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FAITH AND REASON IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Bilkent University 2019

FAITH AND REASON IN HIGHER EDUCATION:
SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF ISLAM AT ANKARA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

A Master's Thesis

by

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Ankara
July 2019

To Josh



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The Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences
of

İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

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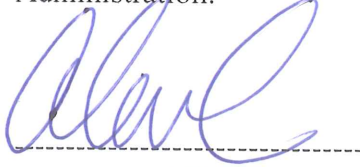
In Partial Fulfillment of The Requirements for The Degree Of
MASTER OF ARTS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

THE DEPARTMENT OF
POLITICAL SCIENCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
İHSAN DOĞRAMACI BİLKENT UNIVERSITY

ANKARA

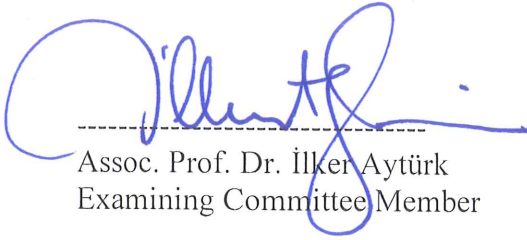
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I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Political Science and Public Administration.



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ABSTRACT

FAITH AND REASON IN HIGHER EDUCATION:
SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF ISLAM AT ANKARA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

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July 2019

The purpose of this thesis is to examine how the *mektep-madrasa* controversy is manifested in Ankara University School of Divinity as a divide between those who see the study and teaching of Islam as a religion, and those who see it as a social science. The works of İlhami Güler, Hayri Kırbaçoğlu and Şaban Ali Düzgün who are scholars at Ankara University School of Divinity are analyzed to understand how they construct an academic study of Islam based on the premises of social sciences through questioning the binary logic behind the concepts of reason/faith, modern/traditional, knowledge/belief which is at the core of theological Islamic studies. Based on the analysis, I argue that although their approaches, points, emphases are different from each other, these scholars share the same objective which is the construction of a social scientific study of Islam in higher education as a ground to reconcile ongoing dichotomy in the academic study of Islam in Turkey.

Keywords: Higher Education, *Mektep*, *Madrasa*, Science, Religion, Modernity, Islam, Turkey



ÖZET

YÜKSEK ÖĞRENİMDE İMAN VE AKIL: ANKARA ÜNİVERSİTESİ İLAHİYAT FAKÜLTESİNDE SOSYAL BİLİMSEL İSLAM ÇALIŞMASI

Baykal, Seda

Yüksek Lisans, Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü

Tez Danışmanı: Prof. Dr. Alev Çınar

Temmuz 2019

Bu tezin amacı, mektep-medrese tartışmalarının Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesinde İslam çalışması ve öğretisini bir din alanı olarak gören klasik İslam çalışması ile sosyal bilim olarak görenler arasındaki bir ayrılık olarak nasıl ortaya çıktığını incelemektir. Ankara İlahiyat Fakültesinde akademisyen olan İlhami Güler, Hayri Kırbasoğlu ve Şaban Ali Düzgün'ün çalışmaları metin analizi yoluyla incelenmekte ve akıl/iman, modern/geleneksel, bilgi/inanç gibi teolojik İslam çalışmalarının sahip olduğu ikili mantığı sorgulamaları ve bu sorgulama sonucunda öne sürdükleri sosyal bilimsel temellere dayalı olan akademik İslam çalışması analiz edilmektedir. Akademisyenlerin bu tartışmalarının analizine dayanarak, meseleye yaklaşımları ve vurguları farklı olsa da sosyal bilim temelleri üzerine inşa ettikleri akademik İslami çalışmanın Türkiye'de uzun yıllar süregelen yüksek öğrenimde İslam nasıl çalışılmalıdır tartışmasına bir uzlaşma önermesi olduğu savunulmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yüksek Öğrenim, Mektep, Medrese, Bilim, Din, Modernite, İslam, Türkiye

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deep gratitude to Professor Alev Çınar for her endless support, encouragement, and patience during the planning and development of this thesis.

I would also like to thank Erdoğan Yıldırım and Barış Mücen for leading my way to problematize the world around me with their engaging scholarships.

I am thankful to my old friend Büşra Şensoy for the joyful years we shared and grow old together. I want to thank my friend Gökhan Şensönmez and Ulaş Murat Altay for the intriguing moments we share together. I also want to express my gratitude for the earnest friendship we built with Hakkı Ozan Karayiğit which eased the hardships of this life.

I am particularly grateful for the continuous support of my family, especially for the endless love of my dear sister Merve Baykal.

Finally, I would like to thank Onurhan Ak for his companionship in the last 5 years of my life. With his calming love, trust and encouragement, I was able to get through the difficult times in life. I am glad that we shared so much together and continue to swim in this fishbowl together.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Focus and The Problem

In 1949 the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) was debating on the issue of higher religious education, when a representative of the founder party, Emin Soysal warned the minister of education about the decision of founding the first theology faculty in Turkey and argued (1949):

I wanted to warn the minister of education that he takes a moral responsibility while deciding this issue based on the contemporary political climate in the country. The struggle between *mektep* (school) and *madrasa* (Muslim religious school) and the conflict between science and religion have caused bloody stages of history not only in the history of our country but also in the history of humankind... I ask the minister to prevent the creation of this kind of mentality in our country. (T.B.M.M. Tutanak Dergisi, Dönem VIII, Cilt 20, Toplantı 3, pp. 279-280)

As the quote shows, the *mektep-madrasa* divide involves a centuries-old struggle between the religious and the secular which has been a critical phenomenon not only in Turkey but in various settings throughout history. In Turkey, *madrasa* and *mektep* discussions reflect the conflict between modernity and Islam and what this conflict brought in such as the binaries of science/religion, modern/traditional, reason/faith. Now, being more than a problem of education, the study of Islam in higher education is a vital phenomenon within the changing sociopolitical dynamics in Turkish society.

Mektep was a public education which provided state officers such as politicians, army officers, writers, teachers and as such (Ergin, 1977, p. 15). In *madrasas*, on the other hand, fundamentals of Islamic doctrines were taught by the Islamic teachers called *ulama* to raise new *ulamas* or religious officers who had highly privileged positions in the society until the conflicts arose by the modernization process in the empire (Kazamias, 1966, p. 55). The system of education was the benchmark for the modernization process in the Ottoman Empire starting during the 18th century (Ergin, 1977, pp. 309-311). While the military and official *mekteps* were being reformed according to modern developments, *madrasas* stayed as the facilities for theological Islamic education in spite of the ongoing educational reforms (Öcal, 2015, p. 76). As Berkes argues, the purpose of these reforms was practical to strengthen the country against decline, not intellectual (1998). Nevertheless, a duality of education began to exist and increased for years based on two binary opposite views, modern and secular education in *mektep* based on scientific premises and theological Islamic education in *madrasa* (Berkes, 1998, 177). The plan of a modern university in which a study of Islam will be given in a theology faculty sparked these ongoing debates. The first attempt of a modern university, *Dâru'l Fünûn*, where Islam was studied as a scientific field as other academic disciplines did not last long because of the dichotomies between scientific and theological studies of Islam in relation to the changing social structure in the country. When A. U. School of Divinity was founded in 1949 and the other Higher Islamic Institutes followed, the duality and conflict in the academic study of Islam emerged again (Kara, 2017, p. 361). On the one hand A. U. School of Divinity was the setting for the social scientific study of Islam with the modern and secular understanding of education, on the other hand, other schools aimed at educating religious officers in the fundamentals of Islamic doctrines rather than train scholars of Islam (Araz, 1960, p. 172). This conflict continues today with the drastic increase in the number of theology faculties in the country. Recently, the President of Religious Affairs Ali Erbaş stated that ninety theology faculties were established in the last eight years increasing the

numbers of theology faculties from 22 to 105 which is an indication of a critical situation considering the number of other faculties in the country (2019, para. 1). Gözler, (2019) as an example, criticizes this growing number of theology faculties and argues that it is absurd for a modern state to have professors of theology more than professors of law (para. 4). As the theology faculties increase, the debates on higher religious education whether the study should be secular or religious and scientific or theological continue to grow in importance in today's Turkey.

The dichotomy between the social scientific study of Islam and the theological study of Islam emerged from the *mektep* and *madrassa* conflict reflects the contemporary positions of A. U. School of Divinity and other theology faculties in Turkey. Although not the whole faculty conducts a social scientific study of Islam, some scholars in A. U. School of Divinity critically address the study of Islam in higher education and endeavor to establish an academic study of Islam which is compatible with social scientific disciplines through their distinct approaches. These scholars are İlhami Güler, Hayri Kırbaşoğlu and Şaban Ali Düzgün, graduates of and now scholars at the same faculty in which they differ with their study of Islam based on social scientific premises from others who conduct a theological study of Islam. What this thesis aims to do is to get a deeper and broader understanding of how the *mektep-madrassa* controversy is manifested in A. U. School of Divinity as a divide between those who see the study and teaching of Islam as a theological inquiry and those who see it as a social scientific study. I will examine the works of these scholars who take a non-conventional stance and propose to study Islam with the tools social sciences provide to understand how they construct their study and how they debate the content of the study of Islam in higher education.

There are vaguely two basic perspectives in the study of Islam in general, which are (social) scientific and theological as stated in the thesis, the conflict between *mektep* and *madrassa* also represents. While the theological study of Islam is directly a faith-related inquiry based on the study of the Quran's verses and the Prophet Muhammad's sayings through the already-established way of thinking

which is considered as absolute, social scientific study of Islam, on the other hand, prioritizes modern academic approaches and scientific language in the study of Islam. Kırbaçoğlu defines the theological, classical study of Islam as the study of Islam which ignores the other issues in the world, overlooks the historicity and objectivity in the analysis and instead prioritizes faith over reason and theological approach against modern/reformist approaches (Kırbaçoğlu, 2015, pp. 16-18). On the other hand, what a modern/reformist and social scientific study of Islam does is to use scientific tools in the analysis, to be in relation with other academic disciplines, to acknowledge historicity, objectivity, criticality and self-reflexivity in the analysis, to be able to respond to the issues of the world around it instead of being limited to the analysis of the Quran and Muhammad's sayings (Güler, 2011, p. 67). As it is seen, a binary logic exists between two kinds of Islamic studies which posits binary opposites such as science/religion, knowledge/belief, modern/traditional, reason/faith, historicity/universality and many more. What these scholars do is to problematize this binary logic and establish an academic study of Islam based on the premises of social sciences as a response to this binary mindset in the study of Islam.

For a detailed analysis, I categorize the perspectives of the scholars to the study of Islam as the historical-critical approach, social scientific approach, and comparative literature approach. Güler's approach is categorized as historical-critical approach since his main purpose is to emphasize the significance of historicity in the study of Islam and to criticize the theological Islamic studies which negate the modern and historical perspectives. Kırbaçoğlu's arguments on the study of Islam, on the other hand, are classified as the social scientific approach because of his emphases on the social scientific propositions and methodology in the study of Islam which are similar but not limited to the disciplines of sociology, anthropology, political science, and psychology. The last but not the least, I categorize Düzgün's approach as the comparative literature approach based on his use of post-structuralist and deconstructivist techniques while debating Islamic studies and constructing the academic study of Islam. The distinctive problematizations and arguments of the scholars are represented by these categorizations to better grasp the authenticity of their works.

Besides their distinctive approaches, what makes these scholars' work significant and controversial is the reaction the Islamic circles in general and the divinity school communities, in particular, give to their scholarships. They are scholars of the study of Islam specializing in the areas of Kalam and Hadith, but their works are not limited to these areas: they discuss a range of issues in the areas of religion, social organizations, economy, politics, and technology. The reputation of these scholars mostly based on the accusations of falsification of God, of the Quran and of the practices of Islam because of the liberal and reformist perspectives they have on the study of Islam. They reinterpret the Quranic verses concerning contemporary societies, which is unwelcomed in theological Islamic understanding. Their critical frame of reference to the Islamic studies and the construction of a study of Islam based on the criteria they endorse are very provocative not only in the academic community but in the entire society.¹

So, what exactly do these scholars aim to establish and why is what they do inquisitive and controversial? First of all, as it is discussed, these scholars come from a background established through the conflict between two antagonistic studies of Islam *mektep* and *madrassa* reflect: social scientific versus theological. In this sense, their critiques on Islamic studies and the construction of the study of Islam in academia is important to understand this conflict. While they establish an academic study of Islam based on a modern, historical and scientific understanding in which the use of reason/rationality, criticality, self-reflexivity are prioritized, they do not negate the significance of faith and religion in the study of Islam. To understand how they do this, depending on these discussions and the theoretical and conceptual frame, each scholars' approach is textually analyzed.

I argue in this thesis that the scholars in A. U. School of Divinity critically address the study of Islam in higher education and offer a social scientific inquiry

¹ Among these scholars, İlhami Güler is particularly popular in the society because of his unorthodox interpretations on the verses of the Quran. His speeches are shared on YouTube by various channels that are different from each other in terms of political agenda such as Atatürk's Children, Community for the Free Theologians of Ankara University, Descendants of the Ottoman Empire and Reason, Atheism and Religion, and Science and Religion. As can be predicted, based on the different views of the channels, Güler's speeches are shared with positive or negative connotations. For some of the videos see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b41ER7_S7v0, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QMZbHOVml5E>

on Islam which is based on a shared ground of modern and scientific features. With the social scientific study of Islam, they prioritize reason over faith but do not ignore faith and Islam as a religion which means that they redefine the boundaries of the study of Islam and social sciences. In this regard, with the construction of a social scientific study of Islam, they offer reconciliation for the dichotomy in the study of Islam started from the *mektep* and *madrassa* conflict.

1.2 Significance of the Thesis

This thesis problematizes the academic study of Islam based on social scientific premises by analyzing the works of the scholars İlhami Güler, Hayri Kırbaçoğlu and Şaban Ali Düzgün at A. U. School of Divinity. I analyze how they critically address the study of Islam: how it is conducted in higher religious education, what its relationship is with the other academic inquiries. Along with this analysis, I argue that the academic study of Islam these scholars endeavor to construct is an offer of reconciliation for the dichotomy in the academic study of Islam.

The scholars, İlhami Güler, Hayri Kırbaçoğlu, and Şaban Ali Düzgün reassess the long history of Islamic thought, particularly in Turkey and problematize the binary logic of Islamic studies through which they establish an academic study of Islam based on social scientific premises. Their problematization is a respond to deep-rooted discussions of modernity/Islam and science/religion in Turkey which is crucial to understand the centuries-old historical, political, cultural, religious and intellectual knowledge embedded in Islamic thought. The significance of the works of these scholars comes from this very fact that they do not only shed light on the centuries-old discussions in Islamic studies, but they offer reconciliation for them as well. They reintroduce Islamic studies as a scientific intellectual activity which creates a study of Islam based on the characteristics of social sciences against the traditional/theological Islamic studies.

Through the analysis, this thesis addresses a topic that brings relevant works of literature on higher religious education in and outside of Turkey together. The literature in the West focuses on the science and religion debate in higher religious education in the context of Christianity which does not shed light on the

study of Islam in but supplies the analysis with different approaches and methodologies. Katsoff, for instance, divides religious studies in higher education into two types: liberal education and indoctrination (1953). He argues that liberal religious education means that the purpose of the education is to train scholars who are capable of discussing and producing different theories, arguments and methods to study religion as their object of study like social sciences such as political science, sociology, anthropology (1953, pp. 285-288). On the other hand, indoctrination means religious education for the sake of the religion, to improve faith of the people and to raise qualified clergy in helping people in religious needs (Katsoff, 1953, pp. 285-288). The same kind of divide exists among theology faculties in Turkey as discussed in this thesis: A. U. School of Divinity can be considered as the institution gives liberal education while others use indoctrination. However, this divide is so simplistic that it may overlook the particularities of the different perspectives which are important for a comprehensive understanding. As a response to this point, some studies inquire on the possible ways of harmonizing this conflictual duality in higher religious education. Wiebe's study (1995) on religious education at University of Toronto and Hill's study (2005) on the long-standing discussion of religious education at Oxford University are some examples of empirical studies on finding harmony between antagonistic perspectives on higher religious education. Many other studies also question higher religious education in relation to the secular position of universities, whether the religious study should be secular because the universities are secular institutions or if this understanding is falsified or whether universities as secular institutions have changed today against the revitalization of religion in the societies (Stendahl, 1963). These discussions question the educational policies, history of universities, the conflicts among different studies of religions in higher education and the changing sociopolitical dynamics in the world in relation to the binaries of secular/religious and modern/traditional. The same issues are discussed in this thesis as well but what is important is that the scholars, Güler, Kırbaçoğlu and Düzgün, are also on a quest of common ground to reconcile this antagonistic duality in higher religious education by conducting an academic study of Islam. In this sense, these works of literature give a framework

for such an analysis. However, there is a contextual difference, religious education in Turkey as Islamic education has a different and long history linked to the social and political changes starting from the Ottoman Empire. On this point, the literature in Turkey steps in and provide this analysis with the discussions on how the conflict between religious and secular constituted (Mardin, 1971) and realized itself through causing a duality in the system of education starting from the modernizing reforms in the Ottoman Empire (Berkes, 1998) and how this conflict realizes itself in higher religious education presenting two mutually exclusive perspectives on the study of Islam today (Genç, 2013). Overall the literature in Turkey stresses the historical formation of higher religious education (Sakaoğlu, 2003), and the changing sociopolitical dynamics (Kara, 2017) and the contextual and pedagogical concerns on the current position of higher religious education in Turkey (Öcal, 2015). Although these studies are invaluable to the thesis, they fall short of considering the particular experience of higher religious education in Turkey (the literature in the West) and methodologically does not give an analysis in detail of how Islamic knowledge produced in higher education in Turkey. In this regard, by benefiting from these works of literature this thesis combines its methodological, conceptual and contextual framework and based on this framework offers a deeper and broader understanding of the scholar's knowledge production through textual analysis of their works. Concerning these, this thesis is not only important for it sheds light on the deep-rooted debate of *mektep* and *madrassa* but also critical for it provides the literature of higher religious education with conceptual framework and methodology for further inquiries on the issue.

1.3 Thesis Background

The modernization process in the late Ottoman Empire was based on the Westernizing reforms initiated through the system of education. Aiming at practical improvement instead of intellectual advancement, these reforms, with the changing sociopolitical dynamics in the country, paved the way for duality in the education known as the struggle between *mektep* and *madrassa* (Koçer, 1970, p. 120). *Mektep* signified the modern and secular institutions of education while *madrassa* was based on the traditional, orthodox Islamic doctrines which reflect

the ongoing predicament between modernity and Islam in the country (Berkes, 1998, p. 177). *Dâru'l Fünûn* as the first attempt of a modern and secular university by including a theology faculty in its structure increased the ongoing debates on conflicts of secular/religious and modernity/Islam (Berkes, 1998, p. 178). *Dâru'l Fünûn* existed between the years 1845 and 1923 and was closed down for multiple times, mostly as a consequence of the conflictual settings the binaries of secular/religious, modernity/Islam created. *Dâru'l Fünûn* was a model for the early modern higher religious education because of its unificatory and systematic approach to scientific disciplines such as physics, biology, chemistry in natural sciences and psychology, sociology and history in social sciences including religious education (Mustafa Öcal, 1986, p.11). A year after the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, the first formal law for the unification of education was enacted in 1924, and all the educational institutions were attached to the Ministry of Education (Kazamias, 1966). *Dâru'l Fünûn* had a theology faculty in it until its transformation to Istanbul University in 1933 when the faculty is closed and replaced by the Islam Research Institute (İslam Tetkikleri Enstitüsü) which was also closed down and replaced by just one course named “Islam and its Philosophy” under the faculty of Arts in 1936 (Reed, 1956, p. 296). On the one hand, the extent of higher religious education was narrowed down, on the other hand, the curriculum was altered and finally in 1941-42, because of the lack of instructors and students, the course was closed (Öcal, 1986, p.115). After years of absence, higher religious education was on the agenda at the time of the multi-party system in Turkey which let the foundation of the first theology faculty in Turkey, Ankara University School of Divinity, through a long discussion session in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. Being founded on a secular and modern setting, A.U. School of Divinity became a place for the academic study of Islam based on social scientific study and stayed as the only institution of higher religious education for ten years until higher Islamic institutes were established (Kara, 2017). By putting the Islamic studies in a scientific field, A. U. School of Divinity was the only place for a social scientific study of Islam for years in the absence of *madrasas* as the place for the theological study of Islam (Reed, 1956, p. 309). This situation, parallel to the conflict between

mektepe as the secular education and *madrassa* as the religious education, came to light again in the Republic of Turkey between A. U. School of Divinity and other theology faculties. Contrary to A. U. School of Divinity, other schools aimed at educating religious officers in the fundamentals of Islamic doctrines rather than train scholars of Islam (Araz, 1960, pp. 172). This difference between A. U. School of Divinity and other theology faculties still represents the conflict between the study and teaching of Islam as social science and as theology. The scholars, Güler, Kırbaçoğlu, and Düzgün by benefiting such a background critically address the study of Islam in higher education and endeavor to establish an academic study of Islam which is compatible with social scientific disciplines through their distinct approaches. The analysis of their works will shed light on how the *mektepe-madrassa* conflict reflects the divide between academic studies of Islam as social science and theology in today's Turkey.

There are two crucial contexts to understand the divide in the academic study of Islam. The first one, examined in Chapter I, the modernization process starting from the Ottoman Empire to today, the predicament of modernity and Islam mirrors a major social change that without understanding it, it is impossible to grasp this issue of the academic study of Islam. The predicament of modernity and Islam is the condition paved the way to a modern and secular setting for the social scientific study of Islam which the scholars base their approaches. Such a ground made them able to question the classical Islamic studies, the theological study of Islam in higher education with the social scientific study of Islam and to respond to this conflict by creating a common social scientific ground which reconcile the dichotomies theological study of Islam carries such as reason/faith, knowledge/belief, modern/traditional and more.

The other important context through which the discussions on the academic study of Islam become clear is the debate on science and religion in higher education. Many discussions exist in the science and religion debate which are mostly focused on the experiences of the Christianity studies but provide a significant theoretical and conceptual framework to other studies on different religions, on Islam in particular. The claims to the science and religion debate are discussed as

the claims that separate science and religion (1), the claims conflict them with each other (2) and the claims to integrate scientific findings into theological explanation and description (3) (Nussel & Lovin, 2014). Considering these different claims, in Section 3.1, I examine how the academic study of Islam the scholars conduct can be understood through these different claims. The questions are how we can understand whether a study of Islam is a faith-related theological, traditional inquiry or scientific, modern, secular and reformist inquiry and how a study of Islam can be a common ground to consider these different and mostly dichotomous studies of Islam. With these questions and discussions, it is shown that the scholars conduct an academic study of Islam based on the premises of social sciences but do not negate the theological side of the Islamic studies and endeavor to create a common ground in which a reconciliation is possible with social scientific premises.

The literature on higher religious education in the West reflect upon the science and religion debate by focusing on the history and organization of the universities and the categorization of higher religious education among other disciplines. It is discussed whether there is a linear understanding of the history of higher education such as the transition from religious to secular and whether the harmony between religion and science can be achieved in higher education (Pullias, 1946, p. 366). The revitalization of religion is also analyzed to understand whether it may be a threat to the secular understanding of the university as an institution if there is such an understanding (Stendahl, 1963, p. 522). Finally, some of the studies stress the categorization of higher religious education, whether it should be a field in liberal art or indoctrination which will define the premises of the study (Katsoff, 1953). Different than the literature in the West, the works on higher religious education in provide hints about the predicament of modernity and Islam in the analysis of higher religious education. Some studies (Aşıkoğlu, 1993) focus on the formation of religious education as an academic study and the effect of the predicament of modernity and Islam on this formation and on the historical analysis of the sociopolitical relevance of the higher religious education in Turkey (Paçacı & Aktay, 1999). Other studies are mostly based on the pedagogical concerns for the organization of higher religious education (Dölek, 2014) and

comparison of higher religious education in Turkey to the others in different countries to offer improvement for the universities (Genç, 2013). These discussions although emphasize the predicament of modernity and Islam fall short of critically addressing the issues of science/religion and modernity/Islam in a comprehensive way.

These are the main contexts and the works of literature to understand the dichotomy in the academic study of Islam which this thesis aims to analyze through the works of the scholars Güler, Kırbaçoğlu, and Düzgün who construct a social scientific study of Islam against the theological one with the aim of reconcile dichotomies in the study of Islam.

1.4 Methodology

This study examines the works of the scholars – İlhami Güler, Hayri Kırbaçoğlu, Şaban Ali Düzgün – in Ankara School of Divinity to understand their approach to the study of Islam in Turkey. There are three major reasons for the selection. Firstly, these scholars are interested in the question of how Islam is studied in higher education and criticize theological, traditional Islamic studies under the same institutions and associations. Secondly, they do not only problematize the study of Islam, but they are prominent scholars in this area of inquiry because of their intensive intellectual activities. And lastly, although there are some other scholars who are interested in the same or similar issues, these scholars are important that they were educated in A. U. School of Divinity and continue their academic career at the same university and faculty in the subfield of Basic Islamic Studies. Accordingly, the historical significance of A.U. School of Divinity, being the first modern and secular institution in Turkey in which social scientific study of Islam is offered reflects upon the background of these scholars.

They have worked in the journal “*İslamiyat*” for years through which they discussed not only academic issues but also social, political and economic matters of the world. The journal continues to be of significance even after it ceased

publication² since the journal was effective on the society with its critical review and reevaluation of the fourteen centuries-old Islamic studies (Akgönül, 2019, p. 32). At the time being, they continue their intellectual activities in the publishing house “*Otto*” by still critically addressing the heritage of Islamic studies and offering interpretations for the problems Islamic studies have today. They are very active intellectually: they focus on the study of Islam and other sociopolitical and cultural issues in their books, and articles, in social media platforms and interviews besides the academic affairs. These scholars are not only unified in their academic pursuits but interested in other issues in the world and present a critical approach to the matters of politics, economy, social practices, culture, technology, market, religion and academy through their works. These make the scholars more significant in understanding the study of Islam in Turkey.

Since the focus of this analysis is to understand the approaches of the scholars to the issue of the study of Islam, textual analysis is employed as the primary method. The most comprehensive books of these scholars are chosen as the main sources to be textually analyzed while other books, articles and other sources of works – articles, interviews – of the scholars are used as secondary sources in the analysis.

