

# The transformation of the Turkish education system and the culture of neoliberalism

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## **ABSTRACT**

The educational system of Turkey has been undergoing an influential neoliberal transformation for the last decade. It has been redefined, restructured and reorganized through four major reforms and acts; the 2005 Curriculum Reform, the FATİH Project and Intel Teach Program, reformation of disciplinary mechanisms, an intensive use of standardized tests, and the 4+4+4 Reform. In this qualitative inquiry, I examine the field of meanings and practices that constituted these reforms and acts to in order to draw a conceptual and theoretical framework to understand the nature of the transformation of the Turkish Education System. In this study, I depart from narrow classical economy-based understandings of neoliberalism and utilize cultural understandings of neoliberalism.

I use a methodology that draws from insights from critical ethnography, narrative inquiry and Foucauldian discourse analysis. I collected data from the fieldwork over a 12-month period and consulted a wide range of documents in order to make sense of the cultural transformation of the Turkish Education System.

I found that the Turkish Education System has been going through a cultural transformation, that emphasizes psychologization of pedagogy, the

computerization of education, Islamization of the system and regular controlling of students and teachers. The logic that pursues this shift is a neoliberal agenda that advocates for marketization of education, defines education as a personal and private endeavor. This logic claims that the educational system is in a crisis of efficiency and productivity that can be saved by computers, promotes religious education, and aims to systematically control students and teachers through new mechanisms of disciplining and an intensive use of standardized tests.

## RESUMÉ

Le système éducatif turc fait l'objet d'une transformation néolibérale influente depuis une décennie. Il a été redéfini, restructuré, et réorganisé à travers quatre réformes et actions majeures, à savoir la réforme de 2005 relatives aux programmes d'études, le projet Fatih et le programme Intel Teach, la réforme des mécanismes disciplinaires, l'utilisation intensive de tests standardisés, ainsi que la réforme des 4+4+4.

Dans cette enquête qualitative, j'analyse les domaines d'application et le sens de ces réformes, afin de définir le cadre théorique et pratique nécessaire à la compréhension de la nature de la transformation que connaît le système éducatif turc. Dans cette étude, je m'éloigne de tout néolibéralisme économique au sens strict et classique et adopte "volontairement" une approche culturelle.

Pour ce faire, j'opère une approche méthodologique hybride s'inspirant de l'ethnographie critique, de l'enquête narrative et de l'analyse du discours foucauldien. Afin de comprendre la transformation culturelle que connaît le système éducatif turc, des données ont été recueillies sur le terrain durant une période de travail de 12 mois et un large éventail de documents a été consulté.

J'ai pu constater que la transformation culturelle que connaît le système éducatif turc favorisait la psychologisation de la pédagogie, l'informatisation de l'éducation, une islamisation du système et un contrôle systématique des enseignants et des écoliers.

Je soutiens que la logique qui favorise ce changement est une logique néolibérale qui prône la marchandisation de l'éducation, définit l'éducation comme un effort personnel et individuel, prétend que le système éducatif traverse une crise d'efficacité et de productivité que seule une informatisation permettra de surmonter, promeut l'éducation religieuse, et vise à contrôler systématiquement les élèves et leurs enseignants par le biais de nouveaux mécanismes disciplinaires et un recours conséquent à des tests standardisés.



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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

### A Personal Note

Although this dissertation deals with the transformation of the Turkish Education System, it is also a personal journey for me. I have been a part of the system both as a student and as a teacher. I have been and am still a subject, an object, a watcher and a claimant of the topic of this dissertation in different ways. I was born in Kurdistan part of Turkey and into a family in which Kurdish was the sole language. However, the system I entered after eight years as an elementary school pupil was organized in Turkish, which was quite a blow to me as I now vaguely remember. I felt like an alien, but in some manner I managed to pull through. After I finished the elementary and middle school levels, I moved along to a vocational high school. In the final year of my high school, like every other senior lycée student, I was training for the national exam for university placement. My intention was to study sociology at the university, but just before I entered the national exam for university admittance, the whole university entrance system had been changed. Actually, I would not be able to study sociology or any other discipline because my field in high school was computers. So I had to take another year to prepare for the university entrance exam. After a year of preparation, I succeeded in getting into the department of computers and

educational technology in the university. I was going to become a teacher. However, my interest in sociology had never abandoned me. I had many questions: Why could not I speak my mother tongue at school? Why, all of a sudden, did the university entrance system change? What was the power behind the change? When I graduated, I began to work as a computer instructor. It did not take long for me to understand the logic that continually directed teachers as to what and how to manage things. For example, the year I took off to teach, there had been a major curriculum reform and we were supposed to teach according to the principles that we had been fed.

The principles themselves are not in question for now; what matters is that no one was consulted about the reform. That is only one side of the problem. The other side is about us teachers. Why did we never ask any questions, and why did we blindly do what we had been given to do? Why did this seem utterly normal to us? These were the kinds of doubts that troubled my mind all the time and pushed me to work out these issues. The reason for spelling out these is not to claim that I am a victim, but to stress the personal story of this dissertation. In this work, I scrutinize the system I have been talking about. This dissertation is the effect of my search for answers to these questions.

## **Statement of the Problem**

This dissertation is about the neoliberal transformation of the Turkish Education System and the culture that embedded within. Neoliberalism, along with its twin term globalization, has appeared as a central concept in studies of the economy, politics, culture and teaching. For the last three decades, neoliberalism has been set up not only as the best, but also as “the only reliable social regulator” (Trouillot, 2003, p. 53). Neoliberalism has been installed as the mechanism that forces governments to first take back funds from publicly funded social services, such as education and health, and then to create a marketed model of governance that requires constant acts of a policy shift.

Education, as a social and publicly funded institution, inevitably has been influenced by neoliberal policy shifts around the world. During the rise of neoliberal policies in the 1990s and thereafter, marketization gained a privileged position in the educational field (Apple, 2001, 2006; Robertson, 2006; Torres, 2009). Privatization of public services, decentralization of the regulation of education, intensive utilization of standardized tests, vocationalization of curriculum, psychologization of pedagogy, weakening of unions, computerization of teaching practice, the rise of religious and anti-secular activities in schools, commercialization of schools, and change of disciplinary mechanisms are some

of the rising movements with the coming of the doxa of neoliberalism in the educational systems.

However, the influence of neoliberalism on educational systems has not been the same in different regions of the world (Harvey, 2005). Effects of neoliberalism on socio-cultural life have been contingent on, contradictory, uneven and more importantly sensitive to the local context across the globe. The above trends have not always been popular in a single education system. In this study, I am concerned with four discourses that came to dominate the field of education in Turkey. These discourses are the psychologization of teaching, the computerization of educational activity, the new discourse of discipline and testing, and Islamization of education. By discourse I mean a set of actions and statements, which have a specific historicity, define what it is the truth and more importantly have material effects on systems and actors within systems. In relation to these discourses, I examine major reforms and practices each of which settles discursive frameworks for their respective discourses. In this regard, I delve into the 2005 Curriculum Reform to scrutinize the discourse of psychologization of teaching, the FATİH Project and Intel Teach Program to understand the discursive formation of computers in schools, the evolution of disciplinary mechanisms and the intensive use of standardized testing to reveal



the logic of change, and lastly the 4+4+4 Reform to document the Islamization of education.

As I noted, in Turkey, psychologization of teaching, computerization of educational activity, change of disciplinary mechanisms and the intensive use of standardized tests, and religious and anti-secular activities in schools have been the rising waves. In 2005 a new curricular approach that advocated student-focused teaching and introduced developmental psychology as a frame of reference for learning, began to be implemented nationally by the ministry of education in primary schools. In 2012, a project called FATİH [the conqueror], was declared by the ministry with the aim of computerizing the system. The goal of this project was to give each of the students in the system (approx. 11 million) a tablet computer distributed free of charge by the commonwealth in order to enhance students' learning. In 2012, a reform called 4+4+4 was implemented by the ministry, which altered the whole structure, the solid construction and governance of the schooling system. The reform divided the school system into three interrupted, sequential levels as elementary, middle and high schools. Most importantly, the reform also paved the way for the middle Imam Hatip Schools (strictly religious schools) that were not there before the reform. Meanwhile, the employment of standardized tests has increased dramatically since the last decade. Standardized tests are now settled as a norm and a cornerstone of the

organization. Disciplinary mechanisms also evolved along the way. In this study, I critically examine these reforms and changes to see the nature and effects of the transformation of the Turkish Education System.

The orientation and effects of these reforms have been rich and diverse in the sense that they have been transforming the establishment, the structure and of the system, the values circulating within the scheme that have created a market model. What these reforms indicate is that the recent neoliberal transformation of the Turkish Education System does not only focus on economics but it extends beyond that. The transformation is a cultural one that has racist, ethnocentric, masculine, and conservative characteristics. In this work, I have two overarching concerns. First, I am concerned with neoliberalism as a cultural system that consists of a manner of informing our temporal practice and what form of subjects we should be, and as well as ways of making certain meaning to our lives. My object in this sense is to develop an analytical framework for the cultural anatomy of neoliberal discourses of education. I expose the nature and the contentedness of the culture that has been established across the Turkish Education System by the discourse of neoliberalism. In this work, I am interested in not just the rhetorical articulation of neoliberalism but also its material effects.

My second objective focuses on the material effect of this cultural shift. Neoliberal reforms in schools via policies can imagine particular ways of conducting teaching practices and the regulation of everyday school life. Nevertheless, whatever the policy purports to does not find its path straight into school life; it is twisted and altered while being translated to and by teachers, students and parents. It should not be taken for granted that the strategies work as strategists expect. One should be aware of the gap between outcomes and intentions. Any study focusing on a grand narrative should go beyond identifying abstract characteristics of the narrative and strive to understand the conflict between what is signified and what is the outcome in order to see disjunctures. In this sense, I contend that a work focusing on neoliberal education policies should examine both what the policy says and how the policy acts out in schools.

### **Research Objectives**

I undertook my doctoral dissertation with the following broad objectives:

- To investigate the field of meanings and practices that constituted reforms and changes.
- To explore the actual impacts of these reforms and changes.
- To develop a conceptual and a theoretical framework to understand the nature of the transformation of the educational system of Turkey.

## **Research Questions**

In order to achieve my research objectives I raise the following sets of questions:

- What kind of a political rationality constitutes these reforms? What is intended by these reforms? What values are promoted by these reforms? What kinds of subjectivities did these reforms intend to produce?
- What are the effects of these reforms and changes on the educational system?
- What kind of a cultural transformation has the Turkish Education System experienced during the last decade? What sorts of discourses are dominating the system? What is their historical relevance and growth?

## **Significance of the Study**

I hope that my research on the transformation of the Turkish Education System makes significant and distinct contributions to knowledge in the field on a number counts. At the epistemological level, I combine insights from critical works of the anthropology of neoliberalism and critical studies of education to understand the contemporary relations of power and inequality in the realm of teaching. Methodologically, in this study I use multiple lenses in studying the neoliberalization of education by applying insights from critical ethnography,

narrative inquiry, and Foucauldian archaeology and genealogy that I call Cloud Discourse.

Another area in which my research can make significant contributions is that of education in Turkey in general. School ethnographies in the area of education in Turkey are rare; it would not be wrong to state that there is a huge gap in this field. This study contributes to filling this gap since it is a school ethnography .

My inquiry also contributes to the field of neoliberalization of teaching practices in the sense that it studies neoliberalism not only as a model of the economy and a mode of governance, but equally as a cultural system to establish a conceptual space for analyzing how neo-liberalism has racist, ethnocentric and masculine features. I attribute special attention to the role of neoliberalism as a cultural system, which involves contemporary relations of power and inequality. Thus, I hope that my inquiry creates a unique contribution to the field of critical studies of neoliberalism and education by examining how education becomes the mechanism of social subjugation and maximizes exploitative relations in a neoliberal agenda.

### **Organization of the Study**

I have organized the dissertation into six chapters. Following this introductory chapter as the first one, I review relevant literature on critical studies

of neoliberalism and education in the second chapter. I critically examine the critical anthropological accounts of neoliberalism and locate my research within the area of critical studies of neoliberalism. Then, I move to the critical studies in education and analyze them to build a framework for my field. In the third chapter, I explain my conceptual framework of the study. I first talk about the nature of qualitative research and the role of ethnography in educational studies. Secondly, I flesh out critical ethnography and try to indicate why it is the most appropriate methodology for this inquiry. Thirdly, I articulate different approaches to Narrative Inquiry and Critical Discourse Studies separately and critically examine these to explain why and how they would be useful as the methods for interpreting my data. Finally, I explain my utilization of methodological instruments in gathering and analyzing the data. I also provide information about the field where the study was conducted.

In chapter four, I provide a brief narrative of the cultural and political constitution of Turkey and the historical evolution of education in Turkey. In this chapter, I also discuss the historical conjunctions and ruptures in the neoliberalization of the educational system of Turkey. In chapter five, I present the data and findings of the survey. I examine four major reforms and modifications that have established a neoliberal culture in the educational

arrangement. In the final chapter, I discuss my overall conclusions, provide recommendations for further research, and explain the limitations of the study.

## CHAPTER II: NEOLIBERALISM AND CRITICAL STUDIES OF EDUCATION

### Introduction

During the rise of the neoliberal agenda, the market ethic has acquired a privileged position in the educational field (Apple, 2001, 2006; Robertson, 2006; Torres, 2009). Privatizing public services, decentralizing the regulation of education, use of standardized testing, vocationalization of the curriculum, weakening of unions, the computerization of teaching practice and the commercialization of schools are some of the rising trends with the advent of the “doxa” of neoliberalism in the educational systems. Education is conceptualized as a “product to be evaluated for its economic utility and as a commodity to be bought and sold like anything else in the free market” (Apple, 2001, p. 111). However, the influence of neoliberalism on educational systems has not been the same around the world; it has been contingent, contradictory, uneven and more importantly sensitive to the local context across the globe.

In this chapter, I focus on the literature and the ongoing discussions within the field of critical studies of education and neoliberalism. I aim to provide a critical and comprehensive answer to the following questions:



- What do the scholarly efforts tell us about the phenomena encapsulated under the grand abstraction, “neoliberalism”?
- What does the literature on critical studies in education tell us about the influence of neoliberalism on the transformation of educational systems?

As the questions suggest, I deal with two different fields of investigation; neoliberalism and critical studies in education. I begin with the critical accounts of neoliberalism by which I aim to scrutinize, and to position my research within the field of critical studies of neoliberalism. Then, I move to the critical studies in education and analyze them to build a conceptual framework for my study. There are similar approaches in critical studies of neoliberalism and education. For example, governmentality studies appear as a dominant theoretical orientation both in studies of neoliberalism and education. However, I chose to articulate them separately since they have different implications for the study of neoliberalism and education even though they use common theoretical concepts such as power and governing.

### **Critical Studies of Neoliberalism**

Neoliberalism, along with its twin term globalization, has appeared as a key concept in studies of the economy, politics, culture and education. The roots of neoliberalism lie in the writings of Friedrich von Hayek (1960). Probably it is in the “*Constitution of Liberty*” that he develops his most systematic thoughts on

liberalism and the market economy and claims that the free market is the most suitable model for regulation of the economy. His ideas have been very influential in designing the economies of the global North especially after the mid-1970s fiscal crisis and with the rise of the Reagan/Thatcher era. Since then, neoliberalism has been established not only as the best but also as “the only reliable social regulator” (Trouillot, 2003, p. 53). Kingfisher and Maskovsky (2008) provide a clear and concise account of neoliberalism, which is worth citing at length:

In recent decades, neoliberalism’s global prominence can be attributed to the actions of a shifting and sometimes unwitting conglomeration of large corporations, right-wing ideologues, centrist politicians and liberal policy experts who pushed government to first roll back key regulatory mechanisms, social welfare policies and public funding streams, and then to devise a technocratic, marketized, audit-oriented mode of governance more suitable to the economic imperatives of capitalist globalization in its current form. Today, examples of the policy shifts that are typically glossed as neoliberal should be quite familiar to scholars: the privatization of public services, the elimination of subsidies and the restructuring of welfare provisioning to increase attachment to the workforce, and the reform of urban fiscal policies to encourage gentrification and securitization of elite residential and commercial areas. (p. 116)

Although I mostly agree with the expected consequences of neoliberalism laid out by Kingfisher and Maskovsky, I do not intend to make such generalizations as I conceptualize neoliberalism as contingent, uncompleted and contextually varying. Rather than seeing neoliberalism as a completed project, I

treat it as an unfinished process to draw attention to its geographically uneven development (England and Ward, 2007; Harvey, 2005), its different practices in different places and its various adaptations to different social and political governing practices. Throughout the literature review, I try to determine the limits of neoliberalism by utilizing the anthropological analysis of it, which I firmly believe has effectively shows "the ideological underpinnings of state restructuring, highlighting the production of forms of citizenship that seek to separate the social from the state by dismantling social welfare programs and in the process encouraging individualistic self-reliant state subjects" (Wilson, 108, p. 128). The strength of these approaches lies in their ability to show the uneven, unstable, contingent, and contradictory nature of neoliberalism.

I now evaluate dominant conceptions of neoliberalism. Within the critical concern of neoliberalism, three approaches have dominated the field, each of which has different points of strength and contributes to our understanding of contemporary relations of power and inequality: Accumulation by Dispossession; Neoliberalism as Exception, and Governmentality Studies. I conclude this part with the re-contextualization of neoliberalism to discuss my position within the field.

## Accumulation by Dispossession

The first approach is influenced by Marxism in general and David Harvey's work (2005) in particular in which neoliberalism is essentially seen as “a class project, masked by a lot of neoliberal rhetoric about individual freedom, liberty, personal responsibility, privatization and the free market” (Harvey, 2009, p. 1). Suitably the neoliberal project sets its sights at the restoration and consolidation of class power that employs accumulation by dispossession as the mere technique of restoring its power. Accumulation by dispossession has a very different set of characteristics from accumulation through expansion in the sense that dispossession “is fragmented and particular – a privatization here, an environmental degradation there, a financial crisis of indebtedness somewhere else...Dispossession entails the loss of rights” (Harvey, 2005, p. 178).

The process of dispossession consists of four main features: privatization and commoditization; financialization; the management and manipulation of crisis; and state redistributions (Harvey, 2005, pp. 158-165). We have been witnessing these processes being used as the techniques of the neoliberalization of states for several decades across the world. However it should be noted that the process of accumulation by dispossession has been geographically uneven. In his study of neoliberalism, Harvey (2005) devotes a whole chapter to the issue of unevenness and notes that “the general progress of neoliberalization has

therefore been increasingly impelled through mechanisms of uneven geographical developments” (p. 87). Despite the uneven development of neoliberalism, in the broad picture it expands the scope of the market, to minimize state intervention in regulating the economy, and to reconstruct the individual as a rational economic being (Harvey, 2005; Turner, 2008).

The extension of the market is limitless; it encompasses the cultural, social, and political domains as well.

Baez (2008) claims that “[n]eoliberalism re-defines the social as an economic domain, governed by the ‘rational choices’ of entrepreneurial individuals who see everything they do in terms of maximizing their ‘human capital’”(p. 7). The expansion of the market is not a border issue and not limited to the economy or the market itself, but rather it denotes a new rationale of governing. It does not only regulate itself but also it demands every other social, cultural, and political domain to be regulated with the very same rationale. Within this apprehension, the market comes on stage as the unmatched mechanism of the state to rule. It does not provide only tools to the state but it also transforms the state and redefines it.

Within the Marxist reading of neoliberalism, it is widely discussed and accepted that the state is shrunk and weakened in terms of its power (among others; Harvey, 2005; Giroux, 2005; McLaren, 2005; Bourdieu, 1998). Although

this is true to some extent, what is actually happening is not the decline of the state power, but rather the redefinition of the state and its roles. The state is now perhaps more powerful and richer than ever in terms of its capacity to regulate its population. Its primary tasks are now opening unengaged fields for the market to operate by using whatever means necessary including military force and brutal violence (Klein, 1997). Incidents of state terrorism are evident by the restructuring of rules and regulations to provide the legitimatization for operations of the market (Turner, 2008), destroying collectivity and promoting the entrepreneurial individual (Bourdieu, 1998). Public services are no longer the concern of the state as they once used to be. It is now individuals who are responsible for their health, education and jobs. They, as autonomous rational beings are held responsible for their social and cultural needs, even though they pay great amounts of tax for social benefits and protection. It is as if the announcement of the death of the social and the birth of the individual; everything is made to be a personal responsibility rather than a state responsibility. "In the name of the scientific programme of knowledge, converted into a political programme of action, an immense political operation is being pursued (denied, because it is apparently purely negative), aimed at creating the conditions for realizing and operating of the 'theory'; a programme of methodical destruction of collectives (neo-classical economics recognizes only individuals,

whether it is dealing with companies, trade unions or families)” (Bourdieu, 1998, pp. 95-96).

Even though to some extent neoliberalism can be seen as a class project, I argue that Marxist writers including Harvey (2005), have failed to recognize that it also brings about new forms of governing and being governed, and new notions of what it means to be human. What Harvey brilliantly observes about the unevenness of neoliberalism has contributed to our understanding of the limits of neoliberalism by reminding us that it is a dynamic set of tools and can be experienced differently in different parts of the world. This brings me to the second set of critical understandings of neoliberalism.

### **Neoliberalism as Exception**

Being attentive of the idea of unevenness, Aihwa Ong (2006) argues that neoliberalism has been experienced differently in East and Southeast Asia and that these countries have introduced exceptions to ordinary governmental practices in order to engage in the global economy. She articulates neoliberalism with the notion of exception, that accommodates an idea of graduated sovereignty and an interactive mode of citizenship that undermines nation-state membership and replaces it with an entrepreneurial form of citizenship.

Ong (2006) reveals her understandings of neoliberalism within the interplay of sovereignty and citizenship. She indicates that neoliberalism has

altered our articulation of the relationship between government and citizenship. In this sense, she conceptualizes neoliberalism as an intervention of optimization that interacts with regimes of citizenship to change administrative strategies, practices of citizenship and the body of sovereignty, replacing it with multiple bodies of sovereignty. She speaks of the emergence of multiple sovereignties and asserts that “in actual practice, sovereignty is manifested in multiple, often contradictory strategies that encounter diverse claims and contestations, and produce diverse and contingent outcomes” (p. 7). In her analysis, she devotes a considerable part to Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) as agents of the multiplication of sovereignty. Mostly by drawing conclusions from the experiences of migrant female workers in Southeast Asia, she problematizes the value of being human and the role of NGOs in identifying and articulating moral problems and claims in the human ethos.

I believe that the idea of exception and the emergence of multiple sovereignties require further special attention since they raise some fundamental issues regarding the nature of sovereignty. Although I concur with Ong’s idea of contradictory strategies and contingent outcomes of neoliberalism, as contemporary political theory reminds us, sovereignty cannot be multiple and it has an identity mostly defined by its constitution. In this sense, Ong is not convincing in asserting that “we have an emergent situation of overlapping



sovereignties” (p. 7) since the sovereign never gives up and shares its right to rule. It rather instrumentalizes third parties (i.e. corporations and NGOs) to diversify its governing practices. In the case of the Southeast Asian maids, which she puts forward, the sovereign attaches itself to the plague of migrant female workers through the NGOs which govern exceptions on behalf of the nation-state. Diversification of regulations, techniques and governing practices of state have a dominant position in governmentality studies. In the following section, I address this issue by revisiting the post-structuralist vista of neoliberalism.

## **Governmentality Studies**

The theoretical framework flourished by post-structuralists utilizing Foucault’s concept of governmentality gives rise to new perspectives in conceptualization of neoliberalism and its relationship with emerging citizenship models and the nation-state. The term governmentality first appears in Michel Foucault’s lectures at the College de France in which he characterizes it as the “art of government”, “conduct of conduct” with an idea of government that is not limited to just state politics, but also includes a wide range of controlling techniques. What he mainly posits is that, with the rise of modernity in the sixteenth century, a new rationality of power emerged which was significantly different from the previous one: the pastoral power that expressed itself through the right of life and death. During pre-modern times, the sovereign had the right

of life and death over her subjects. The exercise of power was simply a matter of deciding whether or not the sovereign would kill someone.

For Foucault, pastoral power is an ancient one and simply the right or power to kill or let live. On the other hand, the primary concern of modern power is in life: how to secure and enhance it. This new rationality, of which he sees the seeds in Machiavelli, is essentially concerned to introduce “the economy” into political science; which is to say that “the correct manner of managing individuals, goods and wealth within the family (which a good father is expected to do in relation to his wife, children and servants) and of making the family fortunes prosper – how to introduce this meticulous attention of the father towards his family into the management of the state” (Foucault, 1991, p. 92). The activities of the state thus change and take the form of government over the conduct of subjects and its power is now exercised to enhance the lives of the population both collectively and individually. In this sense, to analyze governmentality is to analyze techniques and mechanisms that “try to shape, sculpt, mobilize and work through the choices, desires, aspirations, needs, wants and lifestyles of individuals and groups” (Dean, 1999, p. 12). With respect to neoliberalism, governmentality indicates that the operations of government are fragmented and economized within a mode of entrepreneurship, that emphasizes responsibility at global, national, local, and individual levels.

Rose (1996) uses the notion of advanced liberal strategies to explain the governmental shift in the era of neoliberalism. These strategies “seek techniques of government that create a distance between the decisions of formal political institutions and other social actors, conceive of these actors in new ways as subjects of responsibility, autonomy, and choice, and seek to act upon them through shaping and utilizing their freedom” (pp. 53-54). Accordingly, he deduces three characteristics in this shift. “A new relation between expertise and politics” is the first one indicating a shift in the regulation of human conduct. “Powers once accorded to positive knowledge of human conduct are to be transferred to the calculative regimes of accounting and financial management” (p. 54). The second characteristic of this shift is “a new pluralization of “social” technologies” (p. 56), that implies a de-governmentalization of state or governmentalization of society. Through various kinds of social actors, the state disassembles its multifarious activities to actors, so-called quasi-governmental or non-governmental organizations, who are ready to take on regulatory roles in security, finance, education, environmental departments and so on. The third shift, “new specification of the subject of government”, is mainly replacing the citizen with the customer citizen; a new subject like patient-customer, student-customer, or consumer-customer who actively and responsibly seek to

“enterprise themselves, to maximize their quality of life through acts of choice” (p. 57).

Although governmentality studies have provided a rich analysis of contemporary relations of power and inequality, the use of the concept has the tendency to produce coherent views of governance. The risk is “that analysis becomes a matter of revealing example after example of 'advanced liberalism' in practice, each example being treated as no more than another instantiation of the general principles” (Clarke, 2004, 114). It seems that governmentality studies bring an instant closure between the intention and outcome, ignoring possible alternative positions in “actually existing” neoliberalisms.

The weaknesses and strengths of the critical paradigms of neoliberalism that I have been discussing have provoked me to inquire about the matter further. In this study, I encapsulate all of the three to build a hybrid understanding.

### **(Re)Contextualizing Neoliberalism**

I use all three paradigms to explore the unstable, fractionary and contradictory nature of neoliberalism. Following Kingfisher and Maskovsky (2008) I aim to focus on three concepts; “culture”, “power” and, “governing practices”.

Instead of treating neoliberalism as a stable, homogenous system, I see it as a “cultural formation; a set of cultural meanings and practices related to *the*

*constitution of proper personhood*, markets and the state that are emergent in a contested cultural field” (Kingfisher and Maskovsky, 2008, 120, Emphasis added). Neoliberalism is not just an idea about the freeing of markets, but rather a logic, “an approach to the world which includes in its purview not only economics, but also politics; not only the public, but also the private; not only what kinds of institutions we should have, but also what kinds of subjects we should be” (Kingfisher, 2002, p. 13). Conceptualized in this manner, neoliberalism is a dynamic and complex idea that penetrates and settles into any social, political and economic structure sometimes by radically altering it or sometimes simply by modifying it.

The second concept focuses on power that I conceptualize in the sense Foucault (1986) does. In the first volume of his remarkable work, “The History of Sexuality”, he outlines his conception of power, which he addresses as all embracing; everything and everybody is a source of power. He lists five propositions related to his evaluation of power. First, power is not a “thing” that one can have, share, keep, protect or lose. Secondly, power relations are intrinsic to economics, knowledge and sexual relations. Thirdly, power does not have a simple come-down-from-above structure. For the fourth proposition, Foucault indicates that power is not subjective but intentional. It has a rationality and logic, there is no master directing and controlling it. Fifth, wherever there is

power, there is resistance. But this resistance is not external to power. It is a part of power relations (p. 94-6). The reason I use Foucault's conception is that it is useful as an analytical category because it acknowledges agency, relations, resistance and structure.

The third concept that I utilize is governing practices that denote the dynamic, contested nature and diversification of government activities through and in which power is exercised. "A focus on culture, power and governing practices establishes a framework for mapping the articulation of neoliberalism with established practices and policies, and for assessing how new hegemonic relations of power emerge in different contexts as a result of these articulations" (Kingfisher and Maskovsky, 2008, p. 121).

