

# **Türkisch Vaqfs (Foundations) As An Economical and Social Model**

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## **Özet:**

*Vakıf, Türk-İslam medeniyetinin önemli kurumlarından biridir. Vakıf kurumu, sadece yardım ve destek görevini değil, aynı zamanda sosyal ve ekonomik bir fonksiyonu da üstlenmektedir.*

*Bu çalışmada vakfın, önemli bir kurum olarak sosyal sistemdeki iktisadi, mali ve yönetim fonksiyonları ele alınmaktadır.*

*Vakıf, öncelikle kendi içinde güçlü bir idari ve hiyerarşik fonksiyonları yüklenmiştir. Bu fonksiyonlar, vakıfların hizmet alanlarıyla ilgili çeşitli görevleri yerine getirmeyi sağlar.*

*Vakfın hukuki yapısı, güçlü ve göreviyle bağlantılı bir yapı içerisinde müesseseyi ayakta tutmaktadır.*

*Vakfın, bir defaya mahsus bir hizmetten daha çok, sürekli ve kendini finanse eden bir yapıya sahip olduğu görülmektedir. Vakıf, bu yönüyle Müslüman toplumların hepsinde yer alan önemli bir kurum özelliğini taşımaktadır.*

*Vakıf, İlk İslam toplumuyla birli”kte başlamış, Emevi, Abbasi, Selçuk ve Osmanlı dönemlerinde devam etmiştir. Osmanlı sisteminde vakıf, çok daha fonksiyonel bir yapıya kavuşmuştur. Vakıf günümüzde de, eski yapısından biraz farklı olsa da, devam ederek sosyal ve iktisadi rolünü yerine getirmektedir.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler: Sosyal Devlet, Model, Osmanlı, Kültür, Mali Sistem**

## **Ekonomik ve Sosyal model olarak Türk Vakıfları**

### **Abstract:**

*The foundation is one of the important institutions of the Turkish-Islamic civilization. The foundation institution undertakes not only help and support, but also a social and economic function.*

*In this study, the economic, financial and management functions of the foundation as important institution, is discussed.*

*The foundation has primarily a strong administrative and hierarchical structure. This helps perform various tasks related to the service areas of foundations.*

*The legal structure of the foundation keeps the institution alive in a strong and constructive structure.*

*It is seen that the foundation has a continuous and self-financing structure rather than a one-off service. In this respect, the Foundation has been and is a necessary institution in all Muslim societies.*

*The foundation started with the First Islamic society and continued during the Umayyad, Abbasid, Seljuk and Ottoman periods. In the Ottoman system, the foundation gained a much more functional structure. Even though the foundation is a bit different from its old structure, the foundation continues its social and economic role also today.*

**Keywords : Social State, Model, Ottoman, Culture, Finance System**

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## **Introduction:**

Foundations are a well-established institution that have a very important place in our culture and civilization history. Some researchers named the Foundation as a "chain of institutions" beyond being only an ordinary institution. This is because that is related to all aspects of life. The existence of the foundations over the ages and States can be explained for two main reasons. First, They have been very strong legal structures and the second their organizational structures have been working perfectly.

As it is known, the legal status and management of foundations are determined by "Vaqf charter" called "Vakfiye". Thus, each foundation was established as an independent unit. Thus, thousands of separate units emerged in terms of status, service area and management.

At first glance, It may argue that this can cause a caos. However, considering the practice in the Ottoman period, the state always paid attention to keeping the foundations under a central control. This control enables foundation managers to send and get approval about their accounting results from the center evrey year through local governor. The second important issue was that when a position was empty in the foundations, the head of the foundation board could not be able. To make an appointment directly, and the proposal was given through local judge and after examining the condition (criminal record) a certificate was given to the proposed person by the Government.

The second aspect of the foundation as a large and deep-rooted institution is measured by its ability to help humanity and effectiveness in the functioning of public life, despite its long-term life and location problems. Foundations have evolved over the centuries, have existed and survived. "It shows how suitable this foundation institution is for the human structure and life order. The foundations, especially and mostly in the Ottoman society have provided mutual aid and solidarity among individuals like in all Islamic societies. Considering the sociological conditions of an institution, we see that even inflation was taken into account in the remuneration, as well as matters such as maturity difference and partnership types. For example, the wages of Foundation officials decreased with inflation and increased with court decision. (Akgündüz from Ömer Hilmi, p. 45) A legal formula that social institutions work and use.

