

RETHINKING STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY:  
TWO EDUCATIONAL POLICIES  
DURING THE JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT PARTY ERA

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## DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Özlem Tunçel Gürlek, certify that

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## ABSTRACT

### Rethinking State and Civil Society:

#### Two Educational Policies During the Justice and Development Party Era

In the early years of the Justice and Development Party regime, educational policymaking was a collaborative and inclusive process with input from civil society organizations (CSOs). In the following years, the state shifted its approach to selective inclusion and refrained from inclusive policymaking. Thus, the state preferred hasty policymaking, in which a limited number of CSOs were included and government-friendly CSOs were supported. Among the many changes in education policies, the difference between the curriculum reform (2003-2005) and the system change (2012) clearly highlight the changing relationship between the state and educational civil society. Analyzing these two policy periods, this thesis tries to determine how and why the relationship between the state and educational civil society changed. In answering these questions, semi-structured interviews with state officials and CSO representatives were conducted and document research was employed. This research claimed that through formal and informal institutional changes, the state altered the power of existing educational institutions. The democratic reversal of the party led to a change in the relationship between educational civil society and the state. The state's limited capacity in education paved the way for the selective inclusion of CSOs in the policymaking process. Therefore, the state remained open to government-friendly CSOs and built capacity for these organizations to offset its limited capacity.

## ÖZET

### Devlet ve Sivil Toplumu Yeniden Düşünmek:

#### Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi Döneminden İki Eğitim Politikası

Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi rejiminin ilk yıllarındaki eğitim politikalarının yapımı sivil toplum kuruluşlarının (STK) katkılarıyla ortak çalışmaya dayalı ve katılımcı bir süreçti. Devlet, ilerleyen yıllarda politika yapım sürecindeki tutumunu katılımcılıktan seçici katılımcılığa dönüştürdü. Böylece devlet, sınırlı sayıda STK'ların katıldığı ve hükümet yanlısı STK'ların desteklendiği aceleci bir politika yapım tarzı tercih etti. Devlet ve eğitim alanındaki sivil toplum arasında değişen ilişkiyi, eğitimde yapılmış olan birçok politika içerisinden müfredat reformu (2003-2005) ve sistem değişikliği (2012) süreçleri arasındaki fark açıkça vurgulamaktadır. Bu tez bu iki politika sürecini inceleyerek devlet ve eğitim alanındaki sivil toplum arasındaki ilişkinin nasıl ve neden değiştiğini anlamaya çalışmaktadır. Bu sorulara cevap vermek için bürokratlar ve STK temsilcileri ile yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşmeler gerçekleştirildi ve doküman araştırması yapıldı. Bu araştırma devletin var olan eğitim kurumlarının gücünü formal ve informal kurumsal değişikliklerle şekillendirdiğini iddia etmektedir. Partinin demokrasiden uzaklaşması devlet ve eğitim alanındaki sivil toplum örgütleri arasındaki ilişkinin değişmesine neden oldu. Devletin eğitimdeki kapasite eksikliği politika yapım sürecine STK'ların seçici katılımına neden oldu. Böylece devlet yetersiz kapasitesini dengelemek için hükümet yanlısı STK'lara başvurdu ve onlara kapasite alanı oluşturdu.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AÇEV	<i>Anne Çocuk Eğitim Vakfı</i> – Mother Child Education Foundation
ADD	<i>Atatürkçü Düşünce Derneği</i> – Atatürkist Thought Association
AKP	<i>Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi</i> – Justice and Development Party
BEP	Basic Education Project
CSO	Civil Society Organization
ÇYDD	<i>Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği</i> – Association for the Support of Contemporary Living
EARGED	<i>Eğitimi Araştırma ve Geliştirme Dairesi Başkanlığı</i> – Department of Research and Development of Education
ERG	<i>Eğitim Reformu Girişimi</i> – Education Reform Initiative
EU	European Union
FATİH	<i>Fırsatları Arttırma ve Teknolojiyi İyileştirme Hareketi Projesi</i> – Movement to Increase Opportunities and Technology
IPA	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance
KESK	<i>Kamu Emekçileri Sendikaları Konfederasyonu</i> – Confederation of Public Workers' Unions
MGK	<i>Milli Güvenlik Kurulu</i> – National Security Council
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
ÖNDER	<i>İmam Hatipliler Derneği</i> – Imam Oratory Association
ÖSYM	<i>Öğrenci Seçme ve Yerleştirme Merkezi</i> – Center for Measurement, Selection and Placement
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study

