



Who can revive Islam, "Political Islam"? or "Civil Islam"?

Abstract

This study is a holistic view of scientific knowledge and sophisticated sociological research, that is, an unconventional approach that serves to understand both the causes and consequences of the decline and revival of Islamic civilization at a global level. Our study claims to prove that the time in which we are living (post-modernism), allows enough space to catapult both values and true Islamic norms and ethics, which has been unfairly excluded from the global value market. Our research tries to prove that the Islamic value system can be revived only by civil Islam, and not by political Islam.

Keywords: *Social movement, political Islam, civil Islam, democracy, modernity, post-modernity, fundamentalism, Islamophobia, Westphobia.*

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Introduction

The notion of a new social movement, is mainly used in the European theory of social movements that have the imperative to "produce" the difference between the movements that arose after the end of the sixties, especially the seventies and eighties, as new compared to the (old) labor movement. Social movements, as groupings of different communities with their collective actions and with a certain level of organization outside the institutionalized channels of politics, take as an obligation the exercise of certain activities in the societies where they live and operate. Meanwhile, in most cases, for the purpose and imperative, they have the



representation or contestation of the processes and developments that occur in the narrower or wider community to which the movement itself belongs. Their identifying element is mainly the common sense of identity (which is mainly of origin; ethnic, racial, religious, civilizational, and cultural) and the high cohesion of solidarity within the community itself, which has undertaken the realization of a certain goal and ambition. Today, social movements are the subject of many sociological, anthropological, psychological, and political analyses and interpretations. But if we are interested in understanding the beginnings of the theory of social movements, we can say that we identify them sociologically immediately after the bourgeois-French Revolution of 1789, when the irrational masses of the French citizenry for the first time in history became a relevant subject in society then not only French but also European. It must be admitted that the concept and nature of scientific interpretations of social movements ****did not become subjects**** of analysis until the 1970s. It was Marxists and functionalists who undertook the most elaborate elaboration on movements. While the Marxist theory, in its discourses, elaborated social movements mainly as class phenomena, the functionalist theory was no longer preoccupied with their explanation and interpretation. She did this with a specific purpose, thinking that the scientific interpretation could very easily undermine both the structure and the coherence of a stable and consolidated society with its own value and normative system that "nourished" modernism through secularization and secularism. However, the promotion of mass society, where individual and community freedoms took on a completely different dynamic, caused them to multiply like mushrooms after the rain and "occupy" the free space that the state in most cases in most democratic societies, he could not control and manage it properly. Today in the world there are more than 50 different movements at the continental and global level, which, in terms of the form and content of their commitments, stand out and are also identified as the "third eye" of taking care of social, and political processes and developments, economic and religious. Today's Western world would not be the same, e.g., without the Civil Rights Movement, Women's Movement, Abortion Movement (right to choose), Anti-abortion Movement, Men's Liberation Movement, Environmental Movement, Anti-Environmental Movement, Consumer Rights Movement, Anti-War Movement, for Animal Protection, New Right Movement, Moral Majority Movement, Homosexual Rights Movement, Global Student Movement, Anti-Smoking Movement, etc. The main characteristic of all these global movements (mainly with a



cosmopolitan background), or how to say their "identity card" is not their social, class ethnic, racial, or religious affiliation, but solidary values and defined norms and defined by codes and laws of the countries and states from which they come. Now, in the era of post-modernism, the dynamics of accelerated social and political processes have led to the creation of two camps, or two different theoretical schools. In Europe, the most popular is the School of New Social Movements or the School of Identity, and in the USA, that of Resource Mobilization Theory. But, since the object of our analysis is not the nature, form, or content of these schools and theories, but the dominant Islamic movements, which imitating and exploiting the "space" of the post-modernist corpus of freedoms and rights, appear as in the local scenes, the regional and global ones, have assumed the duties and obligations to revive and affirm the civilizational values and norms of Islam. We have mentioned that today in the "Islamic world" there are two main global movements (because there are many others at the local and regional levels) competing. The Hizmet movement identifies with "civil Islam" and other radical movements that identify with the discourse of "political Islam". It should be noted that social movements, in contrast to voluntary associations or clubs, which today are thousands and thousands of such, have the imperative and obligation to change the order, system, or social organization, and why not the political one, or to maintain the status quo of that order, system or organization. Social movements, as social formations, are identified with the collective efforts and commitments of ethnic, gender, class, racial, and religious, etc. communities to make certain political, economic, religious, or cultural changes. However, I think that when Islamic (political and civil) movements are in question, other additional features can be found. Among these new identifying features, and in the case of the Islamic "sample", I remember that they can also be "loaded"; the common belief in the cause of the Creator, non-pompous solidarity (this feature is typical for the Hizmet Movement), then the formal network that is used only within the movement, as well as the strong conviction to publicly manifest the behaviors and values of the community (Islam). But, since today's typology of social movements, and especially those with an Islamic background, is not the object of our sociological analysis, I am content with that. The social movement should be established that they are a kind of broad alliance (in most cases silent and closed) of communities where members from different backgrounds (social, political, and value) identify whose ultimate goal and ambition are undoubtedly the order and the existing system. In

my opinion, this would be the most accurate sociological definition. However, in many debates and discourses developed in the past that have to do with Muslims, Islam, modernism, renaissance, and traditionalism, you will investigate and identify a kind of consistency for the treatment, comparison, and interpretation of processes and developments for the world of their stuck behind western civilization. In almost most of these discourses, be they meditative or religious ones, the topic of the relationship between tradition and modernity is always tried to be explained and interpreted, even as a kind of quixotic "battle".