The culture-power-governing practices typology invokes a comprehensive understanding of neoliberalism. It enables us to recognize neoliberalism not only as an economic idea, but also as a social, cultural formation having masculine, racist and class-based characteristics. Within this formation, power is never top-down, despite the fact that policies having regulatory effects are. Social actors of any system (teachers, students, parents, principals in my case) perform a decisive role in this none top-down power schema. They have power and they contribute exceedingly to the formation of the neoliberal culture system. As a complementary part of this typology, governing practices open up spaces for

social agents to intervene in processes as subjects and, for the state to governmentalize social actors so that they can regulate themselves. I believe that the limit and the play of the relationship between existing patterns of inequality and oppression and new relations of inequality and power lie within this typology, which is why I intend to use it as my theoretical-analytical mode in my study. In the following part, I try to incorporate the critical studies of education into this typology to figure out the potential specifications that these studies might bring.

### **Critical Studies in Education**

Here I provide a theoretical and historical background of critical studies in education, which supply invaluable theoretical tools in understanding contemporary relations of power and inequality in schools. Both in political theory and social theory, these studies have produced unique frameworks of reference to reveal patterns of domination over the poor and oppressed. Within the field, education and schools appear as an important area of inquiry mostly by denoting a contested and contradictory space aiming to shape children socially and culturally. Being intense sites of cultural politics, schools while offering “certain freedoms and opportunities, at the same time further draw students into dominant projects of nationalism, and capitalist labor formation, or bind them even more tightly to systems of class, gender, and race inequality” (Levinson & Holland, 1996, p. 1). In its theoretical and methodological stance, critical theory is

a heterogeneous field encompassing different paradigms and tools of inquiry. Levinson and Holland (1996) outline three major approaches that have dominated the field of critical studies in education during the past four decades. These approaches are social reproduction, cultural reproduction and cultural difference. Although I generally comply with their distinction, I believe that they underestimate the influence of governmentality studies in educational studies and their distinction needs a slight revision. I think the distinction between social and cultural reproduction is not that significant in the sense that they use a similar Marxist perspective. Utilizing their distinction, I propose a slightly revised alternative; reproduction studies involving both social and cultural reproduction, governmentality studies, and the cultural difference approach that I elaborate respectively in the following sections.

### **Reproduction Theory and Neoliberalism**

Reproduction studies challenge the existing social order by claiming that the contemporary social order serves the interests of a certain class (capitalists) at the expense of other groups (mainly working class). Critical theory is therefore in its very nature, a political contestation, which for Marx (1983), is “the relentless criticism of all existing conditions” (p. 93). Yet, Rehg and Bohman (2001) note that “[a] wide range of current theoretical approaches might plausibly claim the title of ‘critical social theory’” (p. 1). Perhaps the one which has the right to make



the strongest claim on the title is reproduction studies which have their roots in the Frankfurt School, founded in 1923 under the name of the Institute for Social Research of the University of Frankfurt. The school basically provides the Marxist cultural critique of capitalist society. The problem that the school is dealing with is about the relation of mankind to capitalism, which they engage in voluntarily.

Horkheimer and Adorno (1994) pose this problem as: "Why mankind, instead of entering into a truly human condition, is sinking into a new kind of barbarism" (p. xi).

Scholars of the school have sought answers to the nature of this voluntary barbaric relation by focusing on reason and free will. The idea of reason they are relating to this issue is the Cartesian one that is assumed to be value-free and scientific in the sense of positivism and logical empiricism. Adorno and Horkheimer (1994) name this reason as the instrumental rationality, a part of ideology that hides and legitimizes any dehumanized actions of dominant power. As Kellner (cited in Küçükaydın, 2008, p. 37) puts it: "Reason was "incorporated into the very structure of society....used to strengthen rather than transform the system... [and the] Enlightenment had turned into its opposite and turned from being an instrument of liberation to domination." Using the terms, "reification of reason", and "reification as reason", Marcuse (1978) argues that this domination takes a form that invades the daily life turning it into a commodity with an

exchange value. Accordingly, schools are vital mechanisms in producing “instrumental rationality” and commodification of daily life.

In a similar vein, Althusser (1971) conceptualizes schools and education as ideological state apparatuses; hence sites where students are ideologically “interpellated” to reproduce their class structure. The structural reading of education is a dominant theme in reproduction studies. With the effect of Althusser’s works, French structuralists begin to question Orthodox Marxism and to investigate the relationship between social structures and schools as their central issue. Bowles and Gintis (1976) emphasize this relationship and claim that schools are producing young people compatible with their social class background. Working class students are learning to be working class members of society. In other words, schools are working as sites of reproducing conditions of inequalities and oppression that exist within the society.

The relationship between schools and social structure is also a central issue in critical studies of education in America. Young’s (1971) edited collection is one of the earliest endeavors to investigate this relationship. With the contribution of Jean Anyon, Michael Apple, and Henry Giroux, the collection becomes a definitive source in the critical studies of education. Apple (1986) outlines three main issues to sum up this work: “[F]irstly, the debate over functionalism and economic reductionism or over what is called the

base/superstructure issue; secondly closely related arguments between structuralists and culturalists in education; finally class reductionism” (p.75). Like their French structuralist colleagues, as Apple states, they begin to question Orthodox Marxism and emphasize the schools’ relations to structural inequalities. Jean Anyon (1981) explains that schools, even if to some extent they might have a transformative potential, serve to reproduce existing structural inequalities. Comparing different types of schools in terms of curriculums they use, she finds out that the knowledge taught to working class students has mostly aspects of reproduction which refer to “aspects of school knowledge that contribute directly to the legitimating and perpetuation of ideologies, practices, and privileges constitutive of present economic and political structures” (p. 31).

Drawing on Marxist social theory, reproduction studies have contributed to our understanding of how schools play an important role in the reproduction of class structures. Reproduction studies have been subjected to critique by several scholars (Apple, 1982; Giroux, 1983) although to some extent they are also reproductionists. The deterministic nature of reproduction theory and the class reductionism (Apple, 1986, 1988; Giroux, 1983) are the main points of critique. However, I believe they provide a useful interpretive tool especially when assessing social inequalities and roles of schools in producing these inequalities (Anyon, 1980, 1981; Macleod, 2004).

After the works of social reproduction scholars, it is not possible to consider schools as “innocent sites of cultural transmission, or places for the inculcation of consensual values. Nor could schools be understood as meritocratic springboards for upward mobility –great leveling mechanism, according to dominant liberal ideology” (Levinson and Holland, 1996, p. 5). Following social reproduction scholars, cultural reproduction scholars provide a deeper social critique to modern capitalist schooling. Bourdieu and his associates undertake an innovative approach to show the cultural basis of reproduction of dominant liberal ideology. Bourdieu (1977) suggests that schools contribute to the reproduction of complex modes of symbolic power that allow elites to maintain their economic power. Bourdieu’s idea of cultural production in schools has been very influential and provides new theoretical tools for further studies. Apple’s (1982) edited collection is one of the first works utilizing Bourdieu’s insights to address cultural reproduction in schools. Lareau (1989) also uses Bourdieu’s ideas to discuss the role of schools in the reproduction of class privilege based on culture. Some other scholars (Holland and Eisenhart, 1990) apply his ideas to investigate cultural production of gender privilege. Bourdieu’s account of cultural reproduction has contributed vastly to numerous areas of research, owing to the innovative and original conceptual tools he used.

Through his ethnographic and comparative work on French schools and the Kabyle peasants of Algeria, Bourdieu (1977) first develops the idea of symbolic modes of domination and power that play an important role in reproducing social inequalities and domination. These forms of domination not only reproduce unequal relations but also disguise social and cultural backgrounds that make these relations possible in the first place. In order to inquire further into these complex relations, Bourdieu develops several other conceptual tools like habitus (1977), field and taste (1984), and cultural capital (2006) that occupy central positions in his theory of cultural reproduction. Although it is beyond the scope of this work, a concise summation of these conceptual tools would be useful. Habitus is an important and powerful tool that denotes the practices of individuals within particular social spaces, whereas field is the context in which interaction between habitus occurs. Taste on the other hand, is a complimentary part of habitus. Bourdieu (1984) argues that each habitus has its own distinctive taste that denotes a certain social positioning. Besides these critical tools, the notion of cultural capital has a particular implication for educational studies.

As it is well known, the primary concern of political economy is the capital defined as accumulated labor that is convertible directly to money and institutionalized in the form of private property. Pierre Bourdieu (2006), even

though he does not negate the importance of capital theory, indicates that a purely economic based capital theory would not be enough in understanding contemporary relations of power and inequality. Well aware of problems of the Marxist theory of capital, in his text "The Forms of Capital" Bourdieu (2006) brings in new dimensions and consideration to Marx's theory of capital by arguing that the capital can present itself in different guises; "economic capital", "cultural capital" and, "social capital" (p. 106). It is very important to say that he later added language as a form of capital. Cultural capital is "convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications" (p. 106). Cultural capital has three forms; "embodied state, objectified state, and institutionalized state" (p. 106). In the embodied state cultural capital is intrinsic to the individual and accumulated throughout one's whole life. When we refer to someone as sophisticated actually we are referring to her/his cultural capital.

In the objectified state, it takes the form of cultural products like, books, paintings, movies and so on. The institutionalized state addresses the educational qualifications and their validity across world. For example, degrees acquired from McGill University and Boğaziçi University of Turkey do not have equal validity and branding across the world due to the McGill's fame around the world. Finally social capital consists of networks, one's social environment. The

more kind of people you know and the more people you know, the more social capital you acquire. The idea of cultural capital along with the concepts of habitus and taste has an enormous effect on studies of critical education because it reserves a central place for culture. Despite the cultural and social differences in schools, values and cultural forms of white, masculine, middle class males are taught in schools as norms. Cultural capital along with the habitus plays an important role in channeling students towards those values. A culturally non-diverse education system contributes the extension of gap between poor child and elite child because the rich already have what is being transmitted in schools due to their social class.

Accounts of social and cultural reproduction have significantly contributed in our understanding of schools and their roles. Still, there are four important problems in the works of these scholars. First, due to its Marxist orientation, social class appears as the unique unit in determining life chances while ignoring influences of gender, race and age on life chances. Feminist, critical race and governmentality studies fruitfully exemplify that an understanding based solely on social class would be limited. Secondly, reproduction studies tend to focus on Euro-American contexts in their research. Hence it is not possible to see insights about non-Western and postcolonial contexts of reproduction in societies that could provide alternative readings of schooling. Thirdly, reproduction studies are

schematic and deterministic in providing patterns of culture and structure and their relation to schooling. Moreover, they have a simplistic assumption of the state and its use of schools, which is believed to be an apparatus of control. Finally and perhaps most importantly, reproduction studies tend to underestimate the role of agency. I believe that in any school at any time, there is always an ongoing struggle among state policies, teachers, principals, and students. Without acknowledging this struggle, it is not possible to grasp a fuller understanding of school life.

To be sure, even though reproduction theories are subject to serious criticism, they provide a solid basis for our understanding of schools and schooling. Especially, Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital is very helpful in thinking of power relations in schools. However, the criticism directed to reproduction studies yields another approach in critical studies in education; the cultural difference approach.

### **The Cultural Difference Approach**

As a result of continuous criticism of reproduction theories, a new orientation among American educational anthropologists has emerged. The influence of this orientation on critical studies in education is somehow limited, yet it is still worth mentioning its basic contributions to the field. While reproduction scholars primarily focus on the role of schools in social and cultural



reproduction, American educational anthropologists, including Eddy (1967), and Gilmore and Glatthorn (1981) among others, beginning in the mid-1960s direct their attention to ethnic difference as their central problem.

“During the 1960s–70s, few educational anthropologists were contributing to either stealth or Marxist class critiques of capitalist schools. Most were busy attacking “cultural and linguistic deficit” views of ethnic minority communities, child rearing, and students” (Foley, 2010, p. 215). As Foley indicates, the primary concern of most of the educational anthropologists is linguistic and cultural “mismatch” between schools and the culture of ethnic minorities. It is precisely these mismatches and differences that they are interested in and which they explored through detailed ethnographic studies of schools. The cultural difference approach, as a result of micro-ethnographic endeavors of classrooms, claims that “ethnic minorities tended to fail insofar as they did not successfully adapt themselves to schools’ dominant (usually considered white, middle class) cultural styles or, conversely, insofar as the schools could not provide appropriate activity settings to accommodate the minorities” (Levinson & Holland, 1996, p. 8).

In their particular contexts, these studies are original in the sense that they bring linguistic and ethno-cultural issues under the lenses of academic studies. It is significant to acknowledge that linguistic and ethnic differences are vital parts of school success. Besides, they play an important role in “offsetting racist

models of genetic inferiority and cultural deprivation. Still, it deemphasizes the importance of historically produced power relations in cultural reproduction. Moreover, the cultural difference approach seems to conceptualize the culture of minorities as a homogenous entity, hence tends to essentialize it. Due to the absence of a critical analysis of social, historical and economic context, school success and cultural production in schools remain unaddressed.

### **The Foucault Effect: Governmentality Studies in Education**

The vitality, significance, importance and value of an intellect's contributions to intellectual life are seen in the influence of his/her ideas on the patterns of thought and analysis. In the case of Michel Foucault, this impact is invaluable and has been felt in a wide range of disciplines including, philosophy and history, disciplines to which he explicitly directed his attention, as well as other areas of intellectuality, most notably, sociology, criminology, political science, cultural studies, feminism, architecture, literary analysis and now educational studies. In fact, it can be claimed that there are no disciplinary fields that have not experienced the Foucault effect. The valuation of Foucault in educational studies is relatively new, dating back to 1990 when Stephan Ball published his edited book, "Foucault and Education: Disciplines and Education." However Ball's edited book was without any particular orientation as Drummond (2000) notes;" While Ball's book did not purport to take any particular approach, it

did have the advantage of spreading the Foucauldian 'load' across different issues pertinent to education” (p. 1).

The second book is that of James Marshall (1996) called, “Michel Foucault: Personal Autonomy and Education” in which he sets up two major and more specific tasks. First, the book is to serve as an introductory text on Foucault texts and their relevance to education. Second and in relation to the first, Marshall offers “a Foucauldian critique of Western liberal education's promotion of the autonomous individual” (Drummond, 2000, p. 1). Apart from these early considerations of the Foucault Effect in educational studies, Michael Peters, et al.'s (2009) edited collection is one of the recent works that takes up a critical mantle interrogating the use of Foucault and governmentality studies in education. In its broadest manner, Foucault's effect in educational studies is a result of his notion of governmentality and his seminal work “Discipline and Punish” (1995).

The notion of governmentality has an enormous effect in social studies including educational ones. Foucault (1991) came up with the notion of governmentality while he was searching for rationalities of government in Western societies since Machiavelli. In a nutshell, governmentality denotes systems of thinking about the practices of government. Foucault (1991) states that the issues of governmentality are “how to govern oneself, how to be

governed, how to govern others, by whom the people will accept being governed, how to become the best possible governor” (p. 87). Since I have revised the notion of governmentality in previous sections, instead I will turn my attention to the notion of power, which is a complimentary part of the notion of governmentality and has significant implications for educational studies.

Foucault (1986) posits that modern power is significantly different from medieval power and states that its primary concern is life itself. Accordingly, this power is exercised over two bodies; individuals, and populations, and consequently takes two different but related forms. One of these forms is disciplinary power, which is concerned with the individual body. This type of power is aimed at the optimization of bodies and their capabilities, and by controlling them, turns them into a manipulable state which becomes productive and economically useful. Hardt and Negri (2000) explore disciplinary power:

Disciplinary society is that society in which social command is constructed through a diffuse network of dispositifs or apparatuses that produce and regulate customs, habits, and productive practices. Putting this society to work and ensuring obedience to its rule and its mechanisms of inclusion and/or exclusion are accomplished through disciplinary institutions (the prison, the factory, the asylum, the hospital, the university, the school, and so forth) that structure the social terrain and present logics adequate to the “reason” of discipline. Disciplinary power rules in effect by structuring the parameters and limits of thought and practice, sanctioning and prescribing normal and/or deviant behaviors. (p. 23)

Clearly, for a long time and within different geographical regions, schools have been playing a disciplinary role. The second form of power is the bio-power where the primary concern of power turns to the population. Bio-power is the power exercised through a series of technologies upon the life of a population with the aim of controlling and monitoring its biological processes, such as health, birth, death, and reproduction. “This bio-politics emerges in the eighteenth century with the concerns for the health, housing, habitation, welfare and living conditions of the population. Such an observation leads him to place his concerns with health, discipline, the body, and sexuality within a more general horizon” (Dean, 2004, p. 19).

Through the lenses of governmentality, schools turn to the sites of both disciplinary power and bio-power that are constantly at play under different guises aiming to constitute students as proper subjects and then to turn them into objects of it. This power is exercised in and through social practices and institutional sites that served as mechanisms of control. Schools are among the mechanisms that particular individualities produce by a calculated and calculative gaze. And examination is one of these gazes.

In the section of *Means of Correct Training of Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1995) explicitly discusses the examination, which combines hierarchical observation (panoptic) and normalizing judgment in one procedure.

As opposed to punishment, it is “a normalizing gaze, surveillance which makes possible to qualify, classify and punish” (ibid, p. 184). Through the gaze of examination, the school became a sole tool of continuous normalizing judgment and hierarchical observation. Foucault (1995) indicates that the examination introduced a certain way of exercising power and had triple effects in its exercise. First, the practice of examination “transformed the economy of visibility into the exercise of power” (p. 187). Secondly, it “introduces individuality into field of documentation” (p. 189), and third “the examination, surrounded by all its documentary techniques, makes each individual a case” (p. 191). Examination is the unique strategy that constructs the individual as both an effect and object of power. Moreover examination is a “dividing practice.” For Foucault schools are places of objectification where the “subject is either inside himself or divided from others” (p.208). “Dividing practices include examination, testing, profiling, streaming and tracking which are at the very heart of school organization. In short, dividing practices are central to the formation of scholastic identity on an individual basis” (Meadmore, 1993, 60). It is this form of power, which has become "a technology of the body as an object of power, gradually formed in disparate, peripheral localizations" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, 134). Foucault sees schooling as a mechanism of gaze when he states that “surveillance defined and regulated, is inscribed at the heart of the practice of teaching, not as

an additional or adjacent part, but as the mechanism that is inherent to it and which increases its efficiency” (Foucault, 1995, 176).

Governmentality studies have enormously affected our perceptions of schooling by problematizing our naturalized and justified ways of thinking and acting. It reminds us that any system of reason is never universal but historically bound and “effects of power” should always be presented in any research context (Popkewitz and Lindblad, 2004, p. 232). It goes beyond reproduction theory by inviting the technologies of self to analysis. It rejects the schematic and deterministic assumptions in regard to the patterns of culture and structure and their relation to schooling. As a result of the governmentality endeavor, the self and its techniques of coming to claim itself as an autonomous self are now irreversibly included in the analysis. Governmentality studies also have provided invaluable contributions to our understanding of governing practices and how the self as an autonomous being relates itself to them (Ferguson and Gupta, 2002; Ong, 1999 among others). However, most governmentality studies tend to focus on “the subject positions inscribed in governmental discourses, excluding or subordinating other relations, positions and identities as the source or focus of mobilization” (Clarke, 2004, 115). They tend to produce oversimplified and unified views of governing practices. Besides, their mode of analysis produces some dominant discourses which take Western practices as the norm. It might be

more accurate to say that many governmentality studies seem spatially indeterminate. But as usual, such indeterminacy tends to result in the generalization of the West as the universal (ibid, p. 114). I believe that the conceptual tools of the governmentality perspective are extremely useful, if only they are put to work through ethnographic endeavors, especially in a non-western context.

### **(Re)Contextualizing Critical Studies in Education**

In the previous sections, I examined major theoretical orientations in critical studies in education, whereas in this section I try to re-contextualize critical studies and provide insights about how I position my work in the literature. I have discussed that these approaches have greatly contributed to our understanding of modern schooling by providing rich and insightful analysis. Despite the strength of these approaches, they also have major problems in theoretical underpinnings as well as in practice. Hence, they need to be revised before being put into use. Levinson, et al.'s (1996) edited collection addresses these problems and invites a critical and ethnographic endeavor to produce alternative solutions to them. They propose a new notion, called "cultural production" as the central theme of their distinguishing theoretical framework. In reproduction theory, subjects were imagined as "interpellated" by ideology, and without agency. Reshaped by the more recent focus on practice and



production, the larger question is now one of how historical persons are formed in practice, within and against larger societal forces and structures which instantiate themselves in schools and other institutions. Cultural production is one vision of this process. It provides a direction for understanding how human agency operates under powerful structural constraints. Through production of cultural norms, created within the structural constraints of sites such as schools, subjectivities form and agency develops...we are forwarding the concept of cultural production as a theoretical construct which allows us to portray and interpret the way people actively confront the ideological and material conditions presented by schooling. (Levinson & Holland, 1996, p. 14)

Even though I believe that the idea of people confronting the ideological and material conditions presented by school should not be exaggerated because they also confirm them and act within boundaries of these conditions, I embrace the notion of cultural production as a direction in understanding human actions. Moreover, drawing from Willis (1981), Luttrell (1989), Haraway (1988), and Foley (1990) along with theoretical tools offered by governmentality studies and reproduction studies, cultural production scholars employ particular conceptions like subjectivity, agency, resistance and social practice in their study to combine ethnographic findings of classroom interactions with the macro insights (culture, power, and capital) of critical studies. As emphasized by Willis (1981), students

are not passive absorbers of school messages. It is important to valorize how people critically and sometimes pragmatically occupy educational spaces and manipulate them for their interests.

Agency of local actors is a central issue in cultural production studies: agency of students, of parents and particularly of teachers...Another significant contribution of cultural production is related to the works of teachers and their strategies in coping with the gap between policy and local culture. Most of the time, teachers might be in line with the dominant ideology of the school curriculum, still there is always the possibility of acting in different ways. "They may in practice challenge or ignore the models bequeathed them by policymakers and politicians" (Levinson and Holland, 1996, p. 24). For example Rockwell (1996) discusses how through the "appropriation" of different practices, spaces and uses of local culture, representations of educated persons have been transformed. He explores how teachers use these "appropriation" techniques to manipulate and mediate the gap between policies and local culture. Hence by selectively appropriating cultural resources of schools, teachers do not translate literally meanings of an educated person as described by the official knowledge, but they change the course of it and translate it to be compatible with the local culture.

As I have noted earlier one of the main problems within the tradition of critical studies is that they tend to be Western both in the mode of analysis and in the site of research. This fact risks the production of Western practices as the norm and the generalization of the West as universal. Cultural production scholars, however, are well aware of this risk and propose to explore non-Western settings as well and their relation to Western contexts. They (e.g. Rival, 1996; Levinson, 1996; Luykx, 1996) consider the impact of Western notions of schooling on non-Western contexts and explore “the paradoxical potentialities of schooling” (Levinson & Holland, 1996, p. 22) and their relation to non-Western local knowledges. In this sense, they fill an important gap in the critical studies of education by studying schools ethnographically in non-Western settings. As a non-Western context but with a strong desire of Westernization, the context of Turkey presents valuable opportunities for studying schools critically and ethnographically.

## CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

*Don't let us forget that the causes of human actions are usually immeasurably more complex than our subsequent explanations of them.*  
*Dostoyevsky, (In Quantz and O'Connor, 1998, p.95)*

### Introduction

My understanding of methodology is informed by the statement, “methodology refers to the epistemological framing of an inquiry that includes prior understandings of phenomenon and the very contextual factors that mediate actions, particular choices of theories, interpretations and representations over others” (Maguire, 2007, p. 8). In this study and throughout this chapter, I draw from different methodologies and employ different methods. My aim in doing so is to overcome certain methodological problems pertaining to approaches that I utilize. At first, I was planning to do ethnography to describe and interpret the cultural field in which I was going to work. Then I realized that ethnography alone would not let me address issues of power, hegemony, domination and resistance. So I turned my attention to critical ethnography, which allows me to address the issue of power and resistance; however, critical ethnography brings in some other methodological problems like the question of voice, representation and notion of emancipation. Whose voice will be included in

my research? Whom will it represent? How do I include others' (participants) voices? Who am I going to emancipate? From what? Do they need to be emancipated? Who decides that? Perhaps, I am the one that needs to be emancipated? So in order to provide a frame for easing the burden of these problems, I decided to include another part that utilizes insights from narrative inquiry, particularly those coming from a Bakhtinian perspective. The journey that I started with ethnography has emerged into a critical narrative ethnography.

In this context, I first discuss the nature of qualitative research and the use of ethnography in educational studies. Secondly, I elaborate critical ethnography as a methodology and try to show that it is the most appropriate methodology for my inquiry. I articulate different approaches to Narrative Inquiry and Critical Discourse Studies separately and critically examine these to explain why and how they would be useful as the methods of interpreting data.

### **The Nature of Qualitative Research**

The history of qualitative research goes back to the late nineteenth century (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). It has appeared widely in the literature since then (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 2002). Qualitative research is defined by Denzin and Lincoln (2000,) as the following:

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible. These practices ... turn the world into a series of

representations including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic, approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (p. 3)

Qualitative research has been used to show and to explain the relationships between or among phenomena; however, since phenomena cannot be reduced to explanation of the relationship by numerical analysis alone, social reality and the context in which the human behavior occurs needs to be explained in-depth, so that qualitative research has started to become important as a research type. As stated by Bogdan and Biklen (2007) “meaning is of essential concern to the qualitative approach. Researchers who use this approach are interested in how different people make sense of their lives” (p. 7). This account does not disparage the quantitative research as it has its own valuable contributions and benefits to the research. Researchers who works in different fields such as cultural studies, feminism, postmodernism, critical theory, and institutional ethnography do qualitative research (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) or “rely quite heavily on qualitative ways of knowing” (Mason, 1996, p. 3) to answer their questions and to understand the underlying factors affecting human behavior in its social context.

The field of qualitative research with its distinctive history is very complicated, heterogeneous, encompassing many different ideas and approaches. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) read the history and complexity of, the tension within the qualitative research through seven historical moments. As many other historical readings, their historical account of qualitative research is artificial and somewhat arbitrary. “Nevertheless, they permit a performance of developing ideas. They also facilitate an increasing sensitivity to and sophistication about the pitfalls and promises of ethnography and qualitative research” (p. 2).

Briefly put, the first moment denotes the traditional period (1900-1950) informed mainly by the positivist paradigm. Generally seen in the accounts of colonizers’ field notes of colonized people and societies, these studies were concerned with the issues of validity, reliability and objectivity. The second moment is (1950-70) the modernist or the golden age which saw the emergence of concern over the underclass of society. Interpretive theories like ethno-methodology, phenomenology, critical theory and feminism came to the stage in this moment. The third moment (1970-1986), blurred genres, utilizing different paradigms and methods, led to “a more pluralistic, interpretive, open-ended perspective. This new perspective took cultural representations and their meanings as its point of departure (p. 15). Named as the crisis of representation,

the fourth moment (1986-1990) witnessed the problematization of the researcher and her role in the research and in the writing. Questioning basic norms in anthropology, this moment invited researchers to work and write more reflexively. The fifth moment (1990-1995), the postmodern period, saw the use of exploratory ethnographic writing to struggle with the crisis of representation. In this moment, “epistemologies of from previously silenced groups emerged to offer solutions to these problems... The search for grand narratives is being replaced by more local, small-scale theories fitted to specific problems and particular situations” (p. 17). The sixth moment (1995-2000), is post-experimental inquiry which invited researchers to connect their works to the needs of free democratic societies. The seventh moment (2000-...), the present and future time is concerned with moral discourses, asks about critical conversations about democracy, race gender, class, freedom, moralities.

The historical account by Denzin and Lincoln has important implications for current researchers. First, these moments are still relevant. Researchers still use strategies and paradigms provided by these moments by either applying their practices or following or arguing against them. Second, as a result of this history, researchers have many different and diverse paradigms and methods to utilize. Third, with the emergence of diverse methods and paradigms, it is possible to look for alternative ways of interpreting, arguing and writing. Finally,



qualitative and ethnographic methods have arrived at a point where the research cannot be viewed from “a neutral or objective positivist perspective” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p. 18). The rich and powerful history of qualitative research provides a variety of paradigms and interpretive frameworks like post-positivist, social constructivism, pragmatism, feminist theories, postmodern perspectives, critical theory and so forth, and diverse approaches to inquiry such as narrative research, phenomenological research, grounded theory research, case study research and ethnographic research among others.

I do not intend to discuss these paradigms and methodologies. However noteworthy is that the boundaries within these different paradigms and within methodologies are never clear-cut. Most of the time, it is almost impossible to indicate where one ends and the other starts. They challenge and feed each other. A researcher could easily utilize different paradigms and employ different research methods that supposedly belong to different methodologies in her particular research. Which paradigms are used and what methods are employed are immensely influenced by the researcher’s interests, worldview and the phenomena with which she is dealing. In this study, I deal with neoliberalism which I conceptualize as a cultural system encompassing different social, cultural and economic ideas and practices. I believe the most appropriate way of examining and understanding neoliberalism as a cultural system is through

narrative critical ethnography. I now discuss the use of ethnography, particularly in educational studies, and elaborate the reasons why I choose ethnography as a methodology for my inquiry.

### **Ethnography in Education**

Ethnography is generally held as one of the major qualitative traditions along with biography, phenomenology, grounded theory and the case study. It is usually considered as the investigation of culture through methods like participant observations, interviews, field notes (journals), and analysis of archival data (Eisenhart, 1988; Denzin, 1978). Although it is possible to find many different articulations of what ethnography is, following Wollcott (1987) I discuss what ethnography is not so as to set the limits and possibilities of ethnography.

