

The study of sociology in Turkish higher education¹

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This paper seeks to reveal the differences among seven departments of sociology in Turkish universities based on studies carried out since 1985 by sociologists working in these departments. Since sociology and sociological education started in 1914, there have been many evaluations of sociology in Turkey. The present study differs from others in its evaluation methods. The basic assumption of this study was that none of the sociological studies could be carried out within the confines of only one sociological subfield such as economic or educational sociology. Based on this assumption, a six-point evaluation tool known as a composite index was used in each study. After collecting publications, a group of sociologists held comprehensive discussions and allocated the proportion of the composition for each sociological subfield represented in each study. The results, based on sociologists' published studies in seven well-established departments in Turkey, showed that there were major differences between departments. Among them was Middle East Technical University (METU), where teaching was in English and many staff members had been educated in England or the United States. The sociology department in that university was the leader in almost every field studied.

Turkey, sociology, sociology education

INTRODUCTION

Each discipline has its own unique developmental history in society. In other words, the needs and interests of a society provide a base and direction for each discipline (Gans, 1989). Sociology as a discipline originated during and after the Industrial Revolution in nineteenth century Europe. When sociology and its training are considered in Turkey, the inception can be found to have started at Istanbul University during the Ottoman Empire in the same period as it began in France, just before the foundation of the Republic of Turkey. There was no industrialised society with its accompanying problems in Anatolia. Therefore, sociology was seen as a tool to help solve the political and administrative problems of the Ottoman Empire by thinkers educated in France who were aware of the development of sociology as a new discipline (Sezer 1989; Kasapoglu, 1991a, 1999).

Therefore, in both France and Turkey, sociology was accepted and earned respect as a science during the twentieth century, but with quite a different purpose. Sociology was seen as a salvation tool of the state for the Ottoman Empire, rather than Turkish society. During the First World War, the Ottoman Empire almost collapsed and was regarded as a 'sick man' by the coalition of opposing countries (such as Great Britain and France) who had already established their armed forces in the Ottoman Capital of Istanbul.

The first sociology lectures were given by Ziya Gokalp, who introduced Emile Durkheim's sociology to Turkey. Ziya Gokalp was widely accepted as the founder of sociology in Turkey and

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his sociology was essentially based on statism, nationalism, corporatism and solidarity. His naturalistic and positivistic sociology was always more dominant than other alternatives such as Prince Sabahattin's (Kasapoglu, 1991b).

Prince Sabahattin, as the follower of Le Play, together with Edmond Demolins, introduced decentralisation and, therefore, liberalism and individualism to Turkey. His approach did not gain power in Turkish sociology, mostly because of the social structure of Turkey (Sezer, 1989). It could be interpreted that non-individualistic and, therefore, communitarian features along with statism and a strong need for building a nation-state following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire played an important role in these developments. Ziya Gokalp, as the father of the ideology of Kemalism and his sociology, provided a base for the foundation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923. Mustafa Kemal, who was called Ataturk (the father of all Turks) based his ideology (Kemalism) on principals of republicanism, statism, nationalism, and secularism. Secularism was accepted for many years because of the personal prestige of Ataturk. However, it eventually ran up against the social reality that 95 per cent of the Turkish population was Muslim and the people began to resent secular regulations. In the last elections, in November, 2002, Turkish voters rejected all the established parties in favour of a pro-Islamic party. Some members of this so-called Justice and Development party desire radical Islamism. Others were and are merely Islamic conservatives who would prefer to see their religion given some public recognition, in the same way that United States' traditional 'civic religion' is a kind of diluted non-sectarian Protestantism. The leaders of the Justice and Development party have pledged themselves to moderation, democracy, the Turkish constitution, the support of NATO, and entry into the European Union.

With the dominance of Ziya Gokalp's sociological approach, Turkish sociology gained a hybrid identity as a combination of nationalism, solidarity and westernisation in the years between 1923 and 1929. Turkish identity was and is unique as it joins Islam to a strong sense of being European. In Kemalist Turkey, the European identity was uppermost. Today that is visibly changing. The new system might become a model for other Islamic countries.

