SOCIOLOGY IN RETROSPECTION: TRANSCENDENTAL AND SECULAR FRAMEWORKS

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In the social science tradition the idea that connects the roots of the modern world to Christianity finds a wide recognition. In this sense, especially in sociology Protestant origin of the capitalist accumulation and rationalization indicating the disenchantment of the world initially asserted by Weber (1958) has been a particular significance. In the same way it is important to note the Biblical root of modern science and technology and their secular character as emphasised by Barbour (1970). In the light of such and similar considerations if we approach the issue from the point of wiew taking the cultural memory of the Muslims into account, it can be argued that dissatisfaction with the process of modernization in the Muslim World can be related to the two main reasons among others. One is the rootedness of modernity in the Christian-Western milieu. For Muslims, Christianity indicates a deviated position from the divine message, since the original revelation of god is believed to be distorted by the Christians. In their view, Qur'an includes the corrections of the distorted forms of revelation and is the final and indisputable reference of god. Since Qur'an and Sunnah are embodied and expressed in the everyday life of the Muslims, they have a constant view about such points. The second reason for the Muslim resistance against modernity is in fact not particular to Muslims. Most of the Third World societies have experienced a phenomenon of extensive colonization that constituted the basic threat to the particular pattern of their life. Western expansion in the form of colonialism has been most damaging for the Muslims because, in their cultural memory, it reflects the aim of the adherents of distorted and rival religion.

Transmission of the modern science and technology and colonization in various forms constitute the basic factors behind the transformation of the traditional lifestyles. Since tradition, in the pre-industrial Muslim World, in a great extent means the Islamic way of life, and Islam penetrates into every

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levels of societal life, modernity has meant the extinction of the Islamic values beneath the way of life. Added to this, the search for socio-cultural particularity for developing distinctive sociologies is related to the boundedness of the prevailing paradigms with the Western context. However, Muslims do not sense the feeling of being compelled to search for such particularity, since Islam has always had the mission of transforming the reality into the ideal. As a principal value Islam has been accepted to be constituted by trans-historical references. But it can not be denied that although historical reality of Muslims reveals great differences and that before the coming of modernity as a universalistic and integrist reality, every people had embodied Islamic teaching in a particular way on the basis of distinctive traits of their culture.

There are two distinctive domains when we attempt to conceptualize the subject of Islamic sociology. Sociology is a secular analytical framework that is an element of modern society. Islam is a sacred belief system that has survived for more than 14 centuries. Sociology has roots in the processes of the transformation of the traditional structures in the West. The asymmetrical relations between the Western and non-Western world has contributed to the transmission of the Western features. This has given an end to the native patterns of life. Sociology emerges at the time period when the natives experience the disappearance of their distinctive experiences of life and conceptions of the world.

Islamic sociology reflects the attempts to combine the historically rooted conflicts between sacred and secular, Western and Eastern, traditional and modern. Not because East has been sacred so the conflicts seem to occur among East and West, but because the conflicts included between the two words of the designation of Islamic sociology lie in the concrete historical relations between East and West as ideal typifications. Neither East nor West, in themselves, can be seen as either sacred and/or secular. But, what we witness as Islamic sociology expresses the formation of the conflict between sacred and secular, that this specific formation has roots in a certain relation between East and West. The development of sociology in the latter coincides with the process of secularization. That was a happening connected with the internal dynamics of the society. Sociology was established as a scientific discipline within the formative period of the elements of modem society. It was one of the socio-culturally and politically connected developments. For instance, it was connected with the consequences of the French and Industrial Revolution. Sociology had taken its place and role in the wide ranged process of the reformation in the West.

As argued by Giddens even the earliest formulations of the social science in the West did not come fresh-faced and innocent. It has been the constitutive aspect of the new form of power (Giddens, 1985, 180-181). In the Muslim society the role and the significance of sociology differs from the distinctive significance of sociology in the restructuration of society in the West, because the principal problem we face with when we deal with a subject as Islamic sociology arises from the reasons that are settled in the processes of the development of sociology in the Muslim World. Without understanding its original place in the West we can hardly understand the handicaps in its development in a society such as ours. In principle, it can be argued that the development of sociology in the West was cosequential to the changes produced from within the Western society, but the development of sociology in the rest of the world has been accompanied by the changes prapered by external factors.

