CURRENT APPROACHES IN SOCIAL SCIENCES

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Prof. Dursun Köse, Ph.D.

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CHAPTER 1

German As an Academic Language in Turkey: Thesis Regulations and Language Preferences in Graduate Studies

Ebru Üstün[1]

[1] Dr., Nevsehir Haci Bektas Veli University, School of Foreign Languages, ORCID: 0000-0001-8820-8129

Introduction

The choice of language when writing a scientific text is an important issue that not only influences the comprehensibility of the content, but also the structure and style of the text (Gehrmann, 2015; Tscherniavskaia, 2015). The dominance of English as a language of science (DAAD, 2010; Gehrmann, 2015; Sava, 2019) is a frequently discussed topic and is likely to become even more of a focus as it increases. This trend leads to different perspectives. On the one hand, this increase is interpreted as a loss of importance of national languages in science (Azimova, 2021; Ehlich, 2000; Földes, 2005; Mocikat, 2008; Tscherniavskaia, 2015), whereby it is also described that researchers are almost 'forced' to publish in English in order to be 'noticed' (Rosandić, 2008, p.56). On the other hand, Kruse (2012) emphasises that English is promoted as the dominant language of science and is seen as a prerequisite for a multilingual Europe.

According to Ylönen (2013), the goal of science is not solely limited to the pursuit of absolute truth; participation in scientific communication plays a fundamental role in this process. In order to be able to participate in this discussion, Földes (2005) describes that a universal scientific language is advantageous on the one hand because it is both simpler and more efficient. The proportion of scientific papers published in English is described as 90 per cent (Sava, 2019; Földes, 2005). Gehrmann (2015, 124) describes that this enables a greater reach, faster dissemination and better exchange. This participation also leads to an increase in international recognition and reputation. The author describes the assumption that English stands for internationality, competitiveness and high scientific quality, while national languages are perceived as limited, less competitive and 'backward'. Ylönen (2013) also shows that scientific achievements are measured by publications and, above all, ranking lists. These favour English as the language of publication, as they are cited more frequently and have a greater reach.

However, national languages should not be lost in the process. Rothmund and Fingerhut (2001) also make it clear that the language of science is English and that the results obtained should rather be published in an international journal. In addition to these advantages, Földes (2005, 9) also lists disadvantages, such as limited possibilities for thinking and gaining knowledge by using only one language, or the danger of a scientific 'monoculture', so that regional scientific traditions are lost. Ylönen (2013) even describes the role of English as a 'threat' to national languages and emphasises that thinking and writing in the mother tongue is easier than in foreign or second languages, but even more important is

the connection between thinking, language and the 'socio-cultural construction of knowledge', which influences the choice of language. Kruse (2012) emphasises that it is rather worrying when academic writing is taught only or mainly in English. This gives the impression that English is the only valuable language for academic writing.

Finally, supporters of national languages in the sciences advocate multilingualism (Gehrmann, 2015; Tscherniavskia, 2015). De Florio-Hansen (2013) emphasises that collaboration in English does not have to exclude publishing in the national language. She emphasises multilingualism as an important component of science communication. Roche (2015) also emphasises the role of English for international communication and stresses that scientists should also have the opportunity to publish in their native language.

With regard to the works that addressed the topic of German as a language of science in theses in Turkey, it was found after the research that this topic was not the main concern of the works, but was sometimes addressed. Özdemir (2022), for example, explains in his work on the bibliography in theses in the subject of German as a foreign language that although most of the literature references used here are in German, the number has decreased over the years. It also emerged that the number of English sources is increasing.

In a further study, Özdemir (2023) examines the trends in doctoral theses in German as a foreign language between the years 2010-2021 with regard to methods, samples, data collection and data analysis. Among other things, this study found that 78.7% of theses were written in German and 21.3% in Turkish.

Another study on theses in German-language subjects in Turkey was written by Tuglu and Göker (2021). The focus was placed on the methods and research fields of the theses. It was found, for instance, that there are more master's theses than doctoral theses in the subjects, and that the Department of German Language and Literature has more theses than the subjects of German as a Foreign Language and Translation Studies.

Üstün's work (2021) also deals with the analysis of theses in German as a foreign language. The interesting result for this work is that 51% of the theses in the subject were written in Turkish and 49% in German.

Studies on English as the language of science versus the national language as the language of publication already exist. However, the topic of the language of academic publication was not considered from the perspective of how Turkish universities with German-language subjects regulate the use of German in theses.

The aim is to analyse the extent to which there are differences between the three German-language subjects 'German as a Foreign Language', 'German Language and Literature' and 'German Translation Studies'. The study aims not only to identify institutional arrangements, but also to understand which language is actually most preferred by students. The significance of the study can therefore be described as: Providing insights into the language requirements and preferences of students in master's and doctoral programmes in German-speaking subjects in Turkey. The aim is to contribute to the current situation of German as an academic language in Turkey and to the international discussion on curriculum development, student experiences and language policy in graduate education. The literature research shows that little attention has been paid to the topic of 'German as an academic language in Turkey'.

The following research questions are to be answered in this regard:

1. How do the regulations on the choice of language for writing theses in master's and doctoral programmes differ between the subjects 'German as a Foreign Language', 'German Language and Literature' and 'German Translation Studies' at Turkish universities?

2. Which of the three study programmes examined, 'German as a Foreign Language', 'German Language and Literature' and 'German Translation Studies', most frequently requires students to write their final theses in German as a compulsory language in their postgraduate studies?

3. Which language do students of German-language subjects in Turkey most frequently prefer when writing Master's and doctoral theses by degree programme?

Method

Research model

The aim of this study is to analyse the role of German as a language of science in theses of advanced German-language studies. This is to be achieved by analysing the language requirements for writing Master's and doctoral theses in the respective subjects. By analysing the study regulations and guidelines as well as the actual situation, the study aims to provide information on the language in which theses in the subjects German as a foreign language, German language and literature and German translation studies may be written and are actually written. In addition, it will be shown whether differences exist between the respective degree programmes and universities. In the next step, master's and doctoral theses

in German-language subjects will be analysed with regard to the chosen language. These intentions are to be pursued through a descriptive approach, as these aim to describe and summarise certain phenomena (Hug and Poscheschnik, 2015) and to systematically record them. The work is therefore based on the so-called mixed method, which means a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. In this work, data was analysed and subsequently quantified using a frequency table in order to systematically determine which language was prescribed and actually used and how often.

As this study is based on the analysis of publicly available documents and does not involve personal data or experiments, approval from the ethics committee was not required.

Data Collection

In order to collect data on the importance of German as a language of science in master's and doctoral theses at German-language degree programmes in Turkey, the universities offering German as a foreign language (Department of German Teacher Education), German Language and Literature (German Studies) and Translation Studies (Department of Translation and Interpreting) were first compiled. This information was collected from the website of the University Council YÖK (2024). Information on all degree programmes in Turkey can be obtained here. After the universities with the respective fields of study were determined, it was worked out on the websites of the universities whether the relevant subject offers further studies after the Bachelor's degree. All subjects that offer at least one Master's programme were summarised in a table. In the next step, guidelines and/or study regulations regarding the required or permitted languages for writing a thesis were analysed. Master's and doctoral theses in the three German-language disciplines were then filtered from the database of the Turkish Higher Education Council. The filters 'field of study' and 'year of publication' were used for this purpose. The subjects German Studies, German as a Foreign Language and Translation Studies were selected for the field of study, so that only theses from these subject areas are listed. The years 2021-2024 were used for the publication year, as existing data from various works could be viewed for the years before that. These results were added to the table.

The data collection is limited to the subjects mentioned and the academic year 2024/2025.

Data Analysis

The collected data was analysed using a descriptive content analysis so that the respective intended languages from the guidelines and study regulations could be divided into categories. The content analysis is intended to reduce the amount of data Hug and Poscheschnik (2015) so that the available material is easier to understand. In order to provide an objective picture of the prescribed languages for the theses, categories were formed after the content analysis. The summarising content analysis was used, in which the text material was examined for relevant information using an inductive approach and summarised in categories (Hug and Poscheschnik, 2015, p.153). The following categories were extracted from the guidelines and study regulations: 'compulsory Turkish', 'compulsory in the language of instruction', 'free choice of language', 'language of instruction or Turkish', 'compulsory Turkish, alternative language possible under certain conditions', 'compulsory in the language of instruction, Turkish possible under certain conditions' and 'compulsory in the language of instruction, other language possible under certain conditions'.

In addition, the theses filtered from the Turkish Higher Education Council database were categorised according to their field of study and their respective language of publication.

Finally, the collected data and categories were presented in a frequency table. This table makes it possible to compare the frequency of language choice by field of study and university and shows how often certain languages are required or permitted, so that certain trends can be recognised.

Findings

The analysis of the universities with German-language postgraduate degree programmes revealed that the three subjects mentioned offer Master's and/or doctoral degree programmes at the following universities.

Table 1 shows the universities in Turkey that offer a German-language study programme at postgraduate level:

Table 1

Universities In Turkey With German-Language Study Programmes At Postgraduate Level

German as a foreign language	German Language and Literature	German translation studies
Anadolu University	Akdeniz University	Ege University
Bursa Uludag University	Ankara University	Mersin University
Cukurova University	Atatürk University	Selcuk University
Gazi University	Ege University	Trakya University
Hacettepe University	Firat University	
Istanbul Cerrahpasa University	Hacettepe University	
Marmara University	Istanbul University	
Necmettin Erbakan University Konya	Marmara University	
Haci Bektas Veli University Nevsehir	Sakarya University	
Trakya University	Selcuk University	
Turkisch German University	Namik Kemal University Tekirdag	

Table 1 shows that a total of 26 universities in Turkey offer the German language degree programmes listed. German as a foreign language and/or German language and literature can be studied at eleven universities and German translation studies is offered at four universities.

In the following, Table 2 shows the language requirements for the final theses in the postgraduate degree programme in German as a foreign language at Turkish universities. **Table 2**

Language Requirements For Final Theses For The German As A Foreign Language Programme At Turkish Universities

	Compulsory in the language of instruction	In the language of instruction or Turkish	Free choice of language (according to the regulations of the YÖK University Council)	compulsory Turkish, alternative language possible under certain conditions	compulsory in the language of instruction, Turkish possible under certain conditions	compulsory in the respective language of instruction, alternative language possible under certain conditions
University						
Anadolu University						x
Bursa Uludag University	x					
Cukurova University					x	
Gazi University				x		

Hacettepe University	x					
Istanbul Cerrahpasa University	x					
Marmara University		x				
Necmettin Erbakan University Konya				x		
Haci Bektas Veli University Nevsehir	-	-	-	-	-	-
Trakya University	x					
Turkish German University	x					
f	50%	10%	-	20%	10%	10%
Total	5	1	0	2	1	1

For the programme German as a foreign language, it can be seen that there are five universities that make it compulsory to write the final thesis in the language of instruction. One of the universities allows a choice between the language of instruction or Turkish, while two again specify Turkish as obligatory, although other languages are also permitted under certain conditions. At one university, the language of instruction is specified, but writing in Turkish is also possible here under certain conditions, and at one university, the language of instruction is obligatory, but writing in another language is also possible under certain conditions.

Table 3 below shows the language requirements for final theses in the German language and literature programme at Turkish universities:

Table 3

Language Requirements For Final Theses In The German Language And Literature Programme At Turkish Universities

	Compulsory in the language of instruction	In the language of instruction or Turkish	Free choice of language (according to the regulations of the YÖK University Council)	compulsory Turkish, alternative language possible under certain conditions	compulsory in the language of instruction, Turkish possible under certain conditions	compulsory in the respective language of instruction, alternative language possible under certain conditions
University						
Akdeniz University					x	
Ankara University	x					
Atatürk University	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ege University				x		
Firat University				x		
Hacettepe University	x					
Istanbul University	-	-	-	-	-	-
Marmara University	x					
Sakarya University		x				
Selcuk University	x					
Namik Kemal University Tekirdag	x					
f	55,56	11,11	-	22,22	11,11	-
Total	5	1	0	2	1	0

For the subject German Language and Literature, a total of five universities oblige their students to write their theses in the language of instruction. One university offers a choice between the language of instruction and Turkish and two of the universities offer the option of using a language other than Turkish under certain conditions. One university offers to work in Turkish in addition to the language of instruction under certain conditions.

Table 4 below shows the language requirements for final theses in the German translation studies programme at Turkish universities: **Table 4**

Language requirements for final theses in the German translation studies programme at Turkish universities

	Compulsory in the language of instruction	In the language of instruction or Turkish	Free choice of language (according to the regulations of the YÖK University Council)	compulsory Turkish, alternative language possible under certain conditions	compulsory in the language of instruction, Turkish possible under certain conditions	compulsory in the respective language of instruction, alternative language possible under certain conditions
University						
Ege University				x		
Mersin University			x			
Selcuk University	x					
Trakya University	x					
f	50	-	25	25		
Total	2	0	1	1	0	0

For the subject of translation studies, there are two universities that require final theses to be written in the language of instruction, while one university offers a free choice of language, taking into account the regulations of the Turkish Higher Education Council (YÖK). Turkish is the compulsory language at one university, but an alternative language can be chosen under certain conditions.

Table 5 shows the actual language choice of theses between the years 2021-2024 by field of study: **Table 5**

Actual choice of language for final theses by field of study 2021-2024

Study programme	Number of theses	German	Turkish
German as a Foreign Language	19	18	1
German Language and Literatur	87	39	48
Translation Studies German	3	3	-
Total	109	60	49

Table 5 shows that a total of 19 Master's and doctoral theses were written in German as a foreign language between 2021 and 2024. Of these, 18 were written in German and one in Turkish. There are 87 theses in German Language and Literature Studies, 39 of which were written in German and 48 in Turkish. A total of three theses were submitted in German Translation Studies, all of which were written in German.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to analyse how German-language subjects in Turkey and their students handle the publication language German in theses, so that a picture of the German language as an academic language in Turkey can emerge.

It turns out that the guidelines and study regulations of universities specialising in German as a foreign language, German language and literature and German translation studies offer a total of six ways of writing a thesis in a particular language. These are: 'Compulsory in the language of instruction; Language of instruction or Turkish; Free choice of language (according to the regulations of the Higher Education Council YÖK); Compulsory Turkish, but alternative language under certain conditions; Compulsory in the language of instruction, but Turkish under certain conditions; Compulsory in the respective language of instruction, but alternative language under certain conditions'.

Five of these categories were discovered for the subject of German as a foreign language. In concrete terms, this means that students of German as a foreign language at Bursa Uludag, Hacettepe, Istanbul Cerrahpasa, Trakya and Turkish-German Universities must write their theses in German, while students at Gazi and Necmettin Erbakan Universities are required to write in Turkish, students at Cukurova University must write in German but can write in Turkish under certain conditions, and students at Anadolu University must write in German but can choose any language, again under certain conditions.

It can therefore be stated that the universities take different approaches to the linguistic organisation of theses in German as a foreign language. Nevertheless, the majority of universities prefer to have theses written in the language of instruction. This can be interpreted as support for the use of the target language, but also as a restriction on the students, as it is not left up to them to decide which language they want to use for their thesis. It would be interesting to observe which language students would prefer if they were given the choice. On the other hand, it is also worth noting that universities consider the national language to be compulsory, even for foreign language studies. The reasons for this decision could be analysed here, as it appears to be a conscious institutional decision. Students of German as a foreign language in Turkey also do not have the option of writing a thesis in English.

For the subject German Language and Literature, four different categories of language choice were identified when writing theses. Students at Ankara, Hacettepe, Marmara, Selcuk and Namik Kemal Tekirdag Universities must write

their theses in German. Students at Sakarya University can choose between the national language or the language of instruction, while Ege and Firat Universities require students to write in Turkish, but consider it possible to accept alternative languages under certain conditions. Akdeniz University requires papers to be written in the language of instruction, but Turkish is also accepted under certain conditions. For the subject German Language and Literature, the picture is similar to that of German as a foreign language. Here, too, the institutions have a variety of linguistic guidelines. Here too, the majority of universities are restricted to the respective language of instruction, i.e. German. Nevertheless, there are also universities that allow a choice between the national language and the language of instruction, so that a decision can be made depending on the subject or preference. This decision can also be interpreted as an indicator of multilingualism in the respective department and should serve as an example for other institutions, as multilingualism in science is emphasised (Tscherniavskia, 2015). Supporting multilingualism in theses could also contribute to the visibility of the work.

For the subject of German Translation Studies, three categories were identified for the language guidelines of theses. Students at Selcuk and Trakya University must write in the language of instruction. Students at Ege University must write in Turkish, but have the option of working in other languages under certain conditions. Students at Mersin University have a free choice of language, according to the Turkish Higher Education Council. The two universities that stipulate the language of instruction therefore attach great importance to supporting the specialised language, while Ege University emphasises the use of the national language. The approach of the University of Mersin is remarkable, as it is the only university among those offering German-language subjects that offers its students the opportunity to choose their own language for their final thesis. The university thus offers great flexibility and the promotion of multilingualism in research.

To summarise, it can be said that there is a common tendency and diversity in the German-language subjects with regard to the language guidelines for writing a thesis. The majority of universities require the thesis to be written in the respective subject-specific language, which serves to promote the German language in science. Whilst a few universities make provision for the use of the national language, they also offer to switch to other languages under certain conditions. Further measures can be taken with regard to multilingualism in the subject. The aim should be to achieve a balance between national and foreign languages as the language of publication.

These findings are reflected in the work of Ammon (2010) and Klein (2001), which state that German as a language of science still plays a significant role in German-language subjects. The Turkish higher education landscape also appears to be comparable to Chinese universities, which require theses in German-language subjects to be written in German (Mächler, 2012). For further research, the background to these decisions should be investigated so that the language policy landscape in Turkey can be presented in relation to theses in further studies. In addition, lecturers in the respective subjects could be interviewed in order to clarify the academic opinion.

For research question two, it should be noted that half of the institutions that offer German as a foreign language and translation studies in postgraduate programmes do not offer their students any option other than German when writing their thesis. For the subject German Language and Literature, the proportion of universities that stipulate German as a compulsory language for final theses is 55.56%. It can therefore be concluded that all three subjects in Turkey prefer to have their theses written in the respective language of study. This approach certainly helps students to further develop their academic language skills in the respective subject and to acquire the ability to express themselves in technical language. It remains to be scrutinised how academic language in German is developed in the respective subjects during the course of study. Research into whether and how, for example, 'academic writing in German' is offered in the degree programme could describe whether or not students are prepared for this university requirement. The development of German for academic purposes should not be taken for granted and should therefore be practised. To this end, it would be useful to analyse students' work for its linguistic peculiarities. It should be checked whether the Master's thesis, for example, is the first academic paper written in German by the respective student, because as Mächler (2012) also describes, the academic style continues to develop with every paper that is written. German for academic purposes should therefore be a topic for further research in Turkey.

Research question three aimed to show how university policies are reflected in practice. According to the above results and conclusions, the expectation is that the majority of theses written in the subjects of German as a foreign language, German language and literature and translation studies should be written in German. Between 2021 and 2024, a total of 19 Master's and doctoral theses were written in German as a foreign language. Of these, almost all (18) were written in German and one in Turkish. A comparison with the work of Üstün (2021) shows that there has been a change in the choice of language in theses. In this

work, it was found that 51% were written in Turkish and 49% in German. It can be assumed that universities have updated their regulations on writing theses in foreign language subjects after 2020. In another paper (Özdemir, 2023), which focuses exclusively on doctoral theses in German as a foreign language, the results from this paper are confirmed: 78.7% of the theses written between 2010-2021 were written in German and 21.3% in Turkish. The discrepancy between the two studies mentioned may be due to the fact that one study focussed only on doctoral theses, while the other also examined master's theses.

There is a balanced picture for the subject German Language and Literature compared to German as a foreign language. Of a total of 87 papers found, 48 were written in Turkish and 39 in German. It is interesting to note that the subject has the highest number of universities that stipulate writing in German, yet there are more works in Turkish than in German. This may be related to the fact that the subject area focusses more on the literature of both cultures than on didactics, for example. Accordingly, there may be more contrastive works for which it was more advantageous to be written in Turkish. In particular, comparative literature works or those that present in-depth analyses of Turkish literature in relation to German literature could benefit from the use of the national language in order to clarify cultural and linguistic differences. Background information could be gathered through further studies by interviewing students themselves as well as lecturers in the field.

As there seems to be a stronger focus on a contrastive approach, universities could apply a more flexible language policy that takes into account the specific needs of the students and the topic of the work.

In the field of translation studies, three theses were found that were all written in German. This may have something to do with the fact that these theses were written at universities that considered the language of study to be compulsory, but it could also be a student preference. Further information could also be obtained through qualitative research with the students or lecturers of the subject.

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Rootlessness and Belonging: A Study of the Mayo Brothers in *Beyond the Horizon*

Şefika Turan[1]

[1] Lect., University of Turkish Aeronautical Association, ORCID: 0000-0002-8726-0256

Introduction

American playwright Eugene O'Neill (1888–1953) is one of the most well-known figures in the world of theatre and a Nobel winner in literature. O'Neill's life and work have had a significant influence on contemporary American theatre because of his deep and sometimes melancholy examination of the human condition. His life, described also as "a relentless cascade of hopeless of hope", was characterized by personal and familial struggles, which also had a significant influence on his writings. (Dowling, 1989: 2). O'Neill spent his early years of life travelling with his family on his father's theatre road tours, so he couldn't have a fixed and regular home. He used to stay in hotel rooms, on trains, and backstage. This unconventional upbringing, without a fixed home, made him intensely aware of life's ambiguity and impermanence. As he personally experienced displacement and alienation, these themes became major themes in his plays where characters often struggle with their own sense of belonging and identity. His early years, marked by psychological upheaval and instability, were crucial in shaping his creative perspective. O'Neill sees life as "a gorgeously-ironical, beautifully indifferent, splendidly suffering bit of chaos", so it is not unusual to see profound suffering in his plays (Dowling, 1989: 8). However, he didn't identify himself as a pessimist and regarded all the sufferings and struggles in life as a path to glorification. According to him, life itself is nothing. It is the state of being passionate and in pursuit of a dream that keeps us alive and exhilarating. Besides, O'Neill was politically active throughout his life, constantly standing with the oppressed. As he states, he really wishes to "arouse compassion. For the unfortunate. The suffering. The oppressed" (O'Neill, 1990: 52). That is to say, he is deeply interested in mankind. However, once he found out his mother's addiction to morphine because of the pain suffered during his birth and her breakdown, he lost his faith in God. Both his loss of faith and his mother's affection created a deep emptiness, loss of sense of belonging and alienation throughout his life.

O'Neill wrote his first successful and full-length play *Beyond the Horizon* in 1918 and he won the first of four Pulitzer prizes for this play. His dark and tragic perception of life was admired by the audience and the critics. Moreover, his success brought him to the attention of a larger theatrical audience. The tragic side of his plays sharply contrasts with melodramas and farces of the period. The tragic results of loss of sense of belonging and harmony with the environment and society are the central theme of the play. This paper aims to analyse how essential to develop a sense of belonging to the occupation, family or social environment to find and form a meaning in life. By examining the main characters

of the play, it also aims to show the pathetic and serious situations that a person will come to face with in case of loss of sense of belonging and meaning in life by pointing out the fact that the choices that we've made in life by knowing ourselves and the potentials we have will naturally make us develop a sense of belonging and ultimate meaning.

What is "Sense of Belonging"?

Sense of belonging is a fundamental human need which refers to the feeling of being accepted, appreciated, included, understood and welcomed. It is a basic human desire that affects how individuals relate with others, perceive themselves and seek meaning in different facets of life. Belongingness may also be related to the feeling developed towards a place, a thing or an event. According to Baumeister and Leary, human beings innately tend to sustain and establish belongingness. Since it is a fundamental need, people who suffer from loss of belongingness show a wide range of ill effects such as psychological or physical health problems. In this regard, Baumeister and Leary assert that "if belongingness is a need rather than simply a want, then people who lack belongingness should exhibit pathological consequences beyond mere temporary distress" (Baumeister and Leary, 1995: 498). In parallel with this assertion, it can also be said that one thing all humans have in common is a need to belong. When this need is not satisfied, it may have a disastrous effect on the mental functions of the humans.

The need for the sense of belongingness is similar to our need for water. We can ignore our thirst for a while without any negative consequences, but our bodies will eventually start sending serious signals to warn us about the things that are out of balance. One of these signals can be the feeling of anxiety. The source of this feeling is described as the state and feeling of "being isolated and helpless in a potentially hostile world" (Horney, 1945: 41). Anxiety, depression, unhappiness or other woes appear to be natural consequences of being isolated from some intimate relationships. Moreover, a great number of research indicates that people who do not have enough supportive social bonds are more stressful than those who have close social ties. This situation can be explained with the feeling of relief and becoming psychologically strong against stress when we have people who are ready for support and assistance (Cohen & Wills, 1985). That is to say, the presence of social support protects people against the negative effects of stress and the deprivation of belongingness. Besides, people who are in a good relationship with others are more satisfied, happier, healthier, and also they are more capable of handling the demands of everyday life as they feel that

they are not alone and that they belong to "a part of a larger symbolic entity (e.g. couple or group) that transcends the limitations of their own body and expands the capacities and boundaries of their own self" (Lambert et al, 2013: 1419).

As a result, it can be asserted that the sense of belonging is immensely beneficial on its own whereas the deprivation of this feeling is not only intrinsically unpleasant and stressful, but it also causes the loss of meaning in life.

