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ECONOMIC SOCIOLOGY IN TURKEY: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

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Introduction

The period between 1923, the year the Republic of Turkey was founded, and the following 15 years, significantly affected the social sciences as a period for the search of “a new social identity” and a new era of production. The most prominent characteristics of this period are the facts that subjects were analysed mostly in theoretical fields and that sociology was interrelated to different disciplines and fields such as philosophy, politics, and education. It has been observed that studies became more academic and more productive after the foundation of Istanbul University in 1933. Many German scientists who took refuge in Turkey in the period 1940-1950, because of the neutrality policy pursued by Turkey during World War II, contributed to the development of sociology in Turkey as well. Later, when Turkey went through a transition period to a multi-party political environment, the democratisation introduced variations in the scientific studies. The 1960s saw the foundation of some institutions that contributed to the development of the social sciences in Turkey. For instance, the establishment of the State Planning Institution contributed immensely to studies on the macro level. Despite the fact that the discipline was interrupted due to the political turmoil in 1970s, it is noteworthy that this field was regarded as a requisite in the institutions of education and that people recognized the significance of sociology and the great number of theoretical and application studies appeared in the second half of 1970s. In 1980s, the increase in scientific studies in all disciplines was encouraged through the liberal policies adopted in economy. Later, the collapse of the Soviet Union, globalisation, and discussions on the European Union introduced further variations in studies in sociology.

I argue that the development of Economic Sociology in Turkey, was influenced by these political and social events in Turkey, as well as by the economic policies adopted in Turkey. There is no doubt that, since the newly-established Republic had problems with which methods to employ for industrialization, economic development, and the establishment of a new economic order, most of the works were on these issues.

In this article, I aim to analyse three groups of sociologists from a historical point of view. Moreover, in Turkey the developments in the world, and sub-disciplines like industrial sociology were considered as parts of Economic Sociology. Therefore, it is difficult to argue

that the works covered in this article totally belong to Economic Sociology. However, these works are significant in that they laid the groundwork for the beginning and subsequent development of Economic Sociology in Turkey. Later, I will deal with contemporary studies.

The Philosophical Bases of Turkish Economic Sociology

Occasionally, some philosophers tend to study social problems without resorting to co-operation and specialization. This, for example, is the case of Ziya Gökalp, who focused on Economic Sociology as well as other branches of sociology.

Gökalp, who took Turkish nationalism as a basis for his philosophy, supported the idea that in order to prosper economically, society should attain the awareness of national solidarity and unity. And he regarded industrialization as an economic ideal, and argued that these ideals could only be reached by the theories of “national economy”¹ (Kurtkan, 1965:18). He insistently argued that in his epoch, the conception of national economy adopted in England was not a universal theory and that the Turkish economists therefore had to provide a scientific programme for our national economy. When stressing the significance of national culture and expounding the relations between culture and economy, he stated that, “if the level of economic life in a country is not high, no science, arts, philosophy, ethics or religion can be at the height of development” (Ülken, 1939:146).

He further elaborated on the economic system that should be adopted by Turks: “Since Turks love independence and freedom, they cannot be participants. However, since they support equality, they cannot act as individualists, either.” Therefore, Gökalp asserted that the most suitable system for the Turkish culture was solidarism. According to him, individual property was legal as long as it covered social solidarity. In his opinion, the fact that socialists and communists aim to remove individual property is not justified. In addition, having property is not limited to individuals. There should be both individual and social properties. The additional plus-values that result from the societal division of labour and which are not the product of the efforts of individuals belong to the society.

According to Gökalp, individuals should not benefit from these plus-values. The great amounts accumulated on behalf of the society due to the additional plus-values should serve as capital for the establishment of factories and big farms, serving the public good. With the income received from such enterprises, special schools should be founded for the poor, orphans, widows and widowers, patients, crippled, and blind, deaf and mute people. Public parks, museums, theatres, and libraries should be opened. Houses should be built to enable villagers to live in a healthy environment and a general network of electricity covering the country should be built. In brief, all requirements are met to secure the welfare of the society by terminating all sorts of poverty. Even when this social welfare reaches a satisfactory level, there is no need to levy taxes on people. At least it is possible to reduce the amount and variations of taxes (Gökalp: 1972).

