

A PIONEER IN OTTOMAN SOCIOLOGY: PRINCE SABAHATTİN

Pelin HELVACI*

ABSTRACT

This article examines Prince Sabahattin's place in Ottoman intellectual development that started to flourish in Tanzimat era. Prince Sabahattin is portrayed with his intellectual capacity and his lead in social sciences, rather than his political stance. As an intellectual, Prince Sabahattin was misunderstood in his own period due to his close association to Anglo-Saxon system with decentralization and private initiative issues that were pillars of liberalism. Although he did not involve actively in politics, he influenced the formation of opposition party, Ahrar (Liberal Party). But his main impact was putting individual development to the core for the advancement of the society, which, according to him, was possible only by inner dynamics, rather than applying top-down reforms. For this, he outlined a social program, Meslek-i İçtimai (Profession of Sociology), which was the first attempt to look for the solutions of social problems, like administration, education and village development in a systematic way that he learned from the French sociologist, Le Play. In this program, which was shaped around the belief in the superiority of Anglo-Saxon system, he emphasized the importance of individualistic form of society, rather than communitarian one and for the advancement of society, he put the British type of education to the core, which led the prospering of individual by himself rather than kinship ties or community bonds. The Village Institutes of the 1940s could be traced back him, since he was the first one to mention the importance of village development and was included in his program. Although his distance to Ottoman society could not be ignored because of his belonging to the Ottoman dynasty, as a son of Mahmud Celaleddin Paşa and Seniha Sultan (Abdulhamid II's sister), compared to his contemporaries, his program was a permanent and a projectionist one, which left an imprint in both Ottoman/Turkish politics and social sciences.

Keywords: Ottoman Sociology, Ottoman intellectuals, Ottoman Liberalism, Le Play, Meslek-i İçtimai, Prince Sabahattin.

ÖZET

Bu makale Prens Sabahattin'in Tanzimat ile başlayan Osmanlı entellektüel gelişimindeki yerini incelemektedir. Prens Sabahattin, bir liberal olarak siyasetteki duruşundan çok sosyal bilimlerdeki yerine göre bir aydın olarak ele alınmıştır. Liberalizmin ana maddeleri olan adem-i merkezîyet ve şahsi teşebbüse inanarak İngiliz sistemiyle yakından ilgilendiği için Prens Sabahattin kendi zamanında anlaşılammış bir aydındır. Siyasette aktif olarak yer almamasına karşın düşünceleri

* Galatasaray Üniversitesi, Siyaset Bilimi Bölümü Doktora Öğrencisi (phehvaci@gmail.com)
YDÜ Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, C. IV, No. 2, (Ekim 2011)

liberal bir muhalefet partisi (Ahrar) oluşturmuştur. Prens Sabahattin'in asıl etkisi, toplumun gelişimi için yukarıdan uygulanan ihraç edilmiş reformların yerine, kişisel gelişimi savunmasıdır. Fransız sosyolog Le Play'den etkilenerek yönetim biçimi, eğitim ve köy gelişimi gibi sosyal problemlere çözüm aramış ve Meslek-i İctimai programıyla Osmanlı aydınları arasında ilk defa sistemli bir program uygulamıştır. Anglo-Sakson sisteminin üstünlüğünü savunduğu programında, tecemmü (komuniter) yerine infiradi (ferdiyetçi) toplum yapısını benimsemiş ve aile ve toplum ilişkileri yerine bireysel gelişimi ön planda tutan İngiliz eğitim sisteminin önemini vurgulamıştır. Prens Sabahattin köylerin gelişimini göz önünde tutan ve programında bunu da kapsayan ilk aydın olduğu için 1940larda gelişen Köy Enstitülerinin oluşumu Prens Sabahattin'e kadar getirilebilir. Mahmud Celaleddin Paşa ve II. Abdülhamid'in kız kardeşi Seniha Sultan'ın oğlu olarak kendisinin Osmanlı toplumuna mesafesi gözden kaçırılmaz, fakat çağdaşlarına göre sosyal programı kalıcı ve ileri görüşlü olması sebebiyle Prens Sabahattin, Osmanlı/Türk siyasetinde ve sosyal bilimlerinde iz bırakmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Osmanlı Sosyolojisi, Osmanlı aydınları, Osmanlı Liberalizmi, Le Play, Mesleki-i İctimai, Prens Sabahattin.