İlhami Güler’s books “*Özgürlükçü Teoloji Yazıları*”, “*Realpolitik ve Muhafazakarlık*”, “*Kur'an, Tasavvuf ve Seküler Dünyanın Yorumu*”, “*İlhamiyyat 1-2*”, “*Dine Yeni Yaklaşımlar*” and “*Kuş Bakışı*” where he discusses sociopolitical issues in Turkey and in the world with a critical perspective and examines the role of the study of Islam in these discussions are used as the primary sources to understand his views on the study of Islam: how it should be conducted, what it offers, its relation to other academic inquiries. To support the analysis further, other works of İlhami Güler such as his interviews or/and his newspaper articles, speeches are used as well.

² For Güler’s critical review of the foundation of İslamiyat, the problems they have been thorough and its closing down, see: <https://www.timeturk.com/tr/2009/07/26/islamiyat-ve-kitabiyat-neden-kapandi.html>

Hayri Kırbaşıoğlu's books "*İslami İlimlerde Metod Sorunu*" and "*Alternatif Hadis Metodolojisi*" are used as the primary sources. In the books, Kırbaşıoğlu discusses the epistemological and methodological problems the discipline of hadith and the study of Islam in general have today and suggests solutions for these problems. He discusses the relationship between the academic study of Islam and its relation to other scientific disciplines and tries to construct a methodological ground for the academic study of Islam which he contends the solution the study of Islam needs today.

Şaban Ali Düzgün's books "*Allah, Tabiat ve Tarih: Teolojide Yöntem Sorunu*" , "*Çağdaş Dünyada Din ve Dindarlar*" , "*Sosyal Teoloji*" , "*Aydınlanmanın Keşif Araçları*" and "*Din, Birey ve Toplum*", are used as the primary sources since the books are concerned with the academic study of Islam and the position of academic study of Islam among other scientific disciplines. The article "*Ulemeden Aydına Değişim ve Dönüşüm*" is also included in the analysis as Düzgün critically addresses the transformation of the scholars within the study of Islam in his article.

The books are chosen with respect to their relevance to the problematization of the study of Islam to present the ideas of the scholars in an accurate fashion.

Secondary sources are used in order to support and explain the main arguments extracted from the former. Together, these primary and secondary sources enable this thesis to grasp the scholars' approaches to the study of Islam and the offer they bring forth for the problems of Islamic studies today.

1.5 Thesis Plan

This thesis begins by introducing the debates on the study of Islam in higher education starting from the conflict between *mektep* and *madrassa* and then presents the scholars, İlhami Güler, Hayri Kırbaşıoğlu, and Şaban Ali Düzgün, whose works are analyzed in the thesis to understand the construction of social scientific study of Islam.

In Chapter II, I examine the history of modern higher religious education in Turkey starting from the Ottoman Empire. I show how a duality in the system of education existed between *mektep* and *madrasa* based on two binary mindsets of secular and religious (Berkes, 1998). This conflict continued in higher religious education and came to light with the foundation of Ankara University School of Divinity in the Republic of Turkey. This faculty as the castle of modern higher religious education and the scientific study of Islam was and still is distinct from the late opened higher institutes of Islamic education which were and are based on the teachings of traditional Islamic doctrines with a theological perspective mostly to raise religious officers for the society's needs (Kara, 2017, pp. 361-367). A. U. School of Divinity's position in the duality within the academic study of Islam reflects upon the works of the scholars analyzed in this thesis which is important to understand their construction of a social scientific study of Islam which is subjugated by the high numbers of theological study of Islam in the country.

Another dimension in understanding higher religious education in Turkey and the scholars' works on the study of Islam is science and religion debate in higher education. In chapter III, I first analyze debates on science and religion in higher religious education and review different perspectives on the study of religion in an academic setting. This dimension is significant to understand the study of Islam scholars endeavor to construct because it sheds light on the way science and religion are approached differently by considering them separate fields, opposite fields, or compatible fields and such (Nussel & Lovin, 2014). What I do is to review these perspectives to better grasp the scholars' approaches to science and religion debate in the context of the academic study of Islam. Through these discussions, I construct the conceptual framework for the analysis which is based on the categorization of the approaches of the scholars as historical-critical approach (İlhami Güler), social scientific approach (Hayri Kırbaçoğlu), and comparative literature approach (Şaban Ali Düzgün). These categorizations are important to understand the literature of science and religion debate in and outside of Turkey and to locate the academic study of Islam these scholars conduct into this literature. Followingly, I discuss the works of literature on higher religious education in and outside of Turkey. The Western literature the analysis benefits

from is significant since it represents a long-standing discussion of science and religion and different approaches developed through a long period of time on this debate. The discussion of higher religious education in Turkey, on the other hand, is a relatively new issue and does not have detailed arguments and approaches on higher religious education and science and religion debate. However, it is important for it includes the particularities of the higher religious education including its historical transformation, sociopolitical changes it has been through and the problematization on its role in the society. Accordingly, while the Western literature provides this analysis with a general framework, the literature based on Turkey gives the particularities of the issue in Turkey which are crucial to the analysis.

Chapter IV covers the main analysis of the thesis which is the textual analysis of the works of the scholars İlham Güler, Hayri Kırbaçoğlu, and Şaban Ali Düzgün. I analyze the works of these scholars in which they criticize theological study of Islam and categorize their approaches to the study of Islam based on the discussions in Chapter III. I argue that all three scholars have different approaches – historical-critical approach (İlhami Güler), social scientific approach (Hayri Kırbaçoğlu), and comparative literature approach (Şaban Ali Düzgün) – but endeavor for the academic study of Islam which is an offer of reconciliation for the conflicts of science/religion and modernity/Islam. Lastly, chapter V concludes the analysis.

These chapters together form a unified analysis of how the *mektep-madrasa* controversy is manifested in the Ankara University School of Divinity as a divide between those who see the study and teaching of Islam as a religion, and those who see it as a social science and how social scientific study of Islam in higher education is constructed by the scholars, Güler, Kırbaçoğlu and Düzgün.

CHAPTER II

STEPS TO MODERN HIGHER RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN TURKEY

Despite its relatively short history in today's Turkey, Ankara University School of Divinity has antecedents that extend back to the 14th century Ottoman Empire when Islamic education was conducted through *madrasas* to raise *ulama* as Mardin calls "Doctors of Islamic Law" until their closure on March 3, 1924 (1991, p. 117). Different types of educational institutions were opened and closed down in the empire based on the new regulations and reforms implemented throughout the 18th and 19th centuries when the predicament between the modernization process and Islam were escalating as a contentious issue in the society. A. U. School of Divinity as the first theology faculty of Turkey carries this deep-rooted issue of the predicament of modernity and Islam to today which can be seen through the academic study of Islam the scholars, Güler, Kırbaçoğlu and Düzgün construct.

Therefore, this chapter analyzes the history of the system of education starting from the first years of Ottoman Empire to today's Turkey particularly focusing on the periods higher religious education has been through to understand the conditions which made the academic study of Islam possible today and the peculiar position of A. U. School of Divinity in conducting a social scientific study of Islam. Section 2.1 reviews the history of education in the Ottoman Empire to introduce the sociopolitical context which the present academic study of Islam bases itself on. By showing different time periods with the distinct

reorganization of the system of education, the analysis shows how the modernization process manifested itself through the system of education and how the terms modernity and Islam pervaded themselves as the binary opposites on the discussions concerning education, particularly religious (Islamic) education in the Ottoman Empire. In the following section, the analysis focuses on the different stages higher religious education went through in modern Turkey such as the transformation of *Dâru'l Fünûn* into Istanbul University, the changing conditions of higher religious education, the foundation of A. U. School of Divinity and other Islamic education institutions such as Higher Islamic Institutes *Yüksek İslam Enstitüleri (YİE)*, and Vocational Schools of Theology *İlahiyat Meslek Yüksek Okulu (İMYO)*. Different institutions of Islamic education, their relationship with the sociopolitical dynamics in that period and with each other are examined to present the peculiar position of Ankara University School of Divinity regarding the academic study of Islam in Turkey. Finally, in the last section, the predicament of modernity and Islam is reviewed in detail to stress its significant role in understanding the construction of the academic study of Islam in Turkey and the works of the scholars, Güler, Kırbaçoğlu and Düzgün.

In sum, this chapter shows the historical, political and social background of the system of education in Turkey focusing on how the dichotomy of the social scientific study of Islam and theological study of Islam was formed starting from *mektep/madrasa* conflict to today. With his background review, works of the scholars, how they construct a social scientific study of Islam and on what ground and what they try to accomplish with this academic study of Islam will become clear.

2.1 The System of Education in the Ottoman Empire

In a broad sense, two major educational organization existed in the Ottoman Empire: *Palace school* and *madrasa* (Ergin, 1977, p. 4). While the *Palace education* was for the preparation of the officers, politicians, and soldiers, *madrasas* were used by society to familiarize with religious and juridical knowledge. Besides these two different systems, there were *sıbyan mektebi* (primary schools) in which children were learning the Quran (only recital),

prayers and calligraphy (Öcal, 2015, p. 36). Like Palace schools, there were also *mekteps* which will be the most important public educational institutions for graduating state officers which will dominate private Palace schools with Westernizing reformations implemented by the 18th century. Ergin argues that since the *sıbyan mektebi* was a primary and low level of local school, it should not be considered as the other *mektep* schools which prepare state officers such as *Harbiye Mektebi* (military academy), *Ziraat Mektebi* (agricultural education), *Mülkiye Mektebi* (political science and language education for state officers and politicians). That is to say, the apart from *sıbyan mektebi* there is a dual education prevailed in the empire: *mektep* and *madrassa* which brought in many other dichotomies with them.

What is this conflict exactly? This conflict between *mektep* and *madrassa* was based on the problematization of the content of the education which is the contest between positive sciences and Islamic doctrinal education. On the one side, the traditional *madrassa* education based on Islamic doctrine was defended while on the other side a modern, rather secular education with an emphasis on free-thinking was advocated based on positive sciences (Kazamias, 1966, p. 55). Besides these discussions on the content of the education, Sakaoğlu exemplifies many nonsensical debates such as whether the blackboard should be used or not since it is made by the West, whether the sitting on the chair while reading Quran is sin or not (before, children did not have chairs and desks but only cushions to sit) (Sakaoğlu, 2003, p. 77). Here, it is seen that the conflict between *mektep* and *madrassa* indicates the predicament of modernity and Islam starting by the Westernizing reforms and was allocated by two binary mindsets in education, specifically in the study of Islam, prevailing still in Turkey: one is the theological perspective supporting traditional Islamic education and criticizing the modern education attributed to the West and the other one is the scientific perspective favors modernization and secularization process and opposes the dogmatic practice of Islam in the system of education (Kazamias, 1966, pp. 53-54).

So, what are the different types of schools as *mektep* and *madrassa* and how did the conflict between them occur? Ergin (1977) categorizes the system of

education in the empire as palace education, military education, and public education. *Mekteps* were the ones which the modernization process in the empire began by because of practical reasons more than intellectual motivations (Ergin, 1977, p. 15). The army forces, palace, and other state officers were needed to be compatible with the rapid reformations in Europe (Kazamias, 1966, p. 30). With the purpose of improvement, *mekteps* (palace and military education) were being reformed and modernized while *madrasas* stayed nearly the same. The inevitable downfall of *madrasas* as public schools began when the reign of Sultan Mehmed II was over when the system of education was underrated among other political and economic problems the empire was having at the time (Sakaoğlu, 2003, p. 21). Ergin (1977) interprets this downfall as the result of the rote learning, strict commitment to the old books and authors, being against any changes and developments which are incompatible to the old thoughts they have and learning only Arabic while do not have qualified Turkish (p. 102). Although many reformations were implemented on *madrasas* starting from Sultan Selim II such as adding the courses of history, physics, geography, and basic Turkish, they came to a deadlock against the modernized *mekteps*. This situation increased the gap and conflict between the two types of education throughout the 19th century: theological Islamic education based on traditional study of Islamic doctrines and criticism of scientific developments, and (social) scientific education based on more standardized and value-free teaching of practical and scientific developments in the world (Çağlayan, 2014, p. 156).

This duality of *mektep* and *madrasa* was tried to be resolved by different political or educational policies before and after the foundation of the Republic of Turkey which will be analyzed in following sections, and the discussions on the issue were attracting politicians and intellectuals in the whole country. As a renowned critical thinker in the history of Turkey, sociologist Ziya Gökalp also discussed this duality in the system of education in his works. His interest in this issue is significant since besides being a sociologist, writer, and a poet, Gökalp was a

political activist who was highly influential in the development of Kemalism³ and its heritage in the modern Republic of Turkey (Parla, 1985, p. 7). Besides his political agenda, the positivist understanding of the world Gökâlp built on the thought of Emile Durkheim who is known as the principal architect of modern social science is visible in the poem. In the poem, Gökâlp discusses the duality in education and tries to offer a solution which is the unification of the old and new which can be read as the traditional and the modern:

...

Science is one and only, no duality can exist in it,
Education should not have two separate paths.
The old and the new, by merging
Should nullify each other.

That is when exists a külliye! (Tansel, 1952, p. 138)

As can be seen in Gökâlp's poem, this conflict, the duality in the education was a vital issue reflecting the sociopolitical background Turkey has been through which is still prevalent today as Islam as a theological study and Islam as a social scientific inquiry in higher education.

2.1.1 Educational Structure in the Early Ottoman Empire (1332-1773)

The first formal educational institution in the Ottoman Empire was an Ottoman *madrasa* founded in İznik by Orhan Gazi, the second bey of the nascent Ottoman Sultanate, in 1332. The first *madrasa* was needed as a school of Islam in which mathematics, medicine, philosophy, and astronomy were also taught alongside the Islamic teachings such as *fiqh* (Islamic law) and *kalam* (discussion of the fundamentals of Islam/Islamic philosophy) (Sakaoğlu, 2003, p.20). In the following years until the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, *madrasas* were an important part of the education system in the empire because of the ground they provide for intellectual development but even then, the education provided was not enough to train prestigious intellectual (Sakaoğlu, 2003, p. 22). The reign of

³ I only touch upon this poem of Gökâlp because of its direct relation to the analysis of the thesis. However, Gökâlp's works and influence on the social and political values of the modern Republic of Turkey go beyond this poem's review and requires further analysis.

Sultan Mehmed II (Mehmed the Conqueror) was a peak period for the *madrasas* as the increased concern on their content and organization until their downfall in the 17th century. Mehmed II (1451-1481) collected scientific books in Ancient Greek and Latin, and invited reputable philosophers, intellectuals and artists with the intention of creating a cultural domain ruled by positive sciences, philosophy and art which was according to Sakaoğlu an attempt to create an environment at the borders of the West and the East (Sakaoğlu, 2003, p. 20). Based on these aims, Mehmed II founded fifty-seven *madrasas* within his thirty years of reign, some of the best knowns are *madrasa of Hagia Sophia* and *Sahn-ı Semân* which consisted of eight different *madrasas* where medicine, fiqh (Islamic law) and astronomy are the main areas of teaching (Öcal, 2014, p. 58).

Unlike the ambition his father had, Bayezid II (1481-1512) stayed away from the free thought and liberal approaches and only known for the hospitals he founded in which unorthodox methods such as music therapy are practiced (Sakaoğlu, 2003, p. 21). Because of the absence of the developments in the system of education, Sakaoğlu describes this era as a dull period in the Ottoman Empire while it is the period of scientific and technological developments in the West (Sakaoğlu, 2003, p. 21). The peak of *madrasa* education was in the years between 1520 and 1566 under the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent. However, while the number of *madrasas* increased as the borders of the empire expanded, the content of the study of Islam was not changed or improved effectively (Öcal, 2015, p. 59). In the *madrasas* which are known as Sahn-ı Süleymaniye, medicine, natural sciences, astronomy, mathematics and kalam, and fiqh were taught which indicates that the content stayed as the same (Öcal, 2015, p. 59). According to Sakaoğlu (2003), an important organizational change in this era was the creation of an *ilmiye sınıfı*, famously known as *ulama* who are graduates of and scholars at *madrasas* (p. 23) Ulamas had a privileged position in the society such as being exempted from taxes and military service and having legal immunity on prison and death sentence (Sakaoğlu, 2003, p. 23). By exploiting their positions, *ulama* caused many problems not only in the organization of the education but in the whole sociopolitical dynamics in the society which the empire could not handle

because of the power *ulama* had in the political and legal policies of the empire (Sakaoğlu, 2003, p. 23).

This disconnection between the empire and the *madrasas* is not surprising since the system of education has been organized and regulated by the foundations called waqfs as the major determinations on any changes done in the system of education (Salvatore, 2016, p. 118). Except for a few exceptions, *mekteps* and *madrasas*, were always established by individuals. Even if they are rulers, they would do it in their own names and account as individuals. The people would benefit from these institutions free of charge and in addition to food and clothing, money was given to those who attend *mekteps* and *madrasas*. This style of administration was called *vakıf* waqf (Ergin, 1977, p. 305).

Following these issues, Sakaoğlu (2003) describes the 17th century *madrasas* as the abandoned establishments which turned their back to the developments of the world because of the dogmatic prevail over the developments and innovations around the world (p. 27). Not only the education was underdeveloped and based on dogmatic understandings, but it also created a binary setting in which the *madrasa* itself determines what is wrong and right and then shepherds the society based on these constructions (Sakaoğlu, 2003, p. 41). This corruption of *madrasa* and its role in the society were of course criticized by some. One of the critiques belongs to Kâtip Çelebi (1609-1657), an acclaimed polymath and literary author of the 17th century Ottoman Empire. In his book *Mîzânü'l-Hakk*, He criticizes the *madrasa* education and *ulama* as follows:

The so-called scholars in *madrasa* accept any idea as solid and frozen like a stone which cannot be changed, they do not discuss anything in detail but only accept or reject the ideas based on their dogmatic approach. They think that it is enough to look into space like an animal does [he means looking at something without questioning or thinking] to fulfill the wisdom of the Quran “Do not they look into the realm of the heavens and the earth and everything that Allah has created?” They only discuss nonsensical issues like whether smoking and drinking coffee are ill-gotten according to Islam or not (Sakaoğlu, 2003, p. 37)

Kâtip Çelebi as a graduate of *madrasa* was the first Ottoman intellectual to criticize the orthodox study of Islam in *madrasas*. His criticisms in the quote

indicate that *madrasa* education was already deprived in the 17th century because of the dogmatic theological study of Islam *ulama* constructed.

In sum, it can be said that starting from the 15th century, *madrasa* education began its downfall which could not be restored by any reformation attempts in the face of modernized *mekteps* throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. This was the era before the conflict between *mektep* and *madrasa* became a contentious issue with the early attempts at modernization in the reign of Sultan Selim II when the dichotomy between the social scientific study of Islam and theological study of Islam manifested itself as the secular versus religious study through the modernization process.

2.1.2 Issues in the System of Education and the First Attempts at Modernization in the Ottoman Empire (1773-1839)

The early attempts at modernization in the Ottoman Empire can be seen during the reign of Sultan Selim III (1789-1807) but the reforms were initiated under the reign of Sultan Mahmud II (1809-1838) as the era before the major reformation policies implemented in Tanzimat period (Kazamias, 1966, p. 42). The modernization process was mainly based on the implementation of the techniques borrowed from Europe to the structure and content of the schools. The first steps of modernization of education were seen through the reforms in the engineering and military schools based on the need for an army force compatible with the ones in the West (Sakaoğlu, 2003, pp. 56-58). The first example of reformed military schools was Mühendishâne-i Bahr-î Hümayun – which will be transformed to Istanbul Technical University after the foundation of the Republic of Turkey – established in 1773 to teach the technical knowledge to the navy and shipyard workers (Sakaoğlu, 2003, p. 57). The efforts to modernize the army were guided by the examples in France: French officers and experts were brought over, and the French language was chosen as the compulsory language for the students in the military schools (Lewis, 1969, p. 58).

The Westernizing reforms initiated under Mahmud II cannot be understood as a mere passion of the ruler for modernization since the process was based on the

inevitable effect of the failure of the traditional institutions against the emergence of a level of secularization and liberation (Berkes, 1998, p. 128). In these circumstances, the reforms were initiated as the implementations of the organizational tools in the West, specifically France, to the institutions in the Ottoman Empire. Since the primary issue was the ongoing wars and defeats, the army was the first to be reformed through the modernization of the military schools (Kazamias, 1966, pp. 51-52). However, the reforms were not limited to the military schools and the army but extended to the civil/public schools in terms of the changes in the content, structure and the organization.

The major reformation in civil/public schools was the foundation of *Rüşdiye* (secondary schools) around 1838 which were considered as secondary schools between the primary schools (*sıbyan mektebi*) and higher institutions. The purpose was to provide advanced preparation for the military, medical schools, and government offices that *sıbyan mektebi* could not provide (Kazamias, 1966, p. 52). In the report on the foundation of *Rüşdiye*, it was written that *Rüşdiye* is needed since “the illiterate people neither love their country nor put their lives together” (Sakaoğlu, 2003, p. 59). The report indicates that the reformations in the system of education were tried to be justified through a nationalist discourse which was a sign of change in the state policies about education (Sakaoğlu, 2003, p. 59). In this era, for the first time in the Ottoman Empire, education became a state responsibility and even a Minister of Education was appointed by the government for the first time (Kazamias, 1966, p. 52). Despite many attempts to modernize education by the empire, it is known that no successful changes happened in the content of the education in this era: education was still dominated by the teaching of dogmatic Islamic doctrines in *madrasas* and in *mekteps* as well, *ulama* was unqualified to provide higher level of education and the attempt to increase the educational institutions were unorganized and unsystematic against the prevailing orthodoxy (Sakaoğlu, 2003, p. 66). Berkes argues that in the reign of Mahmud II

...education in the sense of schooling was a "religious" matter: the new schools were thought of only as a means of teaching certain skills, primarily for military purposes. Consequently, no institutions were

founded in which to prepare students in the alphabet of modern science: there arose the strange situation of teaching engineering students such elementary subjects as writing, composition, Arabic, French, arithmetic, etc. (Berkes, 1998, p. 100)

As the quote indicates the reformations in this era were based on the practical needs rather than intellectual purposes. While the reformations began for practical purposes, this attempt was not successful in practice and provoked many revolts staged against the reformations (Sakaoğlu, 2003, p. 65). Although the conflict between the social scientific and theological study of Islam was not evident yet, *mektep* and *madrassa* conflict manifested itself with the increase in the reactionary discourse of *ulama*.

2.1.3 The Era of Tanzimat and its Effect on the System of Education (1839-1876)

The prevailing antagonism embedded in the system of education continued to be the major issue in the era of Tanzimat which was tried to be resolved with the Education Act of 1869.

*Tanzimat Fermani*⁴ (The Edict of Gülhane) set some principles and laws on the reorganization of the government and regulation of the society in 1839 as an introduction to following reformations (Cleveland & Bunton, 2017). New currents of thoughts emerged, new institutions were introduced, and the administrative offices were reorganized (Öcal, 2015, p. 337). Education, on the other hand, stayed as the *sine quo non* of the modernization of the empire (Kazamias, 1966, p. 57). The first attempt was to secure the system of education through the supervision of the state against the *ulama* who were creating troubles for the modernization process. Kazamias (1966) interprets this act of the state as the attempt to prevent the traditional hold of the religious dogma from impeding the Western, modern, secular reforms (p. 58). In 1845, a council was appointed to find the most appropriate methods of implementation of the reforms in the country so that the conflicting environment would end. Sultan Abdülmecid while

⁴ For English translation of the rescript and further information see: Hamlin, C. (2014). *Among the Turks - My Life and Times* (1st ed.). İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi.

discussing the formation of a Council of Education states that the purpose of education is “to disseminate religious knowledge and practical sciences, which are necessities for religion and the world, so as to abolish the ignorance of the people” (Cevat, 1922, as cited in Berkes, 1998, p. 173). After a year, the council issued a report for the complete reorganization of the system of public education which was based on the plan to establish *Maârif-i Umûmiye Nezâreti* (the Ministry of Education), to establish a state university and to prepare intellectually well-equipped instructors for the university and finally to regulate public education as primary, secondary and higher schools (Öcal, 1986, p. 111). In the report it was stated that “it is a necessity for every human being to learn first his own religion and that education which will make him to be independent of the help of others and then, to acquire practical sciences and arts” (Cevat, 1922, as cited in Berkes, 1998, p. 173). This idea of practicality of the education in both the religious and material life is the essence of the reforms implemented in the system of education in the Tanzimat.

The implementation of these reforms, however, was not successful as it was expected in terms of improvement on the content of education. Although the Ministry of Education was established, the *mekteps* and *madrasas* were mostly stayed as basic as they were before in terms of the content and *Rüşdiye* was not enough to prepare children since it was based on the same elemental structure as other primary schools have which consists of Arabic syntax and grammar, the Quran (reciting), the orthography, composition and style, Islamic history, Ottoman history and Turkish and Persian (not comprehensively) (Kazamias, 1966, p. 59). Although many new courses were added and reorganized such as the introduction to religious sciences, arithmetic, introduction to geometry, general history and Ottoman history, geography, gymnastics, there is no evidence on the qualification of these courses (Evered, 2012, p. 210). Sakaoğlu (2003) argues that neither the books nor the instructors are known to be qualified for the planned education of the era because of the poor conditions primary schools existed for years (pp. 74-76).

Concerning higher education, on the other hand, there was an attempt at founding the first modern university, *Dâru'l Fünûn*, in 1845. The same year an Italian architect was hired for the building of the university which stayed empty for eighteen years until the university began its education in 1863 but was closed after only two years of education in 1865 (Sakaoğlu, 2003, p. 57-58). Besides *Dâru'l Fünûn*'s short period of education, other important examples of reformed education were the high schools which still exist in today's Turkey: *Galatasaray High School*, *Dariüşşafaka* and *Robert College* which are schools based on modern, secular and scientific education (Kazamias, 1966, pp. 65-68). As a public institution, on the other hand, the most critical school was *Mekteb-i Mülkiye* (civil school) founded in 1859. What makes *Mekteb-i Mülkiye* significant was its role in the realization of the reforms Tanzimat promoted and being the source of progressive ideas for years (Sakaoğlu, 2003, p. 84). Like other schools founded in this era like *Dâru'l Fünûn*, *Galatasaray Highschool*, *Dariüşşafaka* and *Robert College*, *Mekteb-i Mülkiye* has continued its educational life after the foundation of the Republic of Turkey and today it is a faculty of Political Science at Ankara University. How was it possible to lay the foundations of such modern schools based on scientific premises in this period?