Another sociological tradition emerged in Ankara, which became the capital of the Republic of Turkey in 1939. In the Faculty of Letters (the original name was Language, History and Geography), Niyazi Berkes and Behice Boran, both educated in the United States, started to give sociology lectures along with other social scientists from Ankara.

During the 1940s there were two centres for sociology in Turkey, one in Istanbul and another in Ankara. Ankara's school was more field and particularly rural study oriented, whereas Istanbul was more focused on theory and philosophy (Kiray, 1986). In this period, in order to communicate with the wider society, sociological publications increased. Sociologists competed with each other through journal articles. For example, *Yurt ve Dunya (Country and World)* was published by Behice Boran to inform society about world events. Boran, the owner and editor of the journal, was from the Faculty of Letters. On the other hand, *Insan Dergisi (Journal of Humanity)* was from Istanbul University.

Until 1938, there was only one university in Turkey, Istanbul University. In Ankara, there were only independent faculties such as the School of Law, the School of Agriculture and the Faculty of Letters. Although many faculties were already established, they were reorganised to form Ankara University after 1938. Sociology education, which started in the Faculty of Letters in 1939, ceased to exist in 1947 and sociology professors were fired from their positions. It was an embarrassment to the Ankara Government and Turkey. Since there was no independent organisational system under the Ankara government, all higher education was dependent on the Ministry of National Education. Politicians simply were not happy with Behice Boran's and Niyazi Berkes' field studies carried out in Ankara and Manisa villages. This can be interpreted, and was also stated by Niyazi Berkes himself, that the research of sociologists at Ankara University created a risk for

their administration. Although they were scientific investigations, the politicians were frightened by the confrontation with reality. Sociology professors from the Language, History and Geography faculties were called communists and it was the worst labelling under conditions found during the Second World War. Therefore, if they were allowed to continue studying in their departments, certainly sociology in Turkey would have been more institutionalised and developed. Thus, it can be said that the foundation of sociology began with political requirements and was interrupted several times for political reasons. It was widely agreed among sociology professors that the prevailing ideology was the most effective factor in sociology in Turkey at that time (Kasapoglu, 1991a, 1999).

There is a consensus among sociologists that, between 1950 and 1960, Turkish sociology stagnated, but of course, its teaching in university departments continued. In 1950, Hilmi Ziya Ulken, a professor at Istanbul University, attended the First International Sociology Association Congress in Zurich and was elected as a member. Another congress was held in Amsterdam in 1953 and, again, a group of sociologists from Turkey attended. After 1960, especially during the 1970s, new sociology departments were founded and there were 25 independent sociology departments at different universities.

In 1980 Turkey had another political intervention and many sociology professors were dismissed from various universities for the sake of the state. The development of sociological studies and their teaching accelerated mostly because of Turkey's strong motivation and intention to enter the European Union. For the past 30 years Turkey has sought to join the European Union (EU) and, during the same period, the Europeans have promised to consider the matter favourably, at a future point in time. Tacit until now, opposition to Turkey's EU membership is nonetheless strong and deep in Euro-elites. What lies behind this opposition, of course, is the fact that the Turkish population is about 95 per cent Muslim.

It can be said that especially after 1990 there was relatively more democratisation in every field including sociology. Therefore, a group of academics founded the Sociological Association in Turkey in 1990. Since the original association, which was founded in 1950, was closed a year later, this new one was a very important initiative for Turkey and its sociologists who had always felt themselves under political control and subordinate to the state. This was the first civically organised movement for Turkish sociologists. The first step towards the foundation of the association came from Ankara University professors and postgraduate students who had suffered from previous political intervention. Therefore, it can be said that the foundation of the Sociological Association was an important milestone in Turkey's social science history and the process of democratisation.

Since the use of the word Turkish in the association's name depended upon permission and approval of the Turkish Great National Assembly, founders of the association had hoped to get this word in the title which was quite important for both national and international recognition. However, the Sociology Association finally gained recognition as an 'association for the benefit of society' ten years after its foundation in 1999. This recognition afforded many advantages and enabled the avoidance of bureaucratic control and tax payments.

