

LIVING TOGETHER: ANCIENT SOLUTIONS FOR MODERN PROBLEMS IN PUBLIC SERVICE SUSTAINABILITY WITH OTTOMAN CASH WAQFS

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Abstract

Human beings are social beings by nature, living within and with society. The ontological rationale of society is public services. Public services are both the cause and the result of people living together. One of the few things that have continued to exist with the human species from the earliest times to the present day is public services. This phenomenon may indicate the strong necessity and high adaptability of public services. Throughout the historical process, humanity has applied many models to produce public services, and in today's modern material civilization, public services are produced by the Nation State, and the cost of these services is covered by taxes collected from society. In this study, while the sustainability of the methods used by nation states to finance public services is being discussed, a critical perspective on the sustainability paradigm is also presented. The discussion highlights the necessity of developing public service financing methods that do not require sustainability and proposes the waqf paradigm as an alternative suggestion. The proposal is concretized with examples from the Ottoman period Rumelian cash waqfs.

Keywords

Sustainability, public service, waqf paradigm, Ottomans, cash waqf, Islamic economics

Introduction

The widespread adoption of the neoliberal economic paradigm, both in theory and in practice, has led to the definition and positioning of public services within this framework. Today, in the neoliberal stream that constitutes the Orthodox economic theory, public services are discussed under the title of market failures, especially in the literature of public economics. Determining the optimal production level and financing sources of public goods and services, efficient and effective use of resources in their production, and the reasons why they cannot be produced in the private sector are still relevant topics of discussion. It should be noted that it may not always be correct to consider all goods and services produced with public financing as public services. On the other hand, it may not be possible to claim that all goods and services not produced with public financing are not public services. Highlighting the characteristics that make a good or service public can be beneficial, but when examining the definitions in the literature, two main problems arise in defining public services. The first problem is defining public services solely in technical and economic terms, excluding the normative qualities inherent in the nature of public services. This problem has two aspects: (i) the exclusion of axiological values embedded in public services from analyses, (ii) the anonymization of preferences and choices of individuals, communities, and society. The main source of the first problem is the definitional framework drawn by the neoliberal stream for public services. In this framework, public services do not have an independent existence, but can exist within a dichotomous ontology. The position of public services is determined by taking characteristics from private goods and services with a method that is compatible with the economic system advocated by the neoliberal paradigm. Therefore, in the current economic structure, what public services are not, rather than what they are, becomes important. Public services are indivisible in their benefits and therefore cannot be marketed; consumers are not competitors in the consumption of public services, and one consumer's use of a public service does not prevent another consumer from using the same service. Public services are services that cannot be deprived of consumption and that no one can be excluded from. In other words, public services are everything that must be supplied, whether demanded or not, and cannot be included in the price mechanism. If the definition of public goods and services accepted in mainstream economic doctrine is read in reverse, they are goods and services that cannot be private goods and services, and therefore cannot be subject to speculation and cannot generate profit for market actors. Private goods and services are goods and services that are rival in consumption and can be excluded from consumption. Public goods and services, on the other hand, are not private goods and services.

The second problem arises from the ontological distinction between public services and their financing. In other words, there is no organic connection between public services and their financing, as they gain institutional existence based on different reasons and grounds. While public services are centralized through budget laws, their financing is distributed to the base through different types of taxes. The principle of non-allocation completely severs the connection between public income and public services. In this case, not only are axiological qualities sacrificed, but also a reductionist notion of public service emerges in terms of local and cultural needs, where the beneficiary's needs and preferences are taken into account.

In this state, public services, which are in perfect harmony with the mainstream doctrine, are reduced to a simplistic notion of mandatory evil by being stripped of all axiological responsibilities. While it may be considered bad for a market economy because no one wants to pay for it, it is mandatory because it is demanded by society as a whole, not by individuals. It does not seek to direct or shape society. At this point, it is scientifically responsible to express the need for an ancient yet fresh perspective on public services.

A Brief Inquiry into the Ontology and Redefinition of the Concept of Public Service

Although Hume (1739) and Smith (1776) were the first to mention public services in the modern economic literature, the concept of public services was conceptualized by Samuelson (1954) and later by Musgrave (1959), and the subject was framed within a theoretical framework. Despite significant contributions by public economics theorists such as Buchanan (1965), Sandler and Tschirhart (1980), Tiebout (1990), Sandmo (2003), Kaul and Mendoza (2003), none of them have refuted Samuelson and Mudgrave. It would not be incorrect to say that the theoretical framework they outlined constitutes the mainstream of public economics literature.

The mainstream is also referred to as the traditional or narrow approach to public services. The conceptualization and theoretical foundation of traditional public services are based on the qualities claimed to be inherent in the nature of public services. These qualities that are claimed to be inherent in the nature of public services and that give them the characteristic of being public are non-rivalry in consumption and non-excludability/non-deprivation from consumption. One of the most prominent examples used to concretize these qualities is defense services. No one competes to benefit from defense services, and it is also not possible to deprive anyone of this service because the benefit of defense services is indivisible. Based on this assumption, those that possess all of these qualities, such as defense services, are referred to as pure public goods and services, and those that possess some of these qualities, such as education and health services, are referred to as quasi-public goods and

services. On the other hand, depending on the breadth of the public domain where public services are provided, local, regional, national, and global public services can also be referred to.

Public services cannot be priced or marketed due to the claimed inherent qualities in their nature. Therefore, the condition of $MC=MR$ firm equilibrium cannot be achieved, and goods and services with these qualities are not produced by the market. In other words, market failure occurs. This failure is the justification for the existence of the state, which is considered inherently bad in the market-oriented paradigm. The mainstream conceptualization of public services, in summary, refers to all productions that the market cannot produce and are therefore left to the state for production and financed by public revenues. However, it should be remembered that this production is not a task undertaken by the state, but a task given to the state by the market. On the other hand, the state has been dictated to refrain from interfering in the production of all goods and services with price formation as a limit to be observed. In this regard, it can be easily observed that the traditional definition of public service is in perfect harmony with neoliberal conditions and evaluates the phenomenon with the market paradigm. Another issue that needs to be carefully considered is the claim that these mentioned qualities give public services the attribute of being public. Contrary to the claim, it only attempts to explain why they cannot be commoditized. The most important point to highlight in the Orthodox definition of public services is the lack of a proper method of definition. In the definition made, the qualities mentioned as so-called natural qualities of non-rivalry and non-excludability from consumption are not the qualities of private goods and services. In a proper definition, the qualities of the defined entity should be included. However, the analogy established by the mainstream leads to the conclusion that everything other than goods and services for which prices are formed in market conditions is a public service.

