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WESTERNIZATION OF 'DARÜLFÜNUN' AND ITS IMPACTS ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN TURKISH UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to elaborate on and examine Westernization at the first modern university in the Muslim world called Darülfünun and its impact on religious education in Turkish universities. The study explores the history of the establishment of Darülfünun at the beginning to determine some efforts to Westernize this institution. This research is qualitative with an approach to library study. Data is collected through documentation such as books, articles, and educational policies of the Turkish government over a certain period. This study revealed that Darülfünun, which has now changed its name to Istanbul University, has held several Westernization agendas and inevitably influenced religious education conducted by the other Faculty of Theology in Turkish universities. The secularization and modernization ordered by Atatürk played a significant role in shaping the Turkish educational system. Due to its status as a pioneer of modern universities in Türkiye, Darülfünun has inspired modernization as well as Westernization in universities founded throughout the country.

Keywords: Westernization, Darülfünun, Religious Education, Turkish University

INTRODUCTION

The decline of the Ottoman Empire in the early 18th century marked the beginning of many reforms in the country in various aspects, including the reform of the higher education system. Several policies were implemented to catch up in terms of science and technology development. Zaim (1948) divided the reform periods of Turkish educational policies in the late Ottoman Empire until the Republic era into five period, namely: *Tanzimat* Period, Constitutional Period, Atatürk's Revolutionary Period, Democratic Party Period, and Post 1960 Revolution period. The *Tanzimat* period until the

establishment of the Republic of Türkiye was extremely significant era because it involved several major reforms in higher education. Several higher education institutions were established with their specifications which took many models and systems from European countries such as Germany and France (Guclu, 2020). Among the high schools founded at that time were *Muhendishane-i Berri-i Humayun* (Imperial School of Military Engineering), *Mulkiye Muhendis Mektebi* (Civilian School of Engineering), *Mekteb-i Tibbiye-i Adliye-i Şahane* (Imperial School of Forensic Medicine), and the first modern university in the Muslim world *Darülfünun* (Siddiq, 2023).

Darülfünun was considered as the embryo of the modern Turkish university (Gediköglü, 1995). It was a civilian higher education institution with roots in Ottoman educational history, but it differed from *Medrese* in the Ottoman Empire's traditional higher educational system in terms of its structure (Ihsanoglu et al., 2004). It was intended to find a cultural bridge connecting Islamic and Western societies, and to strike a good balance between "Islam and the West" and "the old and the new" (Siddiq, 2023). However, later this institution received a lot of criticism, especially when Mustafa Kemal Atatürk intervened in reforming the education system within *Darülfünun*. Even Tibawi (1972) noticed this institutions was in the same conditions like many American universities in the Middle East and the Muslim world. According to Wan Daud (1998), one extreme position is that of espousing, often inadvertently, secularization as a philosophical program. This is due to big number Westernization agenda that has run for a long period since the Atatürk revolution era which supports secularism all over the country.

Westernization can be defined as a process of social change where societies or groups convert to the customs and practices of Western Civilization (Bozkurt, 2012). *Darülfünun* is one of the institutions that played an important role in the process of Westernization of religious education in Türkiye (Kızıl, 2020). Westernization could be done by changing the philosophical paradigms and infusing Western values and methods. The Westernization of *Darülfünun* as the first change in the Turkish higher educational system has had a significant impact due to its important position in relation to other universities in the country.

Several works related to current research have been carried out, such as: First, *The Development of the Educational System in Turkey (The Impact of Westernization on Education)*, an article by Sabahaddin Zaim. This study explicitly discusses several higher education institutions experiencing modernization and several important events in the Westernization discourse. However, the discussion regarding *Darülfünun* is not emphasized and discussed enough (Zaim, 1948). Second, *Ottoman Educational Institutions during the Reform Period*, a work by Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu. This article specifically discusses several higher education institutions that were founded during the *Tanzimat* era, including *Darülfünun*. However, an analysis of the Westernization of *Darülfünun* and its influence on current modern universities in Türkiye isn't discussed (Ihsanoglu et al., 2004). Third, *Modernization of Education in the Late Ottoman Empire*, a journal article by Lathiful Khuluq. This study explored the phenomenon of modernization and Westernization of education during the *Tanzimat* period, however, the discussion about *Darülfünun* has a very small portion and is not enough to explain the Westernization that occurred in *Darülfünun* (Khuluq, 2005). Forth, *The Effects of Westernization Efforts on the Turkish Education System*, a journal article by Seyithan Demirdağ and Muhammad Khalifa. This study examines the impact of Westernization efforts and how stakeholder groups use these on their behalf to obtain control over government institutions and alter educational policies in Türkiye. However, the influence

