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# Crème De La Crème Versus Âliyy'ul Âlâ: The Modernization Process of Conservative Female Identity

Âliyy'ul Âlâ: Muhafazakâr Kadın Kimliğinin  
Modernleşme Serüveni

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## **Abstract**

The fundamental argument of the present study was that the conservative female identity was based on the re-generation of body within a modern and capitalistic context. The concept of body was focused on because it referred to a context included in interest of power, and it could be reconstructed forms again and again in an observable manner. The present study examined the “ÂLÂ” Magazine was published a year ago year. The main reason for the selection of the “ÂLÂ” Magazine was that it reflected the modernization process of the conservative female identity. In addition, the present study intended to demonstrate how the Magazine represented the stage which the conservative female identity had reached in participating in the public life after the 1980s. A distinctive characteristic of the ÂLÂ Magazine is that it attempts to make

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the perception of “manhood opening a space for themselves by using political power” -a frequently constructed perception in the conservative tradition- inconsistent with the spaces they open for themselves. According to the present study, the conservative female image bears neoconservative and neo-capitalistic traces while the conservative female identity tries to take itself out of the male power within the triplet of aesthetics, admiration, and beauty.

**Keywords:** *modernization, conservatism, Turkey, woman, ÂLÂ magazine*

## Öz

Bu çalışma, temel iddiasını, muhafazakâr kadın bedeninin modern ve kapitalist bağlamda yeniden üretildiği tezi üzerine kurmuştur. Sürecin izlencesini üç yıldır çıkmakta olan “ÂLÂ” dergisi oluşturmaktadır. Bu derginin seçilmesindeki temel amaç, “*muhafazakâr kadın*”ın hem modernleşme serüveninin sürecini yansıtması hem de 1980 sonrasında kamusal hayata katılımda geldiği son aşamayı temsil etmesini görüntüleme isteğidir. ÂLÂ dergisinin bir başka farklı özelliği ise muhafazakâr gelenek içerisinde sıkça vurgusu yapılan “*kendilerine siyasi güç ve iktidarla alan açan erkeklik*” algısını, kendilerine açtıkları “*kadını alanlar*” ile tutarsızlaştırma beklentisidir. Bu kadını alanların kuşkusuz modernleşmenin sunduğu alanlarla paralel olduğu görülmektedir. Özellikle “moda ve güzellik” kavramlarının kimliklerin sunumunda birincil derecede rol oynaması dikkate değer bulunmuştur. Çalışmada yeterli veriye ulaşılabileceği düşünüldüğü için bir içerik çözümlemesine girişildi ve derginin 2011-2012 tarihleri arasında yayınlanan ilk on sayısı üzerinde çalışıldı. Bu derginin seçilmesindeki nedenlerden birisi kadın dergisi olması ikincisi ise muhafazakâr bir dergi olmasıydı. Kuşkusuz derginin kadın dergisi olduğu iddiası; ilk sekiz sayısında “*Güzel Yaşam Tarzı Dergisi*” ve kadınlara özgü görsellikle; dokuz ve onuncu sayılarda ise “*Hanımefendilerin Dergisi*” sloganıyla, bir süredir de Aliy’ül Âlâ adıyla yayınlanıyor olmasıdır. Derginin ilk sayısı ile onuncu sayı arasında yapılan içerik ve biçim incelemesinde ortaya çıkan değişim çizgisi, aslında bahsi geçen muhafazakâr kadın kimliğinin dönüşümünde modern ve kapitalist izleri taşıması bakımından çalışmayı farklılaştırmıştır. Muhafazakâr kadın kimliğinin görüntüsü, artık modernist izler taşımakta, muhafazakâr kadın kimliği ise kendini *estetik, beğeni ve güzellik* üçlemesinde modernliğin “*kendinde özne*” algısından yola çıkarak erkeklik iktidarının dışına taşımaya çalışmaktadır. Böylece ÂLÂ dergisinin gündelik pratikleri organize ettiği görülürken, kadın kimliğinin kamusal alanda yeni bir sunum biçimini modernlik ekseninde gerçekleştiği görülmektedir.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** *modernleşme, muhafazakârlık, Türkiye, kadın, ÂLÂ dergisi.*

## Introduction

Modernization, representing the “*rebirth*” of Europe, gives birth to conservative thought when its own opposition/criticism is being made. While modernization implies change and transformation, conservatism involves stability and traditional/protective attitude. This nature of conservatism is a resistance for “*change*” as a social phenomenon which is also the fundamental thesis of modernization. Although the above-mentioned two ways of thinking have different points of origin, they generate “*forms of understanding and interpreting*” by means of the same “*methodological tools*”. These two opposing thoughts are raised the conflicts of one another and attempt to appropriate the mentality and the pattern of daily habits through the same world of symbols. In this regard, it is possible to argue that both the Turkish modernization and the Turkish conservatism progress by adopting a method like the one in Europe. However, while the Turkish modernization transforms by keeping itself through its own conflicts, the Turkish conservatism follows a conceptual development process where “*Islamic*” perception is in the foreground and religion is regarded as the primary element.

