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Toward a Relational Approach? Common Models of Pious Women’s Agency and Pious Feminist Autonomy in Turkey

Pinar Dokumaci

Department of Politics, University of York, Heslington, York YO10 5DD, United Kingdom
Corresponding author. Email: pinar.dokumaci@york.ac.uk

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Abstract

This article reviews the common models of pious women’s agency in the literature with respect to pious feminist perceptions in Turkey, and calls for a relational approach to subjectivity and autonomy. After critically assessing individualistic models of pious women’s autonomy as well as the main theoretical tenets of Saba Mahmood’s landmark study on the women’s piety movement in Egypt, I argue that previous models cannot fully explain the second stage of pious subjectivity-formation in the pious feminist narratives in Turkey, which combines habituation with informed choice. In the intersection of applied theory and ethnographic empirical research, my study posits the need for a relational reformulation of these common models that can account for (1) self-constitutive engagement with multiple discursive traditions, and (2) the importance of complex and interrelated webs of relationships. I suggest that Jennifer Nedelsky’s relational self and relational autonomy and Kenneth Gergen’s relational multi-being might provide a starting point for such an approach.

Keywords: pious women’s agency; relational autonomy; feminist subjectivity; Muslim women’s headscarf; Islamic feminism; secularism and feminism; relational subjectivity

In this article, I review the most common models of pious women’s agency in the current literature with respect to the narratives of self-proclaimed “pious feminists” (*dindar feministler*) who are active participants in both the (1) women’s piety movement and (2) women’s rights movement in Turkey.¹ The main aim of this article is to rethink these common models with respect to the ethnographic data I obtained from two years of fieldwork in Turkey from 2011 to 2013—an interesting in-between period that marks the beginning of pro-pious, pro-capitalist AKP’s (Turkish acronym for Justice and Development Party) authoritarian turn.² While tracing out the most common models and examining each model with respect to pious feminist narratives, this article also locates an important gap in the literature on pious women’s agency.

Although the last few decades have seen an increasing number of studies that aim to decolonize mainstream, Western, liberal feminist vocabularies and account for non-Western experiences of women in the third world (see Avishai 2008; Singh 2015; Herr 2018), this effort continues to rely on a dualistic approach to subjectivity

that assumes a foundational separation, if not opposition, between the Self and the Other, Western and non-Western values, secular and religious knowledges—an assumption that itself relies on Freudian drive theory and its oppositional ethics of selfhood and otherhood (see Freud 1941/2004). As Suad Joseph's work on intentionality and subjectivity in Lebanon suggests, this reliance cannot capture complex and convoluted relationships in the Middle East (Joseph 2012). Yet, in the current literature, despite different categorizations (Bracke 2003; 2008; Bilge 2010; Burke 2012), two main approaches remain for thinking about pious women's agency. One, based on Western liberal, individualistic definitions of pious women's autonomy-as-self-law (*auto-nomos*), highlights how pious women resist and confront, or resituate and empower themselves against religious norms; the other identifies pious women's alternative agentic ways of compliance (sometimes referred to as other-law, *hetero-nomos*; see Bucar 2010).³

In contrast, however, the participants in my study were a part of the women's *rights* and women's *piety* movements in Turkey. Rather than either resistance or compliance, critique or affirmation, they were able to talk about their own subjectivity and autonomy in *their own* terms and make references to both feminist resistance and critique as well as religious compliance and affirmation. Therefore, neither individualistic nor compliant models of pious women's agency can fully account for pious feminist narratives of autonomy. In this article, I propose that pious feminist narratives call additionally for a relational approach to pious women's subjectivity and autonomy, reformulated in a way that does not locate Islamic piety and feminism as fundamentally separate knowledges, or as distinct and/or separate routes to pious women's agentic action.

There are two points to clarify here. First, when I call for a relational approach, I particularly refer to approaches with a relational conception of the self that build on the relational psychoanalytic models of subjectivity (Mitchell 1988; Gergen 2009; see also Sullivan 1953; Kohut 1971; Bowlby 1973; Kohut 1977; Bowlby 1979) and reflections of this literature in gender analysis (Chodorow 1978; Gilligan 1982; Keller 1986; Nedelsky 2011; Joseph 2012). Although feminist reconceptualizations of individual autonomy in relational terms (for example, MacKenzie and Stoljar 2000) can account for the socio-relational component of pious subjectivity and autonomy in my study, as Jennifer Nedelsky argues, these models continue to rely upon Western liberal theory on individual subjectivity (Nedelsky 2011, 118–57). The particular relational approach I am looking for also differs from the idea of self-constitutive relationships between separate and separated individuals (Westlund 2003; Oshana 2006; Westlund 2009) which, as Ranjoo Herr argues (Herr 2018), cannot account for Saba Mahmood's genre-defining study of pious women's compliance as an alternative Islamic mode of agency in *Politics of Piety* (Mahmood 2005). As Nedelsky argues, when I talk about relationships here, I “do not mean just intimate relationships, but mutually interacting relationships that are a part of a nested structure from intimate to global,” which also includes interconnected relationships with institutional structures, law, civil society, and multiple religious and secular discursive traditions (Nedelsky 2018, 15). Diverging from the socio-relational approaches, therefore, I argue that the pious feminist narratives in Turkey bring to mind Kenneth Gergen's psychoanalytical relational approach where “independent persons do not come together to form a relationship; from relationships the very possibility of independent person emerges” (Gergen 2009, 38).

Second, in this article, I do not offer a theory of pious women's autonomy. Rather, the scope of the article is theoretically specific and contextually situated: I discuss (1) how the most common models of pious women's agency might help us to understand pious feminist autonomy in Turkey, and (2) how pious feminist autonomy in Turkey can, in turn, contribute to the existing theoretical literature on pious women's agency. In this way, I build on existing models of pious agency. In doing so, I also convey a detailed theoretical critique, especially of Mahmood's expanded redefinition of agency and her use of Aristotelian habitus.

