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HISTORICAL CRITIQUE OF TURKISH-ISLAMIC SOCIOLOGY

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Abstract. Turkish-Islamic sociology emerges as a distinct scientific discipline rooted in the unique cultural and religious heritage of Turkish and Islamic civilizations. Unlike Western sociological paradigms, which dominate the global academic landscape, this field reflects a synthesis of traditional values and modern sociological inquiry. Its historical trajectory spans from the social structures of the Ottoman Empire through the sweeping modernization reforms of the Turkish Republic, marking a continuous negotiation between past legacies and present realities. Central to Turkish-Islamic sociology is the exploration of the formation of knowledge, the reproduction of culture, and the social functions of religion. These elements are intertwined with the internal dynamics of society, producing both tensions and creative syntheses that shape social life. This discipline insists on critically confronting Western methodological frameworks, advocating for an approach that respects and incorporates the unique social, cultural, and religious particularities of the Turkish-Islamic context. Ultimately, Turkish-Islamic sociology strives to bridge the wisdom inherited from history with the evolving demands of contemporary society. By doing so, it seeks not only to preserve cultural identity but also to provide meaningful insights into the complexities of modern social life. This dual focus enables the discipline to contribute a nuanced understanding of society that transcends mere imitation of Western models, fostering an authentic and dynamic sociological perspective.

Keywords: Islam; Islamic science; Turkish-Islamic sociology; Historical critique; Religion; Sociology of Religion

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ТҮРІК-ИСЛАМ ӘЛЕУМЕТТАНУЫНЫҢ ТАРИХИ СЫНЫ

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ИСТОРИЧЕСКАЯ КРИТИКА ТУРЕЦКО-ИСЛАМСКОЙ СОЦИОЛОГИИ

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Андатпа. Түрік-Ислам социологиясы – түрік пен ислам өркениеттерінің ерекше мәдени және діни мұрасына негізделген бірегей ғылыми сала болып табылады. Батыс әлеміндегі үстемдік ететін социологиялық парадигмалардан ерекшелене отырып, бұл сала дәстүрлі құндылықтар мен заманауи социологиялық зерттеулердің синтезін көрсетеді. Оның тарихи жолы Осман империясының әлеуметтік құрылымынан бастап Түрік Республикасының жаңғырту реформаларына дейін созылып, өткеннің мұрасы мен бүгінгі шындық арасындағы үздіксіз диалог болып табылады. Түрік-Ислам социологиясының негізгі бағыты – білімнің қалыптасуы, мәдениеттің қайта өндірілуі және діннің әлеуметтік қызметтері мәселелерін зерттеу. Бұл элементтер қоғамның ішкі динамикасымен тығыз байланысты, кейде шиеленіс туғызса, кейде шығармашылық синтездер арқылы әлеуметтік өмірді қалыптастырады. Бұл сала батыс әдістемелік шеңберлерін сыни тұрғыдан қарастыруды талап етіп, түрік-ислам контекстінің бірегей әлеуметтік, мәдени және діни ерекшеліктерін құрметтеп, оларға негізделген тәсілді ұсынады. Соңында, түрік-ислам социологиясы тарихтан қалған даналық пен қазіргі заманның талаптарын байланыстырып, мәдени бірегейлікті сақтап қана қоймай, заманауи әлеуметтік өмірдің күрделілігін терең түсінуге ұмтылады. Осы екіжақты көзқарас арқылы бұл сала қоғамды түсінуде терең әрі шынайы социологиялық перспектива қалыптастыруға мүмкіндік береді, тек қана батыс үлгілерін қайталаудан асып түседі.

Түйін сөздер: Ислам; Ислам ғылымы; Түрік-ислам әлеуметтануы; Тарихи сын; Дін; Дін социологиясы

Аннотация. Турецко-исламская социология выступает как особая научная дисциплина, основанная на уникальном культурном и религиозном наследии турецкой и исламской цивилизаций. В отличие от западных социологических парадигм, доминирующих в мировой академической среде, эта область отражает синтез традиционных ценностей и современных социологических исследований. Её исторический путь охватывает социальные структуры Османской империи и реформы модернизации Турецкой республики, являясь постоянным диалогом между прошлым наследием и современностью. В центре турецко-исламской социологии – изучение формирования знаний, воспроизводства культуры и социальных функций религии. Эти элементы тесно связаны с внутренними динамиками общества, создавая как напряжённость, так и творческие синтезы, формирующие социальную жизнь. Эта дисциплина настаивает на критическом подходе к западным методологическим рамкам, выступая за уважение и интеграцию уникальных социальных, культурных и религиозных особенностей турецко-исламского контекста. В конечном счёте, турецко-исламская социология стремится объединить мудрость, унаследованную из истории, с меняющимися требованиями современного общества. Делая это, она не только сохраняет культурную идентичность, но и предоставляет глубокое понимание сложностей современной социальной жизни. Такой двойственный подход позволяет дисциплине внести нюансированный вклад в понимание общества, выходящий за рамки простого подражания западным моделям, и способствует формированию аутентичной и динамичной социологической перспективы.

Ключевые слова: Ислам; Исламская наука; Турецко-исламская социология; Историческая критика; Религия; Социология религии

Introduction

The prevailing academic discourse on the origins of sociology maintains that the discipline is a product of the Western European intellectual tradition. The conceptual framework of modern sociology was built upon the ideas of Saint-Simon (1760-1825) and systematized and named by Auguste Comte (1798-1857) (Nisbet, 1967, pp. 21-25). Comte's positivist sociology was developed on a philosophical foundation, remaining largely at a theoretical level and paying limited attention to the historical context of social phenomena (Giddens, 1976, p. 12). However, in Islamic civilization – beginning from the time of the Prophet Muhammad – there has existed a deep-rooted intellectual tradition aimed at perceiving social reality as it truly is and, based on this reality, arriving at normative and scientific principles. The epistemological essence of this tradition is succinctly expressed in the following Prophetic supplication: “Allāhumma, arinal-ḥaqqa ḥaqqan wa-rzuqnā ittibā’ahu, wa-arinal-bāṭila bāṭilan wa-rzuqnā ijtinābahu, wa-arinal-ashyā’a kamā hiya.”