Wolcott (1987) describes ethnography by listing what it is not. This list includes items like “ethnography is not field technique”, “ethnography is not length of time in the field”, “ethnography is not simply good descriptions”, and “ethnography is not created through gaining and maintaining rapport with subjects.” Obviously ethnography could and should include these items, but that would not lead to a good ethnography. Beyond all of these, ethnography is describing and interpreting cultural behavior.

Ethnography is not empathy; ethnography is not merely first-person accounting or “Being There”; ethnography is not new-found respect for another culture; ethnography is not a day in the life; ethnography is not role

study; and so on- although all these may be among its ingredients...The purpose of ethnographic research is to describe and interpret cultural behaviour. (p. 43)

As important sites of articulation of cultural behaviors, schools have been central to ethnographic concern. Today, a lot of researchers allegedly do ethnographic inquiry in schools. However, the process is not problem-free. Wolcott (2001) puts forward three recommendations to researchers and educators to utilize from and to further the use of ethnography in educational studies. He recommends that educators should extend their readings to include descriptive studies. Secondly, he proposes that educational researchers should increase their familiarity with different field techniques. And thirdly, he asks educators “to develop a keener appreciation for context in educational research” (p. 167). Obviously, these recommendations could be made to any newcomer to the field of ethnographic research. However, making these recommendations to educational researchers also implies that there are problems with researches. Besides, the emphasis on context in educational researches is particularly important since many traditional ethnographers tend to ignore this aspect.

When it comes to context in educational research, the researcher should beware that there are different contexts at different levels. Eisenhart (2001) argues that

in conventional ethnographies, including many school ethnographies, there was a tendency to view the immediate context (e.g., a school, a classroom) as if it were almost completely determined by the unidirectional influence of wider, outside forces (e.g., community norms, school district politics, federal regulations, etc.) (p. 22).

However, in schools there is also an internal context that remains “so remarkably the same in spite of persistent and well-intended efforts to change them”

(Wolcott, 1987, p. 55). Ignoring the internal force shaped by students, teachers, principals, curriculum, and so forth, is an important problem with conventional ethnographies. Without examining the relationship between internal and external contexts, which are never static and clear, it almost impossible to provide a fuller interpretation of cultural behaviors in schools. Nesper (cited in Eisenhart, 2001) offers a different conceptualization from traditional ethnographies.

Instead of treating the school as a container filled with teacher cultures, student subgroups, classroom instruction, and administrative micropolitics, I look at one school . . . as an intersection in social space, a knot in a web of practices that stretch into complex systems beginning and ending outside the school. Instead of looking at educational settings . . . as having clear boundaries and identifiable contents, I look at them as extensive in space and time, fluid in form and content; as intersections of multiple networks shaping cities, communities, schools, pedagogies, and teacher and student practices. . . . I want to give school its due, but not on its own terms—to treat it not as the focus of study but as a point of entry... to the study of economic, cultural, and political relations shaping curriculum, teaching and kids’ experiences. (p. 24)

In such a dynamic and fluid ethnography, the purpose is no longer only to provide an interpretation of school culture and influence of external context, but

to invite us to think about schools differently. Schools are distinctive cultural sites in which the internal and external contexts come together to form a more complex and sometimes contradictory context. It is not a mere microcosm of the society and a totally different entity. It is somewhat in-between. It is a third space, which shows characteristics of society and features pertaining to its particular context at the same time. The idea is to find new ways of thinking about schools and their relations to different contexts.

Whether in schools or in any other socio-cultural site, ethnography always works with certain philosophical and interpretative paradigms chosen by the researcher to inform the conceptual framework of the research. Hence, it is possible to speak about different kinds of ethnographies informed by different paradigms like auto-ethnography, life history, visual ethnography, feminist ethnography, critical ethnography and so on. I find my own stance aligned with critical ethnography, which is a diverse and complicated tradition.

### **Critical Ethnography**

Characterizing theoretical assumptions of all critical ethnographers is obviously an impossible task. Yet, it is possible to provide some general assumptions about it. First of all, the adjective critical refers to a particular intellectual tradition whose origins can be traced back to the works of Karl Marx and the Frankfurt School. Since then critical theory has developed into a

complicated tradition that includes different theoretical approaches such as, social and cultural reproduction, cultural difference approach, governmentality studies and cultural production as discussed in the previous chapter. With all these different theoretical interventions to critical theory, it is still possible to provide some general understandings among critical ethnographers.

It is generally held that critical ethnography primarily seeks to speak against the forms of domination and inequality. In other words, the researcher has a political motive in that she advocates the emancipation of the marginalized. Habermas (1971) calls this “emancipatory intent”. He talks of three dimensions of knowing; technical, historical-hermeneutic, and critical self-reflective. Habermas suggests that we only reach true knowledge that would free us by achieving critical self-reflective knowing. Critical self-reflective science “releases the subject from dependence on hypostatized powers” (p. 310). In a similar vein, Freire (2000) views this emancipatory intent as a form of consciousness rising. In addition to emancipation, critical ethnography aims to address the issues of power, domination, hegemony and inequality.

Carpescken (1996) rightfully credits the foundation of critical ethnography in educational studies to Paul Willis’s (1981) *Learning to Labor* in which he primarily develops a grounded version of resistance theory. Willis’s account is also significant because he addresses the problematic relationship between

structure and agency. The gap between structure and agency, at the macro and micro levels has become a paramount issue in understanding and studying cultural behavior since Willis's *Learning to Labor*. The aim has turned to connect theory to life and interpret the gap in between. In other words, praxis has become the central issue for many critical ethnographers. Carspecken (1996) explains that relating theory to life is basically a need for one to develop a sense of dignity and self-understanding. "Praxis need is basically the need to become a self, maintain a self, and develop a self through expressive activity" (p. 63). Hence it is the work of the critical ethnographer that may develop the ways of expressive activity and transformation of self.

Critical ethnography is currently being used widely. Critical ethnographers are doing intensive empirical examination of everyday life using appropriate methods. As I noted earlier, it is not possible to grasp accounts of all critical ethnographers, yet it is possible to give some underlying ontological and epistemological assumptions.

(1) All cultural groups produce an intersubjective reality which is both ``inherited'' and continually constructed and reconstructed as it is lived or practiced. This shared cultural reality is external in the sense that Bourdieu defines ``habitus'' (Bourdieu & Waquant, 1992). It is a distinct, lived historical tradition ``objectified'' through structuring practices (laws, public policies, cultural conventions). The habitus of a lived historical tradition is marked by a collective memory of particular ecological, geo-political, embodied, spaces/places; (2) a well-trained, reflexive investigator can know

that historical, socially constructed reality in a partial, provisional sense through an intensive, experiential encounter with people who live by these cultural constructions of reality; and (3) a reflexive investigator, who has experienced this unfamiliar cultural space and has dialogued with its practitioners, can portray this cultural space and its people in a provisionally accurate manner. (Foley, 2002, pp. 472-73)

Although, these assumptions seem to be somewhat cryptic, many critical ethnographers may still embrace them. So far, I have presented the basic tenets of critical ethnography; however this does not mean that I completely agree with these assumptions. I discuss my points of departure.

To begin with, I, as a critical ethnographer, do not agree with the idea of transformation or emancipation. I do not think that the emancipation is one of the tasks or the roles of critical ethnography. The emancipatory intent could potentially lead to an authoritarian relationship between the researcher and the researched. The idea of emancipation or consciousness rising presumes that the researcher is already emancipated and has a raised consciousness which sounds very problematic. In order to avoid this problematic, I neither take on emancipation as a duty, nor do I have such an aim. Instead, I propose a more self-reflexive account of critical research that informs my place and voice in the research. Although my research is not an auto-ethnography, I draw insights from auto-ethnography to avoid an authoritative voice and to place myself in the



research in self-reflexive way. Indeed, I am a witness, subject, and object of my research case, the neoliberalization of the education system in Turkey.

Stories, accounts and insights that I describe in my research inevitably also include my stories and insights. Maguire (2006) discusses that ethnographers are looking for new approaches to inquiry in which researchers could present agentive turn and claim their voices, sign and signature in writing self and other. Relevant to this search, drawing from Bakhtin, Maguire proposes the use of the “act of authoring as a creative answerability/responsibility that invokes a much needed dialogue between self and others in human inquiry” (Maguire, 2006, p. 2). From this perspective dialogue is a necessity for one to fulfill oneself. Answerability is “my unavoidable state as a human being; as such I have 'no alibi for my existence', I must engage in a constant dialogue with the world as it is given to me; only in this way can I give my own life meaning and value” (Bakhtin, 1994, p. 247). As Maguire (2006) clearly puts, I am intrigued by “creative answerability and agency to understand the nexus between larger domains of social activity and individuals’ ways of authoring subjectivities in the social sciences/humanities” (p. 3).

Apart from the need for a reflexive turn in critical ethnography, I also advocate for a narrative turn in critical ethnography. As much as ethnography focuses on cultural behaviors and critical ethnography focuses on relations of

power, hegemony, domination, and inequality and the ways of how these patterns of power and culture shape individuals' behaviors, narrative inquiry focuses on the ways of how individuals as autonomous beings shape, contribute to, distort and play with these patterns. My major focus is on teachers' interpretations of the transformation of education in Turkey. I believe that narrative inquiry as a methodological approach provides another appropriate ways of understanding teachers' interpretations.

### **Narrative Inquiry**

*Narrative is present in myth, legend, fable, tale, novella, epic, history, tragedy, drama, comedy, mime, painting (think of Carpaccio's Saint Ursula), stained glass windows, cinema, comics, news items, conversations. Moreover, under this almost infinite diversity of forms, narrative is present in every age, in every place, in every society; it begins with the very history of mankind and there nowhere is nor has been a people without narrative. All classes, all human groups, have their narratives . . . narrative is international, transhistorical, transcultural: It is simply there, like life itself. (Barthes, cited in Franzosi, 1998, p.517)*

Barthes (1975) claims that no one can build a narrative without referring to herself. Implicit in this statement, narrative is a unit that relates self to a particular structure. Narrative is the human enterprise (Butler-Kisber, 2010) of telling a story that relates self to life. It informs both the place and voice of self in the world. Narrative is the site where self produces her reality, makes meaning of her life, experiences, and events around her. Narrative inquiry is then about looking for alternative ways of thinking and meaning making, the ways people construct

their subjectivity, and how people build their reality and act up on it. Narrative inquirers seek to access individuals' life experiences with the aim of understanding multidimensional meanings and ways of meaning making.

Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) elaborate that:

Beginning with a respect for ordinary lived experience, the focus of narrative inquiry is not only a valorizing of individuals' experiences but also an exploration of the social, cultural and institutional narratives within which individuals' experiences were constituted, shaped, expressed, and enacted—but in a way that begins and ends that inquiry in the storied lives of the people involved. Narrative inquirers study an individual's experience in the world and, through the study, seek ways of enriching and transforming the experience for themselves and others. (p. 42)

Building on the tenets of qualitative research, narrative ways of knowing crept slowly into research and became a distinctive field of research methodology.

Although Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) speculate that the origins of narrative inquiry as we know it, can be traced back to the ancient times, many others (including Barthes, 1975; Chase, 2005; Butler-Kisber, 2010) note that the traces of narrative inquiry go back to the practices of the Chicago School in 1920s and Russian formalists. Narrative inquiry is now a cross disciplinary field and enjoys its “renaissance” across social studies, including educational studies (Josselson, 2003). Since Connelly and Clandinin (1990), the narrative inquiry has gained a significant acceptance among educators and established itself as an important qualitative methodology in the field of educational studies. “Narrative inquiry has

made a transformative impact in education and contributed to the advancement of education research in areas such as research methods and methodology, curriculum, teaching and learning, and teacher education” (Kim, 2010, p. 5).

In this study, I use life stories as my method due to my aim to create a reflexive research space or in Bakhtinian terms a carnivalized research site in which “everyone is an active participant, openness and different cultures are celebrated, hierarchy is invisible and norms are reversed” (Kim, 2010, p. 11). A carnivalized research inverts hierarchies and leaves the dialogue between the researcher and the researched as an open genre which I believe is a necessary move for self-reflexive methodologies. In what follows, I further my use of life stories and understanding of carnivalized research to “acknowledge the impact of personal and situational influences on research and its ‘findings’, and contextualized nature of research events” (Maguire, 2007, p. 8).

## **Life Stories**

The real, according to Taussig (1997) is just fabricated through discourses and narratives. However, this does not mean that they are automatic meaning producers for experiences of individuals; rather they are used, shaped, and changed by individuals so that they construct realities.

Reality is socially defined. But the definitions are always embodied, that is, concrete individuals and groups of individuals serve as definers of reality. To understand the state of the socially constructed universe at any given

time, or its change over time, one must understand the social organization that permits the definers to do their defining. (Berger & Luckmann, 1996, p. 134)

Life-stories are sites of narratives that are part of social reality that we live by. "Life stories in this sense are not conceptualized as merely representations disconnected from "real" life, nor are they "transparent" records of experience" (Üstündağ, 2006, p. 5). They are forms that relate subject to social-cultural relations where tensions, contradictions and conflicts between subject and dominant discourses and cultural patterns are addressed and negotiated. Collecting teachers' life-stories an important part of my study through which I aim to enter a dialogic communication with participants, the Turkish teachers.

I take very seriously the idea that knowledge is contextually produced and socially constructed. However, this does not mean that there is a truth out there for me to capture. Rather I believe in the importance of being aware of my presence in the field. I am not a "third person, nameless, ahistorical, one-dimensional subjects or acultural being, researching from a position of nowhere" (Maguire, 2007, p. 9). Rather, I am offering a carnivalized research that would inform and acknowledge my place in the research. As I have noted earlier, a carnivalized research offers a dialogic framework that raises the issues of voice and self-reflexivity. Bakhtin (1984) explains that the "carnival celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order: it

marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions” (p. 10). A carnivalized research would mark my presence in the research as a historical and cultural being. Similar to the notion of carnivalized notion and also drawing from Bakhtin, Quantz and O’Connor (1988) forward the notion of “polyphonic ethnography that would present the utterances of disempowered groups in dialogue both externally and internally” (p. 105). Obviously, the utterances do not have to belong to disempowered groups only, but as the concept of polyphonic implies, the idea of each voice contributing to the whole while maintaining its integrity seems to me paramount.

At any given time, in any given place, there will be a set of conditions-social, historical, meteorological, physiological- that will insure that a word uttered in that place and at that time will have a meaning different than it would have under any other conditions... (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 428). In this regard, the multiplicity of voices is so essential that according to Bakhtin (1994), the basis of being human is not a fixed identity but a fluid one that is the opening of dialogue which implies a simultaneous inclusion of other voices. The sense and the meaning of self are made through the help of the other precisely at the moment of dialogue with the other. Hence the problem in human inquiry, which is how to include multiple voices, of researchers and of participants, might be overcome through a proper dialogue. Relevant here is the concept of answerability/responsibility that provides needed dialogue between self and

others (Maguire, 2006).“This concept of authoring views a self that is answerable not only to the social environment but also a self that is answerable for the authoring of its responses (p.2).

I argue that life stories, contextuality of truths and voices produced by actors build particular narratives that are articulated within the discourses that are circulating within the given cultural and political spaces. For example, a teacher's life story is inevitable related to the discursive formation of the schooling system that she is in. Her references, articulation of pedagogy, professional practices, relation to the others, and even her words all speak to a certain position in the discourse. In the last section of the chapter, I further this discussion deeper and turn my attention to the different approaches to critical discourse analysis as my method of data analysis. I critically examine them, and situate my understanding.

### **Critical Discourse Analysis**

In its broad sense, a discourse is simply a body of speech or writing. More specifically, “a discourse is a group of statements which provide a language for talking about –i.e. way of representing- a particular kind of knowledge about a topic” (Hall, 1992, p. 291). The study of discourse has been a profound methodological aspiration in human inquiry. Among the discourse studies, Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), especially that of Fairclough (2009; 1995; 1993), are widely held by scholars of education in studying neoliberalism and its implications

for education. There are diverse approaches to CDS such as Dispositive Analysis, (Jager and Maier, 2009); Socio-Cognitive Approach (van Dijk, 2009; 2001; 1988); Discourse Historical Approach (Reisigl and Wodak, 2009); Corpus Linguistics Approach (Mautner, 2009); Social Actors Approach (van Leeuwen, 2009); and Dialectical-Relational Approach (Fairclough, 2009; 1995, 1993).

Although these approaches have been proven to be useful in their respective fields, I see two common problems with these approaches. The first problem is that the analysis of widely used approaches to CDS is mostly text and language oriented. For example, Fairclough (1989) provides a series of questions that aim to analyze characteristics of vocabulary, grammar, and textual structures of a given discourse. Such a tendency has the potential to ignore the materiality of discourse. This disposition is primarily concerned with what the discourse says and what it conceals. Accordingly, the task of the researcher is to excavate the embedded meanings of discourse by means of interpretations. However, interpretations can be indefinite. "If interpretation is an unending task, it is simply because there is nothing to interpret. There is nothing absolutely primary to interpret because, when all is said and done, underneath it all everything is already interpretation" (Foucault, cited in Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 107).

Whatever different approach to Critical Discourse Studies scholars may use, the basic understanding that they ignore is, as Young (1981) specifies,



"what is analyzed is not simply what was thought or said per se, but all the discursive rules and categories that were a priori, assumed as a constituent part of discourse and therefore of knowledge" (p. 48). The second problem I see is that these diverse approaches to CDS are so focused on what discourse says and its implicit meaning that they tend to ignore not only what discourse does, but also its material effects and its context. Foucault seems to be highly aware of these problems and his injunctions about the use of discourse analysis are aimed to fight against them. Therefore, I use discourse as Foucault conceptualized it. Below is a an elaboration of certain principles and tasks of Foucault's archaeology and genealogy.

### **Foucault and Critical Discourse Studies**

I begin with two key points. First, in the last section of the Order of Discourse, while talking about Jean Hyppolite, Foucault makes a statement between the lines about his relation to Hegel which I find vital in understanding Foucault's entire aura. He states that "...the aegis of Hegel, and that our entire epoch, whether in logic or epistemology, whether in Marx or Nietzsche, is trying to escape from Hegel: and what I have tried to say just now about discourse is very unfaithful to the Hegelian logos" (1981, p. 74). The statement indicates a breaking from not only Hegel but almost the Western logos in that it envisages a radical shift both in epistemological and methodological senses. Being unfaithful

to Hegelian logos means that the philosophy has a new task ahead, which is not to look for systems of thought and meanings that claim to explain life, not to look for fixed, ahistorical, coherent and rationalized essences, not to look for ideals, and not to produce new epistemological and methodological orthodoxies. Rather, the new task is to discover the conditions of possibility and limits of such orthodoxies, which constitute regimes of truth that form subjectivities, positions, techniques of regulations and tactics of power, and those that produce hegemonies, exclusions, and divisions. Foucault's methodological understandings, archaeology and genealogy, can be seen as ways of de-familiarizing, de-centering and de-naturalizing orthodoxies while trying to escape from Hegel.

My second point concerns the understanding that genealogy is the successor of archaeology and superior to it, which appears to me to be widely held among education scholars. Following Foucault's own evaluations of both approaches and the writing of Scheurich & McKenzie (2005), I disagree with the idea of genealogy being the successor of archaeology and superior to it. In the "Order of Discourse", Foucault (1981) explicitly states that "the critical [archaeological] and the genealogical descriptions must alternate, and complement each other, each supporting the other by turns" (p. 73). The archaeological portion deals with the systems that surrounds discourse and aims

to "identify and grasp these principles of sanctioning, exclusion, and scarcity of discourse" (p. 73) whereas, the genealogical task tries to discover moments and conditions of emergence of discourses and truth statements. In this sense, archaeology and genealogy are not superior or inferior to each other but rather they are a different set of tools that are directed towards different aims, fashioned for different needs and in most cases they complement each other.

Foucault does not make any hierarchical distinction between his methodologies. Instead, he considers both methodologies as equally valid and important. The idea that genealogy is superior to and a successor of archaeology comes from Dreyfus and Rabinow's (1982) highly influential work, "Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics" which has been a cornerstone in introducing Foucault to the US and many other English speaking scholars and countries. It is unquestionably a misinterpretation in the sense that Foucault had never preferred one to another, as Scheurich & McKenzie (2005) discuss in detail. Foucault used them for different purposes and saw them as both valid and valuable. In the following section I shift focus to the details of archaeology and genealogy and their interplay in identifying discursive formations and their relations to power.

## The Archaeological Method

My focus here is to provide some basic notions and guiding questions that might be asked while studying data or more relevantly, archives. The notions that are frequently cited and of vital importance in understanding archaeology are *savoir* and *connaissance* which define his archaeology.

By "archaeology" I would like to designate not exactly a discipline but a domain of research, which would be the following: in a society, different bodies of learning, philosophical ideas, everyday opinions, but also institutions, commercial practices and police activities, mores - all refer to a certain implicit knowledge [*savoir*] special to this society. This knowledge is profoundly different from the bodies of learning [*des connaissances*] that one can find in scientific books, philosophical theories, and religious justifications, but it is what makes possible at a given moment the appearance of a theory, an opinion, a practice. Thus, in order for the big centres of internment to be opened at the end of the seventeenth century, it was necessary that a certain knowledge of madness be opposed to nonmadness, of order to disorder, and it's this knowledge that I wanted to investigate, as the condition of possibility of knowledge [*connaissance*], of institutions, of practices (Foucault, 1994a, pp. 261-62).

*Connaissance* involves the bodies of formal knowledge like biology, sociological theories and physics whereas *savoir* is the implicit knowledge, the more general knowledge that sets the background and conditions of possibility for the emergence of different *connaissances*. In order to understand the emergence of a particular discipline (i.e. psychiatry), it is not enough to study only that particular discipline and its treaties but it is necessary to study its much broader and

complex context (*savoir*) that involves politics, policies, every day practices, institutions, books, norms, rules, morality and seemingly unrelated disciplines.

In studying the *savoir*, which is the dispersed knowledge across the entire field archaeologically, Foucault (1972/2002) lays down four principles with the aim of presenting the specific qualities of archaeological analysis.

(1) Archaeology tries to define not the thoughts, representations, images, themes, preoccupations that are concealed or revealed in discourses; but those discourses themselves, those discourses as practices obeying certain rules. It does not treat discourse as document, as a sign of something else, as an element that ought to be transparent; ...it is concerned with "discourse in its own volume, as a monument. It is not an interpretative discipline: it does not seek another, better-hidden discourse. ... (2) Archaeology does not seek to rediscover the continuous, ...its problem is to define discourses in their specificity; to show in what way the set of rules that they put into operation is irreducible to any other; to follow them the whole length of their exterior ridges, in order to underline them the better. ... (3) Archaeology is not ordered in accordance with the sovereign figure of the oeuvres; it does not try to grasp the moment in which the oeuvre emerges on the anonymous horizon... (4) Lastly, archaeology does not try to restore what has been thought, wished, aimed at, experienced, desired by men in the very moment at which they expressed it in discourse; ...It is not a return to the innermost secret of the origin; it is the systematic description of a discourse-object. (pp. 155-56)

The principles he outlined here aim to put into work the principle of reversal:

[T]rying to grasp the forms of exclusion, of limitation, of appropriation which I have referred to above; showing how they are formed, in response to what needs, how they have been modified and displaced, what constraint they

have effectively exerted, to what extent they have been evaded (Foucault, 1981, p. 70).

The analysis in archaeology deals with the exclusions and constraints that rarefy and limit the discourse to construct some of the statements as true and some others as false. In studying the constraints of discourses, Foucault (1981) talks about three different kinds of procedures, which are systems of exclusion (exterior procedures), internal procedures and constraints on the speaking subject. Systems of exclusion that work from an external space are prohibitions, division and rejection, and the opposition between true and false. Prohibitions (the forbidden speech) denote that any speaking subject cannot say anything she wants, or not everyone has the right to say whatever she thinks, in a sense that prohibitions determine the limit of what is sayable. Division and rejection (the division of madness) refer to the binary opposition between madness and reason and determines what is considered as normal, reasonable and what is not. The last system of exclusion is the opposition between true and false (the will to truth) that deals with the production of truths over centuries within discourses as "a system of exclusion, a historical, modifiable, and institutionally constraining system" (Foucault, 1981, p. 54).

The second procedure in controlling and delimiting discourse is the internal procedures resulting from the discourses' will to exercise their own control operate as principles of classification, ordering and distribution. The

internal procedures are commentary, author function and disciplines.

Commentary plays in the thin space of the hierarchy between primary text and secondary text and paradoxically allows the speaking subject to "say something other than the text itself, but on the condition that it is this text itself which is said, and in a sense completed" (p.58). Thus, commentary helps discourse to get reproduced and circulated. Author function determines the available subject positions in the discourse, and limits the element of chance by inserting an identity into the play of discourse. Lastly, disciplines meaning both institutions and fields of knowledge and working as genres, control the limits of discourse, shape the rules, and establish what is permitted to be said in any given time and circumstances.

The last set of procedures in controlling and delimiting discourses is about the constraints on the speaking subjects, which denotes that none shall enter the order of discourse if he does not satisfy certain requirements or if he is not, from the outset, qualified to do so. To be more precise:

[N]ot all the regions of discourse are equally open and penetrable; some of them are largely forbidden (they are differentiated and differentiating), while others seem to be almost open to all winds and put at the disposal of every speaking subject, without prior restrictions (Foucault, 1981, p.62).

The procedures that I have outlined basically aim to control, organize, select, reproduce, and redistribute discourse in order to limit the chance events of discourse. The analysis of these procedures, as Foucault would argue is the critical (archaeological) portion of analysis; however there is another aspect of analysis, the genealogical part that complements and supports the first portion.

### **The Genealogical Method**

Methodologically, archaeology deals with the principle of reversal that is concerned with the rarefaction of discourse, whereas genealogy involves the other three methodological principles that are the principal of discontinuity, of specificity, and of exteriority.

The principal of discontinuity denotes that there is not "a great unsaid or great unthought" that circulates around the world. Discontinuity means treating discourses as interrupted practices that at times cross each other and at other times combine with each other unexpectedly "but can just as well exclude or be unaware of each other" (Foucault, 1981, p. 67). The principal of specificity indicates that there is not any hidden, inherent or essential meaning in things. Foucault warns that "the world is not the accomplice of our knowledge; there is no prediscursive providence which disposes the world in our favour" (p. 67). Absence of any prediscursive providence does not simply indicate that there is nothing beyond text but that our claims of truth, our appropriations of discourse,



our meaning making procedures and our speaking capacity are determined and governed by discourse itself. The last one, the principle of exteriority, begins with the claim that critical readings will always be insufficient because there is always the possibility of other readings. Hence, instead of tracing and trying to show hidden meanings, the analysis should be based on the discourse's surface, "its appearance and its regularity, go towards its external conditions of possibility, towards what gives rise to the aleatory series of these events and fixes its limits" (p. 67).

Foucault's genealogy is not a structured methodology in the conventional sense but rather a set of philosophical understandings and injunctions that diversify the work of critique and aim to bring new dimensions to research. What he offers, in short "a methodology of suspicion and critique, an array of defamiliarizing procedures and reconceptualizations that pertain not just to any object of knowledge, but to any procedure of knowledge production" (Hook, 2005, pp. 4-5).

The first injunction is directed to the search of origins as a historical understanding. Foucault (1994b), utilizing Nietzsche, presents the search of origins as an idea to be avoided, since it is an attempt to find "exact essences of things, their purest possibilities, and their carefully protected identities" (p. 371). Instead, the work of a genealogist is opposed to the search of origins and

[I]f he listens to history, he finds that there is something altogether different behind things: not a timeless and essential secret but the secret that they have no essence, or that their essence was fabricated in a piecemeal fashion from alien forms (p. 371). The work of the genealogist is inevitably historical in that it tries to discover the moment of emergences and "details and accidents" (p.373), randomness, fabrications, and chance that accompany beginnings.

The second injunction is related to the body. In this respect, Foucault sees history as a body of concrete becoming "with its moments of intensity, its lapses, its extended periods of feverish agitation, its fainting spells" (p.373) that always turns its face to a corporal body. The issue of body is indispensable to the work of the genealogist, in fact, "Discipline and Punish" is an attempt to expose a body that was bruised, bleeding and recreated by truth regimes, if nothing else. The history works on the body through descents, which are "the subtle, singular, and sub-individual marks that might possibly intersect in them to form a network that is difficult to unravel" (p. 373). The genealogist's focus is then not the origins but descents and their ways and moments of attaching themselves to the body which is the surface, the space that history constantly leaves marks and stigmata on. "The body manifests the stigmata of past experience and also gives rise to desires, failings, and errors" (p. 374). The task is then to expose the body that

carries the "imprints of history" and to discover the moment at which descent attaches itself to the body.

The third injunction is to focus on the various systems of subjection and "hazardous play of dominations" (p.376) by utilizing the term emergence, the moment of appearance and arising. Emergence designates the entry of forces and their confrontations that lead to differentiation of values. The genealogist, in this respect describes what happens to the rest while elephants kick and stamp. Humanity does not gradually progress from combat to combat until it arrives at universal reciprocity, where the rule of law finally replaces warfare; humanity installs each of its violences in a system of rules and thus proceeds from domination to domination (p. 378). What emergences are the study of differentiation of values and forces while proceeding from domination to domination.