The institutional structure created in the light of the definition of public services as a product of the neoliberal paradigm suppresses the diversity of public services and restricts access to these services due to budget constraints. On the other hand, the current definition leaves the production of public services to the state mechanism, and in cases where political stability cannot be ensured, significant disruptions occur in the supply of public services. In order to improve the quality and quantity of public services, it is necessary to redefine the concept of public services from a broader perspective, encompassing not only their technical and economic qualities but also their axiological purposes, and most importantly, opening the door to a decentralized public service ecosystem with a new paradigm.

In a valid definition, it is expected to cover as many attributes as possible that the defined entity carries, while excluding the attributes it does not possess - “embracing its own and excluding others.” However, the opposite of what

is expected is observed in the mainstream definition of public services. In the definition made within the framework of neoliberal doctrine, no place is given to the attributes that public services may or should possess. On the contrary, an attempt has been made to define them based on the attributes they do not have. Thus, the ontology of public services is fixed on a non-dialectical but dichotomous tense ground. In light of these criticisms, the necessity of establishing a new ontological ground for public services can be easily understood. It may be necessary to redefine public services in an ontological ground that goes beyond technical and economic limits, and is factual, historical, and passive/active. Thus, it may be possible to clarify the attributes that public services possess and evaluate the normative and positive functions they undertake on a more objective theoretical basis.

It would be useful to state upfront that claiming that public services consist solely of goods and services produced by the government and financed by the collective contributions of society creates a significant and destructive gap in framing the debate. Public services are much more than goods and services produced by the government. They are more than that in two ways: firstly, the production of public services is not limited only to the government, but every component of society produces public services as an active or passive part of sociality at any moment. On the other hand, public services are not only comprised of goods and services. Not only the production of the national flag in the government's sewing factory or the flagpole in the iron workshop, but also the waving of the flag on the mast is a symbolic representation of sociality and a form of producing public service. The duty of an economic actor involved in the production process of private goods and services to do their best or not to do what they should not do is also a form of public service. Regardless of whether it is classified as private or public, all types of production can be realized with the resources and capacities of society. Public services, in their most refined form, are everything that makes living together possible, easy, and sustainable. Public service is both the rationale and the result of sociality in a society, whether it is democratic or not. Conceptually, public service is a vision as the rationale for the existence of sociality and an important institution carrying tradition as its outcome. As a vision, public services play important functions in determining the present and shaping the future of societies, and as tradition, they contribute to the sustainability of the experience of living together and the preservation of social memory. Institutions that emerge in a society are the common product of the understanding of existence and morality of that society. Public services, as a social institution, should be evaluated not only in economic and technical terms but also in terms of their axiological dimension. The understanding of existence of societies shapes the material/concrete structure of their institutions, and morality forms their essence. Institutions of societies that lose their essence are confined to the limits of matter, while societies clothed in morality are able to realize a truth that goes beyond matter

and make their institutions carriers of this truth. In other words, institutions, which are tangible examples of the perspective of societies towards human beings, objects, and the universe, are representatives of the paradigms upon which societies are built. Together with other institutions inherent in the paradigm they belong to and represent, these institutions form the entirety of organized relationships at local and global scales, in other words, the ground of living together. The ground of living together is the ontology field where human beings are born, acquire existence, become aware of their existence, and come into contact with each other. Throughout human history, as well as in modern material civilization, this ontological field, or the ground of living together, is created through public services.

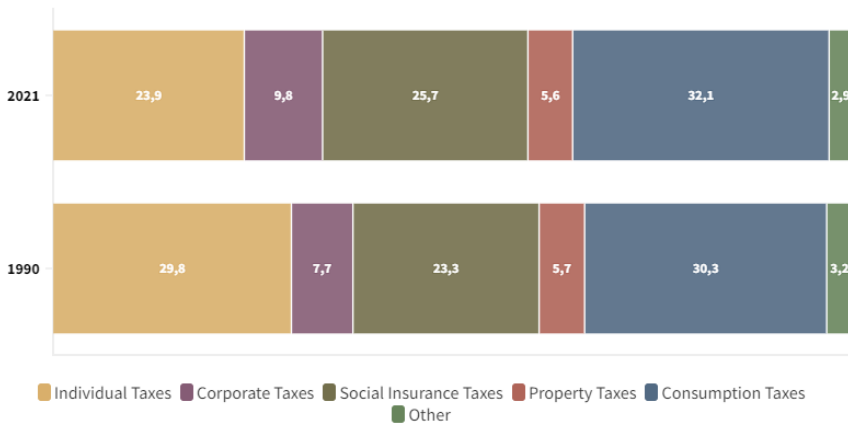
The ontological field of humans is shared not only with each other, but also with all living and non-living beings, collectively forming a whole. Every consciousness recognizes and interprets itself and all other entities on the common ground of coexistence, benefiting from the possibilities of the paradigm that constitutes this ground, or in other words, the given template meanings. The outcomes of the process of interpretation become visible in human-human, human-entity, human-divine relationships; they manifest as conceptions of the universe, world, geography, country, city, neighborhood, household, family, and individual, shaping material civilization through institutionalization via public services. The paradigm inherent in material civilization is the dominant element that determines the perspective and relationship of the conscious agent constructing civilization towards humans, objects, existence, and the universe. When viewed from the framework presented above, the limitations of the neoliberal approach in public services become apparent.

From the Sustainability of Public Services to Autonomous and Persistent Public Services

It is evident from the ongoing discussion throughout the article that the ontological boundary drawn by the mainstream economic paradigm does not encompass the true nature of public services. This ontological constraint also manifests itself in the financing of public services. The sustainability of public services is a prerequisite for the sustainability of the living environment. Ensuring that the experience of living together is sustainable for everyone depends on improving the quality and quantity of local, national, and global public services. There are numerous indicators today that we have reached the natural limits of the existing paradigm, some of which will be discussed below.