I present my discussion in four parts. First, I start with the progression of the pious women's rights movement in Turkey. Second, I introduce the individualistic models of pious women's autonomy. I argue that some of these models can partially explain pious women's struggle in Turkey, but they fail to account for the agentic significance of religious affirmation, compliance, and acceptance in the narratives. Third, I introduce compliant models of pious women's agency. I focus on Mahmood's landmark study, *The Politics of Piety*, that brings together (1) Butler's performativity, (2) Foucault's ethical formation, and (3) Aristotle's habitus (Mahmood 2005). I argue that, similar to Mahmood's discussion, in pious feminist narratives, piety is learned as a skill through affirmation and habituation. In contrast to Mahmood, however, pious feminists in Turkey include an additional, second stage of pious subjectivity-formation, which combines religious compliance with informed choice. Last, I expand on some of the critiques of Mahmood's theoretical framework, most notably the critiques about her use of Aristotelian habitus to justify piety in itself and her ignorance of the role of *phronesis* (practical wisdom) in Aristotle's theory of virtue—which, I argue, is a constitutive part of pious feminist narratives. I assert that, in addition to these critiques, pious feminists in Turkey also highlight the need for a particular relational reformulation of subjectivity and autonomy that can account for (1) self-constitutive engagement with multiple discursive traditions and (2) the importance of complex and interrelated webs of relationship.

I. The Headscarf Issue and the Progression of Pious Feminism in Turkey

Since the 1990s, two trends have become observable in the women's rights movement in Turkey: (1) increasing levels of institutionalization, the number of organizations, and the availability of common platforms; and (2) rising ideological, ethnic, and religious cleavages (Coşar and Onbaşı 2008). Whereas the first offers opportunities for coalition-building, the second has made it harder to coordinate various efforts among leftist, Kemalist/secular, pious/Islamic, nationalist, Kurdish, Alevi women's rights organizations.⁴ Particularly, due to the deepening secular–pious divide in broader Turkish politics, secular and pious feminists rarely come together in the women's rights movement.⁵ This preference is discursively enrooted in the historically deep-seated secular–pious divide in Turkey, and one of its most paradigmatic representations: the headscarf issue in Turkish politics (see Ibrahimhakkıoğlu 2013).

Deniz Kandiyoti argues that the headscarf issue in Turkey raises two sets of “conflicting claims,” based on either “encroachment on secular spaces” or “Muslim injury” (Kandiyoti 2012, 514). Both stances assume that Turkish secularism has introduced a break in history with the establishment of the Republic in 1923. According to the first claim, this break was between tradition and modernity, backwardness and progress, Sharia rule and secularism. From this perspective, the revival of the headscarf since the 1980s was a political move to reverse Turkish modernization and bring back Sharia.

According to the second, Turkish secularism introduced a break between the state and society, center and periphery, secular values and Islamic ideals, the majority of the pious population in Anatolia and the secular elite in coastal, urban cities (Kuru 2009). From this standpoint, the headscarf movement indicates a critique of the “cleansing” of Islam from the public sphere (Yavuz 2000).

In this deeply divisive political contest over representations of the secular and the pious, the pious women’s *resistance* movement in Turkey started as a reactionary rights-based campaign against the headscarf ban in public institutions during the 1980s. Like the emerging generation of radical/critical feminists, these pious women shared a critical approach toward secular forms of patriarchy, which were largely ignored by the first generation of secular feminists in Turkey (Arat 1997; Kandiyoti 1998). Yet even during the 1990s, the majority of the Islamic women’s organizations were founded on the premise that women and men are different but complementary, and that women’s domain is the family. The pious women’s *rights* movement started about a decade later in the aftermath of the events that followed the February 28, 1997 National Security Council meeting, which called for more stringent measures to maintain the secular character of the Republic. Also known as the “28 February Process” (*28 Şubat Süreci*), in this period, the headscarf-ban in public buildings and state institutions, including universities, was monitored more strictly than ever. When the constitutional court banned the party that preceded Erdoğan’s AKP, many women wearing the headscarf while working in public institutions were discharged from their jobs immediately (Kadıoğlu 2005). Being deprived of their jobs in the public sector, pious women with headscarves observed a very potent gender bias in the system. Due to the visibility of the headscarf, the 28 February Process did not detrimentally harm observant Sunni Muslim men as it did observant Sunni Muslim women. Nor did pious men do anything to help them or take political action against this harm.⁶ As pious women, they saw that they could find refuge only by forming their own communities with other pious women suffering from the same problem, which instigated pious *feminist* consciousness and the pious women’s *rights* movement in Turkey based on both “God-given” rights of women and women’s secular rights (Özçetin 2009; Aslan-Akman 2011).

In my study, I conducted repeated, ethnographically sensitive, open-ended, semi-structured interviews with pious women who are active in both the women’s piety movement and the women’s rights movement.⁷ All of the participants were university educated, observant Sunni Muslim women from middle- to upper-middle-class families who have lived most of their lives in cities. Three types of pious women took part: (1) those who called themselves “conservative women sympathetic to Islam”; (2) “pious women” who worked toward the achievement and advancement of women’s rights, but who did not consider themselves feminists; and (3) more progressive, self-proclaimed pious feminists. When I talk about self-identified, self-proclaimed pious feminists, therefore, I refer to the last group.⁸

II. Individualistic Models of Feminist Autonomy and Pious Feminist Perceptions

I commence by reviewing the most common models of pious women’s agency based on an individualistic conception of pious women’s autonomy. I focus on three main frames: pious women’s (1) submission, (2) resistance, and (3) empowerment. I argue that although all three frames discussed here are partly relevant for understanding pious women’s feminist struggle in Turkey (or its critiques), they leave out the compliant

terms in which my pious feminist participants reformulate subjectivity and rethink their own autonomy, thus they cannot fully explain pious feminist perceptions in Turkey.

The Submission Frame: On False Consciousness, Class, and “Türban vs. Başörtüsü”

As an emancipatory project of the Enlightenment, feminism is rooted in secular values, where binaries such as empowerment and victimization, resistance and submission, liberation and subordination continue to constitute evaluative frameworks of women's oppression (Hoyt 2007; Bauman 2008; Bilge 2010). The studies of pious women's subordination, in this regard, often equate pious women's lack of resistance with submission, and support “the false consciousness thesis,” that is, the presupposition that the women who participate in religious traditions are either not capable of locating their own interests, or are brainwashed victims (Bilge 2010, 14; Burke 2012, 122–33). The debate on the Muslim woman's headscarf is one of the primary issues associated with this legacy that operates under the dichotomy between the individual and the system where religions are assumed to fully take over pious women's ability to act as rational individuals (Göle 2003; Asad 2009; Burke 2012).