### **A. Economic and Social Function of the Foundation**

Firstly, it is mandatory to say that the foundation is not only an economical theory and proposition but more than this is an instituton that is able to practice diverse economical and social functions. Because we believe that dealing with an issue in theoretical framework and to practise are different matters. Foundation practice is the perfect example of Islamic law and economy forces in practice

#### **1. Economic function of the Foundations**

It is not a coincidence that trade is related to these foundations. They were also interested in the trade of large machinery, which is useful for new trading investments, for a very simple reason that foundations should also operate according to market laws. In this regard, we have to mention the economic institutions called "gedik".

"Gedik" means that the places of foundation where the craftsmen can place their belongings for a long time are with the permission of the owner. They got this permission because of the need for foundation buildings. In this way, the necessary repairs were made and there was some kind of rent for the foundation. The place where the kitchen utensils were placed was also called "gedik property" and the rent was called "property rent". After, they were installed to the property of the foundation.(Ebussuud, Gedik Risalesi, from Akgunduz 1989:57).

According to Dr. I. Erol Kozak another important functioning of the foundations is that;

At the micro level, each foundation is in fact a kind of business organization, without mentioning its goals. In order to continue the services for the purpose of the foundation, which must be treated as economic organization. For a productive and rational management, it must be guided by economic principles. In other words, formal and informal organization, production, sales, marketing, public relations, employee-employer relations, finance, budget and control techniques are also governed by the management principles.

If we examine from a macro level, we can argue that foundations are intermediaries that are helpful for the enforcing of the state while helping the dividing of the national wealth justly, the income distribution, the increase in the employment level and development with the contribution to the social assistance by investing on the health, education and urbanisation.

## **2.The Function of Social Security and Solidarity**

It is necessary to examine the social function of the foundation in two main sections. The first of these is the delicacy and humanity in the foundation's view of social life. This approach reveals the "philosophical foundation", which enables the initiation of studies that will ensure the thinking and best protection of people and society. The second is the establishment of a "social solidarity and security system" by putting this philosophical foundation into action. Comprehensive institutions have emerged in every geography where the foundation developed in such a sense and Islamic civilization was seen.

Our ancestors established social assistance institutions such as mosques, madrasahs, schools, inns, Turkish baths, caravanserais, hospitals, lodges and fairgrounds for strategic and military purposes or for the purpose of facilitating travel and trade. (Ozturk, 42).

The foundation system, in which life is intertwined with itself, has served important duties in Anatolian lands in the transportation services since the Seljuks. In the part of the big road connecting Konya to the east, only between Sivas and Konya, there were 23 large and magnificent caravanserais in the thirteenth century. Thanks to this system they have established, Seljuks have enabled traders to travel in safety and comfort, even foreign traders during this transit trade, robbery etc. has established a "insurance service" in the face of possible losses due to such reasons, by giving them state guarantees.

The Ottoman State, which maintains the same system by expanding a little more, has taken all kinds of measures for the better functioning of international trade. Along the way, there are many inns and caravanserais that provide the accommodation of caravans and almost all of them are in the nature of a foundation. The troops that protect the safety of the roads are patrolling day and night. There are villages commissioned by the state to repair roads and bridges, and communities that meet the needs of the caravans. The state carefully protected this resource, which provided it with significant income, and provided international trade and caravans with an unprecedented convenience and security in that era. (Cem, 86)

The complex, which is called "Küllüye" and can be seen in almost every Ottoman city, is a "architectural complex type", which has been created with a civilized and social understanding in terms of its function and purpose of construction and is one of the contributions of Turks to the world art. This complex, which is a social center, consists of a mosque and buildings with various social functions around it. These; madrasahs, hospitals, cultivation (imarat), tabhane, school, library, tombs, bazaars, inns and caravanserais, Turkish baths, legitimate buildings, toilets, temporary office and fountain.

The fact that foundations finance "lodges" and "derbent" institutions is also related to the establishment of urban areas. The principle of these organizations was that the people concerned would live together in the nearby regions.