The phenomenon of “*female*” was focused on in the present study because it is at the centre of the debates and changes shaped by the modernist thought and the conservative thought. Both thoughts produce “*a world of images and perceptions*” through symbols. Here, female comes to be at the centre of “*power*” and “*change*”. Being produced as the “*representation of self-confidence*” in modernization theses, female is labelled as the “*social value equivalent*” in conservative theses. The image of self-confident female involves opposing traditional control systems and taking over male-dominated social production stages. The perception of female as the “*social value equivalent*” is associated with the fact that it is the primary source of social morality. Here, what come into mind are the “*roles*” provided by “*religion*” to female and the traditional attitudes’ “*sanctions that turn into control mechanisms*”. Surely, such central role provided to female confronts us in the new fields constructed upon the inclusion of capitalism in the agenda of conservative thought. In this way, the basic context where the patterns of daily life are discussed continues to rise over the “*female*” identity. The control of female in every aspect is important in the conservative thought. Modernization relies on the same context, too. Capitalistic context turns female into a commodity by suggesting that female body should be re-aestheticized. It argues that a mental transformation may be achieved by this means.

Although the present study included all the above-mentioned contexts, it basically claims that conservative female body has been reproduced within modern and capitalistic context. The present study focuses on body because it has been the target of power groups for a very long time and could be defined forms in an observable manner. The present study examines the “*ÂLÂ*” Magazine that had been published for three years. The main reason for the selection of this Magazine was that it reflected the modernization process of the “*conservative female identity*”. In addition, the present study intended to demonstrate

how the Magazine represented the stage which the conservative female identity had reached in participating in the public life after the 1980s. A distinctive characteristic of the *ÂLÂ* Magazine is that it expects to make the perception of “*manhood opening a space for themselves by using political power*” – a frequently emphasized perception in the conservative tradition – inconsistent with the feminine spaces they open for themselves. Surely, these feminine spaces are parallel with the spaces presented by modernization. It was found in the present study that the concepts of “fashion” and “beauty” played a primary role in the presentation of identities. Content analysis technique was employed in the study. The primary categories used in the content and form examination conducted from the first to the tenth issue of the Magazine were mentioned under the title of “*body-aesthetics and conservatism*”. In addition, the line of change found in the content and form examination covering the first issue to the tenth issue of the Magazine made the present study distinct in the sense that it carried the modernist and capitalistic traces of the transformation of the mentioned conservative female identity. According to the present study, the conservative female image bears *neo-conservative* and *neo-capitalistic* traces while the conservative female identity tries to take itself out of the male power within the triplet of *aesthetics*, *admiration*, and *beauty* based on the “*self-subject*” perception of modernism. In this way, the *ÂLÂ* Magazine organizes daily practices. A new form of presentation of female identity in the public sphere is observed in the axis of modernism.

### 1. Research methodology

Content analysis technique was employed in the present study. This technique was defined by Stacey (2005) as the transformation of qualitative data into quantitative data. According to Smith (1975), content analysis technique involves summarizing, comparing, and categorizing the available data. Within the framework of content analysis, the first 10 issues of the *ÂLÂ* Magazine published between 2011 and 2012 were examined. The two reasons for the selection of that Magazine were as follows: (1) it was a female Magazine; (2) it was a conservative Magazine. Surely, the argument that it was a female Magazine was based to the slogan of “*Beautiful Life Style Magazine*” and visuals included in the first eight issues and the slogan of “*Magazine of Ladies*” appearing in the ninth and tenth issues as well as the fact that it had been published with the name of *Aliy’ül Ala* for a while. On the other hand, the Magazine was considered a conservative female Magazine because it defined itself in a conservative way and frequently used the concepts of “religion”, “tradition”, “culture”, “scarf”, and “hijab” visually. The main intention for the selection of the first 10 issues of the Magazine was to trace the assumption that change in the Magazine went parallel with the change in conservative women. Female and conservatism – two primary categories – were frequently used in the first 10 issues. Though these points were taken into consideration in the present study, the below-mentioned categories were used:

Body	Visual presentations, brands, technology, luxurious and comfortable life
Aesthetics	Beauty, fashion, chicness
Conservatism	Culture, tradition, religion, hijab

The sub-titles under the title of body were used for categorizing the instruments aimed at organizing daily life through basic visual and verbal “*slogans*”. They were emphasized mainly because they were the most obvious indicators of modernization within conservatism. The categories under the title of aesthetics were aimed at determining the responses of conservative women in the modernization process based on the “*female*” identity. The category of conservatism was divided into some sub-titles deemed to be important for the present study. The purpose was to make a content analysis based on sub-titles regarding the image of conservative women with reference to the *ÂLÂ Magazine*.