Complicating such dichotomies, however, pious women's headscarf protests in Turkey during the late 1990s explicitly used a language of rights. As young pious women with headscarves, they distanced themselves from secular feminists, but they also sought their own interpretations of Islamic norms and texts and thus refused to uncritically accept male interpretations of Qur'an (Durmuş 2018). During this time, it was common for secular women (including secular feminists) to refer to the headscarf used by the protesters as *türban* (turban),⁹ which secular women deemed as the politically charged version of the traditional headscarf (*başörtüsü*). According to the participants in the study, this categorical separation helped secular feminists justify to themselves that they were tolerant toward *başörtüsü* as long as it stayed within the domain of tradition. For the participants, this separation also sought to divide the women's piety movement, pitting pious women (with the *başörtüsü*) against pious women (with the *türban*). Nilüfer Göle, however, also notes that this differentiation attributed to *türban* a “modern” character (Göle 1996), and therefore, while otherizing it as a politicized symbol, secular women began to think about pious women outside of the domain of tradition.

According to pious feminists in my study, the headscarf is not a problem of pious women's conservatism or religious observance; it is a political problem (see Çınar 2008; Gökarişel and Secor 2014).¹⁰ Zeliha contended that it is also a problem of class. For Zeliha, the headscarf was not a problem when the women with the headscarf “were only house cleaners, superintendents, . . . wives of someone from a lower economic class. . . . As upper-class women, secular women were teaching us, the lower class.” The headscarf became a problem when “the women with the headscarf became doctors, engineers, lawyers, or even members of parliament, so that they could take an active role as decision makers.” According to Zeliha, “the secularist” view on the headscarf had no credibility:

they [secularists] project their own fear onto us. And they claim this is their right. . . . They tell me since I cover up my head, I let go of my right to be a subject! How can they make this choice for me? . . . They are so blinded by their own righteousness that they do not even realize it is their memorized ideology, and not my headscarf, that denies that I too am a subject.

Zeliha sighed and concluded with an ironic smirk, “Those secular women, I am sure they still treat their house cleaners [with the headscarf] respectfully.”¹¹

Situated Resistance: Islam vs. Islamic Patriarchy

Like the submission frame, the studies of pious women’s resistance agency similarly warn against the harm that religious practices might cause for women, but divergently, these studies assume that pious women are capable of resistance (Burke 2012, 125). The resistance frame thus examines how pious women resist, contest, alter, or modify religious norms, values, and practices (Bilge 2010, 18). It posits that pious women can enjoy freedom and agency, but this is possible only when they act against the religion (Bucar 2010, 667–68). Similar to the submission frame, the resistance frame equates (1) critique to resistance even at times when pious women do not intend to resist, and (2) religious obedience to a lack of agency even when pious women consider obedience a part of their agentic pious subjectivity (668).

Although, by itself, resistance agency cannot provide a comprehensive framework for the pious narratives in my study, it is helpful in explaining how pious feminists locate, criticize, and confront Islamic patriarchy, but not Islam. Rather than uncritical resistance or blind acceptance, pious feminists in Turkey stand closer to Amina Wadud’s notion of engaged surrender (Wadud 2006). For example, in her narrative, Yelda distinguished Islam from the applications of Islam. Whereas Islam granted women “God-given rights,” Yelda argued that the “men in power only applied what worked for their own benefit. Traditions, cultural values, social values, contextual values, prejudices—they all played a role in the distortion of Islam [in favor of men].” Yelda added, “it is also because of the societal and genetic codes of men, they could not take it [God-given rights of women].”¹² Melahat concurred, “it was a *bedevi* (Bedouin) society, after all, what else could we expect!”¹³ Self-proclaimed pious feminists like Yelda and Melahat, therefore, affirmed that whereas Islam provided women-specific rights, Islamic patriarchy has rewritten these rights in favor of men and deprived women of their God-given rights.¹⁴ Similar to Yelda and Melahat, the other participants delineated the need to differentiate what Islam dictates from what patriarchy dictates in the name of Islam. They also thought that if they did not live in a secular country, they would not be able to make this distinction. Hence, although pious feminists resisted secular forms of patriarchy, they did not reject secularism or secular values just as they resisted Islamic forms of patriarchy without rejecting Islam.

For Melahat, for example, living under “a repressive Islamic regime like Afghanistan or Saudi Arabia” was her “worst phobia, [her] worst nightmare.”¹⁵ Similarly, Meral was astounded by the women’s absolute silence when a group of government officials from Afghanistan visited her organization:

The women did not open up their mouths even once to say a single word. Nothing. The sole purpose of their visit was learning more about our headscarf struggle. When they saw that we were demanding women’s rights and equality, the men did not say anything at first. But then, they did signal that they thought what we were doing was slightly *yollu* (loose) by giving examples from Hazrat Aisha and saying she has been active in politics but she has always stayed in the background, in the shadows of Hazrat Umar.¹⁶

Yelda protested: “Who stayed in the background? How do you stay in the background when you go to war and fight!”¹⁷ Meral continued: “Every gesture they used implied

that men ruled the world and women always came in second. The way they sat down, the way they talked. . . .”¹⁸ Ayşe thought the minds of men like that were “filthy and cruel.”¹⁹ If a woman did not wear the headscarf, Ayşe contended they would equate her with the Devil, and she openly condemned this mindset. These pious participants were thus univocal about the benefits of living under a secular, democratic society instead of under Sharia, which helped them to differentiate Islamic patriarchy from Islam, and to resist patriarchy, not religion.

Reconsidering Empowerment: God-Given Rights and *Tevekkül*

Similar to resistance agency, models of pious women’s empowerment assume that certain features of gender-traditional religions harm women (Brink and Mencher 1997; Burke 2012); however, in contrast, the empowerment model does not require resistance. Instead, it focuses on the emotional or psychological rewards of religion as pious women reposition themselves toward the harm caused by religious practices (Bilge 2010, 19). This includes the studies that resituate veiling as an innovative response (El Guidi 2005; Afshar 1995) as well as the postcolonial feminist studies that reveal the alternative forms of women’s empowerment that are invisible to the Western eye (Bhabha 1994). Kelsy Burke argues that (like the previous two models) empowerment agency assumes a radical contestation between feminism and religion. The pious participants, however, did not talk about feminism in this manner. For pious women in my study, including nonfeminists, the women’s rights movement in Turkey has helped them to relocate the God-given rights of women that have been distorted by patriarchal misinterpretations of the Qur’an and the hadiths. Rather than categorically resisting Islam or feminism, the pious participants repositioned themselves toward both. For example, while reading Qur’an, Melahat often thought that Allah is the greatest feminist of all time:

