RELIGION, RELIGIOSITY, AND RESEARCH IN PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION IN TURKEY

An Assessment of Locality and Universality Problem

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Abstract

A uniform and universal understanding of science is an invalid precept, especially for the social sciences and humanities. Hence, the modern version of psychology is but a reductionist, limited, and abstract description of human reality in general. One of the most recent achievements in psychology is the recognition that every culture has a special frame of meaning and that individuals develop their identities and personalities accordingly. Therefore, to understand the spiritual world of human beings and their behaviors, a new intercultural perspective is needed. This need also applies to the field of psychology of religion, which is currently based upon the so called Judeo-Christian tradition. While the issues addressed, theories and concepts developed and introduced, have considerable relevance for the individuals within the mentioned tradition, they say very little, if any, about the religious structure of the individuals outside it. For that reason, there is urgent need in research conducted in the field of psychology of religion in Turkey to consider the basic beliefs of Islam, and social, cultural, historical, and contemporary developments within it.

Key Words: Social sciences and humanities, reductionism, hermeneutics, cultural psychology, religiosity, psychology of religion, psychology of Islam.

Introduction

Psychology is a science that attempts to understand and explain the spiritual life of human beings, their personalities, characters, and their different tendencies. Since Antiquity, psychology has been subject to the curiosity of human beings in various civilizations and societies and from different points of view. There have always been psychological theories and explanations that are fed by religious traditions and philosophical understanding as well as the wisdom of humankind in general. However, the science of psychology, as developed and spread in most parts of the world, is essentially a product of "Western" modernism. Although psychology as a modern science is a product of the Western world, specifically of the North American scientific environment, the fact that the rest of the world has mostly accepted this situation remains. Psychology naturally reflects the values and the modes of thought of this environment because the psychologists themselves set their own cultural identities when analyzing the psychological cases. For that reason, it can be said that psychology has created man; in other words, psychology's conceptualization of the individual is in fact a social case.[1]

Modern psychology generally examines behavior, abstracting it from the cultural context, and thus aims to find the universal dimensions and general norms of human behavior. In psychology, the physical science model, which has a positivist philosophy of science, has been taken as the exemplar. The use of this model has resulted in a methodological approach that separates behavior from its natural environment to examine the changeable whose effects cannot be examined. Hence, until recently, academic psychology has mostly set aside culture when examining human development. Because psychology has always aimed to be a universal science, it is assumed that its theories and findings are acceptable among different cultures, ignoring the possibility that these theories and findings mostly belong

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[1]   Çiğdem Kağıtçıbaşı, *İnsan Aile Kültür* [*Human Family Culture*] (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1990), 20, 36; Kenneth J. Gergen, "Sosyal İnşa: Batının Psikolojide Kendi Kendine Konuşmasından Karşılıklı Küresel Konuşmaya [Social Construction: From Soliloquy of the West on Psychology to Global Colloquy]," in Sibel A. Arkonaç (ed.), *Doğunun ve Batının Yerelliği: Bireylik Bilgisine Dair* [*The Locality of the West and East: About Individuality Knowledge*] (Istanbul: Alfa Yayınları, 2004), 4; Mücahit Gültekin, *Psikolojik Tehlike* [*Psychological Danger*] (Istanbul: Nesil Yayınları, 2008), 73-75.

to Western culture. For that reason, social and cultural factors are not to be found in many analyses. This problem is not only a concern of the psychology of development but also of all branches of psychology, including religion, whose subject matter is the individual. Taken in all of its aspects, it is not an exaggeration to say that the conceptualization of the "individual," which is the main concept of modern psychology, is a very strange idea for most world cultures.[2] Any universal, uniform human conception that is generally accepted in all cultures does not have any real correspondence in real world because psychological reality can only be found in the particular cultural activities of individuals. In fact, cultural activity is the subject matter (*die Sache*) of interpretation. However, psychology does more than interpreting; it also explains. In fact, human actions, minds, and experiences take different forms and shapes in accordance with the culture in which they develop. No one can discuss anything in human nature apart from culture.

In this paper, we first emphasize the weaknesses and the problematic areas in the scientific tradition of modern psychology and point out some new approaches and to solve them. Afterwards, we provide an overall evaluation of the ramifications of these issues in the field of psychology of religion and in the studies in this field in Turkey.