At the beginning of the play, Robert Mayo, a young man of twenty-three, is introduced as a delicate and poetic man. He is also a real daydreamer who yearns for exploring the world, in other words 'beyond the horizon'. Robert doesn't want to take root in any one place, yet he wants to keep moving. That is why, he willingly prepares to go on a sea voyage with his uncle. Obviously, Robert has not been able to develop any sense of belonging to the village he lives in, so he regards this voyage as a means of discovery to the places where he will possibly feel belonged to. In fact, going beyond the horizon and exploring the wonders of the world are Robert's childhood dream. As he suffers from lots of pain during those days, daydreaming turns into a useful tool for him not to feel much more pain. It could be said that as a kid Robert associates his own village with the pain and suffering he had to endure and his happiness and relief with the wonders of the world that are beyond the horizon. He used to think that only if he reached there, would he be secure, relieved, happy and filled with the sense of belongingness. "There is something calling me……Oh I just can't explain it to you, Andy", with these statements Robert makes it clear that he is really in need of finding his own self by escaping from the confinements or 'fences' of the village (O'Neill, 1921: 18). On the other hand, his brother Andrew, "an opposite type to Robert" is introduced as a young man of the soil who isn't interested in intellectual things like poetry or other literature stuff (O'Neill, 1921: 16). He is a real Mayo who has developed a strong sense of belonging to the land. Andrew is so happy for being deeply rooted in the village. Besides, he looks as if he were wedded to the soil. He is even like the part or product of the land. In act one, Andrew has ironically stated that "Imagine me reading poetry and plowing at the same time" and Robert has laughingly stated that "Or picture me plowing" (O'Neill, 1921: 17). It is quite clear that both brothers were actually aware of their own nature and what they feel belonging to. However, upon Ruth's revelation of love for him, Robert is caught in a dilemma between his desire and love. Being blinded by Ruth's charm and beauty, Robert decides not to go away on the trip. Just as Ruth's name sounds like root, Robert is rooted in the village by Ruth herself. He sacrifices his own need to form his own self and his ambition to discover the world. Since Andrew is deeply disappointed by Ruth's choice, he

decides to take the place of his brother in order to escape from this situation though they are up to their necks in hard work on the farm. As he believes that he has lost the chance of creating a more meaningful life because of his failed marriage plans Andrew, acting emotionally, takes the sea voyage with his uncle despite the fact that he is "a Mayo bred in the bone, and he's a born farmer, and a damn good one, too" (O'Neill, 1921: 36).

"Perhaps after all Andy was right—righter than he knew—when he said I could find all the things I was seeking for here, at home on the farm. I think love must have been the secret—the secret that called to me from over the world's rim—the secret beyond every horizon; and when I did not come, it came to me" (O'Neill, 1921: 29). Assuming that all he needs and has been looking for has come to him through love, Robert decides to stay in the farm.. Though he believes that he is not made for farming like Andrew, he supposes that love is the secret formula for all issues.

As his father stated, Robert has never been cut out for being a farmer because he is sure that farming is not fit for his son's nature, yet Robert is possessed with the belief that he can handle the farm and be pleased with his business. In the same way, Andrew has never had any enthusiasm for going out into the world and discovering the new things, but because of his anger and grief he is seized with the delusion of being sick and tired of the farm business. Besides, he does not want to stay around and watch Ruth and Robert together. Tragically, both brothers have run against their nature in spite of their father's protests, making themselves believe that they have made up their mind properly and made the right choices in life with defiant assertiveness.

"The room has changed, not so much in its outward appearance as in its general atmosphere. Little significant details give evidence of carelessness, of inefficiency, of an industry gone to seed. The chairs appear shabby from lack of paint; the table cover is spotted and askew; holes show in the curtains; a child's doll, with one arm gone, lies under the table; a hoe stands in a corner; a man's coat is flung on the couch in the rear; the desk is cluttered up with odds and ends; a number of books are piled carelessly on the sideboard. The noon enervation of the sultry, scorching day seems to have penetrated indoors, causing even inanimate objects to wear an aspect of despondent exhaustion" (O'Neill, 1921: 55).

Unfortunately, as the time passes, it becomes more obvious that Robert's running against his nature has caused serious troubles in many aspects. Since he does not have enough experience in farming, both Mayo farm and Mrs. Atkins'

farm are drifted to rack and ruin day by day. Hopelessly, the family members including Ruth's complaining mother Mrs. Atkins start waiting for Andrew to come back as soon as possible to fix the situation. Sadly, even his wife has stopped supporting him, and her feelings have also changed as it can be understood from her facial expression: "Her face has lost its youth and freshness. There is a trace in her expression of something hard and spiteful" (O'Neill, 1921: 61).

Upon this, Robert starts to isolate himself from his wife and child as he loses his connection with his family. His desperate situation is described with the following sentences;

"His shoulders are stooped as if under too great a burden. His eyes are dull and lifeless, his face burned by the sun and unshaven for days. Streaks of sweat have smudged the layer of dust on his cheeks. His lips drawn down at the corners, give him a hopeless, resigned expression. The three years have accentuated the weakness of his mouth and chin" (O'Neill, 1921: 63).

Developing a sense of belonging is strongly linked to emotional and physical well-being. On the other hand, a lack of sense of belonging makes the person feel isolated, alienated and excluded from the social environment. This can negatively affect the person's mental health and make it difficult to develop meaningful connections with other people. When we look at Robert's situation from this perspective, it becomes clear that as Robert loses his sense of belonging to his job and his family, both the physical appearance and psychological state of him gradually get worse and worse. The adverbs like "listlessly" or "wearily" which are mostly used to describe his actions in the text clearly show that everything in his life seems like a burden. As he realizes his unfitness for farming, he feels much more depressive day by day. In addition, he loses all his power of willing and becomes more regretful as he thinks about the things Andrew has experienced in all those amazing faraway places and he even envies him obviously by stating with a deep sigh "Gad, the things he's seen and experienced! Think of the places he's been! All the wonderful far places I used to dream about! God, how I envy him! What a trip!" (O'Neill, 1921: 72). In order to get rid of his guilt feelings, Robert directs his anger and frustration to the hills stating vehemently:

"Oh, those cursed hills out there that I used to think promised me so much! How I've grown to hate the sight of them! They're like the walls of a narrow prison yard shutting me in from all the freedom and wonder of life! (*He turns back to the room with a gesture of loathing*) Sometimes I think if it wasn't for you, Ruth, and—(*his voice softening*)—little Mary, I'd chuck everything up and

walk down the road with just one desire in my heart—to put the whole rim of the world between me and those hills, and be able to breathe freely once more!" (O'Neill, 1921: 72)

Since Robert couldn't actualize what he has always dreamed about, he gets more and more upset and feels so trapped within the borders of the farm that he will never be able to escape from. In addition, his imprisonment causes him to feel exhausted and breathless. Realizing that he has taken the wrong path in life, Robert strongly wants to fulfil his potential and make his dreams come true; therefore, he desperately longs for walking out of the farm though he is sure that it doesn't look possible under these circumstances. While attempting to formulate a meaningful life, he finds himself in complete meaningless and loneliness. Furthermore, he becomes literally rootless and 'Ruth'less as well. He even starts blaming himself labelling his dreams as "fool" (O'Neill: 1921, 72). As for Andrew, despite his success in becoming a businessman, he also fails in developing any kind of belonging to the sea. During his sea voyages, he also feels like a prisoner just as Robert feels on the farm. Besides, Andrew determinedly states that he is "through with the sea for good as a job" (O'Neill: 1921, 86). He also adds that "the days were like years", obviously he is really sick of everything related to sea (O'Neill: 1921, 80). While Robert and Andrew have temporarily gained the security and sense of belonging by conforming to the conditions and acting the way expected of them, it has happened so at the price of their selves. Fromm states that "one who so totally conforms to others no longer has a self; there is no longer an "I" as distinct from them. The person becomes "them" and a false self takes the place of genuine self" (Fromm, 1976: 92). Robert's loss of self, the surrender of himself, has unfortunately left him in a worse situation than he was in before. Besides, both brothers have been overwhelmed by new insecurities and uncertainties because they have obtained false identities, and their new false selves have turned them into reflexive responses to what others expect of them.

Sense of belonging is fundamentally about feeling a connection to people and being a member of a community. Social interaction with a long-term romantic partner might bring several satisfactions including the sense of belonging, but if this contact is impaired, several problems may arise as well. Because of Robert's failure in farming and the consequent financial troubles the family has had to struggle with, Ruth and Robert have alienated from each other. Their constant quarrel about Robert's incapability of foreseeing the things about the farm has led to the gradual decay and dissolution of the family. In addition, both have lost their tolerance and understanding for each other. As a result, Robert has realized

that he is not accepted, included and his presence is not appreciated in his family, so he starts feeling like an outsider. The feeling of exclusion is also so painful for him. "To satisfy the need to belong, the person must believe that the other cares about his or her welfare and likes (or loves) him or her." (Baumeister and Leary, 1995: 500) Unfortunately, Robert has become sure that he is not loved by Ruth anymore. In addition, she does not care about his well-being by leaving him in a desperate situation. Therefore, their impaired relationship results in a loss of meaning and belongingness to life.

In conclusion, Eugene O'Neill's *Beyond the Horizon* poignantly explores the profound consequences of loss of sense of belonging, demonstrating how it can lead to emotional breakdown, alienation, and a loss of meaning in life. Through the opposing characters of Robert and Andrew Mayo, O'Neill exposes the existential struggle between personal aspirations and societal norms. Robert's desire for adventure and escape beyond the horizon is a reflection of his search for identity and the sense of belonging which he has failed to develop, yet his abandonment of this dream for love and stability only results in isolation and regret. In contrast, Andrew's initial rootedness in the village symbolizes a deep sense of belonging, but his desire to leave the farm in order to escape his inner turmoil just makes him feel more alienated and dissatisfied. Both brothers, by trying to conform to what they believe is expected of them, sacrifice their true selves and ultimately face the consequences of their choices. The play strongly emphasizes the importance of belongingness in one's personal and social life, portraying the fact that true fulfilment arises when individuals align their desires with their environment and relationships. Robert's tragic fall demonstrates how life loses all its meaning and becomes void of purpose when there is no true sense of belonging, which results in mental and physical degradation. O'Neill's work reminds us of the inherent human need for connection, the risks of neglecting one's identity, and the critical importance of finding meaningful places and relationships where we can truly belong to. Ultimately, *Beyond the Horizon* calls attention to the devastating effects of alienation, encouraging us to seek authenticity in both our relationships and our pursuits to avoid the perilous consequences of losing our sense of purpose.

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CHAPTER 3

Change and Continuity in the Turkish Business System

Sedat Ilgaz Günay[1]

[1] Dr. Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt Üniversitesi, İşletme Bölümü

Introduction

Macro-institutional research argues that firm behavior cannot be solely understood through the lens of economic rationality; instead, it must be examined within the broader societal and institutional contexts (Whitley, 1999; Hall and Soskice, 2001; Fiss, 2008; Aguilera and Jackson, 2010). With this insight, the business systems approach has emerged as a valuable analytical tool for explaining variations in firm behavior across national contexts (Whitley, 1999). Firm behavior encompasses the mechanisms of coordination, governance, and decision-making within firms, as well as the patterns of ownership, competition, and inter-firm collaboration in a given national economy. Business systems refer to historically embedded institutional arrangements and social structures that shape firm behavior across different economic contexts (Whitley, 1999). Comparative studies on business systems have predominantly focused on two primary models (Aguilera and Jackson, 2010). First, liberal business systems are distinguished by market-based ownership and control mechanisms and limited state intervention into markets (Hall and Soskice, 2001; Whitley, 1999). In contrast, continental European economies are characterized as coordinated market economies featured by concentrated ownership structures, long-term inter-firm relationships an active state role in economic planning (Whitley, 1999).

Despite the extensive focus on these two ideal types, scholars have pointed out the need for studying other business systems especially those concerning developing economies (Aguilera and Jackson, 2009). Given that developing economies operate within distinct societal and institutional contexts, they exhibit unique firm behaviors (Aguilera and Jackson, 2009). To address this, scholars have identified a third business system type, known as the state-organized model, which is particularly relevant in developing economies (Whitley, 1999). In this system, the state plays a dominant role in regulating market mechanisms, ownership structures, coordination and competition (Whitley, 1999). The Turkish business system has historically been characterized as a state-organized model, though it also displays distinct features when compared to other economies within this category (Selekler-Gökşen and Üsdiken, 2001). Throughout its history, Turkey has witnessed strong state involvement in selectively financing, subsidizing, and incentivizing private enterprises (Özen and Berkman, 2007). Additionally, the state has played a decisive role in shaping market competition by strategically directing investments into specific sectors (Buğra, 1994). However, successive governments have struggled to implement a stable, systematic, and predictable development strategy that would provide businesses with a coherent investment framework (Öniş and Şenses, 2007). This challenge

has been exacerbated by weak regulatory institutions, with business policies often shaped by personal relationships between business elites and political leaders rather than institutionalized governance (Buğra, 1994; Yağcı, 2021). Consequently, the Turkish business environment has been dominated by large, family-owned conglomerates, commonly referred to as holding companies.

Recent scholarship on comparative business systems has increasingly engaged with the convergence-divergence debate, particularly in light of global economic transformations since the 1980s (Aguilera and Jackson, 2010). Convergence position asserts that neoliberal reforms, financialization, and globalization have accelerated the adoption of liberal market institutions worldwide, leading to a homogenization of business systems. Conversely, scholars emphasizing the continuing role of societal and institutional structures that, despite pressures for liberalization, coordinated and state-organized economies have retained significant elements of their institutional configurations (Whitley, 1999). Against this backdrop, the Turkish business system has undergone profound transformations since the 1980s, shaped by neoliberal reforms and increasing global economic integration (Öniş and Şenses, 2007). However, despite these shifts, core institutional features—such as the dominance of family-owned conglomerates—have persisted (Üsdiken, Yıldırım Öktem, and Şenol, 2015). This study, therefore, aims to analyze both continuity and change in the Turkish business system. To achieve this, it first examines the broader shifts in the global economy since the 1980s, followed by an in-depth discussion of the evolution of Turkey's business system across different historical periods.

Comparative Business Systems

Macro-institutional studies claim that understanding firm behavior cannot be simply limited to explanations of economic rationality, instead research should focus on societal context and institutions (Whitley, 1999; Hall and Soskice, 2001; Fiss, 2008; Aguilera and Jackson, 2010). In this vein, business systems research has been developed as a fertile framework to explain the differences in firm behavior across different national contexts (Whitley, 1999). The term firm behavior refers to the structures of coordination, control, and decision-making in the firms. It also refers to structures of ownership, competition, and collaboration across firms in a national context. Business systems refer to the historically structured and patterned societal institutions and relationships that can explain the firm behavior across different national economies (Whitley, 1999). Although there are several institutions to be studies in business systems, the role that the states assume is one of the most substantial in terms of determining regulation

and governance mechanisms of markets, ownership, representation, coordination, and competition (Whitley, 1999).

The studies on cross-country comparisons have mainly focused on the two typologies of business systems (Aguilera and Jackson, 2010). First, the Anglo-Saxon countries dominate the extant research as an ideal type of liberal market economies (Hall and Soskice, 2001). These countries are characterized by the market mechanisms of ownership and finance, such as shareholder value for the listed firms, high levels of competition and low levels of coordination, the state as the neutral regulator of markets in an arm's length distance, and the firms' specializing in the related industries via limited diversification and vertical integration (Whitley, 1999). Second, the continental European countries are the other pole of the continuum with the ideal type of coordinated market economies. They are defined by the concentrated ownership structures, long-term financing alliances with the banks, limited competition but high collaboration, the states' active role in planning the economies and forming negotiation and representation mechanisms for the businesses and labor, and the high specialization of firms in related industries through considerable degree of vertical integration (Whitley, 1999).

Although comparative business research has focused on these two ideal types, scholars have underlined that studies on the developing countries have largely remained limited (Aguilera and Jackson, 2009). It follows that developing countries reveal substantially different firm behavior with their different societal institutional contexts (Aguilera and Jackson, 2009). Therefore, a third type of business systems, namely state-organized, is developed in the research on developing countries (Whitley, 1999). The state-organized business system is characterized by the state's direct interventions in the market mechanisms and structures of ownership, coordination, and coordination. Furthermore, in this system we observe concentrated ownership, the low levels of inter-firm collaboration, limited degree of competition, and finally the large presence of state in determining access to finance (Whitley, 1999).

The Turkish business system can historically be characterized as a state-organized business system, yet Turkey has its similarities and differences with the other economies grouped in this system (Selekler-Gökşen and Üsdiken, 2001). Through its history, the Turkish business system witnesses the state's strong role in selectively financing, subsidizing, and incentivizing private businesses. Moreover, the state assumes a strong role in determining the conditions of competition by selectively promoting business investments in

different sectors (Buğra, 1994). Nevertheless, it can be argued that the successive governments have failed to form a cohesive, systemic, stable, and predictable system of development policies that would enable cohesive business strategies for investments (Öniş and Şenses, 2007). Furthermore, this failure was further aggravated by the weak institutional capacity for regulation and instead the particular businessmen's relations with the successive governments dominated the business policy decisions (Buğra, 1994; Yağcı, 2021). Therefore, the business system is dominated by the large family-owned businesses, also called holding companies, which have seen the political uncertainty as risk and opportunity at the same time (Buğra, 1994). As a result, the holding companies adopted unrelated diversification strategy to hedge against uncertainty but at the same time to benefit from state-induced investment opportunities (Selekler-Gökşen and Üsdiken, 2001). Further, the concentrated ownership under a single family became the main structure of ownership and control, and low-trust in the other families' businesses hindered the viability of long-term alliances (Selekler-Gökşen and Yıldırım Öktem, 2009; Çolpan, 2010).

The recent research on comparative business systems has focused on the convergence – divergence debate with the transformations in the world economy from the 1980s onwards (Aguilera and Jackson, 2010). Convergence refers to the increasing dominance of liberal market structures and institutions all over the world with the advent of neoliberal transformations, financialization, and globalization. One tendency in this debate studies how the liberal market institutions and ideas, such as corporate governance and shareholder value, have permeated the coordinated and state-organized the business systems transforming them into classical liberal market economies (Whitley, 1999). However, the scholars who focus on the path-dependencies and institutional lock-ins of the latter business systems maintain that despite some changes towards liberalization, the coordinated and state-organized business systems continue to show considerable divergence in holding to their historical structures and institutions (Whitley, 1999). In this vein, the Turkish business system has also undergone drastic changes beginning from the 1980s towards neoliberalization and global integration (Öniş and Şenses, 2007). However, the Turkish business system still maintains its institutional configurations, albeit with different forms, in coordinating and controlling businesses, such as the family-owned holding firms (Üsdiken, Yıldırım Öktem, and Şenol, 2015).

The Global Transformations since the 1980s

The world economy witnessed the rise of neoliberalism in the 1980s. The post-World War II world economic order was characterized by an increase in growth rates, in purchasing power, the development of a social welfare system, sustained mass production and consumption, and low unemployment rates (Gamble, 1979). The situation had gone to reverse direction during the 1970s, as the growth rates started diminishing and leading to a wave of unemployment and inflation. That is where the new order emerged from the crises of the Keynesian welfare regimes first within the central countries, such as the United Kingdom and United States, and then gradually spread to the world (Harvey, 2005). The new world economic order was engendered under the hegemony of the so-call neoliberal globalization (Harvey, 2005).

Neoliberalism as a policy framework was brought about by the Thatcher government in the UK as a new right critique of post-war social welfare state. The latter was characterized by redistributive policies that increased demand to meet the increased supply. The redistributive policies aimed at full employment, unionization, collective bargaining, and social security schemes (Gamble, 1979). It also envisaged an interventionist state, which actively aimed at stable prices, balance of payments, and regulation of financial markets. In the 1970s, this policy regime underwent a period of recession, marked by sustained high inflation. Consequently, neoliberalism emerged to the policy scene as a criticism of inflationary policies of social welfare state, based on the argument that the latter policies undermined the basis of market order (Gamble, 1979, p. 12). Neoliberal economic ideas asserted that redistributive, regulatory, protectionist and interventionist policy model were responsible for distortions of market economy, which caused higher inflation (Gamble, 1979, p. 15).

From the 1980s on, neoliberalism offered a model based on liberalization of capital markets, globalization of economy, and the retreat of the state. While neoliberal policies have expanded, governance was marked by a series of discipline and control mechanisms through fiscal and monetary policies, which curtailed public spending and redistributive welfare schemes, and deregulated market intervention to boost competition (Saad-Filho and Johnston, 2005, p. 4). The neoliberal policies were marked by the retreat of the state and increasingly leaving some social policies to market competition, such as pensions, unemployment, housing, education, and health care (Saad-Filho and Johnston, 2005).

At the global level, the spread of neoliberal policies resulted in structural transformations in advanced and developing economies. The international financial institutions (IFIs), such as International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, became prominent global actors in promoting and monitoring structural transformations. The IFIs increasingly assumed the role of supervision and coordination of current account balancing and exchange rate stabilizing policies through neoliberal conditionality guidelines (Thirkell-White, 2007, p. 22). Following, the global hegemony of neoliberal ideas about the market as 'self-regulating realm' left their mark on structural transformations in many developing countries. The IFI conditionalities was labeled as 'Washington Consensus' to denote the global policy elites' consensus on the neoliberal policies of deflationary policy measures, contracting public budgets, deregulating markets, and liberalizing financial movements (Thirkell-White, 2007, p. 25). However, in the 1990s, the so-called Washington Consensus came under scrutiny for pressuring premature opening of developing economies exposing them to financial recessions, which resulted in balance of payment crises and credit defaults (Harvey, 2005).

From the mid-1990s on, after two decades of neoliberal liberalization and expansion of financial markets, there was a change in the discourse of global regulation, which came to be called 'post-Washington Consensus'. This consensus was portrayed by the IFIs at the global level as a form of morally responsible capitalism and market–augmenting but regulating state (Thirkell-White, 2007, p. 20). This discourse was promoted through the institutionalized discourses of 'good conduct', 'good governance', 'standards and codes', 'best practices', 'transparency', and 'accountability' (Thirkell-White, 2007, pp. 23-27). This time the IFIs would not prescribe more deregulation but promote regulations for reducing market externalities and information asymmetries by augmenting transparency and accountability (Thirkell-White, 2007, p. 23). In an attempt to reinstitute the legitimacy and 'neutrality' of IFIs, this change in discourse became known as 'the new international financial architecture'. The new architecture anticipated utilizing 'soft law' approach to augment the responsibility of 'public authorities' in ensuring the efficient functioning of markets (Thirkell-White, 2007, p. 29). The soft law approach sought compliance to legitimacy of institutionalized ideas of 'market discipline' rather than direct enforcement (Thirkell-White, 2007, p. 30). However, it should be noted that an unprecedented boom in financial speculation was witnessed in the same period in global economy.

Financialization denotes the permeation of socio-economic systems, its values, practices, networks, and identities by global financial market services, products, ideas, calculations, and technologies (Chiapello, 2015; Harvey, 2005; Davis and Kim, 2015). The period of neoliberal globalization witnessed explosion of the magnitude of 'financial innovations', such as monetization, securitization, assets, swaps, derivatives, tools, and technologies (Picciotto, 2011, p. 265). Concomitantly, the regulatory attempts followed to cover this expansion in financial innovation (Picciotto, 2011). Interestingly, the presence of regulation did not limit but encourage further financial speculation through financial innovations (Picciotto, 2011, p. 265). The explanation for this is that these regulations were mainly characterized by their delegation of public regulatory roles to private financial organizations, such as credit rating agencies (Picciotto, 2011, p. 266). Further, the expansion of number of regulatory bodies and legislations in their complexity also became a factor in flow of financial speculation into innovative financial instruments (Picciotto, 2011, p. 266). Financialization processes also stimulated financialization of incomes of various socioeconomic groups, such as employees, low-income households, professionals, rural population, and small enterprises (Lapavitsas, 2009, p. 115).

The 2008 global financial crisis (GFC) has been historical for its magnitude and persistent impact. Financialization was one of the most important factors that triggered this crisis. For financialization engendered liberalized financial markets, systemic risk exposure through financial innovations and financialized individual incomes. Following the GFC, the financial sector came under scrutiny, which increased the anticipation of transformations in the regulation of financial system (Schoenbaum, 2012). At the global level, the group of 20 countries (G20) spearheaded the international financial regulation and coordination efforts. The G20 meetings succeeded in mitigating the social impact of the GFC by coordinated macroeconomic policies, expansionary fiscal and monetary policies, lowering key interest rates, and injecting liquidity (Schoenbaum, 2012, p. 110). Nevertheless, these coordination efforts were limited to the crisis measures and did not produce substantial policy transformation for financialization (Schoenbaum, 2012, p. 113).

In the 2000s, policy cycles 'financial regulation' and 'financial innovation' paved the way for the 2008 GFC. The deregulated global financial markets witnessed immense capital inflows and expansion of credits for corporations, governments, and individual consumers (Lapavitsas, 2009, p. 120). The state and financial corporations pushed for the rapid increase in household borrowing (Lapavitsas, 2009, p. 120). The financial corporations exacerbated the housing

bubble by extending housing sales to low–income households in the US, which created the so-called 'subprime mortgages' (Lapavitsas, 2009, p. 121). Given the lax regulatory environment, financial corporations utilized financial technologies and innovation, such as securitization of mortgages through collateralized debt obligations (CDOs) and ensuring these securities through credit default swaps (CDSs) (Lapavitsas 2009, p. 136; Gowan 2009, p. 14). Following, when in 2007 and 2008, credit defaults triggered 'liquidity shortage', causing massive deleveraging, writing-off, and devaluation of speculative financial assets (Lapavitsas, 2009, p. 121). The cost of mitigating the crisis further caused sovereign debt crisis especially in European Union members.

