Problems With Sociology Education in Turkey on Its 100th Anniversary

Aytul Kasapoglu

Abstract
Although sociology education began a century ago in Turkey, sociology is considered a scientific discipline rather than a profession in which graduates can earn money. The primary aim of this article is to identify the essence of this problem in sociology education based on students' and sociologists' views. To achieve the study objectives, a phenomenological study based on standpoint theory was designed and conducted with 25 students and 20 working sociologists. The findings reveal that sociology education is quite far removed from being considered a professional education. Theoretical courses without field studies are not in accordance with the requirements of both the public and private sectors. Students and sociologists are quite romantic regarding what sociology is and what sociologists do. Students mostly begin the study of sociology involuntarily and without a clear understanding of the discipline. Sometimes students find themselves in a paradox or dilemma: Although the knowledge and skills they have developed during their sociology education enable students to express themselves effectively and understand social events more comprehensively, the risk of unemployment is a severe threat. Even if they are employed, graduates are disappointed because they are not prepared to conduct the tasks that their jobs demand. Students assess these activities as social work and thus inappropriate. To solve the problems of sociology as a profession in society and as an academic field in the university, both problems must be clearly defined and programs must be carefully reconfigured to meet the demands of both society and sociologists.

Keywords
sociology, education, phenomenology, Turkey

Introduction
Sociology in Turkey was influenced by Western sociology in general and French sociology in particular during the collapse of Ottoman Empire in hopes that sociology would save the country. Intellectuals of political and administrative bodies preferred Westernization as their primary tool as Turkey moved away from its society's own traditional institutions. When introducing social and cultural innovations to society, Ottoman intellectuals were deeply affected by French political and social thought. According to Sezer (1988), Paris was the cynosure of intellectuals who spoke against existing government while shaping their political and ideological views. Ziya Gökalp was the most important politician among them and was later accepted as the founder of sociology in Turkey; Gökalp gave sociology lectures at Istanbul University in 1914. Gökalp was also the father of the basic principles of the newly established Republic of Turkey in 1923. Ziya Gökalp introduced positivism to Mustafa Kemal, who instituted major reforms to convert society to modern Western traditions beginning with changing the alphabet from Arabic to Latin, changing the Muslim calendar to the Gregorian calendar and changing Islamic canon law Sharia to civic law. Gökalp's (1988) book, *Main Principles of Turkishness*, facilitated the definition of a nation of Turks. When the Ottoman Empire with its multiethnic structure was becoming a nation state, Gökalp's sociological definition, that “citizens of Turkey are considered Turks,” established a practical manner with which to resolve questions regarding the ethnic origins of society and was applied by Mustafa Kemal when declaring the Republic of Turkey.

Contrary to economically based sociological analysis of social structure such as Marxism, Durkheim sociology is widely accepted and followed in Turkey because of Ziya Gökalp, who himself was an ideologist of the Order and Progress Party, whose members changed the political system of the country from a monarchy to a republic. The primary slogan developed by Ziya Gökalp was the articulation of three main concepts: “Islamization, Westernization and Turkification.” As a sociologist, he proposed an amalgamation to solve the identity problems of the citizens of the new...

1. Ankara University, Turkey

Corresponding Author:
Aytul Kasapoglu, Professor of Sociology, Department of Sociology, Ankara University, Ankara 06100, Turkey.
Email: kasap@humanity.ankara.edu.tr

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nation state by saying, “I am from the Turkish nation; I belong to Western civilization as well as Islam.” (Gökalp, 1970, 1988). When sociology education began in Turkey in 1914, the Ottoman Empire was certainly not a modern industrial society that required sociology to solve its problems. However, Ziya Gökalg considered Durkheim’s sociology and its communitarian approach appropriate for Turkey, which was primarily traditional and patriarchal. Being a communitarian instead of an individualist such as Durkheim was politically preferable in Turkey and later garnered many supporters as opposed to other sociology traditions such as Prens Sabahattin’s, who was a representative of Le Play’s sociology, which is more decentralized and individualistic (Parla, 2006). The history of sociology in Turkey falls primarily into two periods or stages. The first period was influenced by Ziya Gökalg and Prens Sabahattin and was called the constitutionalist period. The second period reached from the Second World War to the present (Mardin, 1974; Tanyol, 1973).

According to Mardin (1983), the first period was more political whereas the second period has primarily been based on data collected from field studies conducted by universities. Mardin (1983, 1998) posited that those who saw themselves as responsible for saving the empire from collapse were called Young Turks (Jon Turks); the Young Turks approached issues in terms of a doctor-patient relationship, acting as social physicians. In fact, at that time, developed Western countries were also defining the Ottoman Empire as a sick man. This first period of sociology was full of controversy among intellectuals who defended progress as modernists and the status quo as conservaties. The Young Turks considered themselves accelerants, transforming society from traditional to modern with the help of the positive sciences; these intellectuals considered sociology their most important tool. In fact, two political movements were competing with one another and later developed as two different sociological traditions in Turkey. Whereas one tradition adopted the Le Play school’s principles, the other tradition adopted Durkheim sociology, both of which originated in France (Dogan, 2006). During the Ottoman Empire, intellectuals were strongly affected by France in terms of culture and the social sciences whereas bureaucrats collaborated with Germany to make military progress.