As previously mentioned, the ontological foundation of public services and their financing are separated, and their relationship is completely severed. Figure 1 below illustrates one of the striking consequences of this phenomenon.

Figure 1. Public Revenues Source in OECD, 1990-2021



Source: OECD, 2023 • The OECD included 24 countries in 1990 and 38 in 2021.

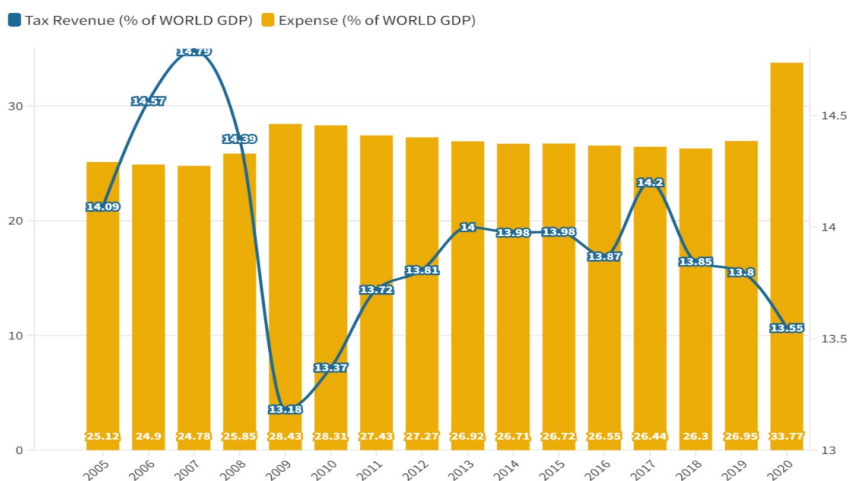
Figure 1 illustrates the components of public revenue collected in OECD countries in 1990 and 2021. As one begins to interpret this visual, it should be noted that there has been no radical change in the tax system of OECD countries between 1990 and 2021. A radical change in the tax system would require a paradigm shift in public services and financing. However, Figure 1 shows that changes in tax policy have occurred without a change in the tax system paradigm. Within the neoliberal paradigm, the fundamental function of tax policies is to finance government activities in a sustainable manner by creating a neutral component of public revenue that does not affect the decision-making processes of economic actors. Naturally, anything that continues unchanged falls outside the concept of sustainability. Structures that are inherently unsustainable require an exogenous force to sustain them. If the financing of public services is being debated within the concept of sustainability, it may indicate an artificial structure that goes against the natural state of public services. The sustainability of the current structure of public financing primarily means the sustainability of neoliberal economic policies. In Figure 1, it can be seen that policymakers continue to seek ways to transition from taxes that are considered fair but contradictory to the objectives of the neoliberal paradigm, such as income taxes, to taxes that are claimed to be more neutral and sustainable in the neoliberal system, such as consumption taxes that are less likely to cause disruptions. The justification for consumption taxes being a favorable method of public financing for the sustainability of the neoliberal system is that the hidden consumer tax embedded in the final consumer price would have less impact on economic behaviors compared to other types of taxes, thus allowing for the establishment or non-disruption of economic efficiency.

However, such tax policies result in directing a larger proportion of household budgets of lower income groups, who need and benefit more from public

services compared to higher income groups, towards financing public services, due to not taking into account the socioeconomic status of the consumer. Thus, the financing of non-priced, and therefore free, public services is shifted to the low-income segment with a higher likelihood of benefiting from these services. In other words, disadvantaged groups who benefit more from public services due to their socioeconomic status allocate a larger proportion of their household budgets to financing public services. Those who benefit more from public services end up making greater sacrifices in the end. While the neoliberal system may not have been able to price public services, it has succeeded in shifting the cost to those who benefit from public services in the end and minimizing distortions from its paradigm. Figure 1 supports this claim. In Figure 1, it can be seen that the proportion of income taxes has decreased in OECD countries, while consumption taxes and social insurance revenues have increased. Compared to 1990, the dependence of OECD countries on income taxes has decreased (by a decrease of 6 percentage points), while the dependence on social insurance taxes (with an increase of 2.4 percentage points) and consumption taxes (with an increase of 1.8 percentage points) has become higher on average.

Another problem arising from the definition of public services is the ontological discrepancy between public services and public financing. Considering public financing and public services as two separate entities is like seeing one thing as two. Evaluating the financing of public services separately from public services weakens the relationship between the two and sometimes causes it to disappear completely. This phenomenon is the biggest threat to the sustainability of public services. Figure 2 below is intended to clarify the nature of the relationship between public services and public financing in the present day.

Figure 2. General Government Revenue and Expense Percent of World GDP, 2005-2020



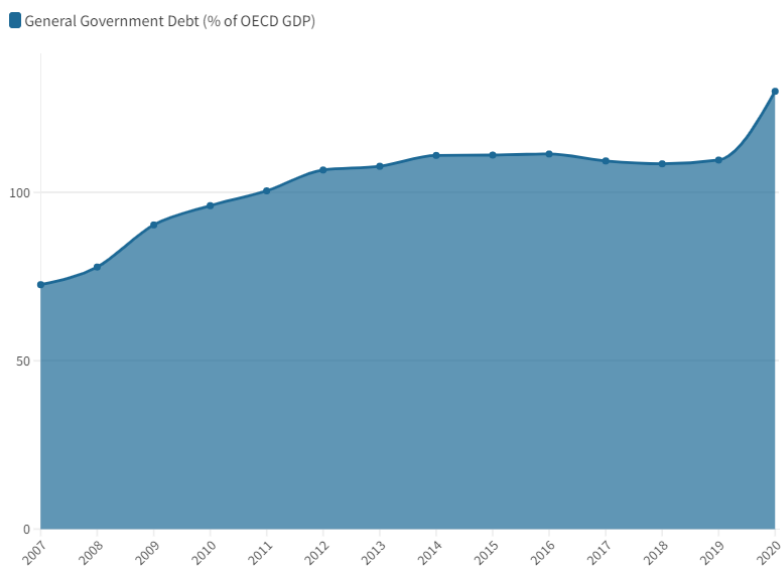
Source: World Bank, 2023

The data used in Figure 2 is compiled by the World Bank using data from the International Monetary Fund, Government Finance Statistics Yearbook and data files, and World Bank and OECD GDP estimates. It would have been beneficial to include the percentage of global public debt to world GDP in the figure to provide a clearer understanding of the current situation. However, data showing the percentage of global public debt to world GDP is not available in the databases of the World Bank, OECD, and IMF. Nevertheless, in the later parts of the discussion, the percentage of public debt to GDP will be included as an argument using OECD Total data.