¹ It can be argued that the fact that the Ottoman Empire did not achieve a national economy level and that it was deprived of a national state where national unity was strong had great influence on Gökalp's approach. That most of the economic activities in the Ottoman Empire were carried out by non-muslims, introduced inefficiency in acquiring welfare. Therefore, for the first time, deep gaps emerged between us and the West in the commercial capitalism and then in industrial capitalism.

Even though Gökalp stressed the significance of the economy as the basic structure of society, he criticised Marx's philosophical theory that social events in reality are economic events. Therefore, the effects of ethic, legal, political, philosophical and cultural events on economic events cannot be denied. (Ülken, 1939:146). In conclusion, Gökalp's ideas on the economy are based on the concept of nationality.

Another key figure in Turkish Sociology is Prince Sabahattin. He ardently supported the capitalist system in economy. He aimed at replacing the communal structure of the Ottoman Society with an individualistic social structure. In order to achieve that, he believed that the characteristics of a society in which individualistic social structure reigns should be introduced into the Ottoman society. He argued that land should be allocated to individuals as private property. Besides, he suggested that "a bourgeois class" should be created that would facilitate the transition to the new social structure and that would apply this new structure. The concept of "individual enterprise" introduced by Sabahaddinderives from the fact that he supported a capitalist economy. Success can be attained by "each of individuals who form a society, directly seeking the success of self-reliance in his/her enterprise instead of relying on his/her family or the government no matter the society he/she lives in (Sabahattin, 1908: 166). Sabahaddin stood for individual enterprise in private life and central administration in public life in order for the society to overcome the collapse and break-up of society as it was seen at that time.

In Sabahattin's view, social manifestations such as law, economy, and ethics vary according to the formation of the society. It means that they do not change the social structure; on the contrary social structures form them (Sabahattin, 1913: 336-338). Sabahaddin also contended that the effect of religion on economic life was relative. Therefore, he argued that those who supported the idea that Islam as a religion was a handicap for the progress were wrong. According to him, what obstructs progress in Turkey was not religion but social organization. He argued that the communal social structure made individuals inactive by encouraging them to consume rather than to produce, which prevented the development of character and social skills. Therefore, the fact that individuals are always bound to search for the bases that combine them with family, society, and government, leads to a simple social structure (Sabahattin: 337-338, 341). Communal structure does not relate an individual with others but with production. That is to say, individuals should expect that personal enterprises and social activities would enable them to increase their level of welfare. The communal structure improves individual skills and personal power (Sabahattin: 340-341). When these views are evaluated, it should be stated that Sabahaddin had a forward-looking approach compared to other thinkers of his time.

The Period of Development of Economic Sociology in Turkey

The Department of Economic Sociology in the Faculty of Economics at Istanbul University goes back to "İktisat ve İctimaiyat Enstitüsü" (The Institute of Economic and Sociology) founded by Ziyaeddin Fahri Findıkoğlu. Findıkoğlu mostly focused on Economic Sociology and methodology. He adopted a philosophical system opposing the Marxist approach, which is clearly observable in his works. He criticised Marxism since it envisages only one reason for social issues and events (Findıkoğlu, 1976:197). Based on this criticism, it is evident that

Findıkoğlu had a pluralist approach. According to him, what should be done to understand, explain and direct social and economic events, is not to develop a monist or dualist causality, but a pluralist theory of causality (Findıkoğlu, 1970:73-74).