When I say this, I always think of the burden of the inferiority complex that Islamic scholars carry in vain, compared to Western ones. We say so also because, this discourse, especially when talking about the topics of modernity, tradition, and postmodernity, sometimes takes on the dimensions of a discourse as it is said (*also; "for life or death"!*). I think that Muslim authors should be freed from this idiotic burden, that if the pace of this kind of debate continues soon, it may turn into a frustrating and extremely hindering "*mortgage*" in the "global offer" that Islamic movements currently do. My sociological advice; Don't knowingly or unknowingly put this unnecessary burden and frustration on your shoulders! Because, in addition to your movement, it will be able to bring problems to other peripheral movements as well. Because such a burden can also be "*expropriated*" from the rights and obligations of interpretation and research in the future. Because science in the age of artificial intelligence does not only serve the West and the values it "produces on the global market", but all of humanity. The researchers of the "*Islamic world*" should understand that the research methodology, in our time, does not need to be re-patented or re-inaugurated, but only to be enriched with specific "*facts*" (*Durkheimian*) which the civil movements should bring to the hall of global science; exactly, as Islamic scholars did in the peak period of Islamic civilization. So, there is no need to imitate them, nor to contest them, much less fight blindly as such. Since we are talking about the two models of Islamic movements that are claiming, in addition to primacy, the historical right for the re-establishment or revival of Islamic civilization, these researchers with their empirical research on the trends and cohesion of the relationship between traditional and modern, can contribute many social sciences. Recent studies are proving more and more that traditional values are not an illusion that modernism should be reserved from, much less afraid of. On the contrary, they can coexist without being "crowned" with each other. Postmodernism, with the background provided for its tolerance and

freedom without equivocation, has begun to communicate without prejudice with traditional Islamic values. We are still not sure why this kind of "acceptance/surrender" (*not to say; "capitulation"*) of post-modernist discourse to traditional values and norms happened. A sociological explanation, in my opinion, could be the cause of the crisis that appeared in the spiritual sphere that completely left aside hedonism and consumerism that was strongly stimulated and "promoted" through the discourses of modernism, or the cause of needs and demands (*not to mention the pressure*) of the new more elastic standards of postmodernism. Anyway, I think that the supporters of traditionalism have the right and the obligation to understand modernism, in the present times of postmodernism, making maximum use of the space "*given for free*"! The "*jealousy*" or the peak disagreement in the period of the collapse of the traditional opposition to modernism that occurred in the past centuries precisely through the engineering of secularism, there is a need (*in my sociological opinion*) that in the "mandate" of post-modernism you step aside, and you too I contest much more easily from the public scene, the discourses and discourses that helped the emergence and imposition of the atmosphere: suspicious, prejudiced and stigmatizing, not only for the codifying values and norms of the Islamic tradition but also for Islam itself. How this process of frustration will develop remains to be seen in the future. But I am very convinced that all this perception and projection will mostly depend on the value system of knowledge and education that the new generations of civil movements will be able to offer, and the Hizmet Movement that for now has the biggest responsibility on her shoulders.

Does Islam need a sociology of knowledge and education?

In many discussions about Muslims, Islam, and modernism, reform and tradition are not only keywords but envisioned as opposites. In these discourses, tradition is associated with respecting the practices and beliefs of the past, promoting religious violence and intolerance. This anachronistic mindset is the cause of the failed social and political developments in Muslim countries. The only solution to this 'crisis' would be a reform of Islamic beliefs and practices. The dichotomy between Reformed and Traditional Islam is not only problematic when it is used by ignorant and anti-modernist politicians because the same believers force them to believe in rigid categories and norms strictly and dogmatically, which they do not need at all postmodernist

values and norms that come from Western civilization and culture. But, if we look at the previous knowledge and achievements of Islam, we understand that this dogmatic point of view is in complete contradiction with the concept of Islam, as a value and as a timeless religion.

So, if modernism is the yardstick that marks and evidences the measurement of the value and development of civilization, the definition of tradition should also be maintained.

Rigidity and dogmatism in the interpretation of today's values on the part of traditional Islamic preachers as opposed to today's is not only wrong but, in my opinion, has become a serious obstacle in the emancipation and complete revival of Islam. Using familiar Islamic terms and phrases for heresy e.g. from the point of view of c. XXI, with the apparatus of a sociology of knowledge from the time of the beginning of the appearance of Islam, for many scholars there are risks in addition to misunderstanding and bad management.

Therefore, it is reasonable to imply that the danger of innovation has strongly limited the space for interpretation, however creative and important it may be, e.g. for the time when it is done.

"Today there are still scholars who think that the interpretation of the traditional norms and codes of Islam has been completed"(1).

But other contemporary authors treat and understand the relationship between traditional spirit and modernist discourse as an unfinished process, e.g. the first generation of 19th-century Muslim reformist modernists such as al-*Thatawi*, *Khayr al-Din*, *Muhammad Abduh*, and *Sayy Ahmad Khan*. These scholars distinguish between the relationship between God and people (*ibadah*) and the relationship between people (*muamalat*).

This difference in reports is investigated by the theologian of our days, Tarik Ramadan. He says that this report serves us "as a tool to recognize the importance of taqlid and ijthihad in Islam and to mediate between those who are stuck in the traditional, but who live and act in modernist times"(2).

- 1) Wael B. Hallaq, *"Was the Gate of Ijtihad Closed?" International Journal of Middle East Studies* 16 vol. 1, (1984). There is a brief introduction to classical theology, by, Binyamin Abrahamov, *Islamic theology: Traditionalism and Rationalism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998).
- 2) Tariq Ramadan, *"Radical Reform; Islamic Ethics and Liberation"* (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2009). On the first generation of Islamic modernists Hourani, *"Arabic Thought in the liberal Age 1798-1939"* (Cambridge: Ca 33 University Press, 1983).