The call for Islamic sociology has a distinctive place within the criticisms of Western sociology by the Third World sociologists. The Third World revolt against the First World social science (Gareau, 1986, p. 172). Combines various discontents with the prevailing paradigms. Since Third World is not a homogenous entity, there are various socio-cultural reasons that have led to this revolt. Western domination has had a particular impact and response in each particular socio-cultural context. The rootednness of the prevailing paradigms of the social scientific discourse in the socio-cultural context of the Western society has resulted in the revolution of relevance and dissatisfaction with them in the various situations of the non-Western societies.

It seems that the problem of the Third World in general and Muslim social scientists in particular with the social scientific discourse are not so much related to the proliferation of certain theories and methodologies. Sociology itself has the mission to disseminate the unconditional premises. As an analytical framework it has to assume or take for guaranteed a status of independent gaze or a stutus of objectivity. It has the mission to enlighten the social world. Enlightening requires a commitment to enlighten, to uncover the structures and particular orientations in the network of societal life. What is conditional or contextual is taken under the light of the unconditional principle. Methodological debates are secondarily significant since even a participatory-action research (Fals-Borda, 1990) has the aim of setting the discipline for the help to the social actor. There lies an assumption that the actors' way of life is incomplete or not self-sufficient without the penetration of the social scientific treatment. Enlightenment of

the dark domains in the structural, intersubjective and subjective levels can generate a capacity of prediction and control over them.

Islam, as a way of life, that is believed to be revealed by god, has been threatened by the imperial expansionism of the West. Economic, technological and scientific components of the West constitute the secular attack to the survival of the Islamic way of life. Colonization as an expansionist strategy has had the unavoidable impact in terms of the formation of the conflict between sacred and secular. There has always been conflicts in any time in history between the two, but as a distinctive present phenomenon the possibility of the conflict lies in the military superiority of the West. When that of the underlying colonization factor is untouched, to approach any issue of sociology lacks socio-historical relevance. Identity crisis is linked with the loss of a memory having no considerable connection between past and present so that what matters is the crisis of the conception. Collision of conscioussness as a result of the colonial domination of the West has given way to the phenomenon of breaking the ties between past and present. The present global techno-scientific world order indicates that there remains no chance for the survival of particularities. So the identity of the particular is globally constituted.

Since modernization is an all encompassing phenomenon, as Laroui argues, 'traditionalism has no slightest possibility of inventing competitive systems with the modem economic and social system and modern intellectual schools' (Laroui, 1976, p. 154). The loss of memory and identity crisis have been parts of the process producing the possibility of sociological treatment of the social world. Epistemological break in such a scale means the actual cognitive impossibility of constructing ties with the particular experiences, since they have been extinguished by the Western-global processes.

The crisis of the world conception in Muslim society is connected with the consolidation of the mechanistic conception of the word. The actual conflict between sacred and secular is to be understood around such an evaluation. Conflict is between actual and ideal, between present and past. In such a point Islamic sociology can be seen as an attempt to accommodate these conflicting conceptions.

Conventionally the object of sociology is defined as the relations between the social actors and as the orders human beings have in time and space. There can be no decontextual sociology because the existential possibility of sociological engagement is temporally and spatially bounded.

The temporal and spatial milieu is the decisive factor for the possibility or impossibility of sociological reasoning. Before the advent of rational principles all over the word, the basic criteria to understand the way of life of a particular social setting was to be found in that environment itself. Of course the monotheistic religious beliefs had been disseminated across different ethnic, linguistic, local groups. But they had not a monopoly over all the levels of the existence of a certain people. That is the essential point of distinction between the proliferation of modern technology and science and the proliferation of religious beliefs. In the pre-industrial world; ethnic, economic, political and linguistic particularity of any people had not been subjected to an extinction in any degree comparable to our present world.

The present global processes presuppose the reduction of the differences in the life styles of the different peoples on the basis of instrumental or productive rationality. Monopolization of the life worlds has brought about the participation of the local peoples in the processes of globalization at the expense of the loss of their particular characteristics. When we grasp the basic factors behind the present worldwide happenings, we can use the terms; globalization, Westernization, rationalization and modernization interchangeably. What is the relevance of such conceptualization now when our subject is Islamic sociology? How to legitimize Islamic sociology in a contextual base when globalization has already meant, the transformation of the local structures, and the transmission of the features of Western society? How can we transcend or leave the circle if we have not a solid epistemological ground for the sociology Islamic?