of Westernization on religious education is not emphasized in this study. (Demirdağ & Khalifa, 2020). Fifth, *Westernized Education in Ottoman Turkey*, a journal article by Roderic H. Davison. This study discusses the renewal and modernization of educational institutions during the Ottoman era. The author also specifically reviews the Westernization of educational institutions at that time but does not examine *Darülfünun* in detail (Davison, 2021).

Nevertheless, several related topics mentioned above did not explicitly review and examine Westernization within the *Darülfünun* and its impact on religious education in modern universities in Türkiye. The current study will carefully explore the history of *Darülfünun* establishment, its form changing to Istanbul University, the Westernization process, and its impact on religious education in the Faculty of Theology of Turkish universities.

RESEARCH METHOD

To describe the Westernization that occurred in *Darülfünun* and its influences on many Turkish universities, this study used a qualitative approach in the form of library research. In order to use this method, the authors must first locate and identify the informational or expert sources that address the research question. This step is involved in all other research methods to some extent (George, 2008). Due to the interpretive nature of library research, which can be used to describe both explicit and implicit information from collected data, the authors decided to conduct this particular type of study. This study also used historical analysis to explain and elaborate on the history of the establishment of *Darülfünun* and its process of Westernization. According to Prastowo (2012), the historical method is an attempt to provide an interpretation of the up-down trends in the past to obtain generalizations that are useful for understanding historical reality, comparing it with the present state, and being able to predict future conditions. The source of data comes from some works, books, and articles related to the topic, and governmental policies that discuss the reforms and changes of Turkish higher institutions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Three Attempts at The Establishment of *Darülfünun*

Darülfünun has a long history of establishment, so in this section, the authors will specifically explore the three stages of *Darülfünun*'s development. This is intended to understand in depth the efforts to modernize and reform these institutions in every higher education policy at that time. The formation of *Darülfünun* was first initiated during the *Tanzimat* period when Ali Pasha, Fuad Pasha, and Cevdet Pasha, called the ‘famous three’ of the *Tanzimat* era, were eager to establish university in 1851. They first tried to found an academy of Science called “*Encümen-i Daniş*” in order to form the basis of the university (Ortaylı, 2021). The primary focus of this academy is on philology, literature, and history research and study. Unfortunately, this board is proposing an unclear plan for the creation of textbooks for these higher education facilities (İhsanoğlu, 2019).

However, the academy was disbanded within a decade, but its work was continued by a new academic organization called the Ottoman Society for Learning (*Cemiyet-i İlmiye-i Osmaniye*), which began hosting public lectures on modern sciences in 1863 and essentially serving as a center of learning (Umunc, 1986). The goal of the university was stated when the Council was considering its establishment as being to educate knowledgeable civil servants who would carry out the state's services in a morally upright manner. This education would be produced using contemporary sciences (İhsanoglu et

al., 2004). Gaspare Trajano Fossati, a Swiss architect of Italian origin, was given the job of building this new institution (İhsanoğlu, 2019).

The University building was located around the Ayasofya (St. Sophia) complex in Istanbul. The name “*Darülfünun*” was first mentioned in the statue on General Education (*Maarif Nizamnamesi*) during the period Safvet Pasha was Minister of Education (The Council of Higher Education, 2019). The name “*Darülfünun*” was chosen with the intention of setting this institution apart from the *medrese* where traditional sciences (*'ulum*, singular *'ilm*) were taught. The term *Darülfünun* was used to denote the difference between the word *'ulum* (i.e., the science or religious knowledge taught in the medrese) and the plural form of *fen, fünun* (İhsanoğlu, 2019).