The Young Turks believed that translating sociology books was quite important in changing the society from traditional to modern. Westernization was the primary target for improving the Turkish society, and the Young Turks required available prescriptions. Therefore, intellectuals began to translate sociology books into the Ottoman language. Sometimes the translators adapted the books to the conditions of the Turkish society by interpretations (Parla, 2006). Ziya Gökalg, who was the theoretical and ideological leader of the Progress and Development Party, and the Young Turks began presenting sociology lectures based on these translated books in 1914 at Istanbul University and began publication of a sociology journal. However, at the end of the First World War, Ziya Gökalg was fired by the invasion forces who occupied Istanbul as the capital of the Ottoman Empire and deported him to Malta/Cyprus as punishment in 1918. Later, professors such as Mehmet Izzet and Nemat Sadak were unable to regain the same popularity as the first established department of sociology in Turkey. However, Mehmet Izzet is important as the author of the first sociology textbook for secondary schools (Dever, 2014).

Another sociologist made significant contributions to Turkey’s history of thought following Ziya Gökalg at Istanbul University. Himi Ziya Ulken studied human geography and philosophy before joining the sociology department, in which he was a professor of sociology between 1940 and 1950. His ideas were primarily Marxist although his philosophy changed when he moved to Ankara to work in the Faculty in Divinity in 1960. His book on refusing historical materialism was the primary evidence indicating Ulken’s radical transformation.

Later, holistic (Durkheim) and particularistic (Weber) views competed in different faculties of Istanbul University. Thus, after the foundation years, sociology in Turkey became quite enriched and proliferated by developing two schools. Following Weber’s tradition, Sabri Ulgener (1951/2006), a member of the Faculty of Economics, wrote a book called Moral World of Economic Disorganization. Because of this study, he is referred to as Turkey’s Weber, and his book is considered a milestone of sociology in Turkey. This tradition was continued by Ahmet Guner Sayar (2006), who was a student of Ulgener.

During the late 1960s, there were Marxists (Sezer, 1979) in addition to followers of Durkheim at the Istanbul University Faculty of Letters who evaluated the social structure of Turkey from the perspective of the “Asian Type of Production” and the “historical specificity” principle of Marxism. These philosophies helped to explain why there was a different infrastructure in Turkey in terms of a production type of economy that did not result in the development of a capitalist system.

It should also be noted that these two traditions of sociology were both interested in the difference between Turkey’s socioeconomic structure and Western societies that had succeeded in shifting from traditional to modern or from agricultural to industrial in general and/or from feudalism to capitalism in Marxist terms. To achieve this aim by following Weber, Ulgener (1951/2006) emphasized the importance of thought and that the factors that determine individual thought lead to the reproduction of traditionalism. Sezer (1979, 1991a, 1991b) and Kemal Tahir (1992), who is one of the most eminent Turkish novelists, studied the social structure of Turkey to show the uniqueness of the feudalism that was peculiar to Turkey and Eastern despotic countries based on the Asiatic Type of Production.

Unfortunately, after its foundation period, sociology again found itself in crisis in 1947 during the Republican Period.
Turkey’s first sociology department in the Republican era at Ankara was closed when professors were accused of being communists. Although the professors were not found guilty and were freed, education in the department and sociology as a discipline in Turkey were deeply affected. The expectations of Turkish sociology, particularly in terms of proliferation, could not be realized. Field-based studies on the social structure of Turkey were interrupted. More importantly, the institutionalization of sociology in Turkey failed because of the political effects of the Second World War and Turkey’s internal reflections on existing government policies. The Department of Sociology in the Faculty of Letters was abolished, and professors who were educated in the United States such as Behice Boran, Niyazi Berkes, and their research assistant, Fatma Taskingol (Basaran); Muzaffer Sherif from psychology; and Mediha Berkes from anthropology were all fired (Kasapoglu, 1991). During their short academic lives at Ankara (1939–1947), the journals Homeland and the World (Yurt ve Dunya), published by Behice Boran and Niyazi Berkes, and Steps (Adimlar), published by Behice Boran, were important contributions in terms of “public sociology” (Kasapoglu, 2011a).

During the planned period of Turkey beginning in the 1960s, the establishment of the State Planning Institution was a milestone for sociologists. One of the students of Behice Boran, whose name was Mubeccel Belik Kiray (1964), conducted a study similar to Boran’s study on the social structure of a small town called Ereğli to determine socioeconomic changes because of industrialization. However, those studies are mostly defined as apolitical as well as quantitative, influenced by American sociology because those new state institutions and universities provided scholarships for sociologists, particularly in American universities (Kasapoglu, 1991, 2005; Odabas, 2009).

Other important events in sociology education were the establishment of Middle East Technical University (1959), Hacettepe University (1964), and Ege University (1977). Unfortunately, Turkey experienced a military intervention in 1980, and the new Higher Education Law redesigned all disciplines, including sociology curricula. The process of proliferation was certainly interrupted by imposing the identical curriculum on all departments. The number of university and sociology departments has increased and reached 104 by 2015.

From its inception, sociology in Turkey always had problems with the identity of the discipline. Because sociology was politically preferred and considered a science, sociology courses were added to secondary school curricula in 1929, and students who studied sociology were sufficiently confident to at least teach in secondary or high schools. Until the 1990s, there were a limited number of sociology departments in old universities, and their graduates were easily employed. Because of Turkey’s European Union Entrance project, the number of universities increased, as did sociology departments. Furthermore, sociology departments in distance education began to add 14,000 sociologists each year. Currently, 19,000 students have studied sociology; however, only 969 of them have been employed by the state since 2003 (Kasapoglu, 2015). Therefore, the risk of unemployment for sociologists, particularly by the state, is a serious problem for both students and their parents.