I was reading the Qur’an the other night and I said to my daughter, “God (*Rabbil Alemin*) is such a great feminist!” [laughs] Indeed though, I have read very clearly, [Qur’an says] the women should be supported and men should be penalized. I have seen that *Allah* is the most feminist among us all. . . . I said this, and then doubted myself, [thinking] am I saying something bad?²⁰

While distinguishing what Islam dictates and what patriarchy dictates in the name of Islam, the participants particularly criticized women’s acceptance of oppression and violence based on false invocations of the Islamic notion, *tevekkül*. Originally, *tevekkül* refers to an informed and spiritual form of acceptance that is achieved after having have tried all worldly means available, and thus, as opposed to uncritical acceptance, *tevekkül* or the belief in *tevekkül* (*tevekkül inancı*) refers to acceptance that requires prior, proactive, worldly action. False reaffirmations of *tevekkül*, on the other hand, encourage uncritical acceptance without any worldly effort, which leaves everything in the hands of Allah. Therefore, the pious participants thought that Islamic patriarchy has redefined *tevekkül* as blind acceptance in order to ensure women’s absolute silence whenever they face oppression. For Meral, false applications of *tevekkül* made pious women hesitant to speak up about the oppression they face in their pious circles because, if they did, they knew it would be misjudged as a betrayal of their pious community:

Pious women are continuously suppressed to remain silent whenever they are face to face with injustice. With *tevekkül*, pious women are suppressed to think oppression is the price we have to pay for our sins. There is this sense of giving in (*boyun eğmişlik*) where everything has to remain silent, closed down in a box. Pious women are not used to letting out their problems. . . . And when we finally do, we are accused of acting against the religion—which is not true! We are not criticizing religion. We are trying to reveal the ones who misuse it. However, most people cannot make the differentiation. . . . Whenever we criticize what is going on in our pious communities, we are treated as if we support the Other side [the secularists].

For Meral, involvement in the pious women's movement made her realize the manipulations of religion as manifestations of patriarchy: "Since I have become a part of [the pious women's movement] and have gotten to know many women from the divinity school, I have learned the difference between the injustices committed by the religion and those that are committed in the name of religion. In the name of religion, the patriarchal society keeps on suppressing the women."²¹

In this regard, the resistance and empowerment models discussed above challenge the false-consciousness thesis, but they continue to assume that religious practices cause harm to women and thus fail to distinguish between religion and religious forms of patriarchy, which is the main axis through which pious feminists resist and empower themselves against Islamic patriarchy, not against Islam. As the next section argues, compliant models of pious women's agency fill this gap by focusing on alternative, locally situated, pious vocabularies of agency.²²

III. Compliant Agency and Pious Feminist Perceptions

According to Burke, among the common models, only compliant agency challenges the individualistic Western liberal definitions of autonomy and recognizes the agentic significance of religious conformity.²³ As Elizabeth Bucar argues, pious women's compliant agency, which most notably includes the works of Orit Avishai and Saba Mahmood (Mahmood 2005; Avishai 2008), shifts the emphasis away from reason, equality, and resistance, and toward "situated reason, habituation, and obedience" (Bucar 2011, 669). In this section, I discuss particularly Mahmood's *Politics of Piety* to explain the first phase of pious subjectivity-formation in the narratives of the participants, which I refer to as habitual or habituated piety.²⁴

Mahmood's *Politics of Piety* is indeed a landmark study of women's compliance in which Mahmood explores pious women's agency "within the grammar of concepts in which it resides" (Bracke 2008, 63) and validates that agency can also be cultivated through embracing, practicing, and perfecting Islamic values such as virtue, hope, and fear (Bucar 2011, 4). Below, I analyze three main conceptual pillars of Mahmood's expanded redefinition of pious women's agency one by one and discuss how each one might apply to and diverge from the pious feminist narratives in my study: (1) Butler's performativity, (2) Foucauldian ethical formation, and (3) the Aristotelian formulation of habitus. I argue that, although Mahmood's work is helpful for explaining the early stages of pious subjectivity-formation, it cannot account for my the pious participants' use of autonomy and choice as a part of their *own* "grammar of concepts."

Performativity and Affirmation

The first pillar of Mahmood's theoretical framework is Judith Butler's notion of performativity. In line with Butler, Mahmood argues that pious acts are different from practical mimesis or imitation, which lack creative capacity. For Mahmood, pious acts are reiterative, citational performatives in which the discourse produces, regulates, and constrains what it names. Unlike Butler, however, Mahmood's discussion does not depend on any exclusionary matrix where the domain of the subject requires a domain of the abject (Butler 1993, xiii; Mahmood 2005).

According to Butler, performatives take place in the contingent space between subjection and abjection where the chances for failure and success cannot be anticipated prior to the doing (or the undoing) of the norm. This, in turn, creates a fluid, alterable environment where one can both attest to and contest one's subjectivity. Consequently, for Butler, the same mechanisms in which the norms attain their discursive power and permanence also make them vulnerable and unpredictable (Spanò 2013, 193). In contrast, for Mahmood, pious subjectivity does not operate within a discursive matrix where disidentification is the "founding repudiation" of identification (Butler 1993, xiii). According to Mahmood, Butler fails to account for the possibility of an affirmative, ethical cultivation of subjectivity where alterability and fluidity arise from the pious subject's affirmative desire for perfecting and excelling in the practices of piety, instead of contingency of success or failure (Butler 1990, 195; Singh 2015, 13). In each performance of a pious act, like praying or wearing the headscarf, Mahmood argues that pious women, first, gradually get better at the practice externally, and then, through perfecting the external practice, they become better Muslims internally. Therefore, for Mahmood, although it does not involve the contingent risks of failure, the process is still contingent, continuous, and fluid because, even after years of practice, a pious woman would not be able to conclude that she has reached perfection and no longer has to worry about becoming a better Muslim (only God can judge that). Piety thus requires a lifelong process of seeking excellence in God's eye. In this way, when Mahmood introduces pious acts as performatives, she insists that norms are not always "subverted and confirmed," but also "inhabited and performed" (Spanò 2013, 193).