(O Allah! Show us the truth as truth and grant us the ability to follow it; show us falsehood as falsehood and grant us the ability to avoid it; and show us the reality of things as they truly are.)

This prayer may be read not merely as a religious invocation but also as an expression of the methodological principle in the social sciences to “attain the reality of things.”

Significance and Method of the Study

In the East, the understanding of sociology evolved not from theoretical speculation but from the direct study of socio-historical reality. When compared to modern Western sociology, Ibn Khaldūn's approach presents an interdisciplinary methodology that unites history and the social sciences, offering an epistemological foundation for comprehending the dynamics of social phenomena within their historical contexts. This study seeks to answer the question, “How did sociology emerge and develop in the East?” by focusing on Ibn Khaldūn's thought and examining how socio-historical reality was established as a methodological field of inquiry. In this study, the document review method, also known as the documentation method, was used. The document review method, also referred to as the documentation method, is a qualitative research technique used to systematically examine and analyze existing documents in order to obtain relevant data. These documents may include official records, archival materials, reports, letters, meeting minutes, policy papers, and other written or visual sources. By reviewing such materials, researchers can identify patterns, extract factual information, and gain deeper insights into the subject under investigation without direct interaction with participants. This method is particularly valuable in historical, sociological, and educational studies, where primary and secondary sources provide essential context and evidence for the research.

This research was written to summarize the short history of sociology in the East and to describe the historical process of the tradition of social thought in the East. Throughout the text, the subject will be examined in depth by briefly presenting the life stories and sociological views of a total of 16 thinkers and authors in Turkish-Islamic history who have reflected, written, and illustrated on social issues. Our study will begin with al-Farabi, the first to express ideas on social matters.

The Emergence of “*Ilm al-‘Umrān*”

The most significant representative of the Eastern sociological tradition, Ibn Khaldūn (1332–1406), systematized this epistemological orientation under the concept of *‘ilm al-‘umrān*. This discipline, aimed at explaining the causal relationships between social structures and historical processes, is widely recognized as a precursor to modern sociology (Rosenthal, 1958, pp. xiii–xv). Ibn Khaldūn’s *Muqaddimah* was written as a preface to his historical work *Kitāb al-‘Ibar* and, through its socio-historical analytical method, set forth the methodological framework of *‘ilm al-‘umrān*. This approach demonstrates that Ibn Khaldūn developed a unique methodology integrating the science of history with social theory (Alatas, 2014, p. 51).

Al-Farabi (870-950). He defined humans as “free and volitional beings,” noting that their behavior and theories are shaped according to their needs and differ from the instinctive functioning of the biological mechanism. He introduced the idea of two types of states: the existing and functioning state, and the ideal state that ought to be. He stated that current states should aim toward the ideal state. Al-Farabi used the concept of the “city” beyond the medieval city-state to express his perspective on the state and politics as a member of a universal religion. For this reason, *al-Madina al-Fadila* can be translated as “the virtuous society.” He asserted that people come together and form communities out of necessity, beginning with humanity itself, and classified societies by size as humanity (large), nation (medium), and village/city (small). He emphasized that a virtuous society should be led by a virtuous leader and listed the qualities such a leader should have: no physical defects, strong memory and comprehension, alertness and intelligence, justice, moderation, determination, willpower, eloquence, love of learning and teaching, and indifference to material wealth, among others. Since it is difficult for all these qualities to be found in one person, he suggested that a harmonious group of leaders could also guide society. He also identified types contrary to the “virtuous city”: the ignorant city, the wicked city, the altered city, and the misguided city. The people of the ignorant city do not know true happiness and pursue worldly pleasures. The wicked city resembles the virtuous city in thought but behaves like the ignorant city. The altered city was once virtuous but has been corrupted by other ideas. The misguided city is one that mistakenly believes it will achieve happiness after worldly life. He further divided the ignorant city into subtypes: “the necessary city,” “the city of wealth,” “the city of tyranny, vulgarity, and misery,” “the honorable city,” “the city of domination,” and “the communal (democratic) city.” (Arslantürk & Öztürk, 2022:18–22)

Works on social issues:

- *Kitab fi Mebadi Ara Ahl al-Madina al-Fadila (The Principles of the Opinions of the People of the Virtuous City)* (For more detailed information about the work, see: Farabi; 1990)
- *Kitab al-Siyasa al-Madaniyya (The Book of Political Regime)* (For more detailed information about the work, see: Farabi; 1990.)

The second figure is Ibn Miskawayh, known for his work on social ethics.

Ibn Miskawayh (980-1037). He approached and evaluated social reality (*al-sha’n al-ijtima’i*) and the phenomenon of society through the lens of ethics. According to him, the condition for a society’s survival depends on adopting moral rules. His moral philosophy serves as a transition to moral sociology, treating morality as a social reality. He defined pleasure as “the perfection

of perfection.” This perfection is “the aim toward which existence moves to reach itself, the beloved it wishes to attain.” (Arslantürk & Öztürk, 2022: 22-25)

Works on social issues:

- *Tahdhib al-Akhlaq wa Tathir al-A'raq (Refinement of Morals and Purification of Characters)*

(For more detailed information about the work, see: Ibn Miskawayh, 1985).

