

Coffeehouse Sociability: Themes, Problems and Directions

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Kahvehane Sosyalleşmesi: Temalar, Problemler ve Yollar

Öz ■ Bu makalenin amacı Yeniçağ Kahvehane Sosyalleşmesi üzerine bir takım unsurları tartışmaktır. Bu unsurlardan ilki Yeniçağ Sosyalleşmelerini anlamak konusunda Habermas paradigmasının ötesine geçmek gerekliliğidir. Bu konuyu da yakından ilgilendiren ikinci unsur bu makalede Doğu ve Batı'nın kültürel karakteristiklerini göz ardı etmeden Yeniçağ Kahvehanelerine Global bir perspektiften bakma gerekliliğidir. Düşünce Tarihi perspektifi Yeniçağ Kahvehane literatürünün değinmesi gereken üçüncü unsurdur. Bu bağlamda tartıştığımız konu bu türden sosyalleşmelerin kurumsal olmaması durumu dikkate alınması gerekliliğidir. Bu makalenin değindiği son unsur da Kahvehaneler ile ilgilenirken kullanılan ilk el kaynaklar hakkındadır. Daha önce kullanılmamış ve bazen de Kahvehane dışı kaynak kullanımının bu makalede Yeniçağ Sosyalleşmeleri hakkında daha geniş bir perspektif kazanmak açısından önemi vurgulanmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Kahvehane, Sosyalleşme, Yeniçağ.

Enlightenment sociability is a well-established subject among scholars studying the European eighteenth century. Most of these studies have either expanded, or more recently critiqued, Habermas' model, which emphasises the emergence of a modern Öffentlichkeit, or in English, 'public sphere'. In his *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Habermas used eighteenth-century British coffeehouse culture to illustrate the social transformation European society

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underwent in its move towards modernization.¹ In particular, he argued that an alternative political existence, which at times provided a critique of the state, was first created in England in the coffeehouses. Recent studies of Ottoman sociability and cosmopolitanism,² in particular investigations of the coffeehouses that were established throughout the Ottoman Empire, which were opened a few decades earlier than in Europe, have also tended to work within Habermasian framework. In this review of the research on Ottoman coffeehouses, we argue for the need to move away from the Habermasian public-private dichotomy and equally for the need to adopt a transnational framework that does not consider European/Western and Ottoman/Eastern as clearly defined and opposing social categories. In fact, converging research and data give historians enough space and material for offering a comparative analyses and a perhaps overly ambitious, but equally useful transnational framework both in European and Ottoman history. This paper demonstrates that a multi-focal reading enables a re-consideration and expansion of our understanding of coffeehouse sociability and intellectual interactions both in general, and in geographically and chronologically specific sites.

Before moving on to the approaches to coffeehouses it is useful to mention shortly its chronology. There is little evidence regarding the early stages of coffee consumption or the appearance and structure of coffeehouses. While the discovery and use of coffee goes back to the fifteenth century in the Arabian Peninsula and some parts of northern Africa, coffee and coffeehouses were first introduced to Mediterranean trading posts like Istanbul and Venice in the second half of the sixteenth century and through the Ottoman Empire to Vienna. It is known that there were open-air coffeehouses in Algiers frequented by the Şazeliyye sect, and by the 1630s, the drink was available in private houses and on the streets. It spread though the harbour cities of the Muslim world before arriving in Europe. Omer Carlier notes that coffee came to Venice in 1590 and that the first coffeehouse was established in 1650 in England.³ In the Islamic world, the cities of Mecca, Cairo and Istanbul came to be known as major centres of coffeehouse culture, while London, Paris and Vienna became their European city

1 Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989).

2 Harun Küçük, "The Case for the Ottoman Enlightenment: Natural Philosophy and Cosmopolitanism in Eighteenth-Century Istanbul," *Perspectives on Europe* 42/2 (2012), 108-110.

3 Omer Carlier, "Magrib Kahvehanesi: Erkek Sosyalliği ve Yurttaşlık Hareketleri," in *Doğu'da Kahve ve Kahvehaneler*, eds. Hélène Desmet-Grégoire and François Georgeon (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1999), 198.

counterparts. From these locations it further expanded to France and England in the seventeenth and from these it almost simultaneously reached other destinations in Europe, Persia and India.⁴

In the Ottoman Empire the date of the opening of coffeehouses in Anatolia, or more specifically in Istanbul, is given by some contemporary historians as around the 1550s. Katip Çelebi in his *Mizânü'l-Hakk fi İhtiyâri'l-Ehakk* and Gelibolulu Mustafa Ali in his *Mevâidü'n-Nefâis fi Kavâidi'l-Mecâlis* gives the year 960 (1552-3) as the opening date of the first coffeehouse.⁵ A sixteenth-century Ottoman historian named Peçevi İbrahim Efendi states that around the year 962 (1554-5), two tradesmen from Aleppo and Damascus each started to sell coffee, adding that before this date, it was unknown. In Istanbul, Peçevi reports that these shops were frequented by groups of men of letters - literati - but also some pleasure-seeking idle men.⁶ Although it initially encountered a great deal of resistance and prohibitions from the religious strata, state officials and Sultan Murad III, coffee was eventually established as a drink acceptable to Muslims and coffeehouses as social venues spread around Istanbul to become major aspects of social life. In fact the era that gain importance in historiography of coffeehouses are the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries where they have been associated to new forms of sociability and have intellectual/political outcomes.

The literature on the history of coffee spans a wide range of topics from its value as a new economic commodity, the creation of a new form of sociability, discussions on public space and opinion (related to how these spaces came to be perceived as a threat to the authorities), the influence of coffeehouses on the republic of letters and literature and the democratization of recreational spaces. These are in fact similar traits that coffeehouses which are astonishingly established within a short span of time in a variety of geographical locus share. However, histories of specific societies tend to under estimate or just neglect these comparisons.

4 Cemal Kafadar, "A History of Coffee," unpublished paper delivered at the XIII Congress of the International Economic History Association (IEHA) (Buenos Aires, Argentina, 22-26 July 2002). <http://sites.duke.edu/rethinkingglobalcities/files/2014/09/64Kafadar16-coffeehistory.pdf> (10.07.2016).

5 Quoted Cem Sökmen, *Aydınların İletişim Ortamı Olarak Eski İstanbul Kahvehaneleri* (Istanbul: Ötüken, 2011), 38.

6 Peçevi İbrahim Efendi, *Peçevi Tarihi*, haz. Bekir Sıtkı Baykal, 2 vols. (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1981), vol. I, 258.