When it comes to Fethullah Gulen, it is worth noting that he has not written any work dedicated to any of the Islamic disciplines as recognized and accepted by the standard of the Islamic academic world. But, for Albayrak, "*Gulen (however) did not write theological treatises or a complete exegesis on the Koran. However, in his various books and speeches, he deals extensively with these issues*"(3). However, Gulen, without wanting to pay him any compliments in this area that is not very well known to me, has his merits around what I have identified as the sociology of knowledge (*) in our time. Now, if we analyze the concept and importance that Fethullah Gulen attaches to knowledge and education through his Hizmet Movement, we understand that the Movement, unlike all other movements of "civil Islam", has best utilized the argument of progress and advancement of Islam in today's days of globalization. Because, the methodology offered by the schooling and especially the education of this Movement matches the typology of the sociology of knowledge which I explained above. And it lies precisely in the acquaintance of young researchers with the different and creative approaches to the "platforms" of knowledge and new cognitions, so that these students in the not-so-distant future begin to think about new connections and correlations between different forms of knowledge and the social context in which they are created with the idea that they are then passed on to future generations. By this aim, a series of examples will be used to show how the establishment, dissemination, and maintenance of specific models of "knowledge" is closely related to the establishment and maintenance of the system of control in society. In other words, the subject studies, the social conditioning and shaping of all kinds of knowledge, from ideologies to science, show to what extent these kinds of knowledge are a "social product" and in what ways they participate in the construction, legitimizing, maintaining, but also changing the social order and the existing power relations in society.

- 3) Ismail Albayrak, (2011), "*Mastering knowledge in modern times*", Published by Blue Dome Press 244 Fifth Avenue #2HS New York, NY 10001.

() The sociology of knowledge and education, its main subject and imperative, is the preparation of young researchers with a much deeper approach to the problem of new knowledge and cognitions, which are mainly identified and collected thanks to analysis, selection, and a more systematic sophisticated, more advanced so that this knowledge encourages and stimulates researchers to openly and creatively begin to think and discuss new correlations between forms of traditional knowledge and the new social context in it which they are created. Because the spread and preservation of new models of "knowledge" are very closely related to the establishment and maintenance of the social control system in society. In other words, the sociology of knowledge studies the social conditioning and shaping of all types of knowledge, from ideologies to science, to prove to what extent these types of new knowledge as "social products" can become active participants in building, legitimizing, and changing the social order and new relationships in a given society.*

The sociology of knowledge and its education deals with the phenomenon of the social organization of knowledge - in terms of "information", "ideology", "facts" and "science". The course starts from a specific concept of "knowledge", according to which knowledge represents that set of ideas and beliefs that are accepted by certain social groups or society as correct, realistic, or true. By this initial assumption, the sociology of knowledge also includes a wide range of issues related to; the scope and limits of the sociocultural conditioning of knowledge, its social function, as well as the role that the sciences should play in modern societies. That the sociology of knowledge, which Hizmet preaches, is not at all contrary to the value system and the sociology of Western knowledge, this has been proven by many positivist sociologists, anthropologists, and culturologists of the Western world. This is also *proven by the prominent American anthropologist, Klas Grinnell* when they state, "*...I claim that Islam is not only something that needs to be learned to become a part of it even for those who do not want to take a stand on the matter of faith. Even if I am not a practicing Muslim, I will allow myself to take Fetullah Gulen's ideas so seriously that I oppose him even when I come across thoughts that I cannot understand, and cannot include in my concept of a good and just society. It is very important, because it is not about measuring his values with mine, to compare Islam with the West*"(4). If we address the history of the creation of Hizmet, we should consider the time context when (*according to many Turkish and Western authors*) de facto and jure the "divorce" of this social movement with the local. According to Anwar Alam (*a modest connoisseur of global movements, as well as a renowned Indian professor of international relations*), "Gülen's Islamic discourse and the Movement's educational activity have been seen as a 'discourse of moral opposition' and 'a counterpoint' to the mobilization namely against the Kemalist state system in Turkey..., where analytical writings on the relationship between the movement and the AKP, even without much evidence, are filled with the narrative of a "political alliance" between the two parties, which is considered to have officially ended with the December 2013 exposure of a massive corruption scandal involving 52 officials, including members of President Erdoğan's family. This scandal, and later the failed military coup of July 15, 2016, led to mass persecution of Gulen Movement volunteers inside and outside of Turkey.

4) Klas Grinnell, (2015), "*Reflections on reason, religion and tolerance*", Published by, Blue Dome Press 244 5th Avenue, Suite D-149 Nju Jork, NY 10001, USA, p.134.

After both incidents - the fraud corruption investigation and the coup attempt - the Erdogan-led AKP government accused the Hizmet Movement of plotting to overthrow the legitimate government"(5). On the other hand, for these authors "The Movement categorically denies any role in exposing the corruption scandal of December 2013 and in the failed military coup of July 15, 2016". For this accusation against him, "*Gülen has asked for the establishment of an international commission to reveal the truth after these developments and categorically stated that he will return to Turkey if such a commission finds that he had even the slightest involvement in these incidents*"(6). Another author, such as *Ziauddin Sardar*, shared the opinion about the need for a new process of the identity search itself for the "Islamic world", which according to him, is in the vortex of today's very dynamic processes brought about by discourse of global values, has lagged far behind. The impossibility of voluntary activation, the ignorance expressed and installed through authoritarian powers, as well as the strange citizen indifference, have caused in most Islamic countries, their social and political perspective to be projected as gloomy and without chances to be changed for well, soon.

When to this atmosphere, uncontrolled escapes and full of threatening dangers are added, together with emigration for well-being and a life with dignity in their countries (*which have been covered by crime and corruption, together with nepotism and still neo-colonial polity*), we understand that Muslim societies are not only not finding the right path, but they don't even understand that without adequate education, they cannot (*let alone compete*) be "divorced" from the ignorance and obscurantism of traditions tribal.