The final injunction is that of effective history as opposed to the traditional history or history of historians. The effective history, on the other hand can serve the genealogist if only it "refuses certainty of absolute" (p. 379). Here, again the effective history brings the body into the scene:

The body is molded by a great many distinct regimes; it is broken down by the rhythms of work, rest, and holidays; it is poisoned by food or values, through eating habits or moral laws; it constructs resistances. "Effective" history differs from the history of historians in being without constants.

Nothing in man - not even his body - is sufficiently stable to serve as the basis for self-recognition or for understanding other men. The traditional devices for constructing a comprehensive view of history and for retracing the past as a patient and continuous development must be systematically dismantled. Necessarily, we must dismiss those tendencies which encourage the consoling play of recognitions. (p. 380)

Effective history deals with the events in their purest possibility and opposes the assumption that there is a unity, continuity, essence behind the things; that the traditional history resolves events onto a rational. Effective history takes the idea of perspectivism into very serious consideration, which the traditional historians spend so much effort to erase from their work. The idea of perspectivism claims that there are different kinds of knowledge (*savoir*) that can be validated as real and, not all of them are counted as truth in the regime of knowledge-power. Thus, the work of the genealogist is to pursue these perspectival knowledges that claim to be true and the ways and techniques how these particular claims come to be true and, not others.

My elaboration so far basically shows that Foucault does not have a methodology in the classical sense, but he has philosophical aspirations and injunctions that he wants to impose on the idea of methodology. In this study, I utilize Foucault's principles and task and combine them with a critical ethnography in which I collect life stories of teachers, which I discuss next.

## **Another Methodology: The Cloud Discourse as an Alternative**

I developed an analytical framework through utilizing tools provided by Foucault's archaeology and genealogy. I argue that the model I present potentially serves a basis for a study of a discourse system, in this case, the Turkish Education System. The model utilizes a cloud metaphor that addresses the current situation of the Turkish Education System and its discursive formations (Figure 1).

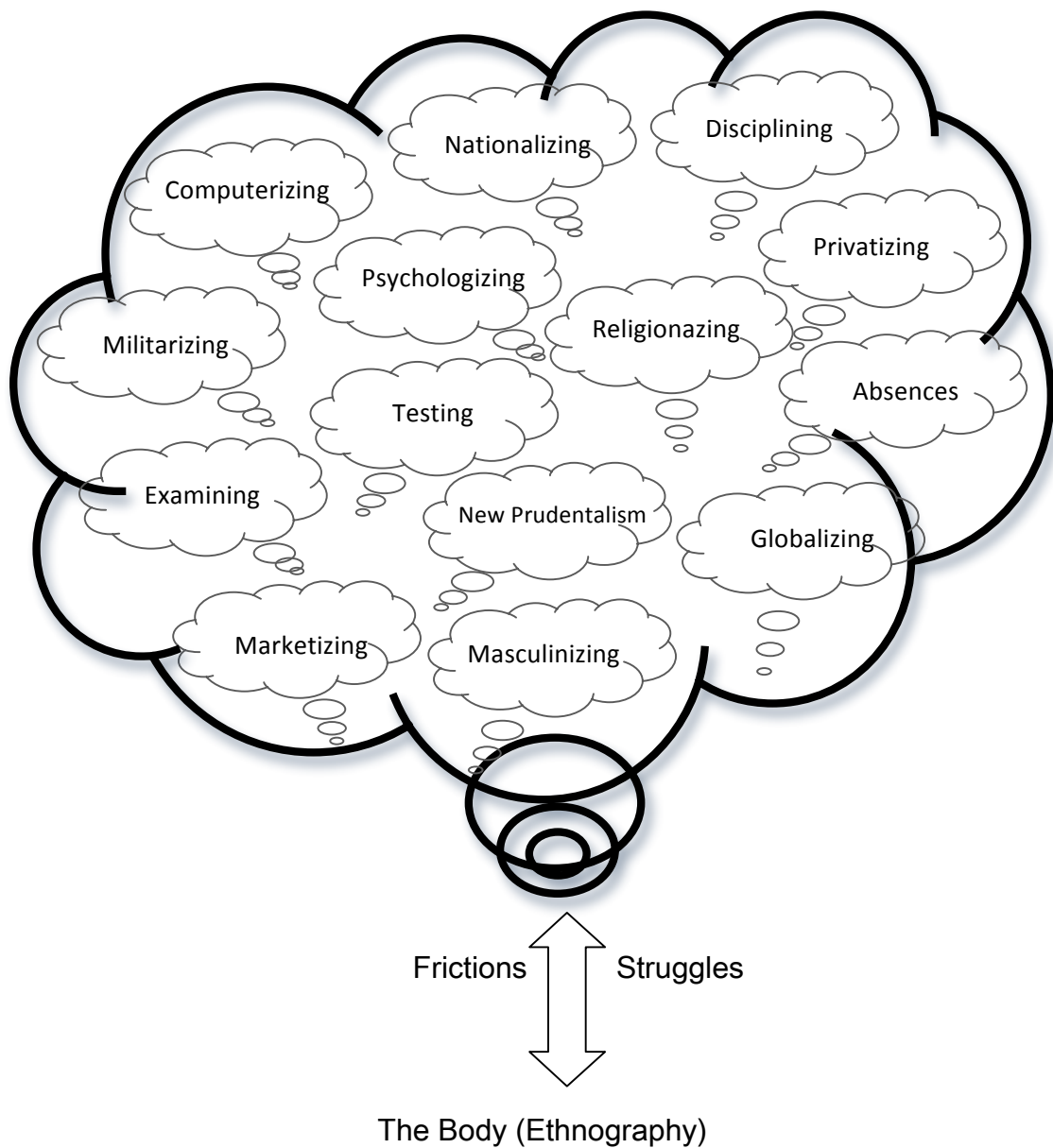


Figure 1: The Cloud Discourse

The Cloud has several guiding postulations.

- (1) The cloud is not a fixed and completed entity. It is always a becoming and in flux. It forms the *savoir* of the system, in this case of the Turkish Education System. It is not a closed system but an open one. The cloud

always pops up, grows bigger, changes its boundaries and shape but never explodes.

- (2) Boundaries of the cloud are never clear-cut, in fact they can barely be differentiated. Boundaries here refer to both external ones and boundaries of discourses within the cloud. They metaphorically indicate the conditions of possibility. Sometimes, they intertwine with each other, at other times they are clear cut and, marking the territories of certain discourses like that of nationalizing and militarizing.
- (3) The cloud, at any given time specifically belongs to the given time. There would be different clouds for different times. Tiny clouds around the main one belong to other times. However, they are not separated as the figure would imply. There are certain discourses that could be seen in other times' clouds but with different boundaries and motives. Tiny drops under the inner clouds imply that they are coming from some other places and times. The history, in this schema is always present but never accessible. For example, the discourse of examination within the system works differently at different times. In the Turkish System, twenty years ago, when I was an elementary student, the idea of examination was not so popular. During my elementary school years, I had only one exam, whereas now students have around 200 exams through the same time

span. The cloud aims to track down these shifts through *rigorous documentation*.

- (4) The cloud deals with emergencies; in fact it is itself an emergence. It traces the imprints of history within the system and on the body. The struggle for dominating over the cloud causes differentiations in discourses and values that they carry with them. In the Turkish System, the current discourse of religion does not have the values it had thirty years ago even though it uses the same religious understanding: Sunni Islam. The values and their ways of operations shift while moving from one domination to another. For example, during my schooling years, 1990s, teachers beating students was common practice, whereas now it is *de facto* forbidden and can lead to the sacking of a teacher.
- (5) Not all of the areas are equally penetrable within the cloud. Some of the areas are thin and vulnerable to external forces, whilst some others are thicker and hard to penetrate like that of nationalizing, militarizing and masculinizing. There are always absences or ghostly appearances within the cloud. Absences/Exclusions could change from system to system. The system always needs these absences in order to build a base for itself but never talks about them and never lets them speak. In the Turkish case,



these absences are, among others, Kurds; a major ethnic group, and Alavis; people of a major Islamic sect.

(6) There is no space outside of the cloud discourse. It is not possible to speak from the outside. The boundaries of discourses determine what is sayable and what is not. They exclude, delimit, constrain, regularize and disseminate what is true within the system.

(7) The cloud never deals with meanings or provides interpretations but concerns itself with what impacts discourses have on daily life.

Methodologically, I added an ethnographic portion to the cloud which aims to document materiality of discourses and their effects on the body; bodies of teachers, students, parents and principals. The interaction between the body and the discourse is foreseen not as a smooth and untroubled process, but rather it is believed there are serious struggles and frictions.

In a typical education system, what one can do, say and even think are pre-determined, and delimited in the moment one steps into the system.

The friction occurs between what one is allowed to do and what one wants to do.

The ethnographic portion introduced to the cloud aims to discover distances, oppositions and struggles, as well as the materiality of discourses.

The cloud is nothing but just a beginning; a reflective space that aims to develop

a general framework for studying an educational system, in this case the Turkish Education System. The cloud aims to identify how discourse works, it is rarefied, what is thinkable, reasonable, sayable or not, within a discourse system by examining policy documents in their present forms and their change through history while empirically documenting their effects with interviews and observations.

### **Design and Procedures**

This is a qualitative study that uses critical narrative ethnography as its conceptual base. The design of the study involves methods of ethnographic studies for collecting data through document analysis, observations and interviews. The fieldwork of the study took place at three different schools in district of Beşiktaş, in İstanbul, Turkey. I conducted my fieldwork in an elementary school, a middle school and in a high school. My entrance to the field was relatively easy, since I have been working as a teacher in the district of Beşiktaş. I still needed to acquire formal consents from the Ministry which was granted in two days after my application.

### **The Field**

The formal field research of the study took place between January, 2013 and January 2014. I visited schools every week day for the whole time except for

the months of July and August. In another sense, since I have been working as a teacher since 2006, the fieldwork of this study could be seen to have taken eight years. In this study I also draw from my own experience of teaching.

## **Methods and Data**

The term methods here refers to the specific techniques used for collecting empirical information and materials. My study involved intensive fieldwork in which I primarily employed the method of participant observation in addition to life-story interviews and document analysis.

### ***Interviews***

I interviewed fourteen teachers; five elementary school teachers, two literature teachers, two computer teachers, two guidance and psychological guidance teachers, a history teacher, an English teacher, and a physical education teacher. Initially I met with teachers to introduce myself, to explain the purpose of the research and let them know that I would be asking for their participation in life-history interviews. Formal interviews were open-ended basically asking the life-stories of participants in relation to their profession. Interviews were approximately one hour in length during which participants told stories of their lives as students and as teachers. Participants constantly were

invited to make comparisons between their schooling years, and teaching years by which I tried to see the evolution of school culture.

I gave to all of participants a consent form, detailing the study, providing assurance of confidentiality, informing them of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without providing any excuses, the choice to be audio-taped, and access to the dissertation upon its completion. Formal interviews were not only mechanisms of my source of data.

### ***Participant Observation***

I visited schools every weekday for ten months. Participant observation enabled me to triangulate what teachers told during interviews. It also helped me to observe what the discourse could actually do. Participant observation proved a useful method in better understanding of cultural context of schools. I also gathered data from informal and brief conversations with participants during the field observation.

During the fieldwork, I kept careful, detailed and descriptive and reflective notes which included basic information of what occurred during observations. My notes also involved what people said during observed activities and informal conversations with me. I wrote my notes where no one was present. I also acquired a huge body of data from the documents.

## ***Documents***

My research focused on a wide range documents related the Turkish Education System, which included policy documents, regulations, guidelines, bulletins, school magazines, newspaper articles, and all other materials generated at the school site by teachers and students. The list of documents I consulted is available in the reference section of this dissertation.

## **Analysis**

Once the document, interview and observation data were accumulated, I started the task of working through the data to render an interpretation of what I had generated. I first classified and later organized themes from the data with respect to the discourses that I dealt with. The analysis that I present in this dissertation is historical due to genealogical concerns and every part has a historical account; after all genealogy is the history of the present. After providing the historicity of the reforms and practices with which I with, I move on to actual discursive articulations of them in subsequent section. I refer to the ethnographic data whenever it is relevant in order to understand the material effects of discourses.

## CHAPTER IV: A HISTORY OF THE TURKISH EDUCATION SYSTEM

### Cultural and Political Foundations of Turkey

The establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923 is widely held as a sudden break with its predecessor, the Ottoman Empire, with an overtone of modernization. To some extent this assessment is valid. Yet, it would be a misconception to disregard the relevance of Tanzimat's reforms to modernize that happened long before the Republic was proclaimed, to the cultural and political orientation of the Republic. The Tanzimat period, covering the years between 1839 and 1876, commenced in 1839 by Mustafa Reşid Paşa, who was the minister of Foreign Affairs and a known liberal. The Edict of Tanzimat, written by the Paşa, initiated an entirely new political understanding, which was advocating for equality of religions and secularization, and stating the responsibilities of government to its subjects. The edict also faintheartedly tried to place seeds of a new agent into the political domain, the citizen. These initial attempts, as much as they were significant, could not be institutionalized enough to bring about significant changes into the life of wider society until the proclamation of the Republic by an alliance of military and bureaucratic elite.

One of the other substantial inheritances of the Tanzimat to the Republic was that the elites of the new state were mainly educated in the western-type schools that had opened with the Tanzimat. These schools were supposed to create a well-trained and loyal Ottoman elite. The founder of the Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, and his entourage were the graduates of these schools through their influence, these schools to some extent achieved what they were expected to. After the National Liberation War, the elites took over where the Tanzimat had left off. They initiated, perhaps one of the greatest state-sponsored social engineering projects of the twentieth century in terms of scale and space the modernization of Turkish society. After the proclamation of the Republic, Tanzimat's unfinished efforts of westernization were accelerated. Only, there was an addendum to the modernization project; an addendum that decided the fate of different religious and ethnic minorities. The goal now was to fashion a homogenous modern Turkish nation at the expense of individual rights, freedom, and cultural and religious diversity.

Feyzi Baban (2004, p. 52) states that "the republican regime in Turkey, however, has not been hospitable to the idea of diversity and has usually adopted the position in that diversity is detrimental to national unity and cohesion." The ideological pillars of the new nation-state, called Kemalism, minimized the room for individual expression and freedom, and attributed an

obsessive emphasis on national unity and social cohesion. The new Turkish nationalism, adapted as the new official ideology and disseminated in a top-down fashion, was similar to French Jacobinism in most cases and in some others it was akin to German National Socialism. The Minister of Justice of the time, Mahmut Esat Bozkurt's statements in a public speech clearly exemplify the cultural and political orientation of the newly founded state:

For this party [Republican People's Party], by its deeds to date, has restituted the status of the master to the Turkish Nation who indeed is the master. It is my opinion, my conviction that, and let both friends and foes hear this, the master of this country is the Turk. Those who are not pure Turks have only one right in the Turkish fatherland, and that is to be a servant, a slave. We are living in the freest country of the world. The name of this country is Turkey. (Cited in Kaplan, 1998, p. 132)

While a new nation was being created by the practices of Kemalist ideology, the characteristics of new social imaginary corresponded with the mentality of a totalitarian domination that contained the perception of national identity formed as "communal interests" and defined as unified, alike, undivided, holistic and standardized. Particularly, the form of presentation of Atatürk as a "mythological hero" with the capacity of a charismatic leader and as the only person involved in the decision-making process which corresponded with desire of totalitarian governance that "aims to activate society by creating intensive fear and antagonism over the crowd of people" (Gütek: 2001, p. 270).



The single party period, 1923-1946, was Kemalism's peak years during which there had been radical transformations in almost every realm of the country, be it political, cultural, social, economic or even architectural. The abolishment of Sultanate (1923), Caliphate (1924), Sheikh-ul Islam (1924), and Şeriat and its courts (1924), the adaptation of the Constitution (1924), change of headgear and dress codes (1925), closure of religious Zawiya's and Dervish lodges (1925), adoption of the Gregorian calendar and Western system of time (1925) and new civil and penal codes based on the Swiss model (1926), replacement of the Arabic alphabet with the Latin one (1928), the adoption of the metric system (1931) and law of surnames (1934), and the right to vote for women (1936) were some of the major acts during the single party period that transformed the cultural and political landscape of the country. Ethno-cultural oriented discourse of bureaucratic and militarist nationalism paved the way for the character of the new nation from the beginning and it has not changed much since then.

The period beginning with the dissolution of a single party regime into a multi-party one a few years after the Second World War ended, was Turkey's first trial with democracy. The period ended bitterly and abruptly by a Military coup on 27 May 1960. The coup was the military's immediate response to the religious agenda of the Democratic Party. Consequently, the conservative prime minister,

Adnan Menderes and three other ministers were hanged. Ironically, after the coup the most democratic Constitution that Turkey ever had, was adopted. The relatively democratic framework provided by the new Constitution, and the rise of individualism, and civil rights, helped Turkey to develop a civil democratic sense of politics and culture. Yet, the democratic climate of the 1960s and 70s came to an end violently with another coup by which many had been were or tortured. During that period, "the military ruler's mission "prevention of anarchy and terror" and a totalitarian indoctrination of the Kemalist canon curtailed social radicalism; all civil organizations were forced to a corporative loyalty; the emergency power of the security forces become normalized" (Bora, 2000, p. 105).

The coup of 1980 harshly subjected the country to the early republican period's fascist discourse. The primary aim was to re-establish the Kemalist hegemony, yet this time the generals added a new ingredient to the recipe of the citizen. Until the coup, the state always tried to keep its distance from the religious affairs as anticipated by Kemalist principles but it was not anymore. The coup articulated Islam with the discourse of Kemalist nationalism. "The military and bureaucratic elite were always preoccupied with delineating the acceptable boundaries of what it is to be a Turk, but now they also had to re-impose what it means to be a Muslim as well" (Gürbey, 2006, p.13). Instruction in religious culture and moral education became compulsory for all of the students.

Education was a major site of transformation once again. Education, in this new context, was supposed to play an instrumental role in creating new religious and nationalist generations, which it did to a major extent.

I now turn my attention to a parallel reading of history of education in Turkey. I will not try to confirm or subvert truth claims; rather, I concern myself with the major transformations and conceptualizations of education, values and qualities attributed by hegemonic discourses to it, and expected roles to be played by schools in Turkey. I provide an overview of events that are need to document the descent and emergence of the discourses and their material effects that I am studying.

### **Education in Turkey**

The first step to modernize the education system traces back to 1839, the Tanzimat Edict (Mardin, 1981; Göcek, 1993), which is one of the reasons that the history of modern education begins with the late Ottoman era. The other reason is that elites of the republican government had been educated in the schools that were opened in during that period. The late modern schools of Ottomans substantially helped the Kemalist elite to craft the foundational framework for the Republic. The reforms started in this period provided the cultural and political basis for the modernization of the Republic. The Tanzimat period denotes the beginning of gradual systemization and centralization of education in the late

Ottoman Empire. In 1866, for the first time in Empire's history, a ministry of public education, Maarif-i Umumiye Nezareti, was formed with the aim of generating a central administrative structure for education.

Three years later, the General Education Regulation was adopted. The Regulation made primary education compulsory and free for all the empire's subjects. It aimed to create similar primary and middle schools across the Empire. It was intended to have a Western type of educational system. "The system constructed by the Regulation was based on a highly centralized French model of education" (Childress, 2001, p. 21). In this sense, a three-level educational system was established: Sibyan (primary), Ruşdiye (secondary), and Darulfünün (higher). Later on another level, called Idadi (middle), was introduced between Sibyan and Ruşdiye schools. It should be noted that these schools primarily targeted the elite and have never been influential in the wider society. The process of penetrating the wider society began with the declaration of the Republic.

Education has always been a prominent site in the creation and organization of newly founded nation-states. Many colonial/post-colonial experiences of modernization show that education has been seen as a mechanism of "catching up" with the West, achieving modernization as a magical cure for any social problems. The experience of Turkish modernity, in this sense

is not that different from any other colonial/post-colonial experiences. Education, in the Turkish case too appeared as a unique means of creating a nationalist culture, of modernization of the nation and of catching up with the civilized and developed West. The elites of the early Republic, stating explicitly their will to be a superior nation, had tirelessly worked to Westernize and modernize the country.

Education played an important role in this site. It was seen as the major mechanism of dissemination of reforms and in the creation of a homogenous and modern nation, and the development of a good citizen who would have full faith in the new state and its values. Implementing sudden and powerful reforms like the adoption of the Swiss civic code, transition from the Arabic alphabet to Latin letters, the new Republic strongly desired to bring about changes in people's lives. The entire civil space was being rearranged with respect to ideals of Western modernity. Education was particularly important in this new social imagination. It became the tool to penetrate the wider society and bring about sudden and significant changes in people's lives, which to a certain extent it did.

Shortly after the republic was declared, several education committees were convened. In 1924, primary school became mandatory and free. The most significant arrangement came on the same year with the acceptance of *Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu* (the Law on Unification of Education), which centralized all

educational affairs and remains in effect to this day and was mostly unchanged until early 2000s. The law was a major step to unify, secularize and nationalize education. Along with the alphabet reform and several other reforms, the law was serving to build a nation for the new state. Education was then strictly national as explicitly stated by the Prime Minister of the time, İsmet İnönü:

We want national education. What do we mean by this? This idea is easier to understand if we define its opposite. The opposite is religious upbringing or international education. You teachers should not offer religious and international, but national education. . . Religious education is in one sense international education. Our education, however, should be by ourselves, for ourselves. National education can be thought about as having two aspects: political and national (vatansal). Unfortunately, however, our citizens do not yet form a true nation (community). But if this generation works consciously, venturing all it has in terms of life experience and higher learning then the Turkish polity (state), may also develop into a Turkish nation (community) marked by genuine cultural, educational, and social maturity. This national body cannot hold any other civilizations. (cited in Özdalga, 2007, p. 419)

As Apple (1990) states “what should be taught is not only an educational issue but one that is inherently ideological and political” (p. 96), the Turkish Education System had a strong ideological aspect. The law of unification and other educational reforms was concentrated to centralize education run by the state, to foster secularist and nationalistic values. The control of local administration of schools, curriculum, allocation of teachers, pedagogical methods, textbooks, examinations and any other facet of the educational system

was strictly centralized and regulated by the Ministry of National Education. The period, until the Coup of 1980, was basically reproduction of the Turkish discourse of nationalism and laicism formed during the single-party regime. Despite the attempts to religionize the system by the conservative parties like Democrat Party and Justice Party, Turkish education had not altered much until 12 September 1980.

### **The Coming of Neoliberalism**

England & Ward (2007) introduce a distinction between neoliberalism and neoliberalization, which emphasizes the contingency and complexity of its enactment and more importantly its everlasting nature. By calling it neoliberalization, they draw attention to neoliberalism as a process rather than a completed project. Although, it is basically a process, using different strategies that are compatible with the aura of the time, it is possible to see some dramatic breaking points in any neoliberalization project. In the Turkish case, it is possible to talk about three breaking points in the process of neoliberalization. These points are the coup of 12 September, 1980, the privatization law in 1994 and the 2002 elections.

Many economists (Ertuğrul & Selçuk, 2001; Kibritçioğlu, 2001; Müftüler, 1995 among others) consider 24 January 1980 as a turning point in the Turkish economic system. It is the date on which the government declared its intention to

liberalize and open the state economy to the free market. With the declaration of “24 January Decisions” the Turkish state was changing its direction from a state-led economy to a market-led economy. It was the first major step in neoliberalization of Turkey. Yet it was not easy to make the transition from state-economy to market-led economy. In most cases, neoliberalization requires a process of erasing and remaking in order to institutionalize itself (Klein, 2007). In some cases, this is achieved through installation of military regimes as happened in Argentina, Chile (Klein, 2007) and in Turkey.

The date 12 September 1980 denotes a traumatic event in the history of modern Turkey because the Turkish army harshly took over the government. By the coup d'état 1980, democracy was terminated effectively and “Turkey was subjected to an authoritarian regime with fascist overtones” (Bora, 2000, p. 105). It was then possible to put the 24 Decisions to work. The coup's immediate plan for the educational system was the introduction of compulsory religious courses along with its strong nationalist implications. Apple (2006) notes that neoliberalism needs a neo-conservative force to be formed to provide neoliberal solutions to social and economic problems. With its new Constitution, the military regime did not only aim to neoliberalize the economy, but also to create a neo-conservative society. The coup of 12 September denotes the historical moment



when all that started. Hence, the coup resulted in the rise of neo-conservatism and policies of neo-liberalization.

The second breaking point happened in the year of 1994 when the Grand Assembly accepted the law of privatization, which started the selling of state enterprises. Given that the Turkish economy was run by the state, the enterprises of the state were quantitatively huge and consisted of very diverse sectors. The privatization law was a milestone in the Turkish neoliberalization process. The prime minister of the era, Tansu Çiller, explicitly stated in defence of the law: “In Turkey, KITs (State Economic Enterprises) lose one billion Turkish liras every day. We have to destroy these enterprises. In Turkey, everything is under the control of the state. We shall destroy the last socialist country” (Aydoğan, 2004, pp. 313-14). This speech was made right after the law had been accepted in the Grand Assembly. However, the process of privatization and religionization did not proliferate until 2002 national elections.

“Successful transition to a neo-liberal model of development requires strong and effective leadership” (Öniş, 2004, p. 118), which was the missing dimension in neoliberalization of Turkey until 2002. The third important breaking point is the election of 2002 which demonstrated the rise of a truly neo-conservative and neoliberal force, AKP (the Justice and Development Party) bringing the missing powerful leadership in. With the rise of AKP, self-defined as

“democratic, conservative, reformist and modern” (Çoşar & Ozman, 2004, p. 63), neoliberalization took a new shape and moved beyond the discussions of privatization. Neoliberalism, in this sense was no longer just a matter of privatization, rather it appeared as a cultural system consisting of a manner of informing temporal practice and what form of subjects one should be, and as well as ways of making certain meaning.

The promise of democracy and freedom, the promotion of a conservative identity, the emphasis on social justice, regulations in the socio-economic sphere, the administration of public institutions, including schools, the emphasis on efficiency, and implementation of total quality management and governance principles show the truly neoliberal character of AKP (Öniş, 2004) and also are some of acts that indicate that neoliberalism is not conceptualized only as a matter of privatization but more broadly as a culture, a logic “an approach to the world which includes in its purview not only economics, but also politics; not only the public, but also the private; not only what kinds of institutions we should have, but also what kinds of subjects we should be” (Kingfisher, 2002, p. 13). With its distinctive approach to neoliberalism, the AKP is still transforming the public and political spheres in Turkey. From the very beginning, the AKP was a neoliberal project whose characteristics are reflected in construction of a new middle class “which is culturally conservative, politically nationalist and moderately

authoritarian, economically liberal, or rather, on the side of free enterprise” (İnsel, 2003, p. 298).

Education, not surprisingly, needed to be rearranged with respect to characteristics of this new middle class. Starting from 2004, the educational system has been undergoing serious and ongoing changes. It would not be wrong to point that throughout the last decade, we have seen both quantitatively and qualitatively the most intense efforts of transforming the education system. The Curriculum Reform, FATİH Project and the 4+4+4 Reform are some of major transformative acts that deepen the neoliberal culture in the Turkish Education System. The effects and implications of these reforms and their interpretations by teachers are main concerns of this study. In the following chapter, I will discuss and analyze these reforms and other sites of neoliberalization in the education system. I conclude this chapter by elaborating the current structure of the Turkish Education System.

### **The Current Organization of the Turkish Education System**

Three characteristics of the education system in Turkey are highly noticeable. First, it is organized ideologically from the very beginning. The education system in Turkey is mainly organized around the Basic Law of National Education. The Law with some amendments is still in effect to the date. The Law

prescribes the general aim of the national education as ""bringing up all individuals of the Turkish nation as citizens who";

(1) are loyal to Atatürk's transformations and principles and the Atatürkist nationalism as expressed in the preamble of the Constitution; adopt, protect, and develop Turkish nation's national, moral, human, spiritual, and cultural values; love and always endeavor to exalt their family, fatherland, and nation; know and behave according to their duties and responsibilities to the Republic of Turkey that is based on human rights and the basic principles expressed in the preamble of the Constitution and that is a national, democratic, laicist, and social state of law;

(2) are creative, constructive, and efficient persons with a well-developed, well-balanced and healthy personality and character as regards their body, mind, morality, spirit and emotions; with free and democratic thought and a wide worldview and respect to human rights and spirit of enterprise;

(3) are prepared for life by development of interest, talent and abilities and acquisition of necessary knowledge, skill, behavior and cooperative habits and thus acquire a vocation which ensures their happiness and contribute to the happiness of the society. (trans. by Kaplan, 2011, p. 231).

The Law arranges the foundation of the Turkish education, including universities, and any other law, regulation and decisions have to be in line with it.