The trend of tax revenues between 2005 and 2020 is shown in the blue line. It can be observed that global tax revenues were lower than global public expenditures, except for the years 2006, 2007, and 2008. The dramatic impact of the 2008 global economic crisis on tax revenues is clearly visible, as the share of tax revenues in global GDP decreased from 14.79% in 2007 to 13.18% in 2009. However, during the same period, global public expenditures increased from 24.78% of world GDP to 28.43%. While the ratio of global public expenditures to world GDP stabilized at around 27% between 2011 and 2019, it can be clearly seen that this ratio jumped to 33.7% in 2020, indicating a dramatic increase. During the same period, there was a significant decrease in public revenues due to the slowdown in the global economy since 2017 and the Covid-19 pandemic that turned into a crisis in 2019. An exogenous factor can increase the need for public services while simultaneously causing a decrease in public revenues and an increase in the need for borrowing.

While public revenues are directly and primarily affected by external factors such as economic, political, and social conjunctures, public services continue to be provided as needed under all circumstances. The ontological gap between public services and their financing results in a disruption of the income-expenditure balance in the public budget and an increase in the need for borrowing.

Figure 3 shows that as of 2020, total general government debt in the OECD region has reached 130.05% of the total GDP of the OECD region. Based on this ratio, it can be argued that taxes are collected not for the sustainability of public services, but for the sustainability of debts. Public services are financed through borrowing, and debts are financed through taxes. As a result of the paradigm shift in modern public service, when sustainability of public services is discussed today, it actually refers to the sustainability of public debts.

Figure 3. The ratio of total public debt to GDP in OECD countries

Source: OECD, 2023

The sustainability of public services is not a widely discussed or followed concept in the Waqf paradigm. This is because the inherent nature of the Waqf paradigm is to create a state of existence that does not require sustainability. However, today, the Waqf paradigm relies on external interventions/support to sustain an artificial/industrial structure that needs to be sustained. The flaws of modern material civilization, which cannot sustain its existence in its natural state, are attempted to be compensated through Waqfs. In the examples of endowments given, we can clearly see that Waqfs have made sustainable development a natural state by providing services free of charge without creating additional costs for the state budget or beneficiaries, for each of the interconnected and ambitious sustainable development goals of the United Nations in the pre-modern period. Today, these Waqfs operate with the help and contributions of local, regional, and international volunteers to repair and compensate for poverty, hunger, poor living conditions, access to education and clean water, unsustainable cities, distorted nature, and their consequences without putting an additional burden on the state budget. On the one hand, this can also mean maintaining a tolerable level of tolerance for the negative effects of modern material civilization with the support of the Waqf paradigm. However, instead of repairing and compensating for the degradation in all areas where sustainability is needed, it is necessary to compensate for the costs of sustainability. Waqf services ensure the sustainability of modern material civilization by reducing the pressure on the state budget and society caused by compensation costs.

The waqf paradigm creates a habitus that eliminates or minimizes the costs reflected on society for financing public services, where the phenomenon of sustainability cannot exist within the current framework. Nowadays, even the sustainability goals themselves are in need of sustainability, and it should be emphasized that the costs of taking steps towards achieving these goals are imposed on the public budget and therefore on the shoulders of societies. This hypothesis will be discussed in the later stages of the debate through the 2023 Central Government Budget of the Republic of Turkey. Firstly, the problem of efficiency, which is an important impasse of the modern public service paradigm, will be emphasized. Three important questions need to be answered for the production of public goods and services: Which public goods and services will be produced? For whom will public goods and services be produced? Who will bear the production costs of public goods and services? In the modern public service paradigm, the answers to these questions are determined as a result of the political decision-making process, which includes politicians, bureaucrats, voters, and interest groups, each aiming to maximize their own benefits. In this way, public choice implies a structure that requires the systematic and simultaneous optimization of multiple objectives. On the other hand, compared to other stakeholders in the composition, taxpayers or voters who bear the costs of public services are the most disadvantaged and vulnerable in terms of participation in the decision-making process.

Creating the objective function is quite difficult when building a decision model for multi-objective optimizations, and there are multiple criteria to evaluate the effectiveness of the preferred solution. It may not always be possible to combine these criteria in a single objective function. In problems where multiple criteria are involved, especially when these criteria are contradictory to each other, different solution alternatives arise. Another aspect to consider in multi-objective optimization is the presence of conflicting objectives in a problem. For these reasons, the effectiveness of public choice remains among the important topics of discussion that are still relevant in the literature.

It is difficult to say that the waqf paradigm has a single purpose, but the greatest advantage of producing public services with local economic resources to meet local needs. In single-objective optimization problems, there is only one best solution, and solutions can be ranked from best to worst. In multi-objective optimizations, instead of a single best solution, multiple best solutions called Pareto optimal solutions can be discussed. In multi-objective optimization problems, a solution that is good for one objective may be bad for another objective. Apart from whether the waqf paradigm is single-objective or multi-objective, the localization and scale advantage it has in producing public services is an important argument for us to think that it will produce Pareto optimal solutions.