In the literature on Ottoman coffeehouses, two issues predominate. First, most studies begin, as we did, by addressing the issues of origins, and identifying the Middle East and the Ottoman Empire as the source. Second, as in the studies of coffeehouses in Western Europe, Ottoman historians emphasize sociability - the coffeehouse was a novel social space where distinctions of rank were ignored, social, intellectual and political information was exchanged, and various forms of entertainment took place. Here the creation of an alternative space for civic/lay cultural tradition, or rather the creation of the public sphere, becomes a contested issue.⁷ Consequently, the arguments interpret the prohibition of coffeehouses in terms of the politicization of sociability, presenting these places as hotbeds of rebellion.

However, most studies remain within the common approach to Ottoman modern/public history, which works within a framework of conflicting dualities of modern/traditional and Western/Islamic dichotomies. We argue that the understanding of coffeehouse sociability in the Early Modern world would benefit from a global perspective. Such a perspective would allow a more nuanced understanding of coffee house sociability, such as that suggested in recent descriptions of coffeehouses as:

spaces [that] functioned like passages or thresholds evoking the creation of alternative public dispositions. They were heterogeneous zones with variant expectations, pleasures, and tastes held by habitués. Because of their multifaceted, contrasting, incongruous spatialities, the coffeehouse created indeterminate and equivocal public event-spaces.⁸

Almost every study on coffeehouses finds itself in dialogue with the Habermas. The 'public sphere' which is very much under scrutiny nowadays, according

7 The most exemplary discussion of coffee and coffeehouses in more recent literature is found in the Encyclopaedia of Istanbul, where several specific coffeehouses are dealt with as individual article; *İstanbul Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1994), s.v. "Kahvehane," 394; this topic has also attracted M.A. and Ph.D. students, whose theses were published later. The most well-known example is Yaşar Ocak's (see below), but see also Sökmen, *Aydınların İletişim Ortamı*.

8 Uğur Kömeçoğlu, "The Publicness and Sociabilities of the Ottoman Coffeehouse," *Public* 12 (2005), 15. For works that contributed to such perspective see Ralph Hattox, *Coffee and Coffeehouse the Origins of a Social Beverage in the Medieval Near East*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985), 130. Especially the last chapter "The Coffeehouse: Social Norms" and *Coffee and Coffeehouse*, Margaret A. Mills, 148.

to Habermas, was formed in the late seventeenth century.⁹ Without examining in detail what Habermas means by this term it is useful here to look at what the critics of a Habermasian understanding of public sphere have to say.

Nowadays, there is an attempt to break down the dichotomies between these spheres again. Habermas' concept poses problems even for European models of public/private spheres. Habermas' public sphere, admittedly a political ideal, has come under criticism due to its false distinction between a public sphere and a private sphere.¹⁰ For instance, eighteenth-century usages of the terms 'public' and 'private' did not always match Habermas' interpretation. To be in a private space in the eighteenth century meant to be in your own company, and the public sphere did not necessarily signify the space outside the home.¹¹ Any activity that took place in the home could be regarded as 'public', as it may have occurred in the presence of others.

Public sphere-private sphere discussions in the historiography have been challenged by more recent arguments that women regularly participated in the so-called public sphere, and treated the so-called private sphere as public. One of the many examples is provided by Susan Whyman in her study of the family records of the Verneys. She argues that:

The Verney archive challenges this rigid model of gender roles and instead finds overlap and complexities. In fact, news was available in ladies' drawing rooms, as was liquid consumption and political gossip. Politics similarly dominated visits, especially before elections. Aunt Gardiner might be chastised for her gambling, but she sent her best political secrets after a day at cards. Her Covent Garden parlour was a site of female sovereignty with little distinction between public and private spheres.¹²

Although Whyman's observations are valuable in the sense that leisure time for the Verney ladies was used for a variety of purposes and it was not just leisure for leisure's sake, Whyman could not find evidence to locate the Verney ladies in

9 Habermas, *Public Sphere*, 18-9.

10 Derya Gürses Tarbuck, "Kahvehanelerin Avrupa Düşünce Tarihindeki Yeri Üzerine," *Cogito* 68-69 (2011-2012), 317-26.

11 Patricia Meyer Spacks, *Privacy: Concealing the Eighteenth-Century Self* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press), 2003.

12 Susan E. Whyman, *Sociability and Power in Late-Stuart England: The Cultural Worlds of the Verneys 1660-1720* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 108.

the intellectual domain of the associational world, nor has any historian who has dealt with women's involvement in club sociability in the eighteenth century. As Whyman says,

Their venues did not lie in the institutional world of clubs, associations, and rational debate that he [Habermas] envisioned. Instead, the Verneys rode privately in public parks and displayed themselves publicly in the privacy of the home.¹³

Similarly, the use of the public and private sphere in Habermasian terms creates a very limited version of sociability for other societies. In the Ottoman Empire, the idea of *selamlık* (the semi-public area in the house used for gatherings), testifies to another type of sociability. Selma Yazıcı Özkoçak, in her article on Ottoman Coffeehouse sociability, talks about it:

A diary of an Ottoman dervish informs us the types of occasions that were accommodated in the private houses of seventeenth-century Istanbul... apparently, he did not live in a very smart house but his house had a special room, *selamlık* (literally meaning reception hall), which accommodated his male guests whom he knew mostly from his religious order, and it is there that he normally served coffee and other refreshments (*şerbet*) to them following the dinner. Books were also exchanged and read aloud, and probably debated in these intellectual meetings.¹⁴

However, Özkoçak's work is self-admittedly Habermasian, as it uses the same framework suggested by Habermas: i.e. the public-private dichotomy and the politicization of public sphere:

This public sphere created in Istanbul coffeehouses, both literally/cultural and political, might have provided the training ground, at some point, for the emergence of a critical public within the current regime, as Habermas pictured in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European Context.¹⁵

It should be noted here again that the Habermasian framework with respect to European Early Modern sociabilities has been abandoned for some time and is deemed old fashioned. There is a necessity to look for spaces/places of sociability

13 *Ibid.*

14 Selma Akyazıcı Özkoçak, "Coffeehouses: Rethinking the Public and Private in Early Modern Istanbul," *Journal of Urban History* 33/6 (2007), 977.