The citizens of these countries (*expressed in the "language" of Emil Durkheim*) with typical anomic backgrounds still feel useless in the face of the power and absolutism possessed by autocrats and arrogant rulers (with tribal ambitions) with empty promises for a better future for these societies most citizens disappointed (*by such ignorant and poltroons power holders towards (post)modern neo-colonialism*) and depressed (*by no prospects for their families, community and societies*), but also unsure of a future for them good.

- 5) Anwar Alam, (2019)., "For the sake of Allah; the origin, development, and discourse of the Gulen movement", Published by Blue Done Press 335 Clifton Ave. pg.223.
- 6) Anwar Alam, (2019)., "*For the sake of Allah; the origin, development, and discourse of the Gulen movement*", Published by Blue Done Press 335 Clifton Ave. p. 230.

But "*the future*" is a contested field where old and new religions, ideologies, and perceptions of what the world should be, and concepts of what humanity is, are jostling for power; and all kinds of efforts are underway to colonize it."(7).

Why "political Islam" can't awake Islam?

In conventional global studies, analyses, and interpretations, the notion of politics in most cases associates and correlates with the acquisition of power. The theories on democracy and its experts, for the narrative of taking (*or changing*) powers, prefer two paths; the democratic one (through the free vote that is cultivated in free democratic societies) and the revolutionary one (*through violence that is also exercised through terrorist acts*). The second way, in the histories of past societies, but also our century, is used through a handful of different military states, as well as mass uprisings of citizens. Meanwhile, in societies where democratic and revolutionary changes fail, terrorist acts become the most adequate means of intimidation. Even our time has recorded in its catalogs many cases of the use of these methods and violent acts. Even not excluding the societies of the "*Islamic world*". But there must be a strict distinction between what Islam allows to what society prefers and what society here is Islamic. Why, Islam as a value and as a world view on the real world, does not prefer but does not allow acts of violence to be used in the functions of religious goals, let alone political ones. It is more than clear that the connection of the word "*Islam*" which is etymologically derived from the Arabic root has the exclusive meaning of peace, submission, salvation, and devotion to the all-merciful and all-knowing Creator. According to many Islamic theologians, when it comes to this special concept, the difference between the concept of *peace* and the concept of *amal salih* (*good deeds*) should also be paid attention to.

The word *amal salih*, like *such*, comes from the roots and means 'to cling to peace or to go towards peace'. Gülen thinks that this peace is of tauhid (*Unity of God/Oneness of God*) and that *Islam, being a religion of Unity (tawhid), can achieve universal unity, equality, peace, and cooperation among all people without distinction, gender, age, ethnicity, nation, race, religion, civilization, and culture.*

7) Ziauddin Sardar, Jordi Serra, and Scott Jordan, (2019), "*Muslim Societies in Post-normal Times/Foresight for Trends*, Emerging Issues and Scenarios, IIIT&CPPFS, UK, p. XVIII.

And the word "Muslim", by these theologians and religious clerics, has the meaning of a reliable and very peaceful person. Thus, the Prophet Muhammed says: (*paraphrasing*) that; the people are safe from his hand and tongue. And one of the greatest sins in Islam is killing an innocent person. Allah says in Surah Nisa (4:93) "If anyone kills an innocent person intentionally, his punishment is Hell forever. The wrath of Allah is against him, and He has cursed him and prepared for him a terrible punishment. The famous Qur'an promises not only the punishment of the murderer in the hereafter, but also the reward and punishment of the smallest deed (*good and bad*) in the hereafter: "Whoever does the smallest bit of good will see it, and whoever does evil will see it. It is interesting that when we read the Qur'an, we see that the killing of innocent people is even equated with the paradigm of polytheism caused by terrorist acts, which are denounced, and condemned without any discussion. But, real life, to us and the past generations, I remind the future ones as well, will provoke and animate us with these morbid as well as reprehensible goals of various radical groups and fundamentalists who, in the name of Islam, kill innocent people and steal power. This view of mine is intended, among other things, to prove that "political Islam" is not only a dangerous journey, but at first sight, a shorter one to achieve certain religious goals, it is also a wrong guide, to revive and reborn Islam as a universal and timeless value for all people. "*Civil Islam*", even though it is a longer journey, is and remains the most accurate, permissible, and adequate tool for today's world, where the race of impositions and influences is extremely competitive and mobile. It should not be forgotten that even a scholar (*for Rozhe Garode*) of global proportions (*which unfortunately was unjustly and naively ignored, for a long time by the Islamic academic world!*) such as the mind and sociological intuition of Ibn Khaldun, since the days of the peak of Islamic prosperity, I understand very early the weight and importance of the role of civil activism. Starting from this role, Khaldun formulates the fundamental principle which is still relevant in our days: "*No one has the right to subjugate the other*". As Roze Garode further notes about Ibn Khaldun, "The establishment of the caliph, (*read: absolute ruler, my italics*) is a 'silent agreement', which reminds us Europeans of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's "Social Agreement". In '*Muqadime*' (*Khaldun's masterpiece*) says Imamate is not a religious principle, but a position which was created to protect the general interest and is under the control of the people"8).

8) Rozhe Garori; Dituria Islame, <https://dituriaislame.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/edukata81.pdf>. Page visited on August 18, 2023.

Western historians and political theorists who have written on secularization are unanimous that secularization is a product of Christian society that emerged as a protest movement against the dominance of the church over the state and the eventual change of this order after the period of the Protestant Reformation. However, the goal was the complete elimination (*but not the denial*) of religion from public life and its reduction and limitation in the private sphere.