When expounding events by a multi-factor method, he makes a kind of comparison of Karl Marx' and Max Weber's methods: without denying the economic factors, he aimed at applying the effect of economic issues on other social problems (Findıkoğlu, 1976:227-228). According to Findıkoğlu, the area of adjustment where "economic sociology policies" and sociology in general terms coincide is particularly the area that is termed "social problems". The increasing gap between the lower and upper levels of the stratified society is the source of social problems. That is to say, if the level of the poor is much lower than level of the rich in a country, there exists a "social problem" which needs to be solved. In his view, the capitalist system cannot be justified in its pure form regarding the allocation of income and wealth. According to Findıkoğlu, who shared the view expressed by John Stuart Mill, this problem in the capitalist regime lead to experiencing of communist, socialist, and co-operatives orders (Findıkoğlu, 1965: 168).

Findıkoğlu also carried out studies that stressed the significance of some cities and towns in Turkey in the economic and social structure. Findıkoğlu regarded the town of Karabük as the first heavy industrial centre in Turkey. The Iron and Steel Factory in this town served as fertile ground for the training of entrepreneurs who were going to establish the small industrial enterprises in Karabük. Findıkoğlu studied the transition from heavy industry to small-scale industry by analysing how the workers working in this enterprise acquired specialization and started their own businesses. At the same time, this situation indicates the social movement for the individual from being a workman to becoming a businessman (Findıkoğlu 1962: 57-59). In brief, Findıkoğlu contributed immensely to the development of Economic Sociology with hundreds of works.

The first Marxist work to be addressed herein was carried out by İsmail Hüsrev Tökin and dealt with the problems of villages and agriculture in Turkey. In his work entitled *Türkiye Köy İktisadiyatı* [Village Economy in Turkey], he resorted to historical materialism as a theoretical basis without mentioning it by name. Tökin stated that each society has a "social order" which is based on the relations of production. The social order is determined by the social qualities of the relations of production. Social order varies and changes according to each system. The "social positions" of people in a society are determined according to their roles in production and their participation in production.

He defined the economic system as "...a historical and social development which has an order corresponding to a certain technique in its relations with Nature and to a certain level of progress in this technique" (Tökin, 1990:18).² But he distanced himself from Sombart, stating that the first and main element in the system is not the economic mentality but the relation between man and nature and therefore he regarded technology as a mediating factor. He argued that economic systems will change as a result of the dialectic progress of the relations

² The first edition of the work was published in 1934.

between Man and Nature (Tökin, 1990:18). According to him, the mentality as a system is complementary and determinant of the characteristics of a society.

Cavit Orhan Tütengil (1970), who is noteworthy for his statements on the underdeveloped countries from a sociological point of view, based his thoughts on the idea of “Westernisation” during the Ottoman Era and afterwards with an ideology supporting Atatürk’s principles.

In underdeveloped societies, “a study which is conducted only in terms of economy is not only incomplete but also causes misconceptions”. He underlined the significance of Economic Sociology by including demographic, sociological, and cultural issues in economic problems. Since demand determines supply in underdeveloped societies and therefore, the consumption trend in underdeveloped societies is intense, demand turns into a factor that determines supply in the market. Tütengil defined this characteristic of the economy of an underdeveloped society as “a dead end”. He stated that this dead end brings about negative results introduced by external powers such as the expenditure of the accumulation of capital in society in areas that do not meet the real needs of the society. This increases the consumption trend in underdeveloped societies. He argued that development is not possible through a capitalist system or a socialist system. The application of the policy of state control, which was put forward as a concept by Tütengil, in essence, aims at developing capitalism through the state. Based on this, we may say that Tütengil is the first Turkish sociologist to have conducted a systematic analysis of underdevelopment and underdeveloped countries.

Another philosopher who has published works on Economic Sociology is Sabri F. Ülgener, who originally was an economist. In his works, he aimed at providing a general picture of the ethics and mentality of the economy. Influenced by Weber in analysing the world of ethics and mentality, Ülgener stressed that a lot of factors should be taken into consideration but that it would be useful to focus on only one of them. Therefore, he endeavoured to expound the way Turkish people behave today as well as in the past. He stated that the type of man which he defines as “somebody who does not like wasting his life by worrying about work, bounded by the records of tradition and authority in determining his behaviour, and somebody who favours lump sum at work and in his accounts” is about to disappear (Ülgener, 1981a: 209). However, he also underlined the negative sides that still are in effect: “today excessive and imposing consumption as far as people can afford is far beyond the efforts of production” (Ülgener, 1981b: 13).