- *On Pleasure and Pain*

- *Risala fi Mahiyyat al-'Adl (Treatise on the Nature of Justice)*

- *Tajarib al-Umam wa Ta'aqib al-Himam (Experiences of Nations and Consequences of Ambitions)*

The third figure is al-Biruni, a highly significant figure in the history of Islamic science and anthropology.

Al-Biruni (973-1051). He died in Ghazni. He worked in about 30 fields of science and produced numerous works. He believed a person should take pleasure in their work, noting that the delight of science – the joy of seeking truth – is among the greatest pleasures. A scholar, he argued, should not discriminate between sciences but give each its due, for science is beautiful and its pleasure is enduring. He stressed the importance of an environment for the progress and development of science: intellectual freedom must be granted; scientific work should be based on sound methods; science should be purified from false beliefs; scholars should be encouraged; material and technical means should be prepared; respect should be shown to science and scientists; public attention should be drawn to scientific matters; and the state's leaders should take measures for scientific development. In his research, he combined theory with experiment, emphasizing repeated experimentation as the foundation of scientific inquiry. His place in anthropology is reflected in his words: “People's thoughts and beliefs are of many kinds. The development and prosperity of the world arise from this diversity of belief.” (Arslantürk & Öztürk, 2022: 25–29)

Works on social issues:

- *Kitab al-Saydalah* – an encyclopedic work on medicine and pharmacy, listing the names of drugs and herbs in Arabic, Persian, Greek, Syriac, Sanskrit, Hindi, and Turkish, along with their properties.

- *Tahqiq ma li-l-Hind* – a study on Indian religion, culture, and philosophy. (For more detailed information about the work, see: Al-Biruni, A. R.; 1997).

- *Taqsim al-Aqalim* – a work on geography.

In history, he wrote *Akhbar al-Khwarazm*, *Mashahir al-Khwarazm*, *Tarikh Ayyam al-Sultan Mahmud*, *Tarikh al-Mubayyidah wa-l-Qaramitah*, and *Tanqud al-Tawarikh*, among others.

The fourth figure, after Luqman the Wise and Galen, is regarded as the father of medicine: Ibn Sina.

Ibn Sina (Avicenna) (980-1037). Famed in the Islamic world as Ibn Sina, he was given the title *al-Shaykh al-Ra'is* by medieval scholars and thinkers for his unique standing in science and philosophy. In the West, he is known as Avicenna and is described as the prince of philosophers. After his father's death, he became deeply involved in political affairs, and following the collapse of the Samanid State, he traveled to various regions. In Isfahan, he continued his scholarly work, completing and refining his unfinished works. He died in 1037 during a campaign to Hamadan. Although born in Bukhara (a purely Turkic environment), he wrote in Persian and Arabic;

however, his Turkish poetry shows that Turkish was his native language. Like the philosophers of his era, he was a universal thinker, dealing with all subjects under the dome of philosophy. He combined rational explanation with Razi's empiricism, practicing both rationalist and empirical methods. While rationalist on the problem of knowledge, he also valued observation, allowing for experience alongside the Socratic rationalism that held all knowledge to be innate.

He stated that logic, which protects humans from error, is also an art of thinking. With the principle, "Once a human exists, they cannot remain apart from social life for the continuation of their being," he emphasized the necessity of social life. He argued that humans cannot organize their lives alone and must divide labor to meet their needs. One of the traits reinforcing humans' social nature is their ability to speak, arising from the need to share thoughts with others. He claimed that human speech is innate, whereas animal sounds are neither perfect nor rational. Human arts are based on knowledge gained through analogy and inference, whereas animal skills are acquired through inspiration and subjugation. He noted that when humans perceive rare things, they are surprised and laugh, while perceiving painful things causes sorrow and tears. He argued that people should abandon certain behaviors for the benefit of society and become socialized through education. Actions that should not be done are "ugly" (*qabih*), and those that must be done are "beautiful" (*jamil*).

He maintained that in the order of existence, there is divine providence, and that for the existence and continuity of humankind, just governance and laws are necessary. Thus, a lawgiver (prophet) is needed, and the concept of a God who rewards and punishes is indispensable for social life. He argued that prophethood can be proven from the principles of humans as social beings and divine providence. Society forms to meet needs, which brings about individual differences and division of labor. Religion is necessary for society, as living alone is impossible or extremely difficult, and religion is needed for the division of labor and justice. The rules to achieve justice are set by the prophet who receives divine revelation. (Arslantürk & Öztürk, 2022: 29–37)

Works on social issues:

- *al-Shifa'* – his largest and most systematic work, consisting of sections on logic, natural sciences, mathematics, and metaphysics. (For more detailed information about the work, see: Ibn Sina, 2000).

- *al-Najat* – a summary of the logic, natural sciences, and metaphysics sections of *al-Shifa'*.

- *al-Isharat wa-l-Tanbihat* – written toward the end of his life to make revisions and corrections to his system.

The fifth figure is Ibn Rushd, known for his responses to al-Ghazali and perhaps the last great philosopher of the Islamic world.