The number of members in the Sociology Association is now 425 and sociologists from both universities and various work places support their association. Many projects are carried out by the members, among which are environmental projects such as resettlement, studies of the impact of disasters and large scale family studies that are supported by state and voluntary organisations.

After its foundation, the Sociology Association, the only extant organisation for Turkish sociologists, has held a national congress once every three years: in 1993, 1996, and 2000. Each congress has focused on different topics that were considered important for the prevailing problems of Turkish society at the time such as "Contemporary Developments in Turkey and the

World" (1993), "Migration and Society" (1996), and "Conflict, Integration and Differentiation in Turkey and the World" (2000). Congress committee members were always careful to maintain links between world development and developments in Turkish society. The congress was important as it decreased compartmentalisation (Aksit, 1986) among sociologists who were not aware of others' studies.

Participation increased from 75 to 135 papers with each meeting of the congress, particularly contributions by younger sociologists from all over Turkey. They presented papers that paralleled the changes occurring in the wider world. Globalisation, identity, social mobility, migration and various other social problems, including gender were the most investigated topics. There were always serious methodological discussions in the methodology sections. Recent discussions on post-modernism and qualitative ethnographic research have drawn an increasing amount of participation in these sessions. On the other hand, it was observed that most sociologists, regardless of the congress title or theme, submitted their papers and integrated themselves formally in terms of the paper title, rather than changing the content of the paper. In other words, without considering the content of their research, they liked to participate in the congress. At the third congress, although it was announced that there was a plan to publish all papers, it was determined after serious discussions that only 22 papers from the 135 papers submitted were selected by the scientific committee of congress for publication.

OBJECTIVES

Although it was more comprehensive and there were links between studies and their environment that emerged, this paper aims only to seek answers to the following questions in order to paint a picture about the present status of sociology in Turkey:

- (a) What sub-disciplines have been studied most in Turkish sociology since 1985? and
- (b) Are there significant differences between sociology departments and their research in terms of the main subdivisions in the sociology discipline?

RESEARCH METHODS

In this research, there were several stages that followed one another. In the first instance, the names of the universities that would be included were decided. Since most of them were newly established and there were not many staff members in their departments, it was decided to conduct research on the seven oldest universities that had, therefore, more developed sociology departments: Ankara, Istanbul, Middle East Technical University (METU), Bogazici, Ege, Mimar Sinan and Hacettepe.

The second important decision was the date of the studies. Since there was already one comprehensive study conducted by Aksit (1986) covering studies up to 1985, it was decided to assess the studies carried out or published after 1985.

The coordinator and principal investigator of this research was a senior sociologist who knew most of the investigators personally as she was the vice president of the Sociology Association. Her letter sent to all sociologists in the seven sociology departments explained the research objectives and requested the name of all publications, and a copy of each, as well as the author's CV. Following these requests and industrious efforts, all necessary information, including books as well as abstracts and entire articles of presented papers that were expected to be published, were collected and reviewed by a group of senior student sociologists and the coordinator of the research herself. Data collection continued for almost an entire semester and the objectives and research methods employed in the studies were then carefully examined in the second semester of

2001. The researchers' CVs and their recognised academic qualifications, as well as departmental differences, were also taken into consideration.

For joint papers, only the first author's credentials were considered. The papers based on the same data presented at different meetings were counted only once, again to prevent redundancy. Original articles were evaluated, but the papers that reviewed only existing literature were not included. Therefore, 989 studies out of 1175 were used for the final evaluation.