15 *Ibid.*, 975.

both in Early Modern Europe and the Ottoman World that go beyond the public-private distinction. Brian Cowan's work on the subject has some useful suggestions, which could be taken into consideration.¹⁶ Cowan puts forward the idea that coffeehouse culture in the Early Modern World should be regarded as a part of a 'Global History'.¹⁷ By doing so, one could, with relative ease, disregard the Habermasian claim to the West's modernity, and scholars' efforts to tag Eastern sociabilities along with it. Once it has been regarded as a Global Early Modern experience, it would be beneficial to look for coffeehouse sociabilities for what they are:

Caffeinated modernity was not waiting to happen in the seventeenth century, but certain elements with British society, such as the virtuosi who promoted coffee drinking and the overseas merchants who took to importing it in increasingly large quantities, were particularly receptive to encouraging the popularity of coffee drinking and promoting the coffeehouse as a central institution of urban life.¹⁸

There are several other pertinent issues that emerge out of this sociability and social stratification framework which have obvious similarities in different geographical locations. After the spread of coffeehouses in cities, certain distinctions arose, especially in big cities like Istanbul. First, their size and location was an element of differentiation between them; there were small neighbourhood coffeehouses and bigger, more cosmopolitan establishments located around city centres. Secondly, social and political factional differentiations began to emerge according to their clientele's vocational and social status identifications. In general, however, the coffeehouse emerged as a social centre where different social groups from various social hierarchies could come together using terms like 'civil,' 'public' and 'democratic' or 'secular' spaces. This was true particularly for larger, more centrally-located coffeehouses. The coffeehouses, as Hattox remarks, also offered for the first time a legitimate form of night-time socializing. Although early on, there were many religious, legal and governmental discussions about its acceptability, in fact in contrast to tavern/wine-houses, the coffeehouse opened up a respectable leisure space outside the home for the Islamic world. Of course we should not forget that we are talking about a predominantly adult male forum.

16 Brian Cowan, *The Social Life of Coffee, the Emergence of the British Coffeehouse* (New Haven: Yale, 2005).

17 *Ibid.*, 258.

18 *Ibid.*, 262.

An important dimension of coffeehouse literature is the argument for the politicization of the public, which resumes in the discussion that in these spaces there is little adherence to existing social stratifications. That is, everyone may enter without any restriction and assemblymen as well as other public servants mix in the same place. In the Ottoman case, one of the complaints is that people from different social backgrounds and status come together in these coffeehouses, which are seen as a serious threat to conventional norms of sociability.¹⁹ Cemal Kafadar, one of the first Ottoman historians who talked of the coffeehouse as a public sphere, gives examples of coffee gatherings of different social-status groups within the dervish lodge. He points out that in the *Sohbetnâme*, which narrates the social life of a dervish,

We learn of the intricate web of relationships established, on the basis of family ties as well as order affiliation and mahalle solidarity, between that social world and other sectors of Ottoman society: most notably, the *esnaf* (shop owner-artisans) and mid-level members of the ‘askeri’ (military/administrative) class. Numerous tradesmen (spice-sellers, grocers, bakers, book binders, quilt-makers and others) are recounted at various social gatherings in Seyyid Hasan’s diary.²⁰

Although we see that the dervish does not talk much about coffeehouses, he gives various examples of coffee gatherings.²¹

Kafadar also argued on the emergence of a bourgeoisie in Early Modern Istanbul immediately investing in the lucrative coffee enterprise which provides a platform for mobilizing public opinion and political action as a side effect.²² According to Kafadar, coffeehouses “had fallen on fertile ground and turned out to be famously user-friendly for those urbanites who constituted their clientele.”²³

19 Steve Pincus, ““Coffee Politicians Does Create”: Coffeehouses and Restoration Political Culture,” *The Journal of Modern History* 67/4 (1995), 814; Ali Çaksu, “The Janissary Coffeehouse in Late 18th-Century Istanbul,” in *Ottoman Tulips, Ottoman Coffee Leisure and Lifestyle in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Dana Sajdi (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 117.

20 Cemal Kafadar, “Self and Others: The Diary of a Dervish in Seventeenth Century Istanbul and First-Person Narratives in Ottoman Literature,” *Studia Islamica* 69 (1989), 121-150.

21 *Ibid.*, 141.

22 Cemal Kafadar “How Dark is the History of the Night, How Black the Story of Coffee, How Bitter the Tale of Love: The Changing Measure of Leisure and Pleasure in Early Modern Istanbul” in *Medieval and Early Modern Performance in the Eastern Mediterranean*, eds. Arzu Öztürkmen and Evelyn Birge Vitz (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2014), 245-6.

23 *Ibid.*, 250

Drawing on the letters of Grand Vizier Koca Sinan Pasha (d.1596), Kafadar argues that coffeehouses transformed themselves into “places where political matters were debated, negotiated, or subjected myriad diversions and subversions.”²⁴ Similar arguments could be seen in Kafadar’s earlier work titled ‘A History of Coffee,’ with an added element of secularism attributed to the Early Modern coffeehouses as providing a new mode of sociability, which was far removed from any religious affiliated places/spaces.²⁵

These places then are seen as hubs of Habermasian modernity, in that they became centres where public opinion was formed and spread. There are various works that mention the role of coffeehouses as places where conversations relating to the state took place, resulting in a reaction by state authorities. They came to be regarded as a means of creating critical ‘publicness’ and disruptive political sociabilities leading to a public opinion formed outside the sphere of the state and relevant institutions. This led to restrictions and the closing down of some coffeehouses in the Ottoman Empire.²⁶ Currently, the topic of prohibitions and reasons for such actions dominates discussions in coffeehouse literature.²⁷

The spread of coffeehouses, spaces of uncontrolled public discussions/gossips, in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries alarmed the Ottoman state as well. According to Hattox, the first prohibition on which there is a detailed report was an establishment in Mecca in 1511.²⁸ Starting from the inner wall, coffeehouses were banned from the old central town area of Istanbul in 1567, and at various times in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Though there are

24 *Ibid.*, 252

25 Kafadar, “A History of Coffee.”

26 Ahmet Yaşar, “Erken Modern Dönem Osmanlı’da Kamu Mekanı Üzerine Mücadele: Kahvehane Yasaklamaları,” *Uluslararası XV. Türk Tarih Kongresi* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2006), 1406-1407; Cengiz Kırılı, “Kahvehaneler ve Hafiyeler: 19. Yüzyıl Ortalarında Osmanlı’da Sosyal Kontrol,” *Toplum ve Bilim* 83 (1999-2000), 58-77; Kömeçoğlu, “Publicness,” 16-7.

27 Ahmet Yaşar, “18. Yüzyılın Sonunda Eyüp Kahvehaneleri,” *VIII. Eyüp Sultan Sempozyumu* (İstanbul: Eyüp Belediyesi Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü, 2004), 263-4. Hasan Sanır makes Habermasian connections directly and talks about the rise of an opposition to the government in these new public spaces: “Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Kamusalığın Oluşumu Sürecinde Kahvehanelerin Rolü Üzerine Sosyolojik Bir Değerlendirme,” *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi* 13 (2010), 185-210.

28 Hattox, *Coffee and Coffeehouses*, 30-1. The whole of chapter 3 is on prohibitions in the Near East.

some doubts emerging now regarding how successful this attempt was, it is also recorded that in controlled areas such as the vicinity of state institutions, many coffeehouses were shut down.