Following the GFC, criticisms about 'irresponsible risk-taking' of financial corporations and the state bailouts of the losses of these corporations triggered the questioning of the legitimacy of the idea of financialization (Schoenbaum, 2012, p. 147). Opponents raised demands for stronger public regulation, which anticipated strict control and limitation of financial market transactions and instruments (Schoenbaum, 2012, p. 147). Nevertheless, the following policy reforms were characterized by substantial ambiguity due to persistence of 'soft law' and 'market discipline' discourses of post-Washington Consensus (Schoenbaum, 2012, p. 150). This discourse anticipated monitoring reports of the IFIs and credit rating agencies would sufficiently regulate financial markets through 'risk premia' and 'creditworthiness assessments' (Seabrooke, 2007, p. 12). In doing so, the market would discipline through financial capital flows (Seabrooke, 2007, p. 30). In this period, the discourse of regulation revealed its limitations. It was private organizations or quasi-public bodies which were supposed to monitor the compliance with the regulatory guidelines. However, financialization as a discourse further engendered complex technologies of quantification, computation, capital requirements, and ratios, which continued to be substitutes for substantial public regulation policies (Chiapello, 2015).

The Turkish Business System since the 1980s

Neoliberal Transformations in the 1980s

The Turkish political economic and business contexts have undergone drastic changes since the transition to neoliberalization and financialization in the 1980s. Turkey was one of the first countries to implement the World Bank and IMF's structural adjustment programs following its balance of payments crisis. Especially for the first half of the 1980s, the IFIs promoted Turkey as a success story for the implementation of liberalization and stabilization policies (Celasun and Rodrik, 1989, p. 193). In the 1980s, Turkey increasingly ascribed to the

global hegemony of neoliberal discourse by following the idea of 'laissez faire' market liberalism pitted against state intervention and welfare regimes. With the Washington Consensus of the IFIs, the Turkish governments implemented 'structural adjustment programs', which entailed contractionary economic and monetary policies (Öniş and Şenses, 2007). The Washington Consensus anticipated that the governments would curtail protectionist policies and implement a novel set of policies, such as financial and capital account liberalization, deregulation, privatization, freeing of interest rate and exchange rate controls, and contractionary fiscal policy (Öniş and Şenses, 2007, p. 264). These neoliberal policies would envisage a 'minimal state', retreating from interventions, which were portrayed as creating 'price distortions', 'rent-seeking', and clientelism (Öniş and Şenses, 2007, p. 268; Rodrik, 1991, p. 462). The state's role would be limited to 'getting the prices right', which ascribed an impartial observer role to the state to ensure the efficient functioning of national markets in the globalizing competition (Öniş and Şenses, 2005, p. 268). The state has increasingly assumed a technocratic authoritarian character excluding public deliberation on the inevitability of the global economic necessities.

Nevertheless, this transformation did not largely engender the anticipated success story in the 1980s (Rodrik, 1991, p. 463). The transition to neoliberalization demonstrated its contradictions by the continuing of the historically strong role of the state in various areas, such as increasing public investments contrary to neoliberal agenda, the informal and clientelist usage of export subsidies, and lack of reductions in the public budget (Rodrik, 1991, p. 463). Rodrik (1991) argues Turkey continued to be characterized by its historically ingrained patronage relations. Consequently, the limitations of transition to neoliberal globalization in Turkey engendered a contradictory unity of clientelism, political uncertainties, and a problematic integration with the global economy.

The scholars underline interesting co-evolution of two patterns of relations between the state elites and business elites throughout the 1980s. These two co-evolving but contradictory patterns are dependence and conflict (Buğra, 1994; Keyder, 2004). The state dependency refers to historical context that Turkish businesses were founded under the personalized ties with the governments and bureaucracy from the beginning of the republic (Buğra, 1994). The conflict, on the other hand, refers to tension that business elites continuously criticize and oppose the 'state-induced uncertainty', such as selective interventions and political instabilities (Buğra, 1994). First, the military coup of September 12, 1980, was seen as an attempt of the state elites to restore their privileged positions

above the civil society. The traditional strong state would be opposed to prevailing discourse of market economy and autonomous civil society (İnsel, 2003, p. 295).

Throughout the 1980s, the Turkish economic landscape witnessed a period in which governments combined the features of state-organized business system with reforms towards creating an open–market economy (Öniş and Şenses, 2005). However, failure in institutionalization of open-market policies, increasing political uncertainty, and rent-seeking behavior were raised as criticisms for the continuing omnipotence of the state over the civil society (Sunar, 2004; Buğra, 1994). Buğra (1994) argues that the business elites, in this period, tried to change their language to defend their own interests and present their own projects for Turkey. Keyder (2004) also mentions the emergence of a seemingly autonomous group of business elites, i.e., Anatolian Tigers, which sees the state as a burden, contrary to traditional big business groups based in İstanbul. The discourse of this period is also contradictory, where the 'integration with world economy' were elevated to a national development target accompanied by state organized business features.

With the January 24, 1980 decisions, the Turkish economy was put on the rail of neoliberalism through the prescriptions of the Washington Consensus in order to integrate the national economy to global free market economy. These decisions were implemented under the auspices of the structural adjustment program by IMF and World Bank which aimed at financial liberalization and outward looking industrialization in a long period (Öniş and Senşes, 2007, p. 269). Under these conditions, businesses had the chance to increase production capacities leading the economy to grow at high levels (5.3%) between 1981 and 1988 (Öniş and Senşes, 2007, p. 270). Moreover, export promotion was another factor in this growth outcome (Öniş and Senşes, 2007, p. 270). Reaching the available production limits had put economy into stagnation and growth rates decreased in 1988 and 1989. Domestic businesses needed access to international financial flows to acquire new production capacities. Therefore, the structural transformations were further developed by financial liberalization and deregulation of financial markets which aimed at liberalization of domestic capital flows (Öniş and Senşes, 2007, p. 270). New financial institutions and stock markets were founded on the rationale of increasing domestic savings and investments of business groups. However, the result was the increasing dominance of speculative profit seeking at the expense of improving industrial capacities and competitiveness, which further increased government debt because of high yields on the government debt instruments (Öniş and Senşes, 2007, p.

270). Towards the end of 1980s, this tendency of big business groups to acquire international financial credits led to an economy dependent upon further financial capital coming from abroad (Akyüz and Boratav, 2002, p. 5). This fact was confirmed by Decree No. 32 in 1989 with the approval of convertibility of Turkish Lira, which removed controls on the domestic and international capital movements (Akyüz and Boratav, 2002, p. 5).

Crises of Adjustments in the 1990s

The Decree No. 32 of 1989 was also compatible with the needs of international business groups. Because in advanced countries interest rates on investments had been low, their big businesses were looking for markets offering high short-term returns on their financial investments. In the following years, short term foreign capital rushed into the Turkish financial markets and it made Turkish economy strictly dependent upon it (Orhangazi, 2002, p. 336; Yeldan, 2006, p. 200). Yeldan (2006) uses the term "speculative-led growth" to define Turkish economy in the 1990s, which was directly affected by fluctuations of international financial flows. First, when recommending financial liberalization, the international financial institutions anticipated Turkey would compensate public debt with the international credits, yet the outcome of the liberalization policies proved otherwise. Because government had to offer high real interest rates to attract foreign capital, public debt continuously increased and reached 63.2% of Gross National Product in 1999 (Yeldan, 2006, p. 198). Second, foreign capital inflow led to foreign currency glut which hold Turkish Lira overvalued due to pegged exchange rate regime. Overvalued Lira reduced the cost of imports which increased current account deficits in the balance of payments. Third, another chronic problem of the Turkish economy was high inflation rates which had reached 78.7% annual average during the second half of the 1990s (Onaran, 2007, p. 6). Therefore, in the end of 1990s Turkey became a highly indebted country with high current account deficits and high inflation rates. Hence, the economy became highly volatile while political uncertainties led to mass outflows of speculative short-term capital causing recessions.

The Turkish business context in the 1990s demonstrated recurring instabilities due to the repercussions of 'premature financial and capital account liberalization' (Öniş and Şenses, 2005, p. 268). The exacerbating factor was the political instability and political elites' attempts at political patronage through deficit financing and rent-distribution (Öniş and Şenses, 2005, p. 268). An example of this recurring pattern is the 1994 financial crisis in Turkey. The incumbent government tried to keep interest rates on government debt

instruments too low to finance budget deficits. However, given the financial liberalization, the sudden financial outflows eventually necessitated the tripling of interest rates overnight, which brought financial system to a halt.

In the late 1990s, the neoliberalization–triggered recessions in the East Asian countries, Argentina, and Turkey led to the alteration of the policy discourse in the international sphere. The deregulation caused speculative-led imbalances caused international discursive change from 'government failure' to 'market failure' (Öniş and Şenses, 2005, p. 264). This time, the so-called "Post-Washington Consensus" had emerged underlining the importance of 'strong institutions and good governance' in the functioning of markets (Öniş and Şenses, 2005, p. 274). The international policy discourse emphasized continuance of the liberalization policies, but this time with the development of concomitant regulatory institutions. This change in the discourse of neoliberal order underlined a conciliatory narrative that the market and state was not challenging but complementing each other (Öniş and Şenses, 2005, p. 275). The Post-Washington Consensus discourse is distinguished by its emphasis on governance of financial markets, as an institution for developing countries to increase the liquidity of its capital markets, access to finance, and servicing of the debt (Öniş and Şenses, 2005, p. 275). In this discourse, the states are called develop technocratic regulatory mechanisms for monitoring the markets. Concurrently, the technocratic state would be isolated from political quarrels, uncertainty, and clientelist demands. The state would itself be operated as an efficient and competitive organization by emulating the 'market-like mechanisms' (Öniş and Şenses, 2005, p. 275).

Speculative-led growth policies failed to provide sustainable development of the economy in the 1990s. Average annual GNP growth rate was 3% in the 1990s which is lower than 4% in the 1980s and 4.8% in the 1970s (Onaran, 2007, p. 7). These deteriorating conditions in the economy, however, triggered changes in the composition of big business groups' portfolios. Because the government were offering tax-free high returns on government debt instruments, Turkey witnessed increasing importance of 'financial capital at the expense of productive investments' in the 1990s (Yeldan, 2006). While big business groups complained that overvalued Turkish lira was an obstacle to export-oriented growth, overvaluation allowed them to get international credits with lower interest rates. Big business groups started founding banks to access low-cost credits and they invested the capital to GDIs with high returns, which were reflected in the increasing share of financial profits (Yeldan, 2006).

An economy dependent upon short-term foreign capital inflows eventually went into recession when speculative finance capital moved out of the country following the uncertainty in the global environment due to 1997 – 1998 East Asian crisis. Decreasing capital inflows aggravated the conditions of domestic big business groups to access foreign credits leading to liquidity shortages in economy. As a result, the capital scarcity caused a crisis in 1999 when the GNP contracted by 6.1% (Akyüz and Boratav, 2002, p. 11). The recession was further deepened when eight private banks became insolvent and transferred to the state. Because the interest rates on public debt were at historic high levels, repayment of debt became the main concern for the public budget (Akyüz and Boratav, 2002, p. 11). Moreover, inflation problem was creating an uncertain environment in the economy for the investments due to high currency risks they were exposed to.

The government signed a stand-by agreement with the IMF in December 1999, in which completing financial and structural liberalization reforms that began in the 1980s was the main objective. The government made explicit that it was going to conduct all the reforms on the framework of inflation targeting. Further, the target of increasing primary budget surplus tried to solve the problem of public debt (Akyüz and Boratav, 2002, p. 12). Moreover, the structural reforms were going to be implemented, such as restructuring of the banking sector, privatization of public enterprises, decreasing social security and agricultural expenditures, setting real wage increases to inflation targets, and further liberalization of markets (Akyüz and Boratav, 2002, p. 12). All the anticipated changes in the economic structure were also consistent with the demands of big business groups. First, with the inflation targets and depreciated Turkish Lira, uncertain environment that hampering the flow of financial capital was going to be removed. Second, restructuring of public debt and regulation of banks were aiming to increase access to international financial markets. Third, the fundamental objective of the reforms was to increase Turkey's credibility in the international financial markets which would lead to foreign short term capital inflows. Lastly, structural reforms in the social welfare schemes and redistributive policies were going to constrict real income of labor and decrease public spending so that big business groups' competitiveness in international markets would increase. Nevertheless, before these expectations were realized, the economy underwent a more severe crisis in 2001, and the substantial restructuring could only be implemented after that.

Neoliberal Restructuring in the 2000s

The 2001 crisis in Turkey revealed the exigency of sound fiscal discipline, regulation of the banking system, and macroeconomic stability (Güven, 2016, p. 1003). The upshot was a major restructuring of the economy with another IMF structural program and with the anchor of the EU candidacy (Yeldan and Ünüvar, 2016, p. 12). The restructuring primarily aimed at constructing functioning independent regulatory agencies, exchange rate liberalization, banking sector regulation, primary budget surplus, tightening monetary policy with inflation targeting and high real interest rates (Yeldan and Ünüvar, 2016, p. 12; Erçek, 2014, p. 998). The results of the restructuring were relatively successful until 2008 global financial crisis (Güven, 2016, p. 996). The economy witnessed high growth rates with increased investments and foreign capital inflow. Nevertheless, the long-term adverse impact of financial dependence led to debt-led structure of growth with the expansion of private indebtedness (Güven, 2016, p. 995; Yeldan and Ünüvar, 2016, p. 11). For the big business groups, the main discourse of the period was rescuing the market from the intervention of politics in Turkey (Güven, 2016, p. 1003; Yeldan and Ünüvar, 2016, p. 12).

The economy underwent another crisis in 2001 when interest rates on both private and public debt rose to high levels. While the government was seeking a remedy for the crisis, a new agreement with IMF came to assistance. The new agreement aimed at providing an institutionalized structure to financial liberalization and international integration (Akyüz and Boratav, 2002, p. 18). The government and IMF agreed on a program, which was later called 'Transition to Strong Economy'. According to the program, the government followed a series of reforms including independence of central banking, inflation targeting, restructuring of banking sector, strengthening of public budget, fiscal stability, and privatization (Akyüz and Boratav, 2002, p. 21). The government declared that it abandoned the 1980s and 1990s' speculative-led growth model defined by deregulated financial markets, and lax regulatory environment.

Under this program, accountability, monitoring, and auditing regulations provided increase in financial efficiency of the banking sector. Moreover, to strengthen capitals of banking sector merger and acquisitions of banks were facilitated. Thus, centralization and concentration in the financial sector were increased and some banks were acquired by international banking corporations (Yeldan, 2006). Moreover, the IMF played a key role in preparing the market conditions to achieve these reforms. It provided funds to increase market liquidity and to restructure financial system, and it also imposed floating exchange regime

which removed the government's control over interest rates and monetary policy (Akyüz and Boratav, 2002, p. 23). As a result, Turkey entered a new economic model aiming at sustained export-led growth and providing required capital for investments by increasing domestic savings and attracting foreign capital. There was not just IMF who advocated implementing such a strategy, but big business groups also emphasized the compatibility of this model (Yeldan, 2006). In the 2000s, the Turkish economy enjoyed high rates of growth under the Justice and Development Party governments and tight surveillance of the IMF (Onaran, 2007, p. 8).

The inflow of international short-term capital was another important factor in this success. However, dependent nature of the economy on the capital inflows was also the reason of fragility in the economy. In 2005 foreign capital inflows comprised 11% of GNP (Yeldan, 2006, p. 8). In a floating exchange rate regime appreciation of Turkish Lira was inevitable and it was appreciated 47.4% in real terms in 2005 compared to 2001 level (Onaran, 2007, p. 8). Because appreciated Turkish Lira had cheapened the price of imported goods, growth in imports far exceeded the growth in exports. Thus, current account deficits continued to be a chronic fragility of the economy (Yeldan, 2006, p. 7). Moreover, increasing rates of private debt added more risk on the sustainability of growth which would be another factor in the fragility of the economy (Yeldan, 2006, p. 8). Therefore, in cases of sudden stops in capital inflows, which have always been the case after any political or economic tension, the financialization rendered the economy vulnerable to recessions.

The Turkish economy experienced the repercussions of the 2008 global crisis due to its dependent model on the global financial market. The model of neoliberal restructuring and financial liberalization left the economy exposed to global financial turbulences. The economy witnessed 84.9% annual decrease in foreign capital inflow following the crisis (Boratav, 2009). In the following year, the GDP declined by 8.2% which was more severe than crises in 1994 and in 2001 (Boratav, 2009). The 2008 global financial crisis heightened criticisms against the conventional neoliberal economic policy wisdom. While post-neoliberalism discussions continued in advanced economies, the possibility of the so-called "new developmentalism" has been discussed in the developing economies (Güven, 2016; Öniş, 2019). Nevertheless, scholars still underline the evidence for the continuity of the neoliberal globalization and financialization (Güven, 2016, p. 999).

In Turkey, the scholars underline surfacing of contradictions of neoliberal and financialized economic model with the global recession (Güven, 2016, p. 997; Yeldan and Ünüvar, 2016, p. 11). The gradual decrease of growth rates from 2012 onwards has been labeled as 'mild descent' (Yeldan and Ünüvar, 2016, p. 20). In line with the global financial expectations, the economic policies try to ensure 'creditworthiness' for the foreign financial investors (Güven, 2016, p. 1009; Yeldan and Ünüvar, 2016, p. 26). Nevertheless, for the scholars, three chronic problems in the economy put specific strain, namely current account deficit, savings deficit, and private indebtedness (Güven, 2016, p. 1009; Yeldan and Ünüvar, 2016, p. 22). As a result, the economy in the 2010s oscillated between neoliberal financialization and protectionist developmental policies (Yeldan and Ünüvar, 2016, p. 22; Güven, 2016, p. 1013; Öniş, 2019).

Conclusion

This paper explored the change and continuity of the Turkish business system by analyzing the developments since the 1980s in response to global economic transformations. The findings contribute to the convergence-divergence debate, demonstrating how institutional path dependence and external economic pressures shape the evolution of state-organized business systems. The focus on state–organized business systems reveals the role of distinct institutional contexts in developing economies. Turkey, in particular, has its distinctive features as a state-organized business system, the state – induced uncertainties, the ongoing survival of the personalized business – politics relations, and business strategies developed as a response to selective business incentives. To make a brief overview of the Turkish business system since the 1980s, The Turkish economy followed a series of structural transformations in terms of neoliberal globalization and financialization. This period witnessed that the big business groups developed further connections with the global businesses. Moreover, global and domestic business groups made partial and contradictory progress in their demands from the state to implement legal and institutional changes in line with the ideas of neoliberal globalization and financialization. The new neoliberal economic model brought about policies of international financial liberalization and deregulation. The big business groups in Turkey adopted the neoliberal globalization discourse, which can be summarized as rescuing the market from the intervention of politics (Güven, 2016, p. 1003; Yeldan and Ünüvar, 2016, p. 12). This discourse anticipated a technocratic state isolated from political uncertainty, and clientelist demands (Öniş and Şenses, 2007, p. 275). To put it otherwise, the big business groups in Turkey subscribe to neoliberal global discourse to advance their normative stance about how the state – business

relations ought to be institutionalized. The big business groups in Turkey concurrently benefit from and complain about the state-organized business system, business political ties and the state-induced uncertainties (Buğra, 1994). Nevertheless, these factors do not seem to disappear but only change their forms in line with neoliberalism and financialization in Turkey (Öniş, 2019). Moreover, the ownership structure in Turkey continues to be concentrated family-owned holding companies which continue to show unrelated diversification, yet they add internationalization strategies in line with the global integration of the economy. On the other hand, there are limited changes together with the increasing number of listed firms and development of market control mechanisms, such as corporate governance and shareholder value practices. Nevertheless, despite the regulations for corporate governance, such as disclosure, auditing, independent board members, the families retain the effective control of the large companies (Üsdiken, Yıldırım Öktem, and Şenol, 2015).

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CHAPTER 4

Mâturîdî's Epistemology: The Construction of Knowledge through Reason, Sensory Perception, and Reported Knowledge

Raziye Sayar[1]

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[1] Res. As., Selcuk University, Theology Fakulty, Department Of Philosophy and Religious Sciences
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-6211-4674

Introduction

Abū Manṣūr al-Mâturîdî (d. 944), a foundational figure in Islamic theology, played a crucial role in shaping Sunni theological thought. His epistemology is particularly significant because it synthesizes three primary sources of knowledge: sensory perception (*ḥiss*), reported knowledge (*khabar*), and rational inference (*istidlāl*) (Kutlu, *İmam Mâturîdî ve Mâturîdîlik*, p.189). This tripartite framework provided a structured and systematic approach to understanding reality, long before similar methodologies emerged in Western philosophy. While 18th-century Western thinkers like Immanuel Kant sought to reconcile empirical observation with rational deduction, Mâturîdî had already integrated these elements into Islamic theological discourse in the 9th century (*Din Felsefesi Açısından Mâtürîdî Gelenek-i*, ed. Recep Alpyağıl, p.35).

Mâturîdî's epistemology is deeply rooted in his theological system. Unlike strict empiricists who view sensory perception as the primary or exclusive means of acquiring knowledge, Mâturîdî acknowledges its role while recognizing its limitations. He argues that human senses provide initial data about the external world, but this data requires rational analysis for proper interpretation (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.9). Without intellectual engagement, sensory information alone remains incomplete. This stance prevents him from falling into the pitfalls of pure empiricism while simultaneously avoiding the extremes of rationalism that disregard empirical evidence altogether (*Mâturîdî'de Bilgi Problemi*, Özcan, p.126).

A crucial aspect of Mâturîdî's epistemology is his emphasis on reported knowledge (*khabar*), which he classifies into two categories:

1. **Mutawâtir (widely transmitted reports)** – information conveyed by a large number of people, making it logically impossible for them to have conspired in falsehood (*Mâtürîdî, Kitâbü't-Tevhîd*, p.11).

2. **Wâhid (solitary reports)** – information relayed by a limited number of narrators, requiring additional scrutiny and verification (*Mâtürîdî, Kitâbü't-Tevhîd*, p.12; Uluç, *Kitâbu't-Tevhîd'in Tahkikli Neşri ve Açıklamalı Tercümesine Dair Bazı Mülâhazalar*, p.21).

Mâturîdî's inclusion of reported knowledge as a valid epistemic source was a groundbreaking contribution to Islamic theology. Earlier theologians had primarily relied on reason and sensory experience, but Mâturîdî extended the epistemological framework by recognizing the necessity of authentic reports, particularly in matters beyond direct human perception, such as historical events

and religious doctrines (*İmam Mâtürîdî ve Mâturîdîlik*, Kutlu, p.189; Rudolph, *Mâtürîdî*, p.397). This validation of reported knowledge also played a pivotal role in justifying prophetic revelation, as Mâturîdî argued that divine messages transmitted through prophets constitute reliable knowledge sources (*Te'vîlâtü'l Kur'an*, trans. Bekir Topaloğlu & Yusuf Şevki Yavuz, p.328-329).

One of the most distinctive features of Mâturîdî's epistemology is his use of Reductio ad Absurdum (*Abese Irca*), a logical technique that demonstrates contradictions in an argument to prove its falsehood (*Mâtürîdî'de Bilgi Problemi*, Özcan, p.91-92). This method, also employed by Aristotle, was instrumental in Mâturîdî's refutations of opposing philosophical and theological claims (*Din Felsefesi Açısından Mâtürîdî Gelenek-i*, ed. Recep Alpyağıl, p.35). He applied this technique when addressing skepticism regarding sensory perception, arguing that those who deny sensory knowledge inadvertently rely on their senses to formulate their denial, thereby contradicting themselves (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.10). Similarly, he used *Reductio ad Absurdum* to challenge those who reject the validity of prophetic reports, highlighting that their reasoning ultimately collapses into self-contradiction (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.11).

Mâturîdî's epistemology also underscores the role of rational inference (*istidlāl*), which he defines as the process of deriving new knowledge through structured reasoning. This method is particularly relevant in theological arguments, such as the proof of God's existence. Mâturîdî asserts that just as smoke is evidence of fire and light indicates the presence of the sun, the observed order of the universe points to the necessity of a Creator (*Mâtürîdî'de Bilgi Problemi*, Özcan, p.96). He further argues that rational inference is indispensable because both sensory perception and reported knowledge can sometimes be deceptive. Therefore, human beings must employ critical thinking to distinguish truth from falsehood (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.13). By integrating sensory perception, reported knowledge, and rational inference, Mâturîdî constructs a holistic epistemological system where each knowledge source complements and validates the others. Sensory experience provides the raw material, rational inference processes and interprets it, and reported knowledge fills in gaps that neither the senses nor reason alone can bridge. This comprehensive approach not only strengthens theological arguments but also ensures that knowledge acquisition remains both systematic and verifiable (*İmam Mâtürîdî ve Mâturîdîlik*, Kutlu, p.192).

This study aims to explore Mâturîdî's epistemological framework in detail, analyzing its foundations, methodological principles, and implications for

Islamic thought. By examining his use of sensory perception, reported knowledge, and rational inference, we will evaluate how his system contributed to the broader discourse on epistemology within Islamic theology and its lasting impact on later scholars.

1. Sources of Knowledge in Mâturîdî's Epistemology: Sensory Perception, Reported Knowledge, and Rational Inference

Mâturîdî's epistemology is built upon three primary sources of knowledge: sensory perception (*ḥiss*), reported knowledge (*khabar*), and rational inference (*istidlāl*). Each of these sources plays a distinct yet complementary role in the acquisition of knowledge. Unlike strict empiricists, who consider sensory experience the only means of obtaining reliable knowledge, or rationalists, who prioritize reason over empirical data, Mâturîdî proposes a balanced epistemological model. His approach acknowledges the limitations of each source while integrating them into a coherent system (*Mâtürîdî'de Bilgi Problemi*, Özcan, p.125).