In his work he stressed that people favoured living in welfare in the pre-capitalist period but they did not want to exert too much effort for this end as opposed to the current unbelievable speed of capitalism. Based on this fact, the inactivity and clumsiness introduced by the motto “we can somehow manage” completes the picture (Ülgener, 1981b: 13). The fact that the real mentality adopted by the economic man of a certain period and environment is separated from the ethics of the economy, and the review of these two concepts as economy ethics and economy mentality individually, are the novelties worth mentioning in this field. According to him, rational life, rational science, rational work and ethics of profession only characterise the West, the rest of the world is not familiar with them.

In these views, Ülgener have also attempted to introduce a historical explanation for the reasons why capitalism did not flourish in Turkish society. While the societies in the West

experienced economic development through technological innovations, why were such developments not experienced in the societies in the East? This is the main question for which he sought an answer in his work. In his view, there should be changes in the behaviour and mentality of both consumers and producers in favour of rationality and efficiency, which would lead to an increase of the national income, the level of employment, investment, consumption, savings and foreign trade. To conclude, I argue that Ülgener sought the basic element of economic development in the characteristics of the citizens of a particular country (1981a,b).

Mehmet İzzet is another Turkish sociologist who adopted a sociological approach on economic events. He argued that societies are in a continuous process of progress and transformation. People settled on land for religious and economic reasons. Then they established clans, villages, communities, cities, and empires. İzzet believed that the motive behind this transformation is co-operation. Through co-operation, societies in which professions reach the level of specialization, the most civilized kind of societies emerge. With the improvement of co-operation, the increase in common production and transformation changes the mentality about property as well. Possessing properties contribute to the improvement of freedom and personality. According to İzzet, economic innovations are also related to theories, traditions and thoughts. One cannot wish to change economic life and stick to the old theories at the same time. This is a fact. However, it is also a fact that our thoughts, traditions and laws are related to economic life. Based on this statement, İzzet argued that economic innovations constitute a motive in the transformation (İzzet 1929: 76-83).

Mehmet Eröz's work entitled "*İktisat Sosyolojisine Başlangıç* (Introduction to Economic Sociology)" (1973) is very significant in the discipline. Economic issues such as co-operation, production, value, exchange, re-allocation, property and consumption are presented again from a sociological point of view and through an extensive literature review. Eröz studied the characteristics of Turkish society in great detail and he thought that economic development "is a means of putting up with sacrifices and deprivations". He pointed out that, in order to achieve development, first the tendencies of saving for individuals', whose level of average or marginal savings tendencies he considered to be low, should be increased.

I also wish to refer to some sociologists who extensively have studied issues of social change. Mübeccel Belik Kıray concentrated on small and short-term issues rather than comprehensive and long-term problems. This is because she believed that the issues in the first group are solved theoretically. The problem is to realise short-term changes and their dynamic movements. In her basic and original work (Kıray, 1964) based on this view, she aimed at determining the social structure of Ereğli, which is a pre-industry town. Kıray defined the concept of "the buffer institution", which she employed when expounding the change as "institutions and relations that do not emerge in neither of the two basic structures but is in formation and that enable integration in relatively more rapid and more comprehensive situations of change" (Kıray: 7). According to her, if change is too slow or too rapid, buffer institutions may not emerge. Changes at medium speed enable the emergence of such institutions.

On the other hand, Amiran Kurtkan Bilgiseven has in her work aimed at shedding light on social structure and change, industrialization, and social problems of small-scale industry .

When the work entitled “*Türkiye’de Küçük Sanayiın İktisadi Ehemmiyeti* (The Economic Significance of Small-Scale Industry in Turkey)” (1962) was published, agricultural production was dominant in Turkey. Therefore, Kurtkan sought to explain the fact that small-scale industry was requisite for the Turkish countryside economy, and this she did by expounding the benefits brought about by the development of small-scale industries.