The examples that were particularly associated with rebellions were, for instance, the Janissary coffeehouses. Although the issue of Janissaries is among the most contested and debated topics in Ottoman History, it has been argued that these were seen as very dangerous elements in the spread of treacherous ideas since: “According to some sources, non-Janissaries also visited these cafes. In some coffee houses, at least at the famous Çardak coffee house, visitors of various ethnic and religious origins frequented the place.”²⁹ They seem to have been involved in several rebellions, making them the group of checks and balances of absolutism, and one of the “most seditious elements of the urban population.”³⁰ And in fact, the Patrona Halil rebellion of 1730 is given as an example. Halil who was a Janissary engaged in petty trade and crafts and frequented coffeehouses, was the instigator of a mob uprising in 1730, which replaced Sultan Ahmed III, the famous sultan of the Tulip Age, which represented an age of novel social practices, with Mahmud I, ending the Tulip period. Halil. In fact, after the suppression of the revolt, many of the coffeehouses were destroyed and the owners executed in front of their shops, accused of being centres or supporters of the riot.

This novel, socially provoking and highly politicised sphere was a widely-observed and complained-about place globally by the ruling elite. In Western Europe, similar examples of such suspicions are discussed in Steve Pincus’ article, where he quotes the Marquis of Newcastle’s conversation with King Charles II. The Marquis says: “Every man is now become a statesman,” referring to the spread of awareness of the public on domestic or foreign news.”³¹ Certainly, this was not good, as ‘state conversations’ (as they were called by the Ottomans), were matters for the king/sultan and his men, and should not turn into ordinary talk. The Marquis consequently recommends that there should be restrictions placed

29 Cabi Ömer Efendi, *Cabi Tarihi*, ed. Mehmet Ali Beyhan , 2 vols, (Ankara: TTK, 2003) vol. 1, 182; Şanizade Ataullah Efendi, *Tarih-i Şanizade* (Istanbul: Çamlıca Yayınları, 2008) vol. 2, 41-2; Reşad Ekrem Koçu, *Yeniçeriler* (Istanbul: Koçu Yayınları, 1964), 286; *Istanbul Ansiklopedisi*, s.v. “Çardak İskelesi Yeniçeri Kahvehanesi” also cited in Çaksu, “The Janissary Coffeehouses,” 121.

30 Çaksu, “The Janissary Coffeehouses,” 119.

31 Pincus, ““Coffee Politicians Does Create,”” 807-834.

on the availability and circulation of news so that “all our discourse will be of hunting and hawking, bowling, cocking and such things.”³²

As a matter of fact, coffeehouses soon became convenient drop-in places for assemblymen and other public servants. Furthermore, Peçevi comments unhappily that some of them took part in the business and earned a sizeable income from it. They became an unavoidable sight in the city also gaining some pleasant attributes in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In fact, in the Ottoman Empire as well as in Europe and elsewhere, the coffeehouse, it is said, was not only somewhere you could drink coffee and meet people, but it became a multifunctional sphere. Instead of the Habermasian approach a more functional and comprehensive term is used by Kömeçoğlu to describe this sphere. He uses the Foucaultian term ‘heterotopia’, where the clients could receive other services, ranging from barber shops, male bonding to reading room/social learning.

The Istanbul “coffeehouse” was related to the “dervish lodge (tekke),” “mosque”, and “theatre” (minstrels, public mimics, musicians, singers, shadow players, tumblers, and jugglers, male dancers), and to “reading salon,” “political club” (especially for janissary coffeehouses), “tavern,” “gambling house,” and “oriental garden” (open air coffeehouses for al fresco enjoyment), to “barber-shop” and spaces for hashish consumption and, on some occasions, homosexual relations.³³

The intellectual dimension is another aspect of coffeehouse studies. The Enlightenment belief that there could be extra-institutional spheres for intellectual sociability could be regarded as a foundational reason for the large number of clubs and societies that were created in the eighteenth-century Europe as well as the perception of coffeehouses as penny universities.

Larry Stewart points out that coffeehouses contributed to the rise of scientific activities at times more than the academies and the universities.³⁴ Stewart, in his work on William Whiston, who was a Newtonian, argued that Whiston helped the popularization of science in the seventeenth century through his

32 *Ibid.*

33 Kömeçoğlu, “Publicness,” 15.

34 Larry Stewart, “Other Centres of Calculation, or Where the Royal Society Didn’t Count: Commerce, Coffee-Houses and Natural Philosophy in Early Modern London,” *British Journal for the History of Science* 32 (1999), 133-53. See also Larry Stewart, *The Rise of the Public Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

public lectures at the coffeehouses. Peter Burke, on the other hand, in his work entitled *A Social History of Knowledge: From Gutenberg to Diderot*, which was published in 2000, argued that through extra-institutional sociability, the monopoly of the universities was broken in the eighteenth century.³⁵ Burke, in his list of the extra-institutional spheres, included the coffeehouses as well.³⁶

Similarly, in the historiography on Ottoman coffeehouse culture, historians like Kafadar who has been cited above and Ahmet Yaşar pointed to the existence of the coffeehouses as an alternative to institutionally controlled sociability. People socializing in the coffeehouses, i.e. outside the *medreses* (religiously-founded schools) and mosques, could also be regarded as early signs of modernization and secularization.³⁷ Yaşar, in another work, pointed out that:

The coffeehouse formed a secular milieu for the city inhabitants with its spatial facilities; in a way it was integrated in to the rooted religious and administrative public institutions by undertaking some of their functions or settling in or next to these spaces³⁸

Yaşar also wrote a literature review on the subject, and like other historians that are mentioned in this study, utilized a Habermasian framework as a tool to understand the dynamics of coffeehouse sociability in Early Modern Istanbul.³⁹ However, he also adds that the social functions of the coffeehouses cannot be limited to this perspective and spatial and daily life functions should also be taken into consideration when dealing with coffeehouses.⁴⁰

In fact, in terms of function coffeehouses also came to be known as spaces of leisure and learning. Firstly, in times where literacy was low and oral culture was still predominant, they functioned through gossip/conversation as a sociable

35 Peter Burke, *Bilginin Toplumsal Tarihi* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2004), 45.

36 *Ibid.*, 55.

37 Yaşar, "18. Yüzyılın Sonunda Eyüp Kahvehaneleri," 263.

38 Ahmet Yaşar, "The Coffeehouses in Early Modern Istanbul: Public Space, Sociability, Surveillance," Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis (Boğaziçi University, 2003), 54. Parts of this work was published in Turkish as Ahmet Yaşar, ed., *Osmanlı Kahvehaneleri: Mekân, Sosyalleşme, İktidar* (Istanbul: Kitapyayınevi, 2009).

39 Ahmet Yaşar, "Osmanlı Şehir Mekânları: Kahvehane Literatürü," *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi* 3/6 (2005), 237-256.

