

Expansion of Education in Turkey: External vs. Internal Dynamics

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Introduction

Compulsory education in Turkey was expanded to eight years in August, 1997 with the passage of the Law 4306 by the TGNA (Turkish Grand National Assembly). Prior to 1997, compulsory education consisted of five years of primary education, followed by six years of secondary education that consisted of three years of junior secondary school and three years of high school. Under the new law, junior secondary schools became a part of a course of primary education that would last eight years, while high school education remained three years as before. However, the expansion of the compulsory education process was very contentious because of its implications for “imam-hatip” schools, religious schools. This law decreased secondary education from six to three years, including the religious schools, and thereby closed the junior secondary religious schools. These schools were central to the debates about the law, since they reflected the tension between the secular ideology of the state and religious ideology of various political and cultural actors in society. To the legislators much more was at stake than the length of compulsory education, or its organization by level. Indeed, the effective curtailment of religious education by the law exacerbated intense and longstanding cultural and political conflicts.

During the debates about the reform, cultural and political conflicts and appeals to “modern” practices were involved, though the latter were selectively invoked by both the modern, secular proponents and the more traditional, religious opponents of the law. The Turkish case is especially interesting because it reflects the process by which the rise of religious and national traditions might pose a “new” challenge to the international trend

toward a uniform pattern of education. I will analyze all these issues in light of general theories about educational expansion, including both internal and world cultural factors.

First Attempts

Law 4306 was not the first attempt to expand religious education. In 1973, the National Education Principle Law (Law 1739) was passed that made attendance at primary and junior secondary school compulsory but kept them separate (Aydagul, 2002). With this law in 1973, vocational education, including the religious education, would be provided only in the second phase of the secondary education.

However, none of the subsequent governments until 1980 tried to implement this law. After 1974, a coalition government between the Republican Party (RPP) and the National Salvation Party (NSP) was established. The NSP demanded the reopening of junior-secondary schools of vocational schools, including imam-hatip schools, and in the same year, junior secondary schools began to provide religious education (Aydagul, 2002). However, it is important to note that as it defined itself as a conservative and traditionalist party, the National Salvation Party aimed at reopening of religious schools, rather than other vocational schools with this change.

Between 1974 and 1980, Aydagul (2002) argues, subsequent governments had to deal with civil unrest and anarchy in the country rather than the reorganization of education. In the 1980s, however, Turkey began to undergo radical social and economic developments, such as liberalization and modernization of the economy and social and cultural life. Hence, the focus of the governments during this period was on vocational education with the aim of meeting the demands of economic change (Aydagul, 2000). Since imam-hatip schools were a part of the vocational education, they were left intact.

Final Attempts

The Fifteenth National Education Council¹, held in 1996, addressed the issue of primary education. In its final report, the commission on primary instruction and guidance gave a recommendation to Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) to implement eight-year continuous compulsory education (Aydagul, 2002). The commission recommended that primary and junior-secondary schools should be combined and called primary instruction schools. Accordingly, graduates of primary education would be granted one diploma at the end of eight years. While this policy recommendation was supported by many of the politicians in the assembly, a strong opposition emerged as well. Supporters of this policy argued that the proposal for eight-year compulsory education was based on scientific rationales. The opponents were not against the idea of eight-year- compulsory education, but they were more concerned with the fact that junior-secondary imam-hatip schools (religious schools) would be closed if the policy was implemented. Hence, they proposed that the eight-year compulsory education should be 5+3, which would enable students to attend vocational schools, including imam-hatip schools after the first five years (Aydagul, 2002).

During the time when the policy was recommended, a coalition government of the Motherland Party and the True Path Party was in power. However, this government collapsed in 1996 because of the internal conflicts between these two parties. After the collapse of this government, a coalition government of the True Path Party and Welfare Party came to power. As Aydagul (2002) indicates, even though this government

¹ Established in 1939 and the highest advisory unit of the Ministry of National Education in curriculum and school regulation policies (Aydagul, 2002).

included eight-year compulsory education in its program, they did not explicitly state its structure. Nor did they attempt to legislate it.

In order to understand the reason behind this ignorance, one should investigate the political orientation of the Welfare Party. It was a continuation of the National Salvation Party (NSP) which had a religious orientation in the 1970s. The NSP was reestablished in 1983 with a new name, the Welfare Party, and similar to the NSP, led by Necmettin Erbakan. To trace the ideological roots of the Welfare Party, one should investigate that of the NSP. The major goal of the NSP was to “revive the moral qualities and the spiritual excellence dormant in the Turkish character, so that Turkish society can regain peace, order, and social justice” (quoted from Toprak, 1981:103). In the political view of the party, in spite of the material progress, capitalism led to a spiritual crisis in Turkish society. NSP politicians argued that the West introduced their corrupt culture into Turkish society since the Tanzimat (1839-1876) era. In contrast to the secularist view, held by Republican elite, that the decline of Ottoman Empire was caused by Islam’s conservatism, the NSP viewed the Western influence as the cause of the decline.

Being an ideological and political continuation of the NSP, the Welfare Party got the largest proportion of the votes in the 1995 elections. In spite of its success in the elections, the Welfare Party could not come to the power; instead, the coalition government of the True Path Party and the Motherland Party came to the power. After the collapse of this coalition, the Welfare Party, which has come to be seen as Islamic Party, established another coalition government with True Path Party in 1996, and Necmettin Erbakan, leader of Welfare Party, became the Prime Minister of Turkey.

The governance of the country by an Islamic Party was closely scrutinized by the

military, which regards itself as the protector of secularism in Turkey. Even though the Welfare Party did not claim to make any change in the secular structure of the state, the military and other secularists continued to see it as a threat to the secular structure of Turkish Republic. They regarded some of Erbakan's activities, such as proposing a mosque in places that have been associated with secularism, attempting to lift the ban on wearing the headscarf in universities and other state institutions, staffing the bureaucracy with Welfare followers, and hosting a Ramadan dinner for leaders of religious orders, as a threat to secularism (Aydagul, 2002).

These and similar developments led the military to intervene in political life in Turkey. On February 28, 1997, the military members of National Security Council proposed a plan that included twenty recommendations to protect secularism in the country. After waiting for a while, the Turkish Cabinet agreed to sign the plan and to enact the measures for protecting secularism. Three articles of this plan were concerned with education:

Article 2 Private dormitories, foundations, and schools affiliated with religious orders must be put under the control of relevant state authorities and eventually transferred to the Ministry of National Education (MNE), as required by the Unification of Education Law.

Article 3 With a view toward rendering the tender minds of young generations inclined foremost toward love of the republic, Atatürk, the homeland, and the nation, and toward the ideal and goal of raising the Turkish nation to the level of modern civilization, and to protect them against the influence of various quarters:

A *Continuous eight-year education must be implemented across the country.*

B The necessary legal and administrative arrangements shall be made so that Koran courses, which children with basic education may attend with parental consent, operate only under the responsibility and control of the MNE.

Article 4 Our national education institutions charged with raising enlightened clergy loyal to the republican regime and to Ataturk's principles and reforms must conform to the essence of the Unification of Education law (quoted from Aydagul, 2002:57-58).

The expansion of compulsory education to eight years was a part of the secular concerns of the military, because this would enable the closing of junior secondary imam-hatip schools as well as Koran courses. The military saw Imam-hatip schools as a threat to the secular system since officers assumed that graduates of these schools acquired a more religious outlook than those of secular schools. Moreover, imam-hatip schools were associated with the Welfare Party, and the military believed that graduates of these schools were the main supporters of the Welfare Party. Hence, by closing the first level of these schools, it would be possible to curtail the power of Islamic movements in society as well as to educate future generations to have a more secular outlook.

However, the government resigned in June, 1997 because of the public pressure on the coalition parties, both from their supporters not to implement the recommendations given by the military and their opponents to act or to resign (Aydagul, 2002). The other two parties, the Motherland Party and the Democratic Left Party, then, established a minority coalition government supported by the Republican Peoples Party, and started the legislation process to expand the compulsory education to eight years based on the recommendations of the military.

During the legislative process of the law, there were heated debates that lasted two days in the assembly. The main argument of the opponents of the law was to keep the junior secondary imam-hatip schools open by changing the compulsory education requirement to a 5+3 structure. Eventually, in August 1997, the new government passed Law 4306 that made compulsory education five years and continuous.

Theoretical Framework

The main goal of this study is to consider how useful general theories of educational change are for understanding educational reform in Turkey in 1997. The point is not to test these theories but to see how the specifics of the Turkish case “fit” within these perspectives. I will consider two broad categories of theoretical approaches to education and educational reform: national-level and world-system level of explanations.