SETA	<i>Siyaset, Ekonomi ve Toplum Araştırmaları Vakfı</i> – Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research
TBMM	<i>Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi</i> – The Grand National Assembly of Turkey
TED	<i>Türk Eğitim Derneği</i> – Turkish Education Association
TEGV	<i>Türkiye Eğitim Gönüllüleri Vakfı</i> – The Educational Volunteers Foundation of Turkey
TEPAV	<i>Türkiye Ekonomi Politikaları Araştırma Vakfı</i> – The Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey
TESK	<i>Türkiye Esnaf ve Sanatkarları Konfederasyonu</i> – Turkey Tradesmen and Artisans Confederation
TEV	<i>Türk Eğitim Vakfı</i> – Turkish Educational Foundation
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TÜRGEV	<i>Türkiye Gençlik ve Eğitime Hizmet Vakfı</i> – Turkey Youth and Education Service Foundation
TÜSİAD	<i>Türkiye Sanayici İş Adamları Derneği</i> – Turkish Industry and Business Association
TÜSEV	<i>Türkiye Üçüncü Sektör Vakfı</i> – Third Sector Foundation of Turkey
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WB	World Bank
YÖK	<i>Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu</i> – Council of Higher Education

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

The education policies of the Justice and Development Party [Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi] (AKP) have been a controversial and contested topic in Turkey. The AKP regime claims they have increased the education budget and reduced inequalities in access to education. Still, critics underscore various problems stemming from infrastructural deficiencies and politically-driven controversies that continue to affect different areas of education. Additionally, continuous and countless changes in education aggravate existing problems. Surprisingly, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan admitted that the government has failed in the areas of education and culture at the opening ceremony of the 2017-2018 academic year (Akyol, 2017).

Much attention has been drawn to neoliberal practices, the role of religion, and politicization of educational policies in these contradictory perspectives. In this thesis, I focus on an overlooked area within education: the relationship between the state and civil society organizations (CSOs). While institutions with strong veto powers (e.g., the judiciary and military) challenged the AKP, the ongoing European Union (EU) accession process promised a democratic trajectory in the party's policies in the early years of the regime. The "authoritarian turn" or "democratic reversal" of the regime in recent years is not consistent with the party's initial years and political trajectory. The current regime has undermined the rule of law and sought to consolidate power; few attempts have been made to build consensus and increase the inclusion of different stakeholders into educational policymaking. This

reversal can also be observed in the relationship between the state and educational CSOs.

In this research, I ask how and why the relationship between the state and educational civil society changed during the AKP period 2002-2012. I explore two policy periods to explain this change: the curriculum reform (2004) and the educational system change popularly known as “4+4+4” (2012). I aim to analyze the relationship between the state and educational civil society through two critical policy periods, explaining the content and actors of each. I also aim to contribute to the existing literature both at the theoretical and empirical level by discussing government-friendly CSOs.

While the curriculum reform period witnessed the cooperation of the state and educational civil society in the policymaking process, the hasty policymaking process and selective inclusion of educational civil society were the key features of the 4+4+4 change. With this system change, the AKP regime imposed a substantial change to the education system, with the draft law proposed by AKP deputies. Thus, the policymaking process was conducted in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (the parliament), excluding educational state institutions and non-state actors. When opposition parties demanded the inclusion of CSOs in parliamentary discussions, the result was a one-day meeting with a limited number of organizations. Moreover, over time government-friendly organizations were introduced into the policymaking process along with more liberal or long-standing educational CSOs.

The existing research on both civil society and Turkish civil society are vast. The civil society literature remains convoluted and puzzling, focusing primarily on Western democratic context and providing case-specific theoretical and practical insights, and absence of conclusive definitions of civil society. The modern Turkish

civil society literature is rather a recent research arena. With the end of the 1990s, Turkish civil society started to mushroom. The EU accession process and financial support to CSOs boosted associational life. Literature on civil society and in particular, Turkish civil society does not speak sufficiently to the democratic reversal or hybrid regime research.

The growing body of literature on civil society under authoritarian and hybrid regimes mainly presents case-specific examples of state control, monitoring, and co-optation of civil society. In the Turkish context, the literature is rather limited. There are no studies examining educational civil society. Civil society scholarship on Turkey has largely focused on state control and legitimization. Despite this, I present CSOs as a critical part of educational policies in Turkey. While state control and legitimization have long been issues in Turkish civil society, the literature has ignored the role civil society may continue to play, particularly in education. This thesis aims to contribute to the existing literature on civil society under hybrid regimes by introducing the case of educational civil society in the Turkish context.

Another contribution of this study is the introduction of newly emerged government-friendly CSOs, how they emerged and their impact on educational policies. In the following chapters, I show that these organizations have played a critical role in educational policies by assisting the AKP regime in legitimizing state policies and altering the role of civil society in Turkey. Moreover, their interactions with other CSOs and growth are examined in the analysis chapters. My explanation in the following background chapter (Chapter 3) provides a critical historical account of two substantial changes in Turkish education. Juxtaposing these two policy periods will also provide a significant contribution to existing studies.

## 1.2 Methodology

This is a qualitative research study, in which I employed both semi-structured interviews and document research. One-on-one interviewing is a crucial aspect of this research since the lack of existing data on education and educational civil society created a barrier for me to understand this matter. Although the Ministry of National Education (the Ministry) provides open-source data on education in Turkey, these numbers were not sufficient to make claims regarding educational civil society. Similarly, there is no available data on civil society in Turkey in general, let alone educational civil society. There are research reports and independent studies on civil society (with limited data on educational civil society), but these studies do not provide comprehensive information. Thus, I was not able to obtain statistical or other descriptive information about educational civil society in Turkey. As a result, I relied heavily on interviewers and document research to triangulate data for the study.