40 Uğur Kömeçoğlu, "Historical and Sociological Approach to Public Sphere: The Case of Islamic Coffeehouses in Turkey," Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis (Boğaziçi University, 2001).

newsfeed. Secondly, socially and politically charged theatre played a role in increasing awareness and acuity of social/political and cultural events.⁴¹ *Karagöz*, shadow puppet plays, which were employed often as a critical, political weapon; *meddah* performances (public mimics, storyteller, traditional public one man performances) seen as having the same function as journalist or newspapers; and *ortaoyunu* (theatre in-the-round), which had more players and was characterised by sharp satire took place in coffeehouses.⁴²

As Ahmet Yaşar remarks, literature on coffeehouses in the Ottoman Empire has increased immensely in the past twenty years. This mostly consists of popular publications, focused on Istanbul, in Turkish, and certainly written with a hint of nostalgia, creating romanticised spaces. Besides looking at the critical stance of the state towards them, authors such as Yahya Kemal, Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar and Samiha Ayverdi focus on the cultural atmosphere that these coffeehouses created around them. Samiha Ayverdi, explains in her work *Istanbul Geceleri*, that the best examples of literary and musical works were performed in coffeehouses.⁴³ As a cultural aspect, it is noted that in the coffeehouse there were (public) readings and intellectual conversation/lectures. Peçevi remarks in his most famous introduction to coffeehouses, that “A group of intellectuals used to come together in groups of twenty or thirty people in coffeehouses. Some of them read pamphlets and others books, some play backgammon, some bring their own poetry and have conversations on art.”⁴⁴ According to Yaşar, it became a tradition that books or pamphlets on religion as well as works of fiction such as poems were read in these places.

They also contained smaller or bigger libraries of works, according to the relevant interests of their customers. In this sense, these places were informal educational centres for young poets and musicians. For this reason, they were

41 For theatre plays and similar entertainment, see Ahmet Yaşar, “Osmanlı Kahvehaneleri: Sivil Eğitim Kurumları,” *Çerçeve* 30/2 (2005), 31; Kömeçoğlu, “Publicness,” 11, 15.

42 Kömeçoğlu, “Publicness,” 11; Ertan Ünal, “İstanbul’da İlk Kahvehaneler,” *Hayat Mecmuası* (1966), 6, 23; Maurice M. Cerasi, *Osmanlı Kenti Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda 18. ve 19. Yüzyıllarda Kent Uygarlığı ve Mimarisi* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2001); Aylin Araz, “Kafelerde Mekan Örgütlenmesi: Trabzon Örneği,” Unpublished M.A. Thesis (Karadeniz Teknik Üniversitesi, 2007), 6.

43 Yahya Kemal Beyatlı, *Aziz İstanbul* (Istanbul: Yahya Kemal Enstitüsü, 1964), 158-60; Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, *Beş Şehir* (Istanbul: Dergah, 1979), 66-69; Samiha Ayverdi, *Istanbul Geceleri* (Istanbul: Kubbealtı Neşriyat, 1952).

44 *Peçevi Tarihi*, vol. I, 258-9.

also called ‘penny universities’ in England, just like the *mekteb-i irfan* (School of Wisdom) or *irfan meclisi* (council of wisdom) around certain *tekkes* in the Ottoman case and *medresetü’l-ulema* (Medrese of Scholars) in the Persian tradition.⁴⁵ Likewise, Kömeçoğlu relates that “Coffeehouses also had their orators, whose eloquence found admiring patrons. The ‘oriental’ orator was a poet or a historian, who would tell fables or legends and ‘land on every subject within the domain of imagination.’”⁴⁶ Thus, the coffeehouses provided intellectual interaction outside institutions such as universities and churches - hence one can observe hints that this provides justifiable materials for the arguments of secularization and modernization in these spaces.

Lastly, it is useful to note that Hattox identifies two other places that had more or less the same function of sociability as the coffeehouse, namely public baths and *bozahanes*. As Hattox mentions the *bozahane* as being particularly popular in the Turkish part of the empire, whose legal and social status was somewhat ambiguous.⁴⁷ A study of *bozahane* in the fifteenth and sixteenth-century Bursa by İklil Selçuk argues that they were “among the most popular public places, hosting people of various backgrounds, until the coffeehouses’ unprecedented rise in the seventeenth century eclipsed them.”⁴⁸ *Boza* has some different characteristics than coffee as a drink actually closer to a solid than a liquid, resembling cool, slightly fermented farina, with a sort of fizzy tingle imparted by the carbon dioxide produced during fermentation. As such could also be resembled to wine.⁴⁹ Later on, Kafadar mentions the same places: “European observers in the pre-modern Near East often noted with some bewilderment that barber shops functioned like an alternate to the coffeehouses when the latter were banned as hotbeds of sedition, as it so often happened in Ottoman history. Public baths similarly created possibilities for social gatherings

45 Ellis Aytoun, *The Penny Universities: A History of Private Life* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1956); Yaşar, “Osmanlı Kahvehaneleri: Sivil Eğitim Kurumları,” 30-2; and idem, “Osmanlı Şehir Mekanları: Kahvehane Literatürü,” 240.

46 Kömeçoğlu, “Publicness,” 9, quotes from *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, s.v. “Coffeehouse” by Ali Dawud (California: Costa Mesa, 1992), vol. VI, 1-4.

47 Hattox, *Coffee and Coffeehouses*, 123.

48 İklil Selçuk, “State Meets Society: A Study of Bozahane Affairs in Bursa,” *Princeton Papers, Interdisciplinary Journal of Middle East Studies* XVI (2011): 24.

49 İklil Selçuk, “Erken Dönem Bursa Bozahaneleri,” *Akademik İncelemeler Dergisi (Journal of Academic Inquiries)* 11 (2016), 61-81.