As indicated by the American Sociological Association, sociologists have three major alternatives to find employment after graduation. These areas are teaching, research, and sociological practice (cited in Kasapoglu, 2015). The majority of sociology graduates work as teachers in secondary schools, vocational schools, preparatory schools, and as faculty in the universities of Turkey. In addition to sociology departments, other disciplines such as law, business administration, education, social anthropology, divinity, social work, medicine, and nursing require sociology courses and hire sociologists. Although teaching was widely perceived as satisfactory because teaching is secure and garners respect in society, the teaching profession has changed, particularly for secondary and preparatory school teachers. Corrosion observed in the teaching profession in general is also true for secondary school sociology teachers (Ayalp, 2005).

Employment in the private or public sector as a researcher is the second most common career option for sociologists. However, if teachers want to be promoted or work under more secure conditions, they should conduct research and publish their results because “publish or perish” is the core principle of academia. Therefore, teaching also requires research skills. Finding a job on a research team in a research institute, which can be governmental or nongovernmental at the local or central level, is quite desirable for many sociologists in many countries, including Turkey. In fact, when sociologists work as researchers in any field of expertise related to the environment or health or human resources, they can find themselves in some confusion regarding their identity, identifying as a researcher rather than a sociologist.

Although the percentage of sociologists who are doing applied or clinical sociology is quite limited in Turkey, the majority of sociologists in developed countries earn their living by applying their knowledge to solve social problems. Although their work is quite close to research, sociology extends beyond research activities and therefore is considered a sociological practice.

Policy-making and administration, other opportunities in government, and opportunities in business are additional options for sociological practice. Local and central administrations require sociologists when developing urban transformation, housing transformation, health, education, and law enforcement policies. Certainly, sociologists work in these fields with professionals such as engineers, architects, urban planners, lawyers, and physicians. Sometimes sociologists can be the head of a project, which occurred in the assessment of Turkey’s largest investment project of water in 1990. Sociologists can also work in human resources, sales, and
business administration departments as planners or analysts although these positions are scarce when compared with the number of sociologists in Turkey.

**Research Problem**

Although sociology education celebrates its 100th anniversary in Turkey, sociology is not recognized as a profession in the Turkish society but is considered an academic discipline and career. Unfortunately, professors are unaware of the problems of graduates and continue to apply curricula that omit the skills and knowledge necessary to address the real needs of society.

**Objectives**

Although the primary research is more comprehensive and detailed, including quantitative survey results gleaned from a representative sample of students from all over Turkey, this article is limited to identifying answer to the following questions:

a. What is the essence of the problems with sociology education in Turkey?
b. When sociology and sociology education are considered, is there any difference between the views of students and working sociologists?
c. What should be done to solve the existing problems of sociology education?

**Method**

In this qualitative study, standpoint theory (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002) was deemed appropriate based on phenomenological tradition; as proposed, standpoint theory is generally superior to positivist traditions because it is critical to dichotomies and focuses on process and dynamism. Standpoint theory identifies differences among similar sides or components. In our case, although sociologists as students and employed sociologists are different, they are in a continuum with one another. Comparisons are made between them rather than with other disciplines or professionals. In this study, it is assumed that there is no one unique type of sociologist to compare with other professionals such as psychologists or social workers; it is therefore assumed that there are differences among sociologists, and comparisons are made between sociologists who are of different statuses, such as student and worker.

**Participants**

The study group comprised 25 students who are studying sociology at various universities (Middle East Technical University, Hacettepe University, Ankara University, Gazi University, and Yildirim Beyazit University) and 20 sociologists who are working in several municipalities and ministries in Ankara, the capital city of Turkey. Senior students who are in their last year were intentionally selected because they are presumed to be more experienced and knowledgeable regarding the conditions and the problems of sociology education and employment. Interviews were also conducted with sociologists who have at least 5 years of work experience. Therefore, “purposive” and “theoretical” sampling techniques (Creswell, 1998) were used to achieve the study objectives.

**Data Analysis**

The design of this qualitative research is based on principles of the phenomenological tradition (Moustakas, 1994; Creswell, 1998) consistent with Colaizzi's (1978) phenomenological principles. For example, first, recorded interviews were listened to carefully before the interpretations were written. Then, significant statements were determined and categorized into negative and positive statements for comparison. Meanings were also grouped into four thematic clusters that were common to all of the participants’ transcripts.

The data used in this article were part of a more comprehensive quantitative study supported by the Ankara University Research Fund. The qualitative research was designed to support and validate quantitative data derived from a nationwide survey comprising 684 students from 126 different universities located in different parts of Turkey. In this article, a short, unstructured questionnaire was developed after applying the results of the quantitative data. The open-ended questions included “What is your definition of sociology?” “How did you decide to study sociology?” “What is your experience here in this department?” “What meaning does sociology have in your life?” and “What do you feel about your future after graduation?” The sociologists were asked similar questions when they were interviewed.

After obtaining their oral consent, face-to-face interviews were conducted during data collection. Interviews lasted at least half an hour, and most lasted approximately an hour. All interviews were recorded with the participants’ permission. As a component of the research problem, researchers were careful not to influence the interviewee’s responses and were particularly aware of setting aside all prejudices by bracketing former experiences, as suggested by Husserl (1931). Interview data were deciphered immediately by the researchers to ensure that no important point was lost. The validity of the research was ensured by reviewing the literature and bracketing past experiences. Taking field notes, selecting an appropriate sampling in accordance with the study purposes, and interviewing until reaching the saturation point (receiving repetitive answers) are also worthy of mention (Meadows & Morse, 2001).