For the assessment of studies, it was decided to weight each study by scoring it according to a specified scale and then to transfer it to the computer files. The research coordinator's recommendation about the basic assumption of the study played an important role in the development of the measurement scales used for the study. It was assumed that sociological studies, although they were grouped under certain headings such as economic or industrial sociology, might share qualities similar to other studies. The most difficult studies to evaluate were about women workers in industry or bureaucratic organisations or at the village level. There were many examples that were not easy to label, either organisationally or medically, such as studies on hospitals. Since there was no institutionalised way of classifying subfields in sociology, the research team decided to develop a six point measurement scale. After long discussions, the group reached a consensus for the weight of each study, in order to avoid making subjective evaluations and prevent redundancies as other studies had done (Aksit, 1986). For example, if a study was done about health workers' problems in Turkey, it was assigned three points for the sociology of sickness and health and three points for social stratification. Thus, an original composite index unique to this study was developed and used.

After lengthy discussions, the definitions of subfields were defined as follows: theory and methodology (including discussions on post-modernism), applied sociology, sociology of the family, economic sociology (including industrial sociology), political sociology, sociology of education (including the sociology of professional education), sociology of sickness and health, social stratification (including organisational sociology and social mobility), sociology of communication (including media studies), and the sociology of art and culture.

Besides these classifications, all studies were also reviewed according to their location. Rural and urban differences and combinations of both of these were used for grouping because there had been several studies that were based on rural and urban comparisons.

Finally, studies were classified according to their relevance to social issues. After reviewing all the extant studies, the research team reached a consensus on 14 different social problems: deviance, violence, technological changes, children and young adolescents, young adults, women, aging, unemployment, discrimination, inequality, poverty, tourism and the environment.

Because the data were based only on the work done by sociologists who were in academic positions at universities, it might have seemed that an important limitation had been created for this study in the first instance. Actually, the reality was different, since most of the studies were done at universities in every field of study, including sociology, in Turkey. Therefore, studies undertaken by sociologists from the seven oldest and relatively well-established universities were assumed to represent sociological studies carried out after 1985 in Turkey.

After the weighting and scoring process, all data were analysed using the SPSS computer program and discussed according to the stated research objectives.

RESULTS

There were 989 studies carried out by 75 sociologists available for evaluation. Distribution of sociologists according to their status and gender was as follows: there were 26 full professors, 18

associate professors, 17 assistant professors, 8 research assistants and 6 lecturers. More than half of the 75 sociologists were female (45).

The distribution of studies according to the sociologists' status in the seven departments is presented in Table 1. There were statistically significant differences among departments and the number of studies carried out by full professors was higher than others (55%). The percentage of studies carried out by professors in the oldest universities, such as Istanbul (85%) and Ankara (71%), were higher than in other departments. Since there were more senior professors with a high number of publications, findings were as expected. On the other hand, the staff composition of each department might have played a role in these differences. Although Istanbul (seven sociologists) and Ankara (six sociologists) were the oldest departments, there were fewer staff members there than elsewhere (18 at METU; 12 at Mimar Sinan; 12 at Ege; 11 at Hacettepe and nine at Bogazici).

Table 1. Distribution of studies according to sociologists' status in seven university departments expressed as percentages

Status	University departments								
	n	Ankara	Istanbul	M.Sinan	Bogazici	METU	Ege	Hacettepe	Total
		139	78	145	63	303	132	129	989
Full professors	26	70.5	84.6	58.6	68.3	40.6	40.2	54.3	54.4
Associate professors	18		10.3	24.1	23.8	31.7	12.1	23.3	20.2
Assistant professors	17	29.5	5.1	14.5		10.6	31.8	21.7	17.0
Lecturers	8					5.6	14.4		3.6
Research. Assistants	6			2.8	7.9	11.6	1.5	0.8	4.8
Total	75	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Chi-square=267.480; df=24; p<0.000

The distribution of studies according to gender in the seven sociology departments is given in Table 2. There were significant differences between departments and, in contrast to research in other departments, there was a very high percentage of studies carried out by male sociologists at Istanbul and METU. This interpretation was based on the fact that there were more male sociologists in these departments than female sociologists. Further, since male sociologists had both seniority and more publications than young female research assistants in Istanbul, these findings were as expected. When gender composition was analysed for each department, it appeared that there was female domination in most of the departments except at Istanbul University where there were five male and two female staff members and at METU, which had 10 male and eight female members of staff. Although the distribution of research studies according to gender was similar for the total sample, it seemed that female and male sociologists were competing with each other as 49.8% of the research was carried out by female and 50.2% by male investigators. However, since the number of females (45) in total sample was higher than males (30), male sociologists' research studies were still proportionally greater than females' studies.