Orhan Türkdoğan's “*Sanayi Sosyolojisi: Türkiye’nin Sanayileşmesi* (Industry Sociology: Industrialization of Turkey)” (1981) covers three periods: Ancient Turks, the Ottoman Empire, and the Republic Era. The relations between the economic and commercial mentalities of Turkish society and its social structure are revealed through an investigation of the economic, commercial and industrialization processes of the Turkish society in the light of history. According to the writer, the industrialization process can only be evaluated after the identification of this ideology and after its place in the Turkish cultural code are specified.

Finally, I would like to refer to Emre Kongar, who conducted many studies that analyse the social structure of Turkey. In the work entitled “*İmparatorluktan Günümüze Türkiye’nin Sosyal Yapısı* (Social Structure in Turkey from the Age of Empire to the Present)” (1979), he studied capitalism as an element enabling social transformation and he also conducted an analyse of the roots of capitalist classes in Turkey.

Contemporary Economic Sociology

The most notable characteristic of the first wave of economic sociological studies in Turkey is the fact that they are theoretical. In contrast, the studies of today are based upon field works, and this is typical of contemporary Economic Sociology in Turkey. It can be argued that gender studies, which is one of the areas of interest for Economic Sociology in Turkey, is a productive field. One can refer to many studies conducted in this field³. Here I will refer to an article written by Yıldız Ecevit (1998), who has carried out many studies. In this article, she aimed at analysing the place of women in the labour market in general, and in the industrial sector in particular, by adopting a gender based approach. The article is innovative in that it reveals that the gender ideology has emerged for several reasons, it also shows how it affects the fields in which it is employed as well as the way it is used. The research conducted under “The Development of Women’s Employment”, a project propounded by the Republic of Turkey, the Prime Ministry, and General Administration of Women’s Status and Problems (TC. Başbakanlık Kadının Statüsü ve Sorunları Genel Müdürlüğü), which supports studies in this field and which is a state institution, is noteworthy as well. Some of these studies are: “*The Participation of Women in Employment in Rural Areas* (Kırsal Alanda Kadının İstihdama Katılım) (February 2000)”, “*New Production Processes and Women’s Employment*

³Deniz Kandiyoti 1989, “Women and Household Production: The Impact of Rural Transformation in Turkey”, K. ve P. Glavanis (Derleyen) *The Rural Middle East*, Zed Books, London., Hacer Ansal 1998, “Küreselleşme, Sanayide Teknolojik Modernizasyon ve Kadın İstihdamı” (Globalization, Technological Modernization in Industry and Employment of Women), Özbay F. (Ed.), *Kadın Emegi ve İstihdamındaki Değişimler – Türkiye Örneği*, T.C. Devlet Bakanlığı Kadının Statüsü ve Sorunları Genel Müdürlüğü ve İnsan Kaynağını Geliştirme Vakfı, İstanbul, Oya Çitçi, 1990, “Women in the Public Sector”, Women, Family and Social Change in Turkey, (ed.Ferhunde Özbay), UNESCO, Bangkok, sayfa 105-119. Meryem Koray, 1992, “Çalışma Yaşamında Kadın Gerçekleri” (The Facts About Women in Business Life), *Amme İdaresi Dergisi*, cilt: 25, sayı: 1.

(Yeni üretim Süreçleri ve Kadın Emeği) (November 1999)", *"The Socio-Economic and Cultural Dimensions of the Problems about Women's Participation in Business Life in Cities (Kentlerde Kadınların İş Yaşamına Katılım Sorunlarının Sosyo-Ekonomik ve Kültürel Boyutları)* (May 2000)", *"Urban Women as Employees Ready to Work and Change (Çalışmaya Hazır İşgücü Olarak Kentli Kadın ve Değişimi)* (August 1999)". These researches will be influential in the solution of problems of employment of women in both urban and rural areas.