1.1. Sensory Perception (*Duyu – ḥiss*) as a Source of Knowledge

Sensory perception (*ḥiss*) constitutes the initial and fundamental source of human knowledge in Mâturîdî's epistemology. He argues that knowledge begins with sensory input, as human cognition depends on the data acquired through the five senses (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.9). However, he avoids the pitfall of radical empiricism, which assumes that all knowledge is reducible to sensory experience. Instead, he asserts that while the senses provide essential raw data, they require rational analysis to become meaningful (*Mâtürîdî'de Bilgi Problemi*, Özcan, p.126). Mâturîdî further argues that denying sensory knowledge is self-defeating. If a person were to claim that senses are unreliable, they would need to rely on their senses to formulate this claim. This argument, based on *Reductio ad Absurdum*, exposes the contradiction in denying sensory perception (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.10). To illustrate this point, Mâturîdî provides an example:

"If someone denies sensory perception, ask them: 'Do you know that you are denying it?' If they respond 'No,' then their denial ceases to exist. If they respond 'Yes,' then they have already admitted the validity of sensory knowledge." (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.10)

This method mirrors Aristotle's logical refutations, demonstrating Mâturîdî's engagement with classical philosophical reasoning (*Din Felsefesi Açısından*

Mâtürîdî Gelenek-i, ed. Recep Alpyağıl, p.35). Another significant aspect of Mâturîdî's epistemology is his claim that sensory experience initiates rational thought. According to him, reason does not function independently but is activated by sensory input (*Mâtürîdî'de Bilgi Problemi*, Özcan, p.126). When an individual perceives an object through sight, touch, or sound, their intellect begins to analyze, categorize, and interpret that data. Furthermore, Mâturîdî argues that the existence of the unseen (*al-ghayb*) can also be inferred through sensory perception. He states:

"Just as a person perceives the heat of fire and understands its burning effect without directly touching it, so too can unseen realities be inferred from observed phenomena" (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.9). This principle serves as a foundation for Mâturîdî's theological arguments, including the proof of God's existence. By observing the order and harmony of the universe, one can rationally deduce the presence of a Creator (*Te'vîlâtü'l Kur'an*, trans. Bekir Topaloğlu & Yusuf Şevki Yavuz, p.328-329). However, Mâturîdî acknowledges the limitations of sensory perception. While the senses provide initial knowledge, they are sometimes prone to error. He cites examples such as optical illusions or auditory distortions to argue that senses must be verified through rational analysis (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.13). Thus, for Mâturîdî, sensory knowledge is necessary but insufficient on its own.

1.2. Reported Knowledge (*Haber – khabar*) as a Source of Knowledge

Mâturîdî's inclusion of reported knowledge (*khabar*) as a valid epistemic source marks a significant departure from earlier theological approaches. While Mu'tazilites and some philosophers were skeptical about the reliability of reported knowledge, Mâturîdî argued that it is essential for understanding historical, religious, and metaphysical truths (*İmam Mâtürîdî ve Mâturîdîlik*, Kutlu, p.189).

1.2.1. The Classification of Reported Knowledge

Mâturîdî divides *khabar* into two categories:

1. Mutawâtir (widely transmitted reports): Information conveyed by a large group of people, making falsehood logically impossible (*Mâtürîdî, Kitâbü't-Tevhîd*, p.11). Examples include widely known historical events (e.g., the existence of past civilizations) and religious doctrines transmitted through prophetic traditions.

2. Wâhid (solitary reports): Information relayed by a single or small group of narrators, requiring scrutiny to determine reliability (*Mâtürîdî, Kitâbü't-Tevhîd*, p.12; Uluç, *Kitâbu't-Tevhîd'in Tahkikli Neşri ve Açıklamalı Tercümesine Dair Bazı Mülâhazalar*, p.21).

Mâturîdî's emphasis on *Mutawâtir* knowledge underscores his belief in the cumulative validity of consensus. He argues that when a diverse group of individuals unanimously conveys a fact, the probability of deception approaches zero (*Mâtürîdî'de Bilgi Problemi*, Özcan, p.91-92).

Another crucial aspect of *khabar* in Mâturîdî's epistemology is its role in justifying prophetic revelation. Since religious doctrines cannot always be verified through direct sensory experience or rational inference, they rely on authentic reports. For example, belief in the afterlife, divine scriptures, and past prophets is based on *khabar*, making it an indispensable source of religious knowledge (*Te'vîlâtü'l Kur'an*, p.328-329). Mâturîdî applies *Reductio ad Absurdum* to counter those who reject reported knowledge. He argues that denying all *khabar* leads to absurd consequences:

"If a person rejects all reported knowledge, they must also deny their own lineage, history, and even the existence of their parents—since such knowledge is acquired through reports." (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.10) This logical approach reinforces the necessity of *khabar* as a valid epistemological category.

1.3. Rational Inference (*Akıl – istidlāl*) as a Source of Knowledge

Rational inference (*istidlāl*) plays a central role in Mâturîdî's epistemology. While sensory perception and reported knowledge provide foundational data, intellect (*aql*) is necessary for analyzing, verifying, and systematizing that data (*Mâtürîdî'de Bilgi Problemi*, Özcan, p.96).

Mâturîdî outlines eight reasons why rational inference is indispensable (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.13-15):

1. Sensory and reported knowledge require rational analysis to avoid errors.

2. The unseen (*al-ghayb*) can only be known through inference.

3. The Qur'an commands believers to engage in rational reflection.

4. Contradictions in arguments can only be resolved through reason.

5. The existence of God is proven through rational inference.

6. Distinguishing between truth and falsehood requires reasoning.

7. Moral and ethical judgments depend on rational deliberation.

8. Human free will and responsibility presuppose intellectual capacity.

Mâturîdî frequently employs analogical reasoning to support theological claims. For example, he argues that just as smoke implies fire and footprints indicate human presence, the intricate design of the universe necessitates an intelligent Creator (*Mâtürîdî'de Bilgi Problemi*, Özcan, p.96).

Ultimately, Mâturîdî's epistemology integrates sensory perception, reported knowledge, and rational inference into a coherent and systematic framework. By demonstrating how each source complements the others, he establishes a balanced epistemological model that remains highly relevant in both theological and philosophical discourse.

1.4. The Role of Rational Inference (*İstidlāl*) in Mâturîdî's Epistemology

In Mâturîdî's epistemology, rational inference (*istidlāl*) serves as the ultimate means of synthesizing and validating knowledge acquired through sensory perception (*ḥiss*) and reported knowledge (*khabar*). Unlike empiricists, who confine knowledge to sensory data, or fideists, who rely solely on religious texts, Mâturîdî establishes reason as the central epistemological tool. He argues that while sensory perception and reported knowledge provide the raw materials of cognition, it is through reason that human beings organize, interpret, and extract meaning from these sources (Mâtürîdî'de Bilgi Problemi, Özcan, p.96).

Mâturîdî's approach aligns with the broader theological tradition of kalām, which emphasizes rational argumentation in theological discourse. However, his system is distinctive in its simultaneous reliance on all three epistemological sources. This integration enables him to critique theological opponents while constructing a systematic framework that upholds both divine revelation and rational inquiry (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.13).

1.4.1. The Necessity of Rational Inference

Mâturîdî presents eight key arguments for why rational inference is an essential component of knowledge acquisition (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.13-15). The first argument is that rational inference is necessary for correcting errors in sensory and reported knowledge. Sensory perception is sometimes misleading, as seen in cases like optical illusions. Reported knowledge, especially *wâhid khabar* (solitary reports), requires verification. Rational analysis is necessary to discern truth from falsehood (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.14). The second argument is that rational inference is required for understanding the unseen (*al-*

ghayb). Certain realities, such as God's existence, the afterlife, and metaphysical truths, cannot be directly perceived through the senses. Instead, they must be logically inferred from observable phenomena (Te'vîlâtü'l Kur'an, p.328-329). The third argument is that the Qur'an itself commands rational reflection. Mâturîdî emphasizes that the Qur'an urges believers to engage in rational contemplation (*nazar*), as seen in verses such as: "Do they not reflect within themselves?" (Qur'an 30:8) and "Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth... are signs for people of understanding." (Qur'an 3:190). These verses demonstrate that rational inquiry is divinely mandated (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.13). The fourth argument is that rational inference is necessary for resolving contradictions. Rational inference enables scholars to reconcile apparent contradictions in sensory or reported knowledge. Without reason, theological and philosophical disputes would remain unresolved (Mâtürîdî'nin Düşünce Dünyası, Düzgün, p.186). The fifth argument is that rational inference is required for proving the existence of God. One of the primary functions of rational inference in Mâturîdî's epistemology is demonstrating the existence of a Creator. He employs a cosmological argument: "If a house implies a builder and an inscription implies a writer, then surely the intricate order of the universe implies a Creator." (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.9). This reasoning mirrors Aristotelian and Islamic philosophical traditions, reinforcing the role of rationalism in theology (Mâtürîdî'de Bilgi Problemi, Özcan, p.96). The sixth argument is that rational inference is necessary for distinguishing between truth and falsehood. Ethical, legal, and theological distinctions depend on rational judgment. Mâturîdî asserts that reason is indispensable in identifying justice, moral responsibility, and religious obligations (İmam Mâtürîdî ve Mâturîdîlik, Kutlu, p.192). The seventh argument is that rational inference is essential for understanding free will and moral responsibility. Mâturîdî's epistemology directly influences his understanding of human agency and free will. Since divine revelation addresses humans as rational agents, rational inference is required for moral decision-making (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.15). The eighth and final argument is that the necessity of inquiry makes rational inference unavoidable. In cases of uncertainty, knowledge is attained through systematic reasoning. The absence of rational analysis leads to ignorance and false beliefs (Mâtürîdî'de Bilgi Problemi, Özcan, p.101). By emphasizing these eight principles, Mâturîdî underscores that intellectual reflection is not optional but obligatory in Islamic theology.

1.4.2. Mâturîdî's Use of Reductio ad Absurdum (*Abese İrca*)

Mâturîdî frequently employs Reductio ad Absurdum (*abese irca*), a logical technique where an argument is assumed to be true, only to reveal that it leads to contradiction or absurdity. This method, used extensively by Aristotle, is a powerful tool in Mâturîdî's refutation of theological opponents (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.10). Mâturîdî applies this method to refute skeptics who deny the reliability of the senses. He argues that if someone claims that sensory knowledge is unreliable, they must explain how they arrived at this conclusion. If they arrived at it through sensory experience, they contradict themselves. If they arrived at it through reason, their reason is based on sensory experience, again contradicting themselves. This demonstrates that denying sensory perception is self-refuting (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.10). He also uses this method to defend the necessity of reported knowledge. If someone claims that reported knowledge is unreliable, they must explain how they know their own name, lineage, or historical events, all of which are based on *khabar*. Rejecting all reports would be impractical and self-defeating (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.10).

Mâturîdî further applies Reductio ad Absurdum to prove that the universe is not eternal. If the universe were eternal, infinite time must have passed before now. However, an actual infinity cannot be traversed, meaning we could never arrive at the present moment. Therefore, the universe must have a beginning (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.22). This argument closely resembles classical kalām cosmology, reinforcing Mâturîdî's theological rationalism.

Mâturîdî's epistemology is remarkably systematic, integrating sensory perception, reported knowledge, and rational inference into a cohesive framework. His approach ensures that sensory perception provides empirical data but requires rational validation, reported knowledge preserves historical and religious truths but must be critically assessed, and rational inference acts as the ultimate tool for analyzing, verifying, and synthesizing knowledge.

By emphasizing intellectual inquiry, Mâturîdî not only defends Islamic theological principles but also contributes to broader philosophical and epistemological debates. His reliance on logical reasoning, empirical observation, and transmitted knowledge makes his epistemology highly relevant in contemporary discussions on faith, reason, and knowledge (Mâtürîdî'de Bilgi Problemi, Özcan, p.125). In the following section, we will explore how Mâturîdî applies his epistemological framework to the proof of divine existence and the contingency of the universe.

2. The Proof of Divine Existence and the Contingency of the Universe in Mâturîdî's Epistemology

In Mâturîdî's theological framework, the proof of divine existence is inextricably linked to his epistemological model. His approach relies on a combination of sensory perception (*ḥiss*), reported knowledge (*khabar*), and rational inference (*istidlāl*). Through this tripartite epistemology, he constructs a systematic argument for the existence of God, demonstrating that the universe is contingent (*ḥādith*) and therefore necessitates a creator. Unlike strict fideists who rely solely on scriptural texts or empiricists who restrict knowledge to sensory data, Mâturîdî emphasizes that rational inquiry is the ultimate means of validating theological claims. He critiques both those who deny the role of reason and those who reject religious testimony, advocating instead for a balanced methodology in which divine revelation and rational analysis complement each other (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.13).

This section explores how Mâturîdî employs his epistemological framework to establish the contingency of the universe and thereby prove the necessity of a creator.

2.1. The Contingency of the Universe: Rational, Sensory, and Reported Proofs

Mâturîdî presents multiple arguments to demonstrate that the universe is contingent and therefore must have been brought into existence by a creator. These arguments can be categorized into three epistemological sources: sensory observation, reported knowledge, and rational inference.

Mâturîdî asserts that sensory perception provides clear evidence of change and impermanence in the universe. He observes that all material objects undergo transformation—they come into existence, change form, and eventually perish. The human body ages, the seasons change, and physical matter deteriorates. These sensory observations indicate that nothing in the universe is eternal; rather, everything is subject to temporal limitations (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.21).

He further argues that if something is subject to change, it cannot be eternal. Change implies contingency, and contingent beings must have a cause. Since every observed entity is contingent, the universe itself must also be contingent. This argument, based on direct sensory experience, serves as an empirical foundation for his theological claims (Mâtürîdî'de Bilgi Problemi, Özcan, p.126).

Moreover, Mâturîdî critiques those who claim that the universe is eternal. He argues that if the universe had always existed, we would not observe the cycles of birth, decay, and regeneration. Instead, everything would remain in a state of permanence, which contradicts our sensory experience (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.22).

2.1.1. Reported Knowledge as Evidence of Contingency

Mâturîdî incorporates *khabar* (reported knowledge) as an essential epistemological tool for understanding the universe's contingency. He argues that religious texts, particularly the Qur'an, affirm the created nature of the cosmos. Verses such as *"God is the Creator of all things"* (Qur'an 39:62) and *"Do they not see that We have created the heavens and the earth?"* (Qur'an 50:6) provide authoritative testimony to the fact that the universe has a beginning and is therefore contingent (Te'vîlâtü'l Kur'an, p.328-329).

Additionally, Mâturîdî points to historical knowledge as evidence for contingency. Human civilizations document the rise and fall of empires, the destruction of once-thriving societies, and the transient nature of human existence. These historical records, passed down through generations, further reinforce the idea that nothing in the world is permanent, supporting the argument that the universe itself is *ḥādith* (İmam Mâtürîdî ve Mâturîdîlik, Kutlu, p.189).

2.1.2. Rational Inference and the Necessity of a First Cause

While sensory and reported knowledge establish the contingency of the universe, Mâturîdî relies on rational inference to conclude that a necessary being (*wājib al-wujūd*) must exist. His reasoning follows a classical kalām cosmological structure:

1. Everything we observe is contingent and subject to change.

2. Contingent things require a cause for their existence.

3. An infinite regress of causes is impossible because it would mean that no first cause exists, which contradicts the reality of existence.

4. Therefore, there must be a necessary being that is uncaused and eternal—this is God (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.9).

Mâturîdî argues that rejecting the necessity of a first cause leads to logical absurdities. If the universe had no beginning, then an infinite amount of time must have passed before the present moment. However, traversing an actual infinity is impossible, meaning we would never arrive at the present. Since we do exist in

the present, the universe must have had a finite beginning, necessitating a creator (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.22).

This line of reasoning aligns closely with Aristotelian and Islamic philosophical traditions, particularly those of al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā, who similarly argue for a necessary being as the ultimate cause of existence. However, Mâturîdî's distinct contribution is his integration of this rational framework within an Islamic theological context, ensuring that divine revelation and rational inquiry work in harmony (Mâtürîdî'de Bilgi Problemi, Özcan, p.96).

3. Refutation of Opposing Views on the Eternity of the Universe

Mâturîdî systematically refutes the arguments of those who claim that the universe is eternal. He specifically critiques two groups (philosophers and dualists). Some Islamic and Greek philosophers, including Aristotle and certain Neoplatonists, argued that the universe is eternal and uncreated. They posited that matter has always existed and is merely shaped and influenced by an external agent. Mâturîdî rejects this view, arguing that if matter were eternal, it would possess the qualities of a necessary being—it would be self-sufficient, uncaused, and immutable. However, as demonstrated through sensory experience, matter is always in flux and subject to external influences, proving its contingency (İmâm Mâturîdî'nin Âlemin Ontolojik Yapısı Hakkında Filozofları Eleştirisi, Uluç, p.57-58). Furthermore, Mâturîdî contends that if matter were eternal, it would not require a creator, contradicting the Qur'anic assertion that God is the sole creator. This theological inconsistency, he argues, invalidates the philosophers' position (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.27).

Mâturîdî also challenges the dualists (*Seneviyye*), who claim that the universe was created by two opposing forces: one representing good and the other representing evil. He argues that this belief contradicts the principle of divine unity (*tawḥīd*). If two ultimate forces existed, they would either be independent (leading to a logical contradiction) or one would be subordinate to the other, proving the superiority of the true creator (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.115). Moreover, he applies Reductio ad Absurdum (*abese irca*) to expose the flaws in dualistic cosmology. If two equal and opposing creators existed, their wills would inevitably conflict, resulting in cosmic disorder. However, the observed harmony and order in the universe indicate that a single, supreme creator governs existence (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.114) Mâturîdî's proof of divine existence is built upon a rigorous epistemological foundation. By integrating sensory perception, reported knowledge, and rational inference, he constructs a comprehensive argument that demonstrates the contingency of the universe and the necessity of

a creator. His rejection of philosophical eternalism and theological dualism reinforces his commitment to *tawḥīd* while affirming the legitimacy of reason in Islamic theology. This synthesis of revelation and rationalism ensures that Mâturîdî's theological system remains both intellectually robust and theologically sound.

4. The Role of Epistemology in Mâturîdî's Theological Anthropology

Mâturîdî's epistemology extends beyond cosmology and the proof of divine existence; it also plays a critical role in his understanding of human nature, free will, and divine justice. His tripartite epistemological framework—sensory perception (*ḥiss*), reported knowledge (*khabar*), and rational inference (*istidlāl*)—shapes his views on human cognition, moral responsibility, and the relationship between divine omniscience and human agency.

In this section, we will explore how Mâturîdî applies his epistemological principles to theological anthropology, addressing key issues such as the nature of human knowledge, the balance between reason and revelation, and the implications of divine knowledge for free will.

Mâturîdî holds that human beings are equipped with innate faculties that enable them to acquire knowledge. He identifies three primary sources of knowledge: sensory experience, rational reflection, and transmitted reports. These sources, when used correctly, allow humans to distinguish between truth and falsehood, thereby making moral and theological discernment possible (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.9).

Mâturîdî asserts that sensory perception serves as the initial stage of human knowledge. Through sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell, humans gather empirical data about the external world. However, he cautions that sensory perception alone is insufficient for attaining comprehensive knowledge. Sensory data must be processed and interpreted by reason to yield meaningful conclusions (Mâtürîdî'de Bilgi Problemi, Özcan, p.126). Furthermore, he critiques skeptics who deny the reliability of sensory perception. He argues that while sensory organs can sometimes be deceived, this does not invalidate their overall reliability. Rather, it necessitates the use of rational scrutiny to verify and contextualize sensory information (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.10). For Mâturîdî, reason (*ʿaql*) is the faculty that allows humans to make sense of the world. He views it as a divine gift that enables individuals to engage in critical thinking, discern patterns, and recognize moral and theological truths. Unlike some theological schools that place strict limitations on reason, Mâturîdî assigns

it a central role in knowledge acquisition (İmam Mâturîdī ve Mâturîdīlik, Kutlu, p.192). One of the primary functions of reason is *istidlāl*, or logical inference. Mâturîdî employs *istidlāl* to argue for the existence of God, the created nature of the universe, and the necessity of divine revelation. He also uses *reductio ad absurdum* (*abese irca*) to refute philosophical and theological positions that contradict rational principles (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.14). Mâturîdî's confidence in reason is evident in his critique of fideists who reject rational inquiry. He contends that blind reliance on scriptural texts without rational engagement leads to misinterpretation and theological errors. Instead, he advocates for a harmonious integration of reason and revelation (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.13).

4.1. The Significance of Reported Knowledge

While sensory perception and rational inference provide direct knowledge, Mâturîdî acknowledges that many truths—especially historical and religious ones—are known through reported knowledge (*khabar*). He classifies *khabar* into two main categories:

- **Mutawâtir reports** (*khabar al-Mutawâtir*): These are widely transmitted reports with multiple independent chains of transmission, making them highly reliable. Examples include widely known historical facts and universally accepted religious teachings (Mâturîdî'de Bilgi Problemi, Özcan, p.91-92).

- **Solitary reports** (*khabar al-wâhid*): These are reports transmitted by a single or limited number of sources. Mâturîdî argues that solitary reports require critical scrutiny and cannot be accepted unconditionally, especially in matters of theology (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.12).

By incorporating *khabar* into his epistemological framework, Mâturîdî ensures that human knowledge is not limited to personal experience or abstract reasoning. Instead, it also includes the collective wisdom of previous generations, preserved through historical and religious texts.

5. The Relationship Between Divine Knowledge and Human Free Will

One of the most complex theological issues in Islamic thought is the relationship between divine omniscience and human free will. If God possesses complete foreknowledge of human actions, does this imply that humans lack genuine free will? Mâturîdî addresses this issue by distinguishing between divine knowledge and divine determinism. Mâturîdî affirms that God's knowledge is absolute and encompasses all past, present, and future events. However, he argues

that divine knowledge does not negate human free will. Rather, God's knowledge is analogous to an observer who sees a traveler approaching a fork in the road. The observer knows which path the traveler will take, but this knowledge does not compel the traveler's choice (İmâm Māturîdî'nin Âlemin Ontolojik Yapısı Hakkında Filozofları Eleştirisi, Uluç, p.60). This analogy illustrates that God's foreknowledge is not causative. Humans act freely within the framework of divine knowledge, meaning that moral responsibility remains intact (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.26).

Mâturîdî strongly opposes fatalism (*jabr*), the belief that human actions are entirely predetermined by God. He argues that if humans lacked free will, divine justice would be meaningless. Reward and punishment would become arbitrary, as individuals would have no real agency in their actions (Mâturîdî'de Bilgi Problemi, Özcan, p.101). Instead, Mâturîdî advocates for a middle position: while God creates the conditions for human action, individuals have the capacity to make choices. This position, known as *kasb* (acquisition), maintains that human beings "acquire" their actions through their intentions and choices, even though the ultimate power of creation remains with God (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.27).

5.1. Moral Responsibility and the Role of Knowledge in Ethical Decision-Making

Mâturîdî argues that moral responsibility is contingent upon knowledge. Individuals are accountable for their actions only to the extent that they have access to the necessary information. He categorizes moral knowledge into two types:

- **Innate moral knowledge** (*fiṭrī maʿrifa*): Basic ethical principles, such as justice and compassion, are embedded within human nature. These principles can be discerned through reason and are universally applicable (İmâm Māturîdî'nin Âlemin Ontolojik Yapısı Hakkında Filozofları Eleştirisi, Uluç, p.76).

- **Revealed moral knowledge** (*sharʿī maʿrifa*): Divine revelation provides specific guidance on moral and legal matters. While reason can discern general moral truths, revelation clarifies details that human intellect alone may not grasp (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.25).

Mâturîdî insists that ignorance is not always an excuse for wrongdoing. Individuals have a duty to seek knowledge, and willful negligence in acquiring

moral and theological understanding constitutes a form of ethical failure (Mâturîdî'de Bilgi Problemi, Özcan, p.96).

Mâturîdî's theological anthropology is deeply rooted in his epistemology. By integrating sensory perception, rational inference, and reported knowledge, he constructs a comprehensive framework for understanding human cognition, moral responsibility, and free will. His rejection of fatalism and his emphasis on the necessity of knowledge in ethical decision-making reinforce the idea that human beings are active participants in their moral and theological development. This synthesis of epistemology and theology ensures that Mâturîdî's system remains both intellectually rigorous and theologically coherent.

6. The Epistemological Foundations of Prophethood and Divine Revelation in Mâturîdî's Thought

Mâturîdî's epistemological framework not only informs his perspectives on human cognition and moral responsibility but also serves as the foundation for his understanding of prophethood (*nubuwwa*) and divine revelation (*wahy*). In his system, revelation functions as both a complement to reason and an indispensable source of knowledge that transcends human limitations. While reason can discern fundamental truths about God and morality, divine revelation provides authoritative guidance on matters beyond the scope of human intellect.

In this section, we will examine Mâturîdî's justification for prophethood, the necessity of revelation in the acquisition of knowledge, and his responses to objections raised by skeptics regarding the authenticity of divine messages.

6.1. The Rational Necessity of Prophethood

Mâturîdî argues that prophethood is a rational necessity for ensuring human guidance. He maintains that although reason can recognize the existence of God and the distinction between good and evil, it is insufficient for providing a complete moral and legal system. Human intellect, due to its inherent limitations, is prone to error and subjective bias. Therefore, divine guidance is required to establish objective moral and theological truths (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.328).