Table 2. Distribution of studies according to gender in seven faculties as percentages

Gender	University departments								
	n	Ankara	Istanbul	M.Sinan	Bogazici	METU	Ege	Hacettepe	Total
		139	78	145	63	303	132	129	989
Female	45	87.8	5.1	37.9	55.6	28.7	55.6	90.7	49.8
Male	30	12.2	94.9	62.1	44.4	71.3	44.4	9.3	50.2
Total	75	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Chi-square = 293.028; df=6; p<0.000

The distribution of 989 studies according to the subfields of sociology is given Table 3. Studies in theory and methods of analysis were the most numerous, probably because of the popularity of discussions concerning modernity and post-modernity and the criticism of positivism. For over 15 years, Oncu (1986) has discussed the evident relationships between central (Western studies) and peripheral (local) studies. Turkish sociologists have been interested in studying and writing

articles about Michel Foucault and Jurgen Habermas. Papers on globalisation have also been numerous and, since these were relatively new subjects in Turkish social science, literature that introduced new areas of research was an easy way to write and publish an article. It can be said that there were hardly any completely original articles as most of them were based on direct translations of Western literature. For papers on research methods, the same interpretation may be construed. Most of the articles were merely introducing new developments (most of which were developed years ago and were new only for Turkey) on qualitative research techniques such as focus group studies or discourse analysis and deconstruction. Therefore, it might be said that the periphery was following the centre without any attention to their application. Writing or talking about them was an indicator of the anti-positivist tendencies that have been very popular among Turkish sociologists in recent years.

Applied and, therefore, policy-oriented sociological studies represented less than 10 per cent of the research output, mostly because of sociologists' attitudes. Policy oriented research was seen as a technical and, therefore, less valuable issue. There was a common belief that, to be a good sociologist, one had to write theoretical articles, regardless of their importance or originality. On the other hand, applied sociological studies take more time and energy, require more financial support and team work and, therefore, more collaboration than simply sitting alone in front of the computer and writing independently about whatever you have studied in Western literature. In the past, there were few sociologists who knew foreign languages and there were no internet facilities. It would seem that this kind of activity is no longer given credence or considered as a theoretical basis for research studies.

On the other hand, a distinct reaction concerning the term research itself arose among anti-positivist sociologists in Turkey. According to them, only the studies based on data collected from the field were considered to be research whereas activities that reviewed the existing studies were simply 'literature reviews' (Ecevit, 1994). Table 3 shows the percentage and distribution of studies according to subfields.

Table 3. Distribution and percentage of studies according to subfields

Subfields	University departments			Total
	n	Relevant	Irrelevant	
Theory and methodology	482	48.7	51.3	100
Applied sociology	94	9.5	90.5	100
Sociology of family	77	7.8	92.2	100
Sociology of religion	51	5.2	94.8	100
Economical sociology	114	11.5	88.5	100
Political Sociology	128	12.9	87.1	100
Educational sociology	63	6.4	93.6	100
Sociology of health	33	3.3	96.7	100
Communication	19	1.9	98.1	100
Art and culture	158	16.0	84.0	100
Social stratification	154	15.6	84.4	100
Social problems	357	36.1	63.9	100

The distribution, in terms of the sociological subfields in the seven universities is given in Table 4. There are significant differences among departments regarding theory and methods of analysis (Chi-square=92.2; df=30; p<0.000), political sociology (Chi-square=37.3; df=24; p<0.041), the sociology of art and culture (Chi-square=69.6; df=30; p<0.000), social stratification (Chi-square=36.9; df= 24; p<0.044), and social problems (Chi-square=308.7; df=78; p<0.000).