1. New Approaches in Psychology

With the progress of social and cultural psychology and anthropology in recent years, it has been understood that identical or similar human behaviors indicate different meanings in different cultural environments. Consequently, we can discuss many aspects of human nature in accordance with the number of cultures, societies, and social groups, but we cannot discuss the existence of a uniform and universal human nature. In cultural psychology, researchers investigate whether psychological operation is buried meaningfully in the cultural environment. Accordingly, contrary to the universalist assumptions that serve psychology in the modern model, cultural psychologists argue that even concepts such as ego, cognition, emotion, and excitement arise within particular customs and traditions. For

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2   Clifford Geertz, "'From the Native's Point of View': On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding," in idem., *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1983), 59.

instance, emotions are regarded as more than just irrational indications of natural and inevitable reactions. Emotions are indications of wishes, opinions, and evaluations that are determined by belief systems and cultural societies. Moreover, emotions are experimental patterns that are acquired and expressed in social conditions and determined in a socio-cultural manner. In consequence, the emotional indication comprises the different reactions interpreted and arranged in a particular context. In other words, emotions accord with the previous cultural forms that were once valid.[3]

This point of view does not mean that universal knowledge is impossible in psychology. Certain dynamic principles governing the psychological space of human beings are not changeable and could be universal. Human beings who are brought up in a particular cultural environment develop personalities and identities according to that society. Without any relation to a particular cultural system, no one can know the shape human nature may take.[4] Therefore, the idea of "local psychology," which supposes that every culture must be examined on its own merits, gained significant strength in non-Western countries because it constitutes the most important environment for psychological cases. When common points emerge from the encounters of the different local realities, it can be assumed that we begin to approach universality.[5] For that reason, the *relativistic* and *hermeneutic* tendencies as a reaction to both positivism, which is still valid in psychology, and to the narrow definitions of reality, which ignores culture, have gained special importance in intercultural psy-

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[3] See Jacob A. Belzen, "Din Psikolojisinde Tarihsel-Kültürel Yaklaşım: Disiplinlerarası Araştırmalar İçin Bakış Açıları [The Historicocultural Approach in the Psychology of Religion: Perspectives for Interdisciplinary Research]," (translated into Turkish by Ali Ayten), *Marmara Üniversitesi İlâhiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* [*Marmara University Journal of the Faculty of Divinity*] 33/2 (2007), 224.

[4] See David Krech and Richard S. Crutchfield, *Sosyal Psikoloji: Nazariye ve Problemler* [*Theory and Problems of Social Psychology*] (translated into Turkish by Erol Güngör; 2nd edn., Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1970), 48-49; Muzafer Sherif, *Sosyal Kuralların Psikolojisi* [*The Psychology of Social Norms*] (translated into Turkish by İsmail Sandıkçıoğlu; Istanbul: Alan Yayıncılık, 1985), 152-154.

[5] Kağıtçıbaşı, *Kültürel Psikoloji: Kültür Bağlamında İnsan ve Aile* [*Family and Human Development across Cultures: A View from the Other Side*] (translated into Turkish by Ayşe Üskül and Esin Uzun; Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık Ticaret ve Sanayi A. Ş., 1998), 32-33.

chology and anthropology. According to this understanding, all psychological concepts, including the concept of personality, are cultural/social products that reflect an intercultural diversity.

2. Psychology of Religion

Psychology of religion, which emerged at the turn of the twentieth century and developed in parallel with the science of modern psychology, is a science that investigates the religious phenomenon using empirical methods. Almost all of the masters of psychology and those who have been regarded as the founders of the notable schools in psychology such as W. James, W. Wundt, S. Freud, C. G. Jung, G. Allport, and A. Maslow are also psychologists of religion. A science that addresses the spiritual life of human beings and their behaviors would not neglect the religious cases, which are an indispensable part of the individual and social life and culture. Whether they have a positive or a negative attitude towards religion, the researchers with knowledge of psychology strive to decipher religious development and belief structure in the life of individuals. They also study the meaning of the strong impact of religious experience and beliefs, prayers, rituals, and worship on human behavior. First, the psychologists of religion in various European countries, especially in the US, conducted their studies in an environment in which Christian-Jewish culture dominated. The limitations in the basic understanding of psychology for human beings; its inadequacies in evaluating the characters of individuals; its restriction to middle class, white students; and, finally, its non-generalizable consequences are also problems for the science of psychology of religion. Hence, the religion these psychologists of religion encountered and the religious cases that they took as the subjects of their research were completely limited to their cultural traditions. Because only very few researchers have addressed Islam or certain Eastern religious traditions, still inadequately,[6] there

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[6]   While explaining the revelation experience of the Prophet, the famous psychologist of religion, W. James, claims that it was a case that revealed the subconscious automatically or semi-automatically, similar to Jewish prophets, some Christian saints and mystics; see *Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (2nd edn., London & New York: Routledge, 2002), 370; French translation: *L'Expérience Religieuse: Essai de Psychologie Descriptive* (translated into French by Frank Abauzit; 2nd edn., Paris: F. Alcan, 1908), 399-400. Recently, applying a Jungian explanation model, W. M. Watt stated that the revelation experiences of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are contents that emerge from the collective sub-

was almost no opportunity to make healthy comparisons. The most common mistake seems to be the assumption that the concepts and models that psychologists of religion apply to make sense of their own religious and cultural world are also valid for a different religious tradition. This mistake is an exemplar of reductionism.