### 1.2.1 Semi-structured interviews and sampling

Prior to my in-person interviews, I conducted four unstructured and informal expert interviews in my pilot study. I spoke with faculty members in the educational sciences and a sociologist who had expertise in education to direct me in my research. These people provided insights for my study and were helpful in reaching my interviewees.

Apart from the pilot study, I conducted 15 semi-structured expert interviews in Ankara and Istanbul from April 2018 to December 2018 with representatives of CSOs and state officials from both policy process. The interviews were conducted in Turkish. They lasted an average of one and a half hour each. I also tape-recorded the interviews with the consent of the interviewee. I transcribed these interviews

verbatim and kept the names anonymous for the safety of the interviewees.<sup>1</sup> I decided that semi-structured interviewing was the most suitable method for my question since it is both structured and flexible enough to facilitate robust discovery (Leech, 2002, p. 665). Though the same questions are asked all the interviewees, the questions remain open, and probes are often used to enrich the interview or obtain additional information.<sup>2</sup>

Since I focus on two periods, my non-random sample consisted of people who were active during the meetings for these policy changes. I used non-random sampling because it is the most efficient method to obtain information on a particular policy or political decision since there is a narrow population (Bleich & Pekkanen, 2013, p. 90). In 2004, the Ministry contacted 25 CSOs for their opinions and suggestions on curriculum change. Similarly, it invited 37 CSOs to the “Designing the Future Together” meetings. While only seven CSOs responded to the initial call, 20 joined the meetings of the Ministry and Board of National Education (the Board). In 2012, there were 14 CSOs and two experts invited to the National Education, Culture, Youth and Sports Committee (the standing committee) meeting in parliament. Five of these organizations were present during both periods: Eğitim Reformu Girişimi (ERG), Türk Eğitim Derneği (TED), Türk Eğitim Gönüllüleri Vakfı (TEGV), Türk Eğitim-Sen, and Eğitim-Bir-Sen. These organizations were crucial informants for my interviews as they were able to juxtapose both policymaking processes.

Representatives were contacted in various ways. I e-mailed or telephoned institutions where most of my interviewees’ currently work. I refrained from cold

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix A presents information about the interviews.

<sup>2</sup> Appendix B presents the interview questions.



calling, instead I used referrals from my pilot study to initiate e-mails or telephone conversations. In cases where interviewees could not be reached through conventional methods, I also utilized social media platforms (i.e., Facebook and LinkedIn).

I did not conduct interviews with representatives of every CSO for several reasons. First, these organizations had similar experiences, so an adequate number of people is sufficient to understand the matter in depth. Moreover, complementary document research of meeting reports provides the official organizational perspectives of representatives. Additionally, as is typical in interview-based research, some representatives could not be reached while others did not want to be interviewed regarding this topic.

Reaching these people and institutions was not an easy task. My interview request was rejected by some institutions and individuals for various reasons; potential interviewees indicated they were not interested in an interview, too busy to spare the time, or hesitant to discuss the subject matter. Admittedly, I also benefited significantly from the interviewees' background. Most of the people I met with had experience both in state institutions (e.g., the Ministry, Board, and parliament) and worked for CSOs as well. Their dynamic backgrounds enabled them to reflect on different perspectives.

### 1.2.2 Document research

Another major part of the research relies on document research of various government documents, reports from international/supranational organizations, and newspaper articles to obtain the perspective of different actors. For the 2004 curriculum reform, I examined the 17<sup>th</sup> National Education Council (Council)

meeting reports, EU Commission report, World Bank's (WB) Basic Education Project I and II reports (BEP I and II), and reports of the Ministry and Board's meetings with civil society. For the 2012 system change, I used the 18<sup>th</sup> National Education Council meeting reports, and minutes from the parliamentary standing committee to supplement my understanding and ability to explain the process. For both periods, I utilize necessary news media research to enrich my understanding.

Independent from the interviews, the desktop research aims to elaborate on the official language of the process. Thus, I show how each policy was planned and discussed by combining interviews with document research. While these documents are beneficial in triangulating the research, interviews provide a "thick description" (Geertz, 1973, p. 312) in the sense that they open the door for an in-depth understanding of matters.

On the one hand, it was relatively easy for me to access certain documents. The parliamentary discussions were transcribed and could be found in the online archive. On the other hand, I couldn't find certain state documents through online research. Existing links from the Ministry and Board for these documents were not working or missing. So, I contacted Ministry and Board personnel for the materials that I sought. The people were accommodating and interested in my research. They shared soft-copy materials and sent hard-copy documents.

### 1.2.3 Case selection

This study primarily focuses on two policy periods in education during the AKP period: curriculum reform (2004) and the system change popularly known as "4+4+4" (2012). According to Gerring (2008) studies with small case samples should employ non-random (purposive) sampling (p. 645). This non-random

sampling should provide the representativeness of the case(s) as well as variation in the variables of interests.