## 2. The case of the *ÂLÂ magazine*

Giving coverage to important authors and interviews, the *ÂLÂ Magazine*, whose first issue was published in June 2011, continues to attract great attention. The interviews and columns prepared with influential names from different circles, along with different views, for over 2 years, re-define the female-fashion Magazine. The *ÂLÂ Magazine* is a female and fashion Magazine. What makes it different is that its target audience is the ladies who have never been determined as target audience by any channels. It is clearly seen today that the target audience firstly addressed by the *ÂLÂ Magazine* -a female-fashion Magazine- has a much larger place in the segment of female products than it has been indicated so far. Knowing the value of discovering new masses and communicating with these masses through correct channels, some important brands have obtained important results thanks to their cooperation with the *ÂLÂ Magazine*. The *ÂLÂ Magazine* presents a higher content ratio in comparison to similar female fashion Magazines. With a wide range of materials and columns in its content, it may stand up against the tides of fashion and can be read for a longer time. The limitation of the ratio of pages allocated for advertisement in the Magazine to 35% of the total content renders advertisement pages more effective.

Since it is a first in Turkey, the *ÂLÂ Magazine* has started to be discussed in many platforms. While some argue that the Magazine fills an important gap for conservative women, some others think that it may spoil Muslim women. In the present study, both above-mentioned two thoughts were left out. The present study made a content analysis of the Magazine’s forms of presenting the “Muslim female” by using a critical discourse. In addition, in the present study, the concept of “conservative Female” identity was used instead of the concept of Muslim woman. One of the most important reasons for this

preference was that it was intended to offer a sample typology for the “*conservative women*” presented in the Magazine. In other words, the study attempted to make a visual presentation of the covered female as a model through practices. Three primary categories in the analysis of the Magazine were body, aesthetics, and conservatism. During the presentation of categories, sub-titles were determined for each category. These sub-titles were “characteristics appreciated” and “characteristics to be avoided”. Main categories were evaluated issue by issue in the 10 issues of the Magazine subject to analysis. While the number of pages of the first issue was 112, the following issues consisted of 144, 161, 192, 177, and 240 pages. The 10<sup>th</sup> issue was 304 pages.

### **Analysis step 1: The forms of presentation of body and female identity**

The publication slogan of the Magazine is “*beautiful life style Magazine*”. Here, the triplet of fashion, beauty, and life comes to the forefront. Life refers to living with “*one’s own values*” while the duality of fashion and beauty represents that fashion re-organizes the life with clothing and consumption. The concept of beauty, on the other hand, implies the rebuilding of body. The instruments of building the body are determined by the trends offered by cosmetics industry and beauty industry. Fashion reflects the valid trends in many fields including but not limited to clothing, accessories, housing, spaces, shoes, and holiday tours.

Since it was the first issue of the Magazine, it invited its readers to present their styles. In this way, it recognized women and aimed to provide them with a desire to “*be free*”. The point of conflict of freedom was the Magazine’s duality of fashion and beauty. The Magazine asked women to present their photos taken in clothes and to give information about where they had purchased their clothes. It was seen that the new image of the conservative woman came together with the image of the woman who was modern in the forms of presenting herself visually. The expression, “*all ladies who wish to wear in accordance with hijab*” used by the editor in the first issue became one of the primary arguments which the Magazine used for defining its own audience. The presentations aimed at body building contained a combination of conservative areas, brands, technology, and luxurious and comfortable life besides visual presentations.

The places given under the title of “*ÂLÂ Cadde (ÂLÂ Street)*” and the theme shots in such places covered 4 pages in the first issue. The most typical characteristic of the streets in the initial issues was that they represented the spaces where middle-class people were assumed to live. It was seen that the women living in such places wore clothes that were combined harmoniously, had been purchased from local boutiques, did not have any brand value, but were plain in general. It was also attention grabbing that theme shots were performed with young women. The clothing of some of these women included bracelets and/or dresses designed by themselves. In the first and second issues, the ÂLÂ Cadde made visual presentations of women in the streets of Pendik, Ümraniye, and Avcılar. The 3<sup>rd</sup> issue, however, presented women from Nişantaşı. The aim was not

to show products in terms of their preparation (handmade, designed by themselves, etc.), but to present women as a consumer model. After the 3<sup>rd</sup> issue, the Ala Cadde shot in Akaretler, Bahariye, Ortaköy, Çınaraltı, Çamlıca, Izmir, Istanbul/Bebek, and Acıbadem. The above-mentioned spaces simply showed the changing social and spatial environment or conditions of the conservative female.