Secondly, the system is strictly centralized. Any dimension concerning public education is under the responsibility of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE). The MoNE prepares programs, curriculum and textbooks, decides pedagogical methods, and hires, assigns, re-assigns and pays teachers and administrative staff. Education from the primary level to the secondary level is compulsory and free of charge. Yet it is very common to ask parents to pay fees under 40 different disguises (Hurriyet, 2011). The third feature is that private

provision of education is very limited in Turkey. For example, the percentage of private provision at primary level is 2.9 (MoNE, 2013) whereas the OECD average is around 11 percentage (OECD, 2013). These rates might change in the very near future since currently the government is trying to turn 6000 test prep centers into private schools. I will discuss this issue in details in the following chapter.

The current structure of the education system is quite new. On 30 March 2012, the law 6287 re-structured the system. Before that, the duration of compulsory education was eight years, and there were no lower secondary schools. The primary schooling was continuing for eight uninterrupted years and it was followed by a four year of non-compulsory high schooling. The Law 6287 introduced the lower secondary education to the system and increased the duration of compulsory education to twelve years. The system is now divided into five basic levels; pre-primary, primary, lower-secondary, upper-secondary and tertiary levels.

Pre-primary education is voluntary based and paid both in public and private schools. It covers children aged between 36-72 months who are not eligible for primary education. The net ratio of schooling at the pre-primary level is 26.63 percent (MoNE, 2013, p. 1). Primary education is the beginning of the twelve years compulsory schooling. It covers grades 1-4 and is free in public

schools. This is followed by four years of compulsory and free (in public schools) lower-secondary school. Lastly, the final part of compulsory education comes. Students attend high schools for four years and public schools are free. The net schooling ratio is 98.96 percent for primary level, 93.09 percent for lower-secondary level and 70.06 percent for upper-secondary level (MoNE, 2013, p.1). These numbers belong to the period before the Law numbered 6287, therefore a significant rise in schooling ratio of upper-secondary level should be expected from this year and on.

After the primary education, students can follow different tracks. At the grade 5 level, students can choose to go to regular academic lower-secondary schools or religious middle schools. At the upper level, program differentiation increases. There are three different school types of high schools; academic, vocational and religious. Students are free to choose any type of school they want to attend. However, students who want to attend a selective and an eminent high school have to take a centralized examination. Then they are placed in these kinds of schools according to their scores.

The last level of the Turkish Education System is tertiary education, which is provided by universities and institutes. These institutions include faculties, graduate schools and vocational higher schools. Vocational higher schools consist of two and four year programs. Faculties generally serve undergraduate

education and graduate schools give graduate education. The admission capacity of universities is limited and the net enrollment rate in 2013 is 38.5 percent. For a high school graduate to be admitted to a university is a troubling process. The seats are limited, the candidates are abundant and competition is brutal. Students have to take centralized exams and are placed with respect to their scores.

The values, qualities and conceptualizations of education in Turkey have a dynamic character, therefore they constantly change while moving from one domination to other. In this chapter, I tried to outline the major transformations and historical alterations in the educational system in Turkey. However, these systemic changes do not always find its way to daily life. Yet they are extremely important since they determine the mode and orientation of the system and potentially decide the nature and capacity of cultural and political organization of schools. In this sense, schools are the sites of inter and intra power struggles between macro and micro agents.

## **CHAPTER V: POINTS OF DEPARTURES: NEOLIBERAL ACTS & TRANSFORMATIONS**

In this chapter, I critically evaluate and re-read the data that I collected from the field and documents that I have closely examined. I elaborate the findings of the study. I begin with the 2005 Curriculum Reform that provides the necessary discursive framework for other reforms and practices.

### **The 2005 Curriculum Reform: a Neoliberal Experiment**

One of the most significant characteristics of neoliberalization in education is its fierce advocacy of reformation of systems that have two distinctive features. First, reforms are continuous. The need for reforms is an unending task for governments. It is as if we are living in a world where an initial reform requires further reforms which is exactly what is happening in Turkey. It all started with the 2005 Curriculum Reform; since then we have been witnessing a series of reforms. It seems that the need for reforms will never end. Second, the reformation of educational systems in millennial capitalism has very similar characteristics along the different borderlands. Countries with different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds are making similar reforms as recommended by international organizations like International Monetary Fund, World Bank and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Rodriguez (2010) notes



that different countries such as Spain, Turkey and Chili in different parts of the world are advised to reform their educational systems to bring about decentralization, increased schools fees and private provision of education, student-centered and computerized pedagogies. This is not to say that systems of education have to possess all of these features though it would be ideal, but to possess as much as of these characteristics as they can. For example, in Turkey decentralization is something that is never going to be realized for the reasons that I have discussed earlier. But on the other hand, the government of Turkey is striving to establish a student-centered pedagogy, to increase private provision of education, and to computerize the system.

Here, I now turn to the 2005 Curriculum Reform that is the most exceptional one by far in terms of its scope and effects. Fundamentally, the 2005 Curriculum Reform advocates and promotes constructivism as way of building knowledge, student-centered approach to teaching, and a psychology-based pedagogy. Before I turn my attention to the details of this reform in Turkey, I should make two important clarifications. First my contention is not with constructivism as such but its discursive articulation of pedagogy. Second, my focus is not on what the reform has failed to accomplish but on its actual effects on the system of education of Turkey.

Given that the implementation of constructivism in the educational field is relatively new, the core of analysis in this part focuses on its material effects on pedagogy rather than its premises. To put in another way, I am not interested in what constructivism per se is or what it has failed to do in the Turkish Education System, but I scrutinize what constructivism envisages in relation to pedagogy and what has changed since the implementation of constructivism in 2005 in Turkey. In pursuing this goal, I start with a brief historical review of curriculum reforms in Turkey in order to set the historical background that necessities the 2005 reform. I then describe the basic tenets of the 2005 reform. I later question two discourses: the redefinition of education as a psychological object and the individualized and flexible student type, as the worldly effects of the curriculum reform.

### **A History of Curriculum Reforms in Turkey**

Technically, curriculum is held as the body of knowledge transmitted to students under the name of educational programs. It denotes not only the body of knowledge but also how to build this knowledge. It determines the discursive organization and the orientation of the education system, and is always related to the discursive formation of society. What is considered as truth and valid in dominant discourses is also true and valid for the discourses of curriculums. The content, values, and objectives of a curriculum are generally in line with the

dominant power relations. A curriculum theoretically has the capacity to influence every aspect of an educational system; from the content, to values, from teachers to students. In other words, almost every discourse circulating in the system is influenced by the curriculum because the curriculum provides the basic discursive framework for other discourses to build upon. In this respect, an analysis of a curriculum potentially can reveal the orientations, intentions and visions of the truth regime (Foucault, 1995) that constitutes the power relations of society. So an analysis of a curriculum is the analysis of the very power relations that establish what is to be considered as the truth, the norm and the ideal type of individuals who in turn form the society.

Noteworthy is that curriculums are dynamic and time-dependent. The needs of a particular epoch are different from that of another one. As time passes, discourses change and so does the curriculum. Thus that the transition from one curriculum to another is not a linear or smooth process. It always involves certain problems and the presence of the previous legacy is always felt in the new one. This is why in the present context of Turkey, the 2005 Curriculum is not brand new, because it has been shaped and designed within the context of the previous one. Therefore in order to make a sense of the present curriculum, I begin by discussing the previous curriculums of elementary schools, named after

the year they have been introduced; the curriculum of 1924, 1926, 1936, 1948, 1968, and 2005.

### ***The Curriculum of 1924***

The first curriculum created by the Republic of Turkey can be considered as the first step in the birth of a modern educational system. The curriculum was a rupture, denoting a shift from a religious monarchy to a nationalist and secularist modern republic. It did not introduce radical changes but made smaller adjustments necessary for a modern system. The most significant change that it brought was to organize primary education in five years. The program did not make any connection between different courses. It included Quran and religious courses. It is also interesting to note the program was developed for boys and girls separately. There were no co-ed schools at that time which was consistent with the context of the time. A curriculum designed for both sexes was not available until 1926.

### ***The Curriculum of 1926***

After the foundation of the republic, scholars around the world were invited to the country with an aspiration of creating a modern education system. John Dewey was one of these scholars who wrote a report in which he made suggestions for a curriculum, teacher training system, school system, discipline and health. The effects of his progressivism were felt mostly in the 1926

curriculum. Relevantly, that program included ideas of Dewey like “life knowledge and work school” (Cicioğlu, 1985). At that time, a course named “Life Knowledge” was introduced and was considered to be the benchmark of the first three years of primary education was introduced. The course started from the first grade and was taught four hours per week. Meanwhile, co-ed started and the Quran course was removed from the program. But a religious course was still present in the program starting from the second grade. This program did not see the student as an autonomous individual but as an entity whose existence gained meaning in the context of nationalism and patriotism. Starting with this program, education was conceived as a mechanism that would disseminate the ideals of the republic.

The Regulation of Primary Schools of 1926 explained these ideals clearly. Accordingly, the goals of primary education were to educate patriotic students; promoting Turkism and the Turkish citizenship; promoting patriotic feelings; teaching the value of the Turkish Revolutions; and creating love and respect for the flag (Şahin, 2002, p.125). These ideals more or less have remained intact to the present day.

### ***The Curriculum of 1936***

The republican elite had established its absolute hegemony by 1936. They had completed most of the reforms they deemed necessary to modernize the state. In the light of reforms and changes they had implemented, a new

education program was inevitable. The program of 1936 was more important than the previous ones for it was a true reflection of the ideas and ideals of the new republic. The program was carrying nationalist and patriotic values like the previous one. The first part of the program was devoted to these values under the caption of “National Education.” Accordingly, the national education aimed to raise “citizens who are nationalist and patriotic and have scientific mind” (Arslan, 1990, p. 4).

The nationalistic and patriotic values can be seen as the continuation of the previous curriculum. What was different in this program was that it paid special attention to the development of students. The program introduced a new vision under the name of “the Principles of Education and Teaching,” which brought the individual characteristics of students into consideration. Some of the related principles were:

- The school should develop each child’s abilities;
- The school should foster an environment that will promote the active participation of the child. In this context, the child should be supported taking responsibility, having creative activities and developing thinking skills. Classrooms should be redesigned to let students work in collaboration;
- Schools should promote students to think. In order to develop thinking skills, student should be set to work through the process of problem solving and teacher should guide students in this process;
- Games should be utilized while teaching;

- Students should be engaged with the subject matter through different ways.
  - Students' individual differences and the features of their developmental phase should be taken into consideration.
  - Students should be allowed to speak of their emotions and thoughts.
- (Beyaztaş, Kaptı& Senemoğlu, 2013, pp. 332-33, My Translation)

These principles indicate a significant turn in the orientation of the program. For the first time, the student was recognized as an autonomous being and their individual differences were acknowledged. It also advocated for a pedagogy that would take into consideration these differences. It would not be wrong to claim that the present curriculum is a refined and nuanced example of the curriculum of 1936. It is interesting to see constructivist ideas in a 1936-dated curriculum given that the history of constructivism in education is a story of the last 30 years (Rodriguez, 2010). However, this does not mean that these principles were applied properly. My last note is about the religious courses. This program left religion totally out of the system which was an indication of secularist aspirations of Kemalism, the official ideology of the new state. The fact that there was not any religious course in the program is also an indication of the power of the Kemalist elite. However, the situation did not last long.

### ***The Curriculum of 1948***

The program of 1948 was a study of detailing the 1936 Curriculum. The principles of education and teaching in this program were parallel to the previous one. The principles were detailed and examples explaining how to implement principles were provided to teachers. The program reintroduced religious courses in the system. The program was criticized for trying too many things in a limited time (Fer, 2005). It introduced many courses with many subjects, which created a major problem in the implementation of the program. These kinds of drawbacks in the implementation of the program required a further revision that resulted in the 1968 curriculum.

### ***The Curriculum of 1968***

As a response to the problems of the previous program, the 1968 curriculum was implemented after five years of piloting. The number of basic courses was reduced to five from 13. The program was praised for its democratic nature ((Beyaztaş, Kaptı, & Senemoğlu, 2013). It stressed the importance of creating a democratic environment in schools and also encouraged progressive and constructivist ideals like inquiry, observation, evaluation and self-learning. After the implementation of 1968 curriculum, there have been program development studies pertaining to individual courses. For example, in 1987 a specific program was prepared for the Turkish course at the primary level, and in



1990 a curriculum for Math at the primary level was designed. However, this approach was seen as insufficient by the Ministry for various reasons and the Ministry carried out a major reform in the curriculum field in 2005.

### **The 2005 Curriculum**

The 2005 curriculum reform is the focus and the very reason for me to write this dissertation. I argue that the reform has set the discursive background for the cultural neoliberalization of the education system of Turkey. By discursive background I do not mean only the statements, claims, or speeches about truths in education but also activities, performances and positions that operationalize these truths which I have attempted to reveal in this section.

### **The Development of the Curriculum Reform**

The program of the first AKP (Adalalet ve Kalkınma Partisi [Justice and Development Party]) government that came into power in 2002, campaigned for a radical change in education. “National Education System will be re-structured with respect to the needs of society and requirements of contemporary civilization” (AKP Government Program, 2002). Accordingly, the new system would be student-centered and would raise students who had self-esteem, responsibility and critical and creative thinking skills. A year later in 2003, the government developed an “Urgent Action Plan [Acil Eylem Planı-AEP]” stating

that in addition to re-structuring of the national education a comprehensive curriculum reform would be implemented.

Our curriculum programs force students to rote learning and prejudiced attitudes and behaviours, and restrain the development of creativity, organizing, free thinking and the ability to produce science. All of the curriculum program will be reevaluated and a contemporary program that teaches students how to learn will be developed. (AEP, 2003, p.93)

Soon after, the Ministry started to work on the development of new programs. In developing the programs, many workshops were held with teachers, school administrators and NGOs. After the development of the initial drafts, the Ministry piloted the program in 2004 in 120 schools in nine cities. A year later, the programs were implemented nationally.

### **Reasons of the Curriculum Reform**

According to the Turkish Ministry a curriculum reform was inevitable due to overwhelming problems in the system and changes and developments in the global world. The Ministry stressed 13 reasons for the curriculum reform:

1. Developments in pedagogy,
2. Increasing quality and providing equality in education,
3. The need for an education that is sensitive to economy and democracy
4. The need to develop individual and national values with regard to global values,
5. The negative reactions of students to learning and studying,
6. Lack of arising curiosity of students and consistency between students' development and content of the program,

7. Lack of consistency between life in schools and in real world,
8. Lack of integration between programs of basic education [Grades 1-5]
9. Lack of vertical conceptual integration in individual courses,
10. Lack of horizontal parallelism between courses,
11. The raising prominence of abilities of creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, decision making and cooperation which are results of economic and social developments,
12. Exigency of citizens who have skills of self-expression, communication, and entrepreneurship,
13. Lack of academic achievement of student in national international tests.
14. (MoNE, 2005, pp. 4-5, My simplified translation)

These reasons are important not only because they show the rationalization of the Ministry but they also address the nature of the proposed change. They give important clues about what kind of a curriculum was designed. Accordingly, as stated by the Ministry (2005), the new program was to be developed with economic motivations. “A sustainable development and creation of competitive force in the international agenda cannot be provided with the content and understanding that are behind the contemporary age” (MoNE, 2005, p. 5).

The reform was primarily needed for competing globally, which was why the program was justified with international references like the program development movements in North America and the European Union (EU), Turkey’s integration to EU and international high-stake tests like PISA, TIMMS and PIRLS. In order to overcome the problems and due to the reasons stated above, the Ministry prepared a new program based on constructivism, student-

center teaching and multiple intelligence approach. The new program, in this sense urged students to have an “entrepreneurial spirit” and encouraged them to follow both national and international economic developments. Students were expected to be active in learning and teachers were also expected to help them in building their own knowledge.

Regardless of the type of the course, the program introduced common skills across the curriculum. These skills were critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, researching-questioning, problem solving, using information technologies, entrepreneurship, and using Turkish effectively, correctly and nicely (MoNE, 2005). Students were expected to have these skills when they graduated. It is not my intention to discuss whether the curriculum achieves what it is supposed to. Instead I examine two discursive formations that dominated the field of education after the implementation of the curriculum reform in 2005. The discourses are the re-definition of education as a psychological endeavor and the new image of student.

### **Education as a Psychological Endeavour**

One of the major effects of curriculum reform in Turkey is that more and more education has come to be defined as a psychological endeavor, which appeared as the underlying discourse. Two discursive practices that have been common along within the education system prompt me to claim that the practice

of teaching is heavily psychologized. These are psychologism and the proliferation of guidance services in school.

### ***Psychologism***

Psychologism here refers to the set of ideas that actions and choices of individuals can be explained by the inner mental entities. In this sense, learning is predominantly a matter of mind as an inner entity and process. The constant use of and references to the concepts like self-monitoring, self-esteem, self-responsibility, and self-evaluation in the programs prescribed by the curriculum of Turkey are the indicators of the understanding of the self “as a kind of agentic, executive homunculus operating behind the scenes to determine, monitor, and guide successful performance in learning and other important life tasks” (Martin & McLellan, 2008, p. 441). This conceptualization of the self and learning as matters of inner mental processes are profoundly evident in many aspects of education.

The textbooks prepared by the Ministry include a part named “I am evaluating what I have learned” at the end of every learning unit. This theme is found in every textbook regardless of grade level and course type. First-person narration is the technique used abundantly to write the textbooks. For example the captions of learning units in the textbook of the third grade “Life Knowledge” are “My School Excitement” and “My Unique Home.” “Do my emotions influence

my body?”, “Why should I choose this occupation?”, “I don’t give in, even if I lose”, “My duties to my country”, “My country, my school, my home”, “How am I learning better?”, and “What is my occupation going to be?” are some of themes in the same book that show the dominance of the self in articulating teaching and learning. After the curriculum reform, the use of guiding and psychological counseling services is expanded throughout the system that works as a mechanism to foster the psychologism.

### ***Guidance and Psychological Counseling Services (GPCS)***

The notion of guidance and counseling in the Turkish Education System is not new. It can be traced back to the early Republican period. Texts concerning the emotional, mental and social development of students were found in the pedagogical textbooks of teachers’ institutes (the Turkish Psychological Counseling and Guidance Association, 2005, p. 3). Noteworthy is that the early use of the service was not systematic but should be considered as more of ad hoc attempts to deal with pedagogical issues. The systematic attempts to establish of Guidance and Psychological Counseling Services (GPCS) in schools started with the regulation dated 1968, which set up “Guidance and Research Centers.” Accordingly, the center was responsible to:

1. determine the reasons of underachievement of students;
2. open special classes in schools for students who are below the normal intelligence;

3. open special classes and schools for gifted students,
4. investigate schools to determine students with hearing, vision, and speech disabilities. To take necessary corrective and educational cautions and arranges therapies when needed;
5. develop curriculum programs for emotionally and physically disabled students;
6. examine students with psychological and social disparities and psychic complexities, determine the reasons and rehabilitate them in cooperation with school and family;
7. make necessary works to develop more efficient and effective methods in fields of teaching and education;
8. make necessary works for career selection of students;
9. develop tests and other tools for the tasks stated above and adapt tests when needed;
10. investigate local educational problems and publish results.

These centers were situated as separate institutions and they did not have direct impact and relations with schools and students. They were more like research centers. Besides, they did not introduce GPCS to individual schools. Two years later in 1970, the Ministry published another regulation that installed GPCS in individual high schools. With this regulation, guidance counselors were appointed to schools with the task of protecting students from "the danger of the outside world" and helping students to develop and maximize their skills. Given that, there were not any undergraduate programs at universities that would train counselors and the regulation installed the service only in high schools, the use and expansion of GPCS remained limited.

In 1985, the Ministry issued another regulation that introduced guidance services to all schools regardless of their levels. Since then GPCS along the system has gained significance and come to produce psychological knowledge about the learning and the learner. But a drastic turn in the use and conceptualization of GPCS occurred when the Ministry published a more contemporary regulation concerning GPCS in 2001. One of the significant aspects of this regulation was that for the first time, the name of the regulation contained the statement of psychological counseling.

The earlier regulations were named as either “guidance and research centers” or “guidance services.” This shift denoted a change in conceptualization of GPCS marking that more and more the learner and the learning were seen in psychological perspectives at the expense of social and cultural terms. The change in the number of counselors working in schools also signifies this shift. Before 2002, the number of counselors was around 7.500, whereas now it is over 23.000, meaning that the number has tripled in about ten years. It is hard to see this as a coincidence. Given that the new curriculum conceptualizes learning as a matter of inner psychological and neurophysiological processes of individuals, the qualitative and quantitative expansion of GPCS seem inevitable. More and more students are being directed to GPCS whenever there is a problem in a



student's achievement. The process was described by the counselor that I interviewed in the following manner:

*At the elementary level, students are coming with problems of achievement. We administer tests to determine if the problem is with the child, if there is a lack of effort. If the problem has originated from the child, we send the student to the Guidance and Research Center*

The process has turned into a routine. In the elementary school where I conducted my fieldwork, there was no class in which a student was not directed to the guidance center. The dominant understanding was that if there was a problem in a student's learning, the reason for this problem is some deficiency with the student's intelligence.

IQ tests as tools of dividing students within and from others are now more common than ever. Learning is confined solely to the realm of psychology, ignoring the cultural and social roots. The discourse of constructivism, in the Turkish case, rendered pedagogy to a pure psychological practice, disregarding any other philosophical, epistemological, cultural, political, and sociological grounds of pedagogy. For example, students whose mother tongue is Kurdish are being directed to the guidance centers (Bemal, 2013). These students are expected to learn to write and read in Turkish. Most of the time, they fail because they cannot speak Turkish. And when they fail they are considered as mentally

disabled. Bernal's story was published in Radikal Daily. It appears that five out of ten Kurdish students were being addressed to the guidance center due to language problems. The Ministry on the other hand refused to accept the existence of the problem and claimed that they were administering cultural values-free test in evaluating these students (MoNE, 2013b). I should note that as of now Kurdish as a medium of instruction is not provided in any school in Turkey. Millions of Kurdish students are forced to learn in Turkish. As this example implies, when they fail, they are labeled as mentally disabled. This understanding of pedagogy is a result of the corporatist and racist orientation of the Turkish state as well as conceptualizing learning merely in psychological terms.

GPCS, in this sense, acts as the mechanism of re-producing racism by utilizing psychological testing as being objective measures of pedagogy. Moreover, this approach helps to articulate learning as a matter of individuality. It is the individual who achieves or fails. The new curriculum by utilizing psychological conceptualization of learning imagines a new student type which is my next problematic.

### **The New Student**

Foucault (1986,) notes that “for millennia, man remained what he was for Aristotle: a living animal with the additional capacity for political existence;

modern man is an animal whose politics calls his existence as a living being into question” (142). Foucault made this point almost 30 years ago, since then much has changed. Foucault’s call was about the birth of the modern man whose existence was questioned and regulated through various forms of power; from disciplinary and to bio-political power. Educational systems around the world for a long time have been also organized around the principles of disciplinary power and bio-power. However the global rise of neoliberalism has been accompanied by a shift in the organization of educational systems. Social technologies inscribed by the new pedagogies of 21th. century are different from the previous ones.

The new curricular programs imply that the systems of education are in a transition from disciplinary ones to controlling ones, as discussed later in this dissertation. The new curricular programs, as is evident in the Turkish case, envisage a new student type who is flexible, entrepreneurial, accountable, self-disciplined, self-motivated, autonomous in her learning and willing to take part in the new controlling society. These flexible subjects are constructed through three major discursive processes, the whole child, developmentally appropriate curricula and interactive pedagogy (Fendler, 2001).

### *The Whole Child*

The discourse of whole child denotes that the every aspect of the child is caught up in the educative process. “Educating the whole child means educating not only the cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects but also the child’s innermost desires” (Fendler, 2001, p. 121). The new program of Turkey embarks upon not only to develop cognitive and behavioral capabilities of the child but also ensures that the child is happy to learn. In this sense, the spirit, motivation, desires, attitudes, beliefs and values of the child are seen as the part of the pedagogical process.

In developing the new curricula, the Ministry places a special focus on the course name “Life Knowledge.” The course’s main aim is to “teach life at school.”

The course visions to “raise happy individuals” who

- develop themselves while enjoying learning,
- are in peace with the nature, social surrounding and themselves,
- know about and protect their country, nation, and nature,
- possess the equipment required by the age and basic knowledge and life skills needed in the daily life,
- are flexible enough to adjust dynamically to the changes. (MoNE, 2005, p. 22)

The program’s “special abilities”, which are expected to be taught to students are more detailed:

- Using resources effectively (using time, money and material),

- Being a conscious consumer,
- Environmental consciousness and using environmental resources effectively,
- Planning and production,
- Security and providing protection (Protection from natural diseases, following the traffic rules, ability to say no, protecting own health),
- Self-regulation (Acting ethically, having fun, learning to learn, determining a purpose, knowing oneself and watching self-development, emotion management, career planning, accountability, perceiving time and space) (MoNE, 2005, p. 24)

The data from textbooks is striking. The word happy or happiness is repeated 31 times in the third grade “Life Knowledge” textbook, and 23 times in the first grade Turkish textbook. “I am happy with my body” (Grade 3, Life Knowledge,) is one of the theme that is being taught. On page 50 of the same textbook, a student says “I am being very happy when our teacher assigns project works and research studies. Because I am learning better by doing projects and researches.” Indeed the use of projects has become an increasing trend throughout the system. The words of a teacher I interviewed exemplify this sense:

*Everything has become a project. Everyone has assigned project tasks. Our life has become project. We, as parents did project works at home. We wanted the same thing from parents.*

On the other hand, the ethnographic data of interviews indicates that the idea of assigning project works to students has failed in the Turkish system. Normally projects are assigned to students so that they do research and

construct their own knowledge. Parents who want their children to get good marks start to conduct these tasks on behalf of their children. 14 of 12 teachers that I interviewed in the field raised this point. “There are these project and performance tasks. When we assign them to be done at home, the children are not doing them. Parents are doing the work for their children.” These are among the common statements that teachers mentioned. My ethnographic data of interviews shows that there is a wide distance between what the reform intends and what is actually happening in the field. However, this does not mean that the curricular reform has failed. The reform is most effective in its work of subject formation in line with hegemonic and neoliberal demands.

The reform is relatively new and its longtime effects are yet to be seen. The new program does not see the intellectual mastery and behavioral compliance sufficient, and evidently it also tries to regulate the innermost aspects of children, i.e. their motivation, fears, happiness, and wishes. What matters most to the new regime is the will to learn. This articulation of the will to learn is supported with another discursive practice; developmentally appropriate curricula.

### ***Developmentally appropriate curricula***

Curriculums in many countries have been aligned with the principles of developmental psychology. The discourse of developmentally appropriate curricula addresses the idea that the curriculum reform of 2005 is conducted with

respect to the principles of developmental psychology that imagine the student as an autonomous being who is capable of carrying certain tasks relevant to her developmental phase. The developmentally appropriate curriculum introduces a new mode of power that constitutes a normalizing vision of student, and provides new ways of thinking about the student and new ways of seeing the student. It determines what, when and how student can or cannot do.

Accordingly, the new program of Turkey describes what students should do in minute detail. All syllabi that I examined were prepared with objectives that explain what students should do in the end. Learning in this sense turns into a matter of demonstrating compliance to predetermined objectives. Moreover, since the objectives are presumably developmentally appropriate, every student should demonstrate the expected abilities. The objectives are the norms that present the standards of average abilities and performances of students of a certain age on particular tasks. This introduces a division into the lives of students, a division between normal and abnormal, advanced and retarded, and emotionally available and unavailable. The discourse of development, in this sense, establishes a system that is capable of grasping any feature of life that can be interpreted as changing over time in the form of a simple operation: normal or abnormal? Students' lives are pre-determined, pre-digested, pre-adjusted, and pre-normalized. If any student should fail to comply with

predetermined objectives, she is sent to the guidance service of the school. In this schema, learning becomes a matter of pure psychological practice that every normal student should accomplish. This understanding of learning makes it possible to disregard the philosophical, epistemological, cultural, political, and sociological grounds of learning. Hence, if a student fails “to learn”, it is due to her individual abnormality. Besides, in this way learning is individualized which brings me to the last discursive process of creating the new student; the interactive pedagogy.

### ***The Interactive Pedagogy***

The interactive pedagogy is a hybrid one that aims to solve the dichotomy between the teacher-centered pedagogy and child-centered pedagogy by providing a new framework of governing the teacher, the learner and the relationship between them. The major role prescribed for the teacher is to teach students how to learn on their own, while for the student is to learn how to learn independently which in turn makes students responsible for their own learning. The teacher is positioned as an instrumental force in the self-regulation and self-subjugation of the student. The curriculum reform of 2005 of Turkey introduced a new assessment mechanism called “Ürün Dosyası (Product File)” which is basically a portfolio that a student should build throughout the semester for every major course. As a concrete effort of producing entrepreneurial subjects, portfolio



assessment brings the neoliberal rationalities of governing into the classroom.

This is an act of governing in the classroom; one that governs at a distance.

Michael Peters (2005) names this process as “new prudentialism.”