**Findings**

A total of 267 significant statements extracted from interviews with 25 students and 20 sociologists were quite comprehensive and complex. To present data in a reader friendly
form, some statements are presented in the appendix (see Tables A1 to A4). A summary of significant statements grouped in thematic clusters is presumed to render the findings more understandable. In this section, the findings of the phenomenological study are presented based first on comparing the thematic clusters of students’ positive and negative statements (Tables 1 and 2), including their formulated meanings, and then presenting the data obtained from working sociologists (Tables 3 and 4).

The four themes derived from the findings are the meaning of sociology, sociology education, the effects of sociology education and thoughts about the future. To reach the essence of the problem, these four themes were used to compare data gathered from students and working sociologists.

At first, it appeared crucial that significant negative statements of both students and sociologists were longer and more numerous. Although similar statements were deleted, there were nevertheless many more significant negative statements (183) than positive statements (84; see Tables A3 and A4 of the appendix).

The findings presented in Table 1 reveal that sociology students have positive feelings regarding sociology because students attribute a higher stature to sociology by saying that sociology is more than a profession and that their lifestyle is in harmony with sociology. Their satisfaction with the education they receive is also consistent with their impressions regarding sociology, and students reported that they had the opportunity to go into the field to understand society. Students also admitted that sociology education had changed their personalities and that they are happy with these changes. Students believe that they will find a job as a sociologist and are thus quite optimistic about their futures.

Sociology students’ negative significant statements, presented in Table 2, show that the status of sociology is unfortunately not as high as expected. Like society in general, students did not know much about sociology and lacked an understanding of sociology when they began their studies. In fact, if their scores had been higher, they would have preferred to study psychology, which is considered a health profession, with special departments in state hospitals and other related organizations in Turkey. Students also blamed sociology professors for not being objective in their lectures and imposing their own ideologies on students. Students were critical that their education remained theoretical without allowing the transfer of their knowledge and skills to the field. Because students do not believe that they belong to either sociology or sociology education, they isolate themselves from any type of interaction that could result in changing their personalities or relationships. Students also claim that because of their sociology education, their relationships with their families are not as good as in the past. Families worry about unemployment and blame the students for not behaving like responsible adults. Families think that at least by working hard and getting high scores, the students can major or minor in psychology or public administration to guarantee their futures.

Table 1. Selected Examples of Significant Positive Statements of Students and Related Formulated Meanings in Four Thematic Clusters.

| Positive significant statements | Formulated meanings |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| Regarding sociology:            | “Sociology is quite an important discipline.” |
| “Sociology is a lifestyle rather than a profession.” |  |
| “I used to know about sociology before registering in this department.” |  |
| Regarding sociology education:  | “Sociology is a good program that is voluntarily studied.” |
| “Sociology was my first choice during my university entrance examination.” |  |
| “Our professors are well educated and concerned about us.” |  |
| “I enjoy doing empirical field study.” |  |
| Regarding the effects of education: | “Sociology is an influential program for students.” |
| “Sociology education affected my entire life.” |  |
| “Sociology education made me more civilized and socialized.” |  |
| “I am not an egocentric person anymore.” |  |
| Regarding the future (employment): | “Employment after graduation is not a problem.” |
| “I suppose I can work as a sociologist when I graduate.” |  |
| “I want to be employed as a sociologist.” |  |
| “There is a large scope of work as a sociologist.” |  |

Turkey’s economic conditions are not good (Boratav, 2011), particularly when considering the unemployment rate among the young. According to International Labour Organization (ILO in 2011) data, the unemployment rate is quite high and reached 24% among university graduates (Kasapoglu, 2015). The findings in Table 3 show that some sociologists expressed being happy because they are doing useful things for society. They also supposed that their education enriched them and prepared them for the work they do. Their desire for a master’s degree in sociology also shows that they want to improve their knowledge and skills and that they are optimistic about their future careers.

Although optimists exist, the majority of sociologists interviewed reported negative perceptions regarding sociology as presented in Table 4 and Table A4 (of the appendix). First, like the students interviewed, the sociologists began to study without consciously choosing this discipline. According to the sociologists, the objectives of sociology curricula were limited to academic sociology. Therefore, their expectations when they started to work were unfortunately quite far from the conditions they faced. They also noticed that the tasks they had to perform required knowledge of the administrative system of Turkey. The sociologists claimed that because they were not familiar with the social structure of Turkey or the components of its social institutions, they had to enhance their knowledge with a master’s degree in the field of public management. The majority of sociologists in Turkey prefer to work in the public sector as government officers with scheduled hours and job security. These sociologists prefer not to go out in the field to
apply their profession, which requires working long hours in risky conditions. Therefore, they are realistic when they admit that they are alienated. Because of their training, they guard against being perceived and treated as social workers. The sociologists believe that sociology is superior to social work in terms of the scientific nature of the discipline. However, they are simultaneously impressed with social workers’ job definitions and salaries. In Turkey, psychologists and social workers are considered health personnel, and they earn more money than other staff who do similar work in the same office. Because of this inequality, some sociologists began distance education in social work to obtain the same status and salary as social workers. All of these phenomena may be interpreted as a type of the “corrosion of character” that was proposed by Sennet (1998) to define the workers’ dilemma. Here in Turkey, sociologists are not considered to be sociologists either by themselves or by society. They are always pessimistic regarding their future although they are employed.