National-Level Explanations

According to national-level explanations, educational system and educational reform are shaped by social, cultural and political dynamics within a society. Paulston (in Ginsburg et al., 1990) makes a further distinction between functionalist and conflict paradigms within national-level explanations. According to the functionalist paradigm, educational reform is a response to the situation in which the needs of modern, industrialized, and urbanized society are not being fulfilled by the existing educational organization (e.g., Trow, 1961; Hurn, 1985; Parsons, 1959). Within the conflict paradigm, on the other hand, educational reform is seen to be a part of ongoing struggles between groups, whose interests are fundamentally in conflict. In other words, educational institutions are seen as mechanisms which various social groups use as a way of winning or maintaining privilege that might be social, cultural or political. The structure and process of a nation's educational institution, then, reflects the outcome of group struggle.

Conflict approaches often draw on Marxist perspectives (e.g. Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Shapiro, 1985; Apple, 1982), and explain educational reforms with reference to

class relations under the capitalist mode of production. In other conflict theories, drawing on the Weberian tradition, conflicting interests are not necessarily economic and class-based, but also cultural and political (e.g., Archer, 1976; Collins, 1979). I will frame my arguments in the conflict paradigm in order to investigate Turkish educational reform in 1997.

Drawing on cultural conflicts in educational systems, Collins (1979) argues, “what is learned in school has much more to do with conventional standards of sociability and propriety than with instrumental and cognitive skills” (p.19). In other words, in Collins’ view, schooling prioritizes the acquisition of certain cultural characteristics over that of technical skills. Accordingly, in contemporary society there are higher positions monopolized by a group of elite, who got their education in prestigious and elite schools and were socialized into certain cultural values. He points out the existence of a cultural consciousness rather than of class consciousness within these superior status groups (p.71). This cultural consciousness among the higher cultural elites leads to the exclusion of others, even though the latter have the necessary skills and ambitions. In other words, they act as gatekeepers in the distribution of status through the cultural market.

Similarly, Archer (1979) argues that education is shaped by the goals pursued by those who control it. Accordingly, educational change occurs because those who have the power to modify education’s previous structural form, the definition of instruction, and its relationship to society, pursue new goals. She argues that with respect to education macro sociology should analyze two things and the relationship between them: On the one hand, the complex kinds of social interaction which result in particular forms of education; and on the other hand, complex types of social and educational structures

which shape the context in which interaction and change occur. Hence, Archer attempts to account for how social interactions produced specific kinds of state educational systems in different countries and how subsequent interaction achieves further change within these contexts. For example, depending on the strategies that “assertive groups” used, two main forms of educational systems emerged: decentralized and centralized education systems that exert dissimilar influences upon education.

Archer (1979) agrees with the world-level explanation of education (discussed below) in that there is a worldwide pattern for the transformation of educational systems. In this general pattern, it is possible to see the transformation of a system where education is firmly linked to the single part of the social structure with which the dominant group is associated, into multiple integration and state systems, where education is linked to the central decision-making agency of a society and to the other parts of the social structure. This transformation occurred when various groups, which Archer calls assertive groups, challenged the domination of the elite group.

The Nigerian education system illustrates the argument that educational institutions are shaped by local social, cultural and political dynamics. The north region of the country was more conservative and dominated by traditional authority. Morgan and Armer (1992) suggest that the political strength of northern traditional elites and the absence of strong federal direction of local policy caused the implementation of universal schooling in the north to be greatly influenced by local demand. This demand was represented by two primary preservationist institutions: the Hausa-Fulani extended family, and Islamic clerics (mallams). Hausa-Fulani fathers embraced Western education for their sons since the economic viability of the family was dependent on their progeny

and since 1960, employment opportunities in Nigeria had largely been provided by the government which required modern education. However, they supported western-like education as long as Islamic clerics took a role in secular educational settings. These two local dynamics led to emergence of a dual primary education system: (1) Schools which had courses such as science, math, English as well as Quran courses taught by Islamic clerics, and (2) Islamiya schools where Islamic clerics taught regular classes with a special focus on Islamic and Arabic training.

World-System-Level Explanations

Ginsburg et al. (1990) approach world-system-level explanations of educational reform in a similar way. In this framework, education and educational reform are explained by worldwide dynamics. They make a distinction between functionalist and conflict paradigms within world-level explanations. Within the functionalist paradigm, the focus is on cultural rather than economic factors. As a secular procedure for constructing the individual and the "modern" state, schooling helps meet the functional need for the integration of increasingly differentiated systems. Hence, there is a convergence toward a common structure and set of practices in education (Meyer, 1977). For less developed countries, educational reforms result from borrowing structures and practices from more developed nations. International organizations provide guidance and economic support for international common standards. Briefly, schools assume the function of creating citizens in response to the world cultural system.

Contrary to the functionalist paradigm, the conflict paradigm in world-system level explanations views educational reforms as conditioned by the world-system of

capitalist production. Accordingly, educational reforms aim at creating schools that provide the skills and attitudes demanded by foreign capital.

I will frame my arguments in terms of a variant of the functionalist paradigm, the institutionalist perspective, because it has considerable empirical support and has come to dominate discussion of world-system impacts on education.

In order to understand the world-system level explanation, one needs to trace the origin of mass education. Ramirez and Boli (1987) suggest that the origin of the compulsory mass education is found in nineteenth century Europe. During that time European countries, including Prussia, Austria and Sweden, attempted to establish mass educational systems as a method for national mobilization in a period marked by crucial transformations such as the expansion of the exchange economy, the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, and the institutionalization of the nation-state and the inter-state systems. Ramirez and Boli (1987) contend that European educational systems were conducive to the development of the Western European model of national society. They refer to this model as "the set of institutionalized definitions of reality that operated as a symbolic universe assigning meaning and legitimacy to some entities, organizational forms, and courses of action while making others unintelligible and unsupportable" (p.3).

As this model of the nation-state expanded, new nation-states adopted the model of state-sponsored mass education that continuously indicated the authenticity of their nation-building projects within the established system of nation-states. In other words, as Meyer (1977) argues, education assumed the role of legitimizing the structure of modern national society. Ramirez and Boli (1987) suggest that worldwide institutionalization of state educational systems is demonstrated by the fact that the ideological acceptance of

particular goals for mass education, the adoption of compulsory school laws, constitutional provisions for mass education, and formation of national educational ministries and bureaus exist in almost all countries.

This account of the origins of mass education represents the institutionalist approach to education. According to the institutionalist perspective, education validates both elites and citizens (Meyer, 1977). The fact that the modern world is dominated the mass education that is closely linked to the nation-state and the notion of universal citizenship indicates this feature of education. Mass education, Meyer argues, has assumptions about common culture of the society, and expands the social meaning of citizenship, personhood, and individuality, all of which are modern ideals. Accordingly, mass education (1) creates the assumption of a national language or languages and defines universal literacy; (2) reifies a given national history; (3) constructs a common civil order like common heroes, common cultural and political order with shared cultural symbols; (4) validates the existence of a common natural reality through science, and a common logical structure through mathematics, thereby creating a link between the national society and world society; and (5) constructs broad definitions of citizenship and human rights as part of the modern world view (Meyer, 1977).

Furthermore, as compulsory mass education became crucial to nation-state formation, it was institutionalized in similar ways across societies. In this process, as Chabbot and Ramirez (2000) point out, the measures of development changed from just national economic growth to include individual welfare and human rights as well. This shift also changed the locus of responsibility from national to global agents. All these transformations are articulated by the development professionals in international

organizations and diffused by activities of these organizations such as international conferences on education. Chabbot and Ramirez (2000) define the result of this process as a "loose coupling between policies and practices out of sync with local realities" (183). This process, in turn, leads to a situation in which education is not necessarily causally related to societal development but symbolizes a common commitment to modernity (McEneaney and Meyer, 2000).

In other words, the institutionalist perspective focuses on the standardization of educational systems across societies rather than explaining the variation across and within societies (McEneaney and Meyer, 2000). First, it emphasizes the fact that modern educational systems organize people's lives around the learning of a common standardized broad culture; it does not reject the fact that educational systems allocate status, but that they first create a common basis of knowledge and culture. Second, it states that this is achieved through universal models of society rather than through the particularities of local or even national social and power systems.