In the waqf paradigm, the decision on which public services will be produced is made based on the most urgent and severe needs in the place where the waqf is established. The question of who the public service produced by the waqf is for is not very meaningful in the waqf paradigm, as the ontological justification of the waqf is to increase the welfare of all beings. It is difficult to give a clear answer to the question of who bears the cost of the public goods and services to be produced by the waqf. The founders of the waqf, called “vâkîf”, bear the establishment cost of the waqf that produces public services, but this cost is not the production cost of public goods and services. This cost is the cost of establishing a public service production unit that is financially autonomous and financially sustainable. Public services are produced from the economic values obtained from the assets that have income-generating quality and are endowed to the waqf. For example, a waqf endows its real estate called “akar” for the purpose of collecting neighborhood waste and maintaining education services with the rental incomes. Sustainability is an ontological necessity in the waqf paradigm. Therefore, in the waqf paradigm, financial sustainability is a jawhar/substance, not an aradh/accident, it is a natural state. The fact that the private property of the endowed private property is conditionally granted for the production of public services and allocated for this purpose socializes the benefit of an economic value with a very low individual marginal utility in private property, and maximizes the efficiency of the economic resources owned by society and the marginal social utility of these resources.

Today, there are 52,000 waqfs inherited from the Seljuks and the Ottoman Empire in modern Türkiye. These waqfs continue their activities in accordance with their objectives under the management of the General Directorate of Waqfs, which is a state institution. The first waqf established by the Turks in Anatolia was founded by the Seljuks in Pasinler, Erzurum in 1048. It would not be wrong to say that Anatolia is the geography where the public service organization has been carried out with the waqf paradigm for the longest time. The current status of public services, which have been autonomously provided in the Anatolian geography for nearly a thousand years, will be monitored with the assistance of the 2023 Central Government Budget of the Republic of Türkiye.

In Türkiye, the state budget has been prepared based on a performance-based program budget system since 2021. Program budgeting is a budgeting system where expenditures are classified according to program classification, which can be defined as function, service, or subject, and information related to the performance of public service delivery is provided. In this system, all activities and programs that work towards the same institutional goal are tried to be organized under the same program, regardless of which public institution is responsible. The rationale for the existence of the state budget is the financing of public services. In the analysis to be conducted, programs that are directly

or indirectly related to the Sustainable Development Goals will be identified by taking advantage of the opportunities of the program budgeting system, and the budget amounts allocated for the implementation of the programs will be highlighted. This way, not only the budget allocated for the financing of public services, but also the budget size allocated for the sustainability of sustainability will be open to discussion. The 2023 Central Government Budget includes 68 programs, 30 of which are directly or indirectly related to the Sustainable Development Goals. The names of these programs and the allocated budget amounts (in billion TL) are provided in the table below.

Table 1. Budget Allocated by the Republic of Turkey for Sustainable Development Goals in 2023 (Billion, TL)

No	Program Name	Budget Amount
1	Active and Healthy Ageing	3,96
2	Fighting Addiction	4,74
3	Regional Development	2,60
4	Protection and Development of Children	10,95
5	Energy Supply Security, Efficiency	406,53
6	Lifelong Learning	8,45
7	Power Management	9,49
8	Law and Justice	79,43
9	Human Rights	0,20
10	Employment	100,40
11	Women's Empowerment	2,09
12	Combating Unregistered Economy	5,20
13	Rural Development	16,43
14	Preventive Health	84,32
15	National Culture	11,85
16	Conservation and Sustainable Management of Forests and Nature	10,20
17	Developing and Supporting Sports	7,66
18	Natural Resources	2,70
19	Agriculture	103,30
20	Therapeutic Health	220,13
21	Basic Education	237,00
22	Community Safety	176,90
23	Utilization and Management of Soil and Water Resources	47,90
24	International Development Co-operation	2,23
25	Citizenship, Civil Society	5,78
26	Strengthening Local Governments	400,40
27	Poverty Alleviation and Social Assistance	136,60
28	Higher Education	154,40
29	Sustainable Environment and Climate Change	6,24
30	Research, Development, and Innovation	18,59
	Total	2.276,67

Republic of Türkiye's 2023 Central Government Budget allocation, as seen in Table 1, is slightly over half dedicated to financing the Sustainable Development Goals. This table draws attention to two dilemmas. The first dilemma is the financial unsustainability of sustainability. The burden of sustainable development goals on Turkish society is quite heavy, as the concept of sustainability is considered a public service within the existing paradigm of public services, and its cost is borne by the society. The second dilemma is the societal unsustainability of sustainable development goals. The fact that more than half of the public budget allocations are occupied by sustainable development goals may result in less budget allocation for voter preferences. This situation may lead to a loss of flexibility in public budgets in terms of financing the experience of coexistence. Producing fewer public services that are preferred by voters and that make coexistence easy and feasible jeopardizes the sustainability of coexistence. Sustainable development goals, in their current form, seem to be a political choice that transforms the fight against global negative externalities caused by modern material civilization and its ontological rationale of capitalism into national public services and imposes its cost on societies through national tax systems. Because the determination of the public budget is entirely a political process.

The waqf paradigm can be claimed to be one of the Pareto-optimal methods of producing public services for society without reflecting costs. An example of this is the establishment of the Waqf Forest Nursery in the 15th century Bursa city to provide a sustainable firewood source for the city residents. The waqf also took care of the protection of forest areas and the maintenance of the nursery. Another example is the establishment of a network of public baths throughout the Ottoman Empire as a social health service. These baths not only served as a source of public hygiene and cleanliness, but were also designed to use sustainable energy sources such as solar energy (Eyice, 1997).

The practice known as "şenlendirme / revitalization" in the Ottoman Empire, which refers to the revival of unused land through cultivation, settlement, and the revitalization of abandoned and ruined structures, ensures that idle economic resources are utilized for production in a way that increases social benefit (Halaçoğlu, 1994). One of the most unique and effective applications of sustainability is seen in the revitalization practices carried out by waqfs in the Ottoman Empire. In addition to these specific examples, the Ottoman Empire emphasized the responsible use of natural resources in general. This is reflected not only in the laws and regulations that govern the use of land and natural resources, but also in the cultural values of the empire, which place great importance on the conservation of natural resources for future generations. Numerous public services, including those dating back to 1048, continue to be sustained without cost to society for nearly a thousand years.