- explicitly enumerated among places over which the *muhtesib* had to keep close surveillance.”⁵⁰

Shifting away from coffeehouse within the dichotomy of public and private or as a socio-political tool, but certainly still related to it, gives us new perspectives that enhance the experience of coffeehouses within the society. A useful and enlightening approach came from historians who were working on the more commercial aspects of the topic. After the first oppositions to the coffeehouse were overcome the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the marginality of coffeehouses ceased and it consolidated its social place. Prohibitions decreased, until in the prohibitions and closures started again in the eighteenth-century Istanbul, as the state understood at least their economic value and hundreds of coffeehouses were opened (approximately 600 at the end of the sixteenth and 2,500 in the nineteenth century).⁵¹ An unpublished paper by Kafadar (and later other articles and books) follow the interconnections and global aspects of coffee from its early discovery to late nineteenth century. Kafadar focuses not only on the lucrative economic aspects of the spread of coffee in Isfahan, Delhi, Oxford, Paris, Vienna and other cities during its expansion from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, but as part “of its repercussions in social and political life.”⁵² Reading several insightful quotations from travellers, historians, and literary works, we follow the similarity in the fashions and reactions to the spread of coffee received in various cities. The method in which we perceive the global aspect of a consumer good makes it clear that coffee established a similar sociability pattern in different cultural milieu. Without distinction of religion or social position, coffee shaped an entrepreneurial urge to establish “its institution for its consumption in a social setting.”⁵³ Looking at coffeehouses only from a social and intellectual point of view, inevitably leaves some questions unanswered. For instance, Kafadar makes a strong point when he explains the material reasons for the persistence of coffeehouses, although they confront attacks from strictly religious groups, or officials, “coffeehouses, however, constituted the primary source of demand, as

50 Kafadar, “Self and Others” 144.

51 Yaşar, “18. Yüzyılın Sonunda Eyüp Kahvehaneleri,” 263; Cengiz Kırılı, “The Struggle Over Space: Coffeehouses of Ottoman Istanbul, 1780-1845,” Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation (The State University of New York at Binghamton, 2000); and Charles White, *Three Years in Constantinople*, 3 vols. (London: H. Colburn, 1845), vol. I, 282.

52 Kafadar, “History of Coffee,” 52.

53 *Ibid.*, 53.

indicated by the sharp decline in customs revenues when these politically volatile institutions were banned by the authorities (and by some of the pragmatic arguments made by those who wanted to revoke the bans for fiscal reasons).⁵⁴

In fact a more global or comparative perspective does indeed have beneficial aspects. It has been noted in many other subjects that with keeping in mind the overtly restricted research and commentary of Global studies which can lead to loss of characteristics of different cultures, it can also reduce the misconception of exceptionalisms. The edited volume on the coffee and coffeehouses of the Orient by Hélène Desmet-Grégoire and François Georgeon is a good example.⁵⁵ Without covering up cultural specificities, it demonstrates that there are many backgrounds in dialogue in coffee sociability of the Early Modern period in Europe and the Muslim world. For example, Carlier points out how the modernist paradigm becomes a main obstacle to comparative sociability studies. By juxtaposing Western and Eastern coffeehouse traditions, European examples become the modern archetype being more creative and initiating a more critical public opinion than its “eastern” counterpart, which is religiously restricted and still submissive to authorities. However, Carlier points out that in terms of activities involving these spaces, both are the same. During the earlier evolution of these establishments, both in fact predominantly rested on male sociability and had some aspects of tolerance gaining a wider popularity among a the religious - Puritans in England and Muslims in the Ottoman Empire for instance. In seventeenth-century England, coffeehouses were in greater demand among the Puritans who were shying away from taverns. Likewise, although a group of Muslims had earlier frequented taverns in the Islamic world, coffeehouses became more favourable places too.⁵⁶

However, Carlier is in parts caught by the modernist paradox himself. Although he has a fresh comparative approach to the coffeehouses of both societies, he assumes that Ottoman sociability during the decline period of the Ottoman state must be regressive too, especially compared to the status of ‘public’ spaces in the West, where capitalism, social movements and liberties were on the rise. Carlier’s questioning of characteristics of culturally different coffeehouses is taken further by Brian Cowan in his article “Café or Coffeehouse”. He approaches the issue by giving national diversities of the perception of coffee spaces.

54 *Ibid.*, 54.

55 Desmet-Grégoire and Georgeon, *Doğu'da Kahve ve Kahvehaneler*.

56 Carlier, “Magrib Kahvehanesi,” 199.

The English coffeehouse has been understood to have been a very different social space than the French café or the German and Austrian Kaffeehaus; the forms of sociability that predominated in each have often been understood to be characteristic of the broader national culture and have often been directly associated with the larger national narrative of each culture. Thus, the English coffeehouse has been part of the story of the long English revolution of the seventeenth century, the French café as part of the origins and consequences of the revolutionary republicanism and working-class formation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the glory days of the fin-de-siècle cafés of Berlin and Vienna are thought to have come to an end with the Nazi accession in 1933 and the Austrian Anschluss of 1938. How and why has national identity been associated with coffee drinking since its introduction to non-Ottoman Europe in the mid-seventeenth century?⁵⁷

Placing Ottoman coffeehouses within this scope, one could perhaps say that Ottoman *kahvehanes* are associated with the Janissary insurgences. Sociability is certainly a highly cultural area of study - a concept arising from sociology and anthropology. However, it has attracted a great deal of interest in historical studies both in European and Ottoman history. In trying to picture the patterns of social, economic, political and intellectual behaviour, sociability becomes a key to understanding the dynamics of a certain era. However, as Valerie Traub rightly points out, one has to be careful about the “coercive sequential requirements of the pre- in relation to the modern.”⁵⁸ Recently, the question of sociability in the pre-modern period has been contested on many grounds. Pre-assumed patterns of social behaviours, gender, cultural and political attitudes and even consumerism has been put under the magnifying glass to prevent normative idealizations and prescribed views. In terms of coffeehouses, one has to be careful for instance with Istanbul’s spectrum of socialising community - Muslims, Greek, Turkish, Armenian, Jewish, Arabic speaking, European merchants, renegades, priests, and all the less-easily identified lots.⁵⁹ New attempts to re-establish the history of sociability is rapidly increasing with scholars who are trying to challenge the classical perceptions of the Ottoman Empire in the seventeenth and eighteenth

57 Brian Cowan, “Café or Coffeehouse? Transnational Histories of Coffee and Sociability,” in *Drink in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, eds. Barbara Schmidt-Haberkamp and Susanne Schmid (New York: Routledge, 2014), 36.

58 Serkan Delice, “Friendship, sociability, and masculinity in the Ottoman Empire, An Essay Confronting the Ghost of Historicism,” *New Perspectives on Turkey*, vol. 42 (2010), 107.