But, according to a Muslim theorist, "*the concept of secularization cannot be understood outside the context of European evolution and its Christian reform movements*"(9).

Muhammad Iqbal, another Islamic academic eminence, spoke affirmatively of the democratic impulses of Islam but stated that Muslims never effectively developed the elective principle. It was also because the Mongols and Persians (*who had already been subjugated*) by embracing Islam had also earned the right to rule with the Muslims. However, in their civilized nature and culture, the principle of the right to choose and be chosen was completely unknown. Because, in the value system of these two races and civilizations, the nature of the rulers was the product of a divine incarnation, and any rejection or contestation of their orders was considered unacceptable. So, these ethical-moral principles and values (*which were wrapped and packaged with divine and tribal norms and codes*) for these two civilizations, were the foundation and the basic framework of resistance to the erosion of time, so that the acceptance of Islam for them except that it was an innovation of its kind, it was also interesting, because it automatically made them equal to everyone else. *Muhammad Iqbal*, about the tradition and culture of Islam, tells us that: "*The republican form of government is not only completely compatible with the spirit of Islam, but it has also become a necessity due to the new forces that have been released in the Islamic world. In the eyes of Sharia, the position of the ruler is the same as that of an ordinary Muslim. In Islam, the basis of legislation, after the clear provisions of the Sharia is the agreement of the Muslim community*"(10)

9) Azzam Tamimi, (2001), "*The Origins of Arab Secularism*", Azzam Tamimi and John Esposito, *Islam, and Secularism in the Middle east*", London: Hurst & Company, 2001, p. 14.

10) Muhammad Iqbal, (1982) "*The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*", Lahore: Ashraf Press, new edition, p. 157.

However, according to *Graham E. Fuller*, "*Hizmet members further believe that a moral movement like theirs should not depend on or need the state and, indeed, can even be corrupted by the state through direct association with his power*"(11).

The anthropologist *Soltes* shares the opinion that (Islam) "*Focuses its energies on the general inspiration to be the best it can be and to serve others altruistically*"(12).

Meanwhile, *Akbar Ahmed*, Chair of Islamic Studies at American University in Washington, DC, and former Pakistani high commissioner to the UK, considers *Gülen* a "*key role model for contemporary Muslims*" when it comes to universal Islamic cultural values. his book "*Journey into Islam: The Crisis of Globalization*" (*Brookings Institution Press, Washington, D.C., 2007*) which was written based on anthropological work and sociological research, it is said that *Gülen* is identified as one of the most influential Turkish Islamic figures of his generation.

How do I amortize some prejudices against Islam, the Hizmet Movement?

Gülen's influence among Muslims also stems from the fact that his principles and principles on education and education are entirely Islamic-based and in full agreement with classical Islamic studies. Therefore, he cannot be sociologically qualified nor considered a reformer of Islam. Islam is the same as it was since the time of the Prophet Muhammad, however, it is the Muslims who ignore, deviate, and misinterpret the values, principles, norms, and civilizing culture of Islam. *Fethullah Gülen* cannot be singled out or identified as a sworn traditionalist, who is fascinated by traditional dogmatism. For example, amid the dilemma of whether the citizenry needs a mosque or a school more? Without any hesitation, he will answer for the second. What *Gülen* did, was that he better than anyone else from the "Islamic world", managed to understand both the weight and the importance of traditional Islamic knowledge (*ilm*), which had to be interpreted (converted) in the context of our contemporary circumstances. It is that simple. Others are the misunderstandings, misinterpretations, stigmatizations, and stereotypes that are "landed" even today from all Islamophobic, radical, and fundamentalist camps, both from the East and from the West.

11) *Graham E. Fuller*, (2014),. "[*Turkey and the Arab Spring – Leadership in the Middle East.*](#)" Bozorg Press. p. 169-70.

12) *Ori. Z. Soltes*, (2022), "*Between thought and action; an intellectual biography of Fethullah Gülen*", Published by Blue Dome Press 335 Clifton, NJ, 07011, USA, p. 265.

Akbar Ahmed, ibn Khaldun Chair of Islamic Studies, School of International Service, American University, Washington, DC. *"This extraordinary collection is a concise and truthful window into the thought of Fethullah Gülen, one of the leading Muslim thinkers of our day. Gülen's discourse is at once intensely spiritual and modern, emerging from deep within traditional religious thought, while managing to be remarkably current and open-minded, these writings will confound all who come to them with preconceptions about religion and secularization, believers and skeptics or tradition and modernism. After looking through this collection, you will better understand why Mr. Gülen has managed to motivate millions of traditional Muslims to engage in progressive social causes that strive to make this world a better place for all humanity"* (*). The Hizmet movement, when its relationship with secularization (as well as other civil postmodernist movements) is in question, which has created new "rules" in democratic systems that have already proven to be resistant to the erosion of time, it has no problem (*neither value nor sociopolitical*) as long as he remains neutral towards legitimate religious activity and is not hostile to his activities as in the initial period of modernism. Furthermore, Hizmet's civil orbit believes that it should not depend on or need the state and its institutional mechanisms. Because, according to them, there is a real fear (*experience from Turkey*) that it, as well as other movements that have continental claims of massification, can even be corrupted by the state through direct connection with its power. This observation, or rather a suggestion as a recommendation, has caused a lot of controversy both among the apologists of the Turkish state institutions (*who were categorical for a kind of social control of the segments of civil societies*) and other civil communities with a radical and fundamentalist background. In the state-building experience of Turkish society, these criticisms surprisingly initially came from the Kemalist political structure, which as an active social and political force over time lost its former political dominance. But, with the new liberal processes that took place in the meantime, a new generation with a new social origin was created, that is, an expanded middle class equipped with typical capitalist values and conditions (which inspire neoliberalism) whose ambitions and its sights and angles looked different from traditional Turkish and Ottoman diopters and optics.