Brands were an important instrument among the forms of body building. Global brands appeared in the Magazine and were integrated into the modern system in accordance with the female consumer profile based on the consuming role of the conservative female. Another important title where brands were presented in different combinations was “*in my bag*” that contained visually different products. In the first issue, attention grabbing products were glasses, cosmetic products, mirrors, wallets, and phones gave place to products were wallets with a, iPhone, MacBook, agendas, Momentous watches, Turkcell VINN, fashion bags, and branded sunglasses which have high brand value in the second issue. Again, in the first issue of ÂLÂ, “*the secret of Basmala*” booklet was given with magazine, but after, in none issues it continued.

Sports and cosmetics industry were presented visually within the context of body building. For example, sport was presented in the axis of comfort, chicness, and brand. Here, comfort was represented by the fact that different sports activities unique to women and men were presented in separate spaces or through different instruments, chicness was represented by the fact that “*the body could be kept at desired sizes*”, and brand was represented by the fact that sports products with a global brand value were used. Especially in the case of clothes, brands were presented with a social context under the slogan of “*the brand of all women who would like to dress well*”. Shoes, scarfs, bags, coats, and jewelry stood out in the Magazine.

The houses presented visually were equipped with high technology. It was emphasized that the houses represented “*comfortable and safe life*”. When spaces and fashion were mentioned, the reasonability of the prices was emphasized. The above-mentioned comfortableness of spaces was associated with “*resting*” and “*evasion from modern life*”. The first 5 issues of the Magazine made the emphasis of “*cheap but enjoyable*”. While the first 3 issues of the Magazine did not make any presentation about prices, prices started to be indicated as of the 4<sup>th</sup> issue. The usages of technology in houses were compatible with religious practices. For example, the slogan of “*Ramadan Drum on iPhone*” was frequently seen in the first issue of the Magazine. A similar form of presentation was used in hijab under the slogan of “*A first in Turkey: The scarf keeping cool*”. Religious practices were combined with consumption patterns within the context of body building in the “*presentation of traditional Ramadan nostalgia in company with the unique Bosporus view*”. Conservatism and body building were mixed. “*Traditional Ottoman cuisine*” and “*Modern Western cuisine*” were presented together in luxurious spaces throughout the Ramadan. “*Mobile Sadirvan*” attracted attention among the practices that made life easier.

The points representing culture and traditions are predominantly based on cleanliness culture and confidentiality. In the modern sense, some professions are presented as concrete or abstract forms of body building for women. For example, today, life coaches are also hired by conservative women to organize their life practices. In the Magazine, the title, *“To be a woman in the business life”* was shaped with the support of an expert psychologist. This is because what matters is the slogan of *“let hands touch you”*. The concepts of *“healthy appearance”*, *“dynamic appearance”*, *“attractive appearance”*, and *“self-confidence”* are the reflections of the female body touched by correct hands. Thus, *“getting rid of wrinkles, stains, and color imbalances, always the best appearance, and self-confidence”* become the fundamental arguments of identity for conservative women.

The Magazine has changed its target audience as of the 8<sup>th</sup> issue. The first 7 issues of the Magazine *“attempted to provide conservative women with a visual and identity stance”*. The 8<sup>th</sup> issue, on the other hand, introduced marginality. The Magazine no longer limited its target audience to Muslim women. The audience expanded. Conservative women wanted to be marginal, too. The slogan, *“Beautiful life style Magazine”* was replaced by *“The Magazine of ladies”* in the 9<sup>th</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup> issues. The new audience was defined as *“covered ladies, either veiled or dressed conservatively”*. In fact, a “state of dissatisfaction” is visible throughout the 10<sup>th</sup> issue of the Magazine, which can be seen in all advertisements and presentations in the Magazine. This state of dissatisfaction is not perceived negatively, but it refers to the impression created by having lived below the classic and traditional line of religion for a long time. An instantaneous liberation took place, which was caused by the “formation of neo-conservative bourgeoisie” and the “change of traditional “conservative practices”. In this way, sociologically changing conservative woman typology reflected the “desire to go out of the classic conservative female typology”.

Some points provided in the Magazine reveals the close link of the Magazine with political transformation. For example, some ministers or deputies from AKP gave interviews to the Magazine. In addition, the wives of leaders were presented to conservative community as a model. Moreover, the said visual presentations demonstrated that the current discourse of the ruling party gave birth to its own elites, who created spaces for themselves or opened a space for themselves in the existing modern spaces. For instance, they opened wedding spaces unique to themselves in Zeytinburnu as well as manifesting their existence in hotels with the Bosphorus view or other luxurious spaces. Although the female body is built upon religion or upon absolute femininity within this context, both religious attitudes and the presentation of women independently of men are disputable. What makes this claim stronger is the fact that the spaces opened for women (fashion and beauty industries being in the first place) were established through men in the first 10 issues of the Magazine. Spaces and social spheres are male-dominated. Thus, it can only be men who open spaces for women. In this regard, it can be said that all those forms of presentation under the “category of body” are used for changing the stance of conservative women from past to present. Published as a Magazine which had

been prepared simply and amateurishly in the first issue, the *ÂLÂ* Magazine addressed people with a middle-income level and partly people with a low-income level. However, the 10<sup>th</sup> issue of the Magazine included discussions focusing on “conservative women” transformed by money and capital.