There is a need for a more inclusive definition and theory of public services for the sustainability of public services. The current theoretical impasse and ontological fragmentation have led to the emergence of voluntary services, referred to as the third sector, as independent entities. However, the third sector also provides public services. It can be clearly stated that a paradigm that encompasses all the qualities and elements of public services and evaluates them in the same ontology as their financing sources is needed. Within this framework, convergence of public services with the waqf paradigm is considered as a proposed solution, and the example of cash waqfs/montes pietatis established in Rumelia during the Ottoman period is discussed as a case study.

Waqf Paradigm in the Ottoman Empire

The generally accepted definition of waqf is the donation of a value for the benefit of the creatures and the saving of a value for the benefit of the creatures. As a result of this definition, waqf is recognized as a charitable institution, and it has been treated in this way throughout history. In this study, the waqf will be analyzed as a charitable institution as well as a structure that builds the society and the state. It is possible to present many examples from past practices as a reason for this evaluation. Especially since the Seljuks and during the Ottoman period, the change and transformation that the institution of waqf has undergone and the new features it has acquired make it necessary to deal with it differently.

It would not be wrong to say that the waqf institution has a history equal to the history of humanity. Because the human tendency to help another living being is a natural feeling and emerged with the first human being. The parable between Abel and Cain about the acceptability of the sacrifice offered for the sake of Allah is proof of this (Harman, 1996). It is natural that various civilizations have influenced an institution with such a long history and have undergone many changes. Even though it is nowadays reserved for the Islamic civilization, waqf/charity/foundation has been characterized differently in all civilizations. Since discussing the characteristics of waqf-like institutions in other civilizations would exceed the limits of this article, it would be appropriate to introduce the nature of the waqf institution and the cash waqfs in the Ottoman period.

The waqf, which emerged as an institution of Islamic history and civilization and developed legally and practically over time, experienced its most significant period during the Ottoman period. The institution of waqf came to the forefront in the Ottoman period and played a leading role in the organization of the state due to the state officials' eagerness for the sustainability of public services. It is possible to see the traces of this desire in the basic principles of the Ottoman economic mentality formulated by Mehmet Genç. This set of

ideas, categorized under the headings of Provisionism, Fiscal Discipline, and Traditionalism, basically aimed at the Ottoman subjects' welfare and the state's maintenance. Provisionism envisaged the availability of products in the market in abundance and at cheap prices, mobilized all means to maximize production, liberalized imports, and restricted exports. This is the idea behind the granting of capitulations by the Ottoman Empire to other states. Conversely, fiscalism aims to increase tax revenues, keep the budget prosperous, and cut expenses to keep the financial structure intact. At this point, it can be said that Provisionism and Fiscalism constitute opposite poles. In cases where these two opposite poles are in conflict and when the state has financial difficulties, the principle of Traditionalism comes into play and produces remedies from the "kanun-i kadim" (Genç, 2018). It is precisely at this point that the waqf institution assumes the leading role in the organization of the state. By establishing the link between the state and society and undertaking a significant portion of social services, the waqf aims to ease the state's burden and increase society's welfare.

What was the content of these services, which were a burden on the state and one of the basic needs of society, and how did waqfs alleviate this burden? In the modern world, services such as education, health, finance, municipality, and religion, which fall within the scope of the basic rights of society, are largely carried out by states. It is known that these services put a huge burden on state budgets in the modern world and that states make great efforts to meet this burden. To give an example for the Republic of Turkey, the table in Annex 1 shows the shares of institutions from the central budget. Accordingly, services and expenditures such as education, health, social security, agriculture, sports, infrastructure, urbanization, and religion constituted approximately one-third of the budget. These figures do not include the budgets of municipalities. Considering that the budget of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality for the year 2023 is 115 billion TL (IBB, 2023), it is understood that the budget burdens of modern states, especially the Republic of Turkey, are very high for the sake of the ideal of being a social state. The importance of the waqf institution emerges at this point. All these services undertaken by modern states were seen in the Ottoman period under the leadership of the waqf institution and without burdening the budget. In all Islamic countries, waqf services were provided by religious and educational institutions (mosque, masjid, madrasah, dârülkur'ân, dârülhadis), accommodation and gathering places for Sufis (zâviye, hankah, ribât, tekke), kitchens distributing food to the poor (imaret). These services included tombs (mausoleums), which were also used as social meeting places, health institutions (bîmârîstan, dârüşşifâ), roads, bridges, caravanserais, irrigation networks, castles, lighthouses, sewers, waterways and fountains in cities and rural areas (Yediyıldız, 2012). The Ottomans designed the cities they conquered or built as Islamic cities and restored them as such. These cities, which had important buildings such as mosques, bazaars, schools,

baths, and lodges at their centers, became prominent all over the empire. In the Islamic civilization, which was formed as an urban civilization, it was of vital importance that urban services were carried out sustainably. Therefore, the Ottomans organized all these urban services through the waqf institution.

Ottoman Period Cash Waqfs and Sustainability of Public Services

The authorization of the endowment of securities in addition to the endowment of real estate coincides with the mercantilist period and the acceleration of cash flow in the market. The Ottomans' dominance over the spice and silk routes encouraged European states to make geographical discoveries. Thus, the silver and gold that Europeans acquired through overseas trade and colonies, especially in America, initiated the mercantilist economic paradigm in Europe, which also affected the Ottoman Empire. The abundance of silver in the Ottoman market made it necessary to take measures to utilize it effectively. Since the possibility of the endowment of movable and immovable property was a subject of debate in Islamic societies, Ottoman scholars revisited this issue. They permitted the endowment of movable property considering current needs and market conditions. The cash waqf, also called “nukud waqf”, is the operation of a certain amount of money with an annual operating rate, and the leading money remains fixed in the waqf capital, and the interest obtained is saved for the performance of public services. At this point, it would be appropriate to mention the operating rates. In the practice of money waqfs in the Ottoman Empire, the operating rates varied between five percent and twenty percent, with fifteen percent being preferred. This rate was accepted throughout the empire and applied unchanged for centuries. Figures below this rate were also applied considerably, and figures above it were rarely encountered (Korkut and Bulut, 2017).