The big step for the modernization of the system of education in this era was the *Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi* (1869) in which the new regulations were planned for the general education. Kazamias outlines this new act as follows:

1. Compulsory primary education (in sıbyan schools).
2. Reorganization of the central and provincial administration of education, that is, the setting up of administrative units in *vilayets* (provinces).
3. Reorganization and regularization of teaching methods.
4. Provision of clearer criteria concerning the promotion and status of teachers.
5. Increase in 'science' institutions (literature and natural

sciences).

6. The school system to be graded and to consist of the following schools:

- a. Primary schools (*sıbyan* or *iptidai*) in all villages and town quarters.
- b. *Rüşhdiyes* in all towns of five hundred or more families.
- c. An *idadi* (preparatory secondary school) in all towns of one thousand families or more.
- d. A *sultani* (*lise*, or academic secondary school) in each provincial capital.
- e. Men's and women's teachers' training colleges in Istanbul.
- f. A university in Istanbul.
- g. Private *rüşhdiyes* for girls in suitable places.

7. Free education in the *sıbyan mektebi*, *rüşhdiyes* and in the *idadi* (preparatory secondary school). (Kazamias, 1966, p. 63)

As the statute shows, major reformations were planned on the system of education that indicates a free and obligatory education for both boys and girls, the expansion of the educational institutions over the country, the preparation of the teachers and the idea of a state university. In Figure 1, the system of education before the *Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi* was planned and after eleven years the establishment of *Maârif-i Umûmiye Nezâreti* is given. In Figure 2, the organization of education planned in the *Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi* was presented. Now, comparing them to each other aforementioned reformations became clear such as free and compulsory education, opening post-primary schools for girls most importantly teacher schools. Considering the crucial social changes in the structure, the new statute was a huge step to transform the system of education in the era of Tanzimat which can be considered as the root for the following reforms on the system of education continued after the foundation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923.

As a critical change, *Dâru'l Fünûn* was reopened in 1870 based on the new regulations but closed again in 1971 because of the accusations against two teachers, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī and Hasan Tahsini who were sent to Europe before the foundation of *Dâru'l Fünûn* by the empire to become a teacher in the university (Sakaoğlu, p. 81). Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī by saying “the prophecy is an art” and Hasan Tahsini⁵ by conducting an experiment proving that living creatures cannot live without oxygen were accused of being nonbelievers (Sakaoğlu, p. 81). Berkes discuss this incident by arguing that Afghānī’s words were neither twisted nor distorted, it was not a mere incident of orthodox Islamic perspective being against scientific claims (1998, p. 183).

Rather it was a conflict of power relations between modernist *mektep* and traditional *madrassa*, *ulama*. Berkes argues that the custodians of tradition, *ulama* did not object to establishment of the school of medicine and other secular higher learning schools because they ignored these schools and considered them outside of their own realm since there was no overlapping between the areas of higher education *madrassa* claimed authority and the sciences secular schools brought in (1998, p. 187). But when the *madrassa* lost its ground gradually in the area of education starting from the Tanzimat period, things changed:

The *madrassa* did not care to wage a struggle over the minds of children so long as it maintained its hold over the minds of adults. For that it was enough to train in its own image the thousands of lads coming from the impoverished towns and villages in search of a means of life. But when the *monsieurs* of science began to talk of teaching humanistic studies such as history, philosophy, economics, law, and even Roman law, that was too much! To the men of the *madrassa*, the Dar-ul-Fünûn showed its real intentions by daring to include even *fiqh* and *kalam* among its godless and blasphemous arts. If once established, the university would be the *madrassa*'s real rival-in subject matter, in its human material, in intellectual function, in everything. (Berkes, 1998, p. 188)

So, the reason Afghānī’s words became an issue was that he presented an argument refuted by *kalam* during its triumph over philosophy. He mentioned an

⁵ There is a quote belong to Hasan Tahsini where he ironically mentions the incident: “Cehalet mültezem, kesb-i kemaldir cünhamız bildim İlahi, cürm-i tahsil-i ilimden tövbeler olsun”. In English: “Ignorance is a must, learning and maturing is a crime. Oh God, I repent for learning science”.

old discussion by using Islamic terminology which overlaps the areas of scientific education and theological Islamic education and in consequence provided *Şeyhulislam* (chosen among Ulama) with alleged reason to attack the new institution (Berkes, 1998, p. 188). After this incident, *Dâru'l Fünûn* continued to exist between the years 1874 and 1881 with no information of its direction in detail until its reopening in 1900 with the new education regulations in the reign of Abdulhamid II discussed in the following section.

To summarize, the bifurcation in the system of education grew in Tanzimat. Because of their belief in the superiority of the old/traditional organization, there were those who wanted to preserve the existing order and on the other hand, those who support reformations and secular education (Koçer, 1970, p. 120).

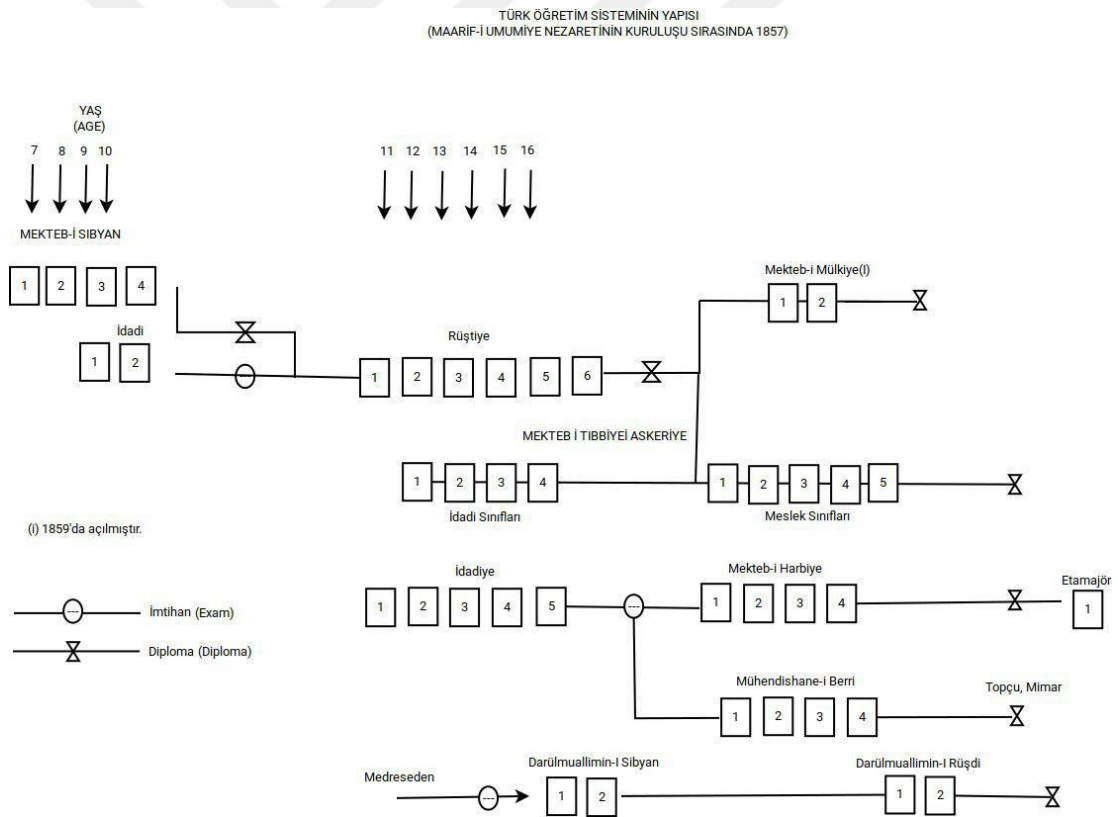


Figure 1. The System of Education During the Foundation of Maârif-i Umûmiye Nezâreti (1857). Adapted from Koçer H. (1970).

Thus, two ideas and understanding of education emerged which were mutually hostile, in Berkes's words "the products of one educational path were incapable of

understanding those of the other” (1998, p. 177). At the end of this era, we see the crystallization of the binary oppositions, the duality in the Islamic studies, (social) scientific versus theological, regarding the conflict between modernity and Islam, the new and the traditional as Berkes puts it “the split between the world-outlooks reigning in the "religious" and in the "secular" areas of intellectual and educational life” (1998, p. 178).

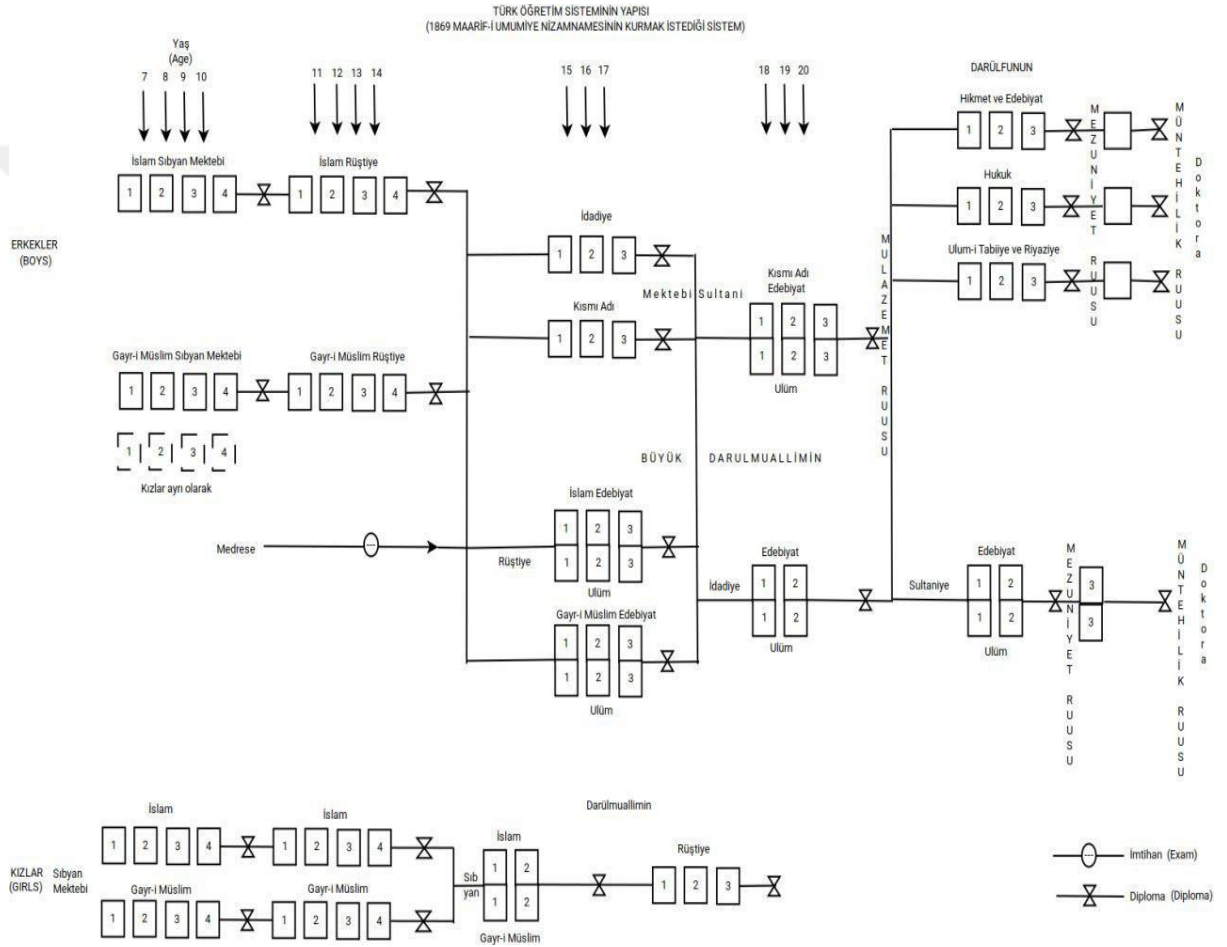


Figure 2. The System of Education Planned in Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi. Adapted from Koçer, H (1970).

2.1.4 The System of Education in the Era of Abdulhamid II, the Second Constitutional Period and the End of the Ottoman Education System (1876-1908, 1908-1923)

In the thirty-three years of the reign of Abdulhamid II, the emphasis was given to the realization of Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi (the Act of General Education) while the social and political turbulence between modernization and Islam continued to affect the system of education (Sakaoğlu, 2003, p. 98). Koçer defined the years between 1876 and 1908 as the years of quantitative expansion and qualitative decline in the system of education (Koçer, 1970, p. 125). The *Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi* which could not be actualized entirely was emphasized in this era, but the content of the education could not be improved much due to the political and economic instability in the country: rebellions around the empire and the Young Turk Revolution which ended Abdulhamid II's reign in 1908.

Even though it was a period of decline, the number of public schools was increased, and private schools reached their best period because of the mobilization for education in the whole country. Sakaoğlu (2003) interpret this policy as it was based on the purpose of expanding the central authority to the remotest corners of the country rather than illuminating the people with education (p. 97).

Whatever the reason was these years was important for the history of higher religious education since *Dâru'l Fünûn* was reopened as *Dâru'l Fünûn-ı Şahâne* in 1900 based on the new regulations Abdulhamid II put in practice. The organization of the university was as follows:

1. Ulûm-ı 'Aliye-i Diniye (Theology Faculty)
2. Ulûm-ı Riyaziye ve Tabiiye (Faculty of Mathematics and Physics)
3. Edebiyat (Faculty of Literature) (Öcal, 2015, p. 336)

Although the structure of the university was very limited to the variety of fields having only three faculties as the quote shows, it is important that the years of planning was finally realized in a more organized way. Figure 3 shows the reorganization of the schools between the years 1914 and 1915 which indicates a

more organized and extended system of education including *Dâru'l Fünûn*. The most critical role of *Dâru'l Fünûn* here is the theology faculty it had which presents the first modern institution for higher religious education. Although it is not known exactly at what extent the theology faculty was intellectually equipped and qualified, it is explicit that as a modern and secular institution, as a university, *Dâru'l Fünûn* offered an academic study of Islam based on the premises of (social) sciences unlike the theological study of Islam given at *madrassa* (Öcal, 1986, p. 112).

In 1912, *Dâru'l Fünûn* was renamed as *İstanbul Dâru'l Fünûnu* based on the new regulations of the Second Constitutional Era (Öcal, 2015, p. 337). Table 1 shows the organization of the faculties which resembles the organization of contemporary modern universities already established in Europe at that time. In Table 2, the courses, including law, history, philosophy, and language from other faculties, given under the Faculty of Islamic Doctrines can be seen which indicates the characteristics of modern higher education as being interdisciplinary. It can be said that *Dâru'l Fünûn* owes its late success to the Ministry of Education of that period, Emrullah Efendi who made a major improvement on the organization of *Dâru'l Fünûn* in 1912 before the foundation of the Republic. However, the critical role of Emrullah Efendi in the system of education was about his theory of Tûbâ Tree (*Tuba Ağacı Nazariyesi*) which is based on the Islamic belief of the big tree in heaven called Tûbâ with roots above and branches below the earth. The idea was that like the upside-down Tuba tree in heaven, education also should begin with the higher education (Sakaoğlu, 2003, p. 125). Against this idea another well-known pedagogue, Satı Bey was stressing the importance of primary education which was in need of being reformed before the modernization of higher education (Sakaoğlu, 2003, p. 126).

Table 1

Faculties in Dâru'l Fünûn 1908-1919 (including the changes initiated in 1912)

1.	Şer'i İlimler Bölümü (Faculty of Islamic Doctrines)
2.	Hukuki İlimler Bölümü (Faculty of Law)
3.	Fen İlimleri Bölümü (Faculty of Sciences)
4.	Tıbbi İlimler Bölümü (Faculty of Medicine)
5.	Edebi İlimler Bölümü (Faculty of Literature)

Note. İlahiyat Fakültelerinin Tarihçesi, Mustafa Öcal, 1986, p.11.

These heated debates show that the ongoing duality of education driven by the predicament of modernity and Islam became a critical concern in the country which will continue to be of significance still today. Koçer (1970) argues that although the foundation of the process of modernization of education began in the Ottoman Empire, this reformation process was unable to go beyond the levels of birth, decline, fluctuation and discussion/disagreement and entered the Republic with various problems awaiting solution (p. 244). One of these problems was higher religious education embodies the conditions for a scientific study of Islam by bringing modernity and Islam together in higher education starting by *Dâru'l Fünûn*, Faculty of Islamic Doctrines to A. U. School of Divinity.

Recalling what Berkes said about the conflict *Dâru'l Fünûn* caused, the dichotomy between the social scientific study of Islam and theological study of Islam once again came to light in the Republic of Turkey with the establishment of A. U. School of Divinity as the modern and secular setting for the social scientific study of Islam and of other theology faculties and institutions where a theological study of Islam endure.

“Table 2 (cont’d),”

Fıkıh/Fiqh	(Islamic Law)	8
İlm-i Kelam/Kalam	(discussion of the fundamentals of Islamic beliefs and doctrines)	8
Siyer-i Nebevi	(the life of Prophet Muhammad)	2
Tarih-i Din-i İslam ve Tarih-i Edyar	(History of Islam and World Religions)	6
İlm-i Hilaf	(Rhetoric)	4
Edebiyat-ı Arabiyye	(Arabic)	6
Hikmeti-i Teşri	(Legislation)	2
Tarih-i Fıkıh	(History of Fiqh)	2
Arap Felsefesi	(Arabic Philosophy)	2
Felsefe ve Felsefe Tarihi	(Philosophy and History of Philosophy)	6
-Study Subjects:		
Tefsir ve Hadis Grubu	(Field of Tafseer and Hadith)	
Kelam Grubu	(Field of Kalam)	
Felsefe Grubu	(Field of Philosophy)	
Fıkıh Grubu	(Field of Fiqh)	
Ahlak-ı Şer'iyye ve Siyer	(Field of Ethics and Literature)	

Note. Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Tarihçe Münir Koştaş, 1989.

2.2 Higher Religious Education in Turkey

Education was considered as the most important basis of the task of building a new nation in newly founded Turkey. It was inevitably linked with political, economic and cultural dynamics of the new republic in breaking the shackles of traditional positions to pave the way for a modern, secular, dynamic national state (Kazamias, 1966, p. 115)

After the foundation of the Republic, *Dâru'l Fünûn* continued to exist as a modern university institution in the name of Istanbul University which still exist today but the same did not apply to the theology faculty. After the closure of *madrasas* in 1924, higher religious education was unified under the Faculty of

Theology of Istanbul University which was transformed to an institute for Islamic research and to a course under the Faculty of Literature until its closure in 1941-42 (Mardin, 1991, p. 126). Until 1949, no formal higher religious education has existed in Turkey until the establishment of Ankara University School of Divinity based on the decision made by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. A. U. School of Divinity as a distinct faculty has stayed as the only theology faculty in Turkey for ten years until the establishment of other higher institutions on Islamic education such as Higher Islamic Institutes, Vocational Schools of Theology and Ataturk University School of Islamic Studies which differed from A. U. School of Divinity in terms of the purpose, the curriculum and the structure and organization of the institution (background of the instructors and the students, requirements and graduate opportunities and such). With the establishment of different higher Islamic institutions, the changing sociopolitical settings made many issues came to light again. The questions were the Islamic study in higher education should be secular or not, what authority should regulate higher religious (Islamic education), the Ministry of Education or the Presidency of Religious Affair, what should be the content of Islamic education in universities, if the graduates can respond to the religious needs of the society and/or can be qualified academically and many other. This section will tackle these issues and show the distinctive characteristics of A. U. School of Divinity to present the background of the scholars analyzed in the thesis and show why their perspectives on the study of Islam is critical.

2.2.1 Early Years of Republic and the Education Policies Concerning Higher Religious Education

The strategy for the new educational system, for the first time, was emphasized by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in Maarif Kongresi⁶ (Education Congress of TGNA) in 1921 when he referred the methods of education in the Ottoman Empire as the cause of the decline (Öcal, 2015, p. 80). Four years after, the first law on the

⁶ For full speech see: *Maarif Vekaleti Mecmuası*, 11, 113-119. (1927) and Bilgin, B. (1980). *Türkiyede din eğitimi ve liselerde din dersleri*. Ankara: Emel Matbacılık.

system of education was enacted as *Tevhidi Tedrisat Kanunu*⁷, the law of the unity and standardization of education and all educational institutions were attached to the Ministry of Education in 1924 (Kazamias, 1966). An important effect of this law on Islamic education was the closure of *madrassas* which according to Öcal (2015) was not explicitly stated in the law (p. 89). This act was clearly a big attempt to realize the values of the newly founded republic such as modernity, secularism, laicism through education which Kazamias defines as “secularization of education and laicization of religion” (Kazamias, 1966, p. 185). Only “laic” institution of the state in relation to religious affairs was the Presidency of Religious Affairs which today maintains its controversial position in regulating the religious affairs and education in the country although all formal religious education is under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. Mardin explains this Westernizing attempt as follows:

The secularizers saw themselves as bringing into Turkish society the principles of toleration and religious freedom which prevailed in the West. They also considered the ulema to be obstacles in the task of educating the Turkish nation in the path of positive science and of opening a door for the grounding of civil liberties in the more general sense. (Mardin, 1991, p. 127)

As the quote shows the sole desire was to create a modern, secular and laic discourse in the society like in the West stemming from the system of education based on a scientific and academic setting. This law crystallized the two dichotomic discourse in the society as modernity and Islam, in the system of education the secular and religious which began by the late 18th century in the Ottoman Empire.

So, what happened to higher religious education? Under such circumstances the only institution parallel to the modern university, *Dâru'l Fünûn* stayed as a formal university for years and had a theology department in its organizational structure until its transformation to Istanbul University in 1933. With the formalization of Istanbul University, theology department was closed and replaced by the Islam Research Institute (İslam Tetkikleri Enstitüsü) which was also closed down and

⁷ For the content of the law see: <http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.3.430.pdf>

replaced by a course named “Islam and its Philosophy” under the faculty of Arts in 1936. As can be seen in Table 3, there is an increase in the courses from other disciplines such as psychology and sociology and the number of courses based on the study of Islam is seemingly decreased. Table 4 shows that on the other hand, nearly no course is taught from outside of the Institute, and the number of courses is clearly reduced from thirteen to only six. Although there is no explicit reason known for this trim, it was officially stated that the faculty is reduced in size due to the low demand for the higher religious education. (Öcal, 1986, p.115). In 1941-42, the course was closed once and for all and no higher Islamic education existed in Turkey until the foundation of Ankara University School of Divinity in 1949 (Reed, 1956, p. 296).

Table 3

Courses and Instructors in Dâru'l Fünûn Theology Department 1924-1933

İslam Dini Tarihi ve Metafizik (History of Islam and Metaphysics)– Şemsettin Günaltay

Dinler Tarihi (History of Religions) – Georges Dumezil, Hilmi Ömer Budda

Din Psikolojisi – (Psychology of Religion) Mustafa Şekip Tunç

Dini İctimaiyat – (Sociology of Religion) İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu

İslam Felsefesi Tarihi – (History of Islamic Philosophy) İzmirli İsmail Hakkı

Kelam Tarihi – (History of Kalam) Şerafettin Yatkaya

Fıkıh Tarihi – (History of Fiqh) Şevket Efendi

Tasavvuf Tarihi – (History of Sufism) Mehmet Ali Ayni

Türk Dini Tarihi – (History of Turkish Religion) Köprülüzade M. Fuat

Arapça – (Arabic) Kilisli Rifat

Ahlak – (Ethics) Mehmet İzzet

Felsefe Tarihi – (History of Philosophy) Mehmet Emin

Note. Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Tarihçe Münir Koştay, 1989.

Like in the Ottoman Empire, the state ideologies and the two opposite mindsets can be traced in the newly founded republic through the organization of the education. Higher Islamic education was tried to be regulated and limited by the state with respect to the modernization and secularization of education but at the same time there were ongoing discussions on the fear of losing Islamic values, the need and need of learning Islam and of officers who perform Islamic practice in the society rather than scholars of Islam(Kara, 2017, pp. 368-369). These problems were discussed in the Grand National Assembly and a decision made on the establishment of A. U. School of Divinity in 1949.

Table 4

Courses and Instructors in Islam Research Institute 1933-1936.

Kelam Tarihi – (History of Kalam) Şerafettin Yaltkaya

Tasavvuf Tarihi – (History of Sufism) Mehmet Ali Ayni

İran Edebiyatı – (Persian Literature) Baki

İslam Mezhepleri Tarihi – (History of Islamic sects) Yusuf Ziya Yörükan

Dinler Tarihi – (History of Religion) Hilmi Ömer Budda

Note. Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Tarihçe Münir Koştaş, 1989.

2.2.2 Ankara University School of Divinity and Other Higher Islamic Institutions

The transition to the multi-party system set forward the foundation of the first theology faculty in Turkey. For years, higher religious education stayed as a single course under the Faculty of Arts at Istanbul University. This situation created a political issue in the country that became a significant discussion matter in the National Assembly of Turkey on January 7, 1949 (Reed, 1956, p. 306). The debate started with the speech of Baltacıoğlu, a representative of the founder party:

I ask the question of what is the purpose of the establishment of a theology faculty and I immediately answer to myself: It is not to revive the

madrassa. Because there is a very basic character that separates faculty and *madrassa*. *Madrassa*'s work is based on *nass* and *apriori* knowledge. However, since faculties are the centers of knowledge production, they use comparison, observation, and ultimately, if possible, explanation. So as much as the first subjective, the second is objective. Therefore, what government wants is to create a faculty that has the character of science in all its meaning that there will not be different than other faculties. (T.B.M.M. Tutanak Dergisi, Dönem VIII, Cilt 20, Toplantı 3, p. 278)

It is critical that even the debate began by stating the duality in education based on two binary opposite mindsets and arguing which one the state wants to conduct with A. U. School of Divinity. Also, putting theology faculty as same as the other faculties shows that the purpose is to establish an academic setting rather than to educate reverends such as *imams*. However, there were also points on the need/demand from the public regarding the lack of religious officers in the country especially in rural areas for religious activities such as funerals, Friday *khutbahs* and for getting general religious information in daily life activities (Reed, 1956, pp. 306-307). The speech of the minister of education Banguoğlu on the issue was as follows:

We are planning to open a theology faculty in the university (as an academic institution) as they exist in the Western countries... This speech is an answer for those who have concerns on the issue: We do not want to revive the old *madrassa* education and raise the men with the same mindset...*Madrassa* and *mektepe* have worked together and created antagonistic mentalities. The people with two different mentalities had to live in perpetual conflict for an age in this country. The theology faculty will not be the same since we are decided to get rid of this conflict in our country for good. Ankara University School of Divinity as an academic community will raise intellectuals who have the same mindset as other civil and military professionals in this country... (T.B.M.M. Tutanak Dergisi, Dönem VIII, Cilt 20, Toplantı 3, pp. 282-283)

As can be seen from the quotes, the concerns and discussions revolve around the antagonistic relationship between science and religion through the example of *mektepe* and *madrassa*, and the possible reflection of this situation on the values of newly founded the Turkish Republic such as modernity, secularism, laicism and on the future of the nation. On the other side, the content of this education, its role

within higher education – whether it is a scientific discipline – and its relation to other social science disciplines were also stressed.