(*) <https://hizmetnews.com/6673/new-book-so-that-others-may-live-a-fethullah-gulen-reader/>

Diopter and optics also matched Hizmet's system and ambition, which according to Ori Soltes, a historian and renowned professor at Georgetown University, for imperatives, among other things, she had "the concentration of her new energies in the inspiration and service of all others" altruistically"(13).

By putting it into operation and arming the citizens with quality knowledge and education, the new movement of Hizmet managed to wake it up, i.e., to move the sleeping and obscurantist community, transforming it into a useful, articulate, and well-prepared active promoter for new social and political processes on the horizon. With her altruistic activism and volunteerism, she already managed to break the architecture of the traditional typology of Islamic movements, the traditional, fundamentalist, modernist, and especially the secular ones. In the initial stages, there was a lot of opposition and anonymity from all three of these traditional typologies. But, with time, with the act, and with the fact that in the already emancipated and politically elevated citizenry, the option of Hizmet's value system was designed and accepted as the best option to introduce the (*however*) secular Turkish society, in the ruthless "*competition*" of global processes.

The events of 9/11 over the Twin Towers in the US, in some ways, served as an additional catalyst (*I would add*) to widen the gap between traditional and modernist Islamic views and movements. New prejudicial and stigmatizing phrases were added to the traditional ones, such as neo-fundamentalism, neo-traditionalism, and Salafist conservatism, meanwhile, to these postmodernists some others such as post-modern fundamentalism, post-modern revival, Islamic radicalism, modern Islamic piety, etc. So begins a hysteria never seen in the history of "*witch hunts*". Of course, the highest price in this hysteria with mass applicability was paid by Islam itself. But, over time, today e.g., this wrong perception of Islam is neither in those dimensions nor in those sociopolitical conditions. It seems that Hizmet has influenced quite a lot in improving the image of Islam. This fact is mostly proven by the spread of its schools across all continents. The Hizmet movement, as a new uncontested collective offer and actor (*of laicity*) as a socio-cultural phenomenon that has civil concepts and structure as a guide, has today become interesting for many movement theorists.

13) Ori. Z. Soltes, (2022), "*Between thought and action; an intellectual biography of Fethullah Gülen*", Published by Blue Dome Press 335 Clifton, NJ, 07011, USA, p. 265.

It is usually socioeconomic factors that initiate "promoters" that ignite the engines of change in a given society. An "offer" specified in both goals and long-term goals is sufficient, where people become supporters or opponents of crisis logical, identity, and socioeconomic situations, at whatever time they occur. Each movement, be it local or regional, not to mention global, to achieve these long-term objectives and goals (*which are not excluded to be short-term and medium-term*), use different tactics and strategies to overcome their opponents with the "offers" made, but also to attract the attention of that part or those segments of societies that have a higher degree of education and political emancipation. In the countries and states where the low degree of emancipation is evident, they often use the tactics of threats and blackmail (*and even violence, especially in radical ones with fundamentalist backgrounds*). In the traditions of democratic states, the "bait" of seduction and "recruitment" (*volunteers*) is usually exercised through social programs, both economic and less programs with a religious and cultural background. The Hizmet movement, since it originates from the Islamic world, is an exception, I had already said a phenomenon in itself. The reasons for its success and catapult in the global "market" should be sought, I think, in some other socio-cultural and, I would add, civilizing factors. So it was that period of the century. XVIII-XIX, when scholars of different profiles reached a unanimous consensus that to revive Islam, the "Islamic world" needs a new offering program and project, so that they, like the "*Western world*", can achieve two goals cardinals; one, which has to do with the revival of those sublime values that in the past were synonymous and an example of social, political, economic, civilizational and cultural progress and well-being (*civil Islam*). And the other goal. which has a lot to do with the hegemonic political ambitions and aims (political Islam) that he once experienced in the medieval centuries. If we do a sociological inspection of Weberian ethics, we will see that such an approach shows that the spirit of modernism within capitalism has significantly influenced culture and economic behavior as a type of product capitalism, even in the unique cultural totality of civilizations. For the Weberian diopter, the "*spirit of capitalism*" as a Calvinist movement has its ethnos and its foundation precisely in the Protestant ethic and the economic logic of capitalism. Max Weber proves to us that early capitalism comes precisely from the "course" and the peaceful, rational philosophy of religion, which Karl Marx identified as opium for the broad proletarian masses, i.e., as a serious obstacle to the progress and well-being of capitalist societies.

Without wishing to indulge more in Marx, I must emphasize that by subordinating the economic base (*productive forces and relations*) to the ideological superstructure (art, culture, morality, science, philosophy, and undoubtedly religion), he overturned it. The logic of Weberian capitalism, who, with his hand on his heart in today's post-modernism (*neoliberalism*), has scored such achievements, that the human mind and experience have never imagined.