There is, it seems, a need to understand where the controversy that binds one to follow the circle occurs. Most significant of all, there were no sociology in the modern sense of the term, before the transmission of the Western one in Muslim world. The societies that are designated as Muslim are articulated with the diversities of ethnic, linguistic, and political features. All these diversities give a struggle of survival against the project of modernization before which one could not witness such an event as the globalization of the life worlds of individuals whose religious values are reduced merely to worldviews divorced from the actual processes directing his/her action.

One of the main conclusion we can derive from these evaluations is that Islam has no sociology and it has its own way of comprehending the world. But sociology has an Islam as an object of study necessitated by the

restructuration process in the Muslim society. Moreover, it can be argued that if Islam is to have a sociology, it can only be an object of Islam. As sociology studies on Islam, Islam can study on sociology.

Sociology contributes to the consolidation of the principle of universal rationality in the modern society. Here the concept of rational can be tentatively used to reflect the process of normalization for the embodiment of secular values in a global level. When sociology becomes an Islamic one, Islam comes to contribute to the effectiveness of rationalization in society, to the one that threatens the very basis of its existence.

Muslim sociologists think that their effort is for contributing to the Islamic cause when they construct such a framework as Islamic sociology. They try to legitimize their claims on the basis of the necessity of the situation, the struggle for intellectual survival. But, here is the paradox: If the situation necessities the development of a sociology by Muslims, that situation determines the one that is developed by them. Islamization of the sciences assumes that there is an actual need of internalizing the progresses in modern science. In this context there seems two main approaches to such an Islamization determined by political or theoretical priorities. Some sees Islamization of the modern sciences as instrumentally important. For instance, sociology can be used to contribute positively to the Islamic ideal through studying the prevailing problems of Muslim society. Such an instrumentalist perspective gives sociology a high degree of validity and credibility in terms of its capacity of grasping the social phenomenon. Sociology is seen as an instrument for determining the problems and producing solutions for the Muslim society. In this approach the content of sociology remains unquestioned. On the contrary, the aim at the Islamization of the sociological perspective on theoretical or methodological levels questions the West-centredness of the present sociology. If sociological approaches are value-loaded, their value should be the one provided in Islamic teachings and tradition. Muslim sociologist can contribute to the cause of Islam by an understanding of the Muslim reality on a sociological level that is confirmed and constituted by the common principles of the belief. Considering the overhelming tension between secular and sacred and emphasising the autonomous character of the techno-scientific realitiy; we can identify a third position that questions the raison d'être of sociological discourse, the possibility weather sociology is autonomous, or dependent on the will of its user. It sees sociology as a part of the secularization processes. It holds the view that the goal and the means are interconnected and the means has its own value that it can not be

articulated with any specific goal. It claims that there can only be one sociology including significant internal differences. Sociology is a multi-paradigmatic discipline in the same way as Islam is a multi-sectarian monotheistic religion.

For Ba-yunus Islamic perspective in sociology is ideologically oriented as the Marxist perspective. Islam was revealed by god to integrate a system the rules of which is determined by him. It is the natural law of the human interactions. God created the universe and sat the rules related to its structure and change. Since all the entities in the physical and biological world act according to divine law, they realize all of their functions in consistency. As such Islam differs from both capitalism and socialism which are man-centered ideologies. Islamic ideology is based on the loyalty to god. Such a loyalty is actualized at both macro and micro levels. Being Muslim means being in conformity with the meaning established by god (Ba-yunus, pp. 28-30). Islamic perspective seems to be incommensurate with the other perspectives since it calls for taking part on the side of the divine cause.

Islamic sociologist is at the same time an analyser, strategy planner and critic. His status as sociologist makes him a participant in the realization of the Islamic ideal. Ba-yunus claims that methodology of Islamic sociology should be comparative. By the help of such a methodology it measures the deviation of the Muslim society from the Islamic ideal. According to the findings of researches it helps to policy implementation. On the basis of the analysis of the present state of social interactions, sociologists can find the clue for reducing the gap between the ideal and the real (ibid., pp. 36-37). Likewise Islamization of the social sciences, for Faruki, is to be carried on the basis of five main points. Firstly, all knowledge should be rearranged according to the principle of Unity (Tawhid) i.e. Allah is the creator of the universe and has absolute power over its happenings. Secondly, the scientific disciplines that are interested in men and in the interactions among them should accept that the world is governed by Allah. These sciences should be devoted to the goal of ummah. They should be ummahist. Thirdly, the Ummahist sciences should not be dominated and subordinated by the natural sciences. Both aims at understanding the divine model. Fourthly, Muslim scientist should proceed in an axiological manner. Practice and theory are mutually connected. Western claims on objectivity is meaningless since any scientific activity is loaded with prejudges. Lastly, Islamization of the social sciences is related with the demonstration of the relatedness of the research projects with the divine model. Researches should be

conducted on the issues that contribute to the consolidation of the Islamic way of living (Faruki, 1988, pp. 49-51).