Ibn Rushd: He lived between 1126 and 1198. He divided people into "the people of reason" (the elite/*havâs*) and "the people of imagination" (the masses/*cumhur*), adding theologians (*mutakallimûn*) to these two groups. He stated that philosophers possess demonstrative proofs and certain knowledge of the truth, whereas the masses can only comprehend by comparing what is visible with what is perceptible. In his system, he paid great attention to preserving the religious beliefs of the general public and advocated that the masses be prohibited from engaging with complex issues in philosophy and religion. He famously declared, "For the mental

health of the people, the outward meaning of the Sharia is sufficient.” He emphasized that elements such as poetry, eloquence, and dialectics (the art of debate) are means to teach virtue to the masses. He argued that human existence can only be realized within a society, and that every individual should share in the happiness of the entire society, since a solitary life yields no results in science or art. He stressed that women, like men, should serve society and the state. He stated that legal rules and laws are established to protect the physical well-being and interests of the people, and that “the idea of law arises from social necessity.” He noted that his discourses on social existence are more philosophical than sociological in nature, as these views and ideas are products of thinking, which is the methodology of philosophy. (Arslantürk & Öztürk, 2022: 41–45)

Works Addressing Social Issues:

- *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut al-Falāsifa*
- *Al-Kashf ‘an Manāhij al-Adilla*
- *Faṣl al-Maqāl fīmā bayna al-Ḥikma wa’l-Sharī‘a min al-Ittiṣāl*
- *al-Damīma*

The sixth figure is the historian and sociologist Ibn Khaldun, whose works laid the foundations of sociology in the Islamic world.

Ibn Khaldun: He lived between 1332 and 1406. He played significant roles in both intellectual and political spheres in North Africa and al-Andalus, and belonged to the Khaldunid family. He served as a court companion in the Marinid palace for nine years and was educated by Moroccan scholars. Between 1357 and 1358, he experienced two years of imprisonment, during which he developed his philosophical outlook and statesmanship. Tired of the intrigues of politics, he devoted eight years to study and research. His true period of seclusion was between 1374 and 1378 in Qal‘at Ibn Salama, Algeria, where he wrote the *Muqaddimah* in approximately five months (1377). Between 1378 and 1382, he resided in Tunis to complete his bibliographic references and, in 1382, presented the first copy of his work to the Hafsid sultan. He spent the last 25 years of his life in Cairo, where he passed away. He claimed to have founded a new and original field of knowledge called “the science of human civilization” (*‘ilm al-‘umrān*), asserting that no prior research had been conducted in this area. *‘Umrān* refers to the gathering of humankind in inhabitable regions of the world to form societies and transform the earth into a livable place; in other words, all that a community produces – its customs, beliefs, and social and religious order. He argued that social life is an inevitable necessity, as humans lack the strength to survive individually and thus require division of labor and mutual assistance. He also maintained that they need cooperation to defend themselves. He stated that the foundation of societies is *‘asabiyyah* – a collective consciousness and sentiment of solidarity that manifests in actions such as conquest, defense, and communal activity. Its most important feature is fostering continuous cooperation, strong solidarity, and powerful unity among the members of a tribe or community. He divided *‘asabiyyah* into “lineage-based solidarity” (*nasab ‘asabiyyah*) and “cause-based solidarity” (*sabab ‘asabiyyah*). He classified societies into two strata: “Bedouins” and “Hadaris.”

Bedouins: The initial stage of social life. They sustain themselves primarily through animal husbandry, hunting, and agriculture. Their consumption is low, their food simple; they have no

currency, market, or tax systems. They are of stern character, attach great importance to kinship ties and ‘*asabiyyah*, and maintain strong solidarity. They do not value luxury, are resilient to life’s hardships, and possess strong willpower. They have the capacity to establish states. They are braver than city dwellers because they provide for their own security and always carry weapons. They are closer to acts of benevolence and goodness, as he argued that human nature is inherently inclined toward good and remains so as long as it remains uncorrupted.

Hadaris: Those who live in urban centers with the means to enjoy a luxurious life beyond basic needs. Among Hadaris, *nasab* ‘*asabiyyah* is replaced by *sabab* ‘*asabiyyah*. Their reliance on rulers for security of life and property, and their residence within fortified walls, makes them more timid. The rule of leaders through coercion and fear increases public laziness and inertia, weakening their courage. Ibn Khaldun argued that the ultimate aim of ‘*asabiyyah* is the formation of a state. A strong community requires a leader more powerful than the social base of the ‘*asabiyyah* to prevent mutual injustice among the people. He likened states to living organisms that are born, grow, degenerate, and inevitably dissolve. He estimated that the lifespan of a state is usually around three generations, or approximately 120 years, grounding this view in the Qur’anic verse (Sūrat al-Mā’idah 5:26). He divided the life cycle of states into five stages: victory and attainment of goals; concentration of power in the ruler’s hands; luxury and opulence; contentment and self-admiration; and debauchery and extravagance. (Arslantürk & Öztürk, 2022: 46-63) **Works Addressing Social Issues:**

- *Muqaddimah*: The famous introduction to his universal history (*Kitāb al-‘Ibar*), in which he formulated the concept of ‘*ilm al-‘umrān*. It stands out for its causal-analytical approach to history long before the emergence of modern historiography. (For more detailed information about the work, see: Ibn Khaldun. (2002). *The introduction* (S. Uludağ, Trans.). Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları. (Original work published 1377)

- *Kitāb al-‘Ibar*: A seven-volume work of universal history. (For more detailed information about the work, see Öztürk, E. (2021). *The key to Iber* (E. Öztürk, Trans.). İstanbul: Rağbet Publications. (Original work published ca. 14th century)

The seventh figure is Kâtip Çelebi, also renowned as an encyclopedist and geographer.