Resembling Mahmood's first point that situates embodied pious acts as affirmative performatives, self-proclaimed pious feminists like Yelda, Meral, and Melahat highlighted that, at its initial stages, piety is best learned through habit, without intervening factors such as an "unfavorable social environment" in Meral's words, or "social prejudices" as Yelda puts it, or "everyday secular-pious contestations" as Melahat affirms, where the headscarf is perceived as a "stigma symbol" (Göle 2003).²⁵

Among these narratives, Meral's narrative is the most explicit one to suggest that, at its initial stages, the choice of piety (1) does not precede the acts of piety and (2) is not independent of the broader social environment in which piety is learned. This notably challenges the sequencing of the Western frame on intentionality and choice. According to Meral, one chooses piety after performing the acts of piety, not before. It also challenges individualistic conceptions of autonomy that assume free-standing, radically independent individuals. Meral thought her choices were never independent; she made her choices interdependently, always considered them against her religious and feminist commitments as well as the opinions of the people around her. However, for Meral this did not mean that her discursive or interpersonal relationships could fully determine her choices, let alone who she is. As Melahat and Zeliha also argued, pious women were not just pious; they were also mothers, daughters, teachers,

engineers, doctors, feminists, activists. In this sense, pious feminists stand closer to Nedelsky's approach to relational autonomy where one has to make judgments in the course of determining what is one's own, and, while doing so, one needs to seek the consent of others in her community of judgment (Nedelsky 2011, 58). It is also important to note here that, although Meral explicitly indicated that her interdependent approach to autonomy is different from individualistic feminist approaches, she continued to use the words autonomy (*otonomi*), intention (*niyet*), and choice (*seçim*). For her, these concepts still mattered for her pious subjectivity, just not in the Western liberal sense. For Meral, therefore, choosing piety requires the availability to pious women of different knowledges as well as a web of relations that make critique and choice possible, whereas learning piety requires undisturbed compliance, as Mahmood suggests.

To illustrate her point, Meral brought up the contested issue of young girls' veiling during elementary school from the perspective of concerned pious parents who want their daughters to wear the headscarf. Although Meral emphasized repeatedly that her personal opinion was to the contrary and that, if she had a daughter, she would not let her wear the headscarf before she was twelve, she also stated she could empathize with the pious parents who wanted their daughters to wear the headscarf in elementary school because they were afraid that their daughters would never be able to get used to the habit unless they started during childhood. In Meral's words, "A part of the reason why people use the headscarf is out of habit . . . if you want your kids to wear the headscarf, you have to make sure that after a certain age their social environment consists only of places where it is okay to wear the headscarf." For Meral, this was not much different from parents who send their kids to ballet, art or basketball lessons. In both cases, parents make self-constitutive choices on behalf of their children that require disciplining and practice. If pious families let their pious daughters go to elementary school only with the headscarf, then, Meral thought, the institutional structures should permit her the legal right to do so. For Meral, restricting a pious woman's right to education also means limiting her access to systems of knowledge other than religion, which, in turn, diminishes her chance of making an informed decision about her own piety. According to Meral, "especially during periods in which a person is not fully autonomous . . . it is wrong to limit her opportunities with a ban on the headscarf."²⁶ Meral's perspective thus requires more than a socially embedded, individual, pious self. Meral's narrative stresses a relationally constituted pious self where familial, legal, institutional, and social relations are considered self-constitutive.

Going back to Mahmood, this shows that, in line with Mahmood's analysis, Meral agreed that piety is performatively learned through habituating pious norms and acts. However, unlike Mahmood, Meral acknowledged the importance of "inhabiting connections" as well as "inhabiting norms" (Weir 2013, 328). For Meral, not only is there often more than one set of norms that one inhabits (as in the case of daughters of pious families going to secular schools), but also there are contingent social and legal forces. For Meral, therefore, during the early phases of pious subjectivity-formation, different webs of socialization could bear contingent risks of interruption that, at that particular stage, could complicate the habituation of piety, but Meral also considered such engagements necessary for the next step of pious subjectivity-formation: informed or chosen piety.

Ethical Formation and Discursive Tradition

Second, Mahmood argues that Islam is best understood along the lines of Foucauldian ethical formation, and by following Foucault, what Talal Asad refers to as a discursive

tradition. For Mahmood, tradition implies here “a form of relation between the past and present predicated upon a system of rules that demarcate both the limits and the possibility of what is sayable, doable, and recognizable” (Asad 1986, 114–15).

Therefore, for Mahmood, Islam as a discursive tradition situates the individual and the community in a complex, multifaceted, discursive relationship that marks the capacities of pious women’s action. Due to this relationship, Mahmood argues that it is almost impossible to separate what is pious women’s “own” and what is determined by the discursive tradition. The two are constitutive of each other and, according to Mahmood, the question of agency individually belonging to the pious women discards this factor. Therefore, Mahmood shifts the question of pious women’s agency and delineates that she is interested in how discursive practices of Islam relate to the embodied capacities of subjectivity-formation (Mahmood 2005, 7, 30–35). In this manner, Mahmood’s understanding of subjectivity resembles Foucault’s, who “treats subjectivity (not as a private space of self-cultivation) but as an effect of a modality of power operationalized through a set of moral codes that summon a subject to constitute herself in accord with its precepts” (28). This challenges agency that requires a “capacity to realize one’s own interests against the weight of custom, tradition, transcendental will, or other obstacles (whether individual or collective)” (8). For Mahmood, her Foucauldian approach enables thinking about agency: (1) “in terms of the capacities and skills required to undertake particular kinds of moral actions” and (2) “as ineluctably bound up with the historically and culturally specific disciplines through which the subject is formed” (29).

In this light, Mahmood’s discussion offers limited room for choice only when there is a “space of non-resolution” regarding different interpretations of Islamic principles (for example, on issues in which jurists’ opinions differ), which excluded the Islamic principles themselves (103). As Mahmood explains: “The process of interpretation, while it differs from one context to another, is not free-floating, but is structured” (103).