What role could the foundation system have played in the social system, in particular, in the social system or the integration of relatives, kinship, regions, professions, or social entities. The first important point is that the Turks, who came to Anatolia in the form of caravans and tribes since the second century, and then crossed the Bosphorus to Rumeli, settling in certain regions, turning old villages

and towns, and establishing new villages or cities, It was thanks to the foundations that the people settled in the territory fused and integrated with each other in a new natural environment.

Seljuk Sultans built new cities such as Beyşehir and rebuilt cities such as Alanya and Aksaray. Foundation institutions such as palaces, theology schools, mosques, Sheikhs, teachers were invited, and merchants moved there. We can also see that they brought Christians from other cities. Those who started to take part in these cities were not “individuals” but “tribes”. The groups had a common religion, a Sheikh, and a religious leader. The sheikhs had a "lodge" and a "mascid" (mosque). Such a development can help in understanding Turkey and other Islamic countries by the characteristics of the districts. Due to the fact that the districts were built on the principles of ethnicity and religion, there all peoples were easily coexisted. For example, when the Ottomans conquered the city of Erzurum, 9 out of 12 districts were dependent on a "lodge". Building the "tekkes" through the foundations was a normal way of attracting people to the cities. Here, the Sheikhs and Dervishes had to place new arrivals.

The goals of Turkish foundations are also interesting. These; teaching religious beliefs, medicine production, cooking halva, immolating, supporting poor people to buy wood for the winter, supporting prisoners for their debts, supporting money for people in need of clothing, reducing mortality, providing food, buying books to support the children education and supporting by aiding money for clothing and livelihood of soldiers etc. (Cagatay,18)

These are all examples to show the mentality and philosophy of the foundations that form the unity of religious moral values and a certain understanding of civilization.

## **2. The Financial Function**

Continuation of the services provided by the foundations was possible with good sources of financing. A kind of "circulating capital" was established in every economic unit of the foundations.

The number of foundations established to support a village or city population is not low. For example, Mukdat Ahmed Pasha established a 78,000-cash foundation to be offered only to those who trade in Amasya in the eighteenth century. There are also foundations established for the payment of house taxes of a certain village or city. Such foundations were helping the city people to integrate. The presence of foundations that support professional groups is also no surprise. The foundations established by the tradesmen groups, the ulema, the sheikhs, to protect the lands they belong to can be given as examples. (Yediyıldız, 34).

(Yediyıldız, 1984:34)

The foundations that were established to pay taxes for the village or neighborhood / region were formerly called "Avariz Foundations". This was a kind of taxes paid on money and other things in difficult times. As we can see in that aspects, tax money was collected during normal times to pay for any kind of difficulty.

Such of foundations that were serving as supporter for those who were no longer able to survive their lives, not able to built and repaire roads and highways, protecting environment and not able to maintain all kinds of fundamental needs.

In every localities people used to have a "avariz savings". It was neither funded from the municipalities nor from the state, and money was given once and forever from wealthy people in the village. This money was used for general purposes. As we have already shown for the benefit of poor people. And another using of this amount, which was loaned and managed in this way.(Yediyıldız, 34)

It is claimed that there are some "money founders" that function as "credit suppliers". In this regard, Neset Cağatay approaches that; "We do not know the starting period of the money foundations. However, we think that the institutions established many years ago among the members of the" Ahi institution” in the Seljuk Anatolie among the West Asian Turks to fulfill such a function. Fatih Sultan Mehmet, who continued during the Ottoman Empire, also needed to know that the food set up 24,000 gold coins to maintain its rising prices, and the Great Soleyman founded another 698,000 akche (Cağatay, 1979: 19).

It is also suggested that money foundations are used as a kind of “solidarity loan”. The legitimacy of this kind of cash financing with the fatwas of labor-capital management principles based on profit-loss, or by selling in cash with another principle called "treatment of sharia/muamele-i şer'i" and paying back by installments up to 15% annually (Akgunduz , 43).

#### **4. Education and Public Relations Functions of the Foundation:**

It was stated that foundations should have a stable structure only once, rather than a limited time. Having a longitudinal service has enabled such an institution to optimize all three of its "human-institution-resources". The foundations were able to give the first examples of the institutions established in the west 500-600 years later.