Both Faruki's and Ba-yunus's approaches to the Islamization of the social sciences are included within the general framework of Islamization of the society. Islamization of scientific knowledge is promoted in an international level. It requires skills and organizations in order to make it a component of the Muslim ummah. Islam is considered as having a universal significance and it is opposed to the present secular system (Musluhiddin, p. 123). There is, it is insisted, no ethnic, racial, linguistic superiority between the believers. Since it is an encompassing system and the blueprint of social life, it can not coexist with any other system. There is no separation between worldly and other worldly affairs as it is the case for Christianity. All the levels of existence in this world are interconnected to each other. It can be said that praying is not dissolved from economic activity that is itself a kind of praying that is advised by the teaching of Islam. Zakat is a religious requisite. In marriage ultimate goal is the consistency with the will of god. Islam has claims both in concrete doings and in the belief of the man. Belief and practice are not two concepts distancing from each other but complementary so that we can not speak of belief without its realization and vice versa.

For some Muslim intellectuals the conception of history should confirm the idea of history in Qur'an. Adam is considered as the common ancestor of the human specie. Socio-historical events are understood by reference to the similar and exemplary events as they mentioned in the divine book. The cases that are explained by god shed light on the cases men has experienced throughout history. For Shari'ati Islamic sociology is based on a distinctive dialectics. There are two classes in any society in history: Habil's and Kabil's classes. In all human societies Habilian and Kabilian structures prevail as the two main structures. He does not see slavery, serfdom, bourgeoisie, feudalism and capitalism as the principle social structures (Shari'ati, 1980, p. 139). For him on the Kabil's pole there are kings, private owners and aristocrats. In the primitive level of social progress a single person holds all the three powers. The progress of culture has led to the division of the power into three categories: Political power, economic accumulation and asceticism as the institutionalized religious appearance of the Kabilian class. These three classes continuously dominate and subordinate the people. On the pole of Habil, there is the governed, the people constituting the majority. History of all hitherto is defined in terms of the conflict between Kabilian and Habilian classes.

Shari'ati claims that in Qur'an the concept Allah and en-nass (people) are used interchangeably. So the verses of Qur'an are interpreted as: the governing belongs to Allah means people should govern themselves in the name of Allah, the property belongs to Allah means that property should not be on the hand of a class but people should own it, and religion belongs to Allah means that religion should not be institutionalized and official. The last one distinguished Islam from Christianity (ibid., pp. 144-147). As a god centered conception of the social world, Islamic sociology promises to enhance the network of the Muslims' life.

In the Muslim societies the development has been accompanied with the respective processes of Westernization. A review of the literature on the domination of the West over the intellectual sphere of Turkey, Arabian countries and Iran reveals that Muslim societies have devoted their intellectual potentialities to imitate the developments in the West. Social scientists have been discussing the issues that are not related to the situation of their own society. Most of the Arab sociologists are trained in the West and are dependent on translating and copying Western sociological works: They are engaged in tribal conflicts between different schools of thought developed in the West (Sabagh and Ghazalla, 1986, pp. 373-379). In Turkey for Mert, Sociology emerged as the official science of the secular state. The socio-political transformation of the Turkish society has given sociology a status of solving the problems. It was promoted as an impartial and objective science, since there has been a need for an authority above ideologies and religion. It was a requisite for the realization of the secularist project (Mert, 1992, 18). However, the impact of modern thought in Turkish society has a longer history than the Republican period. It has roots in the Ottoman Europeanization in the early decades of the nineteenth century as enunciated by Türkdoğan and Magneralla (1976). Gökalp's views and synthesis concerning Turkification, Islamization and Modernization can be considered as the culmination of the intellectual debates carried out as a reaction to impact of the westernization policies and processes. But, now, it appears that since Gökalp there has been little advance in this issue (Akşit, 1991). For the Iranian case Hanson claims that Behrangi, Âl-e Ahmed and Shari'ati gave an intellectual struggle against "Westoxication". They developed an extensive social critique to indicate the results of imitating Western culture (Hanson, 1983). All criticisms do not share that Islam is the alternative to the imitation. Islamic resistance is one of the alternatives. It reflects the common heritage of the Muslim society.