After long, heated debates in the assembly, it was decided to establish a theology department under Ankara University. This decision was realized in 1949 with a sophisticated academic staff mostly from the Faculty of Languages, History, and Geography at Ankara University. Professor Yavuz Abadan from the Faculty of Law at Ankara University stated that

the Faculty of Divinity cannot ever be a center to inspire religious feelings, but simply a teaching institute which carries on research in an objective manner on the historical, sociological and intellectual development of all religions. (Reed, 1956, p. 309)

The quote demonstrates an example of the approach from the other faculties of the university which supports the modern and secular perspective on higher religious education advocates the academic study of Islam. To establish a theology faculty in Ankara was also a part of the strategy of transforming higher education institutions to Ankara which was the new capital of the country. Many higher education institutions were transformed from İstanbul to Ankara while the new ones were established in Ankara which signifies the importance of education once again as being the ground to reflect the state ideology of modernity and secularism (Kara, 2017, 361) The interdisciplinary background of the academic staff and curriculum affirm a social scientific image for the faculty. In Table 5, the first curriculum of the faculty is given which consists of only eight courses including non-departmental courses such as sociology, logic and philosophy and foreign languages.

Table 5

Ankara University School of Divinity, Curriculum 1949-1950

COURSES	HOURS/ WEEK	LECTURER
Arabic	6	Lugal at the F.L.H.G. ¹
Persian	2	Prof. Necati Lugal at the F.L.H.G.
Foreign Language (Eng. Fran. Germ.)	4	Followed at the Foreign Language Dept. of F.L.H.G.
Sociology	2	Mehmet Karasan at F.L.H.G.
Logic And Philosophy Of Sciences	4	Hamdi Ragyp Atademir at F.L.H.G.
Islam And History Of Sects	4	Prof. Yusuf Ziya Yörükan
History Of Islamic Art	2	Prof Remzi Oğuz Aryk
Comparative History Of Religion	2	Prof. Hilmi Ziya Budda

Note. Adapted from “75 Years of Higher Religious Education in Modern Turkey”, Paçacı & Aktay, 1999.

What is striking here is that the curriculum of the faculty seems like a faculty of Religious Studies⁸ based on instructors from different social scientific backgrounds and on the interdisciplinary curriculum. However, Banguoğlu argued in TGNA that this will be avoided, and this faculty will be a theology faculty based on the study of Islam, not a faculty based on sociology, history, and philosophy like it was in Istanbul University (T.B.M.M. Tutanak Dergisi, Dönem VIII, Cilt 20, Toplantı 3, p. 283). This curriculum, however, does not include any specific course on Islamic doctrines such as fiqh, kalam, hadith or even a basic course on learning the Quran. Öcal (2015) explains this situation that since for years there was no serious education on Islamic doctrines whether in *madrasas* or in *Dâru’l Fünûn* /İstanbul University, there were no qualified instructors for

⁸ By Religious Studies I refer to the faculties exist in many European countries and U.S. in which the faculty staff comes from different academic background such as political science, sociology, history, philosophy, anthropology and so on and the studies in these faculties are based on the social scientific studies of world religions rather than the study of a specific religion to educate reverends through orthodox doctrines and faith-based studies.

higher religious education in the country (p. 352). On the other hand, Kara (2017) contends that the choice of instructors and the courses were a deliberate choice which reflects the state ideology of the time which is the secularization and modernization of the state through the replacing of traditional/theological Islamic education by the modern, secular and scientific study of Islam (p. 365). Öcal claims that students suffered from this situation and attended mosques to learn Quran because of the inability of the faculty to provide education of the basic Islamic doctrines (2008A, p. 294, 594 in Volume I).

After ten years of the foundation of A. U. School of Divinity, other Higher Islamic Institutes began to be opened in 1959, the first one was İstanbul Yüksek İslam Enstitüsü (Kara, 2017). These schools were established as A. U. School of Divinity was not accepting the graduates of Imam-Hatip School ⁹ for years which is a sign of its distinct character of a modern academic setting. While A. U. School of Divinity preserved its position for the academic inquiries other Institutes were for the developments of the religious officers who were already educated in Imam-Hatip Schools (İstanbul Yüksek İslam “Enstitüsü,” 1960, pp. 6-7). The duality between *mektep* and *madrassa* emerged once again between A. U. School of Divinity as the modern and secular milieu for academic practices and Higher Islamic Institutes as the educational institution for the training reverends, religious functionaries and officers in the country. Nezihe Aras’s words on the establishment of Higher Islamic Institutes shows this duality in a simple way:

This facility, which started at Ankara University in 1949, is not a religious institution, but a faculty of research on religious matters. So, the graduates of this faculty are not necessarily faithful Muslim people and there is no such condition to be to study here. It is the same for the faculty members. Some of the teachers have been said to be Buddhists, atheists, Christians and some seemingly Muslims since its foundation. It is also meaningless to consider ‘faith’ in an academic institution called faculty. As a matter of fact, this faculty never granted the right of Imam-Hatip School graduates to study in it despite all the requests and applications. If the students

⁹ Imam-Hatip Schools are secondary education institutions in Turkey which were founded after *madrasas* were abolished by the Unification of Education Act in 1924. In the following years, the structure and the function of these schools have changed dramatically requires further and comprehensive analysis. For a contemporary study on Imam-Hatip Schools see: Ozgur, I. (2015). *Islamic Schools in Modern Turkey: Faith, Politics, and Education* (Cambridge Middle East Studies). Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.

studying in the Imam-Hatip Schools went to this faculty, no doubt it would disappoint them because what they wanted was not to learn theories and discussions but to seek their way to be the best teacher or reverend (*imam*). The Higher Islamic Institutes were founded with these spiritual aspirations. These institutes not only provided higher education to the students of the Imam-Hatip Schools but also pioneered the issue of educating qualified reverends. (Araz, 1960, pp. 172-173)

The quote shows how A. U. School of Divinity and Higher Islamic Institutes differ in terms of the purpose, curriculum, function and social status. The divide between them was a dichotomic relationship between the social scientific study and teaching of Islam A. U. School of Divinity represents and the theological study and teaching of Islam as a religious interest in Higher Islamic Institutes.

Table 6 illustrates the emphasis on theological education in Higher Islamic Institutes through the courses based on the fundamentals of Islam.

Table 6

Weekly Curriculum of Higher Islamic Institutes (1959-1960)

Course Name	1 st Grade	2 nd Grade	3 rd Grade	4 th Grade
Quran	5	4	1	1
Reading of the Quran	-	-	-	1
<i>Tefsir</i> (Interpretation)	-	1	2	2
<i>Belagat-i Kur'aniye</i> (Rhetoric)	-	-	-	1
Hadith	-	1	2	2
<i>Siyer-i Nebeviye</i> (the life of the Prophet Muhammad)	1	1	-	-
<i>İlm-i Tevhid</i> (the study of the principles of Islam)	1	1	-	-
Kalam	1	-	-	-

“Table 6
(cont’d),”

	-			
Islamic Law	-	-	1	1
Fiqh	-	-	-	1
The History of Islam and Islamic Sects	1	1	1	-
Comparative History of Religions	3	1	1	1
History of Islamic Turkish Literature	-	2	1	1
History of Islamic Sufism	-	2	1	1
Ethics	-	-	1	1
History of Islamic Philosophy	-	-	1	-
Logic	2	-	1	1
History of Islam	2	1	1	-
History and Geography of Contemporary Islamic Countries	6	2	1	-
Arabic	2	5	4	4
Persian	-	2	1	1
Religious Psychology	-	-	1	1
Religious Pedagogy	-	-	1	1
History of Islamic Arts	-	-	1	1
Rhetoric and <i>İrşad</i> (showing the true path)	-	-	-	1
Religious Music	4	-	1	1
Foreign Languages (German, French,	-	4	4	4

English)				
History of Turkish Revolution	11	-	-	1
Number of Courses	28	14	20	20
		28	28	28

Note. Adapted from “Osmanlı’dan Günümüze Türkiye’de Din Eğitimi”, Mustafa Öcal, 2015.

After years of their establishment, all Higher Islamic Institutes were unified under the structure of higher education as theology faculties in 1982 by the new act of the Council of Higher Education.¹⁰ Besides Higher Islamic Institutes, Vocational Schools of Theology *İlahiyat Meslek Yüksek Okulu* were opened in 1988 as a two year-higher education for reverends and religious functionaries to improve and develop themselves on their areas. Like Higher Islamic Institutes, these schools emphasized the basic Islamic education and pedagogical teaching for the graduates of İmam-Hatip Schools and officers of the Presidency of Religious Affairs (Öcal, 2015, pp. 399-401). Also, like Higher Islamic Institutes did not last long but unlike staying under theology faculties they were closed down in 1999 (Ayhan, n.d., para. 7).

The establishment of these higher institutes is an important sign of the distinct character of A. U. School of Divinity. On the one hand, U. School of Divinity holds a modern and secular setting for an academic study of Islam as a social scientific inquiry on the other hand theological Islamic education is given through different higher Islamic Institutes whose mission is to educate religious officials and religion teachers. This divide is dichotomous in the sense that social scientific study of Islam gets normally separate fields of science/theology, secular/religious, modern/traditional together which were prevailing in *mektep-madrasa* divide.

Ninety new theology faculties were established in Turkey after 2011 and the number of these faculties is still increasing today (Din Eğitimi ve İLİTAM

¹⁰ For the official document of the act see: Yükseköğretim Kanununun Yürürlükten Kaldırılmış Hükümleri. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/mevzuatmetin/5.5.2547.pdf>

Çalıştay, 2019, para. 1). Under these circumstances, A. U. School of Divinity preserves its modern and secular setting among other theology faculties and enables the scholars, Güler, Kırbaçoğlu and Düzgün to make a social scientific study of Islam. Although A. U. School of Divinity provides a modern and secular setting for such study, it does not mean every scholar in the faculty do the same. The significant position of these scholars does not only come from the background of A. U. School of Divinity has but also from being the ones who benefit from this background, question it and study and teach Islam with the premises of social sciences. In this sense, what these scholars do is not only subjugated by the theological study of Islam conducted in other theology faculties but also by the scholars in the same faculty in Ankara University. The social scientific study of Islam they conduct is exceptional against the dominance of theological study of Islam in Turkey.

Table 7

Academic Departments, Ankara University School of Divinity in 2019

Basic Islamic Studies	Philosophy and Religious Studies	Islamic History and Arts
Department of	Department of	Department of
- Quranic Exegesis	- Logic	- Islamic History
- Hadith	- History of Philosophy	- History of Turkish-Islamic Arts
- Kalam	- Islamic Philosophy	- Turkish-Islamic Literature
- Islamic Jurisprudence	- Philosophy of Religion	- Turkish Religious Music
- History of Islamic Sects	- History of Religions	
- Sufism	- Sociology of Religion	
- Arabic Language and Rhetoric	- Psychology of Religion	
	- Religious Education	

Note. Retrieved from <http://divinity.en.ankara.edu.tr/>.

2.3 The Predicament of Modernity and Islam in Turkey

As the previous sections show, the predicament between modernity and Islam is a critical dimension to understand the formation of the social scientific study of Islam in Turkey which the scholars Güler, Kırbaçoğlu, and Düzgün try to conduct. To understand how these scholars are able to critically address the study of Islam, it is vital to understand the sociopolitical conditions that let them able to do it. The predicament of modernity and Islam constitutes both the ground for the social scientific study of Islam these scholars try to build and also the dichotomy these scholars try to reconcile in their studies.

This dichotomy between the social scientific and theological study of Islam based on *mektep-madrasa* divide is already discussed in previous sections through the analysis of the modernization process in the system of education beginning from the Ottoman Empire. Now, this section reviews how the predicament of modernity and Islam is an important dimension to understand the duality in the study of Islam.

The antagonistic image of religion and modernity is a widely discussed phenomenon in social sciences and humanities. One of the positive readings of this relationship belongs to Jürgen Habermas. Habermas argues that the religious dimension must be included in the reading of Western modernity (Habermas, 2010). According to Göle, in contrast to the scholars who think the return of the religion is something that is supposed to change and/or replace the secular, Habermas states that a reflexivity is needed when addressing the relationship between religion and secularism so that the “modernization of public consciousness” will be attained (Göle, 2015, p. 1). The reconciliation Habermas offers between the religious and the secular is understandable based on the public sphere discussions in the West in relation to the political agendas of Western societies. However, the terms secularity, religion, and modernity in Turkey cannot be grasped through the Western experience and literature since the values attributed to the social, cultural and political settings vary based on different societies (“İslam ve Modernleşme”, 1997). This is why Şerif Mardin’s studies on the process of modernization in the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey are

important to understand how the social change took place in this process. He argues that the social structure of the Ottoman Empire was divided into two groups, an elite class of military and civilian establishment and a "folk" class of the governed which was transformed through the process of modernization (Mardin, 1991, p. 114). These two different groups were based on two different educational systems in the empire, madrasa where the religious education was dominant and the palace education where the arts of war and government were taught more profoundly. This double educational style resulted in two distinct groups which contemplated each other remotely: one was ulama which Mardin calls "Doctors of Islamic Law" educated in madrasas and the other was the sultan's servants trained in palace schools:

Şehzade Korkut, an heir apparent in the sixteenth century who was sent on administrative duty, is known to have expressed, in a report to his father, his own distress at the conditions he had found in the field and how far they diverged from what he knew as the Islamic code of justice. Prince Korkut's remarks indicate that he could identify those trained with madrasa ideals and their pious followers as well as the administered, the ordinary subjects of the sultans, as a potential "team of the just," while the sultan's servants and their application of sultanic fiat could be considered the "team of the unjust". (Mardin, 1991, pp. 117-118)

As it is seen in the quote that even before the process of modernization began to be highly effective in the 19th century, two dichotomic groups/perspectives appeared within the social structure of the empire which Mardin chose to define as "the just and the unjust". By the 18th century, this divide was widened, and a dividing line had appeared by the evolving of the "men of the pen" into bureaucracy in controlling records, finances, and in increasing contact with the West. These men were the first modern reformers in the empire which reshaped the social, political and economic structure of the country during Tanzimat (Mardin, 1991, p. 117). What these modern reformers did was to reorder already established social values in the society, particularly Islam, with the new ones such as modernity, secularism, and laicism in Mardin's words this was a "revolution of values" (Mardin, 1971, p. 209). Islam was one of the important values in society by its constant presence and role in regulating social relations. Most importantly, Islam had a double function: for the ruler, it was the linkage between the ruler and

the ruled and for the ruled, it was an alternative to the polity and a buffer against the authority (Mardin, 1971, p. 204). While the Westernizing reforms increased, the Muslim-Ottoman discourse based on the reproduction of already established social relations weakened. (Berkes, 1998, pp. 173-183). Mardin argues that

by the turn of the century, an emerging rift had been transformed into one between two qualitatively different stocks of knowledge and the rules for the practical uses of these realms of knowledge. *İlm*, traditional orthodox knowledge, placed the stamp of morality on knowledge and its application to human relations. What progressive late nineteenth century Turkish intellectuals named *fünûn* (Western scientific knowledge) classified human relations as a scientifically observable process and a part of the realm of "things": this explains the ease with which, a few decades later, the philosophies of the French sociologist Emile Durkheim were able to so strongly influence Turkish intellectuals. (Mardin, 1991, p. 124)

As the quote indicates "the team of the unjust" was rapidly moving away from the team of the just because of the secular education and Western bureaucracy. It had become a cultural discourse exclusive of the Islamic culture of the majority of the population and recognizes this culture only as a period in the course of history (Berkes, 1998, p. 501). These intellectuals with secular education background were the ones behind the secular and modern discourse against the orthodox, traditional, religious Islamic discourse. Mardin argues that the new leaders of the Republic of Turkey could not realize the functions of Islam in the Ottoman society and the inadequacy of the new values in fulfilling these functions. Two significant and relevant points exist in these arguments. Firstly, the link between the modernization process and the system of education. It is shown that two conflictual discourses existed during the Westernizing process which was fueled by the duality in the system of education: the secular education (*mektepe*) and religious education (*madrassa*). Secondly, this conflictual situation reflected as the predicament of modernity and Islam on the newly founded republic and caused ongoing discussions on higher religious education whether it should be secular or religious. As it is understood from Mardin's analysis, the concept modernity corresponds to various political, social and even economic discourses in Turkey. Berkes also states that concepts of modernity/modernization, laicism and secularism cannot be used as same as in the Western context because the problem

is wider than the separation of religion and state. He explains the use of the term modernization as follows:

We used the term “modernization of language” deliberately. Because language, like religion, perhaps more than that, is the most powerful source of tradition in some nations' lives. When a foreign vocabulary enters a language, it shows that the most powerful ceremonies of tradition have begun to change, even though its meaning is not known. The power of time pushes such a thing as change. (Berkes, 2012, p. 19)

Berkes explains the modernization process as something comes from the necessities of the present time which is inevitable. He also argues that when this necessity of change occurs in a society when a tendency towards modernization begins to occur, many people who have not been consciously within the setting of religion begins to stick to this setting. He gives the example of a grand vizier who is guilty only in state affairs but killed with the accusation of religious betrayal. This means that whenever there is modernization there is also religionization as protection against modernization. Based on this framework Berkes argues that problematization of modernity and religion (Islam) is about the narrowing down the sacred discourse in economic, technological, political, educational, sexual and informational living spaces and those who oppose this narrowing down deserve to be called *gerici* (reactionists, traditionalists) (2012, pp. 22-23). What Berkes's arguments indicate that there is a dichotomy between modernity and Islam which is not between state and religion but between reactionists, traditionalists and modernists and reformists which is crystallized through higher religious education as it is discussed in the former sections (2012, p. 3).

If the discussions above are ignored this may lead to a situation where the concept of modernity may be used very specifically and lose its connection with other experiences or it may be used in a very general meaning and lose its contextuality. On this issue, Çınar (2008) states that

modernity is the product of not one, but many, contending ideas and modernization projects, with different notions of nationhood and different ideas projected into the future, which either fight, tolerate, cooperate, imitate, or even merge with each other, though all seek to transform society along a set of social and political ideals. (p. 8)

According to this conceptualization, Islam is one of the issues that modernity shares a critical connection with. Göle dwells upon this relationship of Islam and modernity in Turkey and argues that this relationship is not a complete opposition as it is commonly understood instead the relationship between modernity and Islam in Turkey is peculiarly a merging relationship which should be addressed with reference to one another (Göle, 2015, p. 2).

In the light of these discussions, it is seen that modernity in Turkey is a deep-rooted complex discussion which is also linked to higher religious education. Accordingly, it is important to shed light on the criticality of modernity and its relation to Islam to be able to understand the academic study of Islam the scholars conduct based on the social scientific premises. The predicament of modernity and Islam is both the condition paved the way to an academic study of Islam and the object of analysis for such a study. The dichotomic relationships between the modern, secular, academic, scientific study of Islam and the orthodox, traditional, religious study of Islam are approached by the scholars Güler, Kırbaçoğlu, and Düzgün who endeavor to question, criticize and reconcile them through the social scientific study of Islam.

CHAPTER III

DISCUSSIONS ON THE ACADEMIC STUDY OF RELIGION

This chapter reviews the discussions on the academic study of religion as a significant dimension to understand how higher religious education is conducted around the world, what are the different perspectives and how the academic study of Islam, the more specifically social scientific study of Islam can be understood according to these discussions. Section 3.1 examines the different claims on the conflict between science and religion and how based on these claims, the study of religion is conducted in higher education. Sections 3.2 and 3.3 review the relevant works of literature on higher religious education in and outside of Turkey. After the examination of *mektep-madrassa* conflict and the predicament of modernity and Islam in Turkey which represent the particular position of A. U. School of Divinity among other theology faculties are discussed in Chapter II, this chapter delves into another significant dimension for this thesis which is the science and religion debates on higher education

3.1 The Dilemma of Science and Religion in Higher Education

A critical discussion within the academic study of religion is the role of faith and reason and the question of whether which one is prior to the study. Since the beginning of philosophy, many important philosophers have problematized the concepts of God, nature, being/existence, faith, and reason and provided crucial discussions on the issue. Their critical inquiries on matters pertaining to religion often resulted in their being accused as non-believers at the time. The main reason for this was their approach and use of the particular methodologies in the study of religion – reason, scientific procedures and so on – as it is discussed above. Even though the object of study is the concept of God or the existence, the criteria that

determine the characteristics of the studies are based on whether the approach is based on faith or reason. Some posit reason and thinking prior to faith, and some posit faith against reason and scientific thinking while studying the concept of God, nature and being e.g. Galileo Affair¹¹. The same issue appears in the arguments of Ibn Rushd/Averroes in his book “The Incoherence of the Incoherence” which is a critical reply to al Ghazali’s “The Incoherence of Philosophers”. What differentiates Ibn Rūṣd’s approach from Ghazali’s is his stand for the prior role of reason over faith in the study of religion. Although they did not have a tragic experience on the issue as Galileo did, the discussion between Ibn Rushd and Ghazali has affected the Islamic studies and led the reproduction of the conflictual relationship between faith and reason as well as directed the possibility of reconciling them.

As the aforementioned discussions point out, the problematization of the relationship between science and religion is a long-standing issue discussed in different contexts. Different religions and their studies with different perspectives in particular time periods necessitate a comprehensive approach and consideration of particularities of the studied religion and sociopolitical setting of the related society. Accordingly, this study benefits from the works of literature on the dilemma of science and religion in the Western context. Firstly, I want to examine different approaches to the dilemma of science to build up the theoretical and conceptual framework of the analysis and before the review of the works of literature on the issue.

Nussel and Lovin review the problems of interdisciplinary thinking in theology and the relationship between science in religion in the conference “Science and Religion Dialogue: Past and Future” (Nussel & Lovin, 2014). They propose that the Age of Enlightenment led the multiplication of academic questions and research areas but caused the differentiation and gap between the science and humanities as well (Nussel & Lovin, 2014, p. 87). According to Nussel and Lovin,

¹¹ Galileo Affair indicates the trial and condemnation of Galileo Galilei by the Roman Catholic Inquisition in 1633 for his support of heliocentrism. The Roman Inquisition found Galileo guilty of heresy and sentenced him to indefinite imprisonment which kept Galileo under house arrest until his death in 1642. This is a good example of the conflict between the religious knowledge and the scientific knowledge.

starting from the enlightenment, in the 19th century, three different claims came to dominate the discussions of science and religion which are (1) the claim of an antithesis or contradiction between science and religion as two different and incompatible approaches to understand the world: (2) the claim to integrate scientific findings into theological explanation and description: (3) the claim that science and religion offer distinct explanations which do not interfere with each other (2014, p. 88). They argue that these claims are inadequate to understand and explain the relationship between science and religion today: what they suggest instead is to move beyond the abstract disciplinary boundaries to determine the relationship between science and theology in a dialogue on concrete, specific topics (Nussel & Lovin, 2014, p. 89).

Nussel and Lovin show us the inconclusive claims on the relationship between science and religion which we cannot base our arguments and analysis today. They discuss this situation but do not further the questions on the issue to open the discussion for other studies of religion such as the study of Islam. Accordingly, for the sake of this study, these claims will be discussed, analyzed and enhanced to the study of Islam.

Firstly, unlike Nussel and Lovin, I think these claims must be understood as analytical tools to categorize the approaches to the study of any religion and its relationship with the science and religion debate. The first claim, for instance, indicates that science and religion are separate and incompatible fields with the same object of study which is the world itself. This claim is helpful to understand the more antagonistic views on the science and religion dialogue. The second claim is for understanding the religious explanations that involve scientific claims. These kinds of approaches tend to understand science and religion as unseparated fields and prioritize the religious explanations over scientific claims. The third claim like the first one suggests that science and religion are different fields of inquiry that do not interfere with each other. However, unlike the first claim, this kind of approaches do not see science and religion as antagonistic fields that contrast each other. This is an approach we see mostly in natural sciences such as physics and biology. It is the approach that one scientifically analyzes the nature

and comes with a scientific conclusion about it while the field of religion is not something that interferes with that scientific analysis or its conclusion. Both science and religion are understood as limited to their own fields of inquiry while none of them argue about something that stands outside of their specific fields.

Now, as Nussel and Lovin indicate, these claims fall short of addressing the science and religion dialogue, I agree and add that these claims are very exclusivist not only in understanding the Christian literature but also in understanding the study of Islam. To overcome this obstacle first, the term science must be contextualized. In the history of Islamic thought, nature was emphasized since it is given as a reference in Quran significantly. However, other than giving nature as the evidence of God's greatness, the content of Quran is mostly about the organization of societies and human behavior which is why it is taken as a guide in human relations (personal communication with Hayri Kırbaşoğlu, February 13, 2019) Accordingly, unlike Christianity, in Islam, the relationship between the interpretation of the Quran and the practices of social sciences and humanities came into prominence more than the natural sciences. This is one of the reasons that the claims to the science and religion debate in the context of the study of Christianity are not adequate to grasp the same discussion in the context of the study of Islam. Now, based on this differentiation, in the analysis, it is social sciences and humanities when the scholars mention the term science unless otherwise is stated or a general definition is given. Other than this, the study of religion is not independent of social, political and cultural settings of the society. In this sense not only the study of a certain religion differs from the study of other religion but even the study of the same religion depends on the geographical and cultural characteristics of societies. Accordingly, Nussel and Lovin's discussion of the claims to the science and religion debate cannot reflect upon the particular characteristics of the study of Islam in Turkey which is discussed in detail in Section 2.3.