### Discussion

Sociology education and its problems have persisted for years in Turkey (Coskun, 1991; Kasapoglu, Kavas, Kilic, Cinar, & Kilikbicen, 2014; Kasapoglu, Kaya, & Ecevit, 2009; Kocabas & Hanedar, 2013). From its inception in Turkey, sociology has had identity problems. What sociology is or what sociologists do remains unclear. Another dimension of the identity problem is people who are not educated in sociology but act as if they are sociologists in society. For example, some social scientists and in particular eminent politicians and journalists claim that they are sociologists when they are talking on TV or writing for the media. Although these pseudo-sociologists become popular with the public, real sociologists react negatively. If these pseudo-sociologists are considered sociologists, then the real sociologists certainly are not. Sociologists also believe that sociology cannot be as ignoble as nonsociologists cause it to appear. All of these attitudes indicate that sociology has severe identity problems; otherwise, other professionals in the market would not play the role of sociologist.

Certainly, the status of sociology is not only problematic in Turkey. Similar discussions have occurred in the United States regarding whether sociology is a science and its scientific status...
Clusters. Sociologists and Related Formulated Meanings in Four Thematic Clusters.

Table 4. Selected Examples of Significant Negative Statements of Sociologists and Related Formulated Meanings in Four Thematic Clusters.

| Significant negative statements | Formulated meanings |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| **Regarding the meaning of sociology:** | “Uncertain risky field to study at that time” |
| “My decision to study sociology was unconscious.” | |
| “Involuntarily, I studied sociology.” | |
| “Sociology is not accepted as a field of expertise or a profession of expertise.” | |
| **Regarding sociology education:** | “Objectives of curriculum are limited by academia.” |
| “We are educated as if we will be academics in the university, which is not the case.” | |
| “The job I do here is not related to academic sociology.” | |
| “Sociology education must be more realistic.” | |
| “I have graduated without knowing what I can do as a professional.” | |
| “The duration of field studies can be increased.” | |
| **Regarding personal effects:** | “Corrosion of character” |
| “I have never defined myself as a sociologist.” | |
| “We are alienated from the society we live in.” | |
| “I work here like a social worker.” | |
| **Regarding the future:** | “Worried and pessimistic” |
| “We are worried about our future because there is no guarantee for tomorrow.” | |
| “It is obvious without doing a master’s in business administration, we can’t advance.” | |
| “The most important problem for sociologists is employment.” | |
| “I suppose there is not a sufficient number of jobs in the public sector.” | |
| “We should also have business administration skills when we are working as sociologists.” | |
| “The job description of a sociologist must be prepared like a social worker’s.” | |

(Singleton, 1998). According to Turner and Turner (1990), who published an institutional analysis of American sociology, a “sharp division has arisen between those who are committed to sociology as a science and those who remain sceptical and critical” (p. 7). During the late 1980s, the ASA prepared a report called Task Force on Graduate Education (TAGGE) and several articles published in the *American Journal of Sociology* written by Collins (1986, 1987) and Denzin (1987). Whereas Denzin was proclaiming the death of sociology, Collins examined sociology as either a proscription or an antiscience. What is wrong with sociology as a topic has also been discussed in special forums (Cole, 1994). The primary discussions concerned what academic sociology is or is not (Davis, 1994). These academics concluded that there are no firm lines between legitimate academic and nonacademic sociology because of postmodernism, humanistic sociology, and critical theory. Some other sociologists, such as Molotch (1994), proposed escaping the science trap as a model. Sociology and other social sciences have all been troubled by long discussions regarding the nature of science, and some have suggested that it may be better to assume, at least for sociology, that the discipline is an “intellectual craftsmanship,” as proposed by Mills (1959). Categorizing the social sciences with a flexible definition of science rather than a strict definition may be a solution. The majority of the social sciences are far from applying the principles of natural sciences, principles such as generalization and objectivity. In addition, there have been many changes in the philosophy of science and the epistemological convergence of natural and social sciences as opposed to divergence, prompting new areas of discussion (Kasapoglu, 1999; Wallerstein, 1998).

In Turkey, even senior professors are not completely clear when they answer questions regarding the identity of sociology. When these senior professors compare themselves with members of other disciplines and professions, they notice that sociology as a science is accepted and its education has continued for 100 years. Simultaneously, however, they believe that they are only the teachers of sociology and do not contribute to the scientific body of knowledge in terms of theory. They only transfer existing theoretical knowledge of the discipline, assuming that the theoretical knowledge is universal.

Sociology students also complain that the subject they study is not well known by society, causing them to feel a lack of motivation to concentrate on their lessons. Even after a certain number of years spent in the sociology department, students admit that they too are unable to define sociology, and the majority of the time they try to avoid answering such questions. The students who are not able to change reality behave like conformists. Because the majority of the students do not know a foreign language, they must read textbooks only in translation, never in the original language. These drawbacks have resulted in “mediocrity” (Sowell, 1993) among sociology students; students accepted being average and did not struggle to be superior or better. In fact, this mediocrity is true for both students and professors because of the existing system that reproduces it (Kasapoglu, 2011b). Furthermore, a lack of original theories and concepts peculiar to Turkey prevents the accuracy of both students’ and professors’ perceptions of reality. Rapid social changes in society necessitate more rigorous and comprehensive studies, not an easy task in existing market system conditions.