Consistent income of the foundation was required to manage buildings and institutions and other places for the income sources. By this condition, for managing debit-credit structure as liable aspects of foundations, the owner of all the foundations gives the people working opportunity in these foundations and paying their salaries from their income regularly. It may be mentioned as describing some examples; that these working places and income sources of foundations were lands, the whole village farms and fields etc.

Workers' duty had to maintain the safety of people on the streets in large sections, day and night. Some villages were officially responsible for keeping roads and bridges in good condition at all times. The state carefully guarded merchants with a large amount.(Cem, 1977:86)

During the Ottoman period, 232 inns, 18 Caravanserais, 32 guesthouses and 42 bridges were built in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Apart from these, we have to talk about wells, mosques and shelters. They built cells to ensure the safety of the roads and settled in so-called "derbentists" in places called "Turkmen". And they were free of taxation. In Anatolie 2288, and in Rumelia 1906 families were settled with that conditions. (Ozturk, 1983:269)

As far as we can find from our ancestors, many foundations have water facilities in different parts of our country. Depending on their functions, the workplaces can be divided into two groups; the water from the source to the people to use the water pipe, the water tank, etc. intervals necessary to drive and also benefit from these intermediate businesses; cisterns, wells, fountains, shadows, pools, baths, toilets, laundries, icehouse, mill etc.

During the rule of the Seljuks, the management of the foundations of the waters was left to the local governors. If someone else was chosen for the management of the foundation, the local governor was in charge of checking the financial reports. Due to its great importance, a water ministry was established only by the Ottoman State in the 15th century and it remained until the 19th century. It can be understood from the old records that this ministry included a chief, secondary secretaries, detectors, rural guards, sergeant, border guardians and porter. Volunteers sent some men who should protect the safety of these water channels. They can be experts on technical issues. (Oge, 1983:26).

The foundations built when the Ottomans were the first examples, most of the foundations attached importance to education. In addition to building schools, these foundations had to be repaired, improved, expanded education, paid teachers' wages and other employees, to built student quarters and so on. To make sure students are interested in their education and only this, they should not spend time working to survive. The amount required for all these services came from the foundations (Ateş, 1983: 33).

As well as the describing of M. Nuri about these issues that; they were building mosques, schools, inns, baths for the common purposes of the people, and at the same time they were building cities, repairing the necessary places, they were also working for the development of education. They supported scholars and , teachers and students to expand science and technology (MN Pasha , 1979: 307).

Researchers inform that the equivalent of all primary schools called "infant schools" and the equivalent of high schools and universities called "madrasahs" were established by these foundations.

In the Ottoman Empire, if we think of the people who were called ulama - in my use - who were more close to the state, who were trained in important official institutions and madrasahs - they also received a license and got a license. But there are other people besides them. There are also people who are knowledgeable and legitimate professors. The foundation institution is a very common institution to help the firsts do their job. There are continual additions to the establishment of new madrasahs. By establishing a foundation, sultans do this, and the great men next to the sultans do it. (Mardin, 1991:108).

## **B. Change in the Efficiency of the Foundations:**

The loss of old power and functionality of a deep-rooted institution like a foundation from a certain period of time is a matter related to the corruption in the human structure in Islamic culture and civilization and the rendering of the legal and economic principles that keep this institution alive. Therefore, the first one is the cause of the event and the other is the results of the event. The legal and moral principles that play a role in the emergence of institutions, of course, may lose their validity or effectiveness with the existence of people who believe in these principles and cannot operate them in accordance with the general philosophy of the system.

### **1. The Human Factor**

We know that foundations are not arbitrary institutions, but their functions are controlled by laws. But like all ages, the human factor and moral values (money, wealth, greed) led them to seek their own good. Such inefficiencies on foundations have developed, especially as religious beliefs and moral values have lost their influence on individuals and society. However, these are all individual and local factors. According to some researchers, the breakdown of the foundations was due to its current structure. Akdağ has this belief; "The land that Sultan gave to his land was formerly called" assignment ", and the legal documents given to prove his owner were called" assignment "." Assignment "could use and sell it to someone else, and it often made it possible for them to benefit from future generations by establishing it to an institution.

Another point of view is that Sultans can take back the income of some of these foundations by accusing them of being false foundations.