According to aforementioned particularities of the study of Islam and its relation to science and religion debate, the analytical tools taken from Nussel and Lovin are not completely appropriate for the analysis of the approaches of the scholars to

the study of Islam. To overcome this limitation and to improve the analytical tools, I added two new analytical tools. By adding these two analytical tools, we can see how limited the approaches to the science and religion debate in the literature and we can better grasp scholars' approaches to the study of Islam and their response to the dilemma of science and religion. One of these analytical tools is (4) the view that tends to understand and explain the world and its relation to religion in the light of science. This approach can be understood as the opposite of the second category which prioritizes the religion. In this approach, science is prior to religion in terms of understanding the world/reality. Also, there may be a contradiction between science and religion in this kind of approaches but not necessarily since this is not a comparative approach but an inclusionary and interpretative one. The other category to be added is (5) the analytical tool that suggests alternative/equally valid approaches and methods postulated by both science and religion. This understanding argues for neither a synthesis between science and religion nor a contradiction but looks for reconciliation between science and religion to be compatible with each other. It simply rejects binary oppositions and antagonism between science and religion and posits a multiple and interdisciplinary understanding of the world by the contributions of science and religion. Now when we look at all of five analytical tools, it is seen that the added categories improve the conditions of possibility of other approaches to the science and religion debate and have the ability to reflect upon the study of religions other than Christianity, in our case the study of Islam.

In sum, the following categories are significant in understanding and evaluating the approaches of the scholars at A. U. School of Divinity to the study of Islam and their response to science and religion controversy:

1. The analytical tool that suggests an antithesis or contradiction between science and religion as two different and incompatible approaches to understanding the world.
2. The analytical tool that suggests the integration of scientific findings into theological explanation and description.

3. The analytical tool that suggests science and religion offer distinct explanations which do not interfere.
4. The analytical tool that suggests the understanding of the world and its relation to religion in the light of science.
5. The analytical tool that suggests alternative/equally valid approaches and methods postulated by both science and religion.

With the help of the characteristics these analytical tools provide, I categorize the approaches of the scholars: İlhami Güler's as historical-critical approach, Hayri Kırbaçoğlu's as the social scientific approach, and Şaban Ali Düzgün's as comparative literature approach. Accordingly, the conceptual framework ensures a comprehensive analysis of the works of the scholars, of their distinct approaches to the study of Islam and of the crux of their arguments. Based on this framework, I argue that these scholars have distinct approaches to the study of Islam but share the same objective which is the construction of an academic study of Islam based on social scientific premises on which they reconcile the long-standing dichotomy in the study of Islam which is also an offer of reconciliation for the conflicts of science/religion and modernity/Islam.

3.2 Studies on Higher Religious Education (in the West)

One of the oldest articles on the issue belongs to Pullias who makes his arguments on the experience of the United States of America. In his article Pullias questions whether there is a linear understanding of the history of universities/higher education such as the transition from religious to secular and whether the harmony between religion and science can be achieved within this linear model (Pullias, 1946, p. 366). He argues that harmony is possible since both religion and science is after the truth (Pullias, 1946, p. 368). What is missing in Pullias's analysis is the significance of methodology in the scientific study which Stendahl points out in his article "Religion in the University" (1963). This article provides a discussion on the significance of methodology in the scientific study which Pullias's analysis falls short of. Similar to Pullias, Stendahl also starts with the idea of a linear history of the university from religious to secular. What he argues that there is a return of the religion to the universities which may signify a threat to the secular

understanding of the university as an institution (Stendahl, 1963, p. 522). He contends that the problem is very complex due to the history of the study of religion which varies on the basis of different cultural models, educational philosophies, and diverse theologies. Accordingly, it is difficult to identify and differentiate the structure of higher religious education. He suggests two analytical tools to analyze this complex issue. One is the crucial role of the university as an institution: the second one is the link between religious study and other fields of inquiry in the university (Stendahl, 1963, p. 524). If the everyday religious practices are the concern of religious organization such as the church, then the academic practices of religion are the concern of universities (Stendahl, 1963, pp. 524-526). He says that religion as a cultural and historical phenomenon must be studied in the university based on scientific methodology, but he does not explain the limits of this study whether it should be a particular discipline in itself or is it to be practiced as a subdiscipline of another social science discipline such as sociology of religion and so on.

Another one of the important studies in the literature is about the differentiation of liberal arts and indoctrination in higher education and the position of religious education in this differentiation. Katsoff argues that two approaches to higher education exist to help us to position religious study (Katsoff, 1953). One is indoctrination which is the approach based on the understanding of higher religious education as it is for the betterment of the religion and higher religious education is for providing religious officials to serve to societies' religious needs as in the other disciplines such as engineering, medicine, teaching. Another type is liberal education which is based on a liberal understanding of education. In this approach, Katsoff argues that religion can be taught like any other discipline in social sciences such as sociology. It means that the primary purpose of higher religious education is not to provide religious officers but rather to understand, discuss, explore and explain a certain phenomenon in the society through the analytical tools religion provide (Katsoff, 1953, pp. 285-288). Katsoff's arguments are important to understand the position of religious education in the structure of higher education. However, the separation of disciplines is not very clear in the universities as Katsoff asserts in his article since the logic of these

separations may change according to social, cultural and economic aspects in different societies at different time periods. For instance, a political science department may be merged with the education of public administration which affects the curriculum of the department. Besides, the understanding of disciplines and the purpose of the education of a certain discipline may vary from university to university based on the mission of the scholars in the department or the university in general. Also, Turkey does not have the variety of schools, faculties and departments the Western academy has such as Religious Studies, Oriental Studies, Middle Eastern Studies, Divinity School and Theology which determine the way of study of the program. In Turkey, there is, unfortunately, no major separation between in the schools or faculties of religious studies which means that both the scholars, teachers, civil servants, and religious officers graduate from the same school which is known as theology faculty in general. Also, the emphasis is given to Islam as the studied religion while other religions are the subjects of secondary, elective courses rather than being a major study subject. Based on these particular characteristics of higher religious education in Turkey, Katsoff's differentiation is not adequate to understand this diverse character of higher religious education in Turkey.

An empirical study on the issue of higher religious education is Wiebe's study on graduate studies at the University of Toronto. He differentiates higher religious education as the traditional point of view/theological studies and modern point of view/religious studies (Wiebe, 1995, p. 354). This empirical study is the missing part of previous studies that is mentioned since it discusses certain cases and shows the criteria for being scientific such as objectivity, methodology. However, rather than focusing completely on the criteria for being scientific, he particularly discusses the points of views of the academics, their thoughts on the issue. For him, personal motives, ideas, and valuation are also important guides in understanding higher religious education (Wiebe, 1995, pp. 372-375). Accordingly, Wiebe's article beneficial for this study in terms of methodology since it underlines the significance of the textual analysis and direct discussion with the scholars that this study tries to achieve.

Another empirical study belongs to Hill in which he dwells upon the historical formation of the University of Oxford through its alliance with the church and the effects of the reformation of universities. He identifies two antagonistic movements on the issue of the study of religion in higher education at the University of Oxford. On the one hand, scholars in one movement, identified as modernists, support critical thinking, interpretation. They emphasize the importance of human being and consequently human reason, rationality in matters of religious education and religion in general. They celebrate methodological skepticism and historical knowledge. Adding to these ideas, another important thing they support is the idea of university reform which is based on the concept of progress liberal education brings forward. The purpose is to make the study of religion a part of the liberal arts curriculum. In the book "Essays and Reviews" they stated that "we must read them [holy book] not by the help of custom or tradition, in the spirit of apology or controversy, but in accordance with the ordinary laws of human knowledge" (Hill, 2005, p. 190). The other opposing view is mentioned as the conservatists who aim to preserve established institutions and therefore prefer tradition to innovation. They insisted on not to abandon the well-established truths of religion in favor of wild speculation and concluded that criticality is speculation that does not ever have an end, so it is unnecessary and impractical for the society (Hill, 2005, p. 197). This conflictual relationship between two approaches on higher religious education is directly related to the analysis of this thesis. As the modernists in the University of Oxford, the scholars from A. U. School of Divinity also make a critique of the theological the study of Islam and emphasized the use of reason, criticality, and interpretation. In this sense, to see the same conflictual situation in different contexts shows us the criticality of the issue and gives the opportunity to compare different cases.

These works of literature are important for identifying the different points of view on the issue of higher religious education since they give the analysis of different cases and contexts with various approaches. Although the different experiences and discussions studied in those works of literature are helpful for this study, it is not adequate to comprehensively address the knowledge production process in higher religious education. This is one of the critical problems in the Western

literature on higher religious education that this analysis aims to solve. There are conceptual discussions and social-historical analyses of higher religious education but no detailed analysis on the works of the scholars exist: the process of knowledge production, the views of scholars are not grasped by detailed examinations. This thesis on the other hand, by using textual analysis, intends to make a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the works the scholars produce which is absent in the literature. Besides these, the Western literature as can be predicted does not and cannot reflect on the experiences in higher religious education in Turkey since the academic study of Islam is historically formed differently than the study of Christianity which is mostly the object of Western literature on higher religious education. Also, to address the study of Islam, one must consider the changing sociopolitical settings of Turkey as discussed in former sections. In the light of these, this thesis contributes to the Western literature with a new approach, analytical tools, and methodology which are significant in terms of interdisciplinary studies on religions other than the study of Christianity.

3.3 Studies on Higher Religious Education in Turkey

Few studies exist on this issue in the literature based on Turkey which focus on the historical background of the foundation of theology faculties in Turkey and pedagogical character of higher religious education. However, none of them directly address the issue of science and religion debate. In the literature of higher religious education and the dilemma of science and religion, it is crucial to understand in Turkey academic study of religion generally means the academic study of Islam. Also, the relationship of the academic study of Islam to science is established through social sciences and humanities rather than natural sciences as in the case of Christianity studies in higher education as discussed in Section 2.2. These two characteristics must be considered when reviewing the literature. Besides, higher religious education is a pretty much a new issue in Turkish academia mostly due to its relatively short period of life for 95 years now. Also, contemporary sociopolitical and economic dynamics of Turkish society force other problematizations on higher religious education such as the employment

difficulties, quality of the education policies in theology faculties rather than the discussions on the dilemma of science and religion or specifically Islam and its relation to sciences. Therefore, the discussions on higher religious education are mostly focused on these topics.

Aşıkoğlu's article is one of the former studies which analyzes the historical formation of religious education as an academic discipline in Turkey. He discusses the way religion has become an academic discipline after the scientific transformations of 19th and 20th centuries which led to an increase of scientific inquiries and division of academic disciplines into sub-branches. Then he explores the same process in the context of Turkish academic history and reviews the belated introduction of the academic study of religion in Turkey (Aşıkoğlu, 1993, p. 85). Unlike other studies in the literature, Aşıkoğlu's article examines the formation of religious education as an academic study and the effect of the predicament of modernity and Islam on this formation. He focuses on the importance of religious education in Turkish society regarding the ability of religion to offer a proposal for societal problems. In this sense, higher religious education is not only academically significant, but it plays a role in the society by providing unity and reconciliation among people in the society (Aşıkoğlu, 1993, p. 90). Although these are important emphases on the role of higher religious education in society, Aşıkoğlu's analysis falls short of addressing the issue of science and religion. Even though the analysis mentions the relationship between science and religion in a historical frame, it does not engage in these discussions in a comprehensive level which this study aims to do. It reviews the historical background of higher religious education in Turkey and examines how religious education as an academic subject would be helpful for societies and academy themselves (Aşıkoğlu, 1993, p. 91).

Another notable academic study on higher religious education is Paçacı and Aktay's article on the history of higher education in Turkey (Paçacı & Aktay, 1999). They discuss the sociopolitical relevance of the formations of theology faculties in Turkey like Aşıkoğlu touches upon in his analysis. They particularly analyze the historical era that made possible the conditions of the establishment of

theology faculties and problematize the state ideology at that time which was effective on this decision and on the structure of the higher religious education. The emphases are on the sociopolitical background of newly founded Turkish Republic and its relation to higher religious education instead of the problematization of the alleged limits of the study of religion scientifically or the criteria for the scientific study of religion. They focus on the official state documents and discussions on the issue with a short analysis of the concepts of modernity, secularism, laicism.

Genç's article is another study on the theology faculties and higher religious education in Turkey. More than an analysis of the historical transformation of the academic study of religion like Aşıkoglu's and Paçacı & Aktay's, Genç's article is a comparative study that deals with different curriculums of theology faculties in Europe and Turkey. His problematization is a pedagogical one rather than the discussion of the dilemma of science and religion. He argues that theology faculties in Turkey in comparison to the theology faculties in Europe lack career concerns which causes students to graduate without enough knowledge about the daily practice of religion which society needs from them (Genç, 2013, p. 30). This discussion is very related to Katsoff's division of higher education into indoctrination and liberal education (Katsoff, 1953). In his analysis, Genç argues that the theology faculties in Turkey are mostly based on the liberal understanding of education and they lack indoctrination. In the light of these findings, he offers suggestions to improve the educational strategies of theology faculties in Turkey based on the interviews with some undergraduate students of theology faculty at Cumhuriyet University in Turkey (Genç, 2013, p. 42). Although Genç's study is significant in terms of its comparative perspective, it overlooks the content of theology faculties in Turkey while it identifies them as liberal education. The curriculums of theology faculties are not analyzed in detail, and the comparison of other theology faculties is not stressed enough. In this sense, Genç's analysis as many other studies in the literature of higher religious education ignores the relationship between science and religion in the academic study of religion in Turkey.

Dölek's article deals with the revitalization of religion in contemporary times and asks the question of how higher religious education should be conducted in a modern world that is profoundly affected by secular movements (Dölek, 2014, p. 3). Concerning this question, he focuses on theology faculties in Turkey and discusses their curriculums. What he argues at the end of his analysis is that the theology faculties in Turkey tend to have standardized curriculums despite the proliferation of theology faculties such as Islamic Studies, School of Divinity, Islamic Civilization Center and so on. What he proposes is to improve the contents of higher religious education considering the specialization in different subdisciplines in the field (Dölek, 2014, p. 26). This study, like Genç's analysis, concerns the pedagogical side of the higher religious education rather than the dilemma of science and religion and suggests specialization in theology faculties to support different career choice of the students such as academic career, teaching career, religious officer careers.

A more contemporary study belongs to İbrahim Turan who compares and discuss the extent of theology faculties in and outside Turkey (Turan, 2017). Similarly, as other analyses in the literature, this study also avoids the problematization of the relationship between science and religion in higher education. Instead, the stress is given to the educational structure, and employment possibilities of theology faculties in Turkey which is related to the discussion Katsoff makes in his article that mentioned above.

Besides these studies on higher religious education, the literature based on Turkey falls short of approaching the issue of higher religious education and its relationship to the conflicts of science/religion and modernity/Islam. Most of the writings aim at providing official documents and historical information on the foundation of theology faculties in Turkey which are beneficial for this study but not related to preceding discussions. Many other inquiries on the issue are about the examination of pedagogical problems in theology faculties and offering solutions which is again not related to the discussion of the dilemma of science and religion.

The literature outside of Turkey falls short of shedding light on the experiences of higher religious education in Turkey and does not have a detailed and comprehensive methodology for the study of the knowledge production process of the scholars and the literature based on Turkey embodies the same problems as well. Although the historical and comparative approaches to the higher religious education are invaluable to this study, the analyses of the literature in Turkey stay vague in terms of disclosing the way of religious/Islamic knowledge production in higher religious education. About this issue, the methodological choice of this thesis has a vital contribution to the works of literature in and outside of Turkey: textual analysis brings a more detailed and direct examination of the knowledge production of the scholars which means a comprehensive understanding their approaches to the study of Islam. Accordingly, the approach and methodology of this thesis are different than the aforementioned ones since it enables one to get details of the process – how the Islamic knowledge is produced in the academy, how the scholars establish their ontological, methodological and epistemological grounds of inquiry and so forth – which is absent in the related literature.

Accordingly, the aim here is to use both works of literature to set the frame of the analysis and at the same time to provide comprehensive material to the same literature in and outside of Turkey regarding the conceptual and methodological approach this thesis adopts.

CHAPTER IV

THE SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF ISLAM AT ANKARA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

In this chapter, academic works of the scholars İlhami Güler, Mehmet Hayri Kırbaşoğlu, and Şaban Ali Düzgün from A. U. School of Divinity are textually analyzed based on the discussions in Chapter II and III. The approaches of the scholars to the study of Islam is examined through the questions of how they construct a social scientific inquiry in Islamic studies, what premises this academic study of Islam has, how they embody the relationship between the study of Islam and other academic disciplines.

Based on the conceptual framework I discuss in Section 3.1, I categorize the approaches of the scholars to the study of Islam to get a deeper and broader understanding of their works: İlhami Güler's as historical-critical approach, Hayri Kırbaşoğlu's as social scientific approach and finally Şaban Ali Düzgün's as comparative literature approach. Although they all construct a social scientific study and teaching of Islam, they have different priorities which I wanted to stress to show that they have their differences. I integrate the discussions on science and religion – whether they try to separate science and religion completely or see a constant conflict between them, whether they reproduce the conflict with further binaries or try to create a harmony or reconciliation between them or reconsider the concepts in binary oppositions – and on the predicament of modernity and Islam – what they understand by the concept modernity and how they make of its relation

to Islam in Turkey, whether they see a perpetual antagonism between modernity and Islam, whether they argue there is a possibility to reconcile this conflict and if there is, how they reconcile this predicament. 90 77 13

4.1 Historical-Critical Approach to the Study of Islam: İlhami Güler

Being a Professor of Kalam, İlhami Güler's works reflect on the discussions about the fundamentals of Islamic beliefs and doctrines, the role of Islam within the contemporary societies, and the religion itself as a part of the human history. In this sense, his field of inquiry is broad, and accordingly, his arguments concern wide-ranging academic fields. In the analysis, I categorize İlhami Güler's approach as the historical-critical approach because of his emphasis on the historicity and criticality in the study of Islam. Throughout the analysis, I discuss how İlhami Güler constructs an academic study of Islam based on the premises of social sciences in through historical-critical approach and how this study responds to the ongoing dichotomies within the academic study of Islam regarding the debates on modernity/Islam and science/religion.

He begins his arguments about the science and religion debate by emphasizing the break between them. Although he does not focus on analyzing the historical transformation of the relationship between science and religion, he argues that when the secular-modern civilizations started to appear, religion in terms of its role in organizing and knowing societies lost its authority to science and went through a crisis of legitimacy (Güler, 2016A, p. 110). Although Güler argues that Christianity, Judaism, and Islam have the same crisis with different practices, he points out that Islam has an essential difference in its role within this conflictual relationship between science and religion. In "Dine Yeni Yaklaşımlar," he explains this crisis as follows:

As a result of great scientific developments in the Western world for the last three centuries, there have been violent conflicts between the Church, the Gospels, and the Christian world and the scientific world. The basis of this conflict is that the results of scientific developments contradict the church's claims and people's claims about the universe. For example, Galileo Galilei and his experience with the Church. However, Islam has no problem with the sciences because the Quran as the last book of the divine

universal religion maintains its originality and does not have any contradiction with the sciences. (2016A, pp. 111-114)

As he emphasizes in the quote, Islam as a religion intrinsically is not in conflict with the sciences because the sayings of Quran do not contradict with the scientific findings, unlike the oppositions Christianity has experienced with scientific activities. Güler criticizes the Church as the authority to regulate both religious and scientific activities in Christian societies since the Bible itself is not an autonomous source of knowledge like the Quran is. Because of this situation, the authority i.e. the Church has created a conflictual situation by regulating both religious knowledge production and scientific activities. However, as Güler indicates, Islam does not have that kind of authority since the Quran itself does not have this relationship with the authoritarian institutions as the Bible has historically. In this regard, he argues that the Quran as an autonomous source of knowledge has never been in conflict with other types of knowledge and will never be.

While arguing the Quran does not contradict with the scientific findings, Güler also emphasizes that the Quran is not a science book either. He vaguely describes science as “the activity of determining the relationship between facts, collecting data on the issue and identifying the laws between them” and based on this definition, he contends that nowhere in the Qur'an have cryptic formulas or scientific knowledge been given to people to be discovered in the future (Güler 2016A, p. 107). Here, he draws a line between the Quran as the sacred book and sciences and then argues that they are not related to each other, but even if they do, they do not conflict with each other since the Quran does not contradict with the findings of sciences. He continues to explain this relationship while emphasizing the Quran's role in societies:

The tendency to interpret the Quran according to the data of the natural sciences began in the 19th century. Since Muslims lost their scientific thinking skills, they resorted to such an interpretation to be freed from the inferiority complex against the scientific discoveries in the West. To inform people about nature is not the task of the Quran, it is rather to lead people and society to the right path and their problems. It is, of course, true that the Quran attaches importance to the mind and invites people to think.

However, this aim is about resolving the religious, moral, and social problems of the society it descends. (Güler, 2016A, pp. 32-34)

Again, Güler emphasizes the irrelevance between the sciences and the Quran and continues to argue that Quran must be understood in relation to thought activities for the social and ethical problems in the society which brings us to Güler's main problematization of the Islamic studies: Although he argues that it is a senseless endeavor to bring Quran and sciences together, this is only about the natural sciences for Güler. Considering the Quran's role in the society, this is not the case about social sciences and humanities since the Quran is related to the social and ethical problems societies have as Güler contends (Güler, 2016A, p. 32).

Regarding this connection, while the Quran and Islam are the objects of study for Güler, the main problematization in his works is how they are studied. What Güler does here is to exclude the Quran itself from the discussion of science and religion conflict. By eliminating the discussions about whether the Quran supports or negates the scientific findings, Güler comes to the main discussion and criticism he wants to elucidate: the problematization is not about the scientificness of the Quran or any other religious book but it is about how the Quran is addressed, interpreted, basically how it is studied. This is one of the striking characteristics of Güler's approach to the study of Islam and the science and religion debate in general that we will see in the works of other scholars as well: before even starting his arguments, he immediately positions himself opposed to the antagonistic claims to the science and religion debate which either separate the fields of science and religion or represent them as constant oppositions discussed in Nussel and Lovin's work. He begins with negating the antagonistic views on science and religion which shows that his fundamental purpose is to find a resolution between science and religion debate and a solid ground for the study of Islam rather than to reproduce antagonisms.

Now Güler framed his problematization, what he does next is to critically address the theological Islamic studies and construct his approach to the study of Islam that he upholds. He brings forth the question of what Islamic studies is and what is its position among other academic disciplines, specifically social sciences and humanities which share the same field of inquiry with the study of Islam (Güler,

2016A). Hence, he asks questions such as how should be the study of Islam conducted? What is its object of study? What are the technicalities, procedures, methods, and language it uses? What should be the position of the scholar who studies Islam? What is the relationship between social science disciplines and the academic study of Islam? By assessing these questions, he critically reviews the ontological, epistemological and methodological premises of the study of Islam.

Now what are the critiques Güler brings forth to the Islamic studies and how are these critiques related to the science and religion debate, social sciences and the study of Islam in particular? First of all, Güler's critiques revolve around the binary oppositions mentioned before in the thesis such as reason/faith, knowledge/belief, modern/traditional, historicity/universality, objectivity/subjectivity and so on. What Güler does is not to celebrate these antagonistic relations by taking a position against one another. Rather what he does is to evaluate these binary oppositions and their use in theological Islamic studies and examine what Islamic studies lack and how it should be conducted. The first critique he makes which constitutes the base for his other critiques on Islamic studies is about the disregard of the rationality/use of reason in the study of Islam, which is a long-standing problem within the Islamic studies. In his work on "Liberal Theology", Güler discusses the use of reason in the study of Islam and argues that it is the base of the study of Islam which enables

...a middle way is possible between the anachronic Islamic studies in the Middle Ages and radical science making such as "positivism" in which God is forgotten. As long as the use of rationale and reason is active and critically used, the rest is from God. (2011, p. 69)

As the quote sets forth, Güler negates two extreme approaches in the study of Islam: the first one is the theological study of Islam which is based on and strictly follows the rules of the traditional teachings and the latter one is conducting scientific inquiry without considering God's existence. Here, Güler does not detailly explain what he means by these approaches, but he clearly addresses the binary opposition between reason faith in the study of Islam. As it is seen in the quote, Güler clarifies that the rationality/reason and criticality are the core of the proper study of Islam, and it can be done without negating the faith itself. He

sides with the modern approach to the study of Islam by criticizing the traditional approaches in Islamic studies but tries to create a basis to include faith as well. He avoids extreme approaches and tries to create a middle way which is based on rationality/criticality for the study of Islam by not ignoring faith. This shows us firstly that Güler's aim is not to create or reproduce the binary oppositions, in this situation reason/faith, but rather to construct a ground for the study of Islam which is based on the use of reason and rationality while acknowledging the role of faith: while the rationality is prioritized, faith is not negated.

This middle way Güler aims to construct does also include other binaries of knowledge/belief, modern/traditional and historicity/universality besides reason/faith. With the legitimation crisis religion has been going through against sciences Güler argues that a series of reformation calls and projects in Islamic studies have been developed in the last quarter of the twentieth century and some scholars¹² attempted to renew the methodologies and contents of theological Islamic disciplines with the data and methodologies of contemporary social sciences. However, Güler continues (2011), "conservative scholars and academics, who advocated the adequacy of traditional methodologies, accused these sincere entrepreneurs of being orientalist and emptying Islam" (pp. 66-67). Güler's criticism here is a crucial point that evidences his position within the modern/traditional opposition. He opposes the theological interpretation of Quran and conservative understanding of the study of Islam by criticizing these approaches as "they declare everyone who is involved with modernity, or more precisely reality, as dirty" (Güler, 2011. p. 67). By putting the words modernity and reality as synonymous, Güler explicitly positions himself within the modernist understanding in the study of Islam. As it is seen, he does not understand modernity as something that one can disregard even if one wants to do so but instead as the reality itself which must be considered by any kind of academic inquiry which otherwise stay erroneous as the theological study of Islam in the present. Now his position here is stricter than his views on reason/faith dichotomy: he clearly prioritizes the modern approach and criticizes the

¹² Güler gives reference to Fazlur Rahman, Mohammed Abed al-Jabri, Abū Ḥanīfa, Mohammed Arkoun and Abdullah Naim.

fundamentals of theological Islamic studies. However, rather than the predomination of modern approach over the traditional one, Güler criticizes the latter of lacking the consideration of modern societies and changing dynamics in the sociopolitical structures in them. In this sense, what Güler argues is that the theological study of Islam is inadequate to react, analyze and explain the modern phenomena by using traditional interpretation: what should be done instead is to acknowledge the use of reason, self-reflexivity, and criticality in the Islamic studies. Only this way, the study of Islam will be of the position to react to modern phenomena, i.e. the realm. (Güler, 2011, p. 67). This position Güler holds shows that the dichotomies of modern and traditional do not matter: what is of significance here is to construct a study of Islam successfully reacting and evaluating the world around it which according to Güler is impractical without provided by a modern approach.