Introduction

The development of an intelligentsia in Turkey has a short past and limited influence in society compared to Europe. It came into being as a result of long political and social conflicts within the elite and within the masses. From the Tanzimat era (1839-1876) through the Republican period, Turkish society encountered radical break ups, revolutions and new political and economic systems, but most importantly a new mentality which they needed for setting by these hard transition periods. With the demise of the Ottoman Empire, the new political entity and the struggle to place the new state in the Western world paved the way for leading state figures and the intelligentsia to act and “think” in accordance with daily political activities and short-term political concerns with superficial knowledge of the West. Even in the eighteenth century, the political and social thought lying behind the façade of the French revolution had not entered into the Empire. Ottoman intellectuals, not many in number at that time, were stuck in discussions regarding the near future and were not deeply moved by this spurt. Beginning from that period, the Western thought was impervious to Ottoman society and the Ottoman intellectuals were tenacious in dispersing Western ideas by their own means, rather than the recognized and reputable Western discourse.

This article aims to examine one of the leading Ottoman intellectuals, Prince Sabahattin's (1878-1948) contribution to Ottoman social sciences. Like his colleagues, he, too, focused on the advancement of society from politics to

community problems, from education to administration, yet, different from his contemporaries, he intended to do this with a social program of his own. The disintegration of the Empire and the oppressive regime of Abdulhamid II, his own family background (nephew of Abdulhamid II), education and wide interest in social problems shaped his thoughts and led him develop a more comprehensive approach to Westernization. He was different from the Ottoman intellectuals who believed that “western civilization was inherently good and superior based upon entirely new foundations” (Berkes, 1964, p. 297) in the sense that he applied science to social problems for the first time and outlined a social program for the transformation of society. His social program, published with a title of *How Can Turkey be Recovered? (Türkiye Nasıl Kurtarılabilir?)* was a comprehensive study that included solutions to social problems like village development, education and administration, and sought answers in sociology, which was taken from the French.

Sabahattin opened the path for the development of the social sciences and labeled it *Meslek-i İçtima*, which in the following years, was followed by new social scientists. Although he did not involve in politics and draw attention of large scale of masses, his name was widely recognized with his intellectual activities. His name is referred today in many novels about Ottoman and Turkish modernization period, like Nobel Prize winner Orhan Pamuk’s *Cevdet Bey and His Sons* (2006) and Zülfü Livaneli’s *Leyla’s House* (2006), in which he was illustrated as an atypical Ottoman intellectual with wisdom and capacity; in many newspaper articles of daily columnists like Çetin Altan (March 3, 2007, *Milliyet*) and Derya Sazak (December 11, 2004, *Milliyet*) in which the importance of his ideas and his attitude towards modernization was covered. He has been studied by some prominent social scientists like Cavit Orhan Tütengil and Ziyaeddin Fahri Fındıkoğlu, and has been included in the studies of leading historians such as Şerif Mardin and Şükrü Hanioglu. He became a subject of many articles with his education proposals, liberal stance and historical importance in a broad range from Educational Sciences to Sociology.¹ Also, recently, he became a subject of

¹ Bayram Bayraktar, “Günümüzde Yeniden Değerlendirilmesi Gereken Bir Düşünür: Prens Sabahattin Bey, (Prince Sabahattin: An Intellectual to be Reviewed)” *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Tarih Bölümü Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi (Ankara University Faculty of Languages, History and Geography, The Review of the Historical Research)*, v. 18 n: 29, 1996. Mustafa Ergün, “Prens Sabahattin Bey’in Eğitim Üzerine Düşünceleri (Prince Sabahattin and Thoughts on Education),” *Kuramsal Eğitimbilim (Theoretical Educational Sciences)*,1 (2), pp. 1-9, 2008.

the discussions on decentralization and private initiation which have gained weight in Turkey regarding the representation of minority groups, and he is admitted as the first liberal intellectual.

This article will deal with his contribution to social sciences rather than his liberal stance in politics, due to the distinction from his colleagues that, for the first time an Ottoman intellectual maintained a social program emulated from French sociologist Le Play, that education with a particular emphasis on individualism, stood in the essence for advancement of society. Sabahattin's program offered a radical change rather than a transition period, instead of concentrating on short-term political concerns and solutions for the salvation of the Empire. His emphasizing the importance of free administration and systematic education, his proposal of the British system of decentralization and private initiation was not welcomed by the leading Ottoman figures, and was branded a traitor and collaborator of Great Powers bent on destroying the empire. Nevertheless, Sabahattin left an imprint in social thought with his revolutionary ideas that were new for that period and he became an important intellectual of his time, mainly in the newly developing area of social sciences. As the first attempt to enlighten society with a scientific approach, in the following years, his social program has been undertaken by Ziya Gökalp, Union and Progress sociologist and father of Turkism.