Kâtip Çelebi: He lived between 1609 and 1657 and was an important Ottoman scholar who placed great emphasis on reason and empirical science. A masterful writer, impartial and honest intellectual, he considered teaching and nurturing students the highest form of worship. He noted that with the onset of the Ottoman society-state’s decline, a new trend emerged that could be called reformist sociology. Influenced by Ibn Khaldun, he adopted the view that societies, like living beings, are born, develop, and die. However, he reduced Ibn Khaldun’s five-stage process to three stages: *Sinn-i Nümuvv* (Period of Growth), *Sinn-i Vukuf* (Period of Stagnation), and *Sinn-i Inhitāt* (Period of Decline or Collapse). He explicitly stated that one of the fundamental causes of the intellectual corruption in the Ottoman Empire was the removal of rational sciences from the madrasas. He argued that logic is the measure and balance of the sciences, and that knowledge cannot be trusted unless weighed by logic. He viewed logic not as an end in itself, but as a tool and means for attaining goals. He maintained that the rejection of philosophy and the removal of rational sciences caused social, scientific, and intellectual devastation in the Ottoman madrasas. He emphasized that the parts of a system are interconnected, and corruption in one

part spreads throughout the whole. When reason is excluded, he warned, superstition envelops thought, leading to the danger of straying from the essence of religion. (Arslantürk & Öztürk, 2022: 68–93)

Works Addressing Social Issues:

- *Düstûru'l-a'mâl li-ıslâhi'l-hâl (Guidelines for Rectifying the State of Affairs)*: A short treatise offering prescriptions for remedying the maladies of Ottoman society, with a clear influence of Ibn Khaldun's thought.
- *Mizânü'l-Haqq fî İhtiyârî'l-Eḥaqq (The Balance of Truth in Choosing the Most Correct)*: Presents his own views on the religious disputes of the period and the degeneration of intellectual mentality.
- *Kashf al-Zunûn 'an Asāmî'l-Kutub wa'l-Funûn*: An Arabic bibliographical dictionary listing the titles and authors of 14,500 books and treatises.
- *Cihannüma*: A geographical work that, alongside maps, provides information on the histories, political systems, economies, and beliefs of various countries. (Arslantürk & Öztürk, 2022: 68–93)

The eighth figure is Mustafa Naima, the first Ottoman court historian (*vak'anüvis*).

Mustafa Naima: He lived between 1605 and 1716 and served as the official historian (*vak'anüvis*) of the Ottoman Empire. In addition to his chronological historiography, he also engaged in social history, the philosophy of history, and historical sociology. He asserted that the condition of the state and society was never fixed (*müstekar*), but rather constantly transformed into new processes and circumstances. He sought the causes of the state's crises and turmoil within its internal structure. Naima fully adopted Ibn Khaldun's "theory of stages" (the five phases of a state), but emphasized that he was unwilling to accept the death of the Ottoman state and rejected a fatalistic perspective. In his view, rational measures could prevent the inevitable collapse. He argued that in this period the Ottoman Empire needed a wise (*âkil*) and competent (*hâzık*) individual – consistent with the "Great Man Theory" – who possessed the qualities to alter the Empire's destiny in a positive direction. He explained that political entities go through five stages, each with its own distinct nature (*fitrat*). Especially in the final, fifth stage, he placed his hopes in such a wise figure, expecting personal interventions during fiscal and economic crises. He stressed that rulers should be virtuous, uphold morality and honor, adhere to the principles of the *sharia*, avoid arrogance, endure hardships with patience, respect *asabiyyah*, and distribute spoils of war justly. He believed statesmen should treat officials with kindness and affection, greet them with a pleasant demeanor – thus uniting hearts – and show generosity to the people. He considered the *kılıç erbabı* (men of the sword/army) and the *kalem erbabı* (men of the pen/scholars, scribes) to be the two essential pillars of the state. While the sword was more necessary during the founding period, in the middle period, the men of the pen enjoyed greater prestige; however, during times of decline, aid from the sword became absolutely necessary. He championed the philosophy of *Devlet-i Ebed Müddet* ("Eternal State") and believed the Ottoman Empire could be preserved by reforming its internal structure. (Arslantürk & Öztürk, 2022: 93–104)

Works on Social Issues: *Ravdatü'l-Hüseyn fî Hülâsati'l-Hafıkayn (Naima's History)*: His famous work, written in his capacity as official historian, chronicling the history of the Ottoman sultanate. (Arslantürk & Öztürk, 2022: 93–104)

The ninth figure is Abdullatif Suphi Pasha, renowned as the first Turkish numismatist, who engaged in the science of numismatics and was himself a coin collector. He was also the father of Hamdullah Suphi Tanrıöver.

Abdullatif Suphi Pasha: Born in Crete in 1818, he served in important posts such as Inspector of Yanya, Minister of Education (*Maarif Nazırı*), Minister of Finance, and Minister of Commerce. In 1883, he founded the first commercial vocational high school (*Mekteb-i Ticaret-i Bahriye-i Osmani*). He possessed a rich library and an important collection of ancient coins. He was the father of Ayetullah Bey, one of the founders of the Young Ottomans movement. He divided the science of history into three parts: the History of Civilization (narratives and accounts from holy books), the History of Humanity (dealing with science, industry, and contemporary events), and Natural History (the state of minerals, plants, and animals). He described Ibn Khaldun's *Kitab al-'Ibar* as superior to all other history books, requiring a subtle intellect to understand. He maintained that the abilities and powers bestowed upon humankind are present in every person and manifest over time, eventually leading to civilization. In his work on the emergence and early periods of Islam, he depicted Mu'awiya's political intelligence and opportunism.

• **Works on Sociology and History:**

Hakaiku'l-Kelam fi Tarihi'l-İslam (The Truth of Words in Islamic History): A history book focusing on the early periods of Islam, from its emergence until the era of Caliph Ali.

Miftahu'l-'Ibar (An Introduction to the History of Humanity and the Prophets): A work reflecting his own understanding of history and its parallels with that of Ibn Khaldun. (Arslantürk & Öztürk, 2022: 105–118) (For more detailed information about the work, see: Abdullatif Suphi Paşa; 2022. Original work published ca. 19th century)

The tenth figure is Ahmed Cevdet Pasha, who completed and published the first translation of the *Muqaddimah*.