Hence Mahmood offers a culturally and historically specific, Foucauldian critique of the Western liberal emphasis on individual choice, intentionality, and autonomy from an alternative perspective founded on positive ethics. With respect to my study, however, it is important to remember that the pious women’s movement in Turkey, culturally and historically, has been both a women’s *piety* movement and a *resistance* movement in which both positive and negative ethics were simultaneously at work. If we go back to Meral’s narrative, it is possible to see that: (1) Pious women in Turkey are exposed to multiple, often conflicting discursive traditions (both secular and Islamic), and (2) a woman’s relationship with piety is regulated and shaped by her own understanding of the Islamic discursive tradition, other discursive traditions (such as Turkish secularism), different webs of socialization, as well as other institutional and legal structures that may act as catalysts for or barrier stoward pious subjectivity-formation. As Meral exemplified: “my nieces did not get used to [wearing the headscarf]. Yes, they see us with the headscarf. We tell them about religious responsibilities. We send them to Qur’an courses. But in the school, they are not socialized [in a pious way] so they don’t wear it. They never wanted to.”²⁷ This multidiscursive relational component of pious subjectivity-formation in Meral’s narrative—ranging from intimate interpersonal relationships in the family to relationships defined by legal, institutional, educational, and politico-religious structures—is missing in Mahmood’s work. As Allison Weir explains, “Although Mahmood, following Foucault, recognizes that the pietists’ agency involves various kinds of relationships, neither understands those relationships as being the *telos* of practice, and neither understands practices of freedom

within a framework of inhabiting connections” (Weir 2013, 328). Mahmood appreciates the relational efforts “to redefine autonomy so as to capture the emotional, embodied, and socially embedded character of people” (Mahmood 2005, 13), but she differentiates her project from this aim and limits her analysis to a single relationship that pious women have: their relationship with the Islamic discursive tradition.

For Meral, the ethical cultivation of Islam has to be coupled with a favorable, pious social environment without which it is unlikely that “one would be willing to wear the headscarf in the first place.”²⁸ Like Mahmood, rather than putting the individual at one end of the spectrum and the community on the other, Meral highlighted the discursive relationship between the two, especially during the initial, formative stages of habitual piety. Unlike Mahmood, however, Meral’s focus was on self-constitutive relationships as well as multiple secular and pious discursive traditions. In a complex society like Turkey, where it is not possible to fully separate the pious from the secular (at the levels of both discourse and social upbringing), even the habituation of Islamic piety involves comparison, if not critique.

Habitus and Habitual Piety

Third, Mahmood states that the Foucauldian ethical formation is rooted in Aristotelian ethical pedagogy where outward performative acts (like prayer and veiling) create inward dispositions (Mahmood 2005, 128). Hence, Mahmood brings in Aristotle’s notion of habitus—the Latin translation of the original Greek term, *héxis*²⁹—and defines it as “an acquired excellence at either a moral or a practical craft, learned through repeated practice until that practice leaves a permanent mark on the character of the person” (135). Mahmood’s use of habitus, therefore, pertains to the internal potentiality of moral excellence where one has to endure arduous external training (147). Hence, at the intersection of performativity, ethical formation, and habitus, Mahmood argues that her work can defer the question of pious women’s religious authenticity since pious acts are no longer just external displays of piety; they are also tools for its internal cultivation.

Mahmood’s discussion of Aristotelian habitus brings forth two points. First, it suggests that external pious acts guide women toward certain emotions, which in turn teach them to become pious internally. For example, Mahmood highlights emotions such as virtue, fear, and hope. Correspondingly, while talking about solutions to women’s problems in Turkey, Zeliha drew upon alternative Islamic values such as “loyalty (*sadakat*), conviction (*kanaat*), sacrifice (*feragat*), good deed (*sevap*), and God’s reward for a good deed (*ecir*).”³⁰ Second, as I discussed above, through habitus, Mahmood indicates that pious acts such as veiling “do not serve as manipulable masks in a game of public presentation, detachable from an essential interiorized self, rather they are the critical markers of piety as well as the ineluctable means by which one trains oneself to be pious” (158). Similarly, pious participants in my study univocally considered the secular skepticism about the authenticity and sincerity behind veiling false and unjustified.

Despite these continuities, Mahmood’s work and habitual piety in the narratives of the pious participants differ significantly. First, the narratives of the pious feminist participants were both about autonomy and critique as well as affirmation and habituation. Second, for pious feminists in Turkey, a second stage of pious subjectivity-formation additionally required multi-engagement with different sources of knowledge and informed choice.³¹ Meral acknowledged that this was not an easy task and that not everyone who wears the headscarf could arrive at this stage of informed piety, or

piety by choice, that requires comparison, criticism, and choice to arrive at one's own "religiously interdependent" autonomy. However, for both her pious and feminist consciousness, she thought this second stage was indispensable.

IV. Mahmood Revisited: Critique, Creativity, and Conformity

Two interrelated critiques of Mahmood's *Politics of Piety* can help us to understand pious feminist agency in Turkey. First, despite Mahmood's evident contributions to the literature, recent reviews address conceptual ambiguities in *Politics of Piety*. For example, Bucar claims that Mahmood's discussion of habitus necessitates further elaboration of Aristotle's differentiation between craft knowledge (*téchne*) and practical wisdom (*phronesis*), since Aristotle actually prefers the latter in moral life due to "the moral ambiguity of embodied skills" (Bucar 2010, 672). For Bucar, Mahmood needs to explain why *téchne* is more important than *phronesis* for moral life to clarify this ambiguity. As Bucar suggests, Mahmood builds on Aristotle's distinction between intellectual and moral virtues and argues, "it appears that the pedagogical principle of habitus pertains to the latter but not the former" (Mahmood 2005, 136). From this assumption, Mahmood deduces habitus is a specific way of cultivating moral values that cannot apply to intellectual virtues including practical wisdom, and in this way, she can justify pious agency only in the moral vocabulary that it resides in without any other external justification (188).

In *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle does introduce two kinds of virtue (*aretè*), one about reasoning (virtues of thought, or intellectual virtues), the other about following reason (virtues of character, or ethical values; see Aristotle 2004, 1139a1–2). However, the relationship between the two is not as immediate as Mahmood assumes. Aristotle instead emphasizes the teleological relationship between action and production, or reason and character, and asserts that "rational choice involves not only intellect and thought but a state of character; for acting well and its contrary require thought and character" (1139a36–40). Here, practical wisdom, or *phronesis*, holds a special place. Although Aristotle initially lists *phronesis* under "intellectual virtues," he treats it both as an intellectual and ethical virtue because "real ethical virtue" can be cultivated only when natural virtue (or virtue of character) is combined with practical wisdom. Or as Aristotle puts it, "we cannot be really good without practical wisdom, or practically wise without virtue of character" (1144b35–37). The difference between natural and real ethical virtue can also help us to understand the difference between *téchne* (craft knowledge, or skill) and *phronesis* (practical wisdom). As Aristotle explains: "In skill the person who misses the mark voluntarily is preferable, but with practical wisdom, as with the virtues, the reverse is true. Clearly then, practical wisdom is a virtue and not a skill" (1140b20–27). Hence, it is only when *téchne* is combined with *phronesis* that one can be really virtuous. For Aristotle, habitus is not just "a tradition of moral cultivation" as Mahmood puts it (Mahmood 2005, 136). According to Aristotle, for any habitus to be virtuous, it has to seek its teleological excellence or its ultimate form (*eidos*), which necessitates practical wisdom.