Sociological studies were higher in almost every field in the department of sociology at Middle East Technical University (METU) than at the other universities in this study. At this university, training was in English and most of the staff members in this department had received their doctorates in either England or the United States. In order to be promoted, staff members at

METU had to publish articles in scholarly journals found in the Social Science Citation Index. Therefore, their quality was higher than material published by the other universities and their quantity was also relatively higher as there were 18 sociologists employed in various capacities. On the other hand, at Bogazici University, training was also in English and the sociologists were also very well educated. However, their research studies were not as numerous, nor as varied when compared with those from METU. Therefore, it can be said that the sociologists' qualifications alone were not enough to create differences and quantity, thereby making the number of the sociologists an important factor. Since there were only nine staff members at Bogazici University, their total research output was less than was produced at METU.

Table 4 Distribution of sociological subfields in seven departments
(composite indices shown as percentages)

Subfields	n	University Departments							Total
		Ankara	Istanbul	Mimar	Bogazici	METU	Ege	Hacettepe	
Theory-Method	482	12.9	14.7	18.3	6.8	23.9	11.8	11.6	100
Applied soc.	94	16.0		19.1	4.3	28.7	18.1	13.8	100
Family	77	18.2		5.2	3.9	26.0	22.1	24.7	100
Religion	51	5.9	3.9	2.0	19.6	58.8	7.8	2.0	100
Economical	114	27.2	0.9	3.5	6.1	36.0	20.2	6.1	100
Political	128	6.3	11.7	10.9	11.7	40.6	11.7	7.0	100
Education	63	33.3	3.2	6.3	3.2	20.6	22.2	11.1	100
Health	33	51.5		3.0	18.2	15.2	9.1	3.0	100
Art and culture	158	10.8	2.5	34.2	6.3	23.4	7.6	15.2	100
Communication	19	5.3	10.5	10.5	10.5	26.3	21.1	15.8	100
Stratification	154	10.4	2.6	4.5	5.8	48.7	20.8	7.1	100
Problems	357	11.2	0.6	13.2	8.4	37.5	14.3	14.8	100

The study of the sociology of sickness and health, and issues related to professional education were higher in Ankara, mostly because of the research output of one sociologist who had been working in this field for almost 25 years. She had worked in the Ministry of Health in Turkey and her studies in these fields were the main reason for the differences encountered. Therefore, it can be said that if there was not much study in one particular field such as the sociology of sickness and health, one person's studies may have been the cause of the differences noted.

Distribution in terms of social problems in the seven departments is given in Table 5. Women studies represented a large proportion of subjects studied (37.8 %) and there were statistically significant differences between university departments. For example, women's studies courses were only 11 per cent of the total number of courses at Hacettepe but represented 50 per cent at Bogazici. Identity (15%) and deviance (12%) were the most studied social problems and, again, there were differences in distribution between the universities. There were several social problems that were not studied in many departments. Aging, inequality and unemployment were not studied at Ankara, Istanbul, Mimar Sinan and Bogazici universities.

Social problems were most often studied at METU (37.5%) followed by similar percentages at Ege and Hacettepe Universities. The oldest department, Istanbul University's Department of Sociology, conducted only two studies: one about youth and another about identity. Since there were no applied sociological courses at Istanbul University, their attitude and behaviour were consistent with an absence of knowledge in this field of study. Table 5 shows the distribution of social problems in the seven university departments.

Distribution of studies according to urban-rural classification showed that there were statistically significant differences between departments. Once again, METU was in a leading position because there were 60 recorded studies concerning either rural or urban sociology. Table 6 presents the distribution of studies according to an urban-rural classification based on the percentage of space occupied by each type.