Sociology and Prince Sabahattin

Among the Ottoman intellectuals, the ways to examine modernization attempts for the salvation of the Empire diverged in a wide spectrum, from Islamism to Turkism, not to mention Westernization. The only a common point in all perspectives in the late 19th century, was that the solutions were suggested on the basis of history, not on sociology. The revolution in history writing that took place in the 19th century in Europe, and its taking a long time to come to the Ottoman Empire, the state/Empire-based incident explanation (*vakanüvislik*) of history, leaving behind the social realities and Ottoman intellectuals educated in Europe, postponed the intelligentsia to look for the solutions in a totally different area full of scientific explanations for community problems: Sociology. Georgeon writes that whether influenced by Comte or Le Play, Ottoman intellectuals applied sociology, in order to understand the decay in the Ottoman system and to struggle against European imperialism (Georgeon, 2006, p. 94). Predictably, the modernization solutions of Ottoman intellectuals were based upon the realities of European societies, like the French or the Russian, and were generated from the

precondition of the dissolution of the communitarian behavior of society, which was not adjustable to the Ottomans.

Prince Sabahattin devoted himself to developing a program for Ottoman progress and placed it on a sociological framework, after the First Young Turk Congress of 1902. In 1903, he was introduced to *science sociale*, which had been founded by Le Play, and he began to develop some ideas of his own. He described his acquaintance with French sociology and how he came across Demolins' book, *Anglo Saxon Superiority: To What It is Due?* in Paris to his close associate Nezahat Nurettin Ege: "While I was deeply desperate and wandering in the Parisian streets, I came across Demolins' provocative book *Anglo-Saxon Superiority: To What It is Due?* in a book store. Thinking about the progress and development of a society for a long time, I have not encountered similar methods to those of Demolins until that time. After reading the book, I found all the answers and thought that these could be adapted to our society." (1950, p. 11).

As a pro-Western Ottoman elite, Sabahattin started to work on a program and developed one to explain problems of Ottoman society with sociology. This study was new to the Turkish scene in the sense that he took on the thoughts of the French sociologist Le Play, as the pillar of his studies and was influenced by one of his disciples, Edmond Demolins' (1852-1907) family and property doctrines for the development of society.

Le Play School and Prince Sabahattin

In order to understand Sabahattin's approach, it is necessary to understand Le Play's studies. Le Play was born into a village in southern France in which fishing was the major source for living. He became a mining engineer and got involved in sociology as a result of the chaotic environment of France with the 1830 revolution. He traveled throughout Europe from 1830 to 1848, in order to develop theories regarding family life and its impositions on society. He died in 1882, but his theories were taken up by many others, led by Tourville and Demolins. Fındıkoğlu mentions that Le Play's past and character shaped by village life with deep national tendencies, along with society's understanding of work, labor and accomplishment as sacred, played important roles in developing his ideas (1962, p. 7). Also, having grown up in a Catholic environment, which was devoted to work and ethics, as well as family values, could have played a minor role in revealing peaceful and strong society. His witness of the 1830, 1848 and 1870 revolutions made him lean towards a more comprehensive view in

examining societies to find a common point in European families. His leaning on family was a result of a belief that a strong family would lead to a strong society and while doing this, he tried to eliminate the antagonism within society, and rather tried to unite them under two concepts: labor and morality. He thought that society must rely on traditions, which must be supported in an applicable manner by education, in order to gain strength, and family was the first and the most important unit in gaining this strength. Even law was not as influential as family rules and traditions.

Le Play's school emerged in the post-revolutionary period in the first quarter of 19th century, when European intellectuals were beginning to lean on the society problems that gave birth as a result of the radical break with the past. It was in this period that sociology arose as a science, embodying technical methods like observation, data provision and comparison. Following the same line as Comte, who emphasized the necessity of the positive sciences in every field of life, Le Play, too, thought that science could solve the problems of society and divided it into the smallest parts in order to comprehend the subject by unit analysis. He started to work on the working class and collected his work in 1855, in a book called *European Working Class*. In this book, he worked with families as the basic unit of society and classified them according to geography. He divided the family types into three, according to the occupations: stock-breeding, agrarian and fishing. He categorized these according to geography and included other variables, such as family earning, spending, and accumulation of wealth. He believed that to understand and predict society's needs, it would be necessary to work on the structure of the smallest unit, which he depicted as the family.

While doing this, he, also, classified the society into two according to their structure: Communitarian and Individual. The first one contained of a system dominated by community. It was based on tradition, family and religion and usually appeared in the Eastern societies and was characterized by a tendency to rely, not on the self, but on the community, family and public powers. The second one, on the other hand, was formed of individuals, who were able to develop themselves by their own effort regardless of society's manipulation. This system appeared in the Western societies. When we apply this to Prince Sabahattin, we see that he did not study the Ottoman family as the basic structure. Not familiar with class categorization, expectedly, he did not divide the Ottoman society into classes regarding occupation; rather he maintained the importance of the structure of Ottoman society as a whole.