In fact, as a general characteristic of the tradition of Western science, "reductionism" is not one-sided. On the one hand, religious cases are reduced to individual, social, and cultural non-religious cases; on the other hand, Islam and other non-Western religions are reduced to the Jewish-Christian model. As a type of research method in the natural sciences, the difference of Islam has been recently recognized in that it puts away reductionism in the social sciences. According to some scholars, Islam as a religion "challenges" the definitions both in the social sciences and humanities and in the religious sciences.[7] It is true that Islam is a religion according to all available definitions of the term, but that does not mean that Islam is only a religion or a belief system in the Western sense. In the Western religious tradition, religion has frequently been considered to be the spiritual being or reality against the material being, as sacred against profane or as religious against secular. Whether or not the reasons for this type of religious perception are philosophical, this perception has been regarded as the biggest obstacle in correctly understanding Islam because it fails to see that Islamic religious tradition addresses every aspect of life and provides a comprehensive framework for every level in society. As stated in various contexts with different forms, Islam can first be regarded as a civilization, a social structure, a certain life style, and a cultural tradition in the broadest sense. Hence,

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conscious. According to Watt, when setting a relationship between traditional explanations and modern psychology, one can say that the Angel first put the revelation in the consciousness of the Prophet, and it then emerged to the surface of consciousness. It can also be said that the sub-conscious is a place where angels (or devils) are active; see *Modern Dünyada İslâm Vahyi* [*Islamic Revelation in the Modern World*] (translated into Turkish by Mehmet S. Aydın; Ankara: Hülbe Yayınları, 1982), 148-154. James also quotes from al-Ghazālī's autobiography *al-Munqidh*, where he states that the state of *wajd* cannot be explained and that mystical truth exists only for the one who experiences it; James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 311-314; Fr. trans. 340-344).

[7] Jacques Waardenburg, "İnsan Bilimleri, Sosyal Bilimler ve İslam Çalışmaları," in Ömer Mahir Alper (ed. and Turkish translation), *Batı'da Din Çalışmaları* [*Religious Studies in the West*] (Istanbul: Metropol Yayınları, 2002), 256.

the interests of Western researchers regarding Muslim individuals and the lifestyles within this society are generally restricted to certain common expressions about Islam as a whole shaped by certain deep prejudices. These interests represent neither an academic interest directed toward achievable data nor a human interest about Muslim lifestyles. The interest may derive from the personal beliefs and spirituality – or lack of spirituality – of the researcher.[8] These remarks lead us to this conclusion: the religious studies conducted by Western scholars on Islam are far from revealing the objective reality. In this sense, their outlook is one-sided and determined by the ideological positions of their cultures and countries. Islam has always been regarded as an ideological monolith by Europeans. There has been considerable resistance to any just, objective and scientific study of the political and religious aspects of Muslim societies.[9] The fact that Western psychologists and social scientists have limited their basic interest to the issue of "violence and terrorism" in recent years strengthens this claim. These scholars consider revealing the psychological and behavioral fundamentals of Islamic fundamentalism to be their most important duty.

Considering the study of modern religious science applied to religion "as a cultural reality," it is well known that different religious cases observed in different cultures exist with special structures and special frames of meaning. However, it is very difficult to state that both Western scholars and other researchers from various religious backgrounds and cultures do justice to this reality. The cases and remarks that are generally represented as the universal science of the psychology of religion are results of the Jewish-Christian reality. Until recently, researches done in a paradigm that eliminate all differences and reduces religion to a uniform reality has represented the dominant view.[10]

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[8]   *Ibid.*, 251, 256, 271.

[9]   *Ibid.*, 267-268.

[10] Antoine Vergote is one of those who are aware of this bias and confesses it. Following are his remarks: "Psychology as an experimental science examines concrete religious cases. In following pages, we give our attention to Christianity, open to information about other religions as far as we can. There are simple reasons to necessitate this choice. Christianity, the religion of the majority of our culture is directly open to us. Most of psychological researches are being done in Christian scales. Like in every study done about a religious factor, if this work has

All of these observations vindicate the objections and criticisms of some Muslim thinkers and scholars regarding psychology in general and the psychology of religion in particular. M. Iqbāl, for instance, regarded the experimental method, used in the early stages of psychology of religion, as valuable, he complains about the scarcity of studies in the field during his time, however. According to Iqbāl, the views on the science of psychology of religion by pioneers such as W. James, Jung, and Freud are far from even reaching the crust of religion. Thus, he points out that the Muslim researchers who address the issues in psychology of religion must develop a critical approach and new research methods to be able to view critically the studies in the field both at the theoretical and conceptual level.[11] Badrī's criticisms of Western psychology regarding its Islamic sensitivity are important for another reason.[12] For Badrī, there is an essential incompatibility between the human concept in Islamic culture and civilization and the human concept in most modern psychology schools. Modern psychology, in general, poses a threat to the belief of Islam and its values. Therefore, even if it is possible to benefit from this information through a serious criticism and selection of the current science for now, there will be a need and a duty for Muslims to construct their own scientific tradition in the future.[13] A. Haque followed the ideas of Badrī, claiming that ideas and tendencies contrary to the essence of religion must be cleaned first, psychology and religion must be unified and, lastly, psychology must be re-constructed with an Islamic view.[14] In parallel with this claim, a quest for an original "Islamic psychology" through several publications and symposiums has been

a universal value, this is because the one who makes the comparison avoids ignoring the differences in a misty weather in which all cows are grey." See *Religion, Foi, Incroyance: Étude Psychologique* (Bruxelles: Pierre Mardaga, 1983), 10.