Ahmed Cevdet Pasha: He lived between 1822 and 1895 and was born in the town of Lofça, today within the borders of Bulgaria. He was interested in various fields such as law, history, language, literature, grammar, and logic, and was one of the prominent figures of the Tanzimat era. He sought to synthesize Ottoman culture with that of the West. He stated, "State affairs are like the cogs of a clock; the regular turning of the wheel depends on the order of each branch, and the disorder of one branch disrupts the order of the others." He believed that since Western states and the Ottoman state arose from different religions and civilizations, Westernization was both mistaken and impossible. He defined history as "the past that illuminates the present." According to him, the historian's duty is to link events to their causes and consequences and to explain them within a specific timeframe. He argued that societies and states are in constant flux, advancing and declining, and that no state is eternal. He gave great importance to the concept of *asabiyyah*, noting that it evolved from kinship ties to a unity of belief over time. He used the concept of civilization in two senses: anthropological and historical, seeing it as a social reality rather than an ideal to be pursued. Opposing class conflict as seen in Europe, he argued that in Islam, there were no social classes and that Ottoman society was a homogeneous whole. He maintained that the Ottoman Empire was a community of nations whose unity was ensured by religion, not ethnicity. By uniting the caliphate and the sultanate in one hand, the Ottomans considered Islam as a complete whole, both material and spiritual. He asserted that

only sciences and industry could be borrowed from Europe, while in terms of social structure, laws, and administration, the Ottoman state was superior. He argued that the exceptions made to the *kanun-ı kadim* (ancient law) were the cause of the empire's decline. (Arslantürk & Öztürk, 2022: 118-120) **Works on Social Issues:**

- Translated Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah* into Turkish.
- *Kısa-ı Enbiya ve Tevarih-i Hulefa*
- *Tezakir* (Arslantürk & Öztürk, 2022: 118–120)

The eleventh figure is Ziya Gökalp, who introduced modern sociology to Turkey.

11. Ziya Gökalp: Born in Istanbul in 1876, he was influenced by national poets and thinkers. He introduced the synthesis of “Turkification, Islamization, and Modernization” into Turkish thought. He stated that this triad was a continuation of the intellectual movements proposed by pre-sociological thinkers of the Ottoman state. He defined the nation as “a society formed by people connected through a cultural unity.” He argued that a cultural nation (*harsî millet*) required traditions composed of elements such as religion, morality, law, fine arts, language, economics, science, and technology, as well as the presence of an elite group to represent these traditions. He attributed sociological meanings to race, religion, and modernity, and adopted a culturally nationalist approach.

He developed the concept of *mefkûre* (ideal/ideal vision) as the force that unites individuals around social consciousness. He asserted that an individual attains personality by living within social consciousness, rising from the level of “human being” (*beşer*) to “person” (*insan*). He distinguished between the concepts of “culture” (*hars*) and “civilization” (*medeniyet*). Civilization: The sum of economic, religious, legal, and moral ideas created through reason and method, and shared by multiple nations. It can be transferred from one nation to another, and a nation can change its civilization.

Culture (*hars*): The specific forms that civilization takes in each nation, created through inspiration and intuition, and consisting of the totality of religious, moral, and aesthetic feelings. A nation cannot change its culture. He noted that the Turkish people had twice changed their circle of civilization (from the Far East to Islam, and now to the West). He argued that there was no contradiction between Turkification, Islamization, and Modernization; rather, they were different phases of the same need, seen from different perspectives. He stated that personality originates within the nation (culture) and that the individual's personality depends on the extent to which they absorb this culture. He defined education (*terbiye*) as the adaptation of the individual to culture, and instruction (*öğretim*) as adaptation to technology. He stated that “in the history of humanity, there has never been a society without religion.” (Arslantürk & Öztürk, 2022: 128-134) **Works on Sociology and History:**

- *Turkification–Islamization–Modernization*: His work presents the fundamental synthesis in Turkish thought.
- *History of Turkish Civilization*: A detailed examination of the concepts of culture and civilization.
- *The Social and Cultural Foundations of Education*: One of his works explaining his views on personality and education. (Arslantürk & Öztürk, 2022: 128-134)

The twelfth figure is Muslihiddin Adil Taylan, who attended the first World Sociology Congress.

Muslihiddin Adil Taylan: Born in Istanbul, he was educated at Galatasaray High School. He served as a professor of administrative law and director at the law faculties of Thessaloniki and Istanbul. He also held positions at the Ministry of Education. After World War I, he supported the national independence struggle by publishing the newspaper *Tarik*, and wrote strongly against the cabinet of Damat Ferit Pasha and mandatarism. He acted as an advisor at the Lausanne Conference and made significant contributions regarding minority issues. He was saddened and fell ill when he could not be included in the staff during the transformation of Darülfünun into a university. He died at age 62.