Consumption, , is one of the widely attractive fields for research after 1980 due to the new economic policies pursued in Turkey. The adoption of liberal policies led to significant changes in the mentality of Turkish people regarding consumption. The studies by Ahmet Güner Sayar (1976) and Begl  Dike ligil (1982) are theoretical. Sayar's thesis, which analyses Veblen's views in detail, and Dike ligil's article that analyses consumption, contributed to the introduction of Western sociologists into Turkish Economic Sociology. In addition, Dike ligil's thesis, in which the relations between life style and income are analysed, is an innovative work in this field (1979).

Rana A.Arslano lu (1999) employed the concepts of Appadurai, Featherstone and Baudrillard in her work, in which she studied the encounter experiences in shopping centres in the metropolises of Turkey. In some sense interpreting the transformation of consumption, Yavuz Odabaşı (1999) pointed out that the concept "consumption society" has different meanings according to different levels of advancement. The writer stated that big shopping centres are places where people coming especially from the shantytowns and rural areas, spend their free time and where social encounters are experienced.

Development and Entrepreneurship are still significant in Economic Sociology today. In the work where cultural bases of development are studied, Mustafa E.Erk l argued that social and cultural factors and determinants are as influential as economic ones. The fact that only a materialist and economic approach considers man as a means of production who manufactures products and tools led to the inefficient evaluation of his moral characteristics. According to him, both liberal and Marxist approaches are full of such inefficiencies. Homo economicus cannot be applicable in all fields of social life (2000: 52, 3). Burhan Baloglu (1987) has provided a profile of successful entrepreneurs through questionnaires submitted to 60 presidents of Board of Directors and who, at the same time, are capitalists chosen from the "Top 500 Industrial Enterprises in Turkey" selected by Istanbul Chamber of Industry. The writer underlined the significance of cultural values in enterprises and economic events.

Another sociologist who has conducted studies on entrepreneurship is Ne e  zgen. Here I wish to refer to her article (2001), which I consider significant in terms of the analysis of the concept of poverty. In this article, it is stated that people who earn a living by collecting garbage earn more than the living indices of cities where the research was carried out suggest. However, the writer found that these people were in a way excluded from the society by being deprived of the urban and universal consumption styles and that they established a network of power for themselves. This research revealed that the new structures brought about by Globalisation and New Policies of Economy led to the emergence of new classes in cities and introduced the concept of "new urban poverty".

Yet another interesting example of the present type of studies is Veysel Bozkurt's "*Püritanizmden Hedonizme:Yeni Çalışma Etiği* (From Puritanism to Hedonism: New Ethics of Working)" (2001). In this study it is stated that, in parallel with the widespread adoption of the consumption culture in a post-modern era, work ethics rapidly move from Puritanism to hedonism. It was observed that university students from different faculties, who were the subjects of the research, were influenced immensely by the hedonist/narcissist culture of the post-modern era. In particular, hedonist tendencies increased as income increased and the respondents denied the view that "working is the most important thing in life". It was revealed that those who support the puritan values ardently were the students from religious schools.

Finally I will refer to Fuat Ercan's "*Toplumlar ve Ekonomiler* (Societies and Economies)" (2001), which expounds the significance of the economy in the social structure and social transformation. The writer stressed that the concept of economy cannot be defined without a historical and most importantly, a social content (Ercan 2001: 179). Influenced by Karl Polanyi, he argued that we should accept a reality in which we experience different societies and economies.

Conclusion

Needless to say, this article does not claim to cover all academicians and researches that contributed to economic sociology in Turkey. I based my study on names since the works published on Economic Sociology in Turkey, as far as I know, have not been collected in a work. I aimed at covering more extensively the studies of academicians whom I believe to be important historically and to reiterate different viewpoints that have been expressed in Turkey. As for the section on the contemporary studies, in a sense, I introduced several studies. I hope that this study serves as a foundation for the collection of all works on Economic Sociology in Turkey.

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