An examination of sociology education suggests that there are many students who are not studying voluntarily. There are also many students who began voluntarily but because of the risk of unemployment, have lost their motivation. The majority of students do not know where they will work and what will they do when they graduate. Few positions in the private sector, a lack of job security, fewer nongovernmental organizations, and limited opportunities to continue their education in academia as research assistants push sociologists to work in the public sector. A lack of sufficient departments in the state renders students disappointed and unhappy. In addition, there is no guarantee that graduates will do sociological work; graduates may have to do everything as an “everyman,” which was discussed by Sennet (1998) in his study on corrosion of character.
The majority of sociologists who are working for the state claimed that they are doing jobs unrelated to sociology. The results of the phenomenological study revealed that both students and sociologists are in a type of dilemma or state of confusion regarding the status of sociology. Although students and sociologists are certainly aware of the problems in the discipline, particularly regarding the risk of unemployment, they nevertheless maintain positive perceptions about their discipline. Although sociology is not known and respected in Turkish society, students, regardless of their gender and university, express being happy studying sociology. To solve the problems of sociology requires applying the tenets of sociology to sociology. If sociology solves its own problems, certainly the discipline will be more successful when practiced in other fields. Transferring Western theory without adaptation, the gap between Western theory and local practices, the lack of communication among sociologists, and certainly identity problems in society are the main problems of sociology in Turkey (Kasapoglu, 1991; Kasapoglu et al., 2014). Although all of these problems affect sociology education, the education in sociology also affects the quality of sociology. However, existing central examination system for entrance of higher education should also be revised. Professors must realize that the intensive efforts that they have exerted to transfer the existing knowledge contained in many ordinary textbooks and neglecting to connect theory with the nation’s or society’s needs represent an old-fashioned manner of teaching. Curricula that do not prepare students to become the professional sociologists should be revised. To fill the gaps between academic and nonacademic sociology, professors should facilitate “anticipatory socialization” (Bynum, Boyle, Presnall, & Wemhaner, 1977) for their students; the skills and ideas we learn from sociology can be applied to many subjects and areas, from art and culture including pubs, museums, street culture, games, and sports. According to Crawford (2012), a new and changing world is always challenging us as sociologists to explore and research. It should also be noted this is not peculiar only to sociology and can be interpreted for other disciplines such as urban planning or social anthropology.

Appendix

Table A1. Significant Positive Statements of Sociology Students.

| Statement                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| “I knew about sociology before registering in this department.”           |
| “I researched sociology before coming.”                                  |
| “I came to this department voluntarily.”                                  |
| “Sociology was my first choice during the university entrance examination.” |
| “I suppose I can work as a sociologist when I graduate.”                  |
| “I want to be employed as a sociologist.”                                |
| “There is a large scope of work as a sociologist.”                       |
| “If I work hard in my last year, I believe that I can find a job.”        |
| “Sociology education has changed my attitudes toward the social environment.” |
| “My department is trustworthy in my mind.”                               |
| “Sociology is a respectable and recognized department.”                   |
| “I feel that I am happy and belong to my department.”                     |

(continued)

Table A1. (continued)

| Statement                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| “My commitment to my department is very high.”                           |
| “If I had a chance to make a new choice, I would certainly choose to study sociology again.” |
| “Now I feel that sociology and my personality are in harmony.”           |
| “I feel that if I weren’t studying sociology, I would stop my education.” |
| “My family respects and trusts my ideas and says that there are positive changes in me.” |
| “Now I am more aware that there are different and hidden things behind social facts.” |
| “I started to learn the basic determinants of social structure.”          |
| “I am satisfied and happy with the content of sociology courses and the department’s teaching techniques.” |
| “The content of the courses is very useful.”                             |
| “The content of the courses is as satisfactory as it should be.”          |
| “Our curriculum and courses are well organized.”                         |
| “I am not a person who will work as a government officer.”                |
| “I do not make prejudgments about people anymore.”                        |
| “My family always supported me.”                                         |
| “Sociology education affected my entire life.”                           |
| “Sociology education made me more civilized and socialized.”             |
| “I am not an egocentric person anymore.”                                 |
| “I started to feel empathy.”                                              |
| “I see the use of a sociology education in my social relations.”          |
| “I started to interpret daily events by using lessons that I learned during my education.” |
| “My family and I are able to sit and discuss problems, which had never happened before.” |
| “At the beginning, I was thinking of studying psychology, but later on, I understood that I must study sociology.” |
| “Sociology is a very comprehensive and good department in which to study.” |
| “I started to like the department when my understanding and awareness increased.” |
| “Sociology pushed and motivated me to make observations about daily routines.” |
| “A sociology education widened my worldview, and now I have learned to look differently.” |
| “I have attended to many activities organized by our department.”         |
| “I enjoy doing empirical field study.”                                    |
| “I liked our field training conducted during the summer holiday.”         |
| “I have no problems with my department.”                                 |
| “Some courses and their professors make me happy about life.”            |
| “Our professors are well educated and concerned about us.”               |
| “Sociology is a lifestyle rather than a profession.”                     |
| “I suppose sociologists have a broader perspective than other people.”   |
| “I believe that sociology will improve me in many ways, including education.” |
| “We should be engineers of society.”                                     |
| “Sometimes I feel happy that I am studying sociology rather than philosophy.” |
| “I tell myself that I am lucky I am here.”                                |
| “I feel happier when others show a positive reaction to sociology.”      |
| “My teacher in secondary school introduced me to sociology and encouraged me to study it.” |
| “Our training is field-oriented.”                                        |
| “I believe that the status of sociology will be better in the future.”   |
| “I see the future of sociology as a profession as bright.”               |
“I didn’t take any sociology courses during my secondary school education.”

“The sociology lessons that I had in secondary school were boring and based only on memorizing.”

“I didn’t like sociology during secondary school.”

“During secondary school, they didn’t tell us about the status of sociology in Turkey.”

“I hardly knew anything about sociology when I registered.”

“Without planning, suddenly I decided on sociology.”

“My scores were not high enough for other departments.”

“Actually I didn’t choose to study sociology voluntarily.”

“I wanted to study law rather than sociology.”

“Actually I wanted to study psychology. I regret studying sociology.”