French sociologists, also, divided societies into two, according to their status: Achieved and ascribed (*tecemmüi ve infiradi*). In the achieved one, an individual relies upon himself in attaining a goal, and he makes a person out of himself as a self-made man; whereas in the ascribed one, the individual gains a position not by his own means, but by a supporter of either family or a particular social group, like a tribe. Demolins mentioned that “societies of a particularistic formation are characterized by a tendency to rely, not on the community, but on self” (Demolins, 1972, p. 50). The Anglo-Saxon model was an example of the first one, in which family and status did not account for acquiring merit, rather it was the individual who gained his own status.

Prince Sabahattin’s Program

Prince used some of these concepts, like family, occupation, education in deriving a certain thesis for salvation of the Empire, rather than the mainstream themes of nationalism, ideology and Islam. His program, including suggestions for education, the development of villages and the advancement of society, was completed in 1911, but was not published until 1913. His program of *Meslek-i İçtimai* (Profession of Sociology), a 55-page piece, published with the name of *How Can Turkey Be Recovered? (Türkiye Nasıl Kurtarılabilir?)* included adaptations from French sociologists influenced by self-instruction and the acquisition of individual ideas on the face of majority, under the light of science. His program consisted of five chapters: 1) Explanation of *La Science Sociale*, 2) *Meslek-i İçtima* (Profession of Sociology), 3) Property Possession in the Ottoman Empire, 4) Governing in the Ottoman Empire, 5) Military and Politics.

In the first chapter, Sabahattin focused on the importance of sociology and referred Le Play, Henri de Tourville and Edmond Demolins as important contributors for sociology’s becoming a science. He put the importance of classification in science and said that even in nature, the animals and plants are classified according to their types, shapes and needs; so the societies needed to be explored and classified in accordance to their characters, like geography and occupation. As he learned initially, as a communitarian system, the Ottoman one was based on community solidarity rather than individual achievement and even though the community sought benefit with this solidarity and adherence, he said, society could not progress, because customs and traditions blocked individual initiative to take responsibility. For him, the society must be comprehended as a distinctive body with different characters and different aims which would give

diversity, rather than a unitary entity with the only common goal of becoming a state officer (Demolins, 1972, p. 15).

The main and the longest second chapter focused on a wide range of issues based on the question of why reform process had failed in the Ottoman Empire. Prince Sabahattin thought the *Tanzimat* reforms, which had induced building up a legal system to guarantee the freedom and equality of the people and encouraged the development of modern institutions, had not influenced the main target; the society. He thought the reforms had to start from below, rather than above, and beforehand, it should be the society, rather than reforms, that must be studied carefully. Follower of Le Play, Prince concentrated on family, as the basic unit of society, as expected, then, he expanded the atomization to the community evolving around the family, that would give the main data to see the occupation type. After determining the occupation type, like agriculture, mining or trade, Sabahattin thought that a convenient education program would stipulate advancement and this would result in community's bettering of (Demolins, 1972, p. 20).

As an agrarian society, Sabahattin wrote, the Ottoman villagers, did not get the right type of education and, combined with the communitarian structure with common property and tribal rules, they were not involved in the decision taking mechanisms. Although the *Tanzimat* had paved the way for change in state institutions with the aim of replacing this communitarian structure with state instruments, introducing bureaucracy and state administration, he wrote, it did not have a great impact on society. The main impact, Sabahattin argued, could only be attained through a systematic education reform which would stipulate progress by training the youth. Thus, education stood aside from the other issues in his program and in his later work, Sabahattin sought to find the most convenient education program for the Ottomans. He examined the Western systems and compared the French and the British. After visiting a British school, *Ecole des Roches* in northern France, the Prince approved the training system that enabled the students to learn their subjects by practice. The British system appealed to Prince, who said that rather than the theoretical training of the French, because the British system required practical knowledge with experience and proper training, they were ahead of the Ottomans, who must adopt this in order to overcome their less development and catch up with the Europeans (Demolins, 1972, p. 26).

In explanation of the British system, Sabahattin made a comparison with the French and said that in spite of the superficial and practical system of the

British schools, British students became more well-prepared for life when they were exposed to practical information rather than heavy mathematics, whereas, the French, were equipped with unnecessary tools, that made the labor to forget reading when they returned to their villages. The Ottomans, Sabahattin mentioned, were exposed to the same problem and this problem could not be solved only by saying that the villagers were ignorant and unskilled. He advocated “instituting schools that would apply Anglo-Saxon teaching methods, which would produce men fit for the struggle for life, instead of passive, dependant individuals” (Berkes, 1962, p. 295). He maintained that the Ottoman education system did not prepare the youth for seeking the reality beneath things; rather it formed a barrier to human development which was initially based on acquiring an occupation, instead of maintaining an identity independent from the family (Prens Sabahattin, 1950, p. 33).