Table 5. Distribution social of problems in seven departments (in percentages: n=357)

Problems	n	University departments							Total
		Ankara	Istanbul	M.Sinan	Bogazici	METU	Ege	Hacettepe	
Deviance	43			4.7		39.5		55.8	100
Violence	12			8.3		75.0	8.3	8.3	100
Technology	9	33.3				33.3	11.1	22.2	100
E.adolescent	17			35.3	35.3	11.8	17.6		100
Youth	26	19.2	3.8	11.5	7.7	15.4	11.5	30.8	100
Women	135	13.3		14.8	11.1	40.0	16.3	4.4	100
Aging	10						20.0	80.0	100
Unemployment	12						100		100
Discrimination	6	16.7		66.7			16.7		100
Inequality	2					50.0		50.0	100
Poverty	3			33.3	33.3	33.3			100
Tourism	5	20.0				80.0			100
Environment	22	36.4				40.9	13.6	9.1	100
Identity	55	7.3	1.8	18.2	10.9	54.5	5.5	1.8	100
Total	357	11.2	.6	13.2	8.4	37.5	14.3	14.8	100

Chi-square =308.711; df=78; p<0.000

Table 6. Distribution of studies according to an urban–rural classification based on space occupied by each type

Status	n	University departments							Total
		Ankara	Istanbul	M.Sinan	Bogazici	METU	Ege	Hacettepe	
		139	78	145	63	303	132	129	989
Full prof.	26	70.5	84.6	58.6	68.3	40.6	40.2	54.3	54.4
Associate	18		10.3	24.1	23.8	31.7	12.1	23.3	20.2
Assistant	17	29.5	5.1	14.5		10.6	31.8	21.7	17.0
Lecturer	8					5.6	14.4		3.6
Res. Assist	6			2.8	7.9	11.6	1.5	0.8	4.8
Total	75	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Chi-square=267.480; df=24; p<0.000

CONCLUSIONS

One of the main objectives of this study was to describe and discuss the study of sociology in Turkey. Since its foundation, sociology and sociologists have not been permitted to be independent in the practice of their profession as either professors in the classroom or as researchers in the field. There have always been many limitations and political pressures on them. For example, if Ankara University professors had not been interrupted, the sociology department of Ankara could have been one of the leading departments compared with METU. Unfortunately, however, this department has only had two full professors in the 53 years since its foundation. Istanbul University, the oldest academic institution, almost disappeared from many fields of research. There have been a few sociologists trying very hard, but they have been weighed down under the pressure of educational and administrative responsibilities. On the other hand, METU, with its relatively independent administrative system and well established infrastructure, has attracted more well-educated sociologists than other Turkish universities. Although it is younger, with only a 40 year history, METU has achieved success in almost all faculties. Since its foundation, almost 99 per cent of Turkish students hope to study in METU. Therefore, the quality of its students is also higher than at other universities and METU's leading position has been confirmed by the findings of this study.

According to Aksit (1986), there were 15 subfields in Turkish sociology, and this itself was a very important indicator of the improvements in terms of the differentiation and proliferation of studies in the field. There were also some indicators that sociology in Turkey was institutionalised as a discipline with insufficient links between theory and practice (Ecevit, 1994). It can be said that there have been some improvements, of course, but not enough. For example, there were changes

in the names of the fields of study, with medical sociology now referred to as the sociology of sickness and health. On the other hand, some new fields such as environmental sociology have emerged. In the past, environmental pollution was studied only by epidemiologists and medical sociologists. Women's studies has become more varied and accelerated and studies concerning identity and ethnicity have become more popular than personality studies. Instead of studying social classes, the study of poverty has increased. Cultural studies, along with ethnographic research, are now more highly valued than static quantitative surveys.

It can be said that all of these were not qualitative changes, except for the foundation of the Sociology Association in 1990. This was an important achievement designed to bring sociologists together in order to carry out more wide-scale research which requires greater teamwork and financial support. More comprehensive research, may lead to the development of original theoretical conceptualisations on the unique structure of Turkish society, rather than merely the application of Western theories which are often insufficient to explain the uniqueness of non-western societies.

This study showed that there were significant differences between departments when their studies were considered, but these differences were mostly caused by the social and political structure of Turkey, rather than organisational problems of the departments themselves. There were dialectical relationships between the structure of Turkey and the Turkish sociologist, but the political structure was more important or dominant particularly in the organisational structure of university sociology departments.

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