To examine the relationship between the state and educational civil society in the AKP period, I conducted archival research of news articles. I also relied on my prior knowledge of the subject. One challenge in finding proper cases for my study was the fact that there were numerous changes to education within the AKP period. However, many of these changes did not include non-state actors in policymaking and were mainly to the exam system, including alterations to the content and conduct of national exams. I therefore eliminated the exam changes from my case pool.

Among the many changes to education policy were the curriculum reform and system change, which had sufficient similarities and differences to allow representativeness and variation in variables of interests. Both changes were substantial and created extensive alterations to the existing educational field. Also, these policy periods included CSOs, but the level of inclusiveness changed; the details of these policies will be explored in Chapter 3.

The curriculum reform was about changing the existing curriculum, and the system change aimed to alter the existing education system in total. Despite the presence of other minor and major curriculum changes (major changes date to post-2012), I chose the curriculum reform for two reasons. It was initiated in the early years of the AKP regime, and it reflected enthusiasm toward EU accession. Additionally, it was a two-year policy change process with an articulated program and inclusion of non-state actors.

Moreover, I aimed to find cases that emerged prior to the party's crackdown on non-state actors. To reflect the variation in the AKP approach, I included the system change in my cases. While the system change was as substantial as the

curriculum reform in terms of its impact, it was rather a short period of policymaking with limited CSO inclusion. Thus, I was able to find two cases that were similar but also diverged enough to reflect the change in the state and educational civil society relationship.

#### 1.2.4 Notes from the fieldwork

My fieldwork and interviews provided significant insight into conducting research during critical changes and evolving regimes. Before and after my interviews, I took notes to supplement the voice recordings. These hand-written notes were a useful part of my research and served as a reminder of interviewees' stance during the writing process.

I believe the timing of the interviews also led to interesting outcomes in terms of fieldwork observations. I interviewed people before and after the general elections in July 2018. The timing, as well as the political trajectory, was reflected in and altered my interviews significantly. Some people preferred not to talk prior to elections; those who spoke took precautions.

Half of my interviews were conducted before the general elections in June 2018, the people were concerned, and uncertainty led to a significant amount of caution. Some people wanted to see the interview questions beforehand and chose not to proceed with the interview afterward. During the interviews, there were numerous cases where people asked to speak off the record to be able to speak freely. In addition to speaking off the record, I realized that certain people lowered their voices and leaned towards me while speaking about the political leaders, political parties, and critical junctures in recent Turkish history. I also encountered cases in

which interviewees used pronouns instead of directly referring to political leaders and parties. Others even checked their surroundings before naming a party or person.

I conducted the other half of my interviews after the election. The well-received appointment of Ziya Selçuk as Minister of National Education changed the attitude and perspective of the educational community. Those whom I talked with after the elections were optimistic by the changing approach to education with Selçuk's appointment. All my interviewees were familiar with Ziya Selçuk and commented on his appointment without me asking. People whom I talked with were hopeful and optimistic about the changing educational environment.

It was not easy to contact everyone during my research. Representatives of civil society that are close to the state were especially challenging to reach. My gender and position as a researcher from Boğaziçi University both eased and created hurdles in the interview process. As a researcher from a respected university, most representatives from liberal organizations were open to talking to me. However, being a woman was a definite obstacle to reaching conservative people who did not want to speak to a "woman" researcher. Some people, directly or through their secretaries, declined my request for a meeting due to my gender. In some cases, being affiliated with Boğaziçi University created an obstacle to my research since I was harshly criticized about my university's stance regarding the current regime.

### 1.3 Organization of the thesis

This thesis is composed of five sections. This chapter (Introduction) has introduced my research questions. In addition, I elucidated the methodology, case selection, and fieldwork notes. The following chapters are set out as follows.

In Chapter 2 (Literature Review), I give my theoretical background. This chapter is composed of two sections. The first section focuses on civil society, its relationship with the state, and its configuration under hybrid regimes. The second section provides contextualization of the literature for Turkey.

In Chapter 3 (From cooperation to selective inclusion: A historical account of the policy periods), I present the historical background of the two policy periods. This chapter provides a historical account of the policies, in which there are numerous changes, actors, and events. During the 2004 curriculum reform, the state was an adamant supporter and practitioner of cooperation and included different non-state actors. In contrast, the state adopted a selective approach in the making of the system change in 2012. The state initiated the policy process in the legislative organ –the Turkish Parliament– and bypassed educational institutions. Criticism by opposition parties in parliament paved the way for the inclusion of CSOs, but their participation was limited.

In Chapter 4 (Two modalities of change: Formal and informal institutional changes), I answer how the state and educational civil society's relationship changed during the AKP period from 2002 to 2012. This chapter elucidates how governing laws and regulations in the executive-legislative bodies are bypassed. In the section on formal institutional changes, I focus on amendments to existing rules and regulations within educational institutions. I gave examples from the Ministry of National Education, the National Education Council, and the Board of Education. In the section covering informal institutional changes, I delve into the parliamentary discussions on the system change in 2012.