The Marxist ideas and concepts for this subordination of the economic base on the ideological superstructure are best denied by the collapse of communism (*in the case of the fall of the Berlin Wall, which is sometimes also taken as the birthday of globalism*) as a system, as a worldview, and as an ideology. Meanwhile, when we come to the correlation of the experience of the Protestant ethic with Islam (*as opposed to that with Buddhism and Brahmanism*) we understand that he discussed Islam in various places in "the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism" (*his sociology of religion*) but had not provided any useful "diagnosis" or assessment of the sociology of religion and generally of Islam as the newest monotheistic religion. There are many authors who even today rate him (*in my opinion more conformist*) as an opportunist when they qualify him as even anti-Islamic. For the reason that he treats Islam more as a militant and violent religion, which shifted the argument of its survival in Western societies from the spirit of individualism (*highly emphasized in the Protestant ethic as one of the driving factors of the development and expansion of "capitalist spirit"*), in the tradition and power of the community (*Hizmet*), alone to conquer humanity. From the beginning, it is investigated that Weber's view of Islam was, as it were, more disappointing than substantive. Because, we also have situations when he speaks with piety about the Messenger of the Creator (*Muhammad, peace be upon him*). The case of the Trench war, e.g., for Weber, it was a genius tactic of the messenger also because according to him, the imperative and final goal in this battle, was not so much the victory over the Arab pagans, but the achieved psychological effect in maintaining the commonality of the community (*still small in number*) Muslim. However, it should be noted that in this period of struggle and commitment, the envoy did not face any secular state apparatus, but a whole system of ethical and moral codes and norms that had been established and strengthened by the society at that time (*expressed in the language of Emil Durkheim*) anomic and ignorant of paganism. When it comes to Islamic economic ethics, the Weberian opinion and judgment, that Islam during the period of appearance and especially that of consolidation contributed very little to the

affirmation of the values and principles of rational capitalism, which would also enable a more pronounced social stratification and categorization of Muslim societies. On this occasion, Weber forgets that Islam (*as opposed to the Christian faction of Protestantism, which was created in completely different social, economic, civilizational, and cultural circumstances*) was presented in a social environment that, in addition to being obscurantist, was also ignorant, because these were VI-VII centuries, not those of the beginning of pre-monopolistic capitalism in the XIV-XV centuries. According to Eduard Said, a very prominent and respected Orientalist, both in Eastern and Western academic circles, Weber's prejudiced view of Islam as a violent religion is only prejudiced because he only analyzes the means (*wars*) and not the goal (*spread with mass applicability*) that Islam had as an imperative in the centuries of its expansion. Also, Said pays special attention to social media, which according to him, by creating certain opinions and ordered by the oligarchs of transnational companies, manage to design the way of thinking, the style of clothing, as well as ambitions and consumerist interests of citizens, in developed democracies. Man, by nature, is a being with clear rational tendencies and predispositions, the media are the ones to dissolve this social rationality, transforming it into an irrational and deliberately controlled being. The skills of today's media to control the minds of liberal citizens have advanced so much that in most of these societies, they are now considered as one of the most important agencies (*along with family, peers, and the role of activity*) in the formation of the personality of a citizen of our century. Imagine, here now also the inclusion of "artificial intelligence..." in this unfair competition!?! Meanwhile, *Muhammed Cetin (a pan-excellence sociologist)* focuses on the motivation for participants that includes spiritual resources and moral values such as altruism, "*which constitute the social capital for the peaceful movement of civil society and how it develops voluntarism, dialogue, and relationships for to achieve common goals, competition and non-materialistic and not contentious services, in Western societies*"(14). Muhammed Cetin emphasizes that "*The Gülen Movement is not founded or based on war in reactionary, political or antagonistic interests, nor is it a sect or a cult, and that the greatness of the "offer" of the Hizmet framework rests in itself; the ability to pursue general goals and objectives in long-term phases; then to insensitivity to escape, extremism and violence.*

14) Cetin Muhammed, (2010), "*The Gülen movement*" (*Civic service without borders*), Blue Dome Press, p.166.

as well as the simplicity of decision-making, mediation, efficiency, and effectiveness of the obligations that its members take; and especially in their ethics and commitment to work even though there are various interests within the community"(15).

An American sociologist (*Helen Rose Ebaugh*), of religion who was very concerned with the structure, hierarchy, and especially with the origin of the financial resources of the movement, says among other things (*paraphrasing*) that Hizmet is a grandiose civil offering of the East which the West should not I refuse ad hoc, but I must co-opt it in the system of neoliberal democracy, as a very serious alternative to religious extremism, after September 11.

But, to understand the essence and essence of this global social movement, we must return to the basic concepts (*without any doubt, typically Islamic*) that have already been "naturalized", explored, and even catapulted into the "global market of values" by its architect Fethullah Gulen. The very fact that the idea and concept of two fundamental categories (*education and service*) in most contemporary societies have managed not only to be understood, but also to be cultivated with jealousy and (non)public interest, proves that in this century (*with or without its architect*) the type of education and training offered by such contemporary "services" (*schools*) will become not only a powerful argumentative "weapon" documenting and guaranteeing the beginning of a promising era, but also a new one new revival for Islamic civilization and culture, and undoubtedly for Islam itself as a peaceful monotheistic religion. But what are Hizmet's immediate goals and ambitions in the global sphere?

Fethullah Gulen, in his text bred in the form of 100 questions by *Dogu Ergil*, gives this answer; *"God knows our purpose, for the last 30 years this nation knows it too. We have no other desire than to gain God's pleasure and share with the world community our valuable historical acquisitions, to create islands of peace in a bloody geography. As a nation, we believe, we have a lot of good. We have an honorable and glorious history that we can call our Golden Age for the last thousand years, from another perspective, a history of 4000 years...(16).*

15) Cetin Muhammed, (2010), *"The Gülen movement" (Civil service without borders)*, Blue Dome Press, p. 225.

16) Ergil, Dogu, (2015), *"Fethullah Gülen and the Gülen Movement in 100 questions"*, Published by Blue Dome Press 335 Clifton Avenue Clifton, New Jersey 07011, USA, p.161.