In a scientific and technological society, considering technology and science as having autonomous characteristics (Ellul, 1964, 133) Islam seems to remain in the memory of people, not in the present order of interactions. However, for Gellner to say secularization prevails in Islam is not contentious (Gellner, 1992, 5). He claims that Islam has not lost any of its strength in the modem world. He explains the reasons in such a way that there is no canon low, but simply divine law as such applicable to the community of believers, rather than to organization and members of some specialized agency. For him Islam as being purutanist and scripturalist have found a chance of survival in the conditions of modem society (ibid., 1-11)

Islamic sociology as a specialized domain of knowing and as a storage of knowledge about the societies in the Muslim countries has self-deficiencies and controversies. This is not because its content is open to serious criticism. Neither the controversy stems from the methods and / or the theories that have been developed as a contribution to Islamic sociology so far. The controversy is not related to the particular arrangement of the theoretical orientations. It does not matter which methods and theories are the most appropriate or beneficial. The particular approaches are not themselves the principal factors causing such a controversy. The discipline can be given any shape according to the choice and intention of the Islamic social scientists. The self-deficiencies of Islamic sociology is related to the fact that although it legitimizes itself on a transcendental ground it works with the secularized concepts to deal adequately with the "realties" of the Muslim societies. In sum contreversy and self-deficiency in Islamic sociology is connected to its being consequential to the transformation of various local patterns of life which are at present conceptualized as Muslim society. To state it simply but clearly, Muslim societies have been under the domination of the West for longer than a century and social sciences, in general, have been contributing to this domination. Sociology could not have been transplanted in Muslim countries without the transformation of the socio-cultural structures. Sociology is not an exception to the main trends in the other levels of society. Profundity of change also constitutes a strong challenge for the conventional sociology of knowledge perspective that has been oriented to investigate its subject matter in terms of the close relation between knowledge and society. Both we can not ignore the effects of Orientalism in any issue of social science, and we can not go in the same direction with the critiques of it, since the peoples of the Orient have long since been integrated into the universalistic-Occidental project. West has adequately trained the non-Western people so that they have not a

particular conception that is distinctively grounded in and developed from within their own world. On the basis of the Enlightenmentalist fromework which is contextually a specific product of western history, a member of the so called Muslim society can realize his/her task to study and illuminate the features of the Muslim society. The object of sociology is to study the processes and changing structures which are constituted and given a direction by the Western expansionism. Shortly we can identify the object of sociology as the Western effect. Even the concept of Muslim society can have a tentative but misleading meaning, since there is not such an independent and unique phenomenon. Sociology, as a factor contributing to the discourse on the Muslim society, is a component of the Western effect. The paradoxical nature of Islamic sociology is connected to the fact that the perspective it uses in studying the phenomenon as Muslim society (the Western effect) contributes to the proliferation and strenghtening of the Western rationality. Both sociology and its object indicate the mode of transformation of the non-western world. Methodological and theoretical debates in sociology become meaningful in its being a multi-paradigmatic discipline employing the basic principles of Enlightenment which is, historically speaking limited to the contextual characteristics of the West.

Technological, scientific and economic penetration of the West has resulted in the disappearance of the cultural specificities. The possibility of formation of objects in the sociological discourse lies not on the presence but on the absence of the particular forms of life. Today, as the global processes prevail in the daily life of individuals, the calls for indigenization of the sociological method and theory on the basis of socio-cultural specificity conceal the actual patterns of life and misconceive the nature and role of the discipline. How can we evaluate the claims of Islamic sociology in studying the Muslim Societies? What are the problems waiting for clarification for both sociology and Islam in a world having a global pattern? are the questions we concentrated on in order to reach a comprehensive view about the present opposition between the transcendental and secular frameworks. The idea of the Islamization of knowledge underemphasizes the role of the transcendental ground of the already existing and established fields of knowledge. Then such an aim, in fact, is nothing except legitimization of the dominant process of producing secular knowledge.

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