### **Analysis step 2: The forms of presentation of aesthetics**

Although the forms of presentation observed in the first 10 issues of the Magazine are mostly associated with “aesthetics” and “conservatism”, the focus is on the category of “body”. What matter here are the visual forms presented by the Magazine for conservative women, as provided in the tables above. The category of aesthetics focused on the theme of the transformation of women under three sub-titles: beauty, fashion, and chicness. Here, the concept of beauty was presented within the body of a large industry and was shaped by consuming female typology within the scope of modern social needs. The hadith tells that “Beauty is the light of Allah,” and the verse, “Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth,” was used for answering the question of “why a veiled woman should be beautiful”. However, the description provided here was based on the distinction between beauty and attractiveness. Those who discredited beauty by associating it with attractiveness were referred to as nihilists. This is because the basic reality emphasized was as follows: “Surely Allah is beautiful and loves who is beautiful. What lies in our power is to satisfy our soul with what is beautiful by focusing on the manifestations of the existence and the beauty of Allah on the earth.”

First, the most important emphasis in themes concerning beauty is on the statement, “Beauty is the light of Allah” where it is implied that religion and beauty are integrated into one another. In this way, fashion and chicness are regarded as the forms of presentation of beauty. The presentations of colors, the scent of cosmetics industry, care sets and other products, hygiene, and health serve the same purpose, too. It goes without saying that women are touched by specialized hands here, as was the case in previous body building forms. For example, specialists make various beauty recommendations for women in the matter of health. The purpose of all these efforts is to create a “charming and rich stance” that visualizes beauty. In-house decoration and food culture are based on the same logic, too. It is noteworthy that “old age” is used for marketing beauty as a field of industry within itself. For example, “stress, air pollution, the harmful rays of sun, wrinkles, marks, and lack of aliveness (freshness)”, regarded as a result of modern life, are actually used as preconditions for the instruments that are to be offered for “avoiding early ageing”. As a matter of fact, the examined issues of the Magazine mostly cover young girls. Young professionals and students are presented visually. Everybody is young.

The statement, “it is easy to be one of those ladies who do not show their ages by eating more healthily and doing exercises unique to women” encountered in the second issue of the Magazine, is quite important in the sense that it reflects the above-mentioned situation and represents the continuance of confidentiality peculiar to women prescribed

by religion. The said preconditions are simply included in the introduction bulletin of the news titled, “vitamin support for body”. They are also reflected in all products or practices of beauty industry presented in the Magazine.

“Adding beauty to beauty” is one of the frequently used arguments. “Anti-wrinkle creams” are offered to conservative women, who are included in the artificial environment of beauty industry, with various discourses including “without additive”, “absolutely organic”, “absolutely natural”, etc. In this way, it is implied that absolute beauty can be achieved through nature. In this regard, some discourses are produced to announce that products aimed at “supporting, revitalizing and energizing the body and preventing hair loss” are prepared through organic and natural methods. “Bold colors” and assertive dressing put emphasis on “individuality” and “freedom” which are associated with modernism. The individual and entrepreneurial female image featured in the first issues under the slogan of “Reveal the designer inside you” was in the producing position initially. However, the said image was transformed into consuming position in the later issues. The idea reflecting the stance of the Magazine was frequently emphasized in the initial issues: “It is nice to cover oneself! That is my way, my choice, my life, my truth, and my right.” As is seen, the conservative female typology re-defines beauty, moves the emphasis on individuality one step forward, and thus wishes to open free spaces for itself in the male-dominated conservative society. In other words, an emphasis is made on going beyond the existing rules. The expression, “Beautiful and delicate styles” included in the editor’s writing in the 2<sup>nd</sup> issue of the Magazine is noteworthy in that it reflects the aspects of beauty associated with both fashion and chicness. The main emphasis in the statement, “We, women, all would like to be beautiful” is as follows: “We must wear clothes suitable for our age and our body lines. We cannot wear anything just for keeping up with the fashion”.