In this regard, the narratives of progressive pious feminists include references to both craft knowledge—where piety is learned as a skill in its first stage of habitual piety—and practical wisdom—for distinguishing Islam from Islamic patriarchy, secularism from secular patriarchy, therefore, for arriving at the second stage of pious subjectivity-formation, which I call informed piety. For example, according to Meral, learning piety as a habituated skill was only the first stage of becoming pious, and even at

this initial stage, for Meral, in addition to uninterrupted reaffirmation of norms, there was the need for favorable pious relationships and institutional structures that do not discriminate against the headscarf. At its second stage, Meral argued, piety is chosen, and it is at this stage that one becomes “really pious” if we put it in Aristotelian terms. In this second stage of pious subjectivity-formation, Meral suggested that, rather than limiting one’s relations to a single habitus, multi-engagements with other (Islamic as well as secular) discursive traditions and systems of knowledge were necessary. After all, one could choose something only if there are multiple sources available. In light of Meral’s narrative, therefore, Mahmood’s use of habitus not only neglects the moral value of *phronesis* (practical wisdom) in Aristotle’s theory of virtue (*aretê*), but it also neglects the explicit role the relationships of piety play during the formation of pious subjectivity.

Another critique of Mahmood’s conceptual ambiguity targets her greatest contribution to the literature: her expanded definition of pious agency. It has been argued that Mahmood only discusses “what pious agency is” without addressing “what pious agency is not” (Burke 2012, 128–29). For Burke, this is critical because without problematizing the way we think about “what agency is not,” Mahmood’s compliant agency might “incorporate all actions taken by religious women, thereby rendering the definition of agency useless” (128–29). Regarding this issue, the narratives of the pious participants differed from Mahmood’s analysis in two ways. First, the pious feminist participants did not relate to the religious tradition in affirmative terms only; they also criticized and resisted the pious forms of patriarchy. Second, for pious feminists, agency required comparison between multiple sources of knowledge along with habituation of embodied pious acts.

This resonates closely with the second line of critique, or Mahmood’s exclusion of critique, creativity, and spontaneity in her conception of pious women’s agency. There are two issues to consider here. First, as Bucar suggests, is the need to ask: “Can action really be the direct product of tradition?” (Bucar 2011, 674). Although Mahmood does not present religion as a pervasive, intrinsically heteronomous, extra-social force (Castoriadis 1991), her overemphasis on discourse and positive ethics (see Mahmood 2005, 120–22) similarly leaves extremely limited room for pious women to be creative, critical agents. An uncritical acceptance of Mahmood’s argument might imply that everything pious women say or do can be justified as a part of the Islamic discursive tradition, which thus fails to address the relational dimension of the pious subjectivity-formation that is present in my study. This brings out the second question: Why does Mahmood’s exploration of alternative modes of pious agency require a negation of autonomy, critique, resistance, or any value associated with the Western liberal vocabulary of concepts? Mahmood makes it clear elsewhere that “the secular and the religious are not opposed but are intertwined both historically and conceptually such that it is impossible to inquire into one without engaging the other” and “that secularism neither entails a monolithic process nor a single ontology of the subject” (Mahmood 2009, 146; see also Mahmood 2016; Müller 2018). However, in *Politics of Piety*, Mahmood is equally critical of the studies of pious women’s subordination as well as the studies that “that endorse or defend the veil on the grounds that it is a product of women’s ‘free choice’ and evidence of their ‘liberation’ from the hegemony of Western cultural codes” (Mahmood 2005, 195). Pious feminist narratives in my study, in contrast, encourage us to rethink choice in relational terms: constituted but not determined by pious women’s actual interpersonal relationships as well as relationships with different discursive traditions including but not limited to Islamic piety.

Mahmood indeed offers a highly important criticism that has shifted the way pious women's agency is portrayed in the Western feminist literature. However, the narratives of pious feminists in Turkey suggest that her critique continues to operate within the dichotomous framework set by the Western liberal progressive imaginary itself, which locates a certain individualistic understanding of autonomy on one end and all the rest on the other. Or, as Kim Shively puts it, Mahmood "tends to discuss individual ethical cultivation as occurring within only one normative system or another" (Shively 2014, 462). In contrast, the narratives of pious feminists in my study, especially their dual interest in rereading Islamic principles from a feminist standpoint as well as rereading feminism from an Islamic pious perspective, urge us to question not only the inherent assumptions of the Western liberal progressive imaginary, but also the assumed separation between this imaginary and its alternatives.

V. Toward a Relational Approach?

So far, I have analyzed how pious feminists in Turkey perceive of their own autonomy with respect to the most common models of pious women's agency. I argued that the current individualistic and compliant models fail to fully account for (1) pious women's multiple interconnected engagements with different secular and pious forms of knowledge, and (2) their complex webs of self-constitutive relationships.

According to the pious feminist participants, there was always more than one discursive tradition at work. The discursive traditions of Islam, Turkish secularism, as well as feminism were all constitutive of their identity, but a single one in isolation could not determine who they were. For the pious feminist participants, rather than acting for or against religion, the distinction was between Islamic patriarchy and Islam, secular forms of patriarchy and secularism, and imposition of Western values and actual women's rights and freedoms (both democratic and God-given). In this regard, progressive, self-acclaimed pious feminist participants in my study were "constituted, but not determined by" (Nedelsky 2011, 38) different discursive traditions associated with Islam, secularism, and feminism in Turkey.

To conclude this article, I suggest that Gergen's criticism of the bounded being can perhaps offer an initial step to clarify what both the individualistic and compliant models of pious women's agency leave out about pious feminist narratives in Turkey. According to Gergen, separation between the moral and scientific forms of knowledge emerges from thinking about the self as a "bounded being" (Gergen 2009, 206). It arises from the assumption that we can determine the borders between ourselves and others. Informed piety in pious feminist narratives, in this regard, challenges the assumption of the bounded subjectivities by complicating the separation among Islamic piety, feminism, and secularism.