59 *Ibid.*

centuries. Many so-called paradigm shifts of recent decades have influenced the historiography of the Ottoman Empire, although also significantly in Europe. These revisionist approaches, which however are not the subject of this article, span from the urban to the social and from the consumption to the political history of the Empire. The revisionist history of the politics of empire by Baki Tezcan, or urban spaces, architecture and their uses by Tülay Artan, and the Tulip Age (early eighteenth century) politics and changes in wealth and consumption norms by Selim Karahasanoğlu have already started to feed the coffeehouse literature and will provide further material for the idea of social and cultural relationships that the coffeehouses are negotiating with their other social vicinities.⁶⁰

This brings us to the issue of primary sources, their use and the importance of their variety. For instance, Yaşar Ocak gives us an example of interpretation of coffeehouses as hotbeds of oppositions and rebels.⁶¹ However, one needs to keep in mind that these narratives rely mostly on state-related sources, especially in relation to the janissaries and their degeneration and oppositional status during the eighteenth century. Some other sources are medical in nature, or official documents like *mühimme defters*, state petitions against coffee, travelogues, novels, and histories written in the period from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries.⁶² Nowadays, search is underway for novel sources such as miniatures, paint-

60 These revisionist social and political histories are certainly very interesting, but fall outside of this article's scope. Only a few will be mentioned here as examples: Tülay Artan, "The Politics of Ottoman Imperial Palaces: Waqfs and Architecture from the 16th to the 18th centuries," in *The Emperor's House: Palaces from Augustus to the Age of Absolutism*, eds. Michael Featherstone, Jean-Michel Spieser, Gülru Tanman and, Ulrike Wulf-Rheidt (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter 2015), 365-408; idem., "The Making of the Sublime Porte near the Alay Köşkü and a Tour of a Grand Vizierial Palace at Süleymaniye," *Turcica* 43 (2011), 145-206; Suraiya Faroqhi, ed., *The Cambridge History of Turkey, Volume 3: The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Selim Karahasanoğlu, "Osmanlı Tarih yazımında 'Lale Devri': Eleştirel Bir Değerlendirme," *Tarih ve Toplum: Yeni Yaklaşımlar* 7 (2008), 129-144; idem., "The Tulip Age Under Consideration: A Review Of Can Erimitan's Ottomans Looking West?," *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 16 (2010), 128-130; Baki Tezcan, "Bilim Üzerinden Siyaset: Erken Modern Osmanlı Bilimi Üzerine Düşünceler," *Hakim Paradigmaların Ötesinde: Rifa'at Abou-El-Haj'a Armağanı*, eds. Donald Quataert and Baki Tezcan, translated by Aytek Sever (Ankara: Tan Kitabevi Yayınları, 2012), 169-94; Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

61 Yaşar, "Eyüp Kahvehaneleri."

62 A great spectrum of diverse primary sources can be found in Kafadar's article, see Primary Sources and Reference Works in Kafadar, "How Dark," 266-268.

ings, court registers and shopkeeper muster rolls (registries), giving information on the owners (name, religion), their origins, how many workers were employed, where they lived, etc. These latter sources have indeed increased the variety and thus type of information on coffeehouses.

However, Kafadar not only uses a great selection of primary sources, but he also raises new questions about previously examined sources. For instance, one interesting question regards the new use of time, that is, the increase of the use of night time and why this disturbed the authorities. There is surely a great deal to discover regarding this question in the historical narratives and to ponder upon, but he swiftly closes the discussion after making some connections to modernity, concluding that he is still working on this question.⁶³ He expands on this point of night time, leisure and modernity within a greater public and political reaction in his later work.⁶⁴

A further new perspective is gained on women's use of coffee. Lady Montague's reports on Istanbul's social life are widely known. However, perceiving the gendered coffee drinking habit is a novel reading. It is generally considered that coffeehouses were male dominated, with some exceptions in Europe with female ownership. However, Kafadar's reading reveals something about women as well. Montague remarks "that Ottoman women, too, loved to sip at the cup; moreover, they were as concerned as men with conviviality and found ways to meet similar social demands but in different institutions: the public bathhouses, Lady Montague observed, serve as 'women's coffeehouses.'"⁶⁵ Thus, there is always the possibility of re-reading sources in the light of a new question, such as gender. Certainly, here reading transnational literature/sources are of high value, as "foreign" eyes can pick up unaccustomed pictures with greater ease.

Another, as yet under investigated area could be oral sources. Again, it is an acknowledged fact that coffeehouses were spaces where performances of great variety (that Kafadar likens to modern "arts and entertainment industry") took place. Travel literature tells us these could be recitals of poems, puppet theatre (*Karagöz ve Hacivat*), musical performances, or traditional theatrical performances like *orta oyunu*. These spaces are an important part of the oral literature of the period between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries and well beyond it perhaps. Does

63 Kafadar, "History of Coffee," 55.

64 Kafadar, "How Dark."

65 Kafadar, "History of Coffee," 54.

this perspective open up a window for us on how to understand oral culture? Or does it allow us to say more on consumption patterns of reading and text?⁶⁶ Or as Nebi Özdemir suggests, coffeehouses can be seen as transitional spheres from oral to written cultures specified on Evliya Çelebi in his article. Evliya Çelebi places great emphasis on talking about the coffeehouses in the locations he visits. He uses these places to gather information on the town, surroundings and cultures of each place. Thus, again we can talk about these places as oral libraries and their function in the sociability of the locals with non-locals or perhaps the other?⁶⁷

Some further hints related to the sociability habits of the early modern world in Europe and in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-centuries Ottoman Empire as well as vicinities that are mentioned by historians such as Kafadar, Cowan, Smidt-Haberkamp and Schmid recently. They show, although not yet in great detail, that in order to understand coffeehouse sociability habits, one needs to look beyond coffee. Increasing drug and tobacco use, for instance, are not just bystanders, but important companions to sociability along with coffee in these places. Certainly, enough has been said in regard to the official and religious discussions on the similarities between coffee and the above-mentioned items and their prohibitions.⁶⁸ On a similar note, an interesting connection is made by James Grehan between the use of new commodities and the shift towards a new mentality of modern culture. He states that tobacco played an important role “in the breakdown of old moral structures and helped to frame a distinctively early modern culture, in which the pursuit of pleasure was thereafter more public, routine, and unfettered.”⁶⁹ Consumption patterns of coffee, tobacco and other items that were key elements in the coffeehouse culture were also on the other hand key elements in the shaping of modern social identities. The relationship

66 Mehmet Kalpaklı remarks that these communal out loud reading practices were due to the lack of individuality in the Ottoman Empire, it was centred on such gatherings like in coffeehouses. See Mehmet Kalpaklı, “Evliya Çelebi Seyehatnamesi ve Osmanlı Kültürünün Sözcüğü / İşitselliği,” in *Evliya Çelebi'nin Sözlü Kaynakları*, ed. M. Öcal Oğuz and Yeliz Özyay (Ankara: UNESCO Türkiye Milli Komisyonu, 2013), 89.

67 Nebi Özdemir, “Evliya Çelebi Seyehatnamesi'nin Sözlü Kültür Boyutu ve Kent Kültürü Araştırmaları,” in *Evliya Çelebi'nin Sözlü Kaynakları*, 136.