These discussions also what that in Güler's construction of the ground for the study of Islam, the values and characteristics he attributes to the study of Islam as to be, are the same values and features social sciences have: both the ontological and epistemological grounds are shared, and the methodological concerns are similar such as criticality and self-reflexivity. This may not mean that Güler puts the study of Islam as a discipline under social sciences, but he attempts to construct a study of Islam which is an academic discipline, scientifically well-equipped, able to react, analyze and explain the social and in relation to the other disciplines among social sciences.

To better grasp Güler's critique and construction of a middle ground for the study of Islam, the *akıl-nakil* debate¹³, which is a long-standing dialogue in Islamic studies, should be reviewed. In this debate, two approaches exist: *akılcılık* and

¹³ *Akıl* means reason/ration while *Nakil* means revelation/transfer. Although *akıl* and *nakil* are put as the binary oppositions in the study of Islam and created conflicts among scholars for years now, there have been many attempts to reconcile this opposition as well like the scholars I believe that İ. Güler, Hayri M. Kırbaçoğlu and Şaban A. Düzgün, all of these scholars one way or another give reference to Maturidi and his sect of Mutezile in Islam since they all try to deal with the *akıl-nakil* debate and put this debate in the context of the study of Islam in Turkey. To get a broader understanding of the issue of *akıl-nakil* debate and Maturidi's role in the debate see: Altıntaş, R. (2005). The Reason-Revelation Relationship in The System of Almaturidiyya as a School of Islamic Theology. *Marife*, 5(3), 233-245. Retrieved from <https://dergipark.org.tr/download/article-file/494064>.

nakilcilik. *Akılçılık*¹⁴ emphasizes the usage of reason and rational interpretation in the study of Islam. This understanding takes the changing conjunctures in societies into consideration such as economic, social, and technological changes and progress while understanding and interpreting the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad's sayings in relation to these changes. On the other hand, the other approach called *nakilcilik*¹⁵ is based on the traditional understanding of the Quran and Prophet Muhammad's sayings which is based on a system of knowledge production unchanged for years and hostile to the new interpretations as *akılçılık* reinforces. By sticking to the classical reading of the Quran and traditional understanding of Muhammad's sayings, *nakilcilik* objects to the modern approaches in the study of Islam. Both *akılçı* and *nakilci* studies consider the Quran and Prophet Muhammad's sayings as the core sources of Islam, but they are sharply different in terms of how to address the issues, how to analyze and interpret them. In this sense, we can say that this binary relationship *akıl-nakil* debate embodies represents oppositions as well such as reason/faith, knowledge/belief, modern/traditional, historicity/universality which are addressed and discussed by Güler himself. He discusses *akıl-nakil* debate as follows:

In the world's great religions and doctrines, there are usually two types of approach to the fundamental texts of a religion or doctrine. The first approach [*akılçılık*] necessitates the use of reason, interpretation, and detailed analysis of metaphor and symbolic expressions in the fundamental texts in parallel to the historical developments and changes. The second approach [*nakilcilik*], on the other hand, argues for believing in the texts as they are and avoiding analysis and interpretation. This is in fact not arose from religion or doctrine itself. It is based on the tendencies and natures of human beings. (Güler, 2016A, p. 102)

The quote shows that Güler does not see the *akıl-nakil* debate as a problem only intrinsic to Islam as a religion but as an important discussion point that exists in other major religions. Accordingly, he broadens the frame of this discussion of *akılçılık* and *nakilcilik* to the approaches within the studies of other major religions. Although his purpose is not to choose sides and create a binary, it is clear that he favors *akılçılık* by arguing that the Quran is directly given to people

¹⁴ *Akılçılık* (rationalism) means supporting the *akıl* (reason/ration) in the *akıl-nakil* debate.

¹⁵ *Nakilcilik* (revelationism) means supporting the *nakil* (revelation) in the *akıl-nakil* debate.

to be understood and interpreted which necessitate the use of reason belongs to human beings. Thereby, he argues that, necessarily, the mind/reason – *akıl* – is prior to the revelation – *nakil* – since reason is used for the acceptance, understanding, and interpretation of any revelation/hadith. (Güler, 2016A, p. 103).

Insofar, it is known that there has been a conflictual duality in Islamic studies for years which Güler critically addresses and seeks to reconcile today. This reconciliation is neither synthesis nor an absolute resolution of the conflicts. Instead, he constructs a ground on which he prioritizes the “necessary” characteristics for the study of Islam to be an academic discipline able to react to the happenings around it. that the theological Islamic studies are unable to do.

Güler’s approach to *akılcılık/nakilcilik* directly reflects on his critiques on theological Islamic studies and emphasizes the ground he constructs for the academic study of Islam which is based on the premises of a modern, scientific, critical academic inquiry. What is more, these dichotomies pave the way for the concept of historicity which is a crucial part of Güler’s problematization which will eventually outline his approach to the study of Islam.

According to Güler, the concept of “historicity” is a scientific method developed in Europe beginning from the 17th century to interpret historical phenomena in social sciences, and the same concept came to the agenda in Turkey regarding the interpretation of the Qur’an (2019, para. 2). The said method, Historical-Critical Approach as Güler argues is about understanding the phenomena within the historical context while the alternative to this approach is the dogmatic, scholastic, anachronistic approach formed by the Church (2019, para. 3). Basically, what he demonstrates here is the historical approach that is used to understand happenings in their particular contexts in opposition to the hegemonic idea which interprets the happenings according to the universal, absolute and unconditional system of rules. In addition to the Historical-Critical Approach, he also discusses Hermeneutic method¹⁶ developed in Germany and how these two approaches are

¹⁶ Hermeneutics is a term for various methods of interpretation which enables one to get in depth understanding of the things using systematic interpretation processes. It is used in the

combined and created a synthesis which has influenced many schools of thought which is seemingly very effective in his approach. He discusses hermeneutics in his works as a theory and method of interpretation but does not define it and its usage in the interpretation of the Quran or any other Islamic source of knowledge. Rather with the emphasis on historical-critical approach and the hermeneutic method, it is understood that Güler is critical of the universal, infallible and unalterable way of producing knowledge in the study of Islam and advocate of the historical, sociological interpretations that take contexts seriously and stress the in-depth, intensive knowledge production. The fact that he gives consequence to historical-critical approach and hermeneutic method shows that Güler tries to use theories and methods outside of Islamic studies on the study of Islam which signifies a common ground not only among Islamic studies but among all social scientific academic fields of inquiry. This historical-critical approach is very outside of the theological Islamic studies which constitute the maxim of Güler's academic study of Islam.

Before continuing the discussion on the middle way/the ground Güler tries to construct, let us get a deeper understanding of the historical-critical approach Güler bases his critiques towards Islamic studies and constructs his study of Islam. Firstly, he separates two different historical understanding as one is a scientific methodology, and other is a philosophical worldview and argues that

it is necessary to not to confuse the historicity as a scientific methodology with the historicism as a philosophical world-view (Marx, Hegel) which adopts a relativist attitude. People who are against historicity – deliberately – confuse these two different issues. (Güler, 2019, para. 3)

This quote, like some other definitions and criticisms Güler makes in his studies, stays vague. However, the main point of the separation between two kinds of historical approach is clear to understand why Güler avoids the historicity as a world-view: his purpose is not to create a hegemonic or ideological world view on how to study Islam as Islamic studies do with its strict borders. Instead, he

interpretation of biblical texts and in other textual interpretations by various academic disciplines e.g. psychology, sociology, philosophy and so on.

endeavors to strengthen the study of Islam by improving it methodologically. This aim is related to the construction of a middle way: a middle ground Güler tries to do for the study of Islam. This middle ground, as it is discussed earlier is a modern approach to the study of Islam, which is based on the use of reason/rationality, criticality, and self-reflexivity. The significance given to the context and historicity was seen in the *akıl-nakil* debate within the *akılcı* approach Güler favors. Now, Güler's understanding of historicity becomes more explicit. He argues that historicity as a scientific method is not about how the revelation occurs but rather it is an issue, a theory of how the Quran should be interpreted (Güler, 2019 para. 7).

Now the questions of how the concept of historicity is conceived by Güler and how historical method is practiced in the study of Islam according to Güler's argument will be discussed. Güler, as we will also see in other scholar's works throughout this analysis, uses Fazlur Rahman¹⁷ many times to explain his arguments. He argues that everyone who has ever read Fazlur Rahman knows that his sole purpose is to show that the problems (economic, political, moral and metaphysical, etc.) Islamic world and humanity face today can be solved through an updated/renewed study of Islam (Güler, 2019, para. 7). He quotes Fazlur Rahman's comment on the criticality of the historical approach in Islamic studies:

In today's world, if Muslims' insistence to discuss the vivacity and validity of Islam as a system of belief and behavior is sincere, what seems clear is that they have to once again began to work on the intellectual field. [in the past, this work was successful]. They need to argue that what Islam wants from them today without hesitation, sincerely and without any restrictions, freely. For this to happen, the Sharia, in all its fields, must be subjected to a new assessment in the light of the Qur'an. To do this, a systematic and comprehensive interpretation of the Qur'an should be introduced. The greatest danger in this process of interpretation is, of course, to load the Quran with subjective ideas and make it an arbitrary study object. This

¹⁷ Fazlur Rahman Malik was a Pakistani scholar of Islam who is best known with his modernist and liberal reformist understanding of Islam. He taught at the University of California, Los Angeles and the University of Chicago for years before his death in 1988. He introduced many notable works in the study of Islam that deeply affected the Islamic studies around the world. For information about his life and works see: Ortaylı, İ. (1990). Hocamız Fazlur Rahman. *İslamî Araştırmalar (Fazlur Rahman Özel Sayısı)*, 4, 4th ser., 262-263. and Sonn, T. (1995). Rahman, Fazlur. In J. L. Esposito (Ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

danger is not as inevitable as it is thought, and it can certainly be minimized. What is needed to be done is to adopt and use a viable method for understanding and interpreting the Quran. (Güler, 2019, para. 8)

This quote from Fazlur Rahman clarifies the critique Güler makes on the Islamic studies and the aim of the study of Islam he tries to establish. Firstly, as it is seen in the quote there is a critique directed at the scholars who produce Islamic knowledge which emphasizes that if their calling is sincere then they need to intellectually address, discuss, explain and criticize the issues in the study of Islam which at a certain time what was happening in Islamic studies as Fazlur Rahman and Güler both argue. Also, this intellectual activity should be done freely without any hesitation or fear of a prohibition for the authenticity, reliability, and validity of the produced knowledge. The effort here is to make the study of Islam a study which will be based on the premises of any other academic disciplines in social sciences which are based on scientific procedures of modern, historical and critical approaches and methods. For these premises to be realized there is also a need for the scholars of Islamic studies to have self-reflexivity which is a minor discussion in Güler's arguments but a significant one.

Following Fazlur Rahman, Güler continues to explain how the study Islam should be conducted formed on the historical approach. First of all, he once again underlines the need for a solid and decent historical perspective to comprehend the Quran: not metaphysically but sociologically (Güler, 2016A, p. 99). He argues that the chronological analysis of the Quran renders the analysis of the first revelations and Islam's fundamental aims independent of any institutions, laws, and prohibitions (Güler, 2019, para. 10). For Güler, this historical perspective in the study of Islam is a must since with this method, in addition to identifying the meaning of the details in the Quran, the general purpose of the Qur'an's message will be revealed as well in a systematic and coherent way: in Güler's own words "this historical method will save us" (Güler, 2019, para 10). This is the one side of the historical-critical approach Güler constructs: to know the historical and sociological conditions which let the production of particular knowledge at a certain time period. The other side is the interpretation and evaluation of that knowledge according to the present reality which Güler prefers to call modernity

(Güler, 2011. p. 67). He contends that the Qur'an's sociological conditions (the social environment in which it was formed), that is, the environment in which the Prophet has acted and operated, should be taken into consideration and based on these, the objectives of the Qur'an should be understood and determined (Güler, 2019, para. 10). In Güler's standpoint, this will put an end to the subjective interpretations of the Quran and pave the way for the study of Islam Güler tries to construct: a modern scientific, academic discipline which critically evaluates the historical and sociological context of today and the past.

Quoting Fazlur Rahman, he argues that "if a person is determined not to put his obsessions [his prejudices, expectations, etc.] on Quran, this approach is very useful and the only real hope for a successful understanding/interpretation of the Qur'an today" (Güler, 2019, para. 12). Here, there is another crucial character Güler attributes to the study of Islam, which is objectivity. He argues that any subjective behavior dangerous to the inquiry itself must be avoided for the substantial interpretation of the Quran. This importance given to the objectivity of the study is again one of the characteristics of social sciences Güler adopts in his construction of the study of Islam. Not only his stress on the objectivity of the study is significant, his argument about the subjective views on the truth and interpretation also gives hints about his knowledge on the issue of objectivity/subjectivity. He does not negate subjective ideas in the study of Islam but considers them as a part of the process of knowledge production: he argues by supporting Fazlur Rahman's ideas that "this should not be overlooked: apart from the detailed differences, in a general sense, all approaches to the truth and all interpretations about it are subjective, and this cannot be overcome" (Güler, 2019, para. 12). Then he continues saying that "all opinions have different approaches, and if the approach does not distort the subject/object of the study and if it is open to the other views and comments, there is no harm in this. In fact, the disagreement that arises in this way – as long as the opinions are reasonable/logical – is actually healthy and sound for the study." (Güler, 2019, para. 12). As the quotes indicate, Güler does not only highlight the significance of objectivity and the production of objective knowledge based on the interpretation of the Quran, he also embeds subjectivity in the study of Islam by emphasizing

the inevitability of the subjective ideas about the truth and by showing how the subjectivity should work in the study of Islam which is based on the sharing of subjective ideas and being open to the other views and critiques. In this way, I think, not only the objective knowledge will be produced in the study of Islam but also there will be a ground to share ideas without hesitation which is based on being open-minded rather than creating hegemony and binary oppositions among different approaches.

Güler has already discussed the significance of the historical contextual approach to the Quran and Prophet Muhammad's sayings, but here he turns his face to the scholar and questions its position within the study of Islam. In his work "Kuş Bakışı", he argues that while looking at the basic sources of the Quran and hadiths to learn what Islam is, it is necessary to ask about history, society (sociology-anthropology) and reason (theology) and states that if this dialectical relationship is canceled, the intellectual interpretation is doomed to be dogmatic (Güler, 2016C, p. 85). To avoid this dogmatism, as he (2016C) contends, there is a need for a new theology of Islam and the scholars are the subjects of this undogmatic theology who are responsible as the clerics, as the theologians and as the scientists who are in different fields normally (p. 96). Güler here stresses a contextual difference of being a scholar of Islamic studies in Turkey by arguing that other roles are also given to the scholars which should be normally assigned to different people with different education. It is a possibility that this complex situation makes the scholars' works difficult, but it may also affect the position of the scholar in the study of Islam by necessitating him to know different sides of Islam.

Güler and scholars like him are on the one hand try to construct a study of Islam which is scientifically compatible, and on the other hand, embrace their religion individually. This complicated situation is one of the reasons why they have a concern about science and religion debate, why they have critiques on theological Islamic studies and the scholars of it. As linked to the science and religion debate, this duality of so-called oppositions is intrinsic to the sociopolitical setting of Turkey beginning from the first modernization steps in the Ottoman Empire to

today modern Turkey which is based on the predicament of Islam and modernity, of *madrassa* and *mektepe*. As it is discussed in the former chapter, the conflictual relationship of Islam and modernity is a deep-rooted issue in Turkey which seemingly effective in the conditions that Güler and other scholars are consciously or unconsciously compelled to address this conflictual relationship and reconcile it as they do in other binary oppositions: the way of doing this is to construct the social scientific study of Islam which will settle those oppositions.

To summarize, İlhami Güler points out that theological Islamic studies and the scholars in it are no longer operative and accordingly, a new study of Islam which is based on a common ground needed. This common ground is what Güler seeks to realize. In this common ground, Güler's first step is to get rid of the hegemonic oppositions in the study of Islam such as science/religion, knowledge/belief, reason/faith, modern/traditional, historicity/universality: he argues that Islamic studies lack the first ones in these oppositions. He argues that this situation ended up Islamic studies being impracticable in today's world. What he proposes instead is to include scientific procedures such as criticality, self-reflexivity, objectivity/subjectivity, to use reason and have a modern historical approach to the study of Islam to modernize Islamic studies. While focusing on what Islamic studies lacks, he does not negate what Islamic studies already have and argues that

the greatest misfortune of Islamic thought is the oppositions it has between thought/emotion, reason/faith, kalam/fiqh, and so forth. These oppositions have created Sufism like a swamp, kalam as empty rationalism and fiqh as choosy formalism and followingly eliminated the unity of Islam. Yet in the Quran, the relationship between faith and reason are like the relationship between honeycomb and honey. The essence and form needed and connected to each other. (Güler, 2016B, p. 96)

As can be seen in the quotation above, he emphasizes the connection of the so-called oppositions theological Islamic studies reproduce and reinforce today. He critically reevaluates and tries to renew/reform the features of theological Islamic studies to make it relevant and be able to understand, explain and question the world around us. Based on these premises, he introduces the social scientific study of Islam which he establishes through his historical-critical approach as the offer

to reconcile the binary oppositions by critically reevaluating them which theological Islamic studies is not able to do so.

How can we understand Güler's construction of a social scientific study of Islam in relation to the predicament of modernity and Islam, conflict of *mektep* and *madrasa*? His views on this issue are basically presented through his problematization of science and religion debate. Although he prioritizes the modern approaches to the academic study of Islam, he does not abstain from criticizing modernity and its relation to Islam in Turkey. The main problematization of Güler on the issue of modernity and Islam is that Islam and the Islamic thought, in general, have become an absolute source which is not open to change while the world is constantly changing. He argues that

...the problem of Islamic thought is that it tries to freeze/stop the change and dynamism embedded in nature, human beings and societies by assuming the absoluteness of God's words based on the absoluteness of God. Eventually, Islamic thought itself is frozen [because of this delusion]. (Güler, 2014, p. 62)

As it is in the science and religion debate, Güler again criticizes Islamic studies of what it lacks today and argues that to overcome this situation what is needed is scientific thinking on the one hand and modern approaches on the other. By asserting the significance of modern approaches however Güler does not celebrate the modern instead he sees modernity as the realm we are living in which Islamic studies must be able to respond and analyze like any other academic disciplines. The historical-critical approach becomes clear in this argument as well: he is against the absolute knowledge in Islamic thought rather he longs for an academic study of Islam which is actively engaging the world – modern age in the words of Güler – and able to analyze and criticize it with the tools of sciences.

It is the right behavior to harmonize the good things the West has such as critical rationality, productivity, passion for science, creativity, individuality, democracy, role of law, human rights, etc. with the good things Islamic thought in Turkey has such as believing Allah, benevolence, solidarity, compassion, fairness, justice and so forth. (Güler, 2012, p. 174)

This quote affirms what Güler tries to do with the academic study of Islam, to reconcile the so-called binaries embedded in the science and religion debate and

the predicament of modernity and Islam that caused *mektep-madrasa* conflict which prevails today as the dichotomy between the scientific study of Islam and the theological study of Islam. As he stresses the example of the relationship between honeycomb and honey, he again argues that faith and reason, science and religion and the modernity and Islam are cannot be grasped without each other.

In sum, Güler makes critiques on theological Islamic studies that it is no longer able to respond to the world around it and endeavors to establish an academic study of Islam through his approach I categorize as the historical-critical approach the premises of which are based on social scientific procedures, techniques and methods such as the use of reason, historicity, objectivity, subjectivity, criticality, self-reflexivity. He brings seemingly irreconcilable oppositions together such as modern/traditional, faith/reason and knowledge/belief on the middle way which he argues stays between the anachronic, theological study of Islam and radical scientific thinking in which God is forgotten (Güler, 2011, p. 69). By doing this, Güler also negates the predicament of modernity and Islam which have been used against each other in the political history of Turkey caused *mektep-madrasa* and social scientific-theological divide in the study of Islam and harmonize them practically in the social scientific study of Islam.

4.2 Social Scientific Approach to the Study of Islam: Hayri Kırbaçoğlu

M. Hayri Kırbaçoğlu's approach to the study of Islam is more focused on the questioning of social scientific aspects of Islamic studies. In this sense, he is different than İlhami Güler by stressing the social scientific characteristics of the study of Islam which is the reason I categorize his views as the social scientific approach. Kırbaçoğlu's major endeavor is to find common methodological ground in the study of Islam based on a social scientific language not only for a well-built study of Islam but also for a strong relationship between the study of Islam and other academic disciplines which will be explored and explained followingly. Besides the differences they have, the construction of an academic study of Islam based on the premises of social sciences constitutes the touchstone of the scholars' academic inquiries.

In his works, Kırbaçoğlu focuses on the question of how the study of Islam should be conducted and the relationship between the academic study of Islam and the other academic disciplines. In “Alternatif Hadis Metodolojisi”, he argues that the study of Islam was in an apologetic position against other scientific disciplines because it was not focusing on what it produces and how it produces by avoiding the epistemological and methodological criticality and self-reflexivity which have let a lack of constructed and equipped ground of inquiry in the academic study of Islam (Kırbaçoğlu, 2015A, p. 14). He argues that for centuries, not only Islam but Christianity and Judaism also have faced difficulties against the scientific, technological, and cultural changes and progress in the world and continues by arguing that the study of Islam could not respond to this crisis and tried to secure itself within the field of moral by arguing “The West is better about science and technology than us, but we are better at morality and spirituality” (Kırbaçoğlu, 2015A, pp. 14-15). Kırbaçoğlu criticizes this idea by stating that not only the study of Islam has stayed limited on the scientific, technological, and artistic areas, it also could not form a well-constructed moral standing as it claims. Today, he argues, Islamic studies are unable to construct an Islamic worldview since the conservative and theological understanding dominates the study of Islam and emphasizes the need for reform (*tecdid*) in the academic study of Islam:

Since our past hadith scholars did not approach text criticism and since they have an unfriendly - sometimes hostile attitude to the scientific knowledge of their time and the relations in this field, they made many mistakes in their works to understand and interpret the hadiths, and now we are paying for some of these mistakes today. The negativities this situation created and the mentality that has been negating anything besides *nakil* must be ended. There is no way out ahead of us (for the study of Islam) unless we adopt the position of a scholar who unifies the *akıl-nakil* approaches and *akli* and *nakli* knowledge and follows the developments in the world – especially scientific ones –, who has a critical and inquisitive mentality and who uses intelligence and reasoning. (Kırbaçoğlu, 2015A, p. 35)

What Kırbaçoğlu emphasizes here is that the theological study of Islam failed to take scientific knowledge into account and ignored the significance of observation, research, questioning, and criticism in the study of Islam which let it lose its legitimacy today. Besides, he emphasizes in the quote that the only

knowledge produced in the theological study of Islam is dominantly *nass*¹⁸-centered based on a *nakilci* approach discussed earlier. The criticism here is that theological Islamic studies only abide by the Quran's and Prophet Muhammad's sayings and ignores the findings of other disciplines and changing settings of social organizations, politics, technology, etc. around the world. Accordingly, Kırbaçoğlu states, a reformist line should be developed which problematizes the inability of the Islamic studies today (Kırbaçoğlu, 2015A, p. 35). He argues that this kind of reformist thoughts has provided a respectable amount of work of literature in the academic study of Islam for the last two hundred years. However, he continues, only in the last over thirty years, this issue has been addressed yet without any feasible solution (Kırbaçoğlu, 2015A, p. 113).

The reason for this belated endeavor to reform the study of Islam Kırbaçoğlu argues is the historical conditions the study of Islam has been through. He argues that the theological Islamic studies cannot form its epistemological and methodological stance on a solid ground and cannot meet the needs of today's world, but it was not always as it is now. He contends that in the first three centuries, Islamic scholars – encyclopedic scholars in his own words – did not make any separation between the various Islamic disciplines and extended their knowledge about a specific discipline to the other disciplines and embodied the study of Islam as a whole (Kırbaçoğlu, 2015B, pp. 112-113). More generally, the study of Islam according to Kırbaçoğlu was not a mere study of Islam: Islamic scholars were inquiring about chemistry, astronomy, physics as well as they study kalam, hadith fiqh and as such. Not only the former Islamic scholars were opposed to the separation and alienation between the Islamic disciplines, but they also did not discriminate academic disciplines as Islamic/religious and the non-religious ones:

While a scholar who works in the field of Islamic science is accepted as a master teacher, it is hardly seen that a scholar who works in the fields such as medicine, astronomy, philosophy, art politics, and economics is regarded as an Islamic scholar. At this point, it should be enough to ask the following question: whether Islamic civilization is the product of works of

¹⁸ Nass refers to the verses of the Quran and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (Sunnah) that are not open to discussion or interpretation.

Abu Hanifa, Shafi, Malik, al-Maturidi, and many in the fields of fiqh, hadith, kalam, tafsir or whether the works of al-Kindi, al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Ibn Rushd, ... Jabir ibn Hayyan and the like about the fields of physics, chemistry, astronomy, medicine, pharmacology, geometry, mathematics, psychology, architecture, urbanism, religious history, geography, music, philology, zoology, botany and such also constitute the Islamic civilization. What's the difference between them? This one-way perspective in the Islamic world is the fallacy of the mentality that links the solution of everything to nass-centered disciplines. (Kırbaçoğlu, 2015B, pp. 103-104)

As the quote shows, Kırbaçoğlu does not only disapprove the isolation of the research areas in Islamic studies, but he also criticizes the separation and alienation of the academic disciplines in general. This situation, according to Kırbaçoğlu, has created ontological, epistemological, and methodological problems in the scientific inquiries for years and the academic study of Islam has been deeply affected by it as well. It seems that the view Kırbaçoğlu advocates is the interdisciplinary approach among the academic studies of all kinds, including the study of Islam. However, he argues that to have an interdisciplinary setting, first, the disciplines themselves must have a solid ground of scientific inquiry by constructing their epistemological and methodological foundations (Kırbaçoğlu, 2015B, pp. 113-114).