In explaining society structures, after education, Prince put private property, in an important place. The third chapter in his program focused on this issue and explained the property type of the Ottomans, who were mostly farmers and living a community life in villages. He explained that because power was dispersed among the land owners of influential families, community problems were solved in accordance to the benefits of these power holders, and this blocked the individual development regardless of property possession. Since Ottoman state tradition did not allow the accumulation of wealth, citizens were not seen as respected subjects with equal rights or freedom. They had no say in problems related to land and agricultural income and this prevented them from developing identities of their own. The only leader in the countryside was the *ayan* (*local notable*), or landowner, who owed his power to wealth and inherited social position. The *ayans*, often with the support of local *ulema* and the janissaries, helped to strengthen local autonomy and thus, weakened the hold of the central authority over the provinces (Karpat, 1972, p. 251).

Even though the *Tanzimat* aimed at a centralized and functionally oriented state, Sabahattin wrote, it did not aim to change this mentality. *Tanzimat* reforms did not and could not change this situation, which resulted in a decline in productivity and income in the villages in the face of an increasing number of urban merchants (Prens Sabahattin, 1950, p. 33). The only way to change the mentality, Sabahattin thought would be to form a socio-economic order based on private property and free trade. This socio-economic order would be maintained through an education program which would allow for the emergence of a new political and economic order with private initiative.

In the fourth and fifth chapters of the program, Sabahattin discussed the ways to develop self-disciplined individuals with more responsibility, less religious and traditional ties. For him, this would be sustained only by dispersing central power to local entities. Sabahattin wrote about the position of military in the state and said that when the system changes from communitarian to the individualistic one, the role of military in politics would decline by itself (1950, p. 49). According to him, the power could not be in the hands of a few including military and state officers and the only way to overcome this monopoly in politics was through village development, which would evolve around education. He rightly pointed out that as long as becoming a state officer was the only goal of the Ottoman individual, the decadent system would bring the end of the state (1950, p. 33).

Pros and Cons of His Program

Completing this naïve study, with no specific adjustments to Ottoman society, Prince Sabahattin's solutions resembled fitting into the developed Western societies, which had undergone this development and reformation process long time ago, with industrialization and political liberalization, and ensured representation and security of property as a result of strong confrontations and conciliations. But for the Ottomans, this need of self-discipline to pave the way for decentralization was not initial. The Ottoman reality in villages differed from the Western examples. Unlike the West, their initial needs were not administrative issues like decentralization or education, but a consistent system that would insure security in the face of the land owners. Although he knew that religion and tradition were the major dominant tools in Ottoman villages, he tried to construct society and administration on a totally new foundations of self-discipline, which would start with the family. In a society, in which family was important not only in the traditional sense, but also as an administrative and economic unit, such as *ayan* families or clans (*aşirets*), Prince Sabahattin did not suggest a solution to break these strong community bonds. In Le Play's works, it is seen that he traveled throughout Europe and his derivations of family typologies were the result of complex and constant studies ranging from Norway to western European societies. His division of societies into two, as agrarian (rural workers) and state bureaucrats, as well as his examination of French and British parliaments, was appropriated by Sabahattin at that time, but they were not renewed or adapted to the Ottoman case. Rather they were taken as role models

and efforts were made to understand Ottoman society in the light of these comparisons which Le Play, himself, observed and experienced.

Ramsaur argues that Sabahattin's deficiency was to take Demolins' main thesis simply, which did not present complications regarding Islam and nationalism (Ramsaur, 1957, p. 87). Sabahattin, compared to Le Play, never traveled that far in order to make observations and he did not have a personal impact as an intellectual to sociology in the world arena. However, it must be borne in mind that another prominent sociologist, Ziya Gökalp, also took on another figure's (Durkheim) ideology in creating sociology in Turkey. In the field of science, the West always dominated the East and Ottoman intellectuals did catch up the Western developments at that time, beginning from 1870s to 1930s; yet they always took a role model in the West and they tried only to make assertions about Ottoman/Turkish society.

Berkes maintains that the most significant contribution of Prince Sabahattin was his encouragement to look for the reasons behind the events (*nokta-i istinat*) (Berkes, 1964, p. 312). It is true that in theory, education was one of the most important pillars of society, and must involve all subjects, rather than a few privileged ones; however, all problems could not be reduced to education alone. Sabahattin's first deficiency appears here: He based his program on education, instead of politics. He did not offer any solutions to expand education to society and the necessary political background for it; rather he approached the issue from a more theoretical perspective by choosing the most suitable system for the Ottomans. He did not see that what the society needed was not a model, but a system which would secure them and make them useful to himself and to the community. In spite of this, his contribution in placing education at the core of society development was notable for contemporary Ottoman intellectuals at that time, which started to cross the path to modernity.