[11] Muḥammad Iqbāl (as Muhammed İkbal), *İslâm'da Dinî Tefekkürün Yeniden Teşekkülü* [*The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*] (translated into Turkish by Sofi Huri; Istanbul: Çeltüt Matbaası, 1964), 212-215.

[12] See Mālik Badrī (as Malik Babikir Bedrî), *Müslüman Psikologların Çıkmazı* [*The Dilemma of Muslim Psychologists*] (translated into Turkish by Harun Şencan; Istanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 1984).

[13] These criticisms have been developed and elaborated by other researchers. See a recent book: Gültekin, *Psikolojik Tehlike*, 102-135.

[14] Amber Haque, "Psychology and Religion: Their Relationship and Integration from an Islamic Perspective," *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 15/4 (1998), 97-116.

maintained since the beginnings of the 1970s.[15] The department of Psychology at the International Islam University Malaysia, in particular, has encouraged researchers to pursue studies on Islamic psychology for some time.

It is known that conservative Christian and Jewish psychologists in the West have been on a similar quest. *Psychology and Christianity* and *The Journal of Psychology and Christianity* have existed since 1982 and *Psychology and Judaism* since 1990. Today, in spite of the lack of respect from positivist circles, scientific activity has been pursued in the field of Christo-psychology, and important developments have been made in this field. Furthermore, there are publications issued under the subject Pastoral Psychology/Care that aim to combine modern psychology with Christian beliefs to offer religious consulting and guidance for different groups in society. It is also interesting to note that the issues of religious experience and the understandings of religiosity of different religious traditions (Judaism, Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism) are addressed within special chapters in some recent handbooks on the psychology of religion.[16] More important, the 2002 special edition of *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* (vol. 12, issue 4) is titled "From Conflict to Dialogue: Examining Western and Islamic Approaches in Psychology of Religion." The issue mostly covers presentations and discussions from the First International Congress of Mental Health and Religion, which was held in Tehran in 2001. The most interesting side of these presentations and discussions is that cultural viewpoints, particularly Islamic approaches, were proposed. It was stressed that psychology of religion that developed in the West basically depends on the Christian example. It was also emphasized that the studies of religion and religiosity must be widened to local chan-

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[15] Since 1973, the Association of Muslim Social Scientists has issued *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*. There are occasionally essays on Islamic psychology. The same association organized the first symposium of "Islam and Psychology" in 1975. The al-Rashad Institute organized a colloquium in Riyāḍ titled "Psychology and Islam" in 1978.

[16] See Fouad Moughrabi, "Islam and Religious Experience," in Ralph W. Hood Jr. (ed.), *Handbook of Religious Experience* (Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1995), 72-86; Syed Arshad Husain, "Religion and Mental Health from the Muslim Perspective," in Harold G. Koenig (ed.), *Handbook of Religion and Mental Health* (San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 1998), 279-290.

nels to cover other religious traditions and belief systems. The efforts in this journal are not enough. However, widening studies to include individuals and groups that adhere to different religious traditions other than the West, entering a dialog and communication process with them, encouraging the local cultures to make sense of their world of belief – all of these developments are extensions of the paradigm change taking place in the scientific method. It is observed that this interest has also spread to a field that includes the scales/measures in the studies on psychology of religion. A thesis by a doctoral student titled "Measure of Islamic Religiousness"[17] under the supervision of the famous psychologist of religion, Pargament, is one of the first examples.

At the point that we have reached, the importance of a local and intercultural perspective in the humanities and the social sciences is better understood. Advancing psychology of religion in this direction is very important for its own future. The intercultural perspective provides the researcher with more sensitivity to the cultural base of his/her own beliefs. It is the only way to reach the reality of his society and humanity. Moreover, considering that psychology has developed as the local science of the West throughout its history, the validity of psychology in non-Western societies must be tested to affirm its claims to universality.

In the light of these observations, we would, now, like to examine the developments in the field of psychology of religion in Turkey.

3. Early Developments in the Field of Psychology of Religion in Turkey

Psychology of religion was recognized in Turkey with a 40-50 year delay. H. Ziya Ülken's articles and conferences,[18] which address some

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[17] Hisham Abu Raiya, *A Psychological Measure of Islamic Religiousness: Evidence for Relevance, Reliability, and Validity* (PhD dissertation; Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University, 2008).