In the Ottoman Empire, cash waqfs were applied throughout the empire and were especially widespread in the Rumelia region. In this section, examples of the sustainability of public services in the Ottoman Empire will be analyzed based on the cash waqfs established in Rumelia during the Ottoman period (Bulut et al., 2019).

Education Services

In the Ottoman Empire, education services were carried out under the roof of schools and madrasas. While schools provided primary and secondary school education, madrasas provided higher education. Schools and madrasas were built and maintained by waqfs all over the Ottoman country. The waqfs fulfilled the construction and furnishing of these institutions, the payment of the salaries of muderris and other officials, and meeting the student's needs.

School Waqfs

In 1669, Velizâde Abu'l-Fazl Ahmed Efendi, the Kadi of Edirne, endowed 5,000 qurush with his real estates. The philanthropist requested that 5.000 qurush be operated with a 15% rate and that the income generated to be used to cover the expenses of the school he had built next to his house opposite the Boyacı Gate of Fatih Mosque in Istanbul (VGMA Register: 632, Page: 368-369, Serial: 174). In 1904, Hacı Mustafa Bey ibn Mehmed Agha endowed 20 hundred pieces of mecidî gold and one hundred sheep. The philanthropist requested that 20 pieces of gold be operated with a 15% rate and that the income generated be used to finance the expenses of the two mosques and two schools he had built in Mübarekşah and Köprü neighbourhoods in İpsala (VGMA Register: 603, Page: 170, Serial: 289).

Madrassa Waqfs

In 1688, Mustafa Bey bin Kethüdazâde Mehmed Agha endowed 2,500 qurush to be operated at a rate of 15%. Philanthropist Mustafa Bey wanted to cover the expenses of the madrasah he had built in Hayrabolu with the income from the operation of the money (VGMA Register: 623, Page: 151, Serial: 161). In 1814, Kara Mehmed Agha bin Abdullah endowed 2,000 qurush and requested that this amount be operated at a rate of 15%. With the income generated, it was requested to cover the salary of the muderris and the expenses of the students of the Kubad Madrasah located next to the Cami-i Kebir in Kırkkilise (VGMA Register: 630, Page: 1143, Serial: 697).

Religious Services

In the Ottoman Empire, religious services were carried out by waqfs in the context of constructing, renovating, and maintaining places such as masjids, mosques, tombs, and tekke-zawiya. In addition to being sacred places where religious obligations were fulfilled, they also gathered places where people spent essential parts of their social lives. Since mosques were the most crucial element of the Ottoman city, they retained their characteristics as the dominant element of cities and religious services.

In 1579, Hüdaverdi bin Ali endowed 141,640 dirhams at a rate of 15% for the expenses of the mosque he built in Konica and the prayer hall built by his brother near Konica (Sarajevo Gazi Hüsrev Bey Library, V-169110). In 1846, Hacı Mehmed Bey bin Ali endowed 3.500 qurush for the expenses of the mosques he built inside and outside the castle of Dubiçe and requested that this amount be interest-bearing at 15% (VGMA Book: 581/2, Page: 267, Serial: 269).

In 1721, Ahmed Agha bin Mehmed Agha bin Yahya endowed 2,500 qurush for the expenses of the Halveti Tekke in the town of Koprulu (Veles), and

the operating rate was set at 15% (VGMA Register: 623, Page: 343, Serial: 344). In 1879, Mehmed Vehbi Effendi bin Mehmed Muhyiddin Şevki Effendi endowed 10,000 qurush for the expenses of the Şâdiye Tekke in Tekyeli Atik neighborhood in Yenişehir Fenar. The waqf's operating rate was set at 15% (VGMA Register: 988, Page: 230, Serial: 134).

In 1672, Velizâde Abu'l-Fazl Ahmed Efendi, the Kadi of Edirne endowed 9,000 qurush for the expenses of Muhyiddin Arabî Tomb in Damascus and Sadreddin Konevî and Mevlâna Celâleddin-i Rûmî tombs in Konya (VGMA, Register: 632, Page: 375-377, Serial: 176). In the waqf, the operating rate of the amount is stated as 15%. Nalburzâde Mehmed Effendi ibn Mehmed from the Isa Fakih neighborhood of Edirne endowed 80,000 akche together with various real estates for the expenses of the tomb he built in Keresteciyan Bazaar and set the operating rate of the amount as 10% (VGMA Register: 623, Page: 185-186, Serial: 183).

Municipal Services

In the Ottoman Empire, municipal services included roads, bridges, pavements, cleaning, water, fountains, kitchens, and health services and these services were provided by waqfs. Imarets were costly structures that included services such as health, kitchen, and accommodation, and whose amount was determined according to the population of the city. These structures were generally built and maintained by the large-scale waqfs of the sultan, pasha, and city elders. Costly services such as roads and bridges also belonged to this category. However, the waqfs established by ordinary citizens to support these large waqfs should also be considered an alleviating factor.

In 1795 Osman Beşe ibn Sarı Mustafa endowed 400 qurush for the maintenance and repair of the water wells, fountains, waterways, pavements, and bridges in the village of Sirt in Rodosçuk and chose 15% as the operating rate (Shar'iiyah (Court) Records of Rodosçuk, 08629.00018. v. 95a-b). In 1867, Süleyman İzzet Pasha ibn Kaplan Pasha and his brothers endowed 22,666 qurush to be spent on the maintenance and repair of the pavements of the streets in Kavaye and Ilbasan (VGMA Register: 988, Page: 103, Serial: 36).

In 1506, Yahya Pasha ibn Abdülhay endowed 38,500 akche with various real estates and requested that the income generated to be used to cover the expenses of the imaret he had built in Skopje. The waqf's operating rate was determined as 15% (VGMA Register: 629, Page: 422-429, Serial: 332). In 1580, Mehmed Pasha endowed 230.000 akche with various real estate to meet all the expenses of the imaret in Leşane Village in Prizren and requested that this amount be interest-bearing with a 15% operating rate (VGMA, Register: 989, Page: 073, Serial: 056).