Drawing from Foucault, he argues that “new prudentialism’ in education rests on the concept of the entrepreneurial self that “responsibilizes” the self to make welfare choices based on an actuarial rationality as a form of social security that insures the individual against risk” (p. 122). New prudentialism also denotes a shift from the welfare regime where the state is responsible for the rights and wellbeing of her citizens to a neoliberal regime where the state’s primary concern is based on a form of citizen-customer who is responsible for investing in herself. Learning has been disconnected from schools and creative thinking, and turned into something for which learners are individually responsible. Now the portfolio assessment combines technologies of the self and technologies of domination. It relates tactics of governing of population to strategies of governing of self (Popkewitz, 1998, p. 77) while redesigning the space of possible actions of individuals.

However, the process of creating a flexible student has not been a total success so far as my fieldwork implies. Especially the pressure created by national exams on the educational system has been deeply affecting and

changing the work in schools. The issue was raised several times by the interviewed teachers:

*There are those old teachers. They don't care about the new system. They are still following the old system [lecture-type teaching]. They are not using the textbooks sent by the Ministry. They choose a book they want and follow that. Parents like those teachers more. Because they are giving information asked in national exams.*

On the one hand, the new system encourages student's self-learning, on the other hand national exams demand students to be well-informed and knowledgeable in science, language, and social courses. This situation puts teachers into a contradictory position. They are either to promote discovery and self-learning or to transmit information.

### **The Mythical Ethos of Computers**

It has been a long time that computers appeared as an integral part of educational systems around the globe. Computers are now so common that it is unthinkable to question their place in education. They appear as the mythical cure for all of the problems of educational systems. They are the modern panacea for the problems of systems of education. The case in Turkey is no different. The government is making huge amounts of investments to create technologically equipped schools. I challenge the privileged position of computers in education. I argue that the rhetoric used in articulation of computers

in schools is a neoliberal one. In discussing the discourse of the mythical ethos of computers, I elaborate the historical development of educational technology in the Turkish system, looking for answers to the question of how and when computers became so indispensable in the Turkish Education System. Then, I analyze two major projects; “the Intel Teach Program” and “the FATİH Project” to see the current state of the issue.

## **A History of Educational Technology**

The Turkish Education System has always attributed a special attention to enhancing the use of technology in schools. Article 13 of the Basic Law of National Education has assigned the task of promoting technology in schools to the Ministry:

All curriculum, instructional methods and technology are to be improved constantly with respect to scientific and technological principles and improvements, and the needs of country. Increasing the effectivity, developing continuously and providing modernization in education are done on the basis of scientific research and evaluations. Institutions that are tasked with producing information and technology, and improving our culture are equipped as required... (Mone, 1973, 3)

This law is dated to 1973 when technology in schools was limited to the use of maps, overhead projectors, and laboratory equipment. Later on, televisions and VHS tapes were introduced to schools. I remember us going to a public education center to watch some biology videos in my elementary years.

The number of computers in the Turkish educational system was limited until 1980s. With the advent of computer technologies in 1980s, the use of computers in the system started to rise. The Prime Minister of the time stated the goal that Turkey was going to provide its schools with one million computers. It was the most expensive and the largest project in the history of the Turkish Education System, which meant approximately 600 million US dollars of additional investment for education (Tutkun & Özdemir, 2012). The goal has never been realized; yet, it was heralding the new orientation of the education system: a high-tech and computerized orientation. The number of computers in the system has gradually expanded since 1980s. During the years between 1985 and 1987, 2400 computers were provided to secondary and vocational schools (Akkoyunlu, 2002). After the extension of compulsory education to eight years in 1997, the installation of computers into the system was accelerated. As many as 2541 computer labs were set up in primary and secondary schools by the end of 1998 (Akkoyunlu, 2002). There were no computer teachers or specialists in schools who would help students and teachers in using the labs, so most of the labs remained unused and quickly became outdated. As a solution to the need of educational technologists and computer teachers, the department of computer and educational technologies was established in the faculties of education in 1998. Until 2002, the use of computers for educational purposes was still limited,

which was also evident from the number of computers and labs in schools. The number of computer labs and computers were 3000 and 25000 respectively in 2002.

I argue throughout this dissertation that after the rise of AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi- Development and Justice Party) to power in 2002, efforts of neoliberalization in education have increased dramatically. The expenditure on technology between 2002 and 2009 supports the argument. Table 1 shows the amount of money spent during the time span.

<b>Years</b>	<b>Expenditures (million US dollars)</b>
2002	54
2003	140
2004	140
2005	787
2006	421
2007	834
2008	504
2009	684
2010	619
2011	1381

Table 1: The Expenditure on Technology (Compiled from DPT, 2011).

The table shows the changing orientation of the education system. Yet the table's implications are more than the numbers that refer to the amount of public money that has been transferred to some private computer companies. It also indicates the fact that computers are growing to be an integral part of the education system. And while growing, they are changing the traditional relations and practices in schools and building a new strand of culture. I now shift my attention

to two major computerizing projects to investigate the specifications of this culture . The Intel Teach Program and FATİH Project are the projects that aim to enhance the use of computers in education and bring a certain culture of technology into schools.

### **Intel Teach Program**

The Intel Teach Program (ITP) is a part of Intel's (one of the leading companies in the computer hardware manufacturing industry) Innovation in Education project. The program is designed specifically for teachers. It is "a professional development program that seeks to provide teachers with the knowledge and skills they need to integrate information and communication technologies as critical tools to encourage active student learning" (Light et al, 2006, 8). Since its first implementation in 1999, the program has been delivered in more than 45 countries to millions of teachers. In Turkey it commenced in 2003 and reached out, as of 2011, almost 180.000 teachers among whom I was one. For a rough comparison, the total number of teachers in Turkey was about 700.000 in 2011 (MoNE, 2011).

The program aims to "to help teachers discover how to use computer technology to captivate, motivate, and, ultimately, move students toward 21st century learning" (Intel, 2008a). Throughout the course, teachers are expected to integrate technology into their teaching practices.

Teachers explore the possibilities of current web-based collaborative technologies and other software applications before selecting the most appropriate tools to support student learning in their learning unit design. The resulting unit includes a sample student project, student self-direction tools, and multiple types of assessment that are embedded throughout the unit (Intel, 2008a).

After 60 hours of training time, teachers need to prepare a learning unit of any subject matter they want to by utilizing information and communication technologies. The course consists of 8 modules in each of which a part of the learning unit is designed. During the modules the teachers are required to indicate which of the “21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills” are addressed in their proposed activities for the students. The program places a special attention on “21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills” that are considered as the necessary elements of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education Systems.”

The Intel’s Education Development Center Inc. denotes the program as an essential tool for building “21<sup>st</sup> Century Education Systems” that are articulated as necessary systems for “the nations to compete globally”. Intel’s rationalization is worthy of quoting at length.

There is an increasing global focus, shared by national governments and nongovernmental organizations, on expanding and improving educational opportunities for children. This interest is driven largely by the belief that as



the economic systems are globalized; the health of national economies will depend increasingly on the ability of its young adults to take on the challenges of living and working in rapidly changing circumstances, across multiple cultures, and with large amounts of complex, dynamic information about the world around them. An indicator of the international interest in the topic is the broad international consensus, documented in the Millennium Development Goals, to extend universal quality education to all children by the year 2015 in order to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Governments around the world are struggling to create 21<sup>st</sup> Century education systems that have the human capacity, the technical infrastructure and the curricular resources they will need in order to provide young people with the skills and competencies they will need to succeed in the future. (Light et al. 2006, p. 10)

The core of these educational systems is “21<sup>st</sup> century skills” that imagine a new type of personhood who has certain kinds of skills. These skills are “Learning and Innovation Skills (Creativity and Innovation, Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, Communication and Collaboration), Information, Media and Technology Skills (Information Literacy, Media Literacy, ICT (Information, Communications and Technology) Literacy), and Life and Career Skills (Flexibility and Adaptability, Initiative and Self-Direction, Social and Cross-Cultural Skills, Productivity and Accountability, Leadership and Responsibility)” (Intel, 2008b).

I will examine the implications and effects of these skills but let me first summarize the characteristics of “FATIH Project” which I consider a major move in creating a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education System.

## The FATİH Project

Fırsatları Artırma ve Teknolojiyi İyileştirme Hareketi [Movement of Enhancing Opportunities and Improving Technology] commonly known as FATİH<sup>1</sup> is perhaps the biggest single educational investment of Turkey. The words used by the Prime Minister while announcing the project summarizes the importance attributed to the project by the government:

"Fatih Sultan Mehmet, by conquering Istanbul, ended a dark age, the Medieval Age, and gave a start to the Modern Age. Here, we are today ending an age not only in the education system, but in every field influenced by education and starting a new age, the information age, the information technologies age" (Zaman, 2012, My translation).

With this project on the one hand, "42.000 schools and 570.000 classes will be equipped with the latest information technologies and will be transformed into computerized classes" (Fatih Projesi, 2012). On the other hand, millions of tablet PCs will be distributed to students and teachers. Within the scope of the project, in-service trainings will be held to transform practices of teachers. The overall goal of the project is to transform the society to an information society. Students in this sense will;

- acquire knowledge using more sensory organs;

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<sup>1</sup>Fatih is the nickname of the Ottoman Sultan who conquered Istanbul in 1453. The name is literally translated into English as conqueror.

<sup>2</sup> The Gülen movement is a transnational religious group. Their main field of activity is education.

<sup>3</sup>[https://www.google.com/search?hl=tr&as\\_q=kutlu+do%C4%9Fum+haftas%C4%B1&as\\_epq=&as\\_oq=B42](https://www.google.com/search?hl=tr&as_q=kutlu+do%C4%9Fum+haftas%C4%B1&as_epq=&as_oq=B42)

- participate and take responsibility more due to self-confidence from knowledge acquisition shape his/her future based on his/her own purpose;
- know what s/he wants and take control of his/her life path.

And the teachers will;

- have easy access to the updated knowledge and latest teaching techniques which will help in teaching process thus help students gain different points of view;
- create information and transfer it perennially;
- be innovative;
- be able to measure the quality and quantity of their teaching and complete the shortcomings;
- prepare the future generation from today (Fatih Projesi, 2012).

The project is currently going on. The government is receiving tenders for boards and tablet PCs on the one hand while on the other in-service trainings are being held. So far 85.000 boards and 62.000 tablet PCS have been purchased. In 2014, these numbers are expected to increase substantially. The project is planned to come an end in 2017. Yet before the project comes to an end, it has created major effects in the educational system.

### **Marketization and Copy-Paste Teaching**

It is widely accepted that societies around the world are moving from industrial type organization, where education is understood as the teaching of a standardized curricula by teachers, to information societies where education is

conceptualized as a life-long, individualized, and flexible strategy of learning. The projects, the Intel Teach and the FATİH, aim to carry out such a transformation. In this schema computers have two major influences: marketization of education and re-definition of studentship and teaching.

First, the economy created by computerization of education is massive for it proposes to buy 570.000 LCD boards and 10.6 million of tablet PCs. One of the main tenets of neoliberalism is transferring public funds to private sectors, which is exactly what is happening here. With FATİH project, the Turkish government is buying millions of high-tech tools for billions of dollars. Moreover, as everyone who is familiar with computer technologies knows it, the need for technology is endless. Once you buy a computer, tablet or any other high-tech machine, you need to replace it with the new one in three to five years. According to a recent auction won by General Mobile (GM, an affiliation of General Electric), the Turkish government is going to pay \$300 CAD for one tablet (Zaman, 2013). Simple calculations show the total amount that will be paid to companies like GM is over three billion dollars. Besides, this payment will have to be repeated at least every five years. For a rough comparison, the total budget reserved for the national education from the general budget is around 39 billion of CAD (Grand Assembly, 2013). This might be the biggest single act of marketization of education: one that will need to be repeated every five years. It creates an

endless marketization mechanism that can change the system of education in Turkey very radically.

Neoliberalism is commonly characterized with the decline of government expenditure on public services. Quite the opposite of this idea is happening in Turkey, government expenditure on public education is growing substantially. But the large amount of this money is channeled to private companies. Acquiring hardware is just one issue, there is also the need for software, which is never discussed publicly and addressed in the documents and policies. There are currently efforts of scanning textbooks and uploading them to the web. However, simply digitalizing textbooks is not the ideal use of technology in education. It appears that the whole project is unplanned and will get stuck at some point due to lack of required software resources. Besides, creating a system that is dependent on technology requires new types of students and teachers, which brings me to the second matter of investigation.

In the course of the Intel Teach Program a new type of student is imagined through institutionalization of so called "21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills" which refer to a range of disparate practices and ways of acting and being in the world. The new student is entrepreneurial, flexible, effective, individualized, knows and uses technology well, The idea of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills exemplifies a neoliberal conceptualization of students' existence and acting in the world. The Partnership

for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills organization is the institution that has developed these skills. On its website, the organization states its mission as “to serve as a catalyst to position 21st century readiness at the center of U.S. K12 education by building collaborative partnerships among education, business, community and government leaders so that every child in the U.S. needs 21st century knowledge and skills to succeed as effective citizens, workers and leaders” (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2004). The Partnership discusses the readiness of United States' K12 education but Intel is using the same discourse for all of the education systems that it operates in. It is one of the features of neoliberalism that it uses similar discourses across the world.

Noteworthy is the rhetorical articulation of the projects. The use of phrases like "be innovative", "take responsibility", "flexibility", "accountability" shows the influence of global neoliberal rhetoric on articulation of projects. The skills are vitalized as ways to fashion the proper self-compatible with dominant practices and beliefs. These skills are the "messianic, salvific, even magical manifestations" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2000, 293) of inhabiting in the world. The new student is foreseen as one who is innovative, productive, capable of using information technologies, and takes responsibility of her own learning.

There is an intended change in how teachers do their works. In this context, the teacher appears as the agent of creating future citizens and workers

and as the personhood needed to be reconstituted. Education in this sense is understood as a future oriented business and teachers are tasked to prepare children for the future. “Teacher education is an even *more future-oriented business* for it aims to prepare teachers for future educational institutions (Zhao, 2010, p. 422, Emphasis added). This argument is strong, widely held, and significant for it reveals the neoliberal logic of conceptualization of education. Mainly, *education is a business*. The idea is to prepare globally competent teachers who will raise globally competent future workers. The teacher is deskilled and re-skilled with what is required to be globally competent. The teacher in this sense is the agent of the new education system, hence needs to be reformed. The Intel Teach Program and FATIH project are mechanisms to institutionalize this change in Turkey.

Within the course of these projects, technology is rhetorically aligned with the discourse of technological determinism where technology is held as the main force in developing the society and bringing change. Priority in this sense is given to the provision of hardware and internet connectivity and minimal attention is attributed to how to use these tools in classrooms to create knowledge which is also evident in the Prime Minister’s launching speech.

Today, FATIH Project is getting started in 17 cities and 52 schools... In 42.000 schools and in 570.000 classrooms FATIH project will be realized in four years. In addition to 570.000 classrooms, Smart boards will be set up in

libraries, laboratories, and teachers' lounges. We will bring in 620.000 smart boards to our schools, classrooms and students. FATİH Project is not only composed of smart boards. With this project, we are bringing in high-speed internet connection not to schools but to each classroom. We are bringing in one multi-functional printer and one documentary camera to every school. (Zaman, 2012)

The neoliberal instrumentalist discourse of computers is what defines the framework of the introduction of computers into the public schools of Turkey. This discourse produces computers as some kind of a mythical tool that will resolve educational problems while ignoring issues like access, equity, knowledge creating and local relevance. It is believed that provision of hardware and connectivity will catapult the country into an advanced stage of development. Without questioning the use of computers in education and ignoring the cultural and social background of education, the project promises radical changes in every aspect of education as the Prime Minister states:

Today, we are witnessing a historical moment on the behalf of the national education. With FATİH Project, we are changing deeply the method and outlook of education and teaching, modernizing them, and bringing requirements and opportunities of our age into classrooms. With FATİH Project the meaning of education is changing. With FATİH Project, roles and positions of school, classrooms, blackboard, teacher and student is radically changing. (Zaman, 2012)

The prolonged effects of computerization in general, this project in particular on teachers, students, and schools remain as a mystery for now. But my



ethnographic data of interviews indicates that the project has not been a success in accomplishing its goals, which I stated above, and that computers have altered the practices of teaching and learning in the Turkish schools in an unimagined way: establishing a strong copy-paste culture in the education system.

In schools, teachers are using computers mainly for presentation purposes, and showing films. Almost all of my participant teachers state that they are using computers for presenting subject matters. "I found it [computer] strange at first. But later I realized it [teaching] is becoming more effective when using visual materials" is one of the many examples. They also indicate that the computer helps them in saving time. FATİH Project has not started in the schools that I have carried out my fieldwork. But these schools had a computer and a projector in their classrooms purchased by parents. I have been working in a high school for the last couple of months, where smart boards have been installed in classrooms within the scope of the FATİH Project. During my days at the high school, I got the chance to observe the use of smart boards and to talk with teachers. I have observed and been told that smart boards are used for presentations and occasional movie displays. A FATİH Project coordinator warned that *"if tablet PCs are not distributed, it becomes teacher-centered. If the proper content is not provided, it will turn into making presentations which will be teacher-centered."* The warning of the coordinator is what is exactly happening

in schools. The blackboards have been modernized for quite a substantial investment. Of course, the project should be re-evaluated after the distribution of tablet PCs.

It has been ten years that computers have been used commonly in schools in Turkey. My fieldwork showed that especially with the rise of the internet connectivity, a copy-paste culture has established in schools. Here, I use the term copy-paste as another word for plagiarism. From students to teachers and to school administrators, everyone is doing 'copy-paste' in their work. With the curriculum reform of 2005, MoNE introduced a new type of student assignments called "performance tasks" with the purpose of increasing creativity and productivity, promoting critical thinking, research, and problem solving. These tasks are supposed to be done in classrooms under the supervision of teachers. However, due to time and resource constraints, students are asked to prepare these tasks at home. Evidence from the field reveals that parents are doing these tasks instead of students and mostly they are doing copy-pasting. I have come across this observation many times in my classes and teachers I interviewed have told me. The issue seems to be a national phenomenon as indicated in a story published in Hurriyet Daily. The story's headline is "Most of the assignments are copy-paste" (Hurriyet, 2007). But it is not only students who are doing copy-pasting. Teachers are also evidently doing the same thing.

Teachers are copy-pasting exams, lesson plans, and presentations. In Turkey, most of the schools publish magazines yearly or by semester. I have examined six of them and they uncover that there is not a single magazine that does not include a copy-paste text. My method was simple: I googled a part of the text published in magazines to see if anything returns. The results showed that every magazine I examined had at least one copy-paste text. In other words, tragically plagiarism has turned into a common and an unquestionably used practice in the Turkish Education System.

### **Change in the Discourse of Discipline and Intensive Use of Exams**

#### **The Evolution of Disciplinary Mechanisms**

The concept of discipline is indispensable to any schooling system. In fact one of the many reasons of existence of schooling is to teach discipline. After all, education is about controlling, regulating and maximizing the effects of student's body and mind. The approach to discipline in a system of education pertains to the discursive organization of the system. In Turkey, the rise of neoliberalism in education corresponds with the rise of the discourse of student-centered learning which in turn has changed the notion of discipline. The new notion of discipline is self-regulative and controlling. It is positive and rewarding rather than punishing. But it was not always like this. During my elementary school years, the notion of discipline was about creating fear and physical punishment. "Etisenin,

kemiğibenim", a popular expression, which means "Don't spare the rod", was said to teachers by parents while they were enrolling their students. Physical punishment was common whereas now it is unthinkable and can lead to the dismissal of a teacher. My work here tries to denaturalize the new notion of discipline, to show how, and under what conditions this new understanding has come about.

In the Turkish Education System, the issue of discipline in schools is regulated through codes of conduct. In earlier times, the code of discipline was prepared separately, not as a part of any other regulation code, as if it was a penal code. Earlier codes generally articulated the notion of discipline as a matter of morality, delinquency and obedience to the nation. The 1971 dated code of discipline was clear in this account:

Turkish students are expected to know those moral rules and act accordingly:

- Hates lying
- Obeys lovingly and willingly to the laws of the Turkish State, moral rules of the Turkish society and the order of school.
- Never forgets that his/her friends are also children of the great being, the Turkish Nation and Republic.
- Does not ruin his/her health and power, which are dedicated to the service of nation and land, with harmful substances.(My translation)

The main orientation of this code was children; learning to be obedient; accepting the authority; and literally giving their existence to the nation as a gift. If one failed to do so, s/he would be called criminal and disciplined accordingly.

In the 1971 code, there was not any discussion about "misbehavior". The problem was not considered as a mistake but seen as an intentional and evil act. In this sense, the 1971 code saw the issue of discipline as a penal problem. This is evident from the frequency of penal concepts in the document: 89 times punishment, 25 times crime, nine times criminal student, ten times criminal, three times evidence, and nine times testimony.

The 1975 discipline code, which de-validated the 1971 one, was not very different from the previous one in the sense that it also saw the notion of discipline as a matter of punishment. The only major difference was the entrance of more nationalist concepts like flag, national homogeneity and unity. The successor of 1975 code was the 1978 code, which remained intact until 2003, and still saw the issue as a matter of punishment. The word punishment had been repeated 112 times in the code. But it also brought about certain changes.

The mode of punitive discourse was not strong as in the previous codes. For example, there was no expression of "criminal student" but "faulty student." The 1978 code was no more like a penal one. Also students were expected to conform to "the written rules" rather than obeying the moral ones. The nationalist

elements in previous codes were eliminated considerably. The code also installed "an honor committee", consisting of students with the task of observing and reporting misbehaviors. I recall that the issue of the honor committee was a huge problem for students in my elementary school years. Students saw the members of the committee as informants and traitors. There was a member of the committee in every class and nobody would know who s/he was. This led us to suspect each other and created an insecure environment.

The 1978 code denoted a shift in the orientation of the discipline. There was a transition from obeying the moral rules to conforming to the written rules with the rise of peer monitoring and surveillance. With this code, the issue of discipline started to be seen as a preventive mechanism. For example, the code employed the disciplinary committee with tasks of "investigating reasons of undisciplined actions and looking for ways of eradicating these; gathering information about the environment and general life of faulty students; researching their habits; cooperating with and utilizing from school counseling service." This code was still punitive but with regulative characteristics. A truly regulative and controlling disciplinary discourse was institutionalized in 2003.

In 2003 the Ministry of National Education rewrote the regulation of elementary schools and the disciplinary code was prepared as a part of this new code. For the first time, the disciplinary code was not written as a separate entity.

In fact there was no disciplinary code in the sense of earlier versions. The code even did not contain the word of discipline. The name of the disciplinary code was changed into "the assessment of student behaviors." The first item of this section started with the statement of "rewarding" which was followed by "the behaviors expected from students" that were more or less same as the rules stated in the previous codes. There were no words referring to crime, criminals, testimony, or punishment. Instead, there were statements like "the negative behaviors of students" and "behaviors requiring enforcing."

The issue of discipline was articulated as a matter of behavior, and it was individualized. Students were required to sign a contract in which they pledged to behave. Students were now becoming the active parts of the process of discipline. Using of words like 'I, you, let's, and shall we' were common. Students were treated with respect, attention and empathy. One of the teachers that I interviewed told me that *"the biggest difference between now and ten years ago is in discipline. We couldn't express our views. We were subjected to violence."* Another teacher made a similar point *"we were afraid of our mother, father and teacher. It was very harsh in the middle school; discipline, beating...Now I wonder would it be better, if children were afraid."* However, this does not mean that there is the same understanding of discipline in all schools. The practices of discipline might change with respect to location and socio-cultural background of

schools. For example, a teacher who had worked in a rural area indicated that the disciplinary measures in rural schools were more like corporal and punitive discipline. While comparing rural schools with urban ones, he *stated "rural schools and urban schools are different. The perception of discipline in rural schools was higher [harsher], which was what parents wanted."* The comparison of another teacher was more detailed. She had worked in a school in Istanbul, where the majority of students were Kurds before coming to the district of Beşiktaş, where most of the students were the middle class Turkish children.

*When classes were overcrowded, we could not establish a sense of auto-control among students, especially during the break times. Students are more respectful here [Beşiktaş]. Entering to backyard had been forbidden. They were not letting anyone in there. They had just told students that they were not allowed to go in there. Students' conformity to rules, self-discipline and auto-control affected me very much. There is not any difference during class hours, not in my class.*

The reason for the difference between the two schools is:

*I think they were raised in this way [referring to Kurdish students]. "Do this!", "Do not do that!" I think this is what they want. When you say it nicely, they do not get it. S/he got used to that. As a matter of fact, the parents of students were beating students. Here [Beşiktaş], when you tell it nicely, they get it. In the other school, they would not get it so I would have to shout at them. Some of the older teachers were beating them. Old system's [referring to the system before curriculum reform] teachers were doing it. For example such things would happen: Girls were escaping from the school. A girl was running away very often. The parents of the girl came to school and asked for help. "This girl is always escaping from the school, we*



*cannot solve this." Teacher slapped her on her face as to why you are escaping [telling conformingly]. It never happened here. There is no need either. Here, even the laziest student does not do any disrespect. More of a respectful sense, it is obvious that families are more democratic here.*

Apart from the teacher's racist and sexist account, this narrative tells us that there is a changing notion of discipline, which is more positive and preferable even though there is still an old archaic understanding in the system. The new notion of discipline is backed up by a close- circuit camera system which every school in Turkey now owns. More like of the panoptic, students are expected to conduct themselves. It does not matter whether someone actually is watching the cameras. The observed one will never be sure about it hence s/he will have to act accordingly. Terms like auto-control and self-discipline are trendy now. Students are under constant control and surveillance.

The shift in disciplinary mechanisms in the Turkish Education System denotes a change in the target of disciplining. The new target is what the student thinks, i.e. mind. The realm of discipline is observing, regulating and controlling. What this change implies actually is the change in the form of power, which constitutes students as subjects and then turns them into objects of it. Schools, in this sense turn into mechanisms where particular individualities are produced by a calculated and calculative gaze. This change in Turkey is accompanied with the proliferation of exams in the system that installs new techniques of power.

## **Examination as a Neoliberal Effect**

Through the last decade, examinations have been the most common feature of the Turkish Education System. By examination I mean multiple-choice tests, essay-type exams and quizzes class-wide, school-wide and nation-wide. Examination as a technique of observing, normalizing and dividing student populations has proliferated in the Turkish Education System during the last decade.

I recall that I had only one exam during my elementary years. According to calculations I made with a teacher during the fieldwork, a student is taking approximately 200 exams during the first four years of primary schooling. Students are undergoing numerous exams from grade one to the time of graduation from high school. Moreover, high-stake testing has become a norm with the rise of neoliberalism across the world, as well as in Turkey. Shaped by certain discourses like objectivity, accountability and equality, standardized tests have been installed as peculiar necessities that would presumably boost academic standards and achievement. The will to exam has reached a level so dramatic that the value, quality and future of an education system is now determined by the system's rank in international tests; e.g. the case of PISA scores. Education is supposedly now organized around the factors that lead to high achievement in these exams. Examination is no longer an assessment tool

but a ritualized machine that observes, normalizes, qualifies, quantifies, classifies, punishes, rewards, individualizes, and produces truths about students and their capabilities and dis-capabilities. But how is this came to be a norm? Why is it taken for granted as the truth? How did testing organize the system of education and deeply influence individuals within the system?

In Turkey, from grade one to grade 4, students take in-class exams, conducted by their teachers. The number of in-class exams can reach to 200 per year. There is not any national high-stake exam during the elementary years. However, it is a rising trend that elementary schools want to have national exams organized by private institutions to assess their achievement level. The school where I did my fieldwork embarked on these exams very eagerly. The importance of exams grows as the level increases. The case in the lower secondary level is bitter. In-class exams get more standardized and the number of national exams rises. During the four years of lower-secondary education, students take approximately 240 in-class exams and 12 national exams. National exams are conducted in the last year of lower secondary education and results are used to place students in secondary institutions. At the secondary level, students take a minimum 240 in-class exams. In the graduation year, students take the most vital exams of their lives, the university entrance exams, which deserve special attention.

In Turkey, the present history of high-stake testing goes back to 1974 when the Student Selection and Placement Center (ÖSYM) was founded. Since then, almost all higher education institutions have been admitting students according to their rank in the exams organized by this institute. Before then, universities individually made the selection. According to the ÖSYM, the individual selection was insufficient due to objectivity problems and conventional reasons.

From 1950 onwards, following the enormous growth in the student population, prevailing admission procedures proved to be inadequate and some of the higher education institutions began to implement their own independent student selection examinations. These, too, were inadequate because the entrance examinations were generally of the essay type and difficult to assess objectively. Consequently, the higher education institutions began to search for a less subjective method and they finally began to use objective tests for selection and placement (ÖSYM, 2006, 5).

Since ÖSYM's establishment, entrance to a university has become a dramatic event in the lives of students and their parents. Students race to death for a spot at the university. Table 2 shows the change in the numbers of students who applied and were placed in universities. The reasons for the difference in the numbers are beyond the scope of this study. My intention is just to show the seriousness of this phenomenon in quantitative terms. The competition is a lot fiercer than the table implies due to the fact that the number of placed students is

lower when the number of students placed in open universities and vocational training schools is subtracted. For example, although in 2012 the rate of students placed universities was over 45.6%, the number of students placed in an undergraduate program is a lot lesser. The number of students placed in a vocational training school and an open university is 284.355 and 223.785 respectively, which means that the total number of students placed in an undergraduate program is 357.342 and its percentage is 18.8 (compiled from ÖSYM, 2012).

