variety of events such as special day celebrations, concerts, and festivals. These gatherings play a crucial role in nurturing connections and shared experiences among citizens from different backgrounds. Additionally, the establishment of community organizations and associations further amplifies this impact. Through such endeavours, municipalities

actively facilitate the convergence of these groups around certain objectives, and voluntary participation, thereby improving integration as well. In this regard, municipalities can be incentivized by the government to organize such events and take such actions.

Therefore, in parallel with Burt's argument that strongly tied dense and hierarchical structures typically associated with closed social networks, instead of forming hierarchically segregated clusters of residential areas, educational institutions and socialization venues which are dense within themselves but closed to the outside, city plans should be developed to create environments for heterogeneous social networks integrating diverse groups with each other through bridges.

While successfully achieving its primary intention of investigating the multivariate relationship between the major indicators of social capital and individuals' self-reported evaluation of social status, this thesis also stimulates further related inquiries. One could be about why the bonding social capital is not just simply ineffective, but in fact, has an adverse impact on the perception of self-social rank in Turkey. Since this study is limited to the family and close friends based on a scale distance of relationship, another valuable contribution, at this point, would be to explore additional specific types of relationships within the realm of bonding social capital to ascertain if and how their impact on the subjective evaluation of one's own status varies. These might include a focus on one of the tightly connected communities of religious groups, neighbourhoods, hometown or ethnicity-based associations and groups.

Moreover, intending to examine the different stages and indicators of social capital to make a conclusion on their collective and collaborative influence on the personal assessment of self in the order of social status hierarchy, this thesis focuses and relies on the distance feature of the social ties to represent the last stage of structure of the social network and assess the type of relationship, which serves the best to the objective of this study. However, there is also a lack and need, in the literature, for research that investigates the impact of the diverse structural network characteristics, like network density and node centrality, at a multivariate level as well. Another noteworthy

limitation of this thesis is its sample, which focuses solely on Turkey, thereby limiting the generalizability of its findings to other societies. Given the significance of national and cultural dynamics in shaping social relations and norms, a cross-national study at this juncture would yield valuable insights into the nuances of cultural variations and contribute to a deeper understanding of societal differences.



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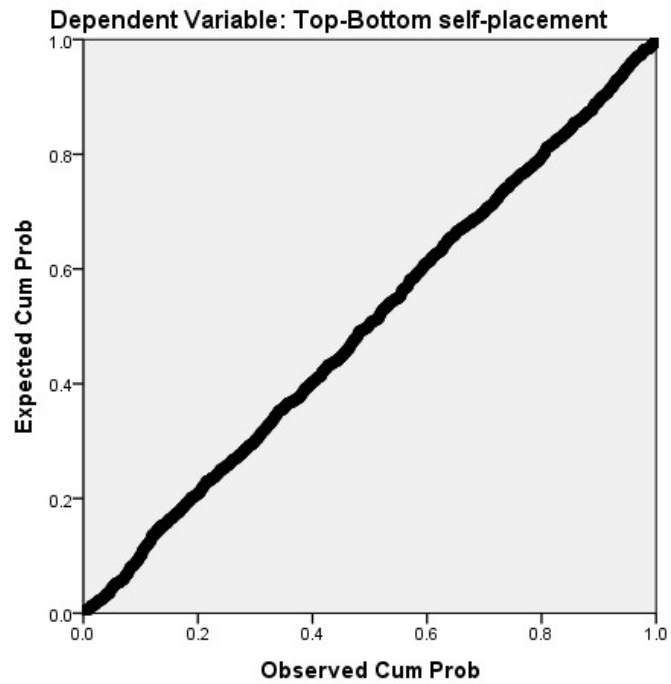
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## APPENDIX

Additional tests for normality of the dependent variable, subjective social status;

		Statistic	Std. Error
	Mean	5.98	.051
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound 5.88 Upper Bound 6.08	
	5% Trimmed Mean	6.02	
	Median	6.00	
	Variance	3.801	
TOPBOT Top-Bottom self-placement	Std. Deviation	1.950	
	Minimum	1	
	Maximum	10	
	Range	9	
	Interquartile Range	2	
	Skewness	-.267	.064
	Kurtosis	-.036	.127

**Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual**



VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) values showing the absence of multi-collinearity of dependent variable, subjective social status;

Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)		
age	.687	1.456
Male	.718	1.392
Married	.794	1.259
Turkish	.914	1.094
urban	.939	1.065
employed	.697	1.434
unreligious	.961	1.041
education	.694	1.441
Economic condition	.966	1.035
Trust	.957	1.045
Social Participation	.881	1.136
Freq. of Contact	.941	1.062
Support Presence	.857	1.166
Support Distance	.836	1.197