Symptoms of the crisis for the stagnation and fading of the values and model of Islamic civilization that dated between c. XVIII-XIX, which were followed by a series of low tensions, conflicts (*especially in the economic and social spheres*), and even wars to remedy and stop this decline, slow but sure and inevitable, brought some "Hamletian" dilemmas, which had to give the right answer regarding these processes and developments not at all pleasant for the former Ottoman Empire, as a dominant global civilization in these times. For the "Hamletian" dilemma, that modern ethical society and a modern ethical man, can and should turn to the religious ethics (of which monotheistic religion) or the secular one that was "installed" thanks to the pre-dispositions that I create the commitment and ambition of man with the bourgeois-French revolution of 1789. So, is democracy an ideal tool to realize these ambitions and aspirations of today's man, or is it the very goal and ideal of man? Should religious institutions be considered social phenomena and should be taken as independent from the political authority of the State? Or is there a role for the state in this field? Educated nations read without interruption, while uneducated ones only listen! Educated people think and reason with their heads, the uneducated with foreign heads! Today's global citizens do not so much want to understand and be informed about their rights and freedoms, they are more inclined to well-being and standard of living. However, there is another layer (*which is very marginalized*) that the dioptra of traditional sociologists, more or less, has not been able to "scan" and study as much and properly. We are talking about a category that Guy Standing has identified as "precarariat". This typical sociological term and concept, for which; "*There are two ways of defining what we mean by it. One is whether a particular socio-economic group belongs to that group. Which is useful in terms of imagery and analysis and allows us to use what Max Weber called the "ideal type" of society. And the other, which describes the precariat as a neologism that combines the adjective "uncertain" and a noun like "proletariat"*(17). In our sociological judgment, the precariat marks a new class (*not in the Marxist sense*) of casual workers who receive wages and temporary, menial, and unprotected work. This class is being "*produced*" by the wild intersection of neoliberalism and globalism... and recently, the

17) Guy Standing, (2011), "*The precariat, the new dangerous class*", Publishing Plc 36 Soho Square, London W1D 3QY, UK and 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010, USA.

Covid 19 pandemic as well as the deepening economic crisis brought about by the Russian invasion of Ukraine have increased it insanely. For illustration and as information, it should be said that today one-third of employees in Europe still live in material and spiritual insecurity. Even during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, this number had risen rapidly. This "rise", or rather this type of reduction in employment opportunities, of course, was also reflected in their condition and social statuses. At the global level, much data tells us that the number of those who work and support themselves and their families is being reduced. This category of people has some work, it can even be said that they partially have some jobs. But the same ones who are not few, especially in transition countries...have existential problems, or better to say survival problems. Simply put, these people live as they say, "today for tomorrow". They have continuously been subjected to psychological pressure (*fear of dying of hunger*); economic (*they face existential problems daily*); and sociological (*that the community continuously prejudices and stigmatizes them*); these marginalized social categories have become easy targets of populist parties, especially adding to the doubt in the values of democracy.

In Western countries, the former controversial US President *Donald Trump* was also a model for introducing the paranoia of fear into democratic values. In Europe, we have Hungarian Prime Minister *Viktor Urban*, and in the Asian part, *Recep Tayyip Erdogan*. In the region, the Serbian President *Aleksander Vucic* wore these interesting features, of "caring" for (*as the neo-Marxists put it;*) the "small" or marginalized social groups... Looking at the socioeconomic status of the precariat, it is investigated that they have a very low level of education. Being at the bottom of the social ladder, they very easily become prey and part of the manipulation of populist leaders who, exploiting their dissatisfaction, and socioeconomic status, then fears prejudices and economic insecurity, manages to ruthlessly manipulate them, and even turn them into neoliberal neo-fascists? I mentioned with a specific purpose this process of deepening the gap between the very rich and the very poor, to illustrate in thick lines, the trend of the deepening of the global crisis of societies, as well as the opening of new opportunities for animating global movements social, for these contingents of citizens endangered by the wild ambition of neoliberalism. Now, if we address the initial question about the challenges and the theme of stagnation and the decline of the image and the missing sublime spiritual values of citizenship, as well as the possibilities of revival and the creation of a new attractive and comprehensive identity of Islam, that was

initiated during century XVIII-XIX, we understand that this confrontation, in addition to having to take place in the harsh and merciless economic "market", should also take place in other civilizing and cultural spheres to wash away the "mortgage" of guilt (*deliberately amputated after September 11*) and the image "immersed" in the mud of prejudices and ultra-stigmatizations. Global social movements (*civil Islam*) with the appearance of this valuable and cultural crisis, have their real chances (*with concrete projects*) to find the right way to overcome these centuries-old challenges.

And the revival of sublime ethical and moral values, which can save humanity from an even greater catastrophe.

Conclusion

The idea of revival, or the new rise of authentic Islam (*identified by some as the original Islam*), was and remains a problematic idea and preoccupation for both scholars with Eastern and Western backgrounds. This preoccupation, in different periods, has been "associated" with mainly theological interpretations, but not enough with complex ones: sociological, anthropological, ethnological, philosophical, social, and cultural. Theological hermeticism, in a way that in addition to suppressing the complex nature of explanation and interpretation of causes and effects, also placed an exclusive monopoly on the very act and fact of interpretation and explanation. Of course, this "right" also produced different repercussions, not excluding here the stagnation or even the bad interpretation of Islam during the period of stagnation. Even now in our time (*modernist and especially post-modernist*), the existing process of monopolizing this "right" over Islam has not stopped. To understand the shortcomings and advantages of this approach, future studies related to the causes and consequences of stagnation, marginalization, and even the dulling of the "skills" of Islamic values, especially now in the competition of criminology where all global civilizations are showing evident symptoms of an irreversible spiritual crisis, must be oriented in complex and multidimensional studies. Islam, in my opinion, should make its own "offer" and put it on the global value "market" and analyze with special attention both the degree of "acceptance" and that of eventual "rejection"...

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*) <https://hizmetnews.com/6673/new-book-so-that-others-may-live-a-fethullah-gulen-reader/>