68 Interesting study on an anonymous text is made by Yahya Michot, *L'Opium et le Café* (Beirut: Albouraq, 2008).

69 An example for this is James Grehan, “Smoking and ‘Early Modern’ Sociability: The Great Tobacco Debate in the Ottoman Middle East (Seventeenth to Eighteenth Centuries),” *American Historical Review* 115/5 (2006), 1352-1377.

of production, consumption and identity, or the so-called emulation-driven demand, are highly intertwined subjects that a greater number of studies are now addressing.⁷⁰ How consumption plays a role in shaping and negotiation of modern social identities in the late Ottoman urban spaces is explored in Haris Exertzoglou's article.⁷¹ Thus, searching within the sources for the history of production and commerce and socio-political reflections of the use of snuff, tobacco, opium and hashish, will show converging testimonies of historians, diplomats, religious men, intellectuals and travellers both in Europe and Ottoman Empire on the subject. It will open new perspectives on the transnational/global nature of coffeehouse sociability and history.

Sociological and cultural analyses and social theories are undoubtedly important tools for historians to utilize in asking questions and comprehending past events. Thinking about gender in history with Joan Wallach Scott, or power relations and the complexity of social spaces with Foucault, or public opinion with Habermas, can provide historians with previously unthought-of questions with which they can interrogate their data. However, the reading of a certain topic consistently through the glasses or concepts of a theory such as the coffeehouses through the emergence of public space back and forth hinders the historian from asking new questions, or perceiving the issue at hand at face value. In the case of coffeehouses, it locks historical analyses both in European and Ottoman history within a scale of liberty and democracy, as these are seen as the indispensable destinies of modernity.

In the last decade, Western viewpoints of history have been heavily criticised via post-colonial theories. Orientalist views have become major targets analysed by both traditional and new Ottoman historians. However, these rightful analyses lead Ottoman historians to an historical act that can be best described as an oxymoron, i.e. Occidentalism. Most of the ensuing arguments around the 'public sphere' either analyse the topic within the Habermas model and come to the conclusion that it did not exist in the Ottoman Empire before the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, or again with reference to Habermasian theory, argue

70 Used by Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J. H. Plumb to explain "want what others had." Quoted in Schmid and Schmidt-Haberkamp, *Drink in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, 12.

71 Haris Exertzoglou, "The Cultural Uses of Consumption: Negotiating Class, Gender, and Nation in the Ottoman Urban Centres During the 19th Century," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 35/1 (2003), 77-101.

that although coffeehouses, *bozabane* and public baths (*hamam*) public sphere emerged much earlier in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the Ottoman Empire, they thus entered the sphere of modernity earlier than Europe. Is it possible to transgress these dichotomies? Can we go beyond, or better, go back to history with different questions that will reveal different sociability patterns? Can we look at the permeability, transitivity and osmotic nature of the private and the public? The modern state is becoming more and more involved with the individual and his/her control over the last 300 years through its taxation systems, education and security units. Can we conduct new analyses on individuality and the public by looking on the state regulations based on individual use of coffee and tobacco in the sixteenth century to the closing down of coffeehouses due to their perceived public threat? It is notable that there is a scarcity of sources used, both in terms of numbers and types, resulting in the exhaustive treatment and repetitive sections in literature, which in itself creates a narrative loop and at times poor methodology. Can we dig into other sources to account for such acts? Are we over-reading sources? Do we have a variety of sources, or are we just utilizing a small number of sources to acknowledge a certain theory?

Intellectual and cultural history indeed in most European and Ottoman case studies has been traditionally viewed in dualistic schema. The ‘courtly culture’ versus ‘popular culture,’ which brings as Cemal Kafadar notes on Ottoman cultural history, the concepts of “high, learned, orthodox, cosmopolitan, polished, artificial, stiff, inaccessible to the masses” versus “folk, tainted with unorthodox beliefs-practices and superstitions, but pure and simple in the sense of preserving ‘national’ spirit, natural, honest.”⁷² However, if we regard the fact that coffeehouses are criticised right from their emergence for bringing together different social groups, we can perhaps start to ask questions that impinge on this dichotomy.

One concept that found expression in Uğur Kömeçoğlu’s article deserves consideration. Kömeçoğlu rightly makes a distinction of Weintraub between social and political public spheres and argues that this space is one “of heterogenous coexistence...a space of symbolic display, of the complex blending proximity coexisting with social distance.”⁷³ This leads the author to analyse the coffeehouse as a Foucaultian heterotopia where we can see the existence/clash of multiple, incommensurable, ambiguous spaces in one location.⁷⁴ This definition is very loose

72 Kafadar, “Self and Others,” 121.

73 Weintraub quoted by Kömeçoğlu, “Publicness,” 5.

74 *Ibid.*, 15.

and even if it is not very descriptive, it certainly opens us a space where we can think of multiple possibilities outside the sphere of described relations.

In conclusion, history writing/studies that are shaped around regressive assumptions of modernity and modern society become an obstacle that stand in the way of the many other questions that could be asked. Within this structure, Enlightenment rationalism and incumbent ideas such as progressivism, liberty and democratic institutions became major factual observations to be made in traditional Turkish history. Concepts such as ‘liberty’, ‘public’ and ‘tolerance’ are searched for and result in two approaches: either they can be found in the Ottoman Empire parallel or with some delay compared to the Western examples, or they already existed before the West began to discuss them.⁷⁵ However, this comparative approach limits us only to these concepts rather than looking at other sociability examples, social existences or mentalities. This review demonstrates that an innovative use of existing sources and a comparative perspective can enhance our analyses on coffeehouse sociability greatly. Although there is always a danger of multi-layered conjectures of Eurocentrism and cultural/religious, political/ideological attitudes produced through the needs of incipient Ottoman attempts to survive, as well as Turkish nationalism, it is possible with new revisionist histories to find ways in which to locate Ottoman consumption and social histories within a cohesive world.

Coffeehouse Sociability: Themes, Problems and Directions

Abstract ■ The aim of this article is to discuss certain issues surrounding the Literature on Early Modern Coffeehouse Sociability. One issue that arises in this historiography is the need to go beyond the Habermasian paradigm in defining the early modern sociabilities. Second issue, which is closely connected to the first that has been argued here is the necessity of a Global perspective in dealing with early modern Coffeehouse without overlooking the cultural characteristics of the East and West. The third issue about the Coffeehouse sociability in the Early Modern World is the intellectual history dimension. Here in this article we argue that extra-institutional aspect of this kind of sociability should be taken into consideration. Last issue we deal with is the use of primary sources in dealing with the Coffeehouse. Examples and suggestions from previously unexamined sources and at times beyond coffee use, will be argued, might lead to a wider understanding of Early Modern Sociabilities.

Keywords: Coffeehouse, Sociability, Early Modern.

75 For example, see Serdar Öztürk, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Kamusal Alanın Dinamikleri,” <http://siyasaliletisim.org/pdf/osmanliimparatorlugundakamusalalan.pdf> (accessed on 24.11.2015), 95; and Ahmet Yaşar’s above-cited works and various analyses on coffeehouses.

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