Fashion is one of the main forms of presentation in the Magazine. Fashion’s forms of combining traditionalism and modernism are remarkable. The definition of hijab fashion confronts us in the 3<sup>rd</sup> issue of the Magazine: “Hijab does not have any fashion. This is because hijab is not a fashion movement. No one can know that better than us. However, every covered woman has a fashion sense. That is something natural. It is necessary to make a distinction between the said two concepts.” The forms of synthesis observed here are either produced or come into being by themselves. Hijab fashion shows, hijab boutiques, and the fact that famous brands turn their hands to hijab designing, which are all seen in the Magazine, are remarkable in terms of the representation of fashion and demonstration of the audience it addresses. Today, conservative women are one of the key themes of fashion industry. The Magazine’s website “yeşiltopuklar (literal meaning: green heels)” is one of the websites through which people follow the fashion. Here, green stands for conservative while heels represent women.

One of the main concerns in the 10 issues of the Magazine is to revise “Muslim women’s” forms of identifying themselves. While modernism is redefined, classic senses

of conservatism are questioned, because of which the following transformation takes place: “the real success is to realize a new sense of hijab”. In this way, the designs of a Dutch, an American, or an English designer for conservative women are legitimized in the axis of chicness and practicality/easiness. These designs may even become the focus of the hijab fashion. This fashion requires big amounts of money, which can only be afforded by the wives or the daughters of the neo-conservative bourgeoisie. In fact, the traces found in the stories of successful young women who have set up their own businesses are remarkable in terms of the questioning of traditional roles. For example, the statement, “one day, she encountered the passport bag of her mother... she thought it was very plain and ugly, so she started to paint it,” presented the typology opposing traditional female roles through a simple reality.

Various elements are used in the Magazine for defining conservative women. Some of them are the following titles about the theme of beauty “out of the common”, “different and unique”, “meticulously prepared”, “a simple and modern beauty manifests power”, and “every house has a princess”. The discourses articulated to the instruments which are used for building a new identity are also the form of presenting a new reality. All the concepts included in discourses are the building stone of the emphasis on individuality and free will. The proposition, “people are welcomed by their appearances and sent by their knowledge” is frequently used in the legitimization of fashion even during profession presentations. Therefore, it is implied that in fact “beauty is not a secret”, but an “accumulation of knowledge”. The promotions of cosmetics products bear the traces of efforts to keep up with the global capitalist system (e.g. “why don’t you have the products used by worldwide known names?”). There is an obvious conflict in some statements provided in the Magazine: “For those women who are fond of impressive and eye-catching make-up” vs. “remain chic in plainness”. The same kind of conflict is apparent in some specific definitions such as “porcelain baby effect in make-up”.

Another area, in which beauty and body gain importance, is the health sector. Besides the proposition of “crazy ideas & aesthetic results”, the issue of “healthy weight loss” is also important for conservative women: Change your life style, find a diet friend, avoid stressful conditions, and keep account of what you eat. A different concept complementing them answers the question of “What should we do to dress chicly?”: pay attention to selecting clothes that are suitable for your body lines, age, and position, be attentive to the sizes of the clothes you buy, choose a dress that is appropriate for the place you go to, do not mix together different designs, prefer solid colors, choose your trends carefully, and allocate time for being beautiful and chic. The emphases on health involve all life practices of women (e.g. the titles of “Nourishment during breast feeding period” and “mother’s and baby’s psychology in the postnatal period”). “Hand care in busy schedule” is one of the issues highlighted within the scope of “healthy nutrition in the office environment”. Touching the body represents not only aesthetic forms but also “magic touches on women”. An “adventuresome, elegant, and modern” woman is created with the effect of fashion that contains “sparkling party shoes”. The

ÂLÂ Magazine even contains “Recommendations for the period after the first sexual intercourse” for conservative women.

Relationships between beauty and spaces attract the attention, too. Now, conservative women are also frequenters of beauty centers. Practices including aesthetic touches on the body such as detox and surgery start to frequently appear on the ÂLÂ Magazine as of the 4<sup>th</sup> issue. The emphasis made on “privilege” for the Muslim female identity during these presentations is very important because it is possible to see the traces of the fact that the incipient “Muslim bourgeoisie” has started to separate itself from its own circle. “Privilege” is accompanied by “excellent” and “crazy”, which also refer to “feeling good”. The fundamental argument used in all 10 issues of the Magazine is the “need for modernization”. In this way, it is highlighted that conservative women must experience modernization not only through clothing, fashion, music or daily tastes but also through looking at the world from a different perspective and pioneering innovations.

### **Analysis step 3: The forms of presentation of conservatism**

The primary goal of the publication of the ÂLÂ Magazine was to offer a fashion and beauty Magazine aimed at the conservative segment in Turkey – a first in Turkey. Frequently appearing in the first five issues, the sub-titles of “hijab”, “the requirements of Islam”, “religion”, “tradition”, and “culture” were determined to be primary categories. The purpose was to investigate where the Magazine could be placed in the axis of conservatism. The description of modernization as a necessity was strengthened and legitimized by such propositions as “The root of Islam is modernity”. When appropriate, a four-page writing file titled “Huzur İslamda (Peace in Islam)” and the pages of “Ala Ruhaniyet (Ala Spirituality)” cover the above-mentioned subjects.