[18] The main examples are Hilmi Ziya (Ülken), "Anadolu Tarihinde Dinî Rûhiyyât Müşâhedeleri: Burak Baba, Geyikli Baba [Observations on Religious Spirituality in Anatolian History: Burāq Baba, Geyiklī Baba]," *Miḥrāb* 13-14 (June 1340 H), 434-448; idem., "Anadolu Tarihinde Dinî Rûhiyyât Müşâhedeleri: Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli [Observations on Religious Spirituality in Anatolian History: Ḥājī Bektāsh Walī]," *Miḥrāb* 15-16 (July 1340 H), 515-530; idem., *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları: Türk Mistisizmini Tetkike Giriş [Outlines of Turkish History: Introduction to the*

Anatolian Sufi personalities, are the pioneering works in the field. These are examples of the perspective in psychology of religion that stems from W. James and his followers and aims to focus on high-level religious personalities who live their religious experiences in an advanced and complete way. Also, these topics, in accordance with the spirit of contemporary values, have the character of setting example for researchers willing to conduct their studies in the field of psychology of religion. Following these early studies came Şerif Mardin's monographic-sociological study (written in the US) on Bediuzzaman Saʿīd Nūrsī, who was the most important and the most effective religious figure in the Republic Period.[19] This study was an important step towards "understanding the local religious life by using its own references." However, we must add that the social scientists in Turkey have commonly distanced themselves from religious matters. Sensitivity has been shown, to a certain degree, in the religious values and religious sources of our society in the lecture notes and books that were first published under the general title of psychology of religion. B. Ziya Egemen states that the most important duty of the psychologists of religion in the future will be to address the reality of religion, which has been an eternal need of the human spirit, "within the framework of the religion of Islam, the most complete religion of all, which has been neglected so far." He insistently stresses the concept of the "Islamic psychology of religion." To him, psychology of religion tries to investigate the religious life and all of its reflections and manifestations in the outside world. Islamic sects and Sufi orders, in particular, provide a vast area of research and observational fields for the psychologists of religion. There are mystic observations, religious rituals, and regulations, psychological situations such as *wajd, istighrāq, kashf* and *karāma*, and other supernatural observations. To address the applications that cause these observations, such as *dhikr, iʿtikāf,* and *samāʾ*, in the framework of psychological causation are the subject-matter of the psychology of religion, especially Islamic

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Investigation of Turkish Mysticism] (Istanbul: Akşam Matbaası, 1934); idem., "Tasavvuf Psikolojisi [Psychology of Sufism]," in his *Üniversite Konferansları: 1944-1945* [*University Speeches: 1944-1945*] (Istanbul: Kenan Matbaası, 1946), 193-206.

[19] See Şerif Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediüzzaman Said Nursi* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988).

psychology of religion.[20] Pointing to the richness of the American and European literature on religious life and behaviors, the author states that the data are primarily collected from a Christian context. Although he considers this effort in Europe, whose population is Christian, reasonable and valuable, he nonetheless contends that there is a clear bigotry in ignoring other religions. To him, the clearest example of this bigotry shows itself when it comes to Islam. The efforts to disregard Islam, which are in violation of the scientific method of objectivity, have mostly led to wrong verdicts in the field of Islamic psychology. Psychology of religion provides many opportunities to criticize these prejudiced, misjudged, and non-scientific ideas. However, psychology of religion must be integrated with studies in the fields of Islamic theology and philosophy.[21] Egemen points out another crucial issue, which has recently been recognized by others. He recommends establishing the "Comparative Psychology of Religion" as a branch of psychology of religion to examine the differences in the religious lives of members of various religions.[22]

Osman Pazarlı's *Din Psikolojisi* [*Psychology of Religion*] (1968), which was written as a course material, can be regarded as a concrete step in accordance with this advice. In this book, which addresses psychology of religion together with other disciplines such as Islamic theology, Sufism, history of religions, philosophy, and parapsychology, the author tries to reflect an Islamic perspective in every topic. However, the work does not extend beyond the theoretical limits, provides very little space for the academic issues of psychology of religion and is an outdated and unsystematic work. Nonetheless, this work also has current value as an objection to the modern style of universalism in science that ignores local sources. This sensitivity, which not only concerns western knowledge but also addresses the local Islamic viewpoint in the studies on psychology of religion, was maintained in other studies.[23] However, the general efforts regarding

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[20] Bedi Ziya Egemen, *Din Psikolojisi: Sâha, Kaynak ve Metot Üzerine Bir Deneme* [*Psychology of Religion: An Essay Concerning Scope, Source, and Method*] (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1952), 20.

[21] *Ibid.*, 21-22.

[22] *Ibid.*, 20.