So far, Kırbaçoğlu's purpose is revealed as the construction of an academic study of Islam whose premises are compatible with the social sciences. For this, the ontological, epistemological and methodological ground of the study of Islam must be reevaluated and reconstructed by critically addressing the errors of the theological study of Islam and the needs of a social scientific study of Islam today which traditional approaches cannot fill anymore.

Then, how can the social scientific study of Islam construct a solid ground for itself? Kırbaçoğlu, besides emphasizing the literature on this issue, argues that there has been no well-constructed attempt to solve the problems of the academic study of Islam today and continues (2015A):

Today, the Islamic world acts as a spendthrift in the field of science, freedom of thought, technology, culture, and art. It does not produce anything serious in these areas, it uses medieval cultural heritage – in

every field – but does not or cannot improve or advance it. As Hasan Hanafi says, the successor consumes what the predecessor prepared. Or as Cabiri puts it, they discuss what is already known and constantly ruminate the information. Therefore, it is not possible to take İslamic world seriously, which is in the state of ruminating and has a claim to guide others without looking at itself – which, unfortunately, many Islamic movements do today. (pp. 22-23)

Here Kırbaçoğlu stresses the liability and validity of the study of Islam which are damaged by the practice of the theological study of Islam. Before offering any solution for the problem Islamic studies have, Kırbaçoğlu stresses the cruciality to revolutionize the mentality of the scholars within the study of Islam first. He argues that only a change in the mentality of the scholars will make the epistemological and methodological solutions for the academic study of Islam effective (Kırbaçoğlu, 2015A, p. 23). This revolution of the mentality in the study of Islam according to Kırbaçoğlu (2015A) is only possible through a comprehensive discussion on the theoretical and empirical settings of the study of Islam and through establishing an epistemological and methodological ground for the study of Islam fueled by the use of reason/rationality (p. 35). He explains this epistemological ground based on rationality/reason by quoting Fazlur Rahman and argues that

...in contemporary times there is a line of thought called modernist understanding of Islam. With this kind of approach, the apologetic character of the study of Islam started to wear off, and a more realistic approach which depends on self-reflexivity and criticality is engaged in the study of Islam. (Kırbaçoğlu, 2015B, p. 9)

According to the quote, Kırbaçoğlu posits the use of reason/rationality as the first common characteristic of the social scientific study of Islam which is related to the *akıl-nakil* debate discussed in the last section. Like Güler, Kırbaçoğlu favors the *akılcı* approach which is based on the use of reason and historicity while understanding and interpreting the Quran's and Prophet Muhammad's sayings instead of *nakilcilik* which is the traditional understanding of the Quran's and prophet Muhammad's sayings against the new approaches and interpretations *akılcılık* supports. By benefiting from sociological and historical approaches and celebrating the scientific methodologies and use of reason, the aim of the *akılcı* approach is to identify, address and take into account the changing dynamics of

the contemporary world which is Kırbaşıoğlu's endeavors to construct in the social scientific study of Islam. By supporting the modernist understanding of the study of Islam, Kırbaşıoğlu positions himself considerably close the *akılcı* approach like Güler. However, as Güler does, what he avoids creating and/or reproducing the binary oppositions or the hierarchy between the approaches. Instead, he insists on the possibility of creating an epistemological and methodological ground based on scientific methods and rationality/reason for the study of Islam which can include both *akılcı* and *nakilci* approaches as long as they are reasonable/rational and not against the modern scientific understanding.

Very similar to Güler's view on the use of reason/rationality, Kırbaşıoğlu proposes an epistemological setting which is based on the usage of reason/rationality, which leads scientific thinking and procedures, which follows the modern ideas and pays attention to the historical progress and changing dynamics of the contemporary societies. This means that the knowledge produced within the academic study of Islam must be reasonable and rational required by the modern world of today. So, according to Kırbaşıoğlu, this rational setting will be the unificatory ground on which all the approaches in the study of Islam will be based.

To continue, Kırbaşıoğlu argues that the formation of this kind of a setting is possible by giving the example of the Islamic sect called Ehl-i Re'y¹⁹ which adopts the idea of critical rationality (2015B, p. 12). He contends that there are many different approaches which are unified under Ehl-i Re'y through a general epistemological and methodological ground which shows that a common ground based on critical rationality – at some point, he starts to replace the use of reason/rationality with critical rationality – is possible in the study of Islam:

The fact that all three schools of thought adopt critical rationality and that all three emphasize the textual criticism of centered on the Quran and reason, and that they pay attention to the use only of the phenomena that

¹⁹ For information about Ehl-i Rey and discussion on their method of interpretation the Quran see: Kırbaşıoğlu, M. H. (1997). "Fazlur Rahman'ın Sünnet/Hadis Anlayışına Bir Katkı. *İslam Ve Modernizm: Fazlur Rahman Tecrübesi*, 53 and Uyar, A. (2004). Hadisleri/Sünneti Anlamada Farklı Yaklaşımlar (Ehl-i Hadis ve Ehl-i Re'y Ekolleri). *Bilimname*, 5, 29-44. Retrieved from http://isamveri.org/pdfdrg/D02237/2004_5/2004_5_UYARA.pdf

are relevant to the mind and the Qur'an, and to consider *akıl-nakil* balance, shows how broad the methodological common ground among them. (Kırbaşıoğlu, 2015B, pp. 12-13)

Kırbaşıoğlu defines the critical rationality approach as it means the production of Islamic knowledge is based on solely rational thinking and the sayings of the Quran. This means that one takes great care in using only reasonable religious narratives. Critical rationality approach, for Kırbaşıoğlu's view, does not negate the *nakilci* understanding as a whole but tries to construct a balance between them where they will meet on the common denominator, which is reason/rationality with respect to the characteristics of the modern world.

Now it seems Kırbaşıoğlu clearly prioritize the rational and modernist understanding of the study of Islam. The epistemological and methodological ground he presents is based on rationality/reason and open to the approaches besides modernist or critical rationalist understanding as well such as theological approaches like *nakilcilik* based on the major criterion whether their arguments are rational and critical. What he does is to draw an epistemological frame for the study of Islam which will be the general ground shared by all the sub-fields in Islamic studies.

At this point, Kırbaşıoğlu made his precedence of scientific thinking, rationality, reason, modernity, and criticality over the theological and classical understanding of the study of Islam clear. By now, Kırbaşıoğlu's arguments on the construction of the epistemological ground for the study of Islam are discussed which indicated Kırbaşıoğlu's scientific stance in the process of Islamic knowledge production. Next, the question of how Kırbaşıoğlu forms a methodological system based on a scientific ground in relation to the epistemological setting he constructed will be addressed.

In "İslami İlimlerde Metod Sorunu" Kırbaşıoğlu discusses the historical, theoretical and practical foundations of the "alternative methodology" he is constructing for the social scientific study of Islam. Historically he argues that the specialization of the fields is a relatively late event in the study of Islam, which prevents strict dissociation and specialization among the fields, and he asserts that there has been

no attempt to construct a general methodology among the fields of Islamic studies (Kırbaşıoğlu, 2015B, p. 12). He gives examples of attempts to form a methodological setting for the study of Islam such as Ehl-i Re'y's critical rationality approach which is examined earlier that inspires Kırbaşıoğlu on the possibility of a general methodology in the study of Islam (Kırbaşıoğlu, 2015B, p. 13).

The basis of the epistemological frame of Kırbaşıoğlu's approach can be understood through the *akıl-nakil* debate: as it is discussed earlier, Kırbaşıoğlu believes that the *akıl-nakil* balance is vital for the methodology but he gives emphasis the *akılcılık* by prioritizing the scientific thinking and procedures, rationality/reason, criticality and self-reflexivity, historicity and modern worldview as the condition for the foundation of a social scientific study of Islam. His main argument here is, in the absence of the qualities mentioned above, the study of Islam does not and cannot advance itself in defining, understanding and explaining the contemporary world around it: to be liable and valid, this methodology has to be a comprehensive one that does not exclude any approach but unify them on the general/shared ground. Instead of multiple methodologies which would cause the same problems of binary oppositions and hierarchies Kırbaşıoğlu wants to draw a general frame for all the sub-fields in the academic study of Islam to follow (Kırbaşıoğlu, 2015A).

Besides the historical and theoretical dimensions, Kırbaşıoğlu also discusses the practical significance of the formation of a general common methodology among the disciplines in the study of Islam. He argues that this alternative methodology is not only for the sake of the study of Islam itself but considering the position of the academic study of Islam as an educational subject, the alternative methodology will practically contribute to the organization of higher religious education (Kırbaşıoğlu, 2015B, pp. 15-16). This aim is critical considering the structural and organizational issues higher religious education has had in Turkey which is discussed in the former chapter. The construction of a general shared ontological, epistemological and methodological ground based on certain premises would surely offer an answer to the science and religion debate and the

problems it creates in the higher religious education by defining the object, the method and the system of religious education in the academy.

This stress he gives to the structure of higher religious education also indicates the social scientific approach Kırbaçoğlu has. He makes critiques and questions the matters of academia while his main purpose is to construct a ground in the social scientific study of Islam which is especially methodologically factual to understand, define and explain the world. The characteristics of the common/general methodology Kırbaçoğlu terms as “*İçtihad Metodolojisi*” are:

1. While the theological Islamic studies are the product of the conquest and the conquerors, this new study will be the methodology of the oppressed in almost every field.
2. While the theological methodologies are *nass* centered, this new general methodology will base its foundation on the phenomena as well as considering the *nass*.
3. In theological/classical methodologies, the *nass* are understood as fixed and stable expressions and are not open to doubt. However, in the new methodology, the *nass* and the history of Islamic thought will be addressed and interpreted from a historical perspective.
4. Unrelated subjects in the theological methodologies will be excluded in the new general methodology.
5. In classical methodologies, the emphasis is given to language and logic. In the general methodology, along with language and logic, for the analysis of phenomena, other disciplines will also be used such as philosophy, history, sociology, anthropology, social psychology, economy, political science, and law.
6. The general methodology will be flexible about its content, which means it determines and redetermines the fields it is related to due to the changing environment of academic disciplines.
7. Despite the appeal of the classical procedures to the experts, the general methodology should be aimed at keeping the experts at a level that can be addressed to those who are not experts, although the priority of the experts is clear.
8. It is essential that the general methodology is based on a comprehensive view of ideas, assets, and facts/events, in other words, on an Islamic worldview.
9. Methodologies, as the products of intellectual endeavor, must have a dynamic structure. Although the theological methodologies have followed the same structure for centuries, they could not continue but repeat the theological view and ignore the historicity and the transformation of contemporary societies. For the general methodology not to experience the same mistake, it will be a methodology that is open to change and progress.

10. The new common/general methodology will be inclusive of all Islamic sects and preserve its common position against the antagonisms that Islamic sects create within the study of Islam. (Kırbaçoğlu, 2015B, pp. 16-18)

The lexical meaning of the term *İctihad* can be explained as to give effort. It is used as a method of fiqh in Islamic studies: basically, it is used if the sayings of the Quran or Prophet Muhammad are not clear-cut, then one needs to make comparisons to understand the meaning of the sayings and interpret them accordingly. However, in traditional Islam, there are strict rules on who can do *icthihad*, when and how, and whose interpretation is valid. This is the reason that Kırbaçoğlu tries to change this methodology entirely and make it a common methodology to be shared by all the sub-field of Islamic studies and by the scholars of the field.

In the 1st characteristic of the general methodology, there is a postcolonial connotation which emphasizes the power relations in the process of knowledge production. When Kırbaçoğlu posits such a general rule, he negates the traditional power relations which decide whether one's knowledge is valid or not based on the dominant power setting in the societal organization, in this matter, we can call the academia. The 2nd and 3rd characteristics are related to each other and stress the significance of historicity and the phenomena which the theological study of Islam ignores. What Kırbaçoğlu argues here is that this common/general methodology will be based on the interpretation of the phenomena according to the particular conditions they are formed in and according to the context they are interpreted in. This approach is what Güler advocates in the study of Islam which is also emphasized by Kırbaçoğlu often. The 4th and 5th characteristic, the emphasis on scientific features become more evident against the theological study of Islam and the significance of other disciplines and interdisciplinary approach is stressed. In the 6th, 7th and the 9th characteristics Kırbaçoğlu underlines the change and progress this general methodology will be based on in opposition to the universal, fixed and hegemonic view of theological Islamic studies. The 8th characteristic is important that it is different than the other ones in arguing the creation of an Islamic worldview. Although it is difficult to interpret this one

vaguely written one sentence, this is one of the ideas Kırbaçoğlu argue that is close to the traditional understanding of Islam. It is critical that it shows Kırbaçoğlu's reconciliation of reason and faith. Lastly, he emphasizes objectivity of the general methodology by arguing it will not belong to any Islamic sects in particular but be a common ground for all of them. In this regard, while the objectivity of the methodology is preserved, any possible hierarchical or antagonistic relations are prevented. Overall, Kırbaçoğlu discloses his approach to the study of Islam with the general methodology he constructed which is based on the premises of a social scientific approach to the study of Islam.

His formation of epistemological and methodological setting in the study of Islam has scientific premises: even though he does not define science and what is scientific in a detailed way, the concept of social science he asserts becomes clear with the general methodology. He does not try to make the Quran or any other religion a science. Rather he argues that the study of Islam should be (social) scientific since it is the only way for Islamic studies to be able to explore, understand, and explain the realm.

To sum, similar to Güler's approach, Kırbaçoğlu's views on science and religion debate cannot be grasped solely through the claims to the science and religion debate Nussel and Lovin discuss which is based on Western literature. We see that the study of Islam has its own particularity. Accordingly, other claims and approaches mostly based on Christianity do not or/and cannot address the issues of the study of Islam. As Güler, Kırbaçoğlu also negates the oppositional understanding in the science and religion debate and offer a reconciliation between them based on a social scientific approach to the academic study of Islam.

Kırbaçoğlu's discussion shows us that a common ground needed both for different fields in the Islamic studies and for the social sciences and humanities in relation to religious studies (Islamic studies in particular) for the reconciliation of the dilemma of science and religion. This common ground in the study of Islam according to Kırbaçoğlu, should be based on scientific language and methodology as well as on a postcolonial critique which adds characteristics of criticality and

self-reflexivity to the study of Islam. The general methodology Kırbaçoğlu constructs based on the said common ground signifies the scientific language and methodology while the process of its construction points out Kırbaçoğlu's view on the binary oppositions of knowledge/belief, reason/faith, modern/traditional and so on. As Güler does, Kırbaçoğlu also criticizes the theological Islamic studies of being static, outdated, and non-academic and tries to reconcile the binary oppositions by emphasizing the common ground. What differentiates Kırbaçoğlu's work from Güler is his emphasis on the practicality of the study of Islam: he endeavors to build a general methodology to be useful. Kırbaçoğlu is after the construction of a ground which is methodologically sound and empirically falsifiable with a social scientific approach while Güler seeks constant critique and focuses on the methods of interpretation based on the historical-critical approach to the study of Islam.

Kırbaçoğlu's views on the predicament of modernity and Islam are not as comprehensive as of the other scholars. It is mainly because his emphasis is on the construction of a common methodological ground for the academic study of Islam. However, besides his academic identity, Kırbaçoğlu is actively issues of modernity, capitalism, neoliberalism on various platforms (Kırbaçoğlu, 2016). His attitude towards modernity is similar to Güler but rather with some negative connotations: He is more critical of modernity and what it brings forth to the moral and ethical values by glorifying the individual and accordingly does not after a complete resolution between modernity and Islam which is impossible for him (Kırbaçoğlu, 2016). Rather, like Güler, he contends that harmony is possible and indeed is needed between modernity and Islam. This harmony between modernity and Islam according to Kırbaçoğlu will be brought by the social scientific study of Islam he and the other scholars construct since its characteristics are based on the reconciliation of the binary opposites which reflect upon the predicament of modernity and Islam as well such as faith/reason, knowledge/belief and modern/traditional. In the light of these, I argue that Kırbaçoğlu introduced an offer of reconciliation to the predicament of modernity for it to be a harmonizing relationship as he does to the science and religion

debate which necessarily means harmony between the social scientific study of Islam and theological one.

Overall, Both Güler and Kırbaşıoğlu are after the construction of an academic study of Islam through the use of scientific procedure and language based on mostly social scientific characteristics of historicity, self-reflexivity, and criticality. Kırbaşıoğlu's approach categorized as the social scientific approach brings a change for the ontological, epistemological, and methodological ground of Islamic studies and rebuilds its relationship with the other academic disciplines which, as both Güler and Kırbaşıoğlu argue, has been damaged for a long time. The formation of an academic study of Islam based on the premises of social sciences is a quest of reconciliation of the dilemma of science and religion and the predicament of modernity and Islam which are the conflictual issues deeply rooted in the sociopolitical history of Turkey and in the course of human history in general.

4.3 Comparative Literature Approach to the Study of Islam: Şaban A. Düzgün

Düzgün is one of the three scholars whose approach is much more intricate to understand, analyze and categorize. He focuses on the interpretation of the texts, the Quran in particular, with a consideration of a wider social, cultural and political contexts. While doing this, he questions the structure/the text and deconstructs the concepts/terms within the text. To be clear, all these scholars agree on the problematization of the binary oppositions of faith/reason, modern/traditional, knowledge/belief and so forth, and through harmonizing these binaries they establish an academic study of Islam based on the premises of social sciences as a response to the science and religion debate and the predicament of modernity and Islam. Yet what differentiates Şaban Ali Düzgün from other scholars is his insistence on the process itself: more than constructing a common ground or setting the characteristics of the academic study of Islam, he focuses on the reevaluation of these concepts and their meanings and critique of the structure/contexts they are used. This distinguishing characteristics of Şaban Ali Düzgün's perspective of structural/textual critique and deconstruction of the

concepts are the reasons I categorize it as the comparative literature approach which will be encountered through the analysis.

He starts his book by arguing that every line of thought tackle with the question of existence and the ways of knowing as its core principles. Unlike the classical understanding of the separation of science and religion based on ontological and epistemological assumptions, Düzgün proposes that theology as a line of thought has ontological and epistemological assumptions which are not necessarily in conflict with sciences. He suggests an approach to the science and religion debate which negates binary oppositions, reductionism, and generalization that are considered as risks to comprehensive and objective scientific inquiries. In “Allah, Tabiat ve Tarih”, Düzgün (2017A) explains this approach as follows:

Metaparadigma, which we use to integrate epistemological and ontological theories in a way that supports each other and not to fully adhere to classical philosophical and theological theories, aims to open the way to perceive the existence as a whole, avoiding reductive and dismantling attitudes. In the history of philosophy and theology, a reduction has been manifested in the radical form of rationality, and empiricism and sometimes as sticking to holy books only. The fact that one of these areas is highlighted as a criterion to evaluate others is the most obvious aspect of this reduction and disintegration. Metaparadigma is a critical approach to this kind of reductionism. (pp. 9-10)

Metaparadigm according to Düzgün is for deciphering the conflictual relationship between religion and science and the assumptions they have. This approach denies the dichotomic character between science and religion and replaces the understanding of reason and knowledge prior to faith and perception with the understanding of these terms in relation to each other without any subordination.

He continues to explain why this kind of approach is necessary by showing the domination of science over the religious inquiry for years and argue that the theologians became “refugees of science” throughout this conflict (2017A, p.11). This situation academic study of religion finds itself in interpreted by Güler and Kırbaçoğlu as well as “the apologetic character of theologians” against the dominant scientific criticism which affects even the contemporary religious studies yet (Kırbaçoğlu, 2015A, p. 14). This conflictual relationship between

science and religion according to Düzgün is based on the scientific hegemony beginning from the 16th century onward and determines our approaches and judgments today along with the concepts of enlightenment and scientific reasoning (Düzgün, 2017A, p. 10). Accordingly, Düzgün argues that science became a metaphysical understanding which claims to understand and explain the world as a whole i.e. a popular worldview (2017A, p. 10). He contends that this hegemonic character of science comes from its claims which interfere with the field of theology/religion which created a conflict between their findings and let science, using dialectics, supported and proved its arguments by simply negating the religious field (2017A, p. 10). Düzgün, as Güler and Kırbaçoğlu, suggests that this so-called conflict between science and religion needs to be analyzed in detail and be reconciled while the academic study of religion finds its position among other fields of inquiry among social and natural sciences.²⁰

Although the term metaparadigm gives hints about what Düzgün's approach is to the study of Islam and its relation to the conflict between science and religion, a comprehensive analysis is still needed. Firstly, Düzgün avoids all extremist understanding of this conflict such as the subordination of religion to science or the clear separation between science and religion once and for all. Instead, he questions the similarities and differences attributed to science and religion then shows how these attributions are related to each other. He begins with a widened definition of science which is "the human activity searching for the being/existence/world and knowledge of it including nature and the social" (Düzgün, 2018A, p. 182). He avoids the understanding of the science based on the separation of inquiries such as natural sciences or social sciences. For him, the

²⁰ Other scholars analyzed before, Güler and Kırbaçoğlu shortly begins to question the study of Islam and only refer to social sciences and humanities while discussing the science and religion debate which is explained in the section 2.2.1. However, Düzgün's approach includes much wider discussion which makes the analysis more complicated. Although the study of Islam is mostly addressed in relation to social sciences and humanities, Düzgün allocates a place for the natural sciences as well in his works. Since his main problematization still revolves around the study of Islam, I did not discuss his views on natural sciences within the debate of science and religion in detail. However, his use of the concept of science refer to sciences including natural sciences which makes his approach different from Güler and Kırbaçoğlu's approaches.

significant and binding character of science is its purpose to understand the being/existence/world as a whole without reducing it into its particularities (2018A, p. 183).

According to the aforementioned definition, Düzgün (2018A) argues that the study of Islam has never been in conflict with the sciences since the first theologians were also physicists in the history of Islamic thought and many concepts having religious connotations in Islam were and still are used in synonym with modern concepts such as *bilim* (science) and *ilim*, *bilim adamı* (scientist) and *alim* (p. 182). However, he adds that this was not the case in Christianity: since the church was an authority, scientists, whether they are religious or not were judged by the church if their findings were in conflict with the sayings of the church (Düzgün, 2018A, p. 182). Accordingly, what Düzgün argues is that the conflict between science and religion was an important issue in Christianity because it is linked to the legitimacy of the church while Islam began to have the same issue rather in a recent time period. (2018A, p. 182). This argument is used by Güler and Kırbaçoğlu as well while stressing the particularity of Islam which is critical to understand how they address the historical conditions which affected the possibility of relatively autonomous Islamic studies in comparison to what was experienced in Christian societies.

It is seen that Düzgün widens the definition of science to get a broader understanding of the relationship between science and religion without negating the conflict between them. He shows that this conflict is necessarily intrinsic to neither science nor religion: in different contexts, various political and social dynamics may cause a conflict between science as in the example of the legitimation of church he gives. To react to the conflictual relation between science and religion and preferably to reconcile them, Düzgün analyzes the similarities and differences between the study of Islam and sciences based on the concepts that are usually consider as binaries such as knowledge/belief, faith/reason, logos, rationality, modern/traditional understanding of human/subject, truth and *hikmet*, method, objectivity, criticality, self-reflexivity in the study of Islam. While constructing the study of Islam based on the assessment

of these binary oppositions, he also develops a reconciliation to the science and religion debate. The different character of his approach is already explicit that he does not only define and criticize the concepts themselves or the use of them in Islamic studies, but he plays with the terms and constructs and deconstructs their meanings through the study of Islam he establishes.

He defines knowledge as “the tested and verified belief in the most general sense” and “the quality that identifies things related to the reason and the senses” (Düzgün, 2018B, p. 123). These definitions show that Düzgün abstains from sharp definitions that prevent other interpretations and cause antagonism between different approaches such as the view that understands knowledge in synonym with the truth²¹. Against this view, Düzgün (2018B) argues that one cannot simply equalize the knowledge and the truth since the source of knowledge is the human being itself: one should always be critical about the production of knowledge and the truth (pp. 124-126). Taking human-beings as the subject/producer of knowledge shows that Düzgün’s position is very similar to the understanding of the modern individual who has a free will, and who is the subject of the knowledge production, who is rational and progressive. What prevents Düzgün’s point of view from being a mere understanding of the modern individual is that while he attributes rationality to the individual while at the same time reveal the obscured character of an individual such as faith and senses without reducing them to knowledge and reason (Düzgün, 2018A, p. 129).

He continues to discuss knowledge and belief and its relation to reason and morality/ethics and argues that there is no hierarchical relationship among them (Düzgün, 2018A, p. 136-137). He benefits from Maturidi’s views²² on the issue and argues that “reason is not only an ability to differentiate good and bad (as in moral/ethics), beyond that reason is a human ability to gather knowledge, to make

²¹ Here, Düzgün discusses Ash’arism which is the orthodox, foremost theological school of Sunni Islam. For further information see: Frank, R. M. (2008). *Classical Islamic Theology: The Ash’arites: Texts and Studies on the Development and History of Kalam* (Vol. III) (D. Gutas, Ed.). Aldershot: Routledge: Variorum Collected Studies

²² For a more detailed discussion on Maturidi’s approach in Islamic studies see: Düzgün, Ş A. (2012). Maturidi and His Method of Interpretation (Hermeneutics). *Kelam Araştırmaları*, 10(1), 1-18. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/4181681/MATURIDININ_KURAN_YORUM_YONTEMI.

a comparison for understanding and explanation” (2018A, p. 128). While Düzgün is in disagreement with the view that interprets the Quran as a book that teaches not only religion but also science, he does not exclude the Quran’s teaching and encouragement on the use of individuals’ ability to question, to know, to understand and explain: he gives examples from the Quran while discussing the significance of knowledge and reason. Reason/knowledge is for Düzgün is something given to human-beings and supported by the sayings of *Allah* but to use them is up to the individuals themselves which may or may not lead to scientific thinking:

This is a force that makes man human: because people can get information about their environment, see the consequences, make plans and take action by using only this power. Therefore, reason and ability to use reason is not a static essence but it is the use of reason in a systematic, methodical, critical sense i.e. scientific thought. (Düzgün, 2018A, pp. 128-129)

Hence, reason/logos, when used as scientific thinking according to Düzgün, become a significant cultural and historical power which may lead to many discoveries including the discovery of truth. The importance given to the knowledge and reason/logos in the study of Islam Düzgün emphasizes in his arguments reflect the possible common ground that science and study of Islam may have. Emphasizing similarities between science and the study of Islam such as the use of knowledge and emphasis on modern human being implies that there is a possibility of a common ground for sciences and Islam to not to be in conflict but to benefit from and support each other.