Within this perspective, education is an abstracted cultural model of modernity rather than a product of socioeconomic modernity. Hence, the educational curriculum is seen neither as a consequence of the functionalist requirements of society (i.e., especially related to economic development), nor a reflection of existing power relations in society (i.e., education serves the interests of particular political or economic elites). As McEneaney and Meyer (2000) suggest, immediate interests, functional requirements, economic development, local structures of power and interest cannot determine the nature of the educational system. For world educational expansion has already transcended the

national indicators of political, social and economic development (Meyer et al., 1991).

In other words, educational expansion has been a worldwide process.

The increasing standardization of primary school curricula across the world is a good indicator of this process. For example, Meyer et al. (1991) analyzed the curricular timetables of over sixty countries. They found that all national curricula have instruction in core subjects such as mathematics, science, social and natural sciences, and that there is a great similarity in the amount of time devoted to these subjects. They also found relatively a few relationships between the socioeconomic development of the country and the content of the curriculum.

It has often been assumed that secondary education curricula are shaped by national educational philosophies, since secondary education is more oriented toward the training and privileging of elites, and cultivating the aristocratic tastes and manners of the upper strata. However, in support of the institutionalist perspective, Kamens et al. (1996) found that there is an increasing dominance of two main forms of secondary education across nations: comprehensive education which consists of different subjects and specialization, and vocational education that puts more emphasis on specialized technical and cultural subjects. Hence, they argue, secondary education, too, is a "highly institutionalized world construction, with its national character and development unquestionably reflecting world-level forces" (p.118).

In this paper, I will frame my arguments in terms of the national-level conflict perspective, and the world-system-level functionalist perspective in order to investigate Turkish educational reform in 1997. With respect to the national-level conflict paradigm,

my main focus will be on cultural and political struggles over educational reform rather than economic ones. At the world-system level I will focus on cultural matters in what has come to be called the institutionalist perspective. To summarize these two approaches, the conflict perspective suggests the likelihood of cross-national variation in school systems because of the variation in internal "alignments" of power. Institutional world-system perspective, on the other hand, suggests the expansion of a basic common pattern throughout the world through the impact of "modern" international culture and its agents, as well as that of nation-builders' efforts to legitimate the state by appeals to the "modern" nation-state model.

Methodology

My analysis has two parts. In the first part, I analyzed the historical and political context of Turkey to understand why imam-hatip schools were central to the political and cultural conflicts that took place before, during and after the discussion of the educational law. This analysis involves the following: findings of scholarly research on imam-hatip schools and their students, views of different social observers, including journalists, social scientists, NGO and labor union representatives and politicians, about the imam-hatip schools and their students, and historical data from secondary sources.

In the second part, to understand the dynamics of the political struggles underlying the passage of the 1997 reform, I analyze the debates that took place during the legislation process of Law 4306 in the Turkish Grand National Assembly. During these debates, representatives from various political parties, both those that supported and

those that opposed to the law, gave a speech about their stance as well as that of their parties. These debates lasted for two days, at the end of which the bill was passed and compulsory education was increased to eight years. The website of Turkish Grand National Assembly (<http://www.tbmm.gov.tr>) has transcribed form of the debates, which is in Turkish and is 900 pages in length. After reading all these speeches, I chose those that reflected common arguments for and against the legislation. I have translated key passages into English and reprinted them in this paper.

During that time there were seven political parties. Their political ideologies² were as the following:

	Political Parties	Supported the Reform?	Ideological Tendency
In power	LDP (Leftist Democratic Party)	Yes	Left wing-Very secular
	MP (Motherland Party)	Yes	Right wing-Moderately secular
	DTP (Democrat Turkey Party)	Yes	Right wing-Moderately Secular
Outside support of the government	RPP (Republican People Party)	Yes	Left wing-Very secular
Opposition	WP (Welfare Party)	No	Right wing-Religiously oriented
	TPP (True Path Party)	No	Right wing-Moderately secular
	BUP (Big Union Party)	No	Right wing-Religiously oriented-Very nationalistic

² Author's labels.

The goal of my analysis of the assembly speeches is to see what kinds of rhetoric that the representatives, both opponents and proponents, used in their speeches during the legislation of the Law 4306. At the end of my analysis, I came up with a number of themes that were most frequently raised by the representatives.

Findings

Status Politics:

One of the most important mechanisms for Westernization/Modernization in Turkey has been education. Beginning in the last century of Ottoman Empire, the aim was to reform the educational system in such a way that it would assume a role in the formation of Turkish national identity. With the establishment of the Republic, secularism became the constitutive element of Turkish identity, replacing Islam, which had played the same role until the twentieth century. Mardin (2004) suggests that secularism in Turkey stemmed from the need to find a principal means for creating social cohesion in Turkish society and raising social consciousness among the Turkish people. Education in this process assumed a very important role. As Aksit and Coskun (2004) suggest, the secular nation-builders believed that education was the institution that would help construct a nation that consisted of citizens united by language and culture, and by secular ideals.

Following the foundation of the Turkish Republic on October 29, 1923, one of the most crucial developments was the passage of the Unification of Education Law on March 3, 1924. By this law, the state acquired monopoly on all levels of education, and

abolished the medreses (religious schools in Ottoman Empire). In other words, this law eliminated the plurality of educational institutions that had existed since 1839. The goal was to establish a unified, secular, and national educational system, which would in turn create Turkish citizens who were loyal to the secular and scientific principles of the modern world –defined as the Western world at that time. As Aksit (cited in Aydagul, 2002) suggested:

The Unification of Education Law was not only a rejection of the traditionalism of the medreses but it also put an end to the pluralism of minority schools, missionary schools and foreign schools thereby asserted a centralist, modernist, national education system under the guidance of rationalism and scientism, to establish a new nation with a new identity, and a unified morality (p.22).

In the following years, especially during the 1930s and the first half of the 1940s, there was an intense effort to strengthen the secular character of the state. For example, in 1937, laicism was introduced into the Constitution to secure the secular basis of the state. However, starting in the late 1940s, religious worldviews with a considerable social, cultural and political power emerged in Turkish society. The coexistence of secular and religious worldviews created a polarized social and political structure in society: on the one hand, institutions and groups that resisted modern ideals and were organized around religious ones; and on the other hand, institutions that were organized around secular ideals. Furthermore, religious ideology became increasingly powerful in political realm. It found its political expression in the Democrat Party, which was established in 1946, and continuously referred to the government's strict secular policies in its political campaigns. When the Democrat Party came to the power, it opened imam-hatip schools in 1951.

These schools were opened as high schools, with the goal of educating the mosque prayer leaders and preachers under the supervision of the Ministry of National Education. They were officially defined as vocational schools. Nearly half of their curriculum consisted of religious courses. However, even though they were founded with a limited end, their expansion has been spectacular since the 1950s. Table.1 shows their expansion between the years of 1992 and 1997, as well as their contraction, beginning in 1998, following the expansion of compulsory education in 1997.

Table.1 Quantitative Changes in Imam-Hatip Schools (1992-2004)

Year	# of the Schools	# of the Students
1992	390	346174
1993	390	392078
1994	391	436528
1995	394	473301
1996	434	495580
1997	601	511502
1998	605	396677
1999	612	192786
2000	504	134224
2001	500	91620
2002	458	71583
2003	450	64534
2004	452	84898

Source: General Directorate of Religious Education (in Cakir, Bozan, and Talu, 2004)

In terms of the goal of this paper, a question arises: Why did the demand for imam-hatip schools increase to such an extent? According to the research done by Aksit (1993), imam-hatip school students chose to go to these schools because they thought that neither western material sciences nor eastern spiritual studies led to development and happiness. According to other research (Turkmen, 1998), 80 % of the imam-hatip school students reported that they were happy going to these schools because they were trained

in both religion and the secular sciences. Similarly, in other research (Cebeci, 1989), 71 % of the imam-hatip school students reported that they came to the imam-hatip school to become more competent in religious knowledge. In short, imam-hatip schools served the need of the young to learn about religion as well as secular subjects.

Over time, however, imam-hatip graduates began to choose career paths other than religion despite the fact that the goal of these schools was limited to educating mosque prayer leaders and preachers. In order to investigate the developments in Turkish education in general, TUSIAD (The Foundation of Turkish Businessmen) had prepared a report. Even though this report is not directly related to the expansion of compulsory education in 1997, data and comments regarding the imam-hatip schools deserve to be considered in terms of indicating the "secular" view about these schools. In this report, Baloglu (1990) gave a detailed account of the first choice of the imam-hatip school students in university entrance exam. Accordingly, for example, in 1988, the faculty of law was the first choice of almost 32 % of imam-hatip graduates, while 18 % chose public management, 9 % theology, 8 % medicine, 7 % engineering, and 5% international relations (Baloglu, 1990). Although not all of the students succeeded in going these departments, these numbers are indicative of their desire to pursue vocations other than those related to theology.