Years	Applied	Placed	% of Placed
1974	--	37.254	--
1980	466.963	41.574	8,9
1985	480.633	156.065	32,5
1990	892.975	196.253	22,0
1995	1.263.379	352.989	27,9
2000	1.407.920	439.061	31,2
2005	1.844.891	688.840	37,3
2010	1.587.866	874.306	55,1
2012	1.895.479	865.482	45,6

Table 2: The Number of students who applied and were placed in universities per selected years (compiled from ÖSYM, 2006, 2010, 2012).

Those who manage to attend university are called “the lucky minority” in the popular language. However, they are not as lucky as they are believed to be. After graduation, a series of exams re-starts: this time for job hunting. In Turkey, every state office without exception, recruits employees on the basis of their scores in national exams. Private institutions arrange their own exams. Today, ÖSYM organizes and conducts approximately 40 different national exams per year. Although, ÖSYM was set up to solve the issue of university exams, now it has turned into an exam machine. Accordingly, in 2010, 8.184.530 examinees; in 2011, 5.445.234 examinees; and in 2012, 9.096.787 examinees applied to ÖSYM to get tested. Every agent feels the effects of this exam machine in every level of the education system. In the following part I discuss the culture and economy created by the exam machine.

### **The Culture of Exam Machine**

My observations and interviews showed that the exam machine is a life changer in the schools. The teachers I interviewed constantly addressed the influences of exams on their teaching practices, peer relations, their relations to parents and students, and on students' well being. I will discuss the major effects of the machine, which are twofold: the competition effect and market effect.

### *The Competition Effect*

My observations and the data I gathered indicate that the competition is the driving force in schools. The competition is not only among students but also among teachers, parents, schools, districts, and cities. In other words, from the micro level of society to the macro levels competition has turned into a hegemonic value. Let me exemplify this.

Students are expected to compete from the very beginning. For example, I found a story in a grade one Turkish textbook that struck me (Figure 2).



Figure 2: The Competitor Seagull, (First Grade Turkish Textbook, p. 75)

The title of the story is "Competitor Seagull." The story tells a small seagull's will to race against bigger seagulls. The story praises the work and efforts of the small seagull that eventually turns out to be victorious. The moral claim of the story is that if one tries and competes enough, success will come which is a claim constantly being reminded to students. Textbooks are loaded with tips for success. How one succeeds in exams and in life are among the major themes that are taught to students. The word success is repeated 40 times in the grade three "Life Knowledge" textbook and 21 times in the grade five "Social Knowledge" textbook. "Live Planned, Be Successful", "What do you need to pay attention to be successful", "I am successful at ..." are some of the covered subjects that create a sense of necessity that everyone has to be successful at something if not everything. The school magazines that I examined have similar themes. There are either writings about schools' successes in national exams or exam stress, concern and anxiety. I was told several times by teachers during the fieldwork that parents were so concerned about the success of their children that they prepared the children's project assignments. These were the words of a teacher on the matter:

*There are also projects and performance task. When I ask students to do these at home, they are not doing the work. I cannot do them in the classroom, because there is not enough time. So I am doing performance tasks in the classroom. Parents are doing the projects.*



Another teacher related a similar case:

*Students have to do projects at home. Parents should be conscious about this. But it is not happening. They say their children should be the best. A parent does not care about the new system. If a student does not get a good grade, then the teacher is blamed. This is because of the examination system.*

A teacher while comparing the schools that he worked in pointed out “*here [Beşiktaş], there is competition. Parents expect you to load information and knowledge. Always race, always race...*”

The issue also is influencing the relationships among teachers, especially the elementary level teachers. “*Teachers hate each other. Teachers are undermining each other*” stated one teacher. The relations among teachers are at the minimum level, especially between those who are teaching the same grade levels at elementary school and the same subjects at the lower secondary level.

*Due to economic struggles, teachers hate each other. They are after students for private tutoring. We are chasing money now. Teachers are doing this. Private tutoring is a serious problem. It must be stopped. Everyone is a group now. There is no sharing and cooperation. My peer-teacher is erasing the board so that I do not see what she is doing.*

A similar case is told by another teacher.

*We used to share stuff in my previous school. We would share exams, opinion, activities and wisdom. There are no such things now, not anymore. Teachers want to be appointed to Beşiktaş, because they are making money here by means of private tutoring and extra study times.*

The exam machine is creating its own market. By promoting a harsh competitive culture in schools, the effects of the machine go beyond what one might think.

The machine has also created a serious marketization effect.

### ***The Marketization Effect***

The marketization in the education system of Turkey has many facets. There is a market-oriented culture in schools. It has been estimated that in 2011 the families spent ten billion dollars for their children's education. In the Turkish Education System, there are two processes of marketization at two different levels; micro and macro.

At the micro level, schools are asking families to make forced donations and teachers are asking for private tutoring. Schools are trying to collect money under different disguises. In the schools where I did my fieldwork parents were forced pay forced donations, monthly fees, sports money, report card money, photocopy money, school bus service fee, money for extra-curricular activities and headshots, and school-cleaning money. It is teachers' duty to collect all of this money. If they do not then they have problems with the school

administration. This was mentioned as a problematic issue for teachers during my fieldwork. Teachers complained about this issue frequently. I had been told several times about the problems that teachers had with the school principal. The more money they brought in, the more they were acceptable to the school administration.

During the interviews, I asked teachers about who was seen as the ideal teacher by their school administration. I was told almost unanimously that the ideal teacher was the one who raised the largest amount of money. Teachers are now classified as the hard-working good ones who collect more money and non-working bad ones who refuse to do so. This division is used by the school administration in the most unimaginable way. When students are first admitted to elementary school, the school administration tells parents that they have a very good teacher and if they want their children to be in that teacher's class, they have to pay bigger amounts of money. This practice is quite common, especially in Beşiktaş; I witnessed it in schools that I worked in and teachers told me during my fieldwork. The Figure 3 exemplifies the situation.

Although it might be considered as marginal, it is meaningful in showing the level of micro marketization that has been reached. A news item, reported by İnci (2012) and published in national newspapers that I came across while searching for documents, had the heading: "Make Donation, and You Shall Have

a VIP classroom." Accordingly, the school administration had opened two different kinds of classes; one for the rich who had donated \$500-\$1000 to school, and the other for the poor who had not paid that amount of money. "VIP Classes" were equipped with projectors, computers, closets, whereas the "Poor" ones did not even have a coat hanger. It was also stated that the district directory had started an investigation.



Figure 3: VIP Classroom, (Akşam Newspaper).

Of course, this is scandalous however, my working experience and fieldwork indicate that it is quite a common practice even though it is not as obvious as in this case. The marketization effect created by the neoliberalization of education

is so much bigger than the above cases that it has created a parallel private education system.

One of the distinct features of the Turkish Education System is that private provision of formal education is limited. The percentage of private provision of formal education is about 3% (MoNE, 2013). The main reason of the limited provision of private formal education is the shadow education, called "Dershaneler (Private Tutorial Centers)." The number of these centers has increased dramatically during the last two decades. In 1984, the number was 174 whereas now it is over 4000. The average fee per year that parents paid to these centers was about \$1300 US dollars in 2002 (Tansel and Bircan, 2006). The total number paid to these institutions was estimated to be around 3.5 billion dollars in 2013 (Habertürk, 2013). Table 3 shows the increase in the numbers of the centers and the students of these centers over the last two decades. Just for a rough comparison, the number of academic high schools was 3306, providing public education to a number of 1.814.421 in 2013. The quantitative expansion of the centers has been dramatic since the AKP came into power in 2002. I argue that neoliberalization has been ascending during the same time span, which is evident also from the case of private teaching centers.

Year	# of Centers	# of Students
1995-1996	1.496	379.463
1998-1999	1727	484.229
2000-2001	1864	523.244
2004-2005	2984	784.565
2005-2006	3986	1.071.827
2009-2010	4193	1.174.860
2012-2013	4535	1.301.909

Table 3: Numbers and students of private teaching centers over last two decades per selected years (Compiled from MoNE, 2000-2013)

Teachers and parents generally tend to see the private teaching centers as the consequences of the exam machine. However, the data above implies that the case has moved beyond that. It has turned into a parallel education system. Moreover, it has also influenced the practice of teaching in public schools. Teachers that I interviewed indicated that the more they taught like private centers did, the more they were seen as good teachers. There is an undisputed test culture in schools, which re-defines the meaning of teaching, and the work teachers do. Teachers are facing a dilemma in conducting their practices. On the one hand, they have to use materials sent by the Ministry and include students as much as possible in the teaching process; on the other hand, they have to prepare students for national exams since the value of their

teaching depends on students' achievement in the exams. They have to do either what the Ministry asks or succumb to the dictates of the exam culture.

*Teacher A: "There are teachers who are using the old method. They don't care about the curriculum. They don't use books sent by the Ministry. They choose a book, use it. Parents like these teachers more because they are giving information and in the exams, this information is being tested."*

*Teacher B: There is nothing in the books sent by the Ministry. I am teaching the life of Hedo [Hidayet Türkoğlu, a basketball player]. Are they going to ask about it in the exam?*

Apparently, teachers are under pressure that is created by the dilemma. The Ministry asks teachers to let students discover and learn. But on the contrary, the exam machine creates a culture driven by test achievement. If teachers want their students to get good scores in the exams, they have to give up on student-centered learning and replace it with "banking learning," where the primary aim is to load the information that students will need in the exams.

The Turkish Education System has been under a cultural transformation over the last decade, shifting from a disciplinary system to a controlling one. This is evident in the change of the disciplinary mechanism that the system has and proliferation of exams across the system. The new disciplinary understanding expects students to learn how to conduct themselves. It is no longer about a confinement but infinite controlling. "Control is short-term of rapid rates of turnover, but also continuous and without limit" (Deleuze, 1992, p. 6).

Examination in the new system has turned into a controlling mechanism. Examination was more like an assessment tool in the older system. The new notion of discipline brought about a change in the use of examinations. The students constantly have exams. They take exams to go to high schools and universities, and when they graduate, they take exams to get jobs, and when they get jobs, they take exams to get promoted, and when they get promoted, they take exams to get higher promotion... It is periodic, quick, and continuous. Examination “constantly presents the brashest rivalry as a healthy form of emulation, an excellent motivational force that opposes individuals against one another and runs through each, dividing each within” (Deleuze, 1992, p.5). Besides creating a huge controlling mechanism, the exam machine has cultural and marketization effects in the system of Turkish education.

Competition has resulted in a value that drives the culture of schools. Students, teachers, parents and schools are competing among each other. In terms of marketization effects, the exam machine has converted public schools into private ones by asking money from parents under different names like donations, monthly fees, sports money, report card money, photocopy money, school bus service fee, money for extra-curricular activities and headshots, and school-cleaning money. The machine also established a parallel private education system, Dershaneler (private teaching centers). The number of these



centers exceeds the number of academic high schools in Turkey. They are established as a norm and articulated as the centers that create equality of opportunity in public discourse. What an irony: private education is claimed to create equality! In fact, the data suggests the exact opposite. The majority of those who managed to enter a university are from the high-income group (Eğitim-Sen, 2012). During the dramatic rise of neoliberalization over the last decade, these centers have been constructed as necessities in ensuring the success of students. They now constitute a parallel and an independent private education system that undermines the quality of public education.

### **Islamization of the Education System in Turkey**

Students were gathered in the yard watching a basketball game played between two different classes. The game was intriguing and fun to watch. All of a sudden, a group of students who were supporting their team started to cheer "Ya Allah Bismillah, Allah-u Ekber." Then, the other group replied "Tekbir", "Allah-u Ekber." I was shocked and could not believe what I was hearing. These were slogans and sayings of radical Islamists and neo-fascists. It was not possible to hear such radical sayings in schools, not even in Imam Hatip Schools (religious schools) in the earlier times. When I was a student, the most extreme case that I witnessed was to teach how to "Namaz" (to pray) in the classroom, which was considered as a marginal act even then. But, now most of the religious rituals

seemed to have been be regularized. A religious spiral now confines the education system of Turkey. But it was not always like this.

## **A History of Religious Education in Turkey**

It is a well-known fact that the Republic inherited an empire with a deeply rooted religious culture. The Ottoman Empire was Sheri-a state meaning that the state (by extension its education subsidiaries) was regulated with respect to religious law and rules. Although it is not possible to talk about a single system of education, there was a strong tradition of religious schools. The provision and the regulation of education were private and decentralized. Educational institutions were mostly run and financed by civil organizations called Wakf. The dominant institutions of education in the Empire were sıbyan schools and medreses that were settled around a mosque and used as educational campuses oriented towards religious teaching. The sıbyan schools were the elementary level of medreses. The curriculum of medreses included subjects like Arabic, Quran, Islamic Law, and Hadiths (prophetic practices and sayings). There was not any standardized secular subject that was taught in all of the medreses. The culture of the Empire was primarily organized around religion and these schools were part of this culture. "The educational aim of the pre-modern Islamic school system at the primary level was the inculcation of basic religious knowledge to students, particularly the learning of Quran verses by heart, whereas in the next

stage of medreses the students could concentrate on deeper learning of religious knowledge" (Somel, 2001, p.191). The graduates of medreses would then join the religious elite, the ulema. Although it was not possible to see a uniform educational system in the pre-modern era, these schools were very common across the Empire. In Istanbul alone, the number of medreses opened until the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century was over 500 (Işık, 2009, p.4).

Thus, when the Republic was inheriting a Sheri-a state, it was also acquiring a religious educational system. The Republican elite took forceful measures to transform the culture of the Empire. The educational system installed by the Republican elite aimed at drastic changes and closed all of the religious organizations along with the medreses. The new understanding was conceptualized within a distinctive secular agenda, which was rendered "not only as separation of state and religion, but also as the removal of religion from public life" (Zürcher, 2001, p. 189). Yet this does not mean that the new system got rid of religion altogether and did not maintain the Islamic characteristics of the previous system in it as I will discuss in the following pages.

As I noted earlier, after the Republican elite took over the regime, the new state went through a series national reforms that were of western, modern, and secular in nature. Education, in this scene, drew great attention and was instrumentalized as a mechanism of "catching up with the West." Kemalists used

the modern basis created in the Tanzimat era to build a national education system. It was both a necessary and an obvious move for Mustafa Kemal Atatürk to create a national education system.

Education can either give a nation a free, independent, glorious and exalted life or abandon it to slavery and misery. If the word education is used by itself, everyone interprets it as he wishes. If one goes into detail, the purposes and aims of education diverge. There is, for example religious education, national education, international education. The purposes and aims of these various kinds of education differ. I shall confine myself to saying here that the new Turkish Republic will give the new generation a national education and I shall not dwell on the other varieties. Atatürk (cited in Bursalıoğlu, 1965, p. 160)

The Law of Unification of Education in 1924 was a milestone in establishing a national education. It shut down all the religious schools of the previous state and brought all of the educational endeavors under the control and the supervision of the Ministry of Education. The foremost aim of the Law was to construct a modern, unified, secular and a national education that would ensure a homogenous education for all of its citizens. Yet, the relation of the new regime to religion remained ambiguous. Article 4 of the Unification Law reveals the contradictory relation. "The Ministry of Education shall establish a Faculty of Theology within the Darülfünun (university) to educate religious professionals and open separate schools to train Imams and preachers to be responsible for

performing religious services." On one hand a secular education was advocated; on the other hand the Law obliged the Ministry to open religious schools.

There had been also several educational assemblies. Even in 1921, two years prior to the foundation of the Republic, the First Education congress was gathered to discuss educational needs of the country and possible models for the educational system. Educational assemblies had been maintained under the name of "Scientific Commission" until 1926. The purpose of the commission was to determine the structure, the program and goals of the educational system. The commission also influenced curriculum and textbooks. It should be noted that the conclusions of these councils and concrete effects of the Law of Unification were not seen until 1930s. It is possible to read this period as a transition phase. The changes in religious schools were gradual and uneven. Even though the Law of Unification closed the religious schools legally, they continued to exist within the system until the early 1930s. When they were totally shut down, Islam, under the leadership of the Kemalist elite, found other ways like religious courses, and religious schools, to penetrate into the new education system.

Religious courses continued to be taught in urban areas until 1930 and in rural areas until 1939. Barak A. Salmoni (2000) notes that teachers were still using the educational materials of the Islamic curriculum of the Ottoman Empire until 1927. Salmoni discusses that while students were taught about the national

and secular values, they also were learning Islam. The transition to a secular schooling system was not as smooth as Kemalists expected. "Although religion had been officially removed from official texts, such as the constitution, state-guided syllabi, and nationalist propaganda, elements of Islam remained embedded in the state in other ways" (Ashkenazi, 2007, p. 105). The contradictory relation of Kemalism to secularism remained intact during the Single Party Era. Laicism's entrance to the Constitution in 1937 furthered some other strict measures to eradicate religion in the schooling system. By the late 1930s, there were no religious courses and religious schools. It seemed the system of education was free of religious elements; however, this did not last too long.

By the end of the Second World War, the single party regime dissolved and a new era called the Multi-Party Era began whose influence on the issue of religion was soon to be realized. In 1946, an opposing group within the ruling Republican People's Party (RPP), founded the Democratic Party (DP) that advocated for liberal ideals and privatization of state industries. With the rise of the DP as a legitimate opposing force, strict Kemalist secular policies eased off. Soon after, rhetoric of religious education was heard publicly. The fear of communism was being used for propaganda of religious education. Parliament's

1946 records are very intriguing in this sense. The following is an excerpt from a representative's speech in defence of religious education:

It is necessary, for salvation of a community, to get used to certain sacredness as a child...Friends, new leftist religions emerged. Consciences and hearts are like homeland. If they remain unattended, enemy conquers them. We are not afraid of these new religions, but our own religion? (Grand Assembly, 1946, p. 428, My translation)

Three years after the DP was founded, in 1949, elective religious courses were introduced to primary schools. Parents were supposed to make an official request that they wished their children to have religious courses. With the rise of the DP to power in 1950 and thereafter, religious courses expanded in the education system. The courses were included in the general curriculum and parents who did not want their children to have the courses had to make an official request to withdraw their children from the course. In 1956, these courses found their ways into middle schools curriculum and in 1967, into the high school curriculum.

On the other hand, the Imam Hatip Schools were re-opened in 1951. The number of schools and attending students gradually expanded. The curriculum of these schools included religious courses and secular subjects. "Combining religious content with modern working skills, these religious schools enjoyed popularity among the Turkish citizens; they emphasized traditional values and

provided answers to questions relating to the existential meaning of life" (Ashkenazi, 2007, p. 135). During the years between 1960 and 1980, the emphasis on Kemalist secularism and nationalism were conjoined with a moderate populist discourse of Islam. Joining of Islam in public sphere was mostly due to the populist politics of DP and other conservative parties. "Religious education came to represent a compromise at some level of political responsibility to the demands of the Turkish population, but at the same time it was used as a political tool for party support" (ibid, p. 136). DP and its successors politicized religion in order to gain political support. This inclination after the 1980 coup turned into a tradition and religion became an important political actor in the agendas of different conservative parties.

As I indicated earlier, the 1980 coup marked the coming of neoliberalism. The military regime was installed primarily for the implementation of 24 January Decisions that targeted the restructuring of the economy of the country. The new economic model was campaigning for the opening of the economy to the free market. The other agenda of the generals was to set cultural conservatism as the basis of social life. The speech given in the Grand Assembly shortly after the coup by General Kenan Evren as the president of the state reveals the conservative inclination:



Laicism is not irreligion, it is freedom of conscience. Laicism is drawing the border of religion in state affairs. According to Ataturk, Islam is compatible with reason, science and technology. Ataturk, in 1923 stated that "Our religion is the most reasonable and natural one, for that it became the last one. In order for a religion to be natural, it should be compatible with reason, technology, science and logic. Our religion fits all of these." According to Ataturk's laicism principle using religion as political tool is out of reason and logic. (Kenan Evren, 1981, p. 120)

Soon after the speech, a religious course became an obligatory course in the entire education system. Article 24 of the 1982 Constitution states: "Education and instruction in religion and ethics shall be conducted under state supervision and control. Instruction in religious culture and moral education shall be compulsory in the curricula of primary and secondary schools." This article was a turning point in the religious education in the sense that it secured the religious education constitutionally.

As for Imam Hatip Schools, after the coup the number of schools and attending students increased steadily. Table 4 shows the change in the number of schools and students.

Years	Number of Schools	Number of Students
1965-1966	19	1646
1977-1978	103	26177
1980-1981	333	62206
1984-1985	375	83157
1996-1997	464	192727
2009-2010	473	198581
2012-2013	1807	384384
2013-2014	2074	450969

Table 4: The number of Imam Hatip Schools and Students per selected years.

(Compiled from MoNE, 2010-2013)

The table indicates that post-1980 Turkey witnessed the rise of the religious agenda. This table and the move of compulsory religious course can be read as the major steps in Islamization of education. It also denotes a differentiation in Kemalism's approach to religion. Kemalist doctrines were merging into Islamic traditions. The military state was aiming to create its own Muslim. "The military and bureaucratic elite were always preoccupied with delineating the acceptable boundaries of what it is to be a Turk, but now they also had to re-impose what it means to be a Muslim as well" (Gürbey, 2006, p.13). This is manifested in the records of the National Security Council. On October 18th, 1982, the National Security Council, composed of five generals,

met to discuss the items of the Constitution. While negotiating Article 24, Kenan Evren, the president of the council, stated that

It is not possible to make a nation irreligious. These children will not have religious culture at school, at family. Where will they have? Then, anyone who wishes will send their children local courses [for religious education], teach them in those places. Instead of teaching [religious courses] in those places, at least they (children) acquire religious culture in here [state schools]. (MGK, 1982, pp. 341-2, My translation)

Another general, Nurettin Ersin, made a similar point.

Our intention is to give religious culture and instruction in this style. Not to force anyone to learn all the necessities of religion; but to make sure that they [students] have a religious culture. There is nothing natural as for everyone to know religious culture since religion exists in countries as an element of uniting the society...Then it would be more appropriate to give this information to the Turkish society under the state control rather than somewhere else. (ibid, p. 342, My translation)

Deeply rooted in the cultural politics of Turkey, Kemalist nationalism was coupling with a moderate and state-sponsored Islamism. The role of religious instruction was gradually expanded in the educational system until 1997.

February 28, 1997 was the last the intervention of the military into politics.

Military memoranda in 1997, also called as the Post-modern Coup, refers to decisions taken by the Turkish military and forced the resignation of conservative Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan.

The events of 28 February influenced the cultural and political life of Turkey deeply. The primary aim was to retract the growing religious influence on social and political life, which was a result of the politics of the 1980 coup. The military was trying to destroy what they had created in the 1980 coup. To this end, many religious foundations were shut down and wearing headscarves in universities and in public institutions was deemed illegal. Although 8 years of compulsory education has been on the agenda since the 3<sup>rd</sup> Educational Assemblies in 1946, the Law 4306 turned primary education into 8 years of compulsory system, which could be considered as another significant consequence of 28 February. With the law, the middle level of Imam Hatip Schools was closed down.

The major consequence of the Post-modern Coup was perhaps the formation of the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi- AKP). Five years later in 2002, the AKP won the general elections and came to power. Self-defined as "democratic, conservative, reformist, and modern", the AKP re-shaped the role of religious education that appeared and was operated as an element of cultural transformation in the neoliberal agenda of the AKP. The issue of religious education was no longer confined to compulsory religious courses or Imam Hatip Schools. Religion under different disguises found its way to the education system and Islamized the system considerably.

The coming of AKP to power in 2002 changed the value and the position of religion in the entire society. Before the AKP era, religion was considered as a matter of individual faith. After AKP, religion appeared as a cultural and social issue, especially in schools. In constituting a religious culture in the educational system AKP used a diverse set of mechanisms. Interestingly enough they did not need to change any law, or legislation, except the 4+4+4 law. The already existing legal framework permitted to make such a considerable transformation smoothly. Holy Birth Week (Kutlu Doğum Haftası-KDH), Values Education, Islamization of Textbooks and Reading Materials, and the 4+4+4 Reform and Elective Religious Courses, are some of the major means used to create an Islamic culture at schools.

### **Holy Birth Week (Kutlu Doğum Haftası-KDH)**

KDH is the celebration of the birth of the prophet Mohammed. Initiated by the members of Gülen Movement<sup>2</sup> and the Office of Religious Affairs in 1989, the aim is to celebrate the birth of the prophet with activities that would be organized out of the mosques and would penetrate modern life (Türküne, 2012). For a long time, the organization remained underground and was claimed by some marginal religious groups. Yet with the rise of AKP's power, KDH has been celebrated with "activities diffusing to the fibers of society" (Türküne, 2012).

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<sup>2</sup> The Gülen movement is a transnational religious group. Their main field of activity is education.

The celebration of KDH in schools started in 2011 with a circular issued by the Ministry of Education. In the circular, it stated that "in dissolving the risks and problems that are threatening individual, family, and society and world that we live in, national, spiritual, social, moral and cultural values that make up the cornerstone of our social structure are the most important source of reference" (MoNE, 2011). In this respect, schools were told to commemorate KDH with posters, wall papers, poetries, religious anthems, seminars, hadiths (sayings of the prophet) and more. The circular found immediate response in the schools. A quick google research reveals that in 2013 about 5000 schools carried out such activities and made it public on their web sites<sup>3</sup>. One of the teachers that I interviewed told me that:

*During the week, speeches were given, students were forced to memorize religious anthems, the school was decorated with balloons that had writings of "Hoşgeldin ya Resulallah (Welcome the messenger of Allah) and a competition of memorizing hadiths was arranged among students.*

Figure 4 is a sample wall paper prepared for KDH celebrations. The paper outlines what Mohammed used to do and how great he was. The roses on the paper symbolize the prophet who is believed to be the rose of the universe.

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<sup>3</sup>[https://www.google.com/search?hl=tr&as\\_q=kutlu+do%C4%9Fum+haftas%C4%B1&as\\_epq=&as\\_oq=&as\\_eq=&as\\_nlo=&as\\_nhi=&lr=&cr=&as\\_qdr=y&as\\_sitesearch=meb.gov.tr&as\\_occt=any&safe=images&as\\_filetype=&as\\_rights=](https://www.google.com/search?hl=tr&as_q=kutlu+do%C4%9Fum+haftas%C4%B1&as_epq=&as_oq=&as_eq=&as_nlo=&as_nhi=&lr=&cr=&as_qdr=y&as_sitesearch=meb.gov.tr&as_occt=any&safe=images&as_filetype=&as_rights=)

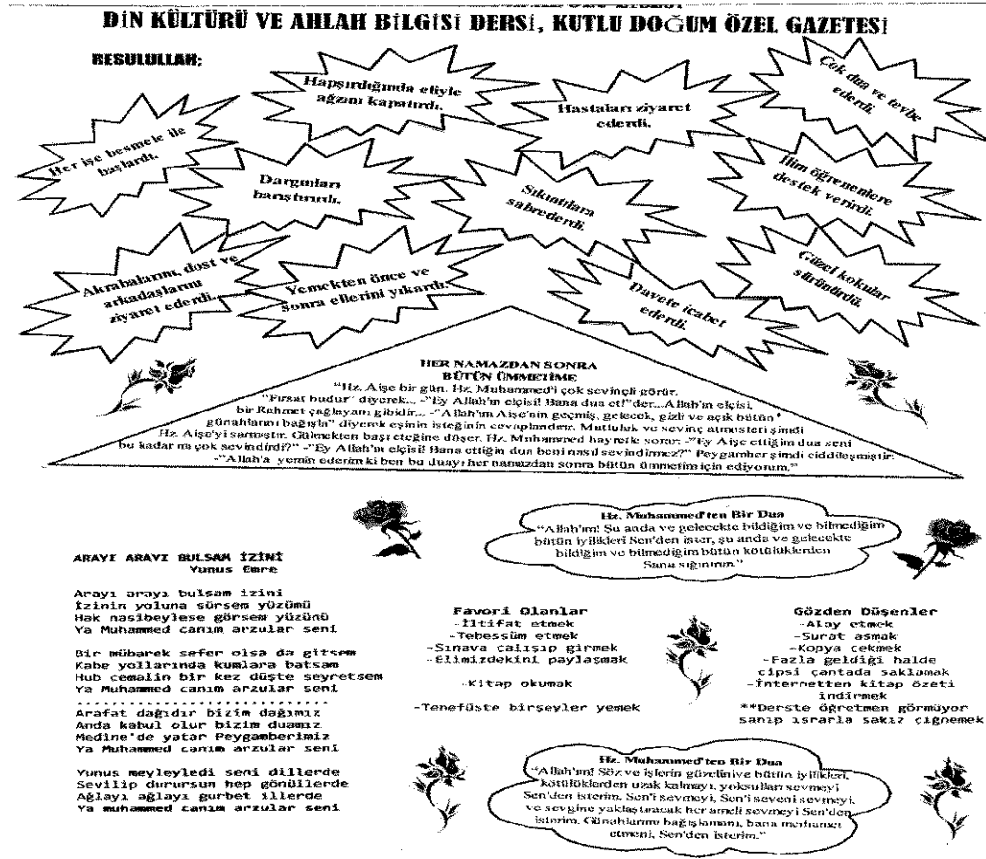


Figure 4: A wall paper prepared for KDH (from the field).