[23] In his book first published in 1993, H. Hökelekli tried to relate modern themes from the psychology of religion to Islamic beliefs and concepts. Moreover, he actualized this interest with a brief history of Islamic psychology early in the book.

the issue of including local sources and elements to the psychological study of religion are far from reaching the desired level.

Although earlier the interest has been directed toward scientifically examining the personalities who shaped the spiritual dynamics of Islam, which spread among people in the early times of Anatolia, it has not been sufficiently developed in the subsequent studies, due to a lack of proper understanding. There are some reasons for this lack of development. One of these reasons is that the studies within the field of psychology of religion have shifted focus from extreme religious personalities and mystics to daily life issues and the problems of religious development and change. Armaner's studies can be regarded in this context. Hence, in his studies, there is an effort to combine psychology of religion with subject-matters such as religious education, religious services, and mental health; he also makes an effort to make scientific knowledge function in daily life.[24] A more powerful tendency in recent years in psychology of religion has been to address situations in daily life, especially issues such as religious development, mental health, and values. The result of this tendency is that psychology of religion became more immersed in the culture in which it emerged and more engaged with local religious traditions.

See *Din Psikolojisi* [*Psychology of Religion*] (6th edn., Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 2005), 22-63. Afterwards, he more systematically maintained his studies in a wider area. See "İslam Geleneğinde Psikoloji Kültürü [Culture of Psychology in Islamic Tradition]," *İslâmî Araştırmalar* [*Journal of Islamic Research*] 19/3 (*Din Psikolojisi Özel Sayısı* [*Special Issue: Psychology of Religion*]) (2006) 409-421. Some other works that were published later have almost the same content as the history of Islamic psychology; see Hüseyin Peker, *Din Psikolojisi* [*Psychology of Religion*] (2nd edn., Samsun: Aksiseda Matbaası, 2000).

24   See Neda Armaner, *İnanç ve Hareket Bütünlüğü Bakımından Din Terbiyesi* [*Religious Discipline with regards to Faith and Behaviour Integrity*] (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Basımevi, 1967); idem., *Psikopatoloji'de Dinî Belirtiler* [*Religious Symptoms in Psychopathology*] (Ankara: Demirbaş Yayınları, 1973); idem., *Din Psikolojisine Giriş I* [*Introduction to Psychology of Religion I*] (Ankara: Ayyıldız Matbaası, 1990). At the end of the book, the author provides a list of the contents of the upcoming second volume. The interesting thing is that although the second volume has not been published, the first part of it, which was planned as two sections, addresses issues such as revelation, prophethood, miracles, and the psychology of Sufism.

4. Recent Developments in the Field of Psychology of Religion in Turkey

Leaving aside the high-level theoretical regulations in psychology of religion as an experimental science, real subjects are the primary source for gathering knowledge on religious experience and behavior. Surveys and interviews conducted with individuals and groups are important for sorting and interpreting the data; these can be obtained through field studies conducted using systematic observation and semi-experimental research methods. Studies in the field of psychology of religion began in the 1970s in Turkey.[25] In recent years, there has been a considerable increase in the number of field studies. Taking the form of dissertations or books and articles, these studies are carried out in such topics as religious development, mental health and religiosity, conversion, the psychology of death and the afterlife, personality and religion, the psychology of faith, God, the perception of God, the psychology of prayer and worship. These studies were examined and evaluated using statistical analyses. Most of these studies use university students as subjects and are far from forming sampling groups that represent all levels of Turkish society. There are reasonable explanations for this. However, the period of youth and the university environment are far from being a study area that perfectly reflects the fruits of religiosity and its manifestations. Therefore, this research does not achieve a complete and sufficient quantity and quality level about religiosity in Turkey. There is a need to add many more studies that include subjects from different age-groups, sexes, and other individuals from various segments of society. The techniques and scales/measures used in these studies must also be enhanced. However, there is a positive side to all of these studies as well: they provide knowledge about Muslims in Turkey and try to reflect Muslims' religious tendencies. Regardless of the technical inadequacies and methodical deficiencies that are to be found in the scales used and the processes applied, these studies are more illuminative than the ready but insufficient knowledge transmitted from the West. However, there is a fundamental problem that has persisted: we lack proper concepts and theoretical frames that are in accord

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[25]   The first case study in Turkey was performed in the Department of Experimental Psychology in Istanbul University. See Belma Özbaydar, *Din ve Tanrı İnancının Gelişmesi Üzerine Bir Araştırma* [*A Study on the Development of Religion and Faith in God*] (Istanbul: Baha Matbaası, 1970).