Darülfünun was considered the embryo of the modern Turkish university. A civilian higher education institution with a foundation in Ottoman educational history, it differed from *Medrese* in the traditional Ottoman educational system in both structure and educational offerings (Gediköğlu, 1995; Ihsanoglu et al., 2004). Initiatives on this idea began around the middle of the nineteenth century with the initial goal of educating the new kind of bureaucrat that the state required. In 1865, its main buildings and facilities which were located beside Ayasofya were destroyed by fire ending the public lecturers at *Darülfünun* (İhsanoğlu, 2019). Despite the fact that this first attempt to found a university was unsuccessful, it served as a model for the development of contemporary higher educational institutions in the years that followed (Gediköğlu, 1995).

The *Tanzimat* bureaucrats continued to pursue the idea of creating this institution and began work on a suitable structure. The second attempt to found the *Darülfünun* was conducted in a manner and environment that led to the designation of the institution as the *Darülfünun-i Osmani* (Ottoman University). When the new building was finished in 1869, plans were made for the organization of the courses, and the university was reopened in a formal ceremony with Ali Pasha, the Grand Vizier, Safvet Pasha, the Minister of Education, and other important state figures in attendance. The principal was named to be Hoca Tahsin Efendi (İhsanoğlu, 2019). The appointment to this position of a person who attended the *Medrese*, a classical educational institution, and who had previously taught at the Ottoman School founded in Paris, had the goal of establishing common ground between the Islamic and Western cultures as well as a suitable balance between “Islam and the West” and “the old and the new” (Siddiq, 2023).

Darülfünun-i Osmani was actually one of the few institutions that did not grant scholarships to students and that charged for tuition. The education system that the Ottoman instituted was heavily reliant on scholarships from the beginning to the very end, and there were few exceptions to this rule (Ortaylı, 2021). *Darülfünun-i Osmani's* main purpose was to host a series of public lectures delivered by prominent Ottoman elites. *Darülfünun-i Osmani* had a lot more structure, administrative autonomy, and academic freedom than its predecessor, *Darülfünun*, especially when taking into account the social and political climate of the Ottoman Empire at the time. The main innovations introduced to the Turkish higher education system by *Darülfünun-i Osmani* were a system of selecting students and the availability of evening classes (Gediköğlu, 1995).

The number of students at *Darülfünun-i Osmani* fell to 73 in 1870, and it is obvious that the absence of the necessary faculty, qualified applicants, and administrative staff to run a higher education institution was the main cause of the second attempt to found the Ottoman University's failure (İhsanoğlu, 2019). The intended model of a three-faculty-university could not be realized due to a lack of manpower, resources, realistic planning, and sufficient numbers of qualified students. *Darülfünun-i Osmani* was only partially

completed because it was unable to fulfill its obligations and educational duties. In 1872, for unknown reasons, it was finally shut down.

Savas Pasha, a Greek-born principal of the Imperial School in Galatasaray, was given the task of founding a new university in 1873 by Safvet Pasha, minister of education at that time, under the condition that it would not put a strain on the government's finances (İhsanoglu et al., 2004). Savas Pasha who was presenting his concept of the Sultanic University (*Darülfünun-i Sultani*). He was inspired by the French system of higher education, He maintained that this institution was just like the examples in Europe (İhsanoğlu, 2019). When the 1874-1875 academic year started, *Darülfünun-i Sultani* was consisted of five departments which were Theology, Medicine, Roads and Bridges (*Turuk ve Maabir*), Literature and Law as their counterparts in Europe (The Council of Higher Education, 2019).

This third attempt to establish the Sultanic *Darülfünun* seems to have been more successful than the first two. The establishment of a university in the modern sense marked the Ottomans' entry into the 20th century. After the *Darülfünun-i Sultani* was shut down in 1880–1881 this last attempt was successfully completed in 1900 and would be known as *Darülfünun-i Şahane* (Universite Imperiale). This effort ultimately succeeded, despite some flaws and limitations that were present from the start. It was formed at the beginning of the 20th century on 31 August 1900 on the anniversary of 25 years of Sultan II. Abdulhamid's accession to the throne (İhsanoglu et al., 2004). The courses that would be taught in the three departments of the *Darülfünun-i Şahane* would be as follows: Department of Divinity (*Ulum-ı Aliye-i Diniye Şubesi*), Departement of Mathematic and Natural Sciences (*Ulum-ı Riyaziye ve Tabiiye Şubesi*); 3) Departement of Arts (*Edebiyat Şubesi*).