Financing of Taxation

In the Ottomans, a type of tax was initially collected from war to war but became permanent over time, and it was called the avariz tax. This tax was collected from all regions of the empire. So much so that, in time, chests were established in every neighborhood where these taxes were collected. When the payment of these taxes, which had become permanent, became a problem for the subjects, waqfs came into play, and these taxes were financed through cash waqfs.

In 1587, Siyam bin Mahmud endowed 1,000 akche to be transferred to the avariz fund of Kara Kâtib neighborhood in Rodosçuk (Shar'ıyyah (Court) Records of Rodosçuk: 08457.00034, v. 57b). Musa Effendi bin Süleyman from Kızılminare neighborhood of Edirne endowed 3,000 qurush in 1643 for the avariz taxes of his neighborhood and preferred 15% as the operating rate (Shar'ıyyah (Court) Records of Edirne, 04648.00013, v. 97a (25a)). In 1804 the year 1804, Seyyid Mustafa Agha ibn Hüseyin endowed 6.800 qurush for the "avariz" fund of the Cami-i Kebir neighborhood in Akçakızanlık (VGMA Register: 987, Page: 143-144, Serial: 46).

Conclusion

All societies are obliged to establish social justice for the sustainability of the experience of coexistence. Otherwise, social disintegration may arise from such situations and practices. Therefore, social justice is necessary although not sufficient for coexistence in every social context. One of the priority components of social justice and the experience of coexistence is public services. In this context, looking at the Ottoman experience, it can be inferred that public services, which are fundamental, were carried out more by civil organizations rather than the state, and it is worth mentioning that the prevailing trend in the literature is also in this direction. However, as a result of this trend, it is possible that the implications obtained have been overshadowed by anachronism that is so deep that they are not even noticed. The reason for the anachronistic perspective is the neglect of the changes that have occurred in the content, nature, and functions of the waqf institution over time, like everything else. The fact that the waqf institution is now considered a civil society organization is due to this kind of anachronistic inferences. Institutions that exist as elements of different social, economic, and political organizations at different times, and therefore undergo changes in their content, nature, and functions, despite their unchanged names, are inevitable. The fact that the waqf institution has become a civil society organization occurred after the emergence of modern nation-states with their social, economic, and political organizations. Before that, the waqf institution itself was public. The experiences of the Byzantine, Seljuk, and Ottoman periods prevent us from saying that the waqf institution was a civil society organization in the pre-

nation-state period. Just as it is incorrect to describe the waqf institution as a civil society organization in the pre-nation-state period, it is also erroneous and anachronistic to claim that the public services and functions performed through waqfs in the pre-nation-state period would be more effective and efficient when carried out by civil society today. When civil society organizations are mentioned, voluntary and charitable activities are perceived. However, the historical position of the waqf institution demonstrates that it is a public service-producing institution that goes beyond voluntary charitable works and aims for societal benefit.

When considering that in the pre-modern nation-state era, land ownership was believed to belong to the ruler or the sovereign, who represented the state, it can be understood that the scope of civil society, as it is commonly known, was limited. In the pre-modern era, waqfs (religious endowments) constituted a significant portion of the public domain, and it would not be entirely incorrect to claim that even the state itself was a waqf. The number of waqfs that have survived from the Ottoman and Seljuk periods to the present day, which are still evident in various forms, is 52,000. The Republic of Turkey, which is often considered to be a continuation of the Ottoman Empire, has also preserved the public nature of waqfs in a modern nation-state paradigm by bringing together all the ancient waqfs under the administration of the General Directorate of Foundations, with an intermediate solution in line with the modern nation-state concept. On the other hand, newly established waqfs have been transformed into civil society organizations by acquiring a modern character. From this perspective, the waqf paradigm continues to exist in modern Anatolia through a dual application of ancient and modern practices. The modern interpretation of the waqf paradigm as a civil society organization form serves as a support for the sustainable provision of modern public services. However, the waqf institution is unable to fully realize its ontological purposes. The construction and maintenance of the public domain through taxes impose significant costs on society. Restoring the waqf institution to its original public nature could be an important step towards the sustainability of public services and the collective experience of living.

Archives

VGMA Register: 632, Page: 368-369, Serial: 174

VGMA Register: 603, Page: 170, Serial: 289

VGMA Register: 623, Page: 151, Serial: 161

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Annex 1. 2023 Budget of the Republic of Türkiye

Institution	Budget
Ministry of Treasury and Finance	2.080.666.192.000
Ministry of National Education	435.351.082.000
Ministry of Health	292.346.556.000
Ministry of National Defence	182.770.968.000
Ministry of Labour and Social Security	160.348.125.000
Ministry of Family and Social Services	149.868.618.000
General Directorate of Security	116.888.293.000
Presidency of Strategy and Budget	90.914.195.000
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry	80.295.454.000
Gendarmerie General Command	76.073.628.000
Ministry of Justice	72.383.054.000
Ministry of Youth and Sports	66.544.532.000
Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure	52.242.481.000
Directorate of Religious Affairs	35.910.653.000
Ministry of Interior	32.631.038.000
Ministry of Environment, Urbanisation, and Climate Change	24.321.048.000
Ministry of Trade	17.103.506.000
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	16.778.583.000
Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources	15.772.982.000
Ministry of Industry and Technology	14.904.608.000
Revenue Administration	13.008.334.000
Ministry of Culture and Tourism	11.428.837.000
Directorate General of Migration Management	9.508.170.000
Directorate of National Intelligence Organisation	7.729.120.000
Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency	6.825.405.000
Presidency	6.637.060.000
Grand National Assembly of Turkey	5.249.583.000
Coast Guard Command	4.986.900.000
General Directorate of Land Registry and Cadastre	3.068.236.000
Directorate for European Union	2.129.297.000
Directorate of Communication	1.631.576.000
General Directorate of Meteorology	1.603.859.000
Court of Auditors	1.292.458.000
Supreme Court	1.276.421.000
Council of State	805.407.000
National Palaces Administration	669.800.000
Directorate of State Archives	362.941.000
Council of Judges and Prosecutors	312.551.000
Constitutional Court	260.919.000
Climate Change Directorate	154.182.000
Secretariat General of the National Security Council	114.297.000
Total Public Administrations within the Scope of General Budget	4.093.170.949.000

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