In Chapter 5 (Limited state capacity and capacity building), I answer why the state and educational civil society's relationship changed during the AKP period

from 2002 to 2012. In this chapter, I argue that the democratic reversal of the Turkish state led to a change in its relationship with CSOs. In addition, a rupture with the EU accession process lessened the accountability of the state towards non-state actors and the international community. Moreover, in order to pursue the educational policies, the party opt for the government-friendly CSOs, and sought to build their capacity within the educational field. Educational institutions gained power over non-state actors through formal and informal institutions, and this facilitated selective inclusion and the party's ability to opt for government-friendly CSOs.

Lastly, in Chapter 6 (Conclusion), I give a summary of the thesis and restate my research questions and findings. Additionally, I present the policy implications of this research and future research directions.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to explain how and why the relationship between the state and educational civil society changed in the AKP period 2002-2012, I use the civil society and state relationship, and civil society under hybrid regimes literature as my theoretical framework. While civil society is well-studied subject, educational civil society and civil society under hybrid regimes are understudied in current research.

In this chapter, I start with scholarly work on the politics of education in general and the politics of Turkish education in particular to give an overview prior to theoretical discussions. In the first section, I examine the civil society and state relationship. I primarily engage with the literature on civil society, its relationship with the state, and current studies on civil society under hybrid regimes. The second section contextualizes Turkish civil society within the changing AKP regime.

Compared to cognate disciplines in the social sciences (e.g., sociology and economics), education has received comparatively little attention in political science research despite its relative importance in subjects like citizenship, basic rights, and the link between citizens' education level and regime type (Gift & Wibbels, 2014, p. 294). Furthermore, existing studies repeatedly claim that education is a critical tool for maintaining power relations in nation-states. For modern nation-states, education is a key mechanism for dominating and monitoring citizens (Althusser, 2014; Apple, 2013; Bourdieu, 1986; Bowles & Gintis, 2011; Foucault, 1995; Willis, 2017). For instance, Gellner (2008, p. 45) claims that the fundamental component of the state is the monopolization of education, not violence as Weber purports (Weber, 2004, p.



33). While the instrumentalization of education remains a critical interpretation, we can bring novel insights to the literature through country-specific cases.

The instrumentalization argument is also examined in the Turkish context to demonstrate that multiple actors with varying ideologies desire to govern education. Two seminal works introduce this discussion in the literature. On the one hand, I. Kaplan (1999) claims that the Turkish state has aimed to control and homogenize its population through education since the early years of the republic. The early years of the republic signify a Turkish social engineering project that seeks to create a homogenous nation with a common identity (I. Kaplan, 1999). On the other hand, S. Kaplan (2006) claims that although the state has aimed to create a single type of subject since its establishment, it has failed because there are numerous interest groups affecting the education system which are organized outside of national education practices. This study shows that, despite the state's aim of creating homogenous subjects, the education system creates non-uniform citizens.

Additionally, S. Kaplan (2006) shows that even though the state aims to be the sole actor in the Turkish education system, there are other “politically associated actors” like the military or religious sects which similarly aim to deliver their own vision. Thus, Turkish education becomes a contested field in which various interest groups have competing visions based on their needs and wants. Education in the Turkish context gains complexity since its role as a tool is not only recognized by the nation-state but also by non-state actors as well.

Recent literature on Turkish education examines various subtopics and highlights the impact of rising neoliberalism and Islamization that create an arena for other actors besides the state (İnal, 2006, 2015; A. Kaya, 2015). Among these, civil society organizations play a critical role despite the paucity of scholarly work

addressing the topic. According to a TÜSEV report, one of the highest proportions of philanthropic donations were to education-focused civil society organizations in Turkey (Çarkoğlu & Aytaç, 2016, p. 30). The same report also shows that Turkish society considers education to be one of the areas in which CSOs actively operate and are more visible to a wider audience, along with the other categories of food assistance and the environment (Çarkoğlu & Aytaç, 2016, p. 30).

Still, the recent literature on the state and educational civil society is scarce. There have been no substantial studies that repress the role of educational civil society and its relationship with the state. The reason behind this absence might be the inadequacy of data and lack of established literature (Gift & Wibbels, 2014, pp. 295-297). However, despite these inadequacies, the role of civil society in educational practices are an important area for investigation as shown by the TÜSEV report.

## 2.1 Civil society and state relationship

In this section, I focus on the literature on civil society, its relationship with the state, and its role under hybrid regimes. While much has been said and written about civil society, this immense literature remains complicated; civil society's relationship with the state is intricate and defining the concept is problematic (Edwards, 2011, p. 3).

There is a prevailing understanding of simplistic antagonism between the state and civil society in the literature that needs further attention (Diamond, 1994, p. 5). During the last years of the Cold War, how civil society antagonism towards the state functioned, and where civil society existed in relation to the state realm become crucial questions for the literature (Rosenblum & Lesch, 2011, p. 288). Scholarly work remains divided; there are people who claim civil society should not be

opposed to the state (Beckman, 1993; Diamond, 1994; Taylor, 1990) and people who consider civil society as an area either in opposition to the state or as a more intermediate sphere of social organization between society and the state (White, 1994, pp. 378-379).