“I chose sociology thinking it was similar to psychology, but unfortunately it isn’t.”

“The difference between sociology and psychology is not clear in society.”

“The value that is attributed to sociology is very low.”

“Sociological studies do not get the necessary support in Turkey.”

“They try to prevent the practice of sociology in Turkey.”

“Sociology is not recognized and known in Turkey.”

“There are a few people who know what sociology is in Turkey.”

“Sometimes people in my environment do not regard sociology as a profession.”

“Sociology as a profession does not have a place in the eyes of society.”

“I have doubts about sociology as a profession, which derives from the system.”

“Sociology in Turkey is not in a good place.”

“Sociology as a discipline does not collaborate with other social sciences.”

“There is sociology in Turkey that is strange or unfamiliar to society.”

“Sociology in Turkey is Western-oriented.”

“Sociology in Turkey couldn’t make any theoretical contribution to sociology, and therefore, we do not have any theories and methods peculiar to Turkey.”

“I do not feel myself very close to sociology.”

“I do not feel that I belong to the sociology department in the university.”

“Sociology does not get the necessary respect in Turkey.”

“When sociology as a profession is compared with other professions, its status is very low.”

“I am sure I will have difficulties finding a job within Turkey’s borders.”

“I suppose I can’t find a job under the name of sociology.”

“I will be an unemployed person with a diploma.”

“I have worries about my future.”

“I do not think that I will work as a sociologist.”

“I still do not know what sociology is.”

“I consider sociology a lifestyle rather than a profession.”

“They employ sociologists with very low wages.”

“People ask me what I will do when I graduate.” “I always get negative reactions from my social environment.”

“Employment opportunities in the state departments are very limited.” “The high percentage of quotas for sociology departments decreases the quality.”

“Although it is a productive science, there is no appropriate organizational body.”

“We are far behind in terms of the internal organization of the profession.”

“We are not organized in the same department; there is no unity among us.”

“I feel that the content of courses is not satisfactory.” “We don’t get a good education.”

“I am not happy in this department.”

“There is something wrong in the educational system.”

“Our education is still based on memorization.”

“We learn only classical and contemporary theories and never go out to make observations.”

“The number of courses that are field-oriented is very few.”

“Everything in sociology education is theoretical.”

“The content of courses is full of gaps and is insufficient.”

“Courses must be more comprehensive and detailed.”

“Sociology curriculum does not meet the requirements of the work environment.”

“I believe that course requirements should be different in sociology programs.”

“An interdisciplinary approach is also missing.”

“The content of courses is not connected to Turkey and its problems.”

“Examples given in the lessons are from Western societies.”

“The most important problem with sociology in Turkey is lack of tradition.”

“Solving the problems of sociology requires time.”

“If I had a chance, I would choose sociology again but not this department.”

“I can’t easily say that I would study sociology again.”

“The employment of sociologists in Turkey is insufficient.”

“The general evaluation regarding employment is negative.”

“Under these conditions, I don’t think that I can find a job.”

“I don’t see myself as part of this faculty.”

“I do not feel committed to my class.”

“I suppose there is no unity for the sake of sociology.”

“There is not enough sociological research in Turkey.”

“I suppose the general ideological standing of the faculty affects the lessons taught.”

“Selection criteria for academics are wrong and vague, especially the general aptitude exams.”

“The majority of professors impose their ideology in the lessons.”

“Professors mostly underline and emphasize their personal views.”

“Professors interpret theories subjectively when giving their lectures.”

“Professors in the department are not open to dialogue and new views.”

“Presenting the same subjects under the names of different courses is really boring.”

“I frequently noticed that professors do not follow recent literature to update themselves.”

“During the lessons, there is no time devoted to discussion.”

“The style of lecturers is very boring.”

“Elective courses are not credited by the professors.”

“We have professors whose cumulative knowledge is very good, but they are not eminent in society.”

Table A2. Significant Negative Statements of Sociology Students.
Table A2. (continued)

"The quality of professors is not very good, especially when the practice is considered."
"I do not attend organized meetings; I only follow them in media."
"I have never felt that I am a sociologist."
"My commitment to my department is very weak. "My personality is not suitable to be a sociologist."
"Not only sociology, I do not belong hardly to anything."
"Sociology education didn’t change my worldview. "Sociology didn’t lead to any change in my life."
"I am against all kinds of organized activity."
"Sociology as a science requires one to be objective, which does not suit my personality."
"I guess I can’t work as a sociologist when I graduate because there are ideological pressures."
"I would be more successful in any other department."
"I do not think that I will be a sociologist when I graduate."
"I feel myself more suitable and close to other professions."
"My personality is not in natural harmony with sociology."
"Sociology education might have negative effects on my relationships with my family."

Table A3. Significant Positive Statements of Sociologists.

"Certainly I benefited from a sociology education."
"I suppose it is useful."
"It is very good to be a sociologist."
"I have never seen it cause harm."
"It contributes to you by giving you a perspective."
"It gains you a worldview toward human beings."
"A sociology education has positive effects on my work."
"I notice the contributions of a sociology education."
"Our professors directed us in a good manner."
"I used to participate in field studies when I was studying sociology."
"I suppose sociology professors motivated us properly."
"I believe that our education was sufficient from a theoretical point of view."
"I guess our sociology professors in the university are all in good positions."
"Theoretically, everything is perfect."
"Theoretically, our education was satisfying during our education."
"I am now practicing what I learned in theory."
"The work I do here is certainly related to sociology."
"I liked doing things that related to the sociology that I studied."
"If you enjoy your work, the time and its duration are not very important."
"I like my job and it satisfies me."
"The place I work has good conditions for sociologists."
"In this organization, they give credit and respect my views."
"We work under flexible working conditions."
"Our salaries are relatively good when compared with other companies."
"I prefer to work for the state rather than the private sector."
"This place is convenient for me to work."
"Nobody stops me if I conduct social research projects."
"We are working here under the same conditions as other workers."
"I want to earn a master’s in sociology."
"The poverty project of the municipality improved my knowledge and skills very much."