In the same report, there was an assessment about the expansion of imam-hatip schools since 1950s:

To sum up, imam hatip schools that were opened with the goal of training religious men required by Turkish society expanded to such an extent that they acquired an excessive capacity beyond their goals... This transformed imam-hatip schools into a general educational institution thereby constituting a second general channel of education...The divide

between these two channels of education is becoming larger. In these two channels, two different generations are being raised whose cultural identity, national self, values, norms, life style, worldview, or in short, educational profiles are totally different. This is against the Unification of Education Law. These developments have a negative impact on the structural consistency of education with democracy. Hence, imam-hatip schools should be arranged as vocational schools based on the Unification of Education Law and the Basic Law of National Education, and their numbers should be restricted by the employment of their graduates (in Unsur, 1995:193-194).

These assessments found support from various segments of society having strong secular views about the issue. For example, Ali Sirmen wrote in his column:

....People who graduated from imam-hatip schools, which are completely opposed to the Unification of Education Law, use the tactic of taking positions in the state. One of the most important dangers is that these people take positions in various ministries such as the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The first way to prevent this development is to give a new status to these schools so that they train only religious men (Cumhuriyet, September 22, 1990; in Unsur, 1995:195).

Similarly, Guneri Civaoglu, another journalist, wrote:

The unity of the educational system is breaking down. 150,000 students graduated from imam-hatip schools in 1990 despite the fact that the personnel requirement for religious men was only 9,000. Hence, 10,000 of these students went to college. While only 2,400 of them went to theology departments, the rest went to others such as law, international relations, medicine school, engineering and education (Sabah, September 20, 1990; in Unsur, 1995:195-196).

All these accounts indicate that the secularists' disdain for the expansion of imam-hatip schools goes back to the early 1990s. Their main argument was that students in imam-hatip schools were inculcated with a religious outlook, which would be dangerous for the "modern" secular regime of the state once they took important positions in state or private institutions. That is, since these schools reproduce cultural capital associated with

religion, their graduates could demand to restructure social, cultural and political life around religious ideals, and this would threaten the secular “modern” system. For example, referring to the distinctive outlook that students in imam-hatip schools acquire, a politician said, “Imam-hatip schools are different from other schools in terms of their educational climate. Hence, graduates of these schools see the world from a religious perspective.” Similarly, a journalist from a newspaper with a secular orientation argued:

Regardless of the personal convictions of imam-hatip school students, we can say that in general a new kind of cultural identity is formed. I can summarize this identity, in a short and crude way, as the defense of a faith that shapes all aspects of life (in Cakir et al., 2004).

In other words, the main secular concern was that graduates of these schools would challenge and attempt to reshape the well-established secular nature of the social and political structure of the society. Indeed, Aksit (2004) found that imam-hatip school students differed from those in secular schools with respect to their cultural and ideological outlooks. While the former had conservative and religious attitudes, the latter had more liberal and secular ones. The findings below indicate the difference in attitudes between these students as measured by their view of female issues and newspaper preferences.

Newspapers:

	Religious Schools		Secular Schools		Total (%)
	Female (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)	
Left	-	-	4.5	3.1	1.9
Liberal	-	-	9	6.6	3.9
Centre	4.9	6.3	61.6	52.2	31.3
Magazine	2.2	4	6.2	9.4	5.4
Islamist/ Nationalist	54.3	56.8	5	5.8	30.5
NA	37.8	28.4	10.4	16.6	23.3

Source: Bahattin Aksit and Mustafa Kemal Coskun (2004)

Attitudes Toward Female Issues:

	Religious Schools		Secular Schools		Total (%)
	Female (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)	
Q1	8.4	19.3	94.6	63.9	65.5
Q2	66.2	24.4	78.1	59.9	57.1
Q3	15.6	60.2	9.9	29.8	28.8
Q4	3.1	22.2	2.1	9.9	9.3
Q5	90.7	89.8	9.9	25.4	53.9
Q6	57.8	15.9	82.6	57.1	53.3
Q7	27.6	83	17.4	45.6	43.4

Source: Bahattin Aksit and Mustafa Kemal Coskun (2004)

- Q1: Women should work outside in order to contribute to household income
 Q2: Women can freely share their ideas with other men
 Q3: Women should share their ideas only to their husband
 Q4: It is unnecessary for women to have a job
 Q5: Women should wear a headscarf when they go outside or they are with others
 Q6: Women can travel alone
 Q7: A woman's place is in the home

Sarpkaya (1998) also points out these differences. In his research, students rated their first and second most popular world leaders. Results were revealing in terms of the worldviews of the students. While 65% of the imam-hatip students indicated Prophet Mohammed as their most popular leader, 76% of the secular school students indicated Ataturk. The second most popular leader is also illuminating in terms of the difference

between these two groups of students. While imam-hatip students chose religious leaders such as Fatih –theOttoman Emperor, Ebubekir, and Omer –Islamic Caliphs- students chose more secular leaders such as Nelson Mandela and Turgut Ozal.

Table.2

Schools	First	#	%	Second	#	%
	Prophet Mohammed	65	66.2	Fatih	31	29.8
	Ataturk	10	9.6	Turgut Ozal	12	11.5
Imam-Hatip Schools	Turgut Ozal	6	5.8	Hz.Omer	12	11.5
	N.Erbakan	5	5.8	Ataturk	7	6.7
	A.Turkes	5	4.8	Hz.Ebubekir	5	4.8
	Others	13	7.8	Others	37	35.7
	Total	104	100		104	100
	Ataturk	76	77.6	No Answer	23	23.5
	Prophet Mohammed	12	12.2	Fatih	13	13.3
	Ozal	3	3.1	Nelson Mandela	9	9.2
Secular Schools	Fatih	2	2	Turgut Ozal	8	8.2
	Other	5	5.1	Ataturk	4	4.1
				Other	41	41.7
	Total	98	100		98	100

Source: Sarpkaya, 1998.

Another point that deserves attention is that imam-hatip schools provided their students with a particular pattern of mobility. For example, Ozdalga and Aksit (in Aydagul, 2002) suggest that one of the driving forces behind the expansion of imam-hatip schools was that these schools provided families with opportunities for upward

mobility. Supporting these arguments, Aksit (1993) found that imam-hatip schools were very popular among rural farmers and farm workers. The fathers of imam-hatip students were not in a high or even a middle position in the occupational hierarchy; rather they had mostly lower-class occupations. In other words, these families wanted their children to climb the occupational ladder through these schools.

These arguments find support from the recent research as well. As the tables indicate below, the majority of the imam-hatip school students come from families with lower levels of education. The high percentage of mothers and fathers with only primary education particularly supports the argument that imam-hatip schools provide upward mobility for families with low levels of education. The high number of illiterate parents, especially mothers, is also revealing in terms of the socio-economic background of imam-hatip schools students.

Table.3

Father's education	Number	Percentage	Mother's Education	Number	Percentage
Illiterate	none	none	Illiterate	76	13.48
Literate	25	4.48	Literate	45	7.98
Primary Education	292	52.42	Primary Education	374	66.31
Secondary Education	77	13.82	Secondary Education	38	6.74
High School	73	13.1	High School	24	4.26
College Education	84	15.08	College Education	6	1.06
Graduate education	6	1.1	Graduate education	1	0.17
Total # of the Students	557	100	Total # of the Students	564	100

Source: Unlu, 1999.

Table.4

Father's Education	Number	Percentage	Mother's Education	Number	Percentag
Illiterate	46	9.2	Illiterate	109	21.8
Literate	51	10.2	Literate	64	12.8
Primary Education	273	54.6	Primary Education	299	59.8
Secondary Education Or Dropout	44	8.8	Secondary Education or Dropout	16	3.2
High School or Dropout	44	8.8	High School or Dropout	9	1.8
College Dropout	3	0.6	College Dropout	None	None
College	38	7.6	College	3	0.6
Graduate	1	0.2	Graduate	None	None
Total	500	100	Total	500	100

Source: Turkmen, 1998.

In other words, religious schools were a means to adapt to the system for segments of the masses that were discontented with the “modern” secular policies of the state. These families preferred religious schools because they wanted their children to take positions in the changing social and economic structure of society, but at the same time to remain religiously committed. Regarding the same issue, a social scientist said:

A group of people who lived in a traditional world and gained power in society perceived imam-hatip schools as a sterile environment, where their children will be raised similarly to themselves protecting them from the negative impacts of modernization, but modern at the same time. What they expected from imam-hatip schools was that these schools would raise these children in a different way from secular schools, with a more conservative and local modernity (in Cakir et al., 2004).