with our cultural world. Because the researchers do not think independently of Western scientific concepts, they feel compelled to adopt their findings to the available perspectives of the West. This type of research seems to be carried out according to the principles of scientific methods. However, because these researchers are disconnected from their own contexts, their findings correspond to a doubtful reality. In fact, all psychological studies in Turkey generally explain the people of Turkey in terms of the conditions that protect the individualist principle of psychology. To put it more precisely, the newly developed models use psychological assumptions that are accepted as universal in terms of collected data and explanations. The possibility that psychological conceptualizations and information can be local is either neglected or is considered under the title "cultural differences." The knowledge of westerners constitutes the fundamental source for the study of culture cultures outside of the West, just as with the mental concepts that they use. This approach deflects our attention from defining our own meanings; it also deflects us from studying the local effects and the possible effects of the natural, social, cultural, and political contexts that constitute our lives.[26] Thus, it is not an exaggeration to argue that making sense of and interpreting the data achieved by the field research studies in psychology of religion has been removed from its historical and social context. Accordingly, it appears to be very difficult to transfer the available data in psychology of religion to apply to areas in Turkey such as religious education and religious services and to use these data to contribute to the efficacy and fertility of these studies.

Studies on religiosity in today's society confront many difficulties with many aspects. First, religious people may feel that they are subject to "neighborhood pressure" within a secular structure of society in which religiosity is limited to an individual, special, and subjective living space. Many aspects of being religious in modern society and expressing and displaying this religiosity are risky. To be both modern and Muslim is only possible at a "hybrid" level within certain limits by being subject to change and by changing others.[27] People who

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[26] Sibel A. Arkonaç, "Kartezyen Olmayan Özne, Öteki, Fail ve Yerel Gerçekliğin İnşası [Noncartesian Subject, Other, Agent, and Construction of Local Reality]," in idem. (ed.), *Doğunun ve Batının Yerelliği*, 261.

[27] See Nilüfer Göle, *İslamın Yeni Kamusal Yüzleri* [*New Public Faces of Islam*] (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2000), 19-40.

accept the religious lifestyle and who prefer to live a sincere religious life feel themselves subject to the threat of exclusion and accusation by influential groups of society. The unfounded "danger of reactionism" that occasionally appears in our society can direct religious tendencies and religious commitment towards impassive, aggressive, or fanatical patterns. On the other hand, although many people receive secular education and remain in secular environments, they tend toward religion and select a religious life. These people face religious tension and pain, a topic that is a primary research subject. In sum, in today's society, there is need to make sense of the consequences of religiosity in terms of choosing a religious lifestyle and to direct studies accordingly, freely expressing, sharing, and talking about beliefs and values. Studies must consider a contextual structure in which only tense, conflicted, minimized, and reduced religiosities can emerge, a structure in which religiosities cannot develop in their natural conditions and natural flows. We must recognize that we face identity structures that depend upon defense, rather than the original religious personalities. However, we must not miss new types of religiosities that recognize an agreement between religious and contemporary values and achieve harmony between these values and the new representations of tradition and religion.

In modern society, people encounter different religious types and different views on how to be religious, views that oppose or criticize religion, anti-religious philosophies, and life styles. Moreover, people receive a different education about religion, and they obtain different types of knowledge until the time when they are in a position to make their own decision regarding religion in their lives. Thus, psychological studies should consider the special reference systems in terms of scope, tools, and interpretations. Even people who were educated in the same religion can exhibit different behaviors according to the socio-cultural background of their religious education. Therefore, it is not easy to differentiate between the sociological and the psychological factors.[28] In the studies performed in Turkey, religiosity is addressed on a uniform and abstract level. Measurement models that depend on the differences in groups, societies, and sects,

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[28]   Vergote, "Din Psikolojisi Nedir Ne Değildir? [What the Psychology of Religion Is and What It Is Not?]," (translated into Turkish by Ali Köse), *İLAM Araştırma Dergisi* [*ILAM Journal of Research*] 2/2 (1997), 165.

all of which serve as a reference for the religiosities of individuals, are still not subjects for ongoing research.[29]

The scales used in field studies are problematic in terms of their credibility and validity for our culture. In fact, scales are problematic in themselves and, more correctly, are an important part of the problem. We know that developing scales is a professional branch of study and requires hard work. The psychologists of religion have commonly maintained their studies using the ready-to-use religiosity scales from the West. Regardless of the validity and credibility of these scales in their original contexts, when they are tested in Turkey, religious and cultural differences come to the fore, as stated earlier in the paper. We must admit, however, that many measures of religiosity developed by our colleagues in various Muslim societies are far from being sufficient. Thus, the study of the "Islamic religiosity scale," which is well elaborated and supported by a professional group, is a priority in an attempt to construct an Islamic psychology of religion.