6.1.1 The Deficiencies of Pure Rationalism

Mâturîdî critiques the view that reason alone is sufficient for moral and theological knowledge. He points out several deficiencies in relying solely on rational inquiry:

- **Disagreement among thinkers**: If reason were entirely sufficient, philosophers and theologians would reach unanimous conclusions regarding theological and ethical matters. However, history demonstrates that human intellect often leads to conflicting interpretations (İmâm Māturîdî ve Māturîdîlik, Kutlu, p.192).

- **The variability of human judgment**: Moral and legal standards derived solely from human reasoning are subject to change based on cultural and historical contexts. Revelation, in contrast, provides an unchanging standard (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.13).

- **The limits of empirical knowledge**: While sensory perception and inference allow humans to understand aspects of the material world, they are inadequate for comprehending the metaphysical realm, including divine attributes and the afterlife (Mâturîdî'de Bilgi Problemi, Özcan, p.125).

For these reasons, Mâturîdî contends that divine revelation is necessary to provide definitive knowledge that reason alone cannot attain.

6.1.2 The Role of Prophets as Divine Instructors

According to Mâturîdî, prophets serve as intermediaries between God and humanity, delivering knowledge that would otherwise remain inaccessible. Their role is not to negate reason but to guide it towards correct conclusions. He likens prophethood to a teacher-student relationship, where the prophet instructs individuals in matters that exceed their independent intellectual capacity (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.329).

He further argues that prophets are essential for the practical implementation of divine laws. Without authoritative messengers, religious and ethical teachings would be left to individual interpretation, leading to confusion and misapplication (İmâm Māturîdî'nin Âlemin Ontolojik Yapısı Hakkında Filozofları Eleştirisi, Uluç, p.60).

6.2. The Epistemological Basis for the Authenticity of Revelation

Mâturîdî recognizes that skeptics may question the authenticity of divine revelation. In response, he provides a structured defense of prophetic truthfulness, based on rational and empirical considerations.

6.2.1 The Concept of Miracles as Epistemic Proofs

Mâturîdî asserts that prophets are distinguished by their ability to perform miracles (*mu'jizāt*), which serve as signs of their divine mission. A miracle, by definition, is an extraordinary event that cannot be replicated by ordinary means and occurs in direct response to a prophet's claim of revelation (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.11).

He outlines several conditions for a valid miracle:

- **It must be beyond human capability**: A true miracle cannot be imitated by magicians or scientists (Mâturîdî'de Bilgi Problemi, Özcan, p.96).

- **It must be consistent with divine wisdom**: Miracles are not arbitrary occurrences; they are designed to validate a prophet's truthfulness (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.13).

- **It must be publicly observable**: A miracle's authenticity is reinforced by widespread testimony and historical continuity (İmâm Māturîdî ve Māturîdîlik, Kutlu, p.192).

Mâturîdî compares the acceptance of prophetic miracles to the epistemic justification for historical events. Just as people believe in past events based on consistent historical reports (*Mutawâtir khabar*), they should accept prophetic claims substantiated by widely attested miracles (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.328).

6.2.2 The Rational Consistency of Divine Revelation

Another key argument Mâturîdî employs in defense of revelation is its rational coherence. He maintains that true divine revelation cannot contain contradictions or irrational teachings. If a supposed revelation included inconsistencies or ethical absurdities, it would undermine its claim to divine origin (İmâm Māturîdî'nin Âlemin Ontolojik Yapısı Hakkında Filozofları Eleştirisi, Uluç, p.76). To reinforce this point, Mâturîdî distinguishes between authentic revelation and false prophetic claims:

- **False prophets lack consistency**: Their teachings are often self-contradictory or change over time (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.12).

- **False prophets pursue personal gain**: Many false claimants to prophethood seek wealth or political power, whereas true prophets exhibit selflessness and moral integrity (Mâturîdî'de Bilgi Problemi, Özcan, p.101).

By applying these criteria, Mâturîdî argues that the authenticity of revelation can be rationally demonstrated.

6.3. The Necessity of Revelation for Theological and Ethical Guidance

Mâturîdî's epistemology establishes divine revelation as the ultimate source of guidance in theological and moral matters. While human reason is capable of recognizing basic moral principles, revelation provides essential details that reason alone cannot ascertain.

6.3.1 Theological Knowledge Beyond Human Reason

Mâturîdî argues that certain theological doctrines, such as the nature of divine attributes and the specifics of the afterlife, can only be known through revelation. Although reason can infer the existence of God and His attributes, it cannot provide detailed knowledge about the unseen realm (*ghayb*) (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.25). Furthermore, he emphasizes that revelation clarifies misconceptions that arise from speculative theology. He critiques philosophers who rely solely on reason to define divine attributes, arguing that such attempts often lead to errors and contradictions (İmâm Māturîdî ve Māturîdîlik, Kutlu, p.192).

6.3.2 The Role of Revelation in Ethical Decision-Making

In Mâturîdî's framework, revelation is also necessary for resolving ethical dilemmas. He distinguishes between:

- **Universal moral principles**, which can be recognized by reason (e.g., justice, honesty).

- **Specific legal and ethical injunctions**, which require divine legislation (e.g., religious rituals, dietary laws).

Without revelation, ethical norms would be subject to human interpretation, leading to inconsistency and moral relativism (Mâturîdî'de Bilgi Problemi, Özcan, p.96). Mâturîdî's epistemology culminates in the assertion that divine revelation is essential for human knowledge. While reason and empirical observation serve as valuable tools for acquiring truth, they are ultimately limited. Prophets function as divine instructors, guiding humanity toward knowledge that reason alone cannot attain.

His structured defense of revelation—through rational necessity, the epistemic function of miracles, and the coherence of divine teachings—demonstrates his commitment to integrating reason and faith. By positioning revelation as the

completion rather than the negation of human intellect, Mâturîdî offers a comprehensive and rationally justified account of divine guidance.

The Interplay Between Mâturîdî's Epistemology and Competing Philosophical Traditions

Mâturîdî's epistemology was formulated within a diverse intellectual landscape that included Muʻtazilite rationalism, Aristotelian philosophy, and other theological currents such as the dualistic perspectives of the Seneviyye. His engagement with these traditions was both critical and constructive, as he sought to integrate reason with revelation while maintaining the primacy of Islamic doctrine.

This section will explore how Mâturîdî's epistemological approach positions itself in response to alternative frameworks, particularly in relation to Muʻtazilite thought, Aristotelian logic, and the theological implications of dualism.

7.1. Mâturîdî's Epistemology in Contrast to Muʻtazilite Rationalism: The Limits of Rational Autonomy

The Muʻtazilites, known for their emphasis on reason (*'aql*) as the primary source of knowledge, developed a rationalistic theological system that often placed reason above revelation. While Mâturîdî shared their commitment to rational inquiry, he diverged significantly in his epistemological priorities.

Mâturîdî acknowledged the importance of reason in religious and ethical matters, yet he argued that reason alone could not serve as the ultimate epistemic authority. He critiques the Muʻtazilite assertion that moral and theological truths can be fully discerned through unaided human intellect.

His objections can be summarized as follows:

- **The contingency of human reasoning**: Mâturîdî argues that human intellect is shaped by individual experiences, biases, and limitations, making it unreliable as an absolute source of knowledge (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.192).

- **The necessity of divine legislation**: Ethical obligations, such as the details of worship and religious law, cannot be derived solely from reason. Revelation serves as the definitive guide where reason alone proves insufficient (İmâm Māturîdî ve Mâturîdîlik, Kutlu, p.328).

- **The epistemic role of prophecy**: Unlike the Muʻtazilites, who viewed revelation primarily as a reinforcement of rational principles, Mâturîdî

contends that prophetic knowledge transcends reason by addressing metaphysical realities inaccessible to human cognition (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.13).

Through these arguments, Mâturîdî presents an epistemology that respects reason's capacity but emphasizes its complementarity with divine revelation.

7.1.1. The Mu'tazilite Interpretation of Divine Justice and Its Epistemic Implications

A central tenet of Mu'tazilite thought is the principle of divine justice (*'adl*), which asserts that God's actions must conform to rational standards of justice. This belief led them to claim that moral truths are knowable through reason independently of revelation.

Mâturîdî challenges this view by asserting that:

- **Human conceptions of justice are inherently limited**: What appears just from a human perspective may not align with the divine order, as God's knowledge surpasses human understanding (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.25).

- **Revelation provides the ultimate moral framework**: While reason can recognize basic ethical principles, divine law determines their specific applications (Mâturîdî'de Bilgi Problemi, Özcan, p.101).

By critiquing the Mu'tazilite reliance on reason in defining justice, Mâturîdî reinforces the necessity of revelation in moral epistemology.

7.2. Engagement with Aristotelian Epistemology and Logic

Aristotelian philosophy exerted a profound influence on Islamic intellectual traditions, particularly in the areas of logic and metaphysics. Mâturîdî, while engaging with Aristotelian principles, remained cautious of their implications for theology.

7.2.1 The Use of Syllogistic Reasoning

Aristotle's syllogistic method was widely adopted by Islamic philosophers as a tool for logical analysis. Mâturîdî employs aspects of this methodology, particularly in his use of *reductio ad absurdum* (*abese irca*), a form of argumentation that refutes an opponent's position by demonstrating its logical contradictions (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.14).

However, he critiques the overreliance on formal logic in theological discourse for the following reasons:

- **Logical structures cannot determine theological truths**: While syllogisms can clarify reasoning, they do not independently verify the authenticity of revelation (İmâm Mâturîdî'nin Âlemin Ontolojik Yapısı Hakkında Filozofları Eleştirisi, Uluç, p.76).

- **Divine knowledge transcends human categories**: Aristotelian logic assumes that all knowledge conforms to human cognitive structures, whereas Mâturîdî argues that divine realities exceed human conceptualization (Mâturîdî'de Bilgi Problemi, Özcan, p.96).

By selectively utilizing Aristotelian reasoning while rejecting its epistemic primacy, Mâturîdî demonstrates a balanced approach that integrates rational methodology with theological integrity.

7.2.2 The Rejection of Eternal Matter and the Doctrine of Huduth

A fundamental point of divergence between Mâturîdî and Aristotelian metaphysics is the concept of *huduth* (origination). Aristotelian thought posits that matter is eternal, whereas Mâturîdî insists on the creation of all things by a transcendent God.

His refutation of the eternity of matter is based on:

- **The dependency of all existence on a creator**: Anything that undergoes change or has a contingent nature cannot be self-existent (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.22).

- **The necessity of a first cause**: If matter were eternal, it would require an independent existence, contradicting the principle that all contingent beings depend on a necessary being (İmâm Mâturîdî ve Mâturîdîlik, Kutlu, p.329).

Mâturîdî's critique of Aristotelian metaphysics aligns with his broader theological commitment to divine omnipotence.

7.3. Theological Responses to Dualism and Seneviyye Thought

Dualistic traditions, such as those represented by the Seneviyye, proposed a cosmos governed by two opposing forces—one of good and one of evil. Mâturîdî strongly opposes this view, arguing that it contradicts the fundamental tenets of Islamic monotheism (*tawhid*).

7.3.1 The Rejection of Cosmic Dualism

Mâturîdî's refutation of dualism rests on the following premises:

- **The unity of divine will**: If two independent forces governed the universe, it would result in conflict and disorder, contradicting the observable harmony of creation (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.114).

- **The dependency of all beings on a single creator**: The existence of multiple eternal entities would negate divine self-sufficiency, leading to logical inconsistencies (İmâm Mâturîdî'nin Âlemin Ontolojik Yapısı Hakkında Filozofları Eleştirisi, Uluç, p.58).

Mâturîdî extends his critique of dualism to its ethical consequences. He argues that:

- **Evil does not require an independent source**: Unlike the Seneviyye, who attribute evil to a separate cosmic force, Mâturîdî contends that evil arises from human free will and divine wisdom (Kitâbü't-Tevhîd, Mâturîdî, p.214).

- **Moral responsibility requires monotheism**: The existence of two opposing deities would undermine human moral agency by creating conflicting sources of obligation (Mâturîdî'de Bilgi Problemi, Özcan, p.109).

By rejecting dualism on both theological and ethical grounds, Mâturîdî reinforces his commitment to a unified and coherent theistic worldview. Mâturîdî's engagement with competing philosophical traditions highlights his sophisticated approach to epistemology. While he acknowledges the value of reason and logical analysis, he firmly establishes divine revelation as the ultimate source of knowledge.

By critiquing Mu'tazilite rationalism, Aristotelian metaphysics, and dualistic theology, Mâturîdî presents a balanced epistemology that harmonizes intellect with faith. His method reflects a commitment to theological coherence while engaging critically with the intellectual currents of his time.

Conclusion

Mâturîdî's epistemology presents a comprehensive and systematic framework for understanding knowledge in Islamic thought, emphasizing three fundamental sources: reason (ʿaql), sensory perception (ḥiss), and transmitted reports (khabar). His theory of knowledge is deeply rooted in the theological tradition of

kalām and has significantly influenced Islamic jurisprudence, ethics, and theology, forming the intellectual foundation of the Ḥanafī-Mâturîdî school.

One of the most distinguishing aspects of Mâturîdî's epistemology is his balanced approach to reason and revelation. While he acknowledges the importance of sensory perception in acquiring knowledge, he argues that human senses alone are not sufficient to attain complete understanding. Reports, particularly divine revelation conveyed through prophets, serve as a crucial source of knowledge, providing access to truths beyond sensory experience. However, it is reason that critically evaluates and interprets these sources. Mâturîdî thus positions himself between the rationalist Muʿtazilites, who place primary emphasis on reason, and the traditionalist Salafī scholars, who prioritize transmitted knowledge. His approach integrates rational inquiry with theological doctrines, ensuring that reason operates within the boundaries of divine guidance.

Mâturîdî's theory of knowledge also extends to legal and ethical reasoning. His emphasis on rational analysis aligns with the Ḥanafī principles of *istiḥsān* (juridical preference) and *qiyās* (analogical reasoning), both of which reflect the necessity of critical thinking in Islamic jurisprudence. However, he does not regard reason as an absolute authority; rather, he argues that rational inquiry must be grounded in divine revelation to ensure that legal interpretations remain consistent with Islamic principles. This methodological balance allows Islamic law to adapt to changing circumstances while maintaining theological coherence.

In moral philosophy, Mâturîdî argues that human intellect possesses an innate capacity to distinguish between right and wrong. He asserts that ethical principles are not entirely dependent on revelation, as reason can independently recognize moral truths. However, he maintains that divine revelation is essential for reinforcing and properly contextualizing these ethical judgments. By doing so, Mâturîdî provides a framework that acknowledges the role of human intellect in moral decision-making while ensuring that divine guidance remains central to ethical discourse.

Mâturîdî's epistemological approach also has broader implications for the Islamic understanding of existence and the nature of divine knowledge. His arguments regarding the createdness (*ḥudūth*) of the universe rely on both rational and scriptural evidence, demonstrating that empirical observation, reason, and divine revelation work together in affirming theological truths. His rejection of the atomistic theories of certain earlier theologians further highlights his commitment to a rational and systematic approach to understanding reality.

In conclusion, Mâturîdî's theory of knowledge offers a well-structured and integrative model in Islamic thought, illustrating the complementary relationship between reason and revelation. His epistemology remains relevant in contemporary debates on Islamic jurisprudence, ethics, and philosophy, providing a framework that bridges the gap between rational inquiry and religious belief. By emphasizing the necessity of critical thinking alongside divine guidance, Mâturîdî's epistemological contributions continue to shape intellectual discourse in the Muslim world.

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CHAPTER 5

Investigating the Link Between Economic Freedom and Logistic Performance By Panel Quantile Regression: Evidence From the MINT Countries

Uğur Sevinç[1] & Feyza Arıca[2]

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[1] Master's Degree Student, COMU, Graduate Education Institute, Çanakkale, Türkiye.
[2] Prof. Dr. COMU, Biga Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Department of Economics, Çanakkale, Türkiye.

1. Introduction

Logistics can be described as the management of a product's journey from raw materials to its final form, ready for consumption. Another perspective defines logistics as the process of transporting goods in full, without damage, on schedule, and at minimal cost. Logistics companies are responsible for various operations related to transportation, including procurement, storage, handling, packaging, and customs procedures.

The expansion of international trade and increasing competition directly influence the profitability of logistics firms. Effective logistics operations enhance profit margins, boost competitiveness, and improve customer satisfaction (Bozkurt & Mermertaş, 2019).

The efficiency of transportation systems and the profitability of the logistics industry are interdependent. Key factors such as minimizing inventory levels, achieving high turnover rates, quickly adapting to fluctuating demand, reducing lead times, and lowering transportation costs significantly impact a company's competitive edge. Consequently, transportation systems—including road, rail, air, and multimodal transport—are considered both a production factor and a critical determinant of overall production efficiency (Ojala & Çelebi, 2015).

The Logistics Performance Index (LPI) is a measurement tool co-developed by the World Bank and the International Trade Center (ITC) to assess various dimensions of a country's or region's logistics industry. It measures factors such as logistics infrastructure, operational efficiency, customs procedures, transportation security, traceability, and delivery reliability. The LPI is widely used to compare logistics capabilities globally and assess how effectively a country performs in this sector.

The Logistics Performance Index (LPI) consists of six core components:

Customs Clearance Efficiency: The speed and effectiveness of customs procedures.

Logistics Infrastructure: The quality of transportation, warehousing, and communication networks.

International Transport Services: The reliability and efficiency of sea, air, and land transport.

Competence of Logistics Professionals: The expertise and skill levels of individuals working in the logistics industry.

Tracking and Traceability: The ability to monitor and trace shipments throughout the supply chain.

On-Time Delivery: The percentage of shipments arriving as scheduled.

These six elements collectively determine a country's overall logistics performance. The logistic performance serves as a key tool for evaluating global logistics competitiveness, improving logistics infrastructure, and identifying areas for sectoral development (WB, LPI Index Report, 2023). When calculating the LPI, countries are rated based on these six dimensions (Bayraktutan & Özbilen, 2015).

Economic freedoms have influenced economic growth and development in a manner similar to the Logistics Performance Index. The notion of freedom is not limited to regulations on social and political rights; it also includes economic, political, and civil liberties, all of which are crucial in shaping institutions. Robust institutions serve as fundamental pillars for fostering economic growth and development. As Dawson (1998) states, institutions influence overall economic activity both indirectly through investment and directly by impacting total factor productivity.

According to Lau and Lam (2002), economic freedom refers to the minimal involvement of the government in the production, consumption, and distribution of goods and services. They also highlight the importance of these activities occurring freely within a framework of government protection. Likewise, Gwartney and Lawson (2002) define the important components of economic freedom as personal choice, voluntary exchange, competitive markets, and the safeguarding of individual and property rights.

Economic freedom, initially regarded as an immeasurable concept, has become quantifiable over time, thanks to institutions such as Freedom House, the Fraser Institute, and the Heritage Foundation. Today, three internationally recognized indices are used to measure economic freedom. The first is the "Economic Freedom of the World (EFW)" index, developed by the Canadian-based Fraser Institute, an international non-governmental organization. The second is the "Index of Economic Freedom," published by the US-based Heritage Foundation in collaboration with the Wall Street Journal. Additionally, Freedom House also contributes to the measurement of economic freedom (Acar, 2010).

In this study, Fraser Institute published economic freedom data based on the EFW Index published annually. Fraser Institute's index includes four elements. These are personal choice, market-organized trade activities, entering and

competing in new markets, security of persons and their property with the government guarantee.

2. Literature

The literature is evaluated in terms of studies on economic freedoms, logistics performance and economic growth.

In his research, Altıntaş (2021) examined the connection between economic freedom and logistics performance across 154 countries listed in the Heritage Institution's Economic Freedom Index and the Logistics Performance Index reports for 2018, employing Nonlinear Canonical Correlation Analysis. The findings revealed that countries with economic freedom tend to be logistics-friendly, whereas those lacking economic freedom are logistics-unfriendly. Additionally, nations that are classified as mostly free in terms of economic freedom exhibit stable logistics performance.

In their study in 2021, Kevser and Doğan analyzed logistic performance, economic growth and financial development data of 157 countries for the years 2010-2018 and concluded that there is a cointegration relationship between the variables.

In their study titled "The Relationship between Logistics Performance, Economic Growth and Financial Development in G-7 and E-7 Countries", Bardakçı et al. (2020) did not find any linkage between economic growth and logistics performance in E-7 countries, while they found a statistically insignificant linkage between the variables in G-7 countries.

Santiego et al. (2020) analyzed the effects of economic freedom and globalization on economic growth using panel data analysis, focusing on the economic freedom, globalization, and economic growth dimensions of 24 developing Latin American countries. The study found that economic freedom influences economic growth in the short and medium term, whereas the social and political aspects of globalization have a significant and positive impact on economic growth in the long run.

Bozma et al. (2017) investigated the relationship between logistic performance and economic growth with panel data analysis using data from 69 countries. The study concluded that there is a positive relationship between logistics performance and economic growth.

Witkowski (2017), with the data on the Industry 4.0 potentials of the USA, European Countries and China, emphasized that by providing activities that will affect the logistics performance of the innovation activities of these countries, it is easier for countries to be effective, effective and efficient in logistics performance compared to other countries.

Lean et al. (2014) suggested that there is a bidirectional causality relationship between logistics and economic growth.

Andrejic and Kilibarda (2014) for 10 countries in Central Europe measured the logistics efficiency performance for the years 2007, 2010, 2012 and 2014 with Data Envelopment Analysis. According to this analysis, the countries in only Hungary and Croatia were able to achieve logistics efficiency performance.

3. ECONOMETRIC ANALYSIS

3.1 Data and Econometric Model

The study examines the relationships between the Logistics Performance Index (LPI) and Economic Freedom Index (EFI) of the MINT countries using panel data techniques for the research period of 2007–2022. In the study, the following model 3.1 was estimated.

$$LPI_{i_{i,t}} = \varphi_i + \beta_i . EFI_{i,t} + u_{it} \qquad (3.1)$$

The definitions and sources of the variables used in the model are provided below.

Logistics Performance Index (LPI): The Logistics Performance Index reflects the logistics capabilities of countries by assessing various aspects of their logistics activities. It provides insights into customs regulations, logistics costs, and the quality of infrastructure used in different modes of transportation. The LPI is a rating system that evaluates countries' logistics performance across six key sub-dimensions, using a scale from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) based on survey responses. The data for the index are obtained from the LPI survey, performed by the World Bank.

Economic Freedom Index (EFI): A unified definition of economic freedom could be described as an environment where individuals make decisions based on their own free will, their property rights are safeguarded, market decisions are governed by the market mechanism, and there is freedom of market entry and competition. Data obtained from https://www.efotw.org/.

Table 1. Variable definitions and data sources

Variable	Variables Description	Definition	Source
LPI	**Logistics Performance Index**	Logistics performance index: The quality of logistics services (1=low to 5=high)	World Bank, **lpi.worldbank.org**
EFI	**Economic Freedom Index**	The index measures the degree of economic freedom present in five major areas: Size of Government; Legal System and Security of Property Rights; Sound Money; Freedom to Trade Internationally; Regulation.	Fraser Institute, https://www.efotw.org/

Figure 1 shows the individual time series of the variables used in the model for the MINT countries (Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Türkiye, respectively). Accordingly, it is seen that in countries 3 and 4, namely Nigeria and Turkey, logistics performance decreases in direct proportion to the downward trend in economic freedoms. For Mexico and Indonesia, the positive trend in economic freedoms coincides with the increase in logistics performance.