He rejected socialism's economic views, especially the abolition of private property, the elimination of personal enterprise, and the banning of competition, considering these demands "economically rejectable" and utopian. However, he supported reasonable demands such as workers' development, freedoms, and fair taxation. He defended property rights as useful, legitimate, and needing permanence. He argued that international solidarity should be based on common interests rather than charity, and that reconstruction of war-torn areas was a shared duty of all civilized nations. He believed issues like the Armenian question were outside the authority of a scientific congress, but felt a responsibility to reject accusations against the Turkish nation and clarify the truth. Quoting Lamartine, he emphasized Turks as a noble, courageous, self-sacrificing, and devout race. He adopted Ziya Gökalp's views on national culture (*hars*) and education (*terbiye*). He saw the perfection of Darülfünun (the university) as a prerequisite to prevent social change from becoming a crisis. He advocated autonomy, scientific freedom, and specialization at Darülfünun. He emphasized the need to reward teachers materially and spiritually, and the importance of special education for disabled and gifted children. He placed great importance on educating girls, stating it would regulate family life and that women were crucial heirs preserving national culture. As an individualist and functionalist sociologist, he believed religion was necessary for social integration and that a society without religion could not exist. He noted that Islamic caliphs gathered scholars and artisans in their courts, that Islam was compatible with scientific discovery, and that it was liberal. (Arslantürk & Öztürk, 2022: 135-152) Works on Sociology, Economy, Morality, and Education:

- *Lessons in Economics*: A key work explaining socialism and property views.
- *Information on Morality and Civilization*: Summarizes his views on religion.
- *German Intellectual Life*: Presents his opinions on the education system and national culture.
- *International Social Congress and My Impressions*: Contains his views on international relations and the Armenian issue. (Arslantürk & Öztürk, 2022: 135-152) (For more detailed information about the work, see Öztürk, 2017)

The thirteenth figure is Ziyaeddin Fahri Fındıkoğlu, who dedicated his life to education in Eastern Anatolia.

Ziyaeddin Fahri Fındıkoğlu: Born in 1902 in Çamlıyamaç village of Tortum district, Erzurum. His father was an Ottoman judge, which influenced his thinking rooted in Islamic heritage. He received primary education in Erzincan and Hakkari, secondary education in Ankara, and university education in Istanbul. He was known for using many pseudonyms in his works. He is described as a "nationalist" figure in the history of Turkish sociology. He devoted his life to working for the Turkish nation, engaging with and solving every problem he

encountered. Although he accepted sociology as a Western science by name and form, he argued that sociological thought currents compatible with sociology existed under different names in Turkish intellectual history. He stated that the history of thinking about social issues in Turks ran parallel to that of cultured nations, and the rise from practical social politics to theoretical sociology followed the same course in Turkey. He regarded the Orkhon Inscriptions as an important document touching on community life and social issues, thus the kernel of sociology. He evaluated works such as Farabi's *Al-Madina al-Fadila* and Yusuf Has Hajib's *Kutadgu Bilig* as important social issue drafts both generally and within Turkish sociological history.

He advocated that economic justice would be achieved by creating social ownership against individual ownership; thus, the state would cease to be a liberal regime. He developed a nationalism based on the relationship among people, nation, and state. He stressed that the integrity of national culture was necessary for the nation's existence, and that language and religion were essential to this continuity. He associated populism with a "social socialism" view, stating that the state's duty was to ensure the welfare of the people, national unity, and state strength. (Arslantürk & Öztürk, 2022: 169-180)

Mümtaz Turhan: He lived between 1908 and 1969. Born and raised in a village, he experienced urban life in Kayseri and observed cultural changes upon visiting his village. He conducted significant studies on "cultural changes" and "Westernization." He scientifically analyzed the contrast between the village culture, maintaining its integrity, and the urban culture, losing its coherence. He defined culture broadly as "the whole that consists of the material and spiritual values owned by a society and provides a lifestyle unique to that society." He divided culture into "material" (civilization) and "spiritual," stating that adjectives like advanced or backward only apply to material culture, while spiritual culture is characterized by differences rather than progress.

He examined cultural changes under two categories: "free" and "compulsory." He described the Tulip Era (1718–1789) as a period of free cultural changes, Sultan Selim III's reign (1789–1807) as a transition period, and the era from Mahmud II to the proclamation of the republic (1808–1923) as a period of compulsory cultural changes. He emphasized that Westernization could not succeed without understanding science and embedding it into Turkey's social structure. He stressed the great importance of education for Turkey, attributing the failure of 250 years of modernization efforts to insufficient emphasis on education. He argued that the path to being contemporary and modern in Turkey was to value education with a Western mindset. He claimed the real problem was not illiteracy but poorly trained intellectuals and the lack of scientists. He emphasized the necessity of well-educated intellectual cadres for economic and cultural development. He dismissed claims that Westernization would cause the loss of religious and cultural identity as scientifically baseless. He advocated that Turkish society must create a unique, original culture through creative synthesis without remaining in imitation or social dissolution. (Arslantürk & Öztürk, 2022: 186-192) Works on Sociology:

- *Cultural Changes:* A major work analyzing the theory of cultural changes and Turkey's Westernization process.
- *Main Issues of Our Education and Some Remedies:* Discusses problems and solutions in the Turkish education system.

- *Where Are We in Westernization?:* Critically assesses the state of Westernization in Turkey. (Arslantürk & Öztürk, 2022: 186-192)

The fifteenth figure is Erol Güngör, founding Rector of Selçuk University in Konya.

Erol Güngör: Lived between 1938 and 1983. He was the grandson of Hafız Osman Efendi, the last sheikh of the Ahi lodge in Kırşehir and imam of the Ahi Evren Mosque. He learned the old Turkish alphabet in middle school and Arabic in high school, which enabled him to read Turkish-Islamic works. As a writer and social scientist, he was very hardworking, writing day and night. Throughout university, he was a regular at Marmara Coffeehouse and known as a man of conversation. Even in the difficult political atmosphere of the 1970s, he maintained his composure and continued his work. He argued that the purpose of scientific research was to gain understanding about problems rather than to guide politicians. He analyzed Turkish history from the perspective of a social scientist from its beginning to the present.