Over time, however, the graduates of imam-hatip schools, along with other newly emerging segments of society, created their own cultural, political and economic sphere.

For example, a social scientist said:

Graduates of imam-hatip schools constitute an alternative elite who comes from relatively religious and low-income families of Anatolia and whose political choice finds its expression in the political parties of the National Thought Movement (associated with the Welfare Party). (in Cakir et al., 2004).

Indeed, Ozipek (2004) argues that the military's interference in education results from the struggle between the dominant group that has been economically privileged by the state and culturally secular since the beginning of the Republican period, and the newly emerging social groups that have come to rival this group. Hence, changes in class structure, which also had implications for cultural identities, were projected on imam-hatip schools as places where religious identities, are created. Ozipek (2004) suggests that if religious people had remained working class and not tried to challenge the well-established group of Turkish businessmen, they would not have been perceived as a danger to the secular system. Indeed, the TUSIAD (Association of Turkish Businessmen) was one of the most important supporters of the eight-year continuous education reform. Ozipek (2004) interprets this support as a mechanism for maintaining the status quo through education, rather than as a sign of the businessmen's loyalty to modern values.

Indeed, a new group of businessmen has been emerging since the 1985s. Bugra (2002) suggests that with the decline of the role of the state in the organization and regulation of economic interest representation, and the protection of poor, elderly, disabled, and unemployed people began to fall upon networks of solidarity on the basis of religion, and kinship. Thus, the role of religion increasingly gained salience. Islamic politics responded to this process by referring to "Islamic ways of going about the daily business of life" (quoted from Bugra, 2002). In other words, religious identity entered economic life. Reciprocity networks became more important for upwardly mobile

Muslim businessmen, who, unlike the private enterprises established earlier with the support of the state, had to rely on these networks. This process created a new class of Muslim businessmen that started challenging the existing one that was more “modern” and closer to the state’s ideology.

In short, secularists were concerned that imam-hatip schools promoted social fragmentation, meaning a challenge to their own ideals that were enshrined in the Constitution. Drawing on the contrasts between imam-hatip students and those of secular schools, an NGO representative said:

Imam-hatip schools are alternatives to secular education. Their goal is to create a religious world with its own language, literature and everything. Through these schools, the children of our nation are exposed to two different educations. These children will not understand each other in the future (in Cakir et al., 2004).

In other words, imam-hatip schools raised generations which would challenge “modern” ideals. For example, a journalist argued, “Students of the imam-hatip schools represent anti-modernity.” However, secularists perpetuated the religious identity of which they are critical by defining the graduates of imam-hatip schools as “strangers” to the “modern” secular Turkish national identity. Related to this issue, a journalist argued:

Any school that becomes a subject of a very heated debate leads to the formation of a tough identity. Imam-hatip school students have an identity that is both activist and reactionary. They are activist because students in these schools construct a more religious identity, but at the same time reactionary because they become the “other” as a consequence of ideological debates (in Cakir et al., 2004).

So why did the debates about the expansion of imam-hatip schools reach a peak in 1997? As I mentioned above, in the 1995 national elections, the Welfare Party, which has

come to be seen as an Islamic party, got the majority of the votes. Even though it did not come to the power just after the elections, it did so in 1996 as a part of a coalition government with the True Path Party. Secularists were very skeptical about the actions of this party since it was seen as a threat to the secular “modern” state with its more religious ideology. In their view, the Welfare Party would not continue only as a political movement but would also create its own cultural sphere. Furthermore, the main argument was that the majority of its votes come from graduates of imam-hatip schools who shared the religious ideology of the party. Hence, the expansion of imam-hatip schools was at the center of political and educational debates.

There is no empirical evidence about the voting patterns of the graduates of imam-hatip schools (or their families), but Carkoglu and Toprak (2000) found that people who voted for the Virtue Party (the continuation of Welfare Party closed in 1997) are more likely to define themselves as very religious or moderately religious (Table.5). Thus, the argument that graduates of imam-hatip schools are more likely to vote for Welfare Party might be considered plausible since, as I indicated above, graduates of these schools have more religious outlook. In other words, the fear of the secular elite that these schools mobilized political opposition to its ideals had a realistic foundation.

Table.5. Political Party Preferences and Religiosity

	I am not religious at all	I am not very religious	I am religious	I am pretty religious	I am very religious	NA
MP	2.1	8.68	60.78	23.65	4.49	0.3
RPP	8.19	25.15	47.95	15.2	1.75	1.75
DLP	2.68	11.63	58.39	22.37	3.13	1.79
TPP	1.36	6.82	56.36	27.27	7.73	0.45
FP	0.25	6.6	40.86	36.55	14.21	1.52

Source: Carkoglu and Toprak (2000)

As I mentioned above, even though there were attempts to change compulsory education to eight years in the past, this reform had to wait until 1997 when the military mandated the change. In order to understand this situation, one needs to grasp the relationship between the military and the politics in Turkey. It is important to point out that the military has long been involved in civil and political life in Turkey. Indeed, the Turkish Republic had three military interventions since its foundations: in 1960, 1971 and 1980. Regarding the education, after the 1960 intervention, a new feature was introduced into the educational system; the Kemalist Turkish-Islam synthesis. After the 1980 intervention, this ideology was more emphasized; moreover, the military began to use Islam against the danger of communism in order to solidify national identity (Yilmaz, 2004). Regarding the period after 1980 intervention, Yavuz argues that instead of showing a secular disregard for Islam, they [the army] took several steps to strengthen it (in Shankland, 1999). The leaders of the military coup, ironically depending on Islamic institutions and symbols for legitimization, hoped to create a socially homogenous and less politically active Islamic community. In other words, the army's approach to Islam was pragmatic. They believed that religion could be a good thing if properly handled.

However, in the 1990s, the task of handling religion in such a way that it is not a threat to the secular nature of the state became more difficult, which in turn led to the initiation of a new stance towards religion, reflected in the educational recommendations of 1997.

In its recommendations to the government in 1997, the military included the increase of the compulsory education to eight years. Some politicians attacked these recommendations with the argument that their real goal was to reduce religious education. Accordingly, the main goal behind this educational reform was not to modernize the educational system but to curtail the development of a religious outlook in the population. Furthermore, as I indicate above, politicians invoked the argument that imam-hatip schools provide students with upward mobility, especially those coming from a low socioeconomic status, in order to justify their stance opposing the reform.

Speaking in a very explicit way about this issue, *Karabekmez (WP)* made the following argument:

You prepared this bill because of the fact that graduates of imam-hatip schools are very successful in the university entrance exam. You are trying to close these schools since graduates of these schools become lawyers, doctors, officials and engineers. It is the first time in the world history that a school is closed because of its success. This is the philosophy of the bat that works against enlightenment and science. If imam-hatip schools are successful, why don't you deal with other schools? You are taking Turkey back while it has been improving in terms of democratic rights. You are acting as reactionaries.

Similarly, *Maliki Ejder Arvas (WP)* said:

This bill is prepared with ideological concerns. The goal is to block the way of Anatolian children and to prevent them from going to imam-hatip schools and Koran courses. Moreover, closing the first level of imam-hatip schools prevents smart and successful children of low-income families from acquiring a good education. ...This situation prevents them from finding a job either in the state or other areas. This process, in the future, leads to class segregation.

As it is seen in the last statement, opponents often referred to Anatolian children targeted by this reform: "We should not play with the future of those students but you have another goal in your mind: to remove Anatolian children from the state administration" (*Lutfi Yalman (WP)*). Similarly, *Huseyin Yildiz (WP)* said, "This project is prepared by ... militaristic and parasitic fraction of society that has not given any value to the public for a hundred years with the aim of blocking the way of Anatolian children but you cannot cope with these people."

Modern Values:

My analysis revealed that both opponents and proponents appealed to "modern" cultural values, such as human rights and democracy. However, they manipulated them according their own political and cultural ideology.

Human Rights:

To recall Meyer's argument, one of the functions of mass education is that it constructs broad definitions of citizenship and human rights as a part of the modern worldview. Indeed, educational expansion has often been justified as a "modern" development. Paradoxically, the law's opponents argued that this law that would increase compulsory education to eight years was against human rights, while the law's proponents never justified it in terms of human rights.