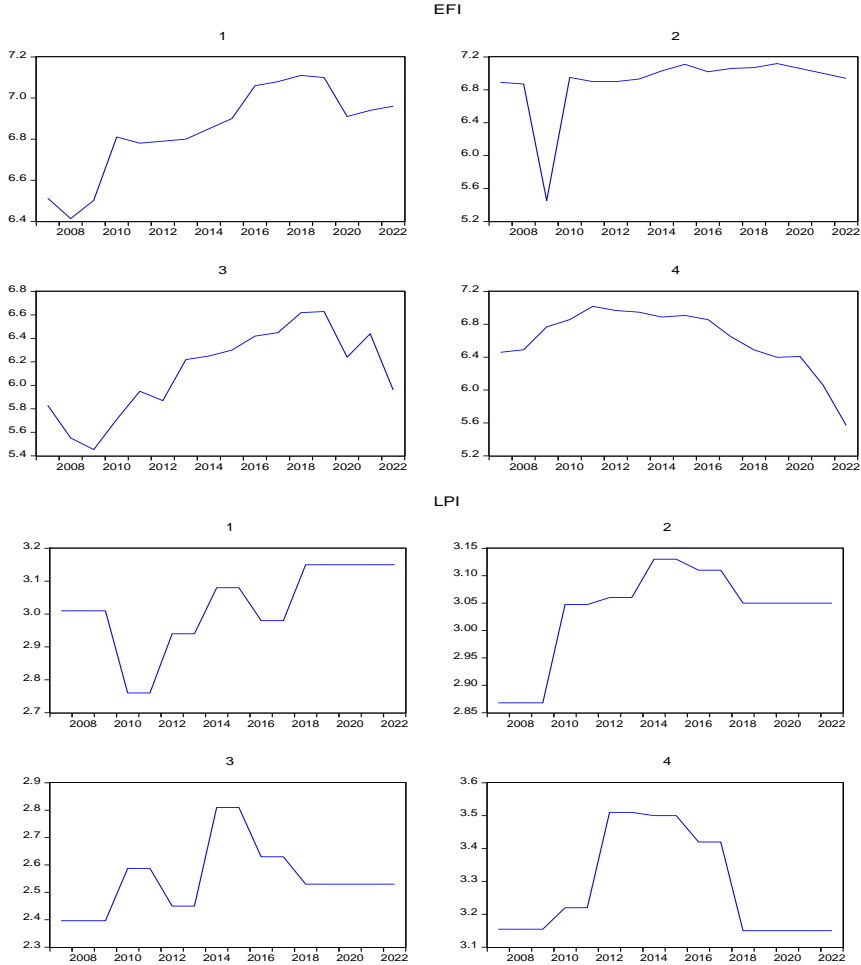**Figure 1.** Individual Time Series Graphs
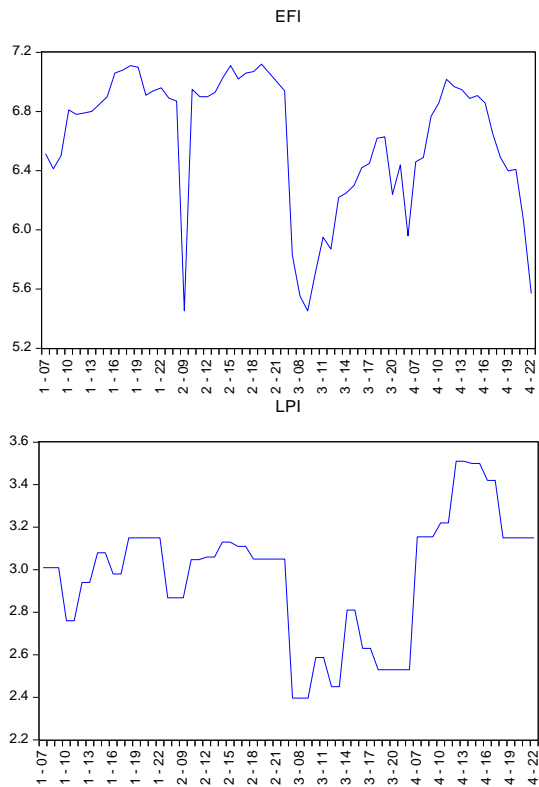
Figure 2. Time Series Graphs of the Variables

EFI

LPI

Table 2 shows the statistical properties of the LPI and EFI.

Table 2. Summary statistics

	LPI	EFI
Mean	2.971183	6.616281
Median	3.050000	6.805222
Maximum	3.510000	7.119741
Minimum	2.396312	5.453104
Std. Dev.	0.294743	0.459605
Observations	64	64

When the descriptive statistics of the LPI and EFI are examined for the MINT countries, the lowest value of the LPI variable is calculated as 2.39 and the highest value as 3.51; the mean is 2.97 and the median is 3.05. The presence of 64 observations for all variables indicates that the panel has a balanced data set.

Table 3. Correlation matrix

	LPI	EFI
LPI	1	0.6014
EFI	0.6014	1

According to the findings obtained from Table 3, it is observed that EFI has a slightly positive and strong relationship with LPI.

3.2. Methodology and Results

The study aims to analyze the relationship between the Logistics Performance Index (LPI) and the Economic Freedom Index (EFI) using the panel quantile regression method for MINT countries, a group identified for their potential to achieve rapid economic growth, over the period 2007–2022.

The quantile regression analysis method, introduced by Koenker and Bassett (1978), offers greater flexibility compared to the Ordinary Least Squares method. It was developed based on median regression to address difficulties that arise when the dependent variable follows an asymmetric distribution.

Koenker (2004) write the panel quantile regression in matrix form as,

$$y = X.B + Z\alpha + u.$$

Koenker (2004) propose the following model for the conditional quantile functions of the response of the jth observation on the ith individual y_{ij},

$$\theta_{y_{ij}}(\tau | x_{ij}) = \alpha_i + x'_{ij} B(\tau) \quad j=1,\ldots,m \quad I=1,\ldots,n.$$

In this formula the α's have pure location shift effect on the conditional quantiles of the response. The effects of the covariates, x_{ij} are allowed to vary depending on the quantile, τ, of interest, whereas the α's remain constant. To estimate the model, Koenker (2004) suggests solving the following equation.

$$\min_{(\alpha,B)} \sum_{k=1}^{q} \sum_{j=1}^{n} \sum_{t=1}^{T} \omega_k \rho_{\tau_k}(y_{ij} - \alpha_i - x'_{ij} B(\tau_k))$$

where $\rho_\tau(u) = u(\tau - I(u<0))$.

The Preminary Tests

Evaluating the homogeneity of the panel longitudinal section and slope coefficients will be of great importance in determining the appropriate estimator. In this context, Pesaran and Yamagata's (2008) homogeneity tests were used.

The result of the $\tilde{\Delta}_{adj}$ statistic from Table 4 indicates that the slope coefficients are homogeneous.

Table 4. Pesaran and Yamagata (2008)'s Homogeneity Test

	Test statistic	P-value
$\tilde{\Delta}$	-0.84	0.80
$\tilde{\Delta}_{adj}$	-0.93	0.82

Secondly, assessing cross-sectional dependence in panel analysis is a crucial step. To identify the presence of cross-sectional dependence, the Breusch and Pagan (1980) LMBP test was applied.

Table 5. LM_{BP} Test Results

Variable	Statistic	p-value
EFI	24.58	0.00***
LPI	21.01	0.00***

*** denotes rejection of the null hypothesis at the 1% significance level.

Table 5 clearly demonstrates that the null hypothesis of no cross-sectional dependence among the selected countries is rejected.

Table 6. Stationarity Test Results

Model with constant term		
Series	**ZA-Spac**	**P- value**
EFI	0.87	0.19***
LPI	-1.34	0.91***

*** denotes rejection of the null hypothesis at the 1% significance level.

Table 6 shows the existence of the Hadri-Kurozumi (2012) stationarity test, which is one of the second generation testsused in the unit root versions of the series. According to Table 6, all variables used in the analysis are stationary at the 0.01 significance level.

Table 7. Dumitrescu-Hurlin panel causality test results

| Null Hypothesis:	W-Stat.	Zbar-Stat.	Prob.
LPI $\nrightarrow$ EFI	3.95137	2.76524	0.0057***
EFI $\nrightarrow$ LPI	11.6773	10.5301	0.0000***

*** p<0.01. Source: Authors' calculations based on E-Views 9.0 output.

To analyze the causal relationship between the Logistics Performance Index and economic freedom in MINT countries, the panel causality test based on the Granger approach, as introduced by Dumitrescu and Hurlin (2012), was employed. The findings are summarized in Table 7. Table 7 suggests that there is bidirectional panel causality between the two variables.

Table 8. The Result of Panel Quantile Regression Estimation

Independent Variable: EFI				
Coefficients	**Standard Error**	**t-statistics**	**Prob.**	**Quantile**
0.616090	0.148516	4.148322	0.0001	tau=0.10
0.474282	0.075969	6.243074	0.0000	tau=0.20
0.467717	0.076443	6.118498	0.0000	tau=0.40
0.410069	0.091401	4.486484	0.0000	tau=0.60

Figure 3. Graphics of Estimated Coefficients
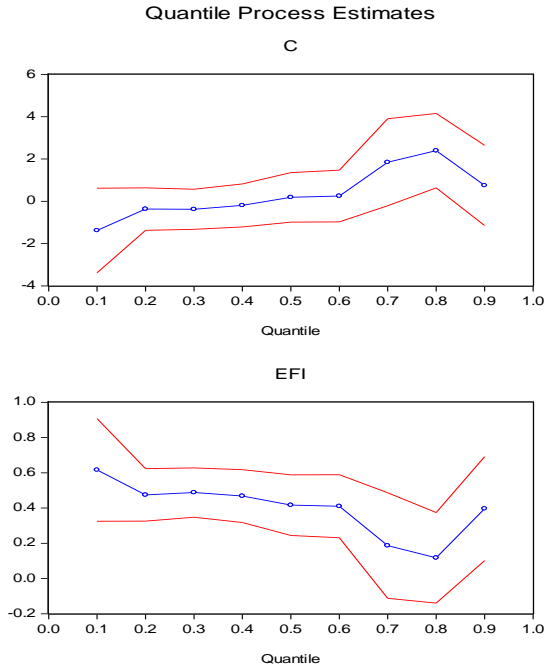
When Table 8 and Figure 3 taken together, it can be said that coefficients EFI are positively and statistically significant in all quantiles (τ=0.10; 0.20; 0.40; 0.60). Thus, as the economic freedom index of a sample country increases, logistic performance index positively effects. This empirical finding suggests that as countries achieve higher economic freedom index, their logistics performance improves. Hence, economic freedoms play a crucial role in increasing the living standards and socio-economic welfare levels of households, while improving logistical performance by providing free environments for institutions and individuals.

CONCLUSION

With globalization, countries and their search for new markets have caused to the emergence of special performance criteria in the logistics and supply chain. More detailed performance features such as time, efficiency, flexibility, outsourcing, customs clearance, warehousing and low-run operations in logistics operations. With logistic performance index, they had the chance to analyze the competitiveness, advantages and disadvantages of countries with other countries. Countries can increase their logistics performance with economic freedom.

When countries engage in activities that enhance both economic freedom and logistics performance, they contribute to each other's development in these areas. The advancement of economic freedom and logistics performance, in turn, supports overall economic growth. In this context, the study aims to investigate the relationship between the Logistics Performance Index (LPI) and the Economic Freedom Index (EFI) in MINT countries—Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria, and Türkiye—over the period 2007–2022 using the panel quantile regression method.

Furthermore, to explore the causal relationship between the LPI and EFI, the panel causality test based on the Granger approach, as introduced by Dumitrescu and Hurlin (2012), was applied. The empirical results indicate the presence of a bidirectional causal relationship between the Logistics Performance Index and the Economic Freedom Index.

The effect of economic freedom on the logistics performance index was investigated for different quantiles (τ = 0.10; 0.20; 0.40; 0.60) through the panel quantile regression method. The findings showed that as the economic freedom index of sample country increases, logistic performance index positively effects. This empirical finding suggests that as countries achieve higher economic freedom index, their logistics performance improves. Hence, economic freedoms play an important role in increasing the living standards and socio-economic welfare levels of households, while improving logistical performance by providing free environments for institutions and individuals.

Consequently, investments to support the development and maintenance of logistics systems, if improvements are made in various areas such as financing support and coordination, these systems will become stronger. Transportation such as roads, bridges, ports and airports public investments in infrastructure, facilitating the movement of goods and people, and logistics help improve the efficiency of their systems. Countries must improve safety, efficiency and logistics systems to ensure the transparent functioning of logistics processes can regulate. In addition to regulations, countries can also improve the efficiency of their logistics systems.

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Postcolonial Identity Crisis and Political Conflict in Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*

Berna Köseoğlu[1]

[1]Assoc.Prof.Dr. Kocaeli University, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Department of English Language and Literature, Orcid: 0000-0001-7706-4115

The social, historical and political conditions in society play a very important role in the construction of identity, as a result it can be asserted that personal identity of the individual is established in society. Thus, the ideological tensions and conflicts between different groups in terms of class, race, and power struggles determine the identity of people. In this sense, analyzing Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*, it is clearly observed that British colonialism influences the political identity of African characters in the novel. In this work, Sam, Ikem, and Chris represent the African individuals who have received education in England so that they are torn between the African and the English culture, therefore they suffer from problems of identity after their return to their hometown. In this respect, mimicry, hybridity, internal colonization and otherness come to the fore in the postcolonial period as a result of the contradictions between the colonizer and the colonized in terms of living manners, perspective of life, and ideology. Moreover, Achebe, as a Nigerian novelist, who received western education, was faced with identity problems and witnessed the sufferings of people in African society, so his novel, *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), reflects his own observations and experiences related to the construction of African identity. In this respect, the aim of this paper is to discuss the role of Achebe as an African author, his function in literature for the construction of African identity, to shed light on the interpretation of identity in the contemporary world, and to analyze the problems of identity in Achebe's novel in the light of postcolonial theory, which questions the personal identity of the colonized, their position and cultural difference in society by focusing on the concept of multiculturalism, otherness, fragmented identity, hybridity, and mimicry.

Chinua Achebe (1930-2013), one of the most significant Nigerian writers, reflected African culture and the conflicts between the Western colonizers and the African colonized in his works, dealing with the political tension and disorder that came to the forefront with the Western colonialism. The writer was also torn between African and British culture, experiencing inner conflict due to his period during his Western education in his country and his experiences with the Westerners. He attended Government College in Umuahia between 1944-1947, which was practising the regulations of British public schools, then between 1948 and 1953 he attended University College in Ibadan, which was affiliated to the educational understanding of English Colleges and was also an associate college of University of London. He received his BA degree from Ibadan University in Nigeria, an independent College of London University in 1953 and studied broadcasting at the British Broadcasting Corporation in London in 1956 (Parekh

and Jagne, 1998, p.19), therefore he has witnessed the impact of British colonialism upon the Nigerian and also experienced the Nigerian Civil War after Nigeria had gained its independence from Britain, so in his works he effectively portrayed his own experiences as well as the social and political condition of people having African identity.

In this sense, Achebe was affected by the tensions in terms of politics in his society, thus he dwelt on the condition of the colonized, colonizer, racism, and the conflicts between these groups in the postcolonial period. Consequently, Achebe witnessed the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized during his period in Colleges, whose educational style was based on English understanding so that he effectively illustrated in his works the contradictions between the African colonized and the British colonizer. Moreover, he also displayed the social and political condition in Nigeria after the country's gaining independence from Britain in 1960, thus he also shed light on the Nigerian Civil War, which took place because of the conflicts among autonomous ethnic groups in Nigeria despite the fact that these communities had their independence. As Achebe undertook official work during the Nigerian Civil War (1967-70) with the Biafrian authorities, one of the autonomous groups in Nigeria, he experienced the horrible effects of war, waste of lives (Ravenscroft, 1977, p. 34), so his background plays a very important role in his depiction of characters, situations and settings, therefore as a socially conscious author, in his novels he has reflected the position of African in the postcolonial world by questioning African identity, therefore it is obvious that "Achebe was possibly the first African writer to be self-conscious about his role as an African writer [...]. Achebe indicates that a part of the writer's role is to encourage the creation of an African identity" (Gikandi, 1991, p.7). Thus, he problematized the construction of African identity by underlining the inevitable influence of colonialism in African people's lives.

In this manner, Achebe aims at strengthening the African identity and portraying the sufferings of African people due to the pressure of colonialism and racism. This shows that Achebe pays special attention to the social and political circumstances in Africa, consequently it is certain that "[w]hen a novelist chooses to write on an obviously political theme, we may safely assume that his burdens are mainly the public ones, common to the men of his group" (Narayanan, 1986, p.4). In other words, Achebe can be considered to be a socially conscious novelist dealing with the identity of African as well as historical and political issues in the postcolonial age. In an interview, he emphasizes: "I decided that I could not stand aside from the problems and struggles of my people at that point in history" (Muoneke, 1994, p.29). In this manner, his remarks prove that

in his works he portrays the panorama of Africa and its citizens in the postcolonial period, and in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), Achebe explores postcolonial problems, political corruption, the conflict between traditional African individuals and European people. In *Black Writers Redefine the Struggle*, Thelwell (1989) indicates the significant characteristics of his works:

> All the works are different, very different. But what they all share in common is something in the genes of their paternity, the inheritance. Each reflects Mr Achebe's uncanny instincts for those definitive illuminating moments where past and future flash together in brief entailing conjunction, which have been called 'those bloody intersections where history and literature meet'. (p.4)

Especially *Anthills of the Savannah* can also be regarded as a novel concentrating on the struggle between past and future. The novel effectively reflects the reality of Africa. In the novel, Achebe creates a fictional African nation, Kangan, a counterpart of Nigeria and sheds light on the corruption in postcolonial Africa through the experiences of African characters who are torn between the English and African identity, therefore as Muoneke (1994) asserts, "[...] Achebe alerts the reader to the cultural, social and political life of a fictitious West African country is no longer than Nigeria" (p.29). Thus, he presents three male characters, Sam, Ikem, Chris, who attended the same school and later received their education abroad. While Sam becomes the head of the state, Christ acts as his Minister of Information, and Ikem becomes the editor of the National Gazette in which he strictly criticizes the political regime in Africa and the situation of African in postcolonial society.

Analyzing the identity problem of Sam in the work, it is observed that due to his college education which was based on English educational understanding, he has experienced English culture, living manners, habits, and the perspective of English people, consequently despite his return to his homeland, he mimics the British and looks down on the native African citizens, so he imposes his power upon the public by getting the title "His Excellency" (1988, p.5), which justifies his despotic regime. Thus, as Moses also asserts, Achebe aims at reflecting the corruption of politics and its influence in the construction of identity. Considering the characteristics of Sam and his identity as a black ruler, it is clearly recognized that he misuses his power and imposes his supremacy upon the powerless citizens by ignoring the needs of public. Since he is indifferent to the sufferings of his people, he says to his assistant: "Tell them, if you like, that I am on the phone with the President of United States of America or the Queen of England. Peasants are impressed by that kind of thing, you know" (p.16), so the perspective of Sam

proves that although he also belongs to the African community, he humiliates the African origin and feels himself superior due to his political identity and his European educational background, consequently his identity has been re-constructed after his education, so he is torn between his African identity and his English background. In this respect, "Achebe presumably drawing on his own experiences, wishes to extend the reader's of these everyday occurrences of African political life" (Carroll, 1990, p.178), thus through his observations he sheds light on African political life, the corruption, hypocrisy, abuse of power, destruction of national consciousness and the identity problems of African. Hence, the wide gap between the rulers and the citizens can be likened to the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, since in each case alienation and isolation of the powerless group can be observed; thus Achebe, by shedding light on the otherness of the internally colonized African in his works, has played a very important role in postcolonial literature as Izevbaye (2010) highlights:

> […] Achebe's most important influence given his goal as a writer, is his contribution to the advancement of a new postcolonial consciousness, particularly as his fictions date from the eve of African independence, thus giving emphatic voice to the pan-African impulse that found political expression in African independence. It is in the novel form that Achebe has made his most enduring contribution as a postcolonial writer. (p.33)

Achebe, therefore, in his novels, exposes problems related to the social and political situation in Africa after African independence, as a consequence he contributes to the reflection of postcolonial experience and to the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. This interaction between the European, the English and the colonized communities, like African people, leads to black men's admiring the European culture and regarding the culture of English as superior to theirs. In fact, they lose their original background and gain English identity despite their African origins. In this sense, English heritage comes to the fore as the dominant, accepted ultimate power, as a consequence of which 'otherness' takes place; in other words, the colonized becomes the 'other,' the isolated and the alienated, thus it would be worth analyzing postcolonial theory, so it should be worth analyzing the cultural differences between the colonizer and the colonized societies, as well as racism, otherness, hybridity, stereotyping (Bertens, 2008, p.167), all of which appear as the concepts of postcolonial studies.

Taking postcolonial theory into consideration, one of the most important theorists in this field, Homi Bhabha's perspective should be emphasized. He criticizes the imperialism of colonial Powers, their repressive attitude and strict

practices by underlining the practices of oppression, which have emerged due to the colonizer's hegemony among the minorities, therefore he indicates the power struggles, the destruction of personal identity and the displacement of the fragmented colonized people along these lines:

> Postcolonial criticism bears witness to the unequal and uneven forces of cultural representation involved in the contest for political and social authority within the modern world order. Postcolonial perspectives emerge from the colonial testimony of Third World countries and the discourses of minorities within the geopolitical divisions of east and west, north and south [...]. They formulate their critical revisions around issues of cultural difference, social authority, and political discrimination [...]. (Bhabha, 1994, p.245)

Thus, postcolonial theory rejects the superiority of the West and inferiority of the East by decentring the accepted norms related to identity, so it is against the belief which asserts that West is the centre while East is the margin, the other, or the colonizer is more intelligent, rational, and powerful than the colonized. In this respect, post-colonialism explores the destructiveness of stereotyping, consequently postcolonial criticism explores the agonies of the colonized suffering from the feeling of otherness and trying to mimic the ultimate supremacy, the European, so as to be accepted by them; in this sense multiculturalism and cultural differences take place, consequently postcolonial theory "privileges difference over sameness [...], its political outlook is pluralist and antihegemonic [...], it problematizes all forms of subalternity and subjugation; and it equates representation with power" (Buchanan, 2010, p.373).

It is obvious that in *Anthills of the Savannah*, the African people consider the English to be more refined, civilized and intelligent, so the English is admired and praised, as a result of which being an English and becoming a part of the English social and political system can be seen as a privilege according to the perspective of the African as Attorney General says to Sam in the novel:

> We have no problem worshipping a man like you. [...]. You went to Lord Lugard College where half of your teachers were Englishmen. Do you know, the nearest white men I saw in my school were an Indian and two Pakistanis. Do you know, Your Excellency, that I was never taught by a real white man until I went to read lawat Exeter [...]. During my first year in Britain I saw Welsh Rarebit on the menu one fine day and I rubbed my hands together and my mouth began to water because I thought I was going to eat real bush-meat from the forests of Wales! (p.22)

It is clear that becoming a member of English community, being involved in the educational facilities of the colonizer, receiving education among the white, being taught by white educators, tasting the food of British, are all regarded as a privilege for the 'other,' therefore Sam's educational background at Lord Lugard College, which has many teachers whose origins come from England, impresses Attorney General. Moreover, deserving the right to eat bush-meat of Wales makes him delighted, because he feels as if he is a member of British society, so Bhabba's concept of 'mimicry' and 'internal colonization' dominate Achebe's novel as well, this justifies the inevitability of the invisible domination of colonial powers even after the independence of the formerly colonial nations. As Amoko (2008) also stresses,

> By the end of the twentieth century virtually all formerly colonized territories had become independent nations, but the effects of colonial rule continue to be powerfully felt at multiple levels. The practice of everyday life in vast sectors of both the ex-colonizing and the excolonized worlds continue to be governed. (pp.132-133)

In the novel, even after the withdrawal of the English colonial power, the harsh attitude of the colonizers towards the colonized is replaced with the despotic regime of the new African black governor Sam, so Achebe still believes that the problems all African countries have faced in the postcolonial period are based on the impact of colonialism in terms of institutional and individual sense, so everyday life in the postcolonial era has been under the influence of the formerly colonial rule so that each movement and behaviour of the colonized, their belief system, perspective of life and habits reflect the norms of the colonizer. In many respects, class distinction and hierarchy in society can be considered to be the results of the colonial past and repressive rulers in Africa during the colonial period. Thus, the postcolonial identity of the black is fragmented under the pressure of colonial period, therefore identity problems come to the forefront because of the distinction between the black and the white as Ikem, as a socially and politically conscious columnist in *Anthills of the Savannah* also stresses:

> Isn't the great thing about a VIP that his share of good things is always there waiting for him in abundance even while he relaxes in the coolness of home, and the poor is out there in the sun pushing and shoving and roasting for his miserable crumbs? Look at those empty padded seats! How does the poor man retain his calm in the face of such provocations? From what bottomless wells of patience does he draw? They are not in the least like ourselves. They don't need and can't use the luxuries that you and I must have. They have the animal capacity to endure the pain of

domestication. The very words the white master had said in his time about the black race as whole. Now we say them about the poor. (p.37)

Ikem can be said to be aware of the inequality between the black and the white, so he pays special attention to the necessity of social justice by emphasizing the condition of the black citizens suffering from poverty, consequently Ikem warns people about the destruction and misery that take place due to the irresponsibility of the rulers. He stresses the failure of the government in this manner: "It is the failure of our rulers to re-establish vital inner links with the poor and disposed of this country, with the bruised heart that throbs painfully at the core of the nation's being" (pp.30-31). Furthermore, in *Conversations with Chinua Achebe*, the interviewer asks Achebe about the meaning of the "bruised heart," and he responses as follows:

> What happened to Africa in its meeting with Europe was devastating. It was our people losing grip on their history, being swept out of the current of their history into somebody else's history, becoming a footnote. So the history of alien races in Africa and the real history that had been going on since the millennia was virtually forgotten. Then independence came and we assumed that we would immediately take up the story as if nothing had happened, and of course, this has proved to be impossible. So the source of the "bruise" is a long one and it has been compounded lately by the brutality of the kind of leadership we have had. So the people have lost their sense of person, this sense of worth. Our people need to be healed. (Lindfors, ed., 1997, p.157)

Thus Ikem leads people to realize the terrible results of colonialism and to see that they have lost their personal identity because of the colonial rule and they are bound to experience the same condition in the postcolonial period during the rule of an African leader, Sam. In this sense, Ikem's role can be described as follows: "Ikem, no doubt, is Achebe's persona, and in him we see the writer's role in society best exemplified. It is not by accident that Achebe makes him a poet, a novelist, a playwright and a newspaper editor. Part of his role is to supply Sam and society a 'glimpse of light'" (Muoneke, 1994, p. 91), so as the spokesman of the novel, Ikem wants to indicate that people should question the social and political system in order not to lose their identities:

> You must develop the habit of scepticism, not swallow every piece of superstition you are told by witch doctors and professors. I see too much parroting, too much regurgitating of half-digested radical rhetoric. When you have rid yourselves of these things your potentiality for assisting and directing this nation will be quadrupled. (p.148)

It is obvious that the character wants to awaken people to struggle against the powerful rulers and their despotic system, therefore in his lecture titled "The Tortoise and the Leopard," (p.141) which is a political meditation in which the tortoise struggles despite its weakness, he tries to prove that black people in Africa can also struggle to defend their rights and not to lose their origins and their social, political and ethnic identity though they are less powerful than the ruling class. However, considering the identity of the governor, Sam, it is very ironic that although he is an African, he turns out to be a despotic ruler, who imposes his political power upon his fellow citizens, so he dismisses Ikem because of his harsh criticism about the governmental system and orders officials to torture him.