He observed that “culture is fragmented and losing its old unity day by day,” yet believed it still had enough strength to help people resist aimless change. He emphasized that today’s problems in the Islamic world were more cultural than political or economic, and that Islam’s awakening could yield deep and lasting results when it turned into a full cultural movement. He addressed Christianization efforts in Turkey as a cultural problem, stressing the need to go beyond superficial religious comparisons. He strongly opposed the “language revolution,” claiming it turned the Turkish nation into “a patient who loses its memory every ten years.” He even opposed translating classical texts into modern Turkish, arguing it caused a significant loss of culture.

He identified five main features of scholarship: Criticism, Analysis, Comprehensiveness, Synthesis, and Innovation. He considered being an intellectual (*münevver*) a profession with its own rules, ethics, and standards of excellence. He stressed that intellectuals must have a concern for truth, mental flexibility, a cautious and critical attitude, and the ability to separate thought from emotion. He was notable for his faith in his religion and nation. His statement, “We will benefit from both Eastern and Western sources, but nothing we write will contradict Islam,” embodied this faith. He believed the Turkish nation always recovered from hard times and rejected pessimistic views. He argued that understanding Ottoman history was essential for understanding the Turkish nation. He maintained that Islam remains alive in Turkish life and that all its issues should be brought into the light as a way of life. (Arslantürk & Öztürk, 2022: 231-255) Works on Sociology:

- *Islam’s Current Issues:* Addresses some problems related to Islam from a social scientific perspective, emphasizing that the problems of the Islamic world are cultural.

- *Cultural Changes and Nationalism:* Discusses the necessity and ways of establishing a contemporary Turkish national culture.

- *Turks in History:* An assessment of Turkish history from the viewpoint of a social scientist.

- *Issues of Islamic Mysticism:* Examines mystical issues from historical and sociological perspectives. (Arslantürk & Öztürk, 2022: 231-255)

The sixteenth figure is Amiran Kurtkan Bilgiseven, the only female sociologist of the first period.

Amiran Kurtkan Bilgiseven: She was a doctoral student of Prof. Dr. Cahit Tanyol. In her later years, she focused more on theology. After her husband’s death, she increasingly devoted

herself to *İlm-i Ledün* (esoteric knowledge) studies. The surname “Bilgiseven” reflects her quest for absolute knowledge. She possessed high reasoning skills and the ability to classify and synthesize. She argued that the science-religion conflict characteristic of the Western world cannot be generalized for all societies, giving concrete examples of science-religion integration in Turkish culture and civilization history.

She carries a “national-constructionist” character, dedicating her life to understanding and building Turkish society. Her belief in the oneness of absolute existence and that the Qur’an contains knowledge of the absolute existence forms the foundation of her sociology of religion studies. She argued that true religion cannot be invalidated by science regardless of how advanced science becomes; rather, it reveals religion’s truths. She identified *tawhid* (unity of God) as the essence of Islam, stating that the phrase “La ilaha illallah” signifies affirming God’s oneness in the heart and confessing it with the tongue.

She expressed *tawhid* in formulas such as “Difference + Unity = Tawhid,” “Transcendence + Immanence = Tawhid,” “Sharia + Truth = Tawhid,” “I-consciousness + We-consciousness = Tawhid.” According to her, all differences are manifestations of the “One,” and the “One” is God. She stated that “The belief in one God is a belief that true Muslims find correct but insufficient,” asserting that belief in the “single existence” is a deeper understanding. She described the universe as God’s field of immanence and that nothing exists outside this plan, yet nothing and everything simultaneously are not the same as God (transcendence).

She argued that sharia and truth are two sides of the same reality (*tawhid*). Sharia aims to teach the *tawhid* reality in a concrete form to the masses who find it difficult to understand scientifically, while the truth is the Islamic reality inherent in God’s commands. She stated that “Revelation is, by definition, superior to all human powers, including reason.” Revelation is divine will, a light sent to the prophet’s heart, and the Qur’an is a soul and living being. She argued that the Day of Judgment is a natural result of the scientific reality of evolution. She explained evolution energetically and stated that human souls continue life in new and immortal bodies. She summarized her approach with the slogan, “Reason, Science, and the Qur’an together lead us to truth and reality.” (Arslantürk & Öztürk, 2022: 198-230) Major Works:

- *Sociology of Religion*: Examines Islam as a requirement of “National-Constructionist Sociology.”
- *Cultural Features of Islam and Islamic Concepts*: Deals with *tawhid* formulas and the cultural aspects of Islam.
- *Mysticism and Secularism*: Studies the role of religion in social integration and its relation to secularism.
- *İlm-i Ledün (General Theology)*: Focuses on the quest for absolute knowledge and turns towards theology. (Arslantürk & Öztürk, 2022: 198-230)

Conclusion

Sociology is a science, and so is the Sociology of Religion. The models both present are Western patents and products of the social realities of the Western intellectual world. In particular, the religion-society relations in Turkish society, and more generally in Islamic

societies, differ from those in the West. So, what should sociologists and sociologists of religion outside the West do? This is the fundamental question and problem of the current research. The answer is sought through Prof. Dr. Korkut Tuna's insight: It is necessary to understand the conditions under which knowledge emerges. Alongside knowledge itself, we must focus on the relationship of knowledge with society—its common origin. Since neither the emergence, development, differentiation, nor the identity acquired by knowledge happens spontaneously, the knowledge-society connection must be evaluated within this framework and from these perspectives. We need to approach the matter within the framework of the solutions we expect from knowledge. It is necessary to reorganize existing knowledge within the context of current problems and to seek new and valid connections in line with the solutions and interests we pursue. Approaching the issue by establishing new connections is essential. Establishing new connections will initially provide significant facilitation in solving the problems that form the starting point of our study. Our accumulated knowledge should be addressed according to the successful modes of connection it presents.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no relevant conflict of interest

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