The obvious emphasis of the first 8 issues published under the slogan of “Beautiful Life Style Magazine” was on “hijab” and how life practices with “hijab” could be performed. The statement, “It is nice to be covered” and the experiences about being covered in parallel with it, made it clear that the initial issues of the Magazine did not deal with fashion or beautiful life alone, but tried to fulfill the socio-cultural needs of a large mass. The expression, “All ladies who would like to wear in accordance with hijab”, which was encountered in the first issue, is important in that it shows the target audience of the editor. With the slogan, “a need to wear in accordance with body lines and life style”, an attempt was made to show both the beauty perception of modernism and religious sensitivity. The expression, “halal certificate for every product that complies with Islamic criteria and human needs” presented as an important religious element within the scope of beauty industry is noteworthy in that it shows the conservative concept of the Magazine. In addition, the Magazine gave coverage to the promotion of “non-alcoholic perfume and cosmetic products” with reference to Islamic sensitivities.

Another form of presentation of conservatism in the Magazine is through association with historical accumulations. Many things (e.g. decorations) are presented in the

Magazine under the slogan of “our heritage”. In this way, the Magazine defines itself as a combination of traditionalism and modernism. For example, Grand Bazaar, The Topkapı Palace, The Sultan Ahmed Mosque, and Turkish Delight are presented within this context. The colors used in clothes are frequently referred to as “Ottoman Colors”. The colors of Turkish delight, sugar candy, sorbet, and coffee are associated with fashion. One of the basic textures observed in many issues of the Magazine is the use of “Ottoman concept” for highlighting conservative practices. “Seljuk Collections” is another item of presentation. It involves prayer clothes and abayas dating back to the Ottoman period.

Identity is a very important issue for covered women. The perception of “late modernism” was reflected with articles on “the need for modernization”. Within this framework, main themes defining the identity of covered women were as follows “*3 crazy children, a perfect job, and seizing the ideal in both design and life*”. Thus, “family” and “sexuality” were functioned as two elements defining the female identity. Surely, three words that determine fashion are plainness, comfort, and chicness. The Magazine emphasizes that the clothes designed must comply with hijab before anything else. According to the Magazine, clothes must be conservative as required by religion, but they must also be very chic and suitable for the fashion of the present time. In fact, the redefinition of fashion goes parallel with the criticisms of the conservative thought to modernism. Within this context, it is thought that modernization refers to imitating the West.

Sport and beautiful life styles were presented along with the title, “*Suitable for Islamic traditions*”. Accessories for sports activities including running, swimming, tennis, walking, etc. that were in accordance with Islamic traditions were highlighted. In addition, it was seen that confidentiality between women and men was preserved in the above-mentioned fields, and sexuality continued to be a taboo. The same taboo was visible in the 6<sup>th</sup> issue containing the “engagement file” designed within the framework of religious requirements: “Engagement ceremony photos: Cannot covered young ladies have engagement photos? Surely, they can. What matters is to be attentive to the limits established by Allah.” The slogan, “Ramadan is brotherhood,” is frequently encountered in the Magazine.

Though holidays were described as the areas where women acted together, holiday packages unique to families were introduced, too. The main purpose was to make a presentation suitable for traditional life practices. Hygiene and health services such as sauna and massage were presented by emphasizing the importance of hygiene in Islam. In addition, they were associated with maintaining the heritage of ancestors. Moreover, it was stressed in the Magazine that the spaces designed for conservative people should have confidential areas for women and men as well as prayer rooms for worshipping comfortably. Another field where traditional codes are redefined, and female roles are presented within the scope of modernism, is the ÂLÂ Law page, which describes the steps for enabling women to stand as self-confident and strong individuals against men.

For example, such important titles as “Does a married woman have to gain permission from her husband to set up a commercial enterprise?”; “Who is to get the custody of children after divorcing?”; and “What rights do women have on the subject of heritage?” were presented by the help of specialized lawyers.

As the editor of the Magazine changed in the 9<sup>th</sup> issue, the concept of the Magazine changed, too. The Magazine started to go beyond the emphases of “conservatism”, which were seen in the first 8 issues, and turn into a beauty and fashion Magazine. One of the most distinctive themes of the 9<sup>th</sup> issue was “black psychology in the hijab fashion”. The concept suggested that the hijab fashion, which had been ignored for many years, should be included in the agenda of both conservative thought and modernist thought.