B. Changing a Form: From *Darülfünun* to Modern Turkish University

The Young Turks took power in 1908, which resulted in a restructuring of *Darülfünun-i-Şahane*, and its name reverted to *Darülfünun-u Osmani*. Young Turks typically sought to establish institutions based on their political ideologies, which incorporated elements of Western liberal tradition while remaining rooted in fundamental Islamic beliefs and Ottoman nationalism (Gediköğlu, 1995). In 1912, Emrullah Efendi reorganized *Darülfünun*. Schools of Medicine and Law in the provinces became affiliated with *Darülfünun*, while the university was divided into five branches (The Council of Higher Education, 2019).

Emrullah Efendi has a significant place in the steps taken toward universitization. During his very short term as Minister of Education, he managed to make important arrangements in *Darülfünun*, but he could not carry out some of the regulations he prepared, on the one hand, because they contradicted the political conditions of the period and on the other hand, he left office (Dölen, 2008). When young Turkish scholars like Ziya Gökalp, İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu, and Fuat Köprülü joined the faculty of *Darülfünun-u Osmani* in 1914, however, it began to take on more of the characteristics of a university (Ergün, 1990). The quality of teaching and other scholarly endeavors at *Darülfünun-u Osmani* significantly declined as European faculty members began to leave after World War One.

After the First World War, *Darülfünun-u Osmani* received a lot of criticism, especially because of the change in the form of the country from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic in 1923. The main criticism of the Istanbul *Darülfünun*, however, focuses on three other issues: the *Darülfünun's* attitude toward the reforms implemented by the government under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the paucity of significant research, and

the inappropriate appointments of its teachers. *Darülfünun* had failed to make a significant impact in implementing the reforms necessary for the quick development of the nation; in fact, some of its professors actively or passively opposed these reforms. Less research was done by its professors, and the majority of them translated rather than published original works from the West (Gediköğlu, 1995).

The government decided to do something as a result of these criticisms. The National Assembly recommended that a European higher education expert be enlisted to investigate the *Darülfünun* and make recommendations for improving it. Swiss professor Albert Malche was invited by the Ministry of Education to conduct the investigation and write a report (İhsanoğlu, 2019). Malche spent four months in Türkiye studying the *Darülfünun* in depth. The developments in Turkish higher education that followed the publication of his report were greatly influenced. According to Albert Malche, there is no reason why the Turkish government shouldn't start higher education reforms given that it is already working to change other institutions. He targeted *Darülfünun*'s curriculum, instructional strategies, and lack of research in his criticisms. *Darülfünun*'s lecturers didn't seem to be at all interested in conducting rigorous research and appeared to be unaware of recent advancements in modern scholarship and science (Umunc, 1986). Malche emphasized that the lessons were encyclopedic summaries that were taught year after year. Such instruction served as a barrier to student's education because it kept them from developing a sense of curiosity or conducting independent research (Gediköğlu, 1995).

In summary, failing to take the initiative in carrying out the recently introduced reforms, *Darülfünun* fell short of the expectations of the Turkish leaders. The failure of *Darülfünun* to create academic works was the most significant. It was unable to help the Turkish people advance as a nation. The Grand National Assembly passed Law 2252 on July 31, 1933, abolishing *Darülfünun* and allowing the Ministry of Education to found a new Turkish institution of higher learning. Accordingly, Istanbul University was established on November 18, 1933 (Guclu, 2020). It is noteworthy that the conservative administrators and professors of *Darülfünun* purposefully avoided using the word 'university' before 1933 or before the Atatürk era to describe institutions of higher learning out of concern that it would signify progressivism and Westernization (Gediköğlu, 1995). The Institute of Islamic Studies was established within the Faculty of Letters at Istanbul University, which had originally been founded with four faculties. The Faculty of Theology was abolished (Siddiq, 2023).

In addition, the establishment of institutions outside of Istanbul marked the beginning of the expansion of higher education in Türkiye. Turkish leaders realized that in order to advance to the level of modern civilization, which was the aim of the Turkish Revolution, new universities must to be founded in other parts of the country. To this end, two universities were established after Istanbul University, Ankara University in 1946 and Istanbul Technical University in 1944.