Mardin said: "There were some Sultans looking for the possibility to get these foundations back." (Mardin, 109).

Some of the events we mentioned earlier can rarely happen. However, we need more information to generalize them. On the contrary, as Akdağ argued, the two examples that took place at the end of the 16th century were used to generalize the history of the Foundations.

As stated in the book of Akdağ, in the late 16th century, a few negative examples were tried to be attributed to the entire foundation history.

It is very important to mention the views of M. Nuri Pasha, the minister of the foundations here;

"Some people were trying to make fun of us by degenerating some of the problems of the past. One of them was trying to leave the owners of the foundations to their next generation. But even if all of this is pointless, the general had a very different understanding of this, and this could be proven. If it was to leave, the institutions established around the foundation should be small, but the amount of money set up for this was a great value, but for all these buildings, the authorities were also paid by the foundations (MN Pasha, 310).

Another point for the same issue is that people who are far from thinking about their relatives, such as "Darus'saade Agasi" and "Kapi Agasi", have established their wealth in these institutions. Although this is the case, although foundations, education, and institutions that will distribute the wealth of the country, it is unfair to emphasize details and not to mention key points.

It is not fact that his family was thrown after the death of every Vizier. It is controversial that there are some powerful reasons such as some of the wealth of these high status people, such as some of the dark sides of their wealth, as in some cases (M.N. Pasha, 309).

Osman Ergin, a researcher, discusses about foundations; Claiming that foundations were built only for fear of confiscation is the same as claiming that there is no more justice in the world for at least the past 1300 years. This is also the same to try to minimize the Turks who have left all these buildings. In order to continue the mosques and belongings established by Çoban Mustafa Paşa, which was established in Gebze, only one person was in his family, and his wages were lower than the manager. (Pakalin, 1950: 580).

## **2. Political Practices**

It may be possible to restructure foundations and regain their former status. However, II. Mahmut did not like having a say in the administration of "ulema (religious scholars)", that is, he did not want religion to get into his business. According to Bernard Lewis, the most important foundations were the control of religious staff, thus creating a great source of economic power for religious institutions (Lewis, 2008: 94).

Until 1826, Foundations were allowed by the permission of Kadis. After this date, they were attached to the ministry of foundations that established by II. Mahmut Sultan. The foundations in Mecca and Medina were attached to a director in in 1845. (Çağatay, 19).

With the new practices during the governing of Sultan II. Mahmut, the poor conditions in which "tekke-zaviye" and foundations' institutions used to be reported to the central authority. It was clear that with the practice of transferring the revenues of the foundations to other areas than they used to be, they have weakened the foundations and even were under the conditions of not being able to pay the employees and that there was not even any repair function possible. (Sener, 1990: 142) Due to such problems, some of the income was transferred from the ministry of wealth to the foundations.

The foundations and their staff were very weak due to the transfer of the revenues of the foundations to other areas. This was explained by M. Nuri Pasha "instead of being the guardian of the foundations, he was the one who destroyed them (Ibsirli, 57).

The II. Mahmut allowed the foundations to disappear. Following years were to take personal advantages from them, not developing them.

## **Conclusion:**

The weakening of the functions of foundations that serve socially and economically for many years has led to some functional deficiencies in society during all these times. It is controversial how the government can possibly deliver every service it has and how people can help the state and public services and even the state to fulfill its duties. those who need them come.

On the other hand, an institution, such as a foundation, which is one of the first examples of management systems in the world and also applied perfectly, needs to be analyzed. Such practices, which include social solidarity and security with their moral and legal aspects in economic life, must be developed under today's conditions. Especially when we keep in mind the money and credit problems of the market, they may think about "avariz savings" and "money foundations" in terms of capital and credit management.

When some people claim that foundations use "tekkes" and "zaviye", they should know the foundations and urbanization, transportation security, guiding tourists, may be deceived. When we consider their contribution to the education system, which is the most important services, we can see that they also fulfill an important social role.

All such of services and functions are to show that foundations are original institutions that cannot replace anything else. The most important task we face today is to give back to their "original status" and to give a chance to this successful model, which operates in a sense as a private sector, while respecting the rights of the people who established their wealth, self-financing and fulfilling some duties of the state.

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