Still, civil society's role is not understood and efforts to identify this role are in vain considering the rise of "ambiguous regimes" (Diamond, 2002, p. 169). Thus, the boundary between the state and civil society remains blurry, and civil society is an elusive concept to us (Bunyan, 2014; Edwards, 2005; Grugel, 2002; White, 1994). This ambiguity is due to interpretations from different political views (Edwards, 2011), and the impact of neo-liberalism (Bunyan, 2014). There is a practical but insufficient conceptualization of civil society as an analytical, normative or public sphere to "strengthen the utility of civil society both as an idea and a framework for action" (Edwards, 2005, p.viii). These three different theoretical perspectives respectively see the civil society either as common interest or realm of service or exercise of active citizenship (Edwards, 2005).

Therefore, the literature often resorts to different historicities and contexts to explain this "social farrago" (Fowler, 2011, p. 44; White, 1994, p. 377). To address this vagueness and acknowledge the ambivalence in the literature, I adopt the following approach:

Commonly referred to as the "third" or "non-profit" sector, civil society in this sense contains all associations and networks between the family and the state in which membership and activities are "voluntary" – formally registered NGOs of many different kinds, labor unions, political parties, churches and other religious groups, professional and business associations, community and self-help groups, social movements and the independent media. (Edwards, 2005, p. 20)

In using this definition, I recognize the vast scope of civil society as well the variety of roles and bodies it entails. In addition to conceptual ambiguity, there is another

common understanding that has been challenged in recent years: civil society as a key factor in assessing the strength of a democracy. The prior understanding indicated that “a weak civil society implies [a] thin democracy” in which democratic participation is limited, and the state is not obliged to listen to society (Grugel, 2002, p. 115). For instance, the European Union positions civil society as critical in the pursuit of democratic legitimacy (Dunn, 2011, p. 168; Fowler, 2011, p. 44).

Identifying civil society as a torchbearer of democratic change (Diamond, 1994; Edwards, 2011; Grugel, 2002; Stepan, 1986) naturally links the rise of civil society to the third wave of global democratization. According to White (1994), the presence of civil society has a crucial role in curbing authoritarian governments, as well as contributing to and maintaining a democratic polity. Moreover, it also plays a decisive role in the improvement of governance (White, 1994, pp. 382-383). Concerning this, it is crucial to distinguish between democratic consolidation and democratic transition, which describe two different processes (Diamond, 1994, pp. 15-16). This thesis’s focus is on the latter process since the Turkish context presents *de jure* and *de facto* consolidation of democracy.

Diamond (1999, p. 74) argues that civil society has an ability to “deepen democracy.” In democratic consolidation, civil society may play various roles, including checking state power, pluralizing the institutional arena, preventing the resumption of authoritarian governments and practices, supporting citizen participation, ensuring representation of the poor and marginalized groups through grassroots mobilization, and enabling public scrutiny of the state both at the local and state level (Diamond, 1994; Mercer, 2002). The democratic consolidation role of civil society is emphasized because it is also the key to state legitimacy; “a vibrant civil society is probably more essential for consolidating and maintaining democracy

than for initiating it” (Diamond, 1994, p. 7). Many agree that a strong civil society and institutionalized parties are the most crucial components of functioning and healthy democracies (Diamond, 1994; Linz & Stepan, 1996; Mainwaring & Scully, 1995).

Civil society can act as an agent in agenda-setting and highlight the democratic deficits of formal structures (Diamond, 1994, pp. 7-11). This means that civil society can pinpoint the needs of society that are not being met by the state. Due to widespread acceptance of neoliberal practices, the increasing emphasis on civil society has become more visible as social services such as health and education became areas where the state and civil society share duties (Sutton & Arnone, 2004). In particular, changing global understandings of welfare regimes has increased the role of civil society organizations (Smith, 2011, p. 32). To varying degrees in different countries, we are witnessing a shift in welfare spending; the practice of low government spending and services provided by civil society are becoming a norm (Smith, 2011, p. 32).

Alongside the shift in welfare provisions and the role of the state, neoliberalization also paved the way for different modes of interaction with civil society. The state can cooperate (Migdal, 2012, p. 9; Rosenblum & Lesch, 2011, p. 395), confront (Lentz, 2011, p. 343), or co-opt (Nicholls, 2011, p. 80) civil society. These forms of interaction produce different results, but civil society scholarship is divided in terms of the consequences of different types of relationships. While collaboration, for example, is often presented as the ideal mode of interaction, it can lead to different partnerships in different countries and does not necessarily create greater social welfare provision (Rosenblum & Lesch, 2011, p. 293). While in some collaborative countries there is growing competitiveness to obtain state grants, in

others civil society substitutes for state services, which can lead to a lack of democratic deliberation on the division of labor between the state and civil society (Rosenblum & Lesch, 2011, pp. 293-295).