Those who have received their post-graduate degrees abroad, written their dissertations and finally returned to Turkey are expected to accelerate and open up horizons to the studies in psychology of religion in Turkey because they have the ability to speak and write in English and can follow the international literature in the field. However, dissertations completed abroad in the field of psychology of religion – except for a few – have not yet been translated into Turkish. First, when choosing the topics, it is not clear whether the topics contribute to the national studies. Thus, there is no indication of whether this type of research, performed in the West, can shed light upon the problems of our country and raises the quality of national research. Interestingly enough, some of the researchers who were educated abroad are not aware of the threat and the danger of the "colonization of the psyche,"[30] a danger that most non-Western re-

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[29]   Along with the religiosity of "Ahl al-sunna," which constitutes a majority in Turkey, psychologists have not paid as much attention to Alevi religiosity, which has a considerable number of members. For perhaps the only exception, see Âdem Şahin and Talip Atalay, "Mezhep Farklılığının Dindarlığa Etkisi Üzerine Bir Araştırma [A Research on Effect of Denominational Differences on Religiosity]," *İslâmiyat* 5/4 (*Türk(iye) Dindarlığı* [*Special Issue: Turk(ish) Religiousness*]) (2002), 207-215.

[30]   See John Shotter, "Sosyal İnşacılığın Ötesinde: Kartezyen Özne ve Faili Yeniden Düşünmek ve Yeniden Cisimleştirmek [Beyond Social Constructionism: Re-

searchers fall into. The magic of the West seduces most of them and makes them blind to the realities of their own society and culture. Some colleagues who know even the tiniest details of the religious motifs and tendencies that are typical of the average American person can be out of touch with their own religious and cultural realities. This problem exists to such a degree that there are some people who do not use Turkish in their writings, who do not pay attention to local sources and who absolutize Western concepts and explanations as universal and ultimate facts.

Conclusion

Although psychology and psychology of religion, which are Western constructions, bear universalist claims, it is clear that the knowledge achieved thus far in these fields is far from having universal value and validity. The Western-centered tendency to address human beings and their spiritual and social world using rational models and determinist relations is now being questioned by Westerners. To generalize the results achieved through the research performed using the Christian perspective and a sampling of human behaviors from another religious tradition and culture is contrary to today's logic within the social sciences and humanities.

As long as there is no local or Western alternative, the psychologists of religion who attempt to understand and interpret the religious lives and behaviors of Turkish people generally select from the available sources, without any relation to academic schools. This approach is pragmatic. Hence, most of the time, these scholars understand and interpret the religious world of their own people using Western frames of reference. However, a demand for cultural self-dom has emerged in Turkey, in terms of a new version of tradition and religion. We cannot observe a desire for a subject that has total symmetry with the West.[31] These scholars are ignoring the fact that Islam is fundamentally different from the Christian-Jewish tradition in certain fundamental issues such as human nature, individual freedom

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thinking and Re-embodying the Cartesian Subject/Agent]," in Arkonaç (ed.), *Doğunun ve Batının Yerelliği*, 164.

[31] See Kamile Oya Paker, "Batı Dışı Toplumlarda Sosyal Psikolojiyi Yeniden Düşünmek: İnşacı Psikolojinin İmkânları Üzerine Bir Deneme [Rethinking Social Psychology in non-Western Societies: A Trial on Opportunities of Constructionist Approach]," in Arkonaç (ed.), *Doğunun ve Batının Yerelliği*, 236.

and responsibility, and the concept of God. Thus, the cultural world of the subject is very different from that of the Western world.[32] To understand the main difference between Christianity and Islam, one must at least consider the difference in the concept of revelation between the two religions.

When we take a closer look at the studies performed in Turkey, we do not see the field of humanities in accordance with daily life and in total agreement with the facts. We see a scientific perspective that restricts itself to classifying all colors of daily religious life and behaviors in a uniform class, seeking universal behavior models with quantitative results and focused on the closeness or distance from a Western scale. What we need to do is to first perceive our people and society within their religious and cultural dynamics, to examine our subjects and problems and to bring a critical approach and a new understanding. The psychologists of religion should evaluate religiosity in terms of a cultural framework in which the individual experience moves from one generation to another. In the final analysis, even the most reliable data that we consider to be valid and ultimate is the product of history and culture. These data were constructed through social interactions and ideas and maintained by social processes and practices that are valid in their own context.

It is a scientific necessity that the international studies in psychology of religion should be enriched with different religious and cultural types unique to specific religious traditions and cultures. In this context, creating a discipline that can be called an "Islamic psychology of religion" requires a two-fold working strategy that extends from the universal to the local and vice versa. We need to digest modern scientific knowledge and also criticize and evaluate these data in the light of the beliefs and values taught by the religion of Islam, a religion that shapes our own cultural identity. We then need to select, create, and apply the theories and concepts that are the most appropriate for our cultural values. Finally, we need to develop and apply data-gathering tools and scales before maintaining research. The results achieved must be evaluated, interpreted, and explained in a historical and sociological context.

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[32] See Arkonaç, "'Kartezyen Olmayan Özne …," 263-264; Tevfika Tunaboylu İkiz, "Doğu Batı Kavşağında Psikanalitik Özneye Bakış [A View on Psychoanalytical Subject in the Conflux of East and West]," in Arkonaç (ed.), *Doğunun ve Batının Yerelliği,* 279.

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