Moreover, what should also be underlined about the governor, Sam, is his losing his African identity due to his devotion to European way of life, especially to English culture, habits, and living manners, therefore Sam can be defined as a mimic man who imitates the western man. For example, he is smoking pipe, listening to Mozart, reading *The Sunday* newspaper (p.45). Moreover, the new black governor Sam and the Minister Chris try to have close contact with the white character, Mad Medico, to feel themselves to become involved in the European culture. This justifies that even if Africa gained its dependence, traces of colonialism and the influence of English rule can still be recognized. Since they have been under the control of the English for a long time, they adopted the norms, culture, and tendencies of the European and they have imitated the living style and the habits of the colonizer in the postcolonial period, and it is no doubt that mimicry, internal colonization and hybridity of the African people can be observed even in the postcolonial period as it is indicated:

> Discourses of Africa are significant in relation to the politics of Black identities and cultures in the African Diaspora. […]. The movement between Africa and European contexts reveals how Africa and its identities have been crucially informed by the impact of knowledges and interests from outside the continent. (Kanneh, 1998, p.1)

It is impossible for the colonized not to be influenced by the culture, knowledge, habits, interests of the colonizer because of the cultural and social interaction, so even after the independence from the colonizer, the colonized is still under the influence of colonial rule in the postcolonial era, and all of these conditions are portrayed by Achebe in *Anthills of the Savannah*.

Furthermore, together with the emphasis on the political identity of black characters, the African female identity is also problematized by emphasizing the necessity to challenge the male-dominated society, which ignores the individuality, political and social rights of women by disregarding their feelings and opinions as Muoneke (1994) also underlines:

> Achebe creates a new role for woman in which she will no longer be the passive, suffering, and enduring woman. Achebe uses Ikem the writer to announce the new role of the woman. Role defines identity; hence, Achebe's new role for the woman confers on her a fresh image. (p.149).

In this sense, the new African female woman image is represented by means of the character, Beatrice Okoh, the Senior Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Finance with a first class honours in English. As the character graduates from London University and can compete with the English (p.68), she can challenge the male-domination and can prove her personal identity.

Therefore, while the three male characters, Sam, Ikem and Chris, because of the corruption in politics and the chaotic atmosphere in Nigeria due to abuse of power, die at the end of the novel, Beatrice is the one who survives. Thus, she is introduced as the new woman in the novel so that she names the child of Ikem at the end of the novel although it is generally a male who comes into view in the naming ceremony of children (p.206). It is observed that Beatrice as a postcolonial female represents the new identity of woman in the postcolonial period, in this manner Achebe portrays not only the world of postcolonial males in politics but also the field of postcolonial women through the portrayal of self-determined, self-confident Beatrice who could stand on her own feet and who survives in spite of the destruction of the male politicians, so as Stratton (1994) emphasizes "Achebe challenges traditional gender relationships by calling into question the role in public affairs that is customarily assigned to women" (p.168). Hence, what is underlined by the author is that the traditional roles of African women should be replaced with a new African female identity, which enables people to realize that African women can achieve their goals with self-determination and confidence.

To conclude, it is clear that in *Anthills of the Savannah*, the corruption in Nigeria in terms of politics and social system plays a very important role in the destruction and failure of the characters. Particularly, the political and personal identity of characters are shaped with the norms of colonialism, the contradiction between the colonizer and the colonized and with the power struggles, so the construction of identity is associated with politics of countries. Therefore, the

concepts of postcolonial criticism, including Bhabha's postcolonial concepts, can easily be observed in the novel. The male characters Sam, Ikem, and Chris fail and die because of their political positions and as a consequence of the dominance of power struggles, so the identity problem of these three characters is foregrounded in the work. In this respect, the dilemma of these characters in terms of their personal identity, their sufferings because of their being torn between African and English identity can be regarded as the reflection of many African people's situation in the postcolonial period. Moreover, in the novel, the African female identity is also questioned by means of the character, Beatrice, who represents the new type of African woman, proving her intelligence and confidence in politics and social life. Thus, it is obvious that in *Anthills of the Savannah*, Chinua Achebe effectively portrays the panorama of postcolonial Africa and the African citizens who have experienced the burden of being the 'other' as a result of the political corruption in society.

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CHAPTER 7

Tommy Cash's Espresso Macchiato: Intertextuality, Postmodern Aesthetics, and the Warholian Legacy in Music Videos

Bengü Başbuğ[1]

[1]Asst. Prof. Dr., Istanbul Esenyurt University, New Media and Communication,
ORCID: 0000-0002-6393-0884

1. Introduction

In 1982, Danish filmmaker Jørgen Leth captured a compelling scene in his documentary *66 Scenes from America*, featuring pop artist Andy Warhol, one of the most influential figures in 20th-century art, known for redefining the relationship between art, media, and consumer culture. This minimalist portrayal, lasting approximately four minutes, presents Warhol unwrapping, methodically eating a hamburger, and concluding with the statement, "*My name is Andy Warhol, and I just finished eating a hamburger*" (Leth, 1982). Warhol's performance has been widely interpreted as a commentary on American consumer culture and the democratization of commodities, highlighting how mass-produced products like fast food transcend social and economic boundaries (Jameson, 1991). As noted by art critic Robert Hughes, Warhol's work often explored the "uniformity" of consumer goods, suggesting that such products serve as a social equalizer in American society (Hughes, 1982). Moreover, Warhol's engagement with mass production and repetition aligns with the postmodern condition, in which originality is constantly questioned, and mass culture reshapes artistic expression (Hutcheon, 1989).

While Warhol's performance critiqued consumer culture in the 1980s, it also left a lasting legacy, inspiring contemporary artists across various disciplines. Decades later, Estonian musician Tommy Cash, known for his controversial artistic persona, reinterpreted Warhol's performance in his 2024 music video, *Espresso Macchiato*. On February 15, 2025, Cash was selected with this song to represent Estonia in Eurovision, taking place in May 2025 (Eurovision.tv, 2025). Cash's Eurovision entry has amplified his popularity, attracting widespread attention and sparking debates on his satirical, boundary-pushing aesthetic. Since its release on December 7, 2024, *Espresso Macchiato* has gained significant attention across digital platforms, accumulating over 7 million views on YouTube, as of March 15, 2025 (YouTube, 2024). More than just a commercially successful song, *Espresso Macchiato* serves as a multimodal artistic expression, integrating music, performance art, and postmodern intertextuality.

Cash's reinterpretation closely mirrors Warhol's original setup, yet introduces key modifications. Instead of a hamburger, Cash consumes an espresso macchiato, maintaining a minimalist aesthetic while shifting the cultural context. The espresso macchiato, a symbol of European café culture, serves as a deliberate contrast to Warhol's quintessentially American hamburger, reflecting shifting cultural consumption patterns and the globalization of tastes in the 21st century (Featherstone, 2007: 134). As a conceptual extension of Warhol's *Eating a*

Hamburger, Cash's *Drinking an Espresso Macchiato* exemplifies how intertextuality and performance evolve in the digital era, reinforcing the role of media aesthetics and algorithm-driven visibility in shaping contemporary culture.

This chapter aims to analyze the intertextual relationship between Andy Warhol's *Eating a Hamburger* (1982) and Tommy Cash's *Espresso Macchiato* (2024), examining how Cash's adaptation functions as both a tribute and a critique. Methodologically, the chapter employs a comparative visual and textual analysis of both videos, supported by a review of relevant literature on intertextuality, postmodern art practices, and cultural studies. The significance of this research lies in its exploration of how contemporary artists engage with and reinterpret past artworks to comment on current societal dynamics. Understanding this relationship offers insight into the evolving discourse on art, culture, communication and media in the digital age.

2. Intertextuality and Postmodern Aesthetics

2.1. Intertextuality in Visual Culture

The concept of intertextuality, introduced by Julia Kristeva, refers to the dynamic interrelation between texts, images, and cultural artifacts, emphasizing that meaning is constructed through reference, reinterpretation, and interaction with prior works (Kristeva, 1980: 36). From this perspective, no artistic or cultural production exists in isolation. Instead, every work is shaped by an intricate network of past influences, whether explicitly acknowledged or subtly embedded within its structure. This principle is particularly evident in visual culture, where art, advertising, cinema, and digital media frequently borrow, remix, and reinterpret existing visual elements to generate new meanings (Barthes, 1977).

In the visual arts, intertextuality is expressed through various strategies such as quotation, pastiche, parody, and appropriation (Hutcheon, 1989; Landwehr, 2002). These techniques allow artists to engage with historical and contemporary cultural materials, often challenging traditional artistic hierarchies and redefining originality. Pop art, for example, heavily relies on intertextuality, integrating mass-produced imagery, commercial symbols, and widely recognized cultural icons to create layered meanings (Jameson, 1991; Stępień, 2015). Conceptual artist Barbara Kruger's text-based works exemplify intertextuality by appropriating commercial aesthetics and media slogans to critique consumerism, identity, and power structures (Goodbody, 2024). One of her most famous works, *I Shop Therefore I Am* (1987), reinterprets Descartes' philosophical statement "*I*

think, therefore I am" by replacing intellectual existence with consumer behavior (Linker, 1990). Using the visual language of advertising – bold typography, red backgrounds, and high-contrast imagery – Kruger mimics and subverts commercial design strategies, forcing viewers to question the relationship between capitalism and self-worth (Kruger, 1999). This demonstrates how intertextuality in visual culture blurs the boundary between fine art and commercial imagery, repurposing familiar cultural symbols to expose the ideological forces behind them.

Figure 1: Barbara Kruger – *I shop therefore I am*, 1987

Source: https://www.moma.org/collection/works/64897

Beyond traditional artistic forms, intertextuality has expanded with the rise of digital media, where remix culture, meme aesthetics, and participatory content creation have intensified intertextual practices (Bolter & Grusin, 1999: D'Angelo, 2009). Media theorist and cultural analyst Lev Manovich (2001) argues that digital media inherently promotes intertextuality, as images, videos, and texts are continuously reshaped, layered, and recontextualized across online platforms. Legal scholar and internet law expert Lawrence Lessig (2008) introduces the concept of "read/write culture", where audiences are no longer passive consumers but active participants in the reinterpretation and repurposing of existing media. The viral spread of memes and TikTok trends, for example, exemplifies how users engage in intertextual practices by remixing cultural references in real time. Social media platforms, online forums, and digital archives facilitate the circulation and repurposing of existing artworks, creating

an ongoing dialogue between historical visual expressions and contemporary reinterpretations. This evolving engagement with intertextuality underscores the fluidity of meaning in visual culture, demonstrating how artistic and media practices continuously recycle, recontextualize, and redefine cultural narratives in an increasingly interconnected and participatory digital world (Jenkins, 2006).

2.2. Appropriation, Homage, and Parody in Postmodern Art

Postmodernism challenges the traditional notion of originality by emphasizing the intertextual and referential nature of artistic production (Jameson, 1991). Unlike modernist movements that prioritized innovation and authenticity, postmodern art thrives on pastiche, recontextualization, and repetition. Within this framework, appropriation, homage, and parody emerge as key creative strategies, reshaping artistic authorship and meaning (Hutcheon, 1989; D'Angelo, 2009). These three modes – often overlapping – are central to postmodern visual culture, where past and present coexist in a continuous dialogue of reinterpretation and transformation. Furthermore, these techniques reflect postmodern skepticism toward the idea of the "new", emphasizing how cultural artifacts are continuously recycled, reinterpreted, and reimagined in unexpected forms (Lyotard, 1984).

- **Appropriation** refers to the intentional borrowing or repurposing of artistic elements, styles, or imagery from previous works to create new meanings. This practice differs from plagiarism, as it does not seek to obscure its sources, but rather highlights them, often recontextualizing existing material within a different aesthetic or ideological framework (Krauss, 1985). Appropriation became particularly prominent in the 20th century with movements such as Dada (Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain*, 1917), Surrealism (Salvador Dalí's surreal reinterpretations of classical art), and Pop Art (Andy Warhol's *Brillo Boxes*, 1964), where artists repurposed mass media and consumer imagery to challenge conventional artistic boundaries and commerical culture. In this way, appropriation both questions and reinforces the cultural significance of the original material, positioning it within a broader dialogue of artistic production and reception.

- **Homage** functions as a direct tribute to a predecessor, acknowledging an artist's influence without subverting their work. While it may involve explicit visual or conceptual references, homage differs from

appropriation in that it expresses admiration rather than disruption (Danto, 2009). Artists employing homage acknowledge their influences explicitly, often embedding their works within a historical continuum rather than attempting to redefine the original meaning. This strategy is common in postmodern architecture, literature, and cinema, where artists reference past styles or figures to reinforce continuity with artistic traditions (Jameson, 1991). For example, in architecture, Philip Johnson's AT&T Building (1984) pays tribute to neoclassical design, while in cinema, Quentin Tarantino's films extensively incorporate stylistic homages to earlier filmmakers.

- **Parody** engages with existing artistic works through irony, exaggeration, and satire. It involves imitation with a critical or humorous intent, often exposing ideological or stylistic contradictions within the referenced work (Hutcheon, 1989). As a hallmark of postmodernist expression, parody allows artists to deconstruct dominant cultural narratives, providing a form of resistance against artistic or social conventions (Lyotard, 1984). For instance, Roy Lichtenstein's comic book-inspired paintings, such as *Whaam!* (1963), reframe low-culture imagery into high art, critiquing both consumerism and the commercialization of war imagery. Similarly, Banksy's subversive street art, such as his reinterpretation of Monet's Water Lilies featuring shopping carts submerged in a pond, employs parody to challenge the commodification of fine art and environmental neglect.

The interplay of appropriation, homage, and parody underscores the self-referential and layered nature of postmodern art. These techniques challenge traditional artistic hierarchies, blur distinctions between high and low culture, and reveal the fluidity of artistic meaning in a media-saturated world. Whether through direct visual citation, respectful acknowledgment, or critical reinterpretation, postmodern artists engage with their predecessors in a way that destabilizes linear notions of artistic progress, embracing instead a cyclical, intertextual dialogue.

2.3. Cultural Recycling in the Digital Age

The digital age has fundamentally transformed cultural production by accelerating the circulation, modification, and reinterpretation of artistic and media content. This shift has given rise to remix culture, where existing visual, textual, and audio materials are continuously repurposed to create new meanings

(Bolter & Grusin, 1999). Unlike traditional artistic practices, which often relied on singular authorship and linear narratives, digital remixing enables a participatory engagement with culture, allowing both artists and audiences to modify, reinterpret, and disseminate content across multiple platforms (Lessig, 2008). As Jean Baudrillard (1994) argues, in a media-saturated society, cultural production is increasingly defined by endless simulations and reproductions, where the distinction between original and derivative works collapses into an infinite cycle of reinterpretation. This phenomenon is exemplified by remix culture, which challenges conventional notions of authorship and originality, reinforcing the idea that cultural production is inherently intertextual (Manovich, 2001).

Digital media technologies – particularly the rise of social media, online archives, and user-generated content platforms – have democratized access to cultural materials, making remixing an integral part of contemporary artistic and media practices. Platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram facilitate the rapid circulation of visual content, allowing for endless modifications and reinterpretations. Memes, viral videos, deepfake technologies, and AI-generated art exemplify this shift, where cultural recycling has become a defining characteristic of digital creativity. For example, deepfake videos – which use artificial intelligence to manipulate existing footage – illustrate how digital remixing can challenge authenticity, blur the boundaries of reality, and redefine media narratives. Similarly, AI-driven platforms like DALL·E and Midjourney, which generate images based on textual prompts, complicate traditional ideas of artistic authorship, reinforcing the fluidity of meaning in contemporary media landscapes.

The evolution of cultural remixing in the digital era reflects broader postmodernist concerns regarding authenticity, repetition, and the fluidity of meaning. Lawrence Lessig's (2008) concept of "read/write culture" highlights how digital users are no longer passive consumers but active participants in reshaping cultural artifacts. Remix culture also aligns with Henry Jenkins' (2006) theory of participatory culture, where audiences engage with media not as static texts but as malleable forms of creative expression. Whether through remixed music, digitally altered images, or algorithm-generated content, contemporary remixing practices illustrate how digital culture has reshaped the way art, media, and meaning are produced, circulated, and consumed. In this new landscape, authorship is collective, originality is fluid, and cultural meaning is continuously renegotiated through digital participation.

3. Andy Warhol and Pop Art

Andy Warhol (1928–1987) was one of the most influential artists of the 20th century. Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to Slovak immigrant parents, Warhol's early exposure to commercial illustration and mass media shaped his artistic vision (Gopnik, 2020). After studying pictorial design at Carnegie Institute of Technology (now Carnegie Mellon University), he moved to New York City in 1949, where he gained recognition as a commercial illustrator before transitioning into fine art (Scherman & Dalton, 2009). His fascination with advertising, celebrity, and mechanical reproduction led him to establish The Factory, his iconic studio, which became a place for experimentation, collaboration, and avant-garde creativity (Michelson, 2001). Warhol's career spanned painting, film, photography, and performance art, reflecting his commitment to blurring the boundaries between high and low culture.

Figure 2: Andy Warhol (1980)

Source: https://www.britannica.com/biography/Andy-Warhol

Few artists have had as profound an impact on contemporary visual culture as Andy Warhol, whose work not only defined the Pop Art movement but also reshaped the relationship between art, media, and consumerism (Gopnik, 2020). Warhol's artistic philosophy was rooted in the belief that mass production and

repetition were fundamental aspects of modern life, and his work mirrored this aesthetic by borrowing from advertising, celebrity culture, and commercial branding (Danto, 2009). His embrace of silkscreen printing and mechanical reproduction reflected what cultural critic Walter Benjamin (1936) described as the loss of aura in the age of mass production, where an artwork's uniqueness is diminished through its endless replication. Simultaneously, Warhol's deadpan approach to art blurred the distinction between irony and admiration, making his work both a celebration and a critique of consumer culture. His fascination with fame, materialism, and spectacle anticipated many of the concerns that would later dominate postmodern media discourse, positioning him as a key figure in the evolution of intertextuality, cultural recycling, and media saturation (Scherman & Dalton, 2009; Danto, 2009).

Emerging in the 1950s and gaining prominence in the 1960s, Pop Art sought to bridge the gap between high art and mass culture, challenging the elitism of modernist abstraction by incorporating imagery from advertising, consumer products, and celebrity culture (Lippard, 1970; Britannica, 2025). Intertextuality was central to this movement, as artists borrowed, replicated, and recontextualized commercial imagery, redefining artistic authorship and originality (Scherman & Dalton, 2009).

Among the most influential figures of Pop Art, Andy Warhol extensively employed intertextuality by appropriating mass-produced images, commercial iconography, and widely recognized cultural symbols to critique and elevate popular culture. His silkscreen printing technique allowed him to replicate consumer products and celebrity images with a mechanical, impersonal aesthetic, reflecting the repetitive nature of mass production (Danto, 2009). As shown in Figure 3, works such as *Marilyn Diptych* (1962) and *Campbell's Soup Cans* (1962) exemplify this practice, transforming mundane commercial imagery into high art while simultaneously questioning the boundaries between originality and mass reproduction (Pratt, 1997; Danto, 2009).

**Figure 3:** *Marilyn Diptych* **and** *Campbell's Soup Cans* **(1962)**

Warhol's engagement with consumer culture and advertising suggests an element of homage, as seen in his fascination with Coca-Cola, Brillo boxes, and Hollywood celebrities. His reverence for mass production and commercial aesthetics positions his work as both a celebration and a critique – blurring the line between artistic autonomy and capitalist spectacle (Gopnik, 2020). Warhol's work reflects what Jean Baudrillard terms "hyperreality", where mass-produced symbols lose their original meaning and become self-referential simulations (Baudrillard, 1994).

Beyond painting, Warhol extended his intertextual and media-saturated approach into film and performance art, producing experimental works such as *Empire* (1964) and *Sleep* (1963), which challenged conventional cinematic narratives by emphasizing repetition, duration, and banality. These works further demonstrate how Warhol blurred the distinction between mass media, artistic production, and everyday life, reinforcing his position as both an observer and manipulator of commercial culture.

4. Tommy Cash: Music, Peformance, and Experimentation

Tommy Cash, born Tomas Tammemets on November 18, 1991 in Tallinn, Estonia, is a multifaceted artist known for his provocative fusion of music, visual arts, and fashion. Growing up during the post-Soviet era, Cash experienced a unique blend of Baltic and Russian cultural influences, which have profoundly shaped his artistic vision (Chinchón, 2023). He began his musical journey in childhood, developing a distinctive style that blends elements of hip-hop, electronic, and experimental music. His provocative lyrics and unconventional sound have gained international attention, positioning him as a prominent figure in contemporary art and music scenes (Batycka, 2022).

Figure 4: Instagram Posts of Tommy Cash

Source: https://www.instagram.com/tommycashworld/
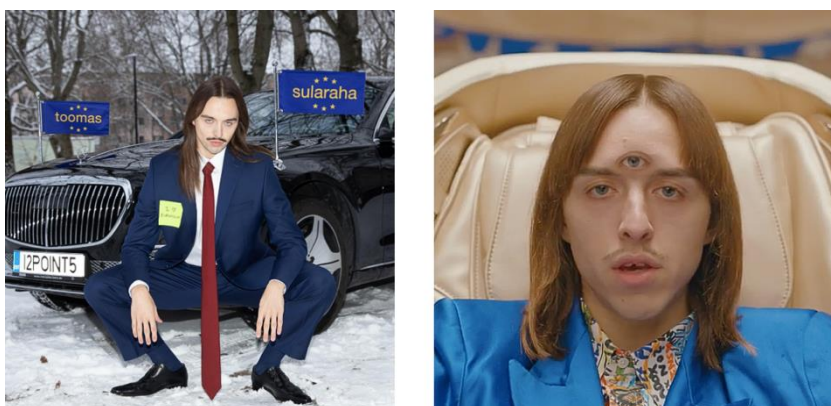
Beyond his musical endeavors, Cash is recognized for his transdisciplinary approach to art. In 2019, he collaborated with fashion designer Rick Owens for an exhibition titled *The Pure and the Damned* at the Kumu Art Museum in Tallinn. This exhibition featured a range of artworks, including sculptures and installations, that challenged traditional artistic norms and explored themes of identity and cultural hybridity. In 2022, Cash presented a solo show at Paris Internationale, where he unveiled "Nukerashka", a piece inspired by the Russian cartoon character Cheburashka, reimagined with nuclear clouds emanating from its ears (Batycka, 2022). This work exemplifies his ability to merge humor with critical commentary, reflecting on post-Soviet cultural narratives (Chinchón, 2023).

Cash's influence extends into the fashion industry, where he has both modeled and collaborated with renowned brands. He made his runway debut in 2018 at Paris Fashion Week, modeling for Rick Owens' Menswear Spring 2019 show (Satenstein, 2019). His unique aesthetic and boundary-pushing style have led to collaborations with brands such as Adidas and Marine Serre. In 2020, he was featured in Adidas's *Superstar – Change Is a Team Sport* campaign, and in 2023, he participated in Marine Serre's campaign for the Borderline underwear collection (Chinchón, 2023). These ventures highlight his ability to integrate his artistic vision into various cultural domains, reinforcing his role as a dynamic and influential figure in contemporary art and fashion.

Tommy Cash's artistic identity is connected to American pop culture, yet it remains distinctively shaped by his Eastern European background. His work is characterized by a satirical engagement with Western cultural icons, luxury

fashion, and hip-hop aesthetics, often reinterpreted through an absurdist, post-Soviet lens. By labeling himself as "Kanye East", Cash plays on the global influence of Kanye West, using irony to challenge Western cultural hegemony while simultaneously acknowledging its pervasive impact on contemporary music and fashion. His 2018 merchandise collection, for instance, featured "Life of Pavel" T-shirts, a direct reference to Kanye West's "The Life of Pablo", blending American hip-hop branding with Slavic cultural humor (Wei, 2018). Such appropriation highlights his method of cultural recycling, where Western influences are absorbed, distorted, and recontextualized within post-Soviet aesthetics (Zadeh, 2017). Cash's musical and visual influences further reflect this duality. His music integrates elements of hip-hop, trap, and industrial electronic beats, genres deeply rooted in American urban culture, yet these are fused with psychedelic rock, Euro-trance, and Eastern European rave aesthetics, creating a hybridized sound that defies easy categorization. Cash's work functions as a critique of both American consumer culture and the commodification of identity, while also embracing its aesthetics and mass appeal. This paradox positions him as an artist who both mimics and subverts Western cultural narratives, making his work a prime example of postmodern cultural intertextuality. In this sense, Cash's name is no coincidence; rather, it carries both irony and cultural significance. His satirical and provocative artistic style is rooted in critiquing consumer culture, making "Cash" an ironic reference to materialism and mass production. His engagement with luxury brands and commercial aesthetics further reinforces this commentary.

In 2024, Cash's career took a significant turn as he entered the Eurovision Song Contest scene. On November 6, 2024, he was announced as one of the participants in Eesti Laul 2025, Estonia's national selection for Eurovision, with the song "Espresso Macchiato". The song was released on December 7, 2024, and went on to win Eesti Laul, securing Cash's position as Estonia's representative for the Eurovision Song Contest 2025 in Basel. His Eurovision participation sparked controversy, with "Espresso Macchiato" receiving backlash from some Italian media outlets and politicians for allegedly stereotyping Italian culture (Giuffrida, 2025).