Another mode of interaction is confrontation. Confrontation is often used to indicate the power of civil society, which collectively gathers around a common issue and acts as a collective grassroots challenge to politics (Kunreuther, 2011, p. 60). This confrontational relationship is often at the heart of the social movements literature as well (della Porta & Diani, 2011, p. 68). In this interaction, it is critical to capture the audience by amplifying the problem and grabbing the attention of power holders (della Porta & Diani, 2011, p. 70).

The last mode of interaction, co-optation, is the capacity “to tie strategically-relevant actors (or groups of actors) to the regime elite” (Gerschewski, 2013, p. 22). Co-optation is especially used by countries that have corporatist authoritarian regimes (Diamond, 1994, p. 13). In these countries, the state may “create, organize, license, subordinate, and control” interest groups (Diamond, 1994, p. 13). Co-optation can occur through formal ties to recognized political bodies (e.g., parliaments and parties) or informal means of binding actors (Gerschewski, 2013, p. 22). These informal forms can be “patronage, clientelism, and corruption” (Gerschewski, 2013, p. 22). Thus, the state can take over an existing civil society or create its own. As Stefes (2006) argues, co-optation is a mechanism that is often used by authoritarian regimes to neutralize the power of civil society (as cited in Gerschewski, 2013, 22). For these regimes, the existence of civil society may be more precarious than that of opposition parties. For instance, Bebbington et. al argues that “NGOs are only NGOs in any politically meaningful sense of the term if they are offering alternatives to dominant models, practices and ideas about

development” (as cited in Ketola, 2012, p. 92). Thus, civil society’s power to create alternatives must be eliminated in order to sustain the existing regime, putting civil society itself at risk.

So far, I have tried to explain the ambiguity of civil society as a concept and its role within a democratic context. The literature on political regimes overwhelmingly celebrated the flourishing of democracy in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century (Bernhard & Karakoç, 2008). Despite the growing hopes of a third wave (Huntington, 1993) and inevitable dissemination of democracy (Fukuyama, 1992), these processes led to a mushrooming of ambiguous regimes<sup>3</sup> and pessimism about civil society (Diamond, 2002, p. 169; Tusalem, 2007, p. 361). Moreover, existing studies have been unable to establish a consensus on regime typology; the debate on defining democracy and authoritarianism continues (Diamond, 2002, p. 166).

The end of the third wave of democratization did not lead to widespread authoritarian regimes but introduced another type of rule “where a democratic facade covers authoritarian rule” (Linz, 2000, p. 34 in Giersdorf & Croissant, 2011, p. 3). Growth in the number of regimes that cannot be classified as democratic or authoritarian challenged the way we see global politics. Particularly with the end of the Soviet Union, the proliferation of competitive authoritarian and hybrid regimes challenged the existing literature.

There are numerous studies on civil society and its relation to democratization and democratic consolidation. However, scholarship on civil society under competitive authoritarian regimes (or hybrid regimes for our case) is not well

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<sup>3</sup> Ambiguous regime is a term used by Diamond (2002) to identify non-democratic regimes that do not fall into existing categories. He defines as ambiguous “[regimes] that fall on the blurry boundary between electoral democracy and competitive authoritarianism, with independent observers disagreeing over how to classify them” (Diamond, 2002, p. 169).

theorized (Bernhard & Karakoç, 2008; Giersdorf & Croissant, 2011; Killingsworth, 2007). Civil associational life under these regimes is a puzzle that needs to be addressed (Froissart, 2014) since civil society is often seen as the harbinger of democracy and freedom. The general understanding of civil society under nondemocratic regimes is that it does not yield to a powerful social organization and remains weak (Diamond, 1994; Doyle, 2017; Edwards, 2005; Grugel, 2002). On the contrary, contemporary nondemocratic regimes and civil society coexist without turning toward democratization. Authoritarian regimes apparently allow these civic associations to flourish since they provide service and help the state achieve its goals (Lewis, 2013, p. 331).

The literature falls short in discussing civil society under hybrid regimes due to two essential issues; hybrid regimes have only recently been conceptualized despite previous knowledge of their existence (Diamond, 2008) and inconsistency within the literature in labeling these regimes as “ambiguous” (Diamond, 2002), “electoral” (Schedler, 2006), practicing “competitive authoritarianism” (Levitsky & Way, 2002), “partly-free” (Freedom House, 2019), or “authoritarian regimes with adjectives” (Levitsky & Collier, 1997) have sown confusion in the literature. Still, civil society membership increased with the Velvet Revolutions of 1989 and the end of Soviet Union, the color revolutions of the 2000s, and the Arab Spring in 2010; its importance and role within hybrid regimes thus garnered scholarly attention.

Current literature mainly engages with civil society under non-democratic regimes with a focus on competitive authoritarian regimes and political activism. Competitive authoritarianism is another systematic approach to a hybrid regime (Bogaards, 2009, p. 400), and the concept highlights electoral competitiveness. These “regimes are civilian regimes in which formal democratic institutions exist and are



widely viewed as the primary means of gaining power, but in which incumbents' abuse of the state places them at a significant advantage vis-a-vis their opponents" (Levitsky & Way, 2010, p. 5).