The idea of establishing regional universities also gained popularity in 1946 as a result of political, social, and economic changes that had occurred (Korkut, 2003). The founding of the Karadeniz Technical University in 1955, the Ege University in 1955, and the Atatürk University in 1957 marked the starting point of the Turkish universities' expansion beyond major cities like Istanbul and Ankara (Gürüz, 2008). As a result of the American Association's transfer of Robert College to Türkiye in 1967, the University of Hacettepe and Boğazıcı were established. The American Congregationalist Missionary founded Boğazıcı University in 1863 under the name Istanbul Robert College. It was run by an American board of trustees and exempt from Turkish university regulations (Umunc, 1986).

Most of the Turkish universities were founded in German, French, or British traditions. Others, like Istanbul Boğazıcı University and Ankara Middle East Technical University, have taken ideas from the higher education system in the United States (Gediköglü, 1995). Additionally, the majority of institutions of higher education and technical schools are not autonomous but rather connected to universities. Higher education is now more widely available, and as a result, there are an increasing number of institutions. Bilkent University, Türkiye's first foundation university, was established in 1984 as a result of the legislative changes made during this time. In 2020, there were 129 state universities, up from 53 in 2003. In addition, Türkiye has 5 vocational schools and 76 non-profit foundation universities (The Council of Higher Education, 2019).

C. Westernization Process and Its Impact on Religious Education in Turkish Universities

The new education system currently implemented in Türkiye was formed by Westernization or modernization efforts. In particular, three significant historical developments laid the foundation for Türkiye's Westernization: first, a string of military defeats forced the Turkish government to modernize aggressively in order to compete militarily and technologically with other Western nations; second, the early architects of the modern secular Turkish state were greatly influenced by French understanding and approaches. Third, the Turkish political and academic elite's reliance on Western knowledge and expertise pushed Türkiye in the direction of Westernization and Modernity (Demirdağ & Khalifa, 2020).

Westernization can be understood as establishing a system based on science and technology in a society where the values of freedom and equality are accepted as the cornerstones of human rights. This procedure also offers scientific solutions to issues encountered in both personal and social life (Ergün, 1990). The first attempts at Westernization in Türkiye started during the Ottoman rule in the late 18th century. The Turkish government came to believe that modernity was a result of these advancements and that to catch up to Europe in terms of technology and education, Türkiye needed to take all reasonable steps. The goal of the Westernization of Türkiye was to advance industrialization for the economy, use science as a guide for higher forms of thought, and bring about democratic political changes in individual lives and social institutions (Çetinkaya, 2002).

One of the Westernization efforts in the field of education is by inviting several educational experts from Europe to Türkiye. Another dynamic force influencing the Westernization of the Turkish higher education system is the educators and subject matter experts who have been brought in from the West on various topics. They teach nearly all courses at Turkish universities (Kaplan, 2019). Initially from France, educators from other European nations and the United States later joined them. Some only produce reports on educational praxis while others are employed as teachers (Turan, 2000).

The higher education system in Türkiye was simple to adapt to Western teaching methodologies because there were many Western experts and educators in Turkish schools at that time. With the arrival of Officer Von Goetze in 1798, German officers joined the military's modernization at Sultan Selim III's request. Sigmund Spitzer, an Austrian native who had moved to Türkiye in the nineteenth century, started teaching at Turkish medical schools (Demirdağ & Khalifa, 2020). Franz Schmidt led a group of about 19 faculty members who traveled to Türkiye during World War I, and in 1933, Friedrich Giese and Gotthelf Bergsträsser, German professors who came and teach Hadīth at *Darülfünun*. Even, Alfred Guillaume was introduced to several Turkish academics

working at the Institute for Islamic Studies. Guillaume gave several conferences there, zealously defending Ignaz Goldziher's Western critical approach to hadith (Hatiboğlu, 2006).