5. Comparative Analysis and Cultural Commentary on Video Performances: Warhol (1982) versus Cash (2024)

The relationship between historical artistic performances and contemporary reinterpretations reflects the ongoing dialogue between past and present cultural narratives. By examining Andy Warhol's *Eating a Hamburger* (1982) and

Tommy Cash's *Espresso Macchiato* (2024), this section explores how both performances engage with themes of consumerism, identity, and media aesthetics. While Warhol's minimalist act served as a commentary on mass production and branding in late capitalism, Cash's reinterpretation situates these ideas within the digital age, remix culture, and postmodern spectacle. Through a comparative visual and cultural analysis, this section highlights the ways in which intertextuality, parody, and homage function across different historical and technological contexts, shedding light on the shifting dynamics of media, performance, and cultural critique.

5.1. Warhol's *Eating a Hamburger* as a Cultural Artifact
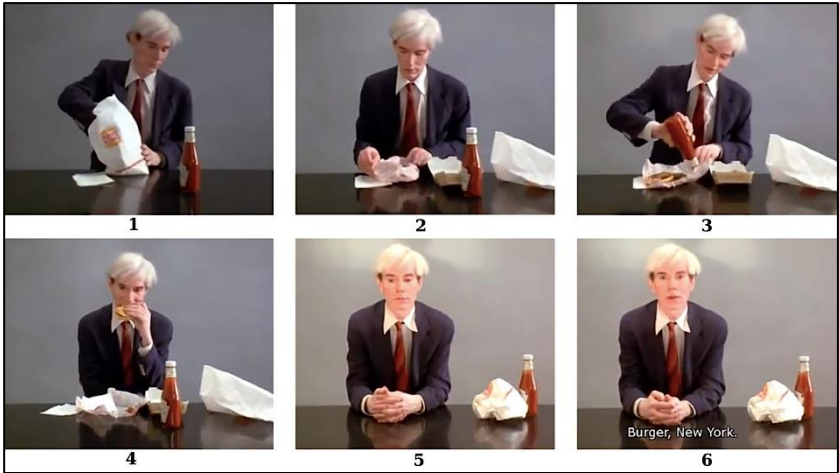
5.1.1. Description of Warhol's Eating Performance

Andy Warhol's eating performance, which lasts 4 minutes and 27 seconds, is a minimalist, silent act of eating, captured as part of Jørgen Leth's film *66 Scenes from America* (1982). Warhol performs the simple yet symbolic action of eating a Burger King hamburger at a table with a plain background.

At the beginning of the performance, Warhol picks up the Burger King bag, prominently displaying the brand's logo. He slowly removes the wrapped hamburger from the bag, unfolding the packaging with deliberate slowness. His expression remains neutral and detached, avoiding any theatricality or emotional engagement. With measured movements, he carefully opens the wrapper, revealing the hamburger. He then smooths out the wrapper on the table, emphasizing a sense of order and process. A Heinz ketchup bottle is present on the table, another clearly visible brand. Warhol attempts to use it but struggles to get the ketchup out, smirking slightly as he quietly remarks, "*It isn't coming out.*" He then begins to eat the hamburger slowly and silently, taking small, unremarkable bites. His chewing remains uneventful, reinforcing the mundane and almost emotionless nature of the act. There is no music, dialogue, or dramatic expression – only the subtle sounds of eating, adding to the stark, minimalist quality of the performance. Once he finishes the hamburger, he neatly folds the wrapper and places it back on the table. Sitting in silence for a brief moment, he maintains his detached demeanor before looking directly into the camera. He then delivers the only spoken words in the entire performance: "*My name is Andy Warhol, and I just finished eating a hamburger.*" His tone remains flat and unemotional, reinforcing the anti-theatricality of the act.

The video abruptly ends, leaving the audience with an ambiguous impression – neither a clear endorsement of consumer culture nor an outright critique, but rather a presentation of consumption in its purest, most mechanical form.

Figure 5: Andy Warhol Performing: *Eating a Hamburger* (1982)

5.1.2. Interpretation of Warhol's Eating Performance

Andy Warhol's *Eating a Hamburger* (1982) is a minimalist yet conceptually rich performance that has been widely analyzed within the contexts of pop art, consumer culture, and media theory. Table 1 shows a detailed breakdown and analysis of Andy Warhol's *Eating a Hamburger* performance.

Table 1: Sequential Actions of Warhol's Eating Performance

Frame	Visual Description	Actions and Details	Interpretation
Frame 1: Warhol Preparing to Eat	Warhol sits at a plain table with a Burger King bag, a wrapped hamburger, and a Heinz ketchup bottle. The background is neutral gray.	He picks up the Burger King bag, removes the hamburger, and carefully places the wrapper on the table.	This highlights the branding and consumer culture – Warhol shows the mass-produced nature of the product.
Frame 2: Unwrapping the Hamburger	The camera focuses on Warhol's slow, deliberate movements. He smooths the wrapper neatly on the table.	He peels open the hamburger's packaging, emphasizing an orderly and repetitive process.	This reflects Warhol's pop art approach, treating everyday objects with artistic detachment.

Frame 3: *Use of the Ketchup*	The Heinz ketchup bottle is on the table, positioned next to the hamburger. Warhol picks up the bottle, holding it upright, preparing to pour ketchup onto his burger.	Warhol tilts the ketchup bottle and attempts to squeeze or shake out the condiment. The ketchup does not immediately come out, leading Warhol to briefly struggle.	The struggle with the ketchup bottle symbolizes a critique of standardization in consumer goods – even mass-produced products are imperfect; not always as efficient or predictable as expected.
Frame 4: *The Act of Eating*	Warhol holds the plain hamburger and takes small bites without expression. The ketchup bottle remains untouched.	He chews slowly and silently, maintaining a neutral facial expression, showing no signs of enjoyment or dissatisfaction.	This reinforces mundane consumer habits – fast food as a universal, mechanical experience rather than personal taste.
Frame 5: *Concluding the Act*	Warhol finishes the hamburger, folds the wrapper back onto the table.	He pauses, looks directly into the camera, maintaining his neutral expression.	A moment of anti-climax, breaking expectations of a traditional performance.
Frame 6: *Final Statement and Ending*	Warhol, in a monotone voice, delivers the only spoken line in the performance.	He states: "*My name is Andy Warhol, and I just finished eating a hamburger.*" The video immediately ends.	A postmodern commentary on identity and branding – is he presenting himself, or has he become part of the mass-consumption cycle?

The whole performance presents Warhol silently unwrapping, eating, and finishing a Burger King hamburger before concluding with the statement: *"My name is Andy Warhol, and I just finished eating a hamburger."* The final statement serves as both a conclusion and a disruption. On the one hand, it asserts personal identity, yet paradoxically reduces it to a mundane, universally shared action. This act is imbued with layers of meaning, reflecting Warhol's broader artistic philosophy and his engagement with mass production, consumer culture, and the spectacle of everyday life (Leth, 1982). Warhol, known for his obsession with branding and mass production, reduces the act of eating to its most basic, commercialized form – a fast-food meal from a global chain. The hamburger, a symbol of standardized consumer culture, is presented as an artistic subject. By choosing Burger King and Heinz – iconic mass-market brands – Warhol underscores the omnipresence of branding in everyday life, aligning with his pop art philosophy of elevating commercial imagery into the realm of fine art.

Warhol's emotionless, slow, and mechanical approach reinforces the banality of consumption in capitalist society. The absence of dramatic expression, music, or narrative enhances the minimalist aesthetic, compelling the viewer to focus solely on the act itself. However, it also leaves the video open to multiple interpretations. It questions whether art is found in the mundane or if consumer culture has reduced human experiences to mechanical routines. The performance transforms eating into a ritualized, standardized experience, mirroring the repetitive, impersonal nature and uniformity of mass consumption. Unlike typical performances that involve elaborate gestures, Warhol's deadpan execution creates a paradox – an ordinary act turned into an artistic statement. This postmodern blurring of art and reality questions whether individuality holds significance in a world dominated by branding and consumer culture. By stripping the performance of emotional engagement, Warhol challenges the expectations of both performance art and consumer behavior, leaving the viewer to contemplate the extent to which personal identity is shaped – or even erased – by mass production and commercialization.

5.1.3. The Significance of Warhol's Eating Performance

Warhol's work consistently blurred the boundaries between art and commercial culture, challenging traditional hierarchies within the art world (Danto, 2009). In *Eating a Hamburger*, his choice of a Burger King product instead of its more dominant competitor, McDonald's, suggests an indifference to brand loyalty, emphasizing the uniformity and standardization of fast food culture (Jameson, 1991). This act reinforces his fascination with mass production and consumerism, themes central to his work with Campbell's Soup Cans and Coca-Cola imagery. The performance also functions as an anti-spectacle, subverting expectations by presenting an unscripted, unembellished moment of consumption in contrast to the highly stylized portrayals of food in advertising and media (Baudrillard, 1994). Furthermore, Warhol's silence throughout the performance aligns with his persona of detachment and neutrality, characteristics that define his public image and artistic approach. By refusing to offer explicit interpretation, he invites viewers to derive their own meanings from the act, reinforcing the idea that in a hyper-commercialized society, even the simplest acts – such as eating – are mediated through branding and consumerist symbolism (Hutcheon, 1989).

The performance serves as a commentary on American consumer culture and the universal accessibility of mass-produced goods. Fast food, as a symbol of capitalist efficiency, represents a democratized form of consumption, accessible

across social classes (Featherstone, 2007). Warhol's performance thus mirrors the reality of a society where individual choices are often dictated by mass production, reinforcing postmodern critiques of commodification and repetition (Jameson, 1991). Additionally, *Eating a Hamburger* can be viewed as an extension of Warhol's interest in media and self-representation. By staging a moment of personal consumption within a cinematic framework, he transforms an ordinary act into an aesthetic experience, challenging the distinction between everyday life and artistic performance (Bolter & Grusin, 1999). The piece also prefigures contemporary digital culture, where banal personal activities are routinely documented and shared as mediated performances on platforms like YouTube and Instagram (Shifman, 2014).

In conclusion, Warhol's *Eating a Hamburger* (1982) exemplifies his ability to turn the ordinary into art while engaging in a broader critique of consumerism and media culture. The performance's simplicity belies its complexity. By refusing to ascribe explicit meaning to his actions, Warhol encourages a postmodern interpretation of his work, where meaning is constructed through the viewer's own engagement with the imagery and cultural context. The performance remains a powerful commentary on the ways in which consumer culture shapes personal identity and artistic production in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

5.2. Tommy Cash's Music Video *Espresso Macchiato*: A Warholian Reinterpretation of *Eating a Hamburger*

Tommy Cash has officially been selected to represent Estonia in the Eurovision Song Contest 2025 (Eurovision.tv, 2025). Known for his controversial artistic persona, Tommy Cash has long been a polarizing figure in the music and art scene. However, with his Eurovision entry, *Espresso Macchiato*, his popularity has grown even further, attracting widespread attention across digital streaming platforms, reflecting its cultural impact and significance within contemporary audiovisual media. First released on YouTube on December 7, 2024, the official music video has accumulated over 7 million views as of March 15, 2025 (YouTube, 2024), underscoring the track's influence within digital music culture. Beyond being a musical composition, *Espresso Macchiato* functions as a multimodal artistic expression, integrating elements of visual performance and postmodern aesthetics. The interplay of music, performance art, and media in this work exemplifies the evolving dynamics of contemporary content dissemination, where streaming platforms and algorithmic amplification play a critical role in shaping cultural consumption. By analyzing *Espresso*

Macchiato through the lens of postmodern media aesthetics and intertextuality, its success can be contextualized within broader discussions on the postmodern reinvention of past artistic legacies and the mechanisms of digital virality in contemporary music video production. Tommy Cash's *Espresso Macchiato* serves as a postmodern reinterpretation of Andy Warhol's *Eating a Hamburger* (1982), demonstrating how performance art evolves in the digital age.

5.2.1. Description of Cash's Music Video Performance

Tommy Cash's *Espresso Macchiato* performance functions as an intertextual reinterpretation of Andy Warhol's *Eating a Hamburger*, replicating its aesthetic, composition, and performative elements while introducing subtle deviations that create new layers of meaning. Cash's music video closely mirrors Warhol's original performance. The opening scene of the video establishes the direct homage to Warhol, as Cash appears in an identical setup – wearing a dark suit, a white shirt, and a red tie, seated in front of a plain gray background – reflecting Warhol's minimalistic and neutral presence. However, intentional adjustments differentiate the two performances. In place of Warhol's Burger King bag and Heinz ketchup bottle, Cash's table features an unbranded white bag and a glass milk bottle, stripping the scene of its immediate corporate symbolism. This absence of visible branding contrasts with Warhol's pop art fascination with consumer logos, signifying a shift from explicit corporate critique to a more abstract, postmodern commentary on consumption and performance art itself.

Figure 6: Opening Scenes of Warhol's and Cash's Videos

Throughout the video, Cash maintains Warhol's deadpan expression and minimalist staging, drinking his espresso macchiato in a similarly slow and methodical manner. At one moment, however, he takes out his phone and briefly glances at the screen while holding his coffee cup, momentarily disengaging from the performance. Unlike Warhol's silent and unaccompanied act, Cash's own

song, *Espresso Macchiato*, plays in the background, yet he remains detached from the music, maintaining his passive demeanor. Musically, *Espresso Macchiato* is a catchy pop song infused with Italian influences in both its melody and aesthetic. Its energetic, almost absurd beat starkly contrasts with Cash's static, restrained performance, reinforcing the tension between the visual and auditory elements. This juxtaposition of high-energy sound with a still, emotionless video aesthetic enhances the postmodern irony of the performance, further blurring the boundaries between commercialism and artistic detachment.

Figure 6: Frames of Tommy Cash's Music Video *Espresso Macchiato*

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o6aJJ6Q5zhg

The climax of Cash's performance introduces a meta-narrative twist absent from Warhol's original. As the song ends, a voice from behind the camera states: "*Tommy, we're ready to shoot the music video.*" This unexpected revelation paradoxically suggests that the audience has not yet watched the actual music video, but rather a prelude to it. This self-referential disruption not only echoes Warhol's ambiguity regarding art and consumerism but also serves as a commentary on contemporary media culture, where the act of performance is continuously deferred, creating an endless loop of production and anticipation.

5.2.2. The Meaning Behind Cash's Drinking Performance

The interplay of appropriation, homage, and parody remains a central theme in contemporary postmodern and digital art. Tommy Cash's *Espresso Macchiato* music video functions within this framework by directly referencing Warhol's *Eating a Hamburger* scene while altering key elements to create new layers of

meaning. By replacing the hamburger with espresso macchiato, Cash both pays tribute to Warhol's minimalist aesthetic and subverts it, adapting the performance to a different cultural and temporal context. Today, artists frequently rework and reference historical artworks to engage with new cultural contexts, much like Tommy Cash's *Espresso Macchiato* music video, which reconstructs Andy Warhol's *Eating a Hamburger* performance. This act of visual intertextuality underscores the enduring impact of past artistic expressions on contemporary culture, illustrating how meaning is continuously redefined through reinterpretation and media circulation.

In Cash's music video, a subtle yet interesting moment occurs at the 19-second mark. If observed carefully, the Starbucks logo momentarily appears on the paper cup Cash is holding. However, he swiftly rotates the cup, ensuring that the logo remains concealed for the rest of the scene. This minor action suggests a conscious engagement with branding and consumer culture, much like Warhol's use of commercial imagery in his art. However, unlike Warhol, who openly incorporated logos into his work, Cash's concealment of the Starbucks logo reflects a more complex relationship with corporate branding, possibly acknowledging its influence while also avoiding direct endorsement or copyright issues in the digital media landscape.

At the 1:59 mark in the music video, Cash suddenly takes his phone out of his jacket pocket and begins scrolling while drinking his macchiato. This scene reflects a common modern habit, as many people instinctively check their phones while eating or drinking. Upon closer observation, it becomes evident that Cash is holding an iPhone, with the Apple logo subtly visible. However, his finger partially obscures the logo, ensuring it is not the focal point of the frame. Just as he previously concealed the Starbucks logo on the macchiato cup, Cash's obscuring or downplaying of brand logos marks a shift in focus – moving away from Warhol's critique of mass production and branding toward a broader exploration of performance, artistic detachment, and mediated self-presentation in the digital age. As Cash glances at his phone while holding the coffee cup, he momentarily disengages from the performance, introducing a strong contrast to Warhol's undistracted, analog presence. After checking his phone, he rolls his eyes briefly, as if expressing boredom, frustration, or irony, before continuing with his drink. This brief action suggests the ubiquity of digital distractions in contemporary life, emphasizing how technology has reshaped even the simplest acts of consumption. In contrast to Warhol's performance – where eating was the sole focus – Cash's incorporation of a smartphone subtly critiques the fractured attention spans of the digital age and the habitual nature of screen engagement.

Cash's decision to mirror Warhol's mechanical consumption process reinforces the banality of ritualized consumer habits, but the inclusion of his song – an energetic, satirical take on modern luxury and excess – creates a jarring contrast. This juxtaposition between the calm, minimalist visual aesthetic and the chaotic, overstimulating musical backdrop highlights the contradictions of contemporary consumer culture, where individuals are simultaneously bombarded with excess yet expected to engage passively. Furthermore, the final spoken line introduces a self-referential paradox, questioning the authenticity of the performance itself. The realization that the "real" music video has not yet begun reflects the continuous deferral of meaning in postmodern media culture, where content exists in a perpetual state of anticipation. This directly parallels Warhol's tendency to present art as an open-ended process, allowing the viewer to determine its significance rather than imposing a fixed interpretation.

Table 2: Sequential Actions of Cash's Drinking Performance

Frame	Visual Description	Actions and Details	Interpretation
Frame 1: *Opening Scene*	Cash sits in a neutral, minimalist setting, mirroring Warhol's composition. Instead of a Burger King bag and Heinz ketchup, there is a plain white bag and a milk bottle.	He unpacks his espresso macchiato from the white bag, unfolding the wrapper with slow, calculated movements.	The absence of branding removes explicit corporate commentary, shifting the focus to the aesthetics of performance and reinterpretation.
Frame 2: *Pouring the Coffee*	The camera captures Cash methodically pouring milk into the espresso macchiato. His expression remains neutral and mechanical.	He carefully controls the flow of milk, creating a ritualistic, controlled aesthetic.	This act introduces sensory contrast – unlike Warhol's dry, repetitive chewing, the liquid interaction adds a new visual texture.
Frame 3: *Stirring the Espresso*	Cash adds sugar to his coffee and stirs it slowly, maintaining the minimalist and repetitive rhythm of the performance.	He methodically mixes the drink, ensuring the elements are fully blended, mirroring the deliberate and controlled nature of the act.	This action emphasizes repetition and ritual, paralleling Warhol's slow eating process. It highlights the performative nature of everyday consumption
Frame 4: *Drinking the Espresso*	Cash takes a sip, holding the cup in a composed, almost ceremonial manner.	He drinks slowly, maintaining eye contact with the camera.	Reinforces passivity and detachment, mirroring Warhol's banal engagement with consumption.
Frame 5: *Digital Disruption*	Cash takes out his phone and glances at the screen while holding his coffee	He checks something briefly, introducing a	Suggests the omnipresence of digital distraction – a

| | cup, momentarily disengaging from the performance. | modern technological layer. | deviation from Warhol's purely analog aesthetic. |
| ***Frame 6:** Meta-Narrative Reveal* | The song ends abruptly, and a voice states, "*Tommy, we're ready to shoot the music video.*" | Cash adjusts his suit, signaling an end to the staged performance. | Reveals that the audience has been watching a prelude rather than the actual music video, reinforcing a postmodern loop of performance and media spectacle. |

Throughout the video, Cash frequently establishes and holds eye contact with the camera, subtly disrupting the passive, detached nature of the performance. This direct gaze creates a self-aware, performative element, acknowledging the audience and reinforcing the idea that the act is not merely about consumption, but also about being watched. Unlike Warhol, whose glances are short, feel unnatural, hesitant, and almost awkward, Cash's eye contact appears more natural and intentional, suggesting a stronger sense of control and engagement with the viewer. This distinction highlights a key difference between the two performances – while Warhol's detachment embodies a mechanical, almost alienated consumption, Cash's gaze introduces a layer of irony, digital-age performativity, and an awareness of the contemporary media landscape, where being watched is an inherent part of self-presentation.

5.2.3. Significance of Cash's Drinking Performance

By maintaining the minimalist setting and ritualistic approach to consumption, Cash evokes Warhol's original piece, yet his choice of an espresso macchiato instead of a hamburger signals a shift in cultural and consumerist references. This strategic modification not only reflects changing consumption habits but also plays with European café culture as a counterpoint to American fast food consumerism. While Warhol's performance emphasized mass production and branding, Cash's version engages with contemporary themes of digital-age spectacle, branding avoidance, and hyperreality, reinforcing his postmodern and satirical artistic identity.

Espresso Macchiato is a satirical song about Italian culture, using humor, exaggeration, and irony to engage with stereotypical depictions of Italian identity, lifestyle, and aesthetics. The playful tone of the lyrics, delivered in a mix of broken English and Italian, references food and cultural clichés, reinforcing the song's absurdist character. Lines like "*Life is like spaghetti, it's hard until you*

make it" function as lighthearted metaphors, while references to "*mafioso*" further emphasize the exaggerated portrayal of globalized perceptions of Italian culture. However, the song extends beyond cultural stereotypes, incorporating cartoonish representations of modern consumerism, luxury lifestyles, excess, and digital-age absurdity. Cash's drinking performance, in particular, mirrors the ritualistic nature of consumption, transforming a simple act – drinking an espresso macchiato – into a theatrical moment that reflects both hyper-consumerist aesthetics and performative identity in digital culture. By merging satirical commentary with surrealist spectacle, Tommy Cash creates a work that is simultaneously a critique of contemporary cultural narratives and an absurdist reflection of society's fixation on branding, image, and spectacle.

Tommy Cash's *Espresso Macchiato* exemplifies how contemporary artists engage in video intertextuality, reinterpreting past works to create new cultural meanings. This performance not only pays tribute to Warhol's conceptual engagement with consumption and branding but also extends it into the digital age, where media production and performance have become infinitely recursive. In today's landscape of viral content, influencer culture, and endless digital self-representation, Cash's work critiques the cyclical nature of media production, where performances exist in a state of continuous postponement, always "about to begin". *Espresso Macchiato* operates within the postmodern logic of pastiche, irony, and intertextuality, illustrating how artists in the digital era reinterpret, remix, and recontextualize iconic performances to generate new cultural meanings. By deconstructing and reimagining Warhol's original piece, Cash's performance captures the essence of postmodern art – where boundaries between reality, media, and performance dissolve. Just as Warhol transformed the act of eating into a reflection on consumerist identity, Cash extends this discourse to the age of digital spectacle, questioning the performative nature of media and its endless reproduction. In doing so, *Espresso Macchiato* becomes a commentary on both the legacy of Warhol and the contemporary state of visual culture, where artistic meaning is perpetually redefined through intertextuality and reinterpretation.

6. Conclusions

Tommy Cash's *Espresso Macchiato* (2024) serves as a postmodern reinterpretation of Andy Warhol's *Eating a Hamburger* (1982), demonstrating how intertextuality and performance art evolve in the digital age. By replicating Warhol's aesthetic and minimalist staging while altering key elements – replacing corporate branding, incorporating his own music, and introducing a meta-

narrative twist – Cash transforms a simple act of consumption into a layered commentary on media, performance, and consumer culture.

Throughout the performance, Cash maintains Warhol's deadpan expression and slow, deliberate pacing, reinforcing the banality and mechanical nature of consumption. However, the presence of his song *Espresso Macchiato*, an energetic satire on luxury and excess, creates a juxtaposition between the visual stillness and auditory chaos. This contrast heightens the performance's ironic detachment, echoing postmodern concerns about the spectacle of consumerism and self-referential media culture. The closing moment – where an off-screen voice states, "*Tommy, we're ready to shoot the music video*" – further complicates the audience's perception of reality, suggesting that what they have witnessed is not the actual performance but a preparatory act, an endless deferral of artistic production.

Tommy Cash's music video *Espresso Macchiato* can be considered postmodern art, given its intertextuality, irony, self-referentiality, and pastiche, all of which are defining characteristics of postmodern aesthetics. His music video operates within the framework of media recycling, cultural parody, and performative ambiguity, reflecting postmodern concerns about authorship, originality, and consumer spectacle. By remixing Warhol's iconic performance, Cash not only references a historical moment in art but also subverts it, introducing layers of meaning that critique contemporary digital culture, mass consumption, and the performative nature of identity. By engaging with Warhol's legacy through video intertextuality, Cash's performance highlights how artists in the digital era reinterpret and remix cultural symbols to construct new meanings. This work exemplifies the postmodern condition, where the boundaries between art, media, and reality are blurred, and performance itself becomes a cyclical process of repetition and reinterpretation. Just as Warhol transformed the ordinary act of eating into a statement on mass production, Cash adapts this framework to question the nature of digital-era performance and the perpetual anticipation of content creation. In doing so, *Espresso Macchiato* stands as a testament to the enduring influence of Warholian aesthetics, while also reflecting the evolving dynamics of performance, intertextuality, and media consumption in the 21st century.

Tommy Cash's music video, titled "TOMMY CASH - ESPRESSO MACCHIATO (Eurovision 2025 Winner)", was released on YouTube in December 2024 – several months before the actual Eurovision final, which will take place in May 2025. This bold self-proclamation of victory blurs the

boundaries between performance, parody, and reality, turning the act of competition itself into a form of self-mythologization, where artistic identity is constructed as much through perception as through actual events. By preemptively declaring himself the winner, Cash not only reinforces his satirical and boundary-pushing artistic persona but also exemplifies how digital culture, intertextuality, and postmodern aesthetics continuously reshape contemporary media narratives – where perception often precedes reality.

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