Sabahattin's second deficiency was his lack of knowledge of Ottoman society. He knew how the French and the British differed from each other, but he could not see how far-reaching it was to change the whole character of Ottoman family and community relations, which were tied each other with strong bonds, and in fact, the state used these bonds in its relations with society. In other words, the state had internalized this relationship throughout a long past and did not want to change it by educating the masses, until the Republican period. Without knowing Ottoman society, Sabahattin did not see that even the best system in the world could not overcome the situation in the Ottoman Empire. The superiority of

the British system could be regarded as out of discussion for him, however it was naïve to talk about a Western curriculum at a time when education was not seen as a necessity, but an engagement for a few upper class students who were able to enter the state schools.

Even if the Ottoman education system was renovated and superseded by the British system, the problem was to support and secure it with a comprehensive system. The only way to ensure this was through a political program, which the Ottoman/Turkish system lacked. It must be noted that even during the absolutist reign of Abdulhamid II, the education system was supported by a political doctrine of creating a new class loyal to the Sultan, and brought up intellectuals with a particular frame of mind. As Karpataz maintains, “The educational system is the outcome of more basic economic and social factors and it brought along professionalization and specialization, along with politicization” (Karpataz, 1972, p. 275). The initial need of the Ottomans was a political program, rather than education. Prince Sabahattin’s examinations, analysis and interpretations about education as well as comparisons with foreign systems, for sure, sought the most beneficial application for the Ottomans, however, his belief that only the education would result in the best results for the advancement of society, was not realistic.

Sabahattin did not ignore the importance of family in the formation of society, but his explanations and solutions based on family and individual relations were not realistic for Turkish villages. Although, he was the first Ottoman intellectual that put the individual to the core, in the face of family, because he did not know the structure of the Ottoman family in different places in the Empire, as Le Play knew the French one, his belief in improvement was not realistic. It must be noted that because he was the son of Seniha Sultan (Sister of Abdulhamid II), who belonged to the Ottoman dynasty, his solutions originated from an “outsider” perspective. Sabahattin could be regarded as one of the most distinguished intellects of the elite class. Ramsaur mentions that his early life in Turkey did not give him an opportunity to study his own country and his education made him more of a European than a Turk (1957, p. 87). Likewise, Hanioglu maintains “his self-declared intellectual superiority made him to look down on the others. He accused them of not understanding the realities of Ottoman society from a sociological and scientific viewpoint, which distanced him from the intellectual arena” (2001, p. 316). Nevertheless, Prince Sabahattin embarked upon a new attempt by delineating a program of his own which

provided the spurt for intellectual development by opening a new era in the social sciences.

Legacy of Prince Sabahattin in the Development of Social Sciences

In addition to his political stance, Prince Sabahattin was more prolific compared to his contemporaries in promoting new educational, cultural and moral manners, which were generated by the question of Le Play's, *Anglo-Saxon Superiority: To What It Is Due?* Fındıkoğlu mentions that rather than maintaining a political stance and struggling for power, Prince Sabahattin did not become a politician, yet he tried to bring permanent solutions regarding socio-political arena, beginning from educational and moral values (Fındıkoğlu, 1962, p. 82). In the economic sphere, he advocated liberalism and tried to supersede the heavy state economy of the Ottomans to a more flexible liberal one encouraged by free enterprise. Without a settlement of the question of the shape and role of government and the structure of economics, of course, Prince Sabahattin's views on educational advancement and moral values could not be pursued.

It is unlikely to be surpassed that Ziya Gökalp had a deep influence on the inception of Turkish sociology, but Prince Sabahattin's impact in sociology could not be ignored even after his death. Fındıkoğlu divides Prince Sabahattin and his protégées into four periods: 1899-1908, 1908-14, 1919-24 and 1931-60s (1962, p. 82). In the first years, the Prince himself took an active role in advancing his ideas along with the line with of Demolins. It was in this period that he started to develop his social program. In the second phase, there were translations from Demolins by Ahmet Sanih, Fuat and Naci Beyler, Rüştü İbrahim and Mehmet Ali Şevki in 1913-15. The most important among these was Mehmet Ali Şevki (1881-1963). He established association *Mesleki İçtimai* in 1918 and published Prince Sabahattin's *Türkiye Nasıl Kurtarılabilir?*, which was written in 1911, but could not be published until that time. He continued his publications related to *science sociale* until the 1940s, however different from Prince Sabahattin and his period, he renewed his ideas and adapted them to the 1930s, on the basis of family and self-education. Like Sabahattin, he believed that previously all reforms aimed at strengthening the state, but ignored the individual.