The trend of obtaining reports from foreign experts and educators to aid in Westernization efforts in the Turkish higher education system continued under the Republican government (Kaplan, 2019). For instance, when 20 German educators worked at the establishment of the Ankara Higher Agricultural Institute in 1928, the work and influence of German experts on Turkish education persisted at this time (Akyüz, 2001). Moreover, between 1933 and 1945, at *Darülfünun* or Istanbul University, about 120 persons and at Ankara University about 50 German faculty members taught (Ergün, 1990). John Dewey and Albert Malche were among two educators involved in the Westernization movement who came to study and write reports on the Turkish Higher Educational System. Later, other education specialists from institutions like the International Labor Organization (ILO), UNESCO, and Ford also visited Türkiye to research and write reports on the Turkish Education System (Demirdağ & Khalifa, 2020).

Apart from visiting European professors who teach at *Darülfünun*, several Turkish students who go to Europe for educational training played an important role in helping to Westernize the Turkish higher education system (Adanalı, 2004). The Ministry of Education dispatched several members of the Turkish elite to Europe. İsmail Hakkı Bey, an art teacher from the Ankara School of Teachers, is one of these educators. He was sent to Europe to research the educational systems there and compile a report on Italy's experience and vocational schooling (Ergün, 1990).

More Turkish educators with knowledge of European educational systems offered more reports to suggest a contemporary Turkish educational system. Necmettin Arif, Kemal Zaim, and Tunal Hilmi Bey provide a report on the French educational system for this reason, while Turkish scholars like Mehmed Sabahattin, Nafi Atuf Kansu, and Abdullah Cevdet Bey declared that the British and American educational systems are superior to the French ones (Akyüz, 2001). They therefore want to have an impact on the new British and American-based Turkish educational system. Others in the Turkish academic community contend that the German educational system is superior to that of other Western nations (Kaplan, 2019). As can be seen, many experts wanted to have an impact on the creation of the contemporary Türkiye's educational system after being impressed by the educational philosophy and system in Europe (Adanalı, 2004).

Furthermore, during the *Tanzimat* era many Turkish educators were inspired by French epistemology, and asserted that the *Medrese* mentality needed to be abandoned in order to build a modern society. These educators included Ziya Pasha, Namık Kemal, and Ali Suavi (Akyüz, 2001). Ziya Pasha translated Jean Jacques Rousseau's pedagogical work "*Emile*" into Turkish for a similar reason. The concepts of nationalism and freedom were introduced into Turkish education by Namık Kemal. Selim Sabit Efendi, who studied in Paris between 1855 and 1861, wrote the first educational book in the Ottoman State that was based on the Western educational system (Zürcher, 2004). Their works had a significant influence at the time on the introduction of fresh instructional strategies, resources, and tools in Turkish schools.

During the second constitutional period (*II. Meşrutiyet*), significant discussions on the adaptation and dissemination of Western pedagogical ideas took place in Türkiye's educational thought between 1908 and 1920. Emrullah Efendi was a significant educator and stakeholder in the period. Emrullah Efendi offered some advice for the revamped Turkish educational system. He has made efforts to transform *Darülfünun* into a model of a Western university during his brief tenure as minister of education. He also was

known for his educational model called Tuba Tree Theory (*Tuba Ağacı Nazariyesi*) (Dölen, 2008). He holds that education must begin at the top and work its way down, making highly qualified instructors from higher education the only ones who can deliver an effective education (Ergün, 1990). His view was considered one of the most crucial tenets of the educational policy of the Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*), an influential group with political sway at the time (Akyüz, 2001).

Ziya Gökalp, the committee's ideological leader, agreed with Emrullah Efendi that high-quality education should begin at the university level and extend to primary schools. Throughout the late Ottoman era and the early years of the Republic, Ziya Gökalp thought had a significant impact (Karataş, 2004). Many academics and politicians, including Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the father of the Turkish Secular Republic, were influenced by his ideas on education. The new higher education system in Türkiye, according to Ziya Gökalp, should combine nationalist ideology teaching methods with cutting-edge curricula (Aksin, 1980).

The creation of the new educational system also benefited from the input of two other significant educators, İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu and Mümtaz Turhan. To fundamentally alter the conventional method of teaching and establish a new educational system, Baltacıoğlu wrote books and published an educational magazine called *Yeni Adam* (New Man) in 1934 (Parla, 1985). He looked at the issues with the previous educational system, concentrated on production, and developed a new pedagogy called *İçtima-i Mektep Modeli* (Social School Model), which was founded on the principles of personality, initiation environment work, and efficiency. Moreover, the main focus of Mümtaz Turhan's works was cultural change. He said that in the process of growth and modernization, a group of Turkish elites should be educated to stand for real science and adhere to the Westernization process. He emphasized the significance of modern education systems in Türkiye's universities in order to cultivate elites. (Adanalı, 2004). Finally, some contend that Emrullah Efendi, Ziya Gökalp, and Mümtaz Turhan continue to have an influence on the Turkish educational system (Hanioğlu, 2013).