For example, referring to the worldwide institutionalization of human rights, *Zeki Ünal (WP)* in his speech said the following: "Regarding education, the 2nd article of

European Human Rights Declaration states, "Participatory states are required to be respectful toward parents' worldview about their children's education." Similarly,

Zülfükar İzol (WP) said:

Freedom of religion and freedom of learning one's language are among the fundamental rights protected by the Constitution. Article 24 suggests that the state, which is responsible for serving its citizens, is supposed to provide its citizens with religious and moral education. The Declaration of Human Rights also considers the freedom of religion to be the fundamental right. Accordingly, it is against democracy and human rights to restrict the right to religious education

More radically, *Ömer Vehbi Hatipoglu (WP)* said:

This law is against human rights and the freedom of religion. You want to deprive this nation of the right to teach and learn one's religion which is one of the fundamental aspects of the freedom of religion; hence, you are committing a crime against the constitution; more correctly, you are committing a crime against humanity.

In addition to the individual speeches given by the representatives, a group of opponents presented a proposal to the assembly that pointed out the characteristics of the bill that were against human rights:

This bill suggests to orient our children (to a vocation) after the age of 16. It is very clear that a person cannot acquire a vocation after this age. This damages industrialization in our country as well as prevents the development of various vocations. More importantly, it is clear that this bill violates the person's right to choose any vocation. However, the 27th article of the Constitution states that everyone has the right to learn, teach, explain, disseminate, and research any field of the art and science. Hence, this bill ... violates human rights and prevents the development of our society...

Additionally, the proposal suggested:

... The Civil Code gives the parents the right to orient their children to any vocation and to endow them with specialization in this vocation. Indeed,

the Civil Code considers invalid any agreement that restricts the right and authority of the parents to do this. This law violates this right of parents.

In this proposal, they also referred to the knowledge provided by developmental psychology in order to justify their argument that the law violated human rights:

... It might lead to personality disorders for the children under the age of eight and those at the age of fifteen to be together in the same school, and to use the same playground and the same restrooms. As a matter of fact, the organization of schools as pre-, primary, secondary and high school results from the characteristics of cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development of human beings ... This law will both disrupt the yearlong experiences in our educational system and violate the personal rights of the children ... Rationality, experience, and law require that those in the first years of their childhood and adulthood are supposed to acquire their education in such a way that they can demonstrate their personal characteristics.

Democracy:

Democracy, as a social good, is one of the themes invoked by both opponents and proponents. Turkey has been a constitutionally democratic state since the establishment of the Republic in 1923, and democracy has been regarded as one of the basic elements of the regime since then. My analysis revealed that in order to justify their arguments, proponents referred to the democratic nature of the reform, while opponents argued that the reform was completely against democratic values.

The main argument of proponents was that the law would give children a chance to choose their vocation in a more free and conscious manner, which would be more democratic. *Refic Aras (MP)*, one of the proponents of the law, suggested:

This new law aims at making it easier for our children to choose consciously any program in higher education that is more appropriate for their talents and skills. With five-year compulsory primary education, it is

impossible to raise our children according to their interests, skills, and talents as well as to prepare them for life and higher education. It is very clear that an 11-year-old primary school graduate cannot have information about different vocations. What happens then is that children decide on their schools with the guidance of their parents or relatives. Indeed, with the new law the child will become more capable of making a choice about a vocation based on the knowledge he/she acquired by the age of 14... This law makes it possible to develop a system that teaches children how to learn, which in turn would allow our children to acquire a vocation appropriate for them and to enmesh them in a democratic culture.

Another argument invoked by the proponents regarding the democratic nature of the law is that it would allow the development of the skills required by the democratic culture. For example, *Hikmet Ulugbay, Minister of National Education*, said:

The child should be at the center of the education between the ages of six and fourteen, and the education in this period should have the following goals: Developing the skills of the child, teaching the methods of learning, teaching the use of knowledge and modern technology, making the child aware of his/her skills about life, teaching children to act together with others in society, and having him/her acquire democratic culture.

Similarly, *Osman Kilic (DLP)* made the following argument:

With this bill, we aim at raising generations that are respectful for and guardians of the main principles of the regime, as defined in the Constitution. With this bill, we would like to raise generations who will internalize democracy as an alternative to obsolete, totalitarian and fundamentalist regimes. What about you (referring to opponents)? Do you want to raise generations who are against the regime or generation who will be guardians of it?

To counter these appeals, opponents focused on the argument that this reform was very likely to raise one-dimensional individuals, which is not democratic. To justify their arguments, they referred to undemocratic regimes. For example, *Ömer Vehbi Hatipoglu (WP)* said:

Nobody has the right to insult this nation by talking about outdated, illogical, and undemocratic goals. What does it mean to say one-dimensional individuals? Are you manufacturing planks in a lumber mill? What is claimed here might be regarded as a dream of dictators only. Please raise your head and see what is around you! It has been 50 years since Fascist dream to raise one-dimensional individuals collapsed; Communism has not survived either. You know, they were also going to raise one-dimensional individuals.

Similarly, *Nevzat Ercan (TPP)* suggested:

This bill is based on the principle of raising one-dimensional individuals against the principles of pluralism, diversity, and variation, which are the fundamentals of democracy. The goal is to raise one-dimensional individuals. This system is against democracy in its origin, and incompatible with the needs of the time.

Another representative, *Zeki Ertugay (TPP)* argued:

... This bill has the goal of raising one-dimensional individuals, which is the goal of a totalitarian and coercive understanding. The expression 'continuous' is used as a tool of camouflage by those who attempt to take away the right to education, and refers to imposition.

By the same token, *Ayvaz Gokdemir (TPP)*, suggested:

This law is against democracy. The aims of national education are supposed to be realized not only in official and private educational institutions but also at home, in the workplace, and everywhere in all circumstances. But this bill claims, 'I will put the children at a desk and raise them however I want.'

As I mentioned above, even though the National Educational Council recommended the increase of compulsory education to eight years in 1996, the actual reform process was initiated upon the recommendation of the National Security Council in 1997. Opponents referred to this feature of the bill, which they considered undemocratic.

For example, *Ayvaz Gokdemir (TPP)* directly referred to this feature of the bill in

his speech:

We are all the products of democracy. I would like any of you to claim that in the most civilized countries of the world, generals talk over and decide on pedagogical and educational issues and that bills on education are prepared upon the recommendations of the president of the general staff. Can a person who believes in democracy claim that?

Similarly, *Hayrettin Dilekcan (WP)* said.

In the constitution, it is stated that the national will has the absolute superiority, that sovereignty belongs to the Turkish Nation, that only Turkish Grand National Assembly and the representatives have the authority to use this sovereignty, and that other institutions cannot use this authority against the national will and sovereignty.

The other arguments that the opponents used regarding the undemocratic nature of the reform referred to the exclusion of the public from the reform process, and public discontent with it:

Erdem (WP) argued:

It is not democratic. What is the fundamental in democracy is the public. Once the public is excluded, system is no longer called democracy but something else. There is no place for imposition in a democracy; what is fundamental is the public will. However, the public is ignored with this bill, and the public was not given a chance to express its opinion. Those who wanted to do so were suppressed; all the ways for democratic expressions were closed; and the public was put under pressure.

Related to that, *Hayrettin Dilekcan (WP)* referred to the government's prevention of public demonstrations:

Based on this law, it is not possible to say that this government is democratic and that it defends equality, social justice, social rights, and the law. We understood that this government is not supportive of social justice and that it acts against the Constitution when it prohibited any kind of demonstration against this bill, even though these demonstrations were not against the Law of Assembly and Demonstrations. Hence, I believe that

members of the Assembly will do what is necessary in order to prevent the passage of this law that is against the Constitution.

In a more extensive way, *Saffet Arikian Beduk (TPP)* made the following argument:

The Turkish Republic is a democratic, secular, and *social justice* state. Democracy is a system of government that the Turkish nation can never abandon. A situation in which democracy applies to some matters but not others cannot be seen in any country.... Today what is struggled for is democracy. During this struggle, our nation is focused on the necessity for democracy in National Education. Since democracy is the regime of compromise and giving priority to democracy in dealing with all issues is required, it is impossible to maintain an innovation that the public does not want and accept upon a compromise. If innovations are realized as impositions and coercions, they will inevitably fail.

References to Other "Modern" Systems:

As Meyer (1977) argues, local educational developments must be understood in relation to the development of the modern system of nation-states which emerged among Western countries during the nineteenth century. Within this system, education assumed the role of legitimizing the structure of modern national society. While the state had to justify its legitimacy through creating national educational systems, education became a universal sign of membership of the nation-state system. In other words, educational developments can be understood in the context of evolving models in the "modern" world society. Therefore, it is important to investigate how this issue came to the picture in the debates with the goal of supporting or criticizing the law. To argue their case, both opponents and proponents referred to other countries, especially to European countries and the US that were assumed to be the prototypes of the "modern" system.