Gergen further argues that subjectivity is dynamically constituted among multiple discourses and relationships as a process of "coordination" where every conversation we have is "akin to playing a multidimensional game in which any move on the part of any participant can be treated as a move in several other games" (43). For example, similar to their pious subjectivity-formation, pious feminists in my study became feminists first by the habituation of feminist acts, such as attending civil society meetings and women's rights protests, and then through educating themselves about key feminist texts in comparison with other sources of knowledge, including Islam and the God-given rights of women.³² At first, therefore, there were at least two interrelated cycles of habituation (and *téchne*) at work: pious skills and feminist skills. As pious

feminists continued to engage with both and to critically reflect on these engagements, they were able to talk about their own interdependent pious feminist approach. In this way, the participants were able to differentiate between Islam and its patriarchal manipulations, feminism and its Western-centric limitations, and to reconstruct their own pious feminist stance toward women's issues accordingly, combining *phronesis* with *téchne* in each step.

Thus, for pious feminists, their journeys toward piety and feminism were not two different roads; they were intertwined. Their involvement with feminism led them to arrive at an informed decision about their piety and to become more informed Muslims. Their involvement with Islam enabled them to support women's secular rights as well as God-given rights, and made them more informed feminists. Their quest was both about autonomy and interdependency, habituation and intentionality, *phronesis* and *téchne*. This requires a relational approach to subjectivity as well as autonomy that, as argued in this article, can perhaps contribute to both individualistic and compliant models of pious women's agency in the current literature and help feminists arrive at better judgments beyond the predetermined boundaries of selfhood and otherhood, secularism and religion, Islam and feminism.

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Notes

1 Five points to note here: (1) my research on this article underwent ethics review and was approved for human-subject research by the Office of Research Ethics, University of Toronto. (2) I use pseudonyms for my participants' real names. (3) I was not interested in pious women's autonomy prior to my fieldwork; I was interested in revealing feminist vocabularies of disagreement they use to explain their contested relationship with secular feminists. Autonomy emerged as the most common factor. (4) I prefer to use *autonomy* instead of *agency* when I talk about pious feminist narratives because: (a) My participants used the word autonomy (*otonom, otonomi*) more than *faillik* (agency); (b) As Nedelsky argues, whereas agency refers to "the making of a choice, to choose autonomously. . . takes some kind of conscious work" (Nedelsky 2011, 62) and the narratives highlighted the latter. (5) Regarding my own positionality: I was born and raised in Turkey. I am a nonpracticing Sunni Muslim. I come from a secular, multireligious, multiethnic, well-educated, middle-class family. I do not wear the headscarf or identify as a pious person.

2 "Authoritarian turn" refers to AKP's delegitimization, elimination, and criminalization of political opposition since 2010, especially after the Gezi Park protests in 2013. This turn escalated after the failed coup attempt in 2015, allegedly organized by the Gülen community, a religious network closely involved with da'wa work, and its arm in the military. In 2014, AKP eliminated the ban on the headscarf (twelve years after coming to power). However, with the purge of Gülenists, thousands of pious women in the da'wa (*hizmet*) movement lost their jobs and passports, and/or were imprisoned. During my fieldwork, this turn and pious feminist criticisms against it were visible, but not widely recognized. My follow-ups indicate that the political landscape was much more hopeful then compared to today.

3 Bucar's use of *heteronomy* is different from Castoriadis's account (Castoriadis 1991). Bucar uses the term to refer to compliant agency. Bucar also offers her own dual account, dianomy (*dia-nomos*, or dual-law), which brings together autonomy and heteronomy. In Bucar's dianomous approach, autonomous and heteronomous sources of moral law are "held together . . . in an unresolved tension," and with the help of this tension between critique and compliance, pious women can enjoy creative conformity (Bucar 2010, 678). Pious feminists in my study did not just separately bring together, but closely interrelated the two sources. Therefore, dianomy cannot fully account for pious feminist autonomy in Turkey either. In this article, I do

not discuss Bucar's diatomy in greater detail because it is not a common framework for pious women's agency.

4 Both secular and pious women's groups are composed predominantly of Sunni Muslim women differing in levels of observance and preference for the headscarf. Alevis (or Turkish Shiites) in Turkey are considered to be closer to the Kemalist secular and leftist circles, and not a part of the piety movement.

5 Yelda Hakman Tekyol, interview with the author, September 2011, Ankara.

6 Meral Şenel, interview with the author, September 2011, Ankara.

7 I had fifty principal participants, selected through the snowball sampling method. Twenty identified as pious, eight declared themselves to be pious feminists, five were indifferent, and all indicated support for feminist values. My interviews took place in Ankara, Istanbul, and Izmir; but the main pious feminist group I interviewed is situated in Ankara. Due to limitations of scope and length, in this article, I use only a portion of my data.

8 Participants in this group declared openly that they were not connected with a sect, a particular religious network/community, or the AKP.

9 The origin of this new headscarf is often credited to Şule Yüksel Şenler, a columnist and writer, who encouraged tying the scarf around the head without a knot in the front, allegedly inspired by Audrey Hepburn (Bora 2017).

10 Yelda Hakman Tekyol, interview.

11 Zeliha Leventgil, interview with the author, April 2011, Istanbul.

12 Yelda Hakman Tekyol, interview.

13 Melahat Tanış, interview with the author, September 2011, Ankara.

14 Meral Şenel, interview (March 2011).

15 Melahat Tanış, interview.

16 Meral Şenel, interview (September 2011)

17 Yelda Hakman Tekyol, interview.

18 Meral Şenel, interview (September 2011).

19 Ayşe Şengül, interview with the author, September 2011, Ankara.

20 Melahat Tanış, interview.

21 Meral Şenel, interview (March 2011).

22 According to Burke (2012), there are also the studies of pious women's "instrumental agency" that focus on external benefits and rewards.

23 As Herr argues, this also includes relational models of individual autonomy (Herr 2018).

24 I use *habitual/habituated piety* in connection with Mahmood's use of *habitus*. Similar terms have been used in reviews and critiques of Mahmood. See Bucar 2010; 2011; Spanò 2013; Weir 2013.

25 Group interview with the author, 2011, Ankara.

26 Meral Şenel, interview (March 2011).

27 Meral Şenel, interview (March 2011).

28 Meral Şenel, interview (March 2011).

29 For more on *héxis* and *pronesis*, see Eikeland 2008, 53–54.

30 Zeliha Leventgil, interview.

31 Meral Şenel, interview (March 2011).

32 This is similar to Weir's argument: "As a feminist, my desire to follow my own path is motivated and legitimated through my appeal to moral ideals of equality, justice, and freedom. Thus, like the pietists, I am following and striving to inhabit norms beyond and above myself" (Weir 2013, 332).

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Pınar Dokumacı is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Department of Politics, University of York.

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