In 1946, *Istanbul Muallime Birliği* (Female Teachers Association), which was active in 1918-36, started to publish Prince Sabahattin's articles and the works of close friends' of the Prince, one of them being Ahmet Bedevi Kuran. Even before his death, Sabahattin's views on education were embraced by Ismail

Hakkı Baltacıoğlu, which can be seen in his weekly journal, *Yeni Adam*. In this journal, he advocated articles about how the high schools should be reformed. He remarked that it was not the information to be gained from school, but it must be the skill to assure a profession in order to develop the society (1934). In the 1930s, questions regarding “the village life, the contradictions between urban and rural life, anti-intellectualism, prosperity of rural populations” were launched and peasantist discourse began to enrich the literature, which brought villages to the core of the issues (Karaömerlioğlu, 1998, p. 51).

Related to Prince Sabahattin’s emphasis on education and improving village life, there were many attempts to understand, discuss and readapt a new system. The most important of these were sociology conferences held at Istanbul University beginning from 1960, pioneered by Z. F. Findıkoğlu. In one of these, in 1961, Salahaddin Demirkan, a bureaucrat of an important post in the *Devlet Demiryolları* (State Railways), gave a speech about how he was acquainted with Prince Sabahattin’s views and what could be done to put this heavy knowledge into practice in the villages. Demirkan was a bureaucrat in the State Railways and in his travels around Turkey, he tried to shed light on how the villages would develop, in a time (the 1960s) when many development models started to pave way for Turkish intellectuals to find out advancement of the West.

Here, Demirkan maintains that the village had never been the focal point of the state, regarding political or economic implementations, in the face of urban areas, when budget share of agriculture remained three per cent (Findıkoğlu, 1962, p. 82). In order to place data into a theoretical framework, Demirkan had started to read Ziya Gökalp until he came across an article in *La Science Sociale* of 1911 by Paul Descamps, who maintained that the first and the necessary step for a new life in Turkey, stemmed from education, not from parliament or politics, and this was tried to be applied by Prince Sabahattin (Findıkoğlu, 1962, p. 82). In 1935, Demirkan was appointed as a state officer to the Village Bureau and started to conceive of new village monographies combined with polls. In this work, he tried to outline data a new branch in sociology, which had been undertaken in the US as “rural sociology.” It must be borne in mind that, in the 1930s, Turkey was undergoing a profound change in urban life, and “lively discussions on how to improve elementary and adult education in general and the agricultural education” were taking place in particular (Karaömerlioğlu, 1998, p. 52). In the 1940s, village development was at stake and a Village Affairs Commission was formed. The village was seen as the centre for community advancement in society, and sociology in Turkey in 1930s were based upon the needs of villages. A similar

movement had taken place in Europe, at the beginning of nineteenth century, in an attempt to upgrade the villagers to working class.

Beginning from the mid-1930s, Turkey was influenced by the Anglo-Saxon education model, which put experimentation and experience to the first place. In the 1940s, the establishment of the Village Institutes and discussions about the British education system, which concentrated on vocational and practical education, were the leading issues, which were defined within the limits of nation-state building. The British system was watched closely and the Anglo-Saxon education system, which endorsed “learning by doing,” became a model for the Village Institutes. The village development program was shaped around the objective of “education for work or education for production” (Karaömerlioğlu, 1998, p. 57). From this point, the Village Institutes resembled a model that Prince Sabahattin advocated at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Conclusion

In the 1950s, as a new movement in the world and in Turkish politics, the liberal wave, paved the way for reemergence and review of Prince Sabahattin’s views. He was remembered and taken into account by many social scientists. However, all these activities could not undermine the fact that, as a wise intellectual trained in Western manners, Prince Sabahattin was not understood by the leading Ottoman figures in his own time. Tütengil put the main reason behind Prince Sabahattin’s overshadowed stance in Turkey as the posture of the State, which tried to pull all the subjects together, instead of breaking them into parts or providing a decentralized pattern of government and administration (1954, p. 59). Second, the discrepancy among the Young Turks and the struggle for power distanced the Prince from politics and because of his political stance proposing decentralization; he was maltreated by his opponents and very much distanced from the Turkish intelligentsia.