Table A4. Significant Negative Statements of Sociologists.

"My decision to study sociology was unconscious at that time."
"I studied sociology involuntarily."
"In my social environment and here in my workplace, there is hardly anybody who knows about sociology."
"Sometimes my inside voice tells me that I should have been a social worker and study social work instead of sociology."
"I graduated from the sociology department without being a sociologist."
"I have never defined myself as a sociologist."
"I didn’t improve or develop my abilities because I don’t want to do anything for myself."
"We don’t have good relations with the new recruits because we conflict."
"There is hardly anybody who understands what sociology is in Turkey."
"Sociology is not recognized properly."
"Sociology as a profession is not known in society."
"Sociology as a field of expertise or a profession of expertise is not accepted."
"We don’t know how to deal with problems when we face them in real life."
"During our education, we learned only theory."
"The things we have learned are all deleted from our minds because they were only theoretical."
"I forgot the majority of things that I learned during my sociology education."
"During our sociology education, professors alienated us from sociology."
"I have negative feelings regarding the academic staff."
"It is a shame if somebody calls me a sociologist because I do not have the qualifications of a sociologist."
"We do not know the functions of social institutions in Turkey."
"You expect sociologists to analyze the social structure of society, but sociologists are not aware of their roles in social institutions."
"We are alienated from the society we live in."
"The system does not educate you well."
"Our sociology education was not good and full of insufficiencies and lacks."
"We learn things wrongly and insufficiently."
"We should also have business administration skills when we are working as sociologists."
"How can we do research if we do not know the public administration system of Turkey?"
"We are educated as if we will be academics in the university, which is not the case. "The job I do here is not related to academic sociology."
"Sociology education must be more realistic."
"I have graduated without knowing what I can do as a professional."
"We should be more realistic during our education."
"During our university years, we enjoyed ourselves without learning."
"The most important problem for sociologists is employment."
"I suppose there is not a sufficient number of jobs in the public sector."
"The quotas of sociology departments must be decreased because of unemployment risks for graduates."

(continued)
When the numbers are increased in the classes, the quality of education decreases."

"I have never participated in field research, which I need now."

"The duration of field studies can be increased. "Summer vocational field training must be compulsory."

"I wish I could get more field research training."

"I am not able to criticize the educational system because I am away from the academic system."

"Long distance education in sociology is the worst thing that has happened."

"The number of sociology departments must be decreased."

"The work I do here is not related to sociology."

"My performance here is not sufficient as a sociologist because I work here as a contract worker."

"There is big gap between the field I have studied and the work I do here."

"The public sector never understands what sociology is."

"They know hardly anything about sociology in the state."

"The private sector employs you to use in work other than sociology."

"Working as a teacher in preparatory schools didn’t contribute to my professional development."

"They do not respect sociologists in the private sector."

"I suppose the employment of sociologists in the public sector is insufficient."

"The private sector pays less money and you are not assigned as a sociologist."

"We became gentlemen by wearing a tie, but I am still not used to it."

"Working in the public sector is awful."

"Here in the public sector, we have some advantages like working and holiday times are certain."

"The private sector was very bad, and I have transferred to the public sector."

"Working in the private sector is full of threats because you can be fired anytime."

"We are worried about our future because there is no guarantee for tomorrow."

"My days in the private sector were frightening."

"Neither working rights nor wages are equal when compared with other professions."

"There are many inequalities between us and others starting from salary to the behaviors toward us."

"Sociologists earn less money than psychologists, teachers and social workers."

"Financially, we are not working under the same conditions."

"I used to be interested in sociology knowledge, but later on I didn’t do anything."

"Sometimes they question our work by humiliating us."

"It is obvious that without doing a master’s in business administration, we can’t advance."

"I do not believe that I can do a good job in sociology."

"I am not in a position to decide or know who is wrong or right."

"Including sociologists, all people are considered as paperwork (red tape) in a bureaucracy."

"Employers select employees according to worldviews and ideology."

Table A4. (continued)

"They eliminate us during the interview if they do not find us close to their ideology."

"In general, they do not like my ideas here in the public sector."

"While my familial responsibilities have increased, my professional qualities have decreased."

"There is no job description for what a sociologist does."

"The job description of a sociologist must be prepared like social workers."

"The work I do here can be handled by anybody who is educated in a field other than sociology."

"The work I do here does not seems to me like sociology any more because I do not go to the field to carry out research."

"I work here like a social worker."

"I continue to work here because I do not have any other alternative."

"The state allocates departments for sociologists, but they do not assign us and we still continue to work in nontechnical departments."

"There are not many departments for sociologists in public administration."

"Before the 1980s, there were decisions made regarding the employment of sociologists, but later most decisions were reversed by the military intervention in Turkey."

"Our future is not open in terms of promotion."

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**Author Biography**

*Aytul Kasapoglu* is a full professor of sociology since 1993 at Ankara University, Department of Sociology. She is the founding member of Sociology Association in Turkey. She is also the editor of three journals in the field of social issues. She has published 21 books and 70 articles. She is interested in social theory, research methods, environmental sociology, sociology of disasters, and sociology of health and illness.