In the district of Beşiktaş, my research field, the week was celebrated in all of the schools with similar events and it was finalized with a district-wise celebration that I attended. During the celebration, children sang religious anthems, speeches by administrators were made, the Quran was read, and roses and chocolates were distributed. It was as if we were in a mosque celebrating a religious day. Speeches made by the district governor, district director of the Ministry of Education and school principals were praising the prophet, repeatedly

emphasizing that Mohammed was the honor of humanity and advising the audience to take the prophet as their life guide. Such events generally have been arranged to praise Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, but now it is for Mohammed.

Mohammed joins Mustafa Kemal to produce a hybrid outcome; a religious secularist culture. Religion is appearing as a formal statement of the state aiming to produce a religious culture in schools. Values Education is installed as another mechanism aiming to channel school climate to religion.

### **Values Education**

The term Values Education (VE) is generally thought of in terms of universal values apart from religious influence of a particular religion. However, in Turkey, in terms of its quantitative and qualitative characteristics VE is the biggest project in Islamization of education along with the diversification of elective religious courses. In implementing this project, as I have noted earlier, the Ministry did not need to make any legal changes. The aim of the project is outlined as follows by the Istanbul Directorate of National Education in "the application manual".

- Fostering cultural codes,
- Designing school and social life surrounding its environment in accordance with moral and ethical values,
- Seeding a moral-based discipline
- Creating a conscience of moral society among students.



VE is basically the transmission of certain values like love, patience, respect, tolerance, mercy, responsibility, trustfulness, honesty and family through curricular and extra-curricular activities. It was firstly implemented in the city of Antalya. Then VE was expanded to 21 cities in the 2012-2013 academic year. Procedurally, each month is devoted to one value. Teachers and students are expected to carry out certain activities described by the Ministry. The values and aims might sound positive; however, a quick review of the activities reveals that the orientation is strictly religious. In most cases, as it is evident from the fieldwork, activities are carried out with religious references like Quran verses, and hadiths. Figure 5 shows a wallpaper that focuses on one of the values: responsibility. Responsibility as such would be a value that every parents would like their children to have. But at the bottom, there is a section that is about children's responsibilities to Allah. "We must not forget our duties to Allah who created and kept us alive and blessed us with many different joys" (My translation). Referring to the values that are accepted commonly across society, the project expands religion into the fabric of society.



Figure 5: The Responsibility Wall Paper, (From the field).

One of the teachers with whom I talked indicated the necessity of these kinds of religious projects. She was arguing the need for morality and stated "children are experiencing things that they are not supposed to." Another teacher I interviewed noted that religion is gaining popularity and visibility in schools. "I feel that religion is entering into schools more. Most of the school principals are ex-religious culture teachers. The future is being built up on religion." Religion now is established as a source of reference in the education system. While this does not mean that all of the students are religious but it still confirms that religion is

currently a source of reference in their school life and is also explicit in textbooks and reading books.

### **Islamization of Textbooks and Reading Books**

The Ministry of Education under the AKP regime initiated a new practice; the ministry prepares textbooks and distributes to students free of charge as a social welfare policy. It also makes sure that all of the students are exposed to the same content. An analysis of these textbooks reveals that the content is organized around religious elements. Below are selected examples, translations are mine:

Pinocchio: For years, you had wanted to make a puppet that everybody would envy, there it is, and your *prayers* were realized...

Pinocchio: Good people's prayers always results positively, my granddaddy.

Grandfather [Geppetto]: I have not done anything evil to anyone. That is why prayers were realized (6<sup>th</sup> Grade Turkish Textbook, pp. 10-15).

In a text on Roden, at some point the issue is related to Allah with no apparent relevance:

He [Roden] was all alone with the work he had, just like the world in its first days of creation by Allah (6<sup>th</sup> Grade Turkish Textbook, p. 72).

In another text Allah joins the love of nation.

Give me strength my Allah! He begged; let your Ali subject pay his debt to the nation (4<sup>th</sup> Grade Turkish Textbook, p.87).


On another page in the same book, begging to Allah is taken to a new level:

I would beg to Allah without asking for anything in return (p.93).

Perhaps the most extreme case, as an example of Islamization of textbooks, is found in 9<sup>th</sup>Grade Philosophy Textbook. Figure 6, found on the page 171, is about proofs of God. Students are expected to read the proof statements, make deductions and fill in the blanks. I will not go into the details of the piece but one of the proofs states that:

For all the people God is the most perfect and competent being. This idea cannot be given to us from the outer environment or other people. Because, they are not perfect enough to give this idea to us.....is who gave us this idea.

Student is obviously expected to write God in the blank. God, in this context, is proved to exist philosophically.

**2. ETKİNLİK**  
A. Aşağıdaki kanıtları okuyarak bunlardan hareketle ulaştığınız sonucu altlarına yazınız..

<b>Ontolojik Kanıt</b> Tüm insanlar için Tanrı en mükemmel, en yetkin varlıktır. Bu fikir bize ne dış çevredeki varlıklardan ne de diğer insanlardan gelmiş olamaz. Çünkü onlar bu fikri bize verecek kadar mükemmel değildir. Bu fikri bize veren..... O hâlde .....	<b>Kötülük Kanıtı</b> Tanrı, dünyadaki kötülükleri önlemek istiyor da gücü yetmiyorsa güçsüzdür. Tanrı'nın kötülükleri önlemeye gücü yetiyor da önlemek istemiyorsa kötü niyetlidir. Tanrı, hem güçlü hem de kötülüğü ortadan kaldırmak niyetinde olsa bunca kötülük var olamaz. O hâlde .....
<b>Kozmolojik Kanıt</b> Dünyanın varlığının nedeni, dünyanın kendisi olamaz. Çünkü dünya hiç olmayabilirdi ya da başka türlü olabilirdi. Şu hâlde, varlığının nedeni kendisinde olan başka bir varlıktır. Eş deyişle Tanrı ..... O hâlde .....	<b>Ahlaki Gerekçeler Kanıtı</b> İnsan, özgür ve güçlüdür. Onun Tanrı tarafından önceden belirlenen bir özü yoktur. İnsan, özünü kendisi oluşturur. Varlığı, var oluşu oluşturur. Varoluşsal varlık, hiçbir şeyden gelmez. Çünkü kendisi dışında hiçbir şey yoktur. Eğer Tanrı var olsaydı var oluş ve özgürlük olmayacaktı. O hâlde .....
<b>Teleolojik Kanıt</b> Teleoloji, evrendeki her şeyin belli amaçlar doğrultusunda düzenlenmiş olduğunu savunan görüştür. Bu kanıtı göre doğada bir düzen olduğunu gözliyoruz. Böylesine mükemmel bir düzenlilik, bu düzeni kuran bir varlık olduğunu göstermektedir. O hâlde .....	<b>Madde Kanıtı</b> Madde, öncesiz ve sonrasız olan tek varlıktır. Tüm varlıklar maddeden meydana gelir. Tanrı doğaüstüdür ve maddi cinsten değildir.

Figure 6: Proofs of God

It is possible to give more examples of religious articulation in textbooks. I will confine myself to point out that religion in general, Allah in particular, appears in textbooks as a major source of reference. Textbooks are not the only medium through which the religious discourse is disseminated. In 2003, the ministry revealed a list of reading materials, named “100 Basic Books” (100 Temel Eser) that covers a wide range of books, from the world classics to the Turkish classics.

Evidently, classics are shortened, simplified and re-designed to align with Islamic discourse. For example Heidi, the major character from a Swiss made fiction, is made to say, “I am so happy to not to forget about God. He knows the right of everything. If I did not believe in God, I could not come here grandfather. A person who forgets about God forgets about everyone.” There are many examples like this. One of the most striking examples of articulation of Islam is found in the fables of Beydeba, the writer of Kelile and Dimne. In one of the fables, it is written that “He had visited Allah’s home, tomb of our prophet. He had completed his Hadj duty (pilgrimage to Mecca). Most of the stories are opened with “Once upon a time, there were many subjects of Allah” which I have never seen before. Apart from Islamization of world classics, books of riddles, rhymes, and proverbs are completely religion oriented. “Allah loves patient kuls (subject)”; “Allah is the helper of the truth”; “Let us start with the name of Allah, Stone the

devil”; and “Allah makes the building, Kul writes its script” are just a few examples of many.

The discourse of Islam in the educational system is getting stronger and stronger. Stronger it is getting, the more it is becoming fundamentalist. In Çiğli, a district of İzmir, there is an ongoing reading project, named “81 Books to 81 Cities”. The project is moving the issue of Islamization to a radical level. Within the scope of the project, the district governorship distributes selected books to elementary and middle school students. The self-stated aim is to help students to get used to reading books and improve reading habits. The books that students are reading indicate that the regime of AKP wants its students to become radicals. Figure 7 shows the radical phase that Islamization has reached. On the page, there are Quranic verses and it is written “Muslims are beating the enemy.” It is, as if the book is calling children to Cihad.

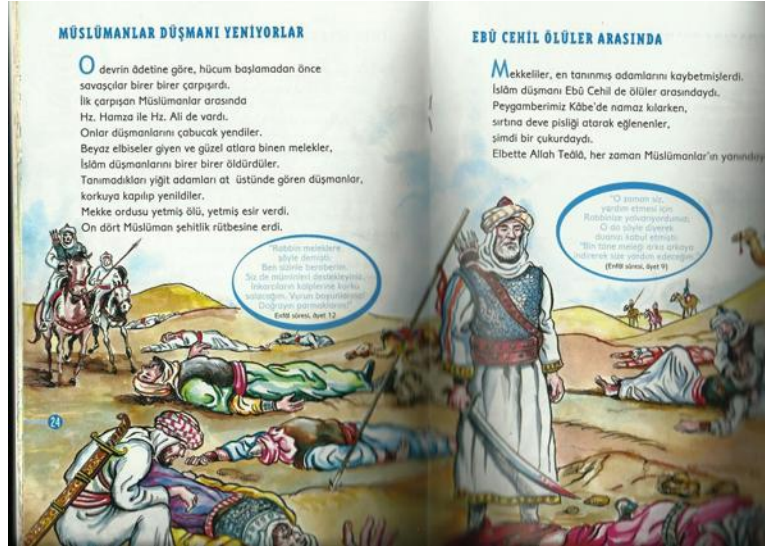


Figure 7: Muslims are Brothers, (sendikam.org)

Figure 8 is another example of radicalization of Islam. The book is about two soldiers: one is a Muslim and the other is not. The illustration speaks about what the Muslim soldier does. It writes, "The duty of man is to Namaz five times a day and other worships."



Figure 8: Muslim Soldier, (sendikam.org)

The radical discourse of Islam started to circulate in the education system after the 4+4+4 Reform, which also opened new channels for the Islamization of the education system.

#### **4+4+4 Reform and Elective Religious Courses**

The Law 6287 dated 30/03/2012, changed the structure of the education system. Compulsory education was divided into three levels and the duration of it increased from eight years to twelve. Accordingly, primary education, which used to be five years in the previous structure, consists of four years (grades 1-4), and is followed by a four years of lower secondary education. The upper secondary education makes up the final four years of compulsory education. Significant to this study is the Law's introduction of middle religious schools and elective religious courses to the system, which adds another major step in the Islamization of education.

The number of Imam Hatip Schools in 2010 was 473 with 200.000 of students. The current number of schools is 708 at the high school level with a total of 380.000 students and 1099 at the lower secondary level, providing religious education to a number of 94.467 students (MoNE, 2013). Before the 4+4+4 reform, there were no religious middle schools. In the span of two years 1099 schools has been opened. Most of the middle religious schools were established by converting the regular academic schools. The number of



converted schools, which is 730, implies that new religious schools will be opened. Although the number of students seems to be limited, the long-term effects remain to be seen. Yet I have to note that I believe admissions to religious schools will increase. My belief is supported by the interest shown by students or parents in elective religious courses.

As I have noted earlier, the other act of Islamization of the education system brought by the 4+4+4 reform is the introduction of elective religious courses. Before the reform, students were obliged to take two hours of religious education every week from the fourth grade upto grade twelve. The reform added new religious courses to the repertoire. Students can now choose three different religious courses along with the compulsory one. The elective courses are Quran (learning to read Quran), the Life of Hz. Muhammad and Basic Religious Knowledge (Islam I and Islam II). The numbers given in a recent report on elective religious course are striking. Of the 1.193.993 fifth grades, 647.349 chose Quran, 426.836 preferred the Life of Hz. Muhammad and 212.134 chose Basic Religious Knowledge for 2012-2013 academic year (Ilke, 2013, p. 51). The dramatic rise of religious middle schools and the interest shown in religious courses are concrete evidences of the level of Islamization of the education system has reached. It also indicates that on one hand the Ministry is opening religious schools at a dramatic pace, on the other hand the regular academic

schools are being Imam Hatipized. My observation in the field also confirms that Islam is establishing itself as a cultural touchstone in the system.

A history teacher told me that students were more afraid of the teacher of religious courses because students believed that he might curse them. Another teacher indicated that her students prayed and begged Allah before exams.

Perhaps the following example is more remarkable. Figure 9 was a performance task prepared by a student for the Traffic course. At the top of the page everything seems normal. The student had cut, pasted the traffic signs and noted the meaning of the signs. But at the bottom he had written a poem named "Traffic Accidents", translation is mine:

There is no question during the Ramadan!  
What happens to kul (subject of Allah), there are many hard exams!  
There is no enmity to what comes from Allah!  
Be patient kul, be patient, your medicine is patience...  
Spare patience to fasting kul!  
Let be careful in the traffic and not have an accident.



Muslim not the state. This understanding bankrupted and 1990s witnessed the rise of political Islam. Eventually the military radically tried to eliminate Islam in the cultural and social sphere in 1997. Yet, their plan failed once more, as a consequence of the coup neo-conservative force AKP formed and came into power in 2002, which changed the value and the articulation of religion. With AKP, Islam appeared as a cornerstone of the education system. On one hand, the number of religious schools increased and lower secondary religious schools were opened, on the other hand regular academic schools of every level were started to being Imam Hatipized through various channels like KDH, VE, textbooks and reading books, and elective religious courses.

## CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMANDATIONS & LIMITATIONS

Neoliberalism, in the 21st. century, is now a global phenomenon that deeply influences the social, political, economic, cultural, ethnic and educational orientations of nations. Far from being coherent and even, neoliberalism has shown contradictory and ambiguous characteristics in different geographies while changing the landscapes of the countries. Scholars (Harvey, 2005; Bourdieu, 1998; Apple, 2006; Kingfihser, 2002; Klein, 2007 among others) from different fields of study have been showing a growing interest in these ambiguous characteristics of neoliberalism. Although neoliberalism is conceptualized as an economic project to which the idea of the free market is central, the use and institutionalization of concept have proceeded beyond the idea of the marketplace alone. Critical scholars from different areas have generally approached the phenomenon as a political and cultural project. For example, Harvey (2005; 2009) sees it as a project of reconsolidation of class power where dominant classes have boosted their privileged conditions. In a similar vein, the leading sociologist Bourdieu (1998; 2003) conceptualizes neoliberalism as the eradication of collective structures (left hand of the state). For Brenner and Theodore

(2002), it is a geopolitical project where increasing socio-spatial transformation and urban restructuring has been observed.

In advancing these understandings, by employing a critical feminist approach, Kingfisher (2002) defines neoliberalism in a different way where it is seen as a cultural system and the product of certain historical and material conditions and practices. Accordingly, neoliberalism is not only an idea about economics, but also a socially constructed way of understanding and looking at the world. It has a constructed, contingent and contradictory nature. For its continuous existence as a system, it not only requires having certain kinds of institutions but also certain kinds of subjects. On the one hand, while neoliberalism aims to create major institutional changes that lead to the formation of a minimalist state, on the other hand, it defines and specifies “what kinds of subjects we should be” (p.13). Thus, in order to achieve its targets, neoliberalism provides certain prescriptions for individuals to inform their practices both in the public and private spheres.

It is significant to mention here that the process of globalization goes hand in hand with the process of neoliberalism in destroying the institutions of the welfare state and creating a new discourse for individual subjects. Education in this sense provides invaluable opportunities in establishing this

process as a smooth and untroubled option. Based on these arguments, this study focuses on the ways in which a specific culture and types of subjectivities have been constructed in the case of the Turkish Education system.

As noted several times, the effects of neoliberalism have not been all the same in different parts of the world. The institutionalization of neoliberalism has always been affected by the local contexts that results in different practices in different areas. In Turkey, the process of neoliberalization started with the so called "24 January Decisions" which essentially marks a turning point in the economic model of the country; from a state-led economy to a market oriented one. However, this does not imply that the transition to a free market economy has been straight forward. A military coup, which happened in 1980, and the coming of a neoliberal conservative force that took power in 2002, are the major milestones of subtle institutionalization of neoliberalism in Turkey. A long and painful process has altered the organizational, political, social, and cultural spheres of the country. The process is still ongoing.

Education within these spheres has a paramount importance which is why the system of education, after the rise of the AKP to power in 2002

attracted sudden attention and has gradually been reconfigured to raise 'globally competitive citizens.' Through various major reforms and some minor adjustments, a neoliberal culture with various distinct features now characterizes the educational system of Turkey. These characteristics and their effects on relations among individuals and the configuration of personhood have been major concerns of this study.

It is within this context that I undertook my research with the following questions:

- What sort of a political rationality constitutes these reforms? What is intended by these reforms? What values are raised by these reforms? What forms of subjectivities did these reforms mean to make?
- What are the effects of these reforms and modifications?
- What kind of a cultural transformation has the Turkish Education System been experiencing during the last decade? What kinds of discourses are dominating the system? What is their historical relevance and growth?

I specifically concentrated on four major reforms and practices to build a critical framework to understand the discursive formation of the cultural



transformation of the Turkish Education System. These reforms and practices were "The 2005 Curriculum Reform", "The Fatih Project" and "The Intel Teach Program", "4+4+4 Reform," and "Disciplinary Mechanisms and the Use of Exams" each of which creates a certain kind of discourse. These discourses are psychologization of pedagogy, the computerization of education, Islamization of the system and controlling societies respectively. These discourses are understood not simply made of linguistic entities, but rather as actions, processes, that have worldly effects on the system. In the following section, I summarize the findings revealed in this study in relation to these reforms and practices. Subsequently I will provide a general discussion about the findings.

In terms of its scope and effects, the 2005 Curriculum reform is the most important one. The reform is also significant because it has set the discursive framework for other reforms and practices. In a nutshell, the reform advocates for, and promotes constructivism as a pupil-based approach to teaching and a psychology-based pedagogy. I have dealt with what the reform envisages in relation to pedagogy and what has changed since the implementation of it. I have concluded that education in general, learning in particular, has come to be defined as only a psychological process and an individualized and flexible

student type is imagined and assumed by the reform. In light of these findings, I feel safe to state that learning is predominantly articulated as a matter of inner entity and process. The role of concepts referring to the inner-self like self-monitoring, self-esteem, self-responsibility, self-evaluation and self-discipline are abundant in the textbooks and program documents that I examined.

In this outline, learning is viewed as a subject of individual success or bankruptcy. In other words, it is the individual who succeeds or fails, it has nothing to do with the cultural or social organization of learning. Moreover, after the curriculum reform, the use of guiding and psychological counseling services has expanded throughout the system. These services act as a mechanism to foster 'psychologism'. The number of psychological counselors before the reform was 7.500 whereas after the reform the number has increased gradually, and as of 2014 it is 24.080.

Another target of the reform is to create a 'new student' who is flexible, entrepreneurial, accountable, self-motivated, and autonomous in her learning. I have found out that three major discursive mechanisms; the whole child, developmentally appropriate curricula, and interactive pedagogy, are at work in raising the new student. The discourse of the 'whole child' denotes that every aspect of the child is a part of the educative process. The underlying notion of the whole child discourse is that a child not only should learn, but also should be

happy to learn. The program overtly states that the purpose is "to raise happy individuals" who use resources effectively, are mindful consumers, and sustain the sense of self-regulation. The new program does not see the intellectual mastery and behavioral compliance of students as sufficient, and evidently it also attempts to regulate the innermost aspects of children, i.e. their motivation, fears, happiness, and wishes. What matters to the highest degree to the new regime is the will to learn. This articulation is backed up with another discursive practice; developmentally appropriate curricula.

The discourse of developmental psychology is the touchstone of the reform. Accordingly, the student is supposed to carry out tasks relevant to her developmental phase. The developmentally appropriate curricula introduces a new mode of power that constitutes a normalizing vision of the student and it determines what, when and how the student can or cannot perform. Learning in this sense is a matter of showing compliance to predetermined objectives. Moreover, the psychological conceptualization of learning and the learner serves as the bearer of the neoliberal cultural agenda since such an understanding disregards any other philosophical, epistemological, cultural, political, and sociological grounds of teaching pedagogy. In this scheme, individuals are required to be accountable for themselves, and become enterprising subjects. As Rose (1992) states:

The subjective being, it is to aspire to autonomy, it is to strive for personal fulfillment in its earthly life, it is to interpret its reality and destiny as matters of individual responsibility, it is to find meaning in existence by shaping its life through acts of choice. (p. 142)

The last discursive mechanism introduced by the reform is the interactive pedagogy that aims to resolve the dichotomy between teacher-centered pedagogy and student-centered pedagogy by providing a new framework of governing the teacher, the learner and the relationship between them. In this schema, the teacher is tasked to teach students how to learn on their own, while the student is tasked to learn how to learn. In accomplishing this, the reform has introduced a fresh form of assessment called "Ürün Dosyası (Product File)" that students are asked to build throughout the semester for every major course. The aim is to allow the student to build her own learning under the supervision of the instructor. My fieldwork indicates that the notion of flexible student is not a total success, although its long-term effects remain to be seen. Teachers I interviewed constantly referred to their failure in creating the imagined student due to the pressure produced by the extensive use of national exams.

The second major phenomenon with which I dealt is the computerization of education. In this regard, I examined two projects that aim to enhance the use of computers in education and bring a certain culture of technology into schools. These projects are the Intel Teach Program and the FATİH Project. I aimed to

illustrate through my analysis and discussion that computers are articulated within the context of neoliberal instrumentalist discourse of computers and technological determinism. Accordingly, computers are regarded as a sort of a mythical tool that will resolve the troubles of the educational system while ignoring issues like access, equity, knowledge creation and local relevance. Moreover, it is considered that the country will catapult to an advanced stage of development simply by computerizing the educational organization. As a worldly effect of the discourse of computerization, my ethnographical data has shown that a strong copy-paste culture has been institutionalized in schools. Students are doing copy-paste while preparing their assignments and teachers are doing copy-paste while developing their lesson programs and tests. Another major outcome of the computerization is related to marketization. In the literature of critical studies, neoliberalism is commonly characterized by the decline of government expenditure on public services. With the FATİH Project, the Turkish government pledges to spend a vast sum of money (over three billion US dollars) on tablet PCs and LCD panels. This project leads a significant rise in the government expenditure on public education. But this money has is being transferred to multinational companies like General Electric. This is a deflection in the dominant understanding of neoliberalism, which I call 'wry neoliberalism'.

The third point of departure in neoliberalization of the Turkish Education System is the change in the discourse on discipline and the intensive utilization of national tests. Discipline in general is seen as a way of governing. My research has uncovered that formerly, discipline in Turkey was more related to physical punishment and directed to the student's body. Whereas, the new notion of discipline, on the other hand, is directed to the intellect and the inner senses of students. Students are now required to be actively participating in their own disciplining. In other words, students are supposed to discipline themselves. The method of discipline appears in the form of observing, checking, regulating and controlling.

This new notion of discipline is also accompanied by the proliferation of exams in the system. The examination has appeared as the most common practice in the Turkish Education System. A student is taking approximately 200 exams during her four years of elementary schooling. The teachers that I interviewed constantly addressed the subject of examinations in their narratives. The examination had two distinctive effects on the system. First, it has produced a fierce competitive culture. Everyone in the system apparently is competing with each other. This culture of competition creates a huge marketing effect in the system. As a consequence of the intensive utilization of tests at every level of the

educational system, a parallel private education system has been formed. This system consists of Dershaneler (Private Tutorial Centers) that organizes and prepares students for the national exams. The number of these centers and students attending them has been increasing dramatically during the last decade. The number of centers and students were 1864 and 523.244 in 2000 respectively, whereas in 2013 the number of centers was 4535 and students attending was 1.3 million. The total money paid to these institutions was estimated to be approximately 3.5 billion US dollars in 2013. These centers have also influenced the practice of teaching in public schools. Teachers indicated that they were expected to teach in the way these centers did if they wanted to be considered as ideal teachers. If instructors want their students to have good scores on the tests, they have to give up on student-centered learning and replace it with the banking system of learning where the principal objective is to upload information that students will need in the exams.

Deleuze (1992) discusses that the mode of power is changing from disciplinary to controlling and that the initial concern of the power is controlling. This change is achieved through various mechanisms including examination, which is the case in Turkey. The examination and the change in disciplinary mechanisms indicate that the Turkish Education System is experiencing a

cultural shift; from a disciplinary system to a moderating one. It is no longer about confinement, only infinite control. Students are constantly taking exams, one after another: an endless circle of controlling, which is periodic, quick and continuous. It “constantly presents the brashest rivalry as a healthy form of emulation, an excellent motivational force that opposes individuals against one another and runs through each, dividing each within” (Deleuze, 1992, p.5). The exam machine has resulted in a controlling system and a parallel private education system that weaken the quality and the character of public education.

The fourth major transformation is related to religion which always has been an important problematique in the Turkish Education System. I found that a strong religious culture is being planted in the system through several mechanisms. On the one hand, after the 4+4+4 reform the number of religious schools, Imam Hatip Schools, has increased dramatically, on the other hand, through various mechanisms regular academic schools are being Islamized. Among these mechanisms are the celebration of the Holy Birth Week, Values Education and Islamization of textbooks and reading books.

Table 5, inspired by Brenner and Theodore (2002) depicts the overall state of the transformation of the Turkish Education System. In the figure, the column named 'points of departures' denotes the site of change, whereas 'the



instant of destruction' indicates the state before the reforms, and 'the instant of creation' shows the state after the reforms.

Points of Departures	Moment of Destruction	Moment of Creation
<b>Pedagogy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher Centered, Lecture Type</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interactive Pedagogy, Dominance of Developmental Psychology</li> </ul>
<b>Discipline</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Harsh, Physical Punishment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Soft, Refinery, Subtle Surveillance, Constantly controlling</li> </ul>
<b>Examination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Random, Less in Numbers, Assessment oriented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular, More in Numbers, Dividing and controlling practice</li> </ul>
<b>Student-Type</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obedient, Nationalist, Knowledgeable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flexible, Adaptable, Accountable, Competitive, Entrepreneur, Nationalist, Muslim, High Tech, Self-Minded</li> </ul>
<b>Teacher-Type</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lecturer, Source of authority</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitator, Adaptable, High Tech, Accountable</li> </ul>
<b>Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public, Private</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public, Private, Parents</li> </ul>
<b>Relation to Religion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ambiguous, contradictory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear, Definite, Domination of Sunni-Islam</li> </ul>
<b>Technology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited, Means</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extending, Mythic, Ends</li> </ul>

Table 5: The Cultural Transformation of the Turkish Education System

As the table implies, the transformation of the Turkish Education System is multi-faceted, and touching every part of the educational system and actors within it. This dissertation has aimed to produce an analytical framework for the cultural transformation of the Turkish Educational System so it should be considered a starting point through which the dynamics of destruction and creation in the Turkish Education System might be tested. Equally, as I have mentioned before, the process of neoliberalization is not a coherent and unilinear transition, but rather it is uneven, ambiguous, multi-faceted and mostly has contradictions of its own.

The political rationality that made these reforms is fundamentally neoliberal and neo-conservative that intend to create a certain kind of neoliberal culture in schools. This culture strives to establish a school where developmental psychology driven pedagogy, accountability, competition, Islam, control, achievement, market orientation, entrepreneurship, and articulation of computers as a modern panacea for the problems of education are paramount values and practices.

It is also worth noting that the transformation of the Turkish Education System is not only market oriented. In fact, I found that there is not any reform, project or practice whose sole aim is to monetize the schooling system. Marketizing always comes as a material consequence of neoliberal discourses

and the practices to which they give rise. In other words, whatever the AKP government has done in the field of education always has produced a huge marketizing effect as is evident in the FATİH Project and the case of national exams. My research also revealed that education is always related to an economic focus pushing aside the role of education in human development. The current neoliberal development discourse that articulates education as a means to create a globally competitive economy has further pushed Turkish policy developers and decision-makers to view education as a means to economic growth, which is also explicitly stated in the programs, and in the rationales for reforms.

### **Limitations and Recommendations for Further Studies**

This study attempted to read the transformation of the Turkish Education System from the point of view of teachers, which enabled a partial understanding of the transformation. This limitation also invites further research into how other sides of the education system interact with the state's conditions for learning. First, similar research studies with students and parents would deepen our knowledge of neoliberalization of the Turkish System. Moreover, each of these reforms and discourses could be studied separately. Finally, these reforms are relatively new in action. A longitudinal study would be important in enriching our knowledge of the long-term effects of these reforms.

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