An interview statement in the Magazine, “...coming early for her appointment in the beauty center, Ala decides to perform afternoon prayer in the saloon so as not to miss it, thus she makes best use of the waiting period.” is an important indicator of change. The requirements of religion are fulfilled in the spare time within planned and scheduled time. In addition, a mother & daughter image is used in the advertisement of a hijab brand. The advertisement presents the mother as covered, but the daughter as uncovered. In this way, it is implied that preferences are individual. Covering is presented as an individual preference. It is ignored that men may be decisive in this matter. After then, fashion is presented based on the idea of being admired. Though fashion is regarded as an individual preference and an area of freedom, being admired and forms of presentation have social aspects. Special pages were prepared in accordance with the concept of Mother’s Day concerning motherhood – an important representation of traditional female roles – on the 10<sup>th</sup> issue of the Magazine. However, the gifts presented in the Magazine were not appropriate for the classic conservative mother prototype.

The requirements of Islam were featured under the title, “*Recommendation for a happy marriage*” included in the wedding file. It was again religious elements that were assumed to direct modern life style. The propositions, “*Wedding feasts are aimed at feeding the poor*”, “*Poor people should be invited*”, and “*Wastage should be avoided*,” may be treated from a religious perspective. However, the spaces presented in the Magazine were not suitable for the concept of “*poor*” people in terms of class differences. There is a conflict. In fact, the motive to keep alive modernism and traditionalism together brings about a conflict. Likewise, debates on Iftar tents reflect this conflict, too. The advertisements of jewellery, bags, and shoes in the price range of TL 500 to TL 5000 appearing just after the proposition, “Help a person in need with a donation of TL 100” made by a non-governmental organization built upon the idea of guarding poor people also reflect a grave dilemma.

### **Conclusion : Crème de la crème versus Âliyy’ul âlâ**

The ÂLÂ Magazine represents the adaptation of modern consumption patterns to Islamic life style based on the fact that covered women need to modernize, too. Covered

woman is envisaged as an individualistic and free spirited “revolutionary woman” who manifests her beauty beyond “classic conservative patterns”. The basic characteristics of the selected issues of the Magazine taken as basis in the present study are as follows:

1. The typology of “covered women” is visually presented in the axis of “fashion” and “beauty”.

2. An attempt is made to present the typology of “covered women” in the axis of conservatism and modernity. “Fashion” and “beauty” are the basic instruments used for this purpose. The Magazine traces the efforts of the “neo-conservative bourgeoisie” to integrate with what is modern. “Islamic capital” rising as of the 1990s is influential on the emergence of the neo-conservative bourgeoisie. This Islamic capital turned into “elites” when AKP came to power alone.

3. The target audience of the Magazine turned from all women who described themselves as “covered and beautiful” to “ladies” in the 9<sup>th</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup> issues. Thus, the Magazine started to address the new bourgeoisie emerging in parallel with the political discourse of the ruling party and the people adopting the system of values based on life style. The target of the Magazine came to be the happiness and comfort seeking of the said new classes within the system of values based on life style. The elements setting the said target were the values of happiness, love, art, prestige, social relations, career, fashion, etc. The typology of “covered women” was supported morally. The same typology was presented in a form “strengthening the female identity”. In fact, the intention was to redefine “conservative woman” as a subject and to help define the role to be played by her as a subject.

4. The Magazine did not intervene in “conservative woman” as a subject directly. The presentations about the subject involved the proposition, “happiness can be reached only if what is required is fulfilled”. What the subject had to do were told to her in every field from fashion and aesthetics to family life and space organization. Those recommendations which were supported visually were expected to direct the subject mentally. The only purpose was to bring success, happiness, and self-confidence to “conservative woman” as a subject.

5. Clothing and space organization were the fields to which the widest coverage was given. The goal in clothing was to determine the forms whereby the new subject would present itself through “fashion” and “beauty” while the goal in space organization was to reform the planned and safe life in accordance with the life requirements of the “neo-conservative bourgeoisie” or enable them to access the existing “bourgeoisie” spaces.

6. “Body building” was one of the primary factors influential on the formation of conservative female typology as a subject. All titles of the Magazine from fashion and beauty to aesthetics and hygiene reflected that building process of the Magazine.

7. According to the Magazine, another important domain of life is “money” and “the areas to consume it”. The subject may be the master of future and the communities she gets involved in only when she becomes the master of herself, which are also the values of capitalist ethics.

8. One of the concepts emphasized in the Magazine is the self-confidence gained by the subject who spends time and exerts effort for herself. Among the important successes of self-confidence presented in the Magazine are well-established values, emotional strength, physical asset, and personal and social achievements.

In conclusion, necessity was the mother of the mission undertaken by the ÂLÂ Magazine in the beginning. While the Magazine represented a large field including the social, cultural, and spatial needs of conservative women initially, it turned into a fashion and beauty Magazine later on. Thus, it converted the body of conservative woman into a subject of consumption industry. In this regard, the Magazine started to address all “elite” women, but not a segment. The break from initial line of the Magazine and corrupted anxiety which being have by the conservative women, in the next stage, with the emergence of different women's magazines (Hesna, Aysha, Noura) get a concrete evidence.

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