I will first analyze the arguments made by the proponents of the law. These arguments focused on the length of the compulsory education in foreign countries. For example, *Refik Aras (MP)* argued, “in EU countries, primary education lasts nine years on average.... With the existing five-year primary education, it is impossible to raise our children according to the changing and developing world conditions in a modern and democratic system.”

Referring to the report prepared by the OECD in 1996, *Ziya Aktaş (DLP)* suggested:

As examined carefully, it might be seen that the suggested eight-year continuous education model is not incompatible with the models in these countries (referring to OECD countries); furthermore, it is exactly the same as some of these models while one year more or less than the others. Our model exists in the following countries: Australia, some parts of Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Spain, Switzerland, Hungary, Norway, Poland, and Portugal. And as the other speakers stated, in other countries, compulsory education lasts more than 8 years.

Similarly, *Necati Albay (DLP)* said, “.... when you look at the developed countries, you can see that these countries have nine, ten, eleven or twelve years of compulsory education; hence, our government presented the TGNA with a new law that will increase compulsory education to eight years.”

In addition to referring to developed countries, proponents compared Turkish compulsory education with that of the undeveloped countries in order to indicate the importance of this reform for the development of Turkey. For example, *Necati Albay (DLP)* in his speech argued, “Although Turkey developed in many aspects ..., it could

not get rid of the five-year compulsory education system that exists in countries with the lowest level of development, such as Benin and Angola.”

Proponents also compared the internal structure of Turkish education with that of other countries. Accordingly, they noted that in other countries compulsory education was continuous and did not have a vocational orientation meaning that students were not oriented to separate tracks for vocational education. For example, *Algan Hacaloglu (RPP)* said:

European countries as well have primary education that lasts at least six years but none of these countries has vocational training during primary education. No country has apprenticeship training in primary education; please do not deceive our children. If our children want to have vocational or religious education after primary school, they will be oriented to vocational education at the end of 8 years. If they want, they will be able to go to any kind of vocational school as well as to imam-hatip schools...Moreover, it is claimed that in developed countries compulsory education is discontinuous. It is true that the internal organization of compulsory education varies by country. *In countries such as Sweden, Denmark, Spain, USA, Canada, and Russia, compulsory education is organized in a similar way.* In other countries such as France, Germany, England, Netherlands, and Japan, compulsory education is organized in the following way: 5+4, 4+6, 6+5, 6+3, and 6+3, respectively.

Referring to the similar points, *Osman Kilic (DLP)* made the following argument:

Some of our politicians overlook a very important point: Even in countries that have discontinuous compulsory education, children are not oriented to a vocation in the second level. Rather, the second level of compulsory education is a continuation of the first level, but it is organized in such a way that students with different achievement and intelligence attend different programs. In other words, children do not start vocational education at the age of twelve. In the first years of the second phase, children attend different educational programs according to their success and intelligence, whereas in the last years of this phase they are distinguished according to their skills and interests.

Making a comparison with undeveloped countries, *Birgen Keles (RPP)* referred to

the continuous structure of the educational systems in developed countries:

In some of these countries, compulsory education is continuous, while it is discontinuous in the others; however, the common feature of these two different systems is that vocational education does not start before the age of fourteen. Moreover, contrary to what is claimed by some of our friends, among the countries that have continuous compulsory education there are not only undeveloped countries, but also developed countries, such as Sweden, Norway, Finland, Spain, and Portugal.

Again related to the internal structure of educational systems of other countries,

Ziya Aktaş (DLP) referred to curriculum of OECD countries:

Again in another study conducted by OECD, time allotments for the courses are calculated: 17 % for reading-writing, 13 % for mathematics, 11 % for science, 13 % for social sciences and so on. Please pay attention to the fact that religion courses make only 3 % of the overall time. In our schools, excluding the imam-hatip schools, the time allotted to religion courses is 7 %. You can find all these facts in this report (referring to OECD report).

Opponents, too, referred to other countries while making their arguments. *Nevzat*

Ercan (TPP) made an extensive argument:

Continuous education is not a pedagogical concept; it does not exist in education literature. Indeed, educational issues in the world are not debated as continuous vs. discontinuous. (Referring to Turkey) The concept of continuous is understood in such a way that it does not include vocational orientation and enforces a unified program... Indeed, in the EU and other developed countries such as the US, Canada, Japan, Korea, and Australia, compulsory education varies between eight and twelve years but it is carried out in such a way that students are oriented to a vocation during this time and they can choose among a variety of programs. Thus, compulsory education guarantees the development of skills and preparation for a vocation besides providing primary education. In the 168 of the countries of the world, compulsory education is carried out in a discontinuous way where children are oriented to a vocation. Developed countries have 4, 5 or 6 years of primary education. After the primary education, students are oriented to a vocational education according to their skills and interests and complete the rest of the compulsory education in those schools. In our country the length of the compulsory education is confused with that of the primary education. However, primary education

is a part of compulsory education. To carry out compulsory education as if it were the same as the primary education is to detain the students in vain for eight years.

Similarly, *Mehmet Altan Karapaşaoğlu (WP)* argued, "Education is discontinuous in the EU, which we are trying to be a part of, as well as in the USA, which holds world dominance. We also see that in the other developed countries of the world, education is discontinuous."

Referring to the ways in which educational reforms are carried out, *Mustafa Bas (WP)* made the following argument:

The expansion of compulsory education in the West does not mean making additions to existing school structure. What is more important is the reorganization of the educational programs according to the needs of the developing social, technical and economic circumstances. However, we are not extending the length of the education accordingly. The only thing we are trying to do is to extend the existing futile school structure.

Related to that, giving specific examples from developed countries *Yusuf Bacanlı (TPP)* argued:

For example, in Germany, primary education lasts four years followed by 10 and then 3 years of more education; after four years students are oriented to a vocation based on their achievement. In France, primary education lasts five years followed by two separate periods of three years. Similarly, in Italy, primary education consists of five years followed by the first level of high school. In some states of the USA, primary education lasts for six years, followed by four years of high school.

Similar to proponents, opponents referred to undeveloped countries in order to make a better point. For example, *Ömer Vehbi Hatipoglu (WP)* suggested:

This bill is what is rejected by the modern world. Let me read you a list. Among the countries that have continuous compulsory education are the followings: the Dominican Republic, Somalia, Brazil, Kenya, Tanzania, Bolivia, East Yemen, Albania, Bulgaria, and the Czech Republic. Then, what about the countries that have discontinuous education? They include

Belgium, the Netherlands, Finland, USA, Japan, England, France, Italy, and Spain.

By the same token, *Avni Dogan (TPP)* made the following argument:

If you desire eight-year compulsory education, if you are sincere with this, we are ready to give you any support. Please abandon the sticky word 'continuous,' that suggests iron curtain countries, Africa, and primitiveness. Please give up the Jacobinism of the 1940s. Let us look at the modern world and the West towards which we cannot hide our admiration; let us take Europe as a model; let us take democratic standards, understanding of secularism and democracy, diversity of structure and the educational systems of European countries as a model.

M. Necati Çetinkaya (TPP) made another related argument:

What is the system that you are trying to adopt? It is the system of countries such as Kenya, Mozambique, Afghanistan and Somali. I was thinking that we are becoming more Western. What is wrong with the modern countries, so that you turned your face to undeveloped Africa?

Both opponents and proponents justified their arguments by giving examples from educational systems in the "modern" world that mostly referred to European countries and the United States. According to the arguments invoked by the proponents, as Turkey to be modern and a member of European Union, it should develop an educational system that is similar to the "developed" world. On the other hand, opponents used the same reasoning to support their stance. Ironically enough, sometimes both sides of the debate referred to educational system of the same country but said different things about it. It is not the aim of this paper to figure out whose argument was correct, but my point is that although it seems that expansion of the mass education in "modern" countries was the common theme, different parties manipulated it according to their own political and cultural ideology. Being "modern" has become a more complicated ideal in Turkey than suggested in the institutional account.

The "Modern" Role of Religion:

Opponents also used the role of religion in the "modern" world to support their arguments. In other words, the importance of religion and religious education was justified by the fact that religion is becoming more prevalent and crucial in the social life of the "modern" developed countries. I argue that in contending that this reform undermines newly emerging modern values, opponents invoked a new understanding of religion and religious freedom that is becoming important even in the countries regarded as "modern" and developed. On the other hand, proponents were completely silent on this issue. It seems that the silence of the proponents on this issue was the result of a tactical consideration. As enthusiastic defenders of secularism, proponents avoid supporting the reform with an argument that alluded to a relationship between religion and the state.