Another attempt at Westernization came when Şükrü Bey served as minister of education. He implemented madrasa regulation reforms, but the *Darülfünun Ulûm-u Ser'îye* branch (Faculty of Islamic Sciences) was shut down in the process. This is a significant step towards the secularization of *Darülfünun*. (Dölen, 2008). Furthermore, Mürteza Bedir revealed that there was no higher education in religious sciences or at the Faculty of Theology between 1933 and 1949. He mentioned that it changed in 1949 and became a part of the Faculty of Literature. One of the causes is the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*) which proposed some anti-religious reforms, demonstrated by its ban on religious instruction (Bedir, 2014). These reforms include the abolition of dervishes' huts and madrassas, the unification of education (*Tevhid-i Tedrisat*), and the requirement that the call to prayer be said in Turkish rather than Arabic (Ulutas, 2010).

As a result, between 1948 and 1982 only one university in Ankara provided theological education during that time. With the September 12, 1982 coup d'état, which saw the establishment of the Council of Higher Education (*Yükseköğretim Kurulu* or YÖK) and the transformation of the existing Islamic institutions into faculties, religious education suffered a severe blow. In addition, the February 28 postmodern coup directly endangered not only Türkiye's Faculty of Theology but also all of its religious institutions during the 1990s, which also saw a crisis in theological education (Demirdağ & Khalifa, 2020). The number of students who could enroll and attend these institutions was negatively impacted by the restrictions that were placed on these faculties.

The recent unification of all Turkish theological faculties under the Council for Higher Education resulted in the creation of flimsy specializations and divisions. The faculty was divided into small groups according to their areas of expertise, such as major branches and departments, which unintentionally undermined the depth and breadth of academic studies. As a result, the scholarly works have stayed within the constrained parameters of the author's particular academic field. These divisions undoubtedly contributed to students' declining awareness of their social and academic obligations (Hatiboğlu, 2006). The faculty's curriculum also includes classes that treat religion as a social phenomenon, such as sociology of religion, psychology of religion, and history of religion, in addition to the more conventional topics like Arabic, Islamic Theology, Sufism, Tafsir, Hadith, and Fiqh. Academics with a preference for traditional scholarship and organizations led by *Khatibs* or *Imams* from outside the academy frequently contrast the courses offered by these faculties with those of private foundations and unofficial madrassas, which only focus on classical Islamic texts and Arabic. The perception that results is frequently that these faculties and their graduates are unfit to carry on the legacy of classical Islamic scholarship (Kızıllı, 2020).

The development of religious education entered a new phase after the 2000s when the *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (AK Party) led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, which supports Islamic ideology came to power. This period was marked by an increasing number of theological faculties being opened in universities throughout the country (Alasania & Gelovani, 2011). Several faculties of theology have also begun to offer programs in Islamic studies using Arabic. Even so, Türkiye's religious education falls far short of what is required to attract students' interest in studying Islam. Religious studies are more popular in Egypt, Yemen, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia among students from Muslim-majority nations like Indonesia, Pakistan, and Malaysia.

CONCLUSION

Undoubtedly, there is a lot of discussion and debate about the Westernization of societies, particularly in Muslim majority country. Higher education will almost certainly undergo a major redecoration as a result of Westernization, particularly in the area of religious education. In the case of *Darülfünun*, Westernization has been practiced since the Ottoman era. But after Atatürk took office and pushed for secularization, Westernization swept through the entire nation and systematically destroyed religious education.

Initially intended to serve the needs of technocrats with Ottoman Islamic values, the establishment of *Darülfünun* ultimately failed to fulfill these goals. Religious education is currently offered concurrently by theological departments in a number of universities and non-formal religious organizations across the nation. Although it has not been able to produce *Ulema* or world-class scholars on par with what occurred during the golden age of Islam.

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