Another concept that Düzgün uses while forming this common ground for science and study of Islam is *hikmet*²³ (wisdom). He explains *hikmet* as something that helps us to exceed the knowledge presented to us and makes possible to create a collective knowledge accumulation for centuries (Düzgün, 2018A, p. 175) Since Islam itself proposes the usage of *hikmet*, Düzgün explains the significance of the concept as follows:

²³For a more detailed discussion of Düzgün on the concept of *hikmet* see: Ankara Üniversitesi Hür İlahiyatçılar Topluluğu. (2014, November 10). Retrieved April 04, 2019, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITWHJqcZSI8>

The claim that knowledge is monopolized only by someone or that whether the knowledge is ‘Eastern’ or ‘Western’ does not matter. The value of knowledge is not sought by its geographic affiliation, but by whether it is accompanied by *hikmet*. *Hikmet* is also a concept that determines the field and method of using knowledge. (2018A, p. 135)

With the concept of *hikmet*, Düzgün highlights another part of the discussion: he frees knowledge from the monopoly of whether it is the individual, sciences, religions, the East and the West: he negates any hegemonic relationship between the reason and faith and the other so-called binaries. He directly addresses the concept of knowledge and how its meaning is constructed through *hikmet*. In this way, he proposes a shared ground for every inquiry about the world whether it is about religion or not: the ground that is open and changeable. He states that “we are producing knowledge on a ground that includes not the truth but multiple truths” and “that is why even the sciences should not be separated as theology and the others” (Düzgün, 2018A, p. 136). Here, not only he defines the object of study for the sciences he also levels the scientific disciplines equal including theology. This shows that the common/shared ground Düzgün tries to construct for the study of Islam as Güler and Kırbaçoğlu do, is a democratic one based on the validity of multiple inquiries rather than a hegemonic character based on binary oppositions.

Düzgün’s arguments show a major endeavor to construct a common ground for the study of Islam built on a non-hierarchical setting which will reconcile the conflict between science and religion. This ground is based on the similarities scientific inquiry and study of Islam have such as the stress given to the reason/logos and knowledge production and to human-beings as the subject of this knowledge production process. This shows that the study of Islam does not necessarily in conflict with science. On the contrary, Islam as a religion encourages such a tendency that eventually may lead the scientific thinking.

Insofar Düzgün’s argument seems deeper and puzzling since his approach is not as clear and distinct as Güler’s and Kırbaçoğlu’s views. Actually, this is the most important characteristic of Düzgün’s approach since the ground he constructs for the study of Islam is not based on clear-cut prioritizations or attributions formed

through the assessment of binary oppositions. Rather, he is more interested in the formation of these concepts as binary to each other: this approach as I prefer to call is comparative literature. Düzgün establishes an approach to the study of Islam which posits a systematic questioning of the structure/text through the deconstruction of the binary concepts discussed earlier.

Now since Düzgün's approach to the study of Islam is examined, next, the question of how the 'so-called' conflict between science and religion is resolved through this ground is addressed.

As it is discussed earlier in, Düzgün contends that the conflict between science and religion is based on the popularization of scientific thinking starting from the 16th century and increased in the 18th and 19th centuries: and followingly argues that since the fields of inquiry of science and religion intertwined, science had the dominant position in analyzing and explaining the same field of inquiry with religion (Düzgün, 2017A). However, this conflict according to Düzgün is seen mostly in Christianity studies since the church has been a hierarchical institution affecting political, economic and social dynamics of the Christian societies. Unlike Christianity, Düzgün argues, Islam has never been in conflict with science since no hierarchical institution like church existed in Islam and accordingly many of the first Kalam people in Islamic studies were physicists as it is mentioned before. According to Düzgün, the study of Islam and its relation to sciences is a relatively new issue which should be addressed with caution.

Within a general frame, Düzgün critically addresses the object of study of the study of Islam and the sciences asking whether having the same object of study could be conflictual or not. Since both the study of Islam and sciences give reference to the same areas of inquiry, Düzgün argues, this situation is interpreted as their terminology and method have to be the same as well (Düzgün, 2017A, p. 16). He criticizes this standpoint and argues that "although this intertwine of the area of inquiry between science and religion caused a dialectical conflict in the history, there is actually no need to have the same terminology and method to confront the same area of inquiry or object of study" (Düzgün, 2017A, p. 19). He argues that having the same area of study is seen as a problem and tried to be

solved by separating the areas of inquiry of science and religion which is not a reasonable solution for him or by making a synthesis between science and religion which mostly ends up with religious studies being subordinated into the scientific terminology and method (Düzgün, 2017B). He believes that not only the separation of the study of Islam – also the study of any other religion – from other scientific disciplines is a problem, but the separation of scientific disciplines from each other in general constitutes a conflictual situation:

The outer world is problematized under the name of the natural sciences, the culture produced by man is problematized under the name of human sciences, the course of humanity is problematized under the name of social sciences, and the relationship of a Supreme Being which determines the operation of these three fields with these fields is problematized under the name of religious sciences. Islamic sciences, on the other hand, examine the relationship between this Being and its relations with other entities in a special paradigm. This requires knowledge to adopt a holistic method to help one to grasp the entity as a whole, not the orientation of knowledge to a single field. In this case, different fields of science must be seen as different human activities in terms of comprehension of beings as a whole. (Düzgün, 2018A, p. 181)

With this explanation, Düzgün negates any hierarchical positions in the scientific academic inquiries and posits the role of the study of Islam among other inquiries. By being a part of a bigger inquiry, the study of Islam brings faith and reason, science and religion, knowledge and belief together. This approach to the study of Islam does not only reconcile the conflict of science and religion but harmonize the relationship between all the scientific inquiries as being part of a holistic inquiry. Now, since according to Düzgün there is no need to divide the area of inquiry for science and the study of Islam, how does he reconcile their terminology and method?

He begins by discussing the subject/object relationship and objectivity in scientific inquiry and argues that making a separation between the subject and object of study is reversed in religion (Düzgün, 2018A, p. 177). However, this does not mean that there is antagonism, on the contrary, “one must understand that if an argument includes both scientific and theological inferences, it only means that they are intersected or benefit from and/or support each other” (Düzgün, 2018A, p. 177). Although there are differences between theological

methods and scientific methods, Düzgün asserts that there are many similarities as well. One of them is the ground based on reason and knowledge both science and theology have which is discussed earlier. According to Düzgün (2018A), even though theological inquiry includes faith, belief and spiritual understanding, it never rejects but necessitates the use of reason and knowledge (pp. 178-179). Secondly, Düzgün argues that both science and religion seek a comprehensive and holistic view of the world around us which make their terminology and method realistic since they are after the truth (2018A, p. 179). Also, for Düzgün religion is related to the sciences in general, not particularly to some of them. Religion has a practical position in people lives' as well as being a theoretical experience. This makes the study of religion in connection with the natural sciences as well as social sciences and humanities. This situation does not only intertwine theological studies and sciences but unifies all scientific inquiries – which usually are separated – by supporting interdisciplinary approach. He argues that

...Islamic sciences by being descriptive carry the characteristic of social sciences which means it puts a distance between its object and itself in order to grasp the study object. It is not possible to correctly understand and explain the events of Islamic thought without having such objectivity and neutrality. In addition to the descriptive aspect, Islamic sciences analyze the mind that created a certain event which makes it similar to human sciences. In short, Islamic sciences meet in common ground with social sciences in terms of analysis of the events and human sciences with the analysis of the minds that create the events. However, the meeting of the Islamic sciences in the common denominators with these two scientific areas does not reduce it entirely to these areas. (Düzgün, 2018A, p. 193)

As it is seen from the quote while Düzgün recognizes the differences between science and religion, he also suggests many similarities and common ground such as the importance given to reason, objectivity, self-reflexivity, and criticality in the study of religion, specifically in the study of Islam. He continues to strengthen his position by suggesting a “multiple methodologies” strategy:

It should be kept in mind that every science has a rational attitude to its own research area and constantly revises its research data under changing historical circumstances. The sciences constitute their theories under these constantly changing historical conditions. This includes natural sciences, humanities, religious sciences, and social sciences. In this sense, it can be said that all knowledge originates from rationality human nature holds.

This requires the sciences to be structured in a way that makes it possible to benefit from each other. In this case, which is called trans-scientific, each discipline can benefit from both the methods and data of other sciences, if it remains in its own problem area. Being specialized in a field does not require separation and alienation from the others, and this approach excludes the kind of thinking that monopolizes the concept of scientific thinking and natural sciences, as the logical atomism does. (Düzgün, 2018A, pp. 196-197)

As the quote indicates, Düzgün postulates his view as trans-scientific which means that disciplines can benefit from other disciplines' methods and findings while making inquiries. Scientific inquiries are based on the use of reason, and this makes the structure of scientific inquiries open to each other rather than be in conflict with each other. Also, by avoiding attributing static character to certain inquiries but take the historicity and changes in the sciences into consideration Düzgün attributes sciences an active character which negates hierarchical understanding among different disciplines and supports interdisciplinary studies.

At this point Düzgün's insistence on the scientific characteristics which theological Islamic studies overlook becomes clear. Like the other scholars, he argues that an academic study of Islam is needed for Islamic thought to be able to understand, analyze and explain the reality. He constructs this academic study of Islam by critically addressing the binary oppositions of faith/reason, modern/traditional, knowledge/belief and analyzing their use and meanings in the text. His emphasis on the process of deconstruction and construction of the binary concepts and the critique of the structure/text are the reasons I categorize his perspective as the comparative literature approach. Through comparative literature approach, Düzgün constructs an academic study of Islam which offers reconciliation between science and religion as he does for other binaries of faith/reason, knowledge/belief and so on in the first place. Now, what does he offer as a reconciliation between modernity and Islam as he does for the science and religion debate?

When Düzgün discusses the role of scholars in Islamic studies, he mentions the power relation in the society which creates hierarchical relationships and argues that "it is obvious that it will cause problems when those who hold power define

the “right path” or the “normal” and demand the same from the society by observing and controlling whether the right path is followed or not” (Düzgün, 2017C, p. 40). This quote shows the critique of Düzgün on the organization of the structure which represents the ideological ground of modernity and Islam, *mektepmadrassa* conflict and the powerful position of *ulama* in propagating theological study of Islam against social scientific one (Düzgün, 2017C). He argues that the predicament of modernity and Islam is a long-standing ideological way of thinking related to the power relations which should be reexamined through different lenses to reconstruct it (Düzgün, 2017B, pp. 151-158). As he does in the science and religion debate, for the predicament of modernity and Islam, he commits to the critique of the structure and the deconstruction of the binaries of modernity and Islam. He discusses “the conflictual nature of modern civilization” and argues that the understanding of this conflictual relationship between the West and the rest which reflects on the predicament of modernity and (religion) Islam requires an “archeology of thought” (Düzgün, 2017B, p. 151). Accordingly, Düzgün offers a reconciliation for the predicament of modernity and Islam as he does for the science and religion debate based on the deconstruction and the reconstruction of the study of Islam in the academy.

In sum, Düzgün’s approach to the study of Islam which I classify as the comparative literature approach makes his problematization of and approach to the issue of the academic study of Islam distinct from the previous scholars. Like other scholars, Düzgün also develops his approach against the theological perspectives in Islamic studies which separate the study of Islam from social scientific inquiries. They all question the binary logic theological Islamic studies assert such as faith/reason, knowledge/belief, modern/traditional and try to reconcile these binary opposites with the academic study they construct. What differentiates Düzgün from Güler and Kırbaçoğlu is that before offering reconciliation for the conflict of scientific and theological study of Islam, he focuses on the critique of and deconstruction of the concepts themselves. While Güler and Kırbaçoğlu pay particular attention to the construction of the characteristics of the academic study of Islam, Düzgün concentrates questioning the use of and meaning of the concepts per se. Whatever the differences they have

in their approaches, the study of Islam they concede is based on the premises of social sciences.

4.4 Discussion and Conclusion

This analysis shows how the *mektep-madrasa* controversy is manifested in A. U. School of Divinity as a divide between those who see the study and teaching of Islam as a religion/theological inquiry, and those who see it as social science through the works of the scholars, İlhami Güler, Mehmet Hayri Kırbaşoğlu and Şaban Ali Düzgün, who conduct an academic study of Islam based on the premises of social sciences. These scholars come from the background of the conflict between two antagonistic studies of Islam *mektep* and *madrasa* which reflected higher religious education in Turkey as social scientific versus theological. They graduated from A. U. School of Divinity which was the modern and secular setting for the social scientific study of Islam against the theological Islamic studies conducted in other faculties. With the increasing number of theology faculties in which theological inquiries are done, what these scholars study and teach are subjugated not only by the other theology faculties but also from the same faculty they teach Islam based on the premises of social sciences which is A. U. School of Divinity. Like the *mektep-madrasa* conflict, the conflict between the social scientific study of Islam and the theological study of Islam prevails in Turkey today with the dominance of theological Islamic studies. In this sense, what these scholars construct as the academic study of Islam based on the premises of social sciences and how they redefine the binary concepts of faith/reason, modern/traditional, science/religion and modernity/Islam and such are critical for understanding the contemporary discussion on higher religious education in Turkey.

Güler's problematization revolves around the historicity and criticality which he thinks vital for the academic study of Islam. He criticizes Islamic studies about being isolated, and traditional, and being based on a constant conflict between the aforementioned binaries and followingly being incompetent to understand and explain the contemporary world. Güler's arguments and critiques categorized as historical-critical approach provide ontological, epistemological and

methodological grounds for the study of Islam for the analysis of contemporary world by giving the tools to address the Quran's and prophet Muhammad's sayings historically, sociologically and critically. His emphasis is not only on the construction of an internally solid study of Islam but also on the construction of an externally solid study of Islam whose premises are compatible with premises of sciences: social sciences, and humanities in particular. By questioning the binary logic embedded in the theological Islamic studies and constructing the academic study of Islam which harmonizes these binaries Güler offers reconciliation for the academic study of Islam based on the premises of social sciences. This reconciliation is also offered for the conflicts of science and religion debate in higher religious education and the predicament of modernity and Islam in Turkey by Güler arguing that the binary character of the relationship between modernity and Islam is based on the unfounded idea of absoluteness classical Islamic studies claim (Güler, 2014, pp. 61-62). He contends that the modernity is the realm we live in which Islamic studies should respond to, but it cannot because of the absolute contrast placed between modernity and Islam. This conflictual relationship for Güler is reconciled – like the science and religion debate – by the harmonization of the absolute binaries Islamic studies assert such as faith/reason, modern/traditional, knowledge/belief.

Kırbaçoğlu and Güler both criticize theological Islamic studies and make an effort to construct a social scientific study of Islam by critically addressing the binaries of science/religion, modern/traditional, reason/faith and knowledge/belief embedded in Islamic studies. Kırbaçoğlu emphasizes the essentiality of the former ones in the construction of a study of Islam by arguing that the academic study of Islam needs to be unified to be able to produce knowledge of the world around it systematically and methodologically. He thinks the only way for a study of Islam to be an academic discipline in higher education is to build a general epistemological and methodological ground which would be shared by all the subfield in the study of Islam and be compatible with the other (social) scientific methods. He constructs a common epistemological ground for the study of Islam by prioritizing the use of reason/rationality in knowledge production. Methodological ground he builds is what he calls “İçtihad Metodolojisi”: not so

much different from an epistemological ground, methodological characteristics of the academic study of Islam Kırbaçoğlu establishes highlight the needs for a scientific language, objectivity, criticality and self-reflexivity in the study of Islam and the vitality of the modern, historical-sociological approach comparing to the traditional, universal, fixed and exclusionary approach theological Islamic studies have. The difference of Kırbaçoğlu from Güler is that Kırbaçoğlu cares about the construction of a general ground upon which Islamic studies can be built as an academic discipline, whereas Güler focuses more on the critique of Islamic studies by critically reviewing the traditional perspectives. These motives define the approach of Kırbaçoğlu who takes a social scientific approach in which the construction of a general methodology and of empirically falsifiable discussions are emphasized. This endeavor towards the creation of a general methodology is associated with Kırbaçoğlu's approach to the study of Islam as an educational issue, which is an indication of a social scientific viewpoint: a general methodological ground would be beneficial for the structure of higher religious education. Apart from the slight differences in what they stress, their problematization of the theological study of Islam and strive for the social scientific study of Islam as the common ground for any Islamic study unify Güler and Kırbaçoğlu. Kırbaçoğlu is more critical of the concept of modernity in terms of its use as a dominant worldview and he argues that modernity negatively affects the moral and ethical values of Islam by glorifying the individual and the material life (Kırbaçoğlu, 2016). However, his attitude towards modernity, like Güler's, is an inside critique: he acknowledges modernity as a fact to be addressed by the study of Islam with the use of the modern social science provides. He stays in the borders of the modern and at the same time criticizes the issues that modernity brings forth through the concerns of Islam. In this sense, Kırbaçoğlu's view on the predicament of modernity and Islam is based on a request of reconciliation as in the conflict between science and religion which will be offered by the social scientific study of Islam Kırbaçoğlu and other scholars agree upon.

Being the last analyzed scholar, Şaban Ali Düzgün makes the most complex analysis among the scholars analyzed in this thesis because of his approach to the study of Islam, which is categorized here as a comparative literature approach.

The significance of Düzgün's arguments is based on his pluralistic and inclusivist viewpoints to the study of Islam that Güler and Kırbaçoğlu do not really embrace. Düzgün does not try to prioritize what Islamic studies lack as much as Güler does and does not intend to create a general methodology for the study of Islam as Kırbaçoğlu aims to do. Instead, what he does is to deconstruct the binary concepts of science/religion, reason/faith, modern/traditional, knowledge/belief and understand their meanings and the way they function in the structure/text. He questions the concepts themselves and offers the conditions of the possibility of a diversity of approaches and multiple methodologies in the study of Islam. Düzgün's post-structuralist approach is the crucial element that separates him from the other two scholars. He shares the critique of the theological study of Islam in higher education with Güler and Kırbaçoğlu and argues similarly that this inability of this theological study to respond to the world around it must be changed and replaced with a modern and critical study of Islam. Yet, the process through which he constructs this study of Islam is distinct in terms of his critique of the structure and his deconstruction of the (binary) concepts.

He also argues that this is an ideological relationship sprang from the conflictual nature of modern civilization i.e. the West and its relationship to the rest. According to Düzgün the critique of the structure and deconstruction of the binary opposite concepts –defined by Düzgün as the archeology of thought – should be applied to the concept of modernity and Islam for the reconciliation of the conflictual relationship between them (Düzgün, 2017B, p. 151). Accordingly, as other scholars do with their distinct approaches, Düzgün also constructs a social scientific study of Islam which does not only respond to the science and religion debate but also to the predicament of modernity and Islam based on the critique of the structure and deconstruction of the binary opposite concepts.

Overall, all three scholars have their particular approaches to the study of Islam while they principally agree upon the need for an academic study of Islam based on the premises of social sciences. They all concur on the problems theological Islamic studies have and on the need for a change. They are problematizing the theological Islamic studies which separate itself from the academic inquiries,

social sciences specifically. They all question the binary logic of this theological Islamic studies and brings forth an academic study of Islam based on the premises of social sciences through their different approaches to reconcile these binary opposites analyzed in this chapter. Through the reconciliation of the binary opposites, they also offer reconciliation for the divide between the social scientific and theological study of Islam by founding a common ground. Similar to this, they recognize modernity as a fact of life for the study of Islam to tackle with like any other academic inquiry. Based on this perspective, they do not blindly celebrate modernity and criticize its effects on the moral and ethical values Islam asserts. They also address the monopolization of the modernity by the West and argue that harmony between modernity and Islam is possible through the reevaluation of the binary opposites as they do for the reconciliation of science and religion debate. Accordingly, based on the different approaches they have for the study of Islam, these scholars argue that for the conflicts between theological and scientific study of Islam, reconciliation is needed and possible through the reexamination and critique of the binary opposites embedded into theological studies and through the construction of an academic study of Islam based on the premises of social sciences.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis is to examine how the *mektep-madrasa* controversy is manifested in Ankara University School of Divinity as a divide between those who see the study and teaching of Islam as a theological pursuit, and those who see it as social scientific inquiry. A duality in the study of Islam began with the *mektep-madrasa* controversy during the Westernizing reformations in the Ottoman Empire and came to light in the Republic of Turkey through the conflict between the theological study of Islam and social scientific study of Islam in higher religious education. In this conflict, A. U. School of Divinity preserved its scientific position for years which the scholars İlhami Güler, Hayri Kırbaçoğlu, and Şaban Ali Düzgün benefit from while constructing an academic study of Islam based on the premises of social sciences. With the increase in the numbers of theology faculties where the academic study of Islam is constructed as a theological inquiry, the social scientific study of Islam has become subjugated to the dominance of theological study of Islam in today's Turkey. In these circumstances, these scholars construct an academic study of Islam based on the premises of social sciences against the dominance of theological one studied and taught at both A. U. University and other theology faculties. Being in the center of these conflicts, what these scholars do in higher religious education is important to understand the ongoing conflict in the academic study of Islam. To get a broader and deeper understanding of this issue, the works of these scholars are textually analyzed in respect to the relevant works of literature, the predicament of modernity and Islam and science and religion debate in higher education.

The analysis shows that these scholars problematize the theological study of Islam that keep Islamic studies separate from the domain of social sciences by reproducing the binary opposites such as faith/reason, modern/traditional, knowledge/belief and so forth. Accordingly, they endeavor to establish an academic study of Islam which will be based on the questioning of the binary logic theological Islamic studies uphold: instead of reproducing these binary oppositions, these scholars reconcile these binaries through their distinctive approaches and establish an academic study of Islam based on the premises of social sciences which offer reconciliation not only for the science and religion debate but for the predicament of modernity and Islam in Turkey.

To understand the academic study of Islam they construct, I categorize the approaches of the scholars based on the theoretical and conceptual framework this thesis provides. I categorize İlhami Güler's attitude towards the study of Islam as historical-critical approach because of his emphasis on the historicity and on the critical evaluation of modernity. Hayri Kırbaçoğlu's approach, on the other hand, is categorized as social scientific approach since he focuses on the academic assessment of the study of Islam such as establishing a common methodological ground for Islamic studies based on social scientific characteristics of historicity, self-reflexivity, and criticality and so on. Finally, I attribute the comparative literature approach to Şaban Ali Düzgün based on his critiques on the structure/text and his deconstruction of the concepts of faith/reason, knowledge/belief, modern/traditional, science/religion and such. They redefine the boundaries of the study of Islam and social sciences with their distinct approaches. Although all three scholars question these binary concepts embedded in the theological study of Islam and try to reconcile them, Düzgün stresses the deconstruction the binary opposites more than reconciliation which he aims to do like Güler and Kırbaçoğlu. What is unique in Düzgün's approach is that he particularly focuses on the critique and deconstruction of the concepts and the structure in the process of constructing the study of Islam that promises the

desired reconciliation. Apart from these differences, their common goal is to reconcile the conflictual character of the study of Islam through incorporating the said methodologies, methods and concepts from social sciences stated above.

The deep-rooted discussions in the history of Turkey are reapproached and offered different perspectives through the review of Islamic thought. These scholars İlhami Güler, Hayri Kırbaçoğlu, and Şaban Ali Düzgün reassess Islamic thought, problematize the theological study of Islam and offer their distinct approaches to Islamic studies which let them establish an academic study of Islam based on the premises of social sciences as a response to the deep-rooted *mektep-madrasa* conflict which currently became crucial again with the increasing number of theology faculties in Turkey.

One of the significant responses of the scholars to the aforementioned discussions is that they reintroduce Islamic studies as a scientific intellectual activity compatible with the characteristics of social sciences which is an important step for higher religious education in Turkey regarding the hegemonic position of theological study of Islam in higher education. Higher religious education has a formally short history in modern Turkey while it is a long-standing issue starting from the conflict between *mektep* and *madrasa*, to the troubled history of modern universities in the early republic and to the foundation of the first theology faculty at Ankara University in 1949. What this history represents is the conflict between science and religion which created a crisis in higher education bringing in the questions of whether Islamic education should be secular or religious, modern or traditional. In the light of these, the propositions of these scholars gain significance for the Islamic knowledge production in higher education that follows the premises of social sciences and humanities is a significant attempt that makes a common ground for the academic study of Islam. By reconciling the conflict between science and religion in higher education, the scholars also respond to the predicament of modernity and Islam by harmonizing the binary opposites rooted in these conflicts such as faith/reason, modern/traditional, historicity/universality, knowledge/belief and so forth. For these very reasons, what these scholars İlhami Güler, Hayri Kırbaçoğlu, and Şaban Ali Düzgün

analyze, discuss and offer are critical for the future of the academic study of Islam in Turkey.

In conclusion, this thesis sheds light on the deep-rooted *mektep-madrasa* conflict which reflects upon the academic study of Islam in today's Turkey by presenting the dichotomy in the academic study of Islam: the theological study of Islam and social scientific study of Islam. Through a textual analysis of works of the scholars, this dichotomy in the academic study of Islam, the construction of a social scientific Islam and its critical role in higher education are discussed in relation to the science and religion debate and the predicament of modernity in Turkey. In terms of methodology, textual analysis enabled me to understand and represent the works of the scholars as direct as possible while the categorization of the scholars' approaches and the theoretical and conceptual structure I base these categories upon provided an appropriate analytical frame to position and to understand these works relative to each other.

In the light of these considerations, I believe this thesis will guide the further inquiries that aim to understand the knowledge production process of the scholars in higher religious education and to address the academic study of Islam in relation to the binaries of science/religion and modernity/Islam viewed in the context supplied by the former.

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