Sociology as a new branch in social sciences appeared in France “when the sphere of social relations began to be conceived as a reality of the same order as physical reality” (Marjolin, 1937, p. 694). Application of positive method to social theory and make use of this new science to understand the underdevelopment of the Eastern societies was the major attempt of Sabahattin. He was the first Ottoman intellectual to offer a complete social diagnosis of the underlying causes of Ottoman deterioration. He argued Western individualism, private ownership, and governmental decentralization were responsible for the

success of modern European states and he advocated this kind of Westernization for Turkey. The major theoretical and methodological contribution of Sabahattin was his emphasis on the family as the basic unit of society. Although he adopted the theory from Le Play and Demolins, he was the first to attempt to collect data of Ottoman society, in accordance to geography and occupation type, which later on, opened the path for works of village development.

Bearing in mind that he was educated in Paris and had been exposed to modernism prior to the others, Prince Sabahattin was one of the most distinguished intellectuals, with his distinctive contributions to the Ottoman intellectual world formulated as long-term solutions as well as to the opposition, which was gathered around *Ahrar*, at the beginning of the 1900s. His proposals regarding the improvement of the educational system and society were ahead of the Ottoman intellectuals with their long-term implications in the sense that he did not rely heavily on political matters or ideologies, like Turkism or Islamism, which had swept the Young Turks, but scientific and sociological ones. This fact distanced him from the people and his solution seeking remained inapplicable.

Hanioglu mentions that Sabahattin claimed, since it was impossible to change the laws of nature, the only thing for the Young Turks to do was to understand and apply these laws to the social events in which they participated. Sabahattin was the primary example of this with his reliance on science alone. His reliance on science and sociology brought difficulties along with, since he attempted to adjust these aspects to the politics, which were not based on theories, but practices. The individualism he acquired from Anglo-Saxon model was reflected as decentralization in politics and as liberalism in economics. This suggestion did not fit at that time, when the Young Turks held the power and advocated centralized policies, rather than granting autonomy to the regions. Thus, as a brilliant and reformist intellectual, Prince Sabahattin could not show the same success in politics, where power was essential, in the face of science and knowledge and although he showed a strong presence in the world of ideas, he was not understood by intelligentsia.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Altan, Çetin. “Adem-i Merkeziyet’çi Prens Sabahattin ve Türkiye’de Yaşam Kalitesi,” *Milliyet*, 3 March 2007.

Bayram Bayraktar, “Günümüzde Yeniden Değerlendirilmesi Gereken Bir Düşünür: Prens Sabahattin Bey,” *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Tarih Bölümü Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, v. 18 n: 29, 1996.

Berkes, Niyazi. *The Development of Secularism*. Montreal: McGill University Press, 1964.

Demolins, Edmond. *Anglo-Saxon Superiority: To What It is Due*. Paris: F-Didot. Publishing, 1972.

Ergün, Mustafa. “Prens” Sabahattin Bey’in Eğitim Üzerine Düşünceleri, *Kuramsal Eğitimbilim*, 1 (2), 1-9, 2008.

Fındıkoğlu, Z. Fahri. *Le Play Mektebi ve Prens Sabahattin*. Istanbul: Fakülteler Matbaası, 1962.

Fındıkoğlu, Z. Fahri. *Sosyoloji Konferansları- 1960-61*. Istanbul: Istanbul University, 1962.

Georgeon, François. “Ulusal Hareketin İki Lideri: Ziya Gökalp ve Yusuf Akçura,” *Osmanlı-Türk Modernleşmesi*. Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2006.

Hanioğlu, Şükrü. *Preparation for a Revolution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Hanioğlu, Şükrü. *The Young Turks in Opposition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Karaömerlioğlu, M. Asım. “The Village Institutes Experience in Turkey,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, vol.25, no.1, (1998, May): 47-73.

Karpat, Kemal “The Transformation of the Ottoman State, 1789-1909,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, no.3 (1972, July): 243-281.

“Liseler Nasıl Islah Edilmelidir?,” *Yeni Adam*, 29 November 1934.

Livaneli, Zülfü. *Leyla'nın Evi*. Istanbul: Remzi, 2006.

Marjolin, Robert. “French Sociology- Comte and Durkheim,” *The American Journal of Sociology*, n. 5 (1937, March): 693-704.

Pamuk, Orhan. *Cevdet Bey ve Oğulları*. Istanbul: İletişim, 2006.

Prens Sabahattin, *Türkiye Nasıl Kurtarılabilir?*, 1950.

Ramsaur, Ernest. *The Young Turks: Prelude to the Revolution 1908*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957.

Sazak, Derya. “Meşveret,” *Milliyet*, 11 December 2004.

Tütengil, C. Orhan. *Prens Sabahattin*. Istanbul: Istanbul Matbaası, 1954.

“Une Lettre du Prince Sabaheddine,” *Bulletin De la Société Internationale de Science Sociale*, 6 November 1914.