Making an argument about the government's general attitude toward religion, *Cevat Ayhan (WP)* suggested:

The *Economist* says that the materialist secularism of the nineteenth century no longer exists in the West, Europe or America. Today, people compromise on the issues that will bring happiness to the nation whether they are secular or religious. Please try to get rid of your strict ... attitude toward this religion (refers to Islam). If you do not do so, Turkey will break off from the European democratic community.

İsmail Durak Unlu (WP) focused on the new developments about the issue in the United States and said:

In order to show how the way you go contradicts with the world, I would like to mention a new decree prepared by Bill Clinton regarding the freedom of religious expression. According to this decree, in their office,

officials could wear a headscarf, a cubbe (a type of Islamic dress) or a cross; have the Bible or the Koran on their desks; and distribute religious texts to their friends. ...It brings two restrictions to religious expression in the office: Avoidance of any activity that might reduce efficiency, or create an image that the state favors a religion or a sect. The most important point about the decree is that it was prepared with the cooperation of Christian, Jewish and Muslim organizations as well as secular foundations....While these are freedoms provided for religion including Christianity, Judaism and Islam, we cannot compromise on the truth although we know everything very well.

Referring to the expansion of religious orientations in the world as well as in

Turkey, *Musa Uzunkaya (WP)* said:

Please be fair! The world is watching this assembly and we are at the point of making a historical decision; let us not make wrong decisions. Sixty four percent of Turkish people believe the inevitability of the expansion of religious orientations in the 2000s. This number is 58 % in Russia, 41 % in North America, 57 % in Latin America, 52 % in Asian Pacific, and 77 % in Africa and the Middle East. Even in corrupt Russia, the percentage of people who believe in the benefits of religion to society is 58 %.

Relating to the general religious trend in the world to Turkish society, *Yahya Uslu*

(*TPP*) said:

As we all know, there are two values rising in the world: Religious and national values. Hence, our people, too, should claim religious values whatever their origins are. Our people are loyal to these values that are very important for being a nation. It is impossible to put an end to them. They will definitely overcome all the obstacles that you establish.

Opponents sometimes were more specific about the effect of religion and religious institutions on education. For example, *Ismail Kahraman (WP)* said:

England has debated this issue and did the reform in 1988. In England, the percentage of the schools associated with the church is somewhere between 65 % and 76 % while it is 76 %, in Belgium. In France, which is a secular country, 95 % of the high school education is controlled by the church. Why are we afraid of religion? We should not be!

Similarly, *Musa Uzunkaya (WP)* argued:

If you have a concern that people will change their political choice when they have religious education, there is no need for such a concern. For the world is going to the opposite direction. It is impossible to interpret the time and the world in a reverse way. England legislates an educational reform with the aim of preserving national identity, creating religious maturity and raising people with democratic understanding.

However, when necessary, opponents referred to Western countries as bad examples. For example, *Yaşar Canbay (WP)* made the following argument:

The Western world is that of immorality. Having searched for the reason for this, one can see that negligence of religious education plays a very important role. Our material and moral development depends on the fact that we provide religious education without neglecting its importance. Then, does not it harm to future generations to close imam-hatip schools, Koran courses and other kinds of religious education?

Ataturk: Defining the Founder of the "Modern":

The proponents also invoked the principles, ideals and goals established by Ataturk, the founder of the Turkish Republic in 1923. Ataturk was the most important figure in the modernization of Turkish society, since he was the person who systematically set the goals for being a "modern" society, which basically meant being a Westernized country. Even after many years, appeal to his ideals in legitimization of a law reveals of how "modern" ideals were central to this educational reform. Furthermore, it deserves special attention, since domestic understanding of the "modern" system played a very important role in this educational reform.

For example, *HİKMET ULUĞBAY (Minister of National Education)* stated:

National education has three goals: Creating a good citizen, a good person, and a qualified person. These goals are only realized through an education program that has continuity. Through such a program (referring to eight-year compulsory education), it is possible to raise people with free

thought, free understanding and free conscience as Ataturk stated. We will raise children who understand and live their time, who know their main language as well as one foreign language, and who love their country and its flag; in other words, children who are loyal to the fundamental principles of the Turkish Republic.

Referring to the educational reforms in the first years of the Republic, *Algan*

Hacaloglu (RPP) said:

With this bill, we are trying to bring a new dimension to the educational and cultural foundations of Turkey that were established in the first years of Republic. Those who established the secular Republic, struggling with the independence war at the same time, gathered The 1st Educational Congress in 1921, thereby starting the independence war in the education and preparing the basis through which education could be saved from religious, fundamentalist, racist, and radical elements. Today, with the eight-year compulsory education, we obtained the same chance... From Silopi to Edirne, and from Ardahan to Anamur, all of our children will be raised as the guardians of the secularism, Republic, democracy, modernity, and peace. They will be raised as the guardians of Ataturk's reforms and principles.

By the same token, *Refik Aras (MP)* argued, "Education is carried out according to the principles of modern education and science in parallel lines with Ataturk's principles and reforms under the supervision of the state." Justifying the reform as a realization of the goals set by Ataturk, *Hasan Gülay (DLP)* said, "... This bill aims at raising our country to the levels of modern civilization, which was identified as a national duty by Ataturk. This bill aims at making us deserving the democratic and secular Republic founded by Ataturk." Similarly, *Birgen Keles (RPP)* argued, "Everybody who desires for modern life and wants Turkey to be a modern country and everybody who is loyal to Ataturk's principles and reforms should support eight-year compulsory education

Conclusion

Compulsory education was increased to eight years in Turkey in 1997; however, this change was achieved after many political and cultural conflicts. I, therefore, argue that the process of worldwide institutionalization of mass education alone cannot account for the changes in national educational systems. It is not to say that ideal of cultural modernity, as Meyer defines, does not have any value in explaining reorganization of educational systems. However, to have a complete understanding of educational changes, I argue, one has to develop a more complicated understanding of internal social, cultural and political dynamics.

Fuller and Rubinson (1992) point out that technical-functional, class conflict and world institution theories attribute different roles to the state in explaining educational change. According to these theories, state action depends on, respectively, technical change in the economy, the dominance of elite interests, or an implicit drive to conform to the worldwide expectations of how the modern state is supposed to act. However, Fuller and Rubinson (1992) argue that none of these factors dominates the others in shaping the educational systems. They are simultaneously oscillating processes that constrain or enhance the degree of the autonomy of political action.

This is what my analysis regarding Turkish case revealed. Accordingly, universal modern values such as democracy and human rights interacted with local cultural and political context and actors to shape the expansion of compulsory education in Turkey in 1997. The Institutional perspective would account for this educational reform as an

inevitable consequence of worldwide expansion of compulsory education. Indeed, this reform might be interpreted as a Turkey's attempt to become more integrated into the modern world through its national education. For as Meyer (1977) argued, national education legitimizes the structure of a modern national society which is based on national language or languages and a national history as well as constructs broad definitions of citizen and human rights as a part of the modern world view. In other words, in this framework, the expansion of Turkish compulsory education in 1997 was a reassertion of Turkish modernization that might be traced to the nineteenth century.

As opposed to this explanation, conflict perspective would account for the educational reform in 1997 as a product of the tension between the supporters of the secular state and various political and cultural actors with a more religious outlook. The historical role of Turkish military and its relation to civil politics was another local decisive factor in the process. Clearly, in the expansion of compulsory education in Turkey, the particularities of the context, especially the alignment of internal power, were decisive. Ultimately, the status groups with the military on their side prevailed.

Thus, even though the culture of modernity is very decisive in shaping of educational systems, the "modern" system is more complicated than the institutionalist perspective suggests. In Turkey, both opponents and proponents of the reform selectively appealed to modern values for local purposes. While proponents invoked modern rhetoric in justifying secularism, opponents for maintaining religious education did, too. Opponents selectively invoked modern themes such as human rights, cultural pluralism and democracy. These appeals reflected local influences on the manipulation of modern

values. For both opponents and proponents it was impossible to perceive this reform outside the realm of worldwide institutionalization of modern values promoted by the worldwide expansion of education across societies. Their selective use of modern rhetoric, however, indicates the importance of internal political and cultural dynamics in creation of national educational systems.

As a future projection, I suggest that as the religious fundamentalism becomes more significant throughout the world, appeals to particular parts of the "modern" worldview will be used to resist the modern consensus. Thus, the further institutionalization of education may not be free from conflict.

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