According to this definition, there are four areas of contestation or competitiveness: judicial, legislative, media, and elections (Levitsky & Way, 2002, pp. 54-58). In the judicial arena, these regimes develop mechanisms like co-optation or bribery to harness the rule of law (Levitsky & Way, 2002, p. 56). Similarly, control by the executive body is established to oversee the legislative body (Levitsky & Way, 2002, p. 55). The media and elections are other areas where the opposition has limited freedom and operates in an uneven playing field (Levitsky & Way, 2002, pp. 54-58).

Although there are studies that define Turkey as a competitive authoritarian regime (Esen & Gumuscu, 2016), this research adopts the more general term of hybrid regimes, which combine democratic and authoritarian features (Diamond, 2002) and is able to facilitate a more generalizable argument. To present the link between hybrid regimes and civil society, I also used competitive authoritarian regime as a keyword in my literature research since it is adopted more extensively. Lauth (2009) defines hybrid regimes as "neither a subtype of autocracies nor of democracies but a regime type on their own, encompassing those political systems that on plausible grounds cannot be classified as either autocracy or democracy" (as cited in Bogaards, 2009, p. 415). This definition of hybrid regimes also supports this aim of generalization since this definition characterizes hybrid regimes as a particular type of regime and acknowledges their peculiarity.

Current research has two focuses: the role of civil society and how and why civil society exists under hybrid regimes (Gerschewski, 2013; Giersdorf & Croissant,

2011; Gilbert & Mohseni, 2011, 2018; Lewis, 2013; Wiktorowicz, 2000; Wischermann, 2013). In understanding the role of civil society, whether the civil society strengthens or challenges the regime is a critical research interest. In examining how and why civil society continues to exist in these types of regimes, the literature offers legal mechanisms, co-optation, and closure as key mechanisms of civil society's survival. Moreover, country-specific studies show that novel mechanisms are used to control and repress civil society.

On the one hand, the literature is able to show that civil society can challenge autocratic elites. Considering the competitive nature of most hybrid regimes (e.g., Russia, Turkey, Venezuela), restricting civic associations is common but coercion and co-optation are limited because the regime must maintain its democratic facade (Giersdorf & Croissant, 2011, p. 1). Newly-emerged hybrid regimes that are competitive in nature are not "inherently more fragile than other types of non-democratic regimes" (Hadenius & Teorell, 2006, p. 22; J. Brownlee, 2009, pp. 528-531). Using the case of Malaysia, Giersdorf and Croissant (2011) show that civil society and opposition parties can merge their power and create novel channels of communication against the autocratic regime. Although such an environment produces a limited civil society, the fact that there is a civil society at all counts as an important source for associational life (Froissart, 2014).

On the other hand, there are various ways in which CSOs may support the regime. CSOs under hybrid regimes can reaffirm, legitimize, and reproduce authoritarian practices (Lewis, 2013, p. 328). As hybrid regimes strengthens, CSOs are either co-opted by the state or government-friendly CSOs mushroom. Co-optation and government-friendly CSOs link the literature to the second focus: how and why CSOs exist under hybrid regimes.

Hybrid regimes adopt co-optation, legal mechanisms, and closure as mechanisms to control civil society and legitimize existing state policies (Gerschewski, 2013). The previous studies on waves of democratic reversal or rise of authoritarianism highlight control and repression as the main explanatory factors (Gerschewski, 2013). Following Weberian tradition, legitimization is the process of gaining consent and establishing the obedience of population (Gerschewski, 2013, p. 18). As the hybrid regime fulfills its duties in the economic, social, and political realms, legitimacy can be acquired (Gerschewski, 2013, p. 20).

Similarly, the regime can co-opt civil society or government-friendly civil societies can emerge where the state sponsors such associations. The formation of government-organized non-governmental organizations (GONGOs) are a way to modernize an autocratic regime (Heydemann, 2007, p. 9). Moreover, co-optation can become a tool for silencing dissident voices (Sarfati, 2017, p. 396). Examples from Africa and Southeast Asia show that co-optation enables these regimes to stabilize themselves (Gerschewski, 2013; Teets, 2014; Wiktorowicz, 2000; Wischermann, 2013; Wischermann, Bunk, Köllner, & Lorch, 2016). Similarly, constraining discursive activity can be another means to repress, co-opt or use civil society to legitimize the regime's policies (Lewis, 2013).

Legal mechanisms are also used by these regimes to control and repress civil society (Gilbert & Mohseni, 2018, p. 468). Manipulation of legal mechanisms allows the state and political elites to control CSOs, consolidate economic power, and prohibit democratic backlash. For instance, Russia and Venezuela prohibited foreign-funded non-governmental organizations to engage in political activities (Gilbert & Mohseni, 2018, p. 455). Similarly, the Sri Lanka government forced these

organizations to register with the Ministry of Defense in 2006 in order to facilitate monitoring (Gilbert & Mohseni, 2018, p. 455).

Besides the abovementioned tools that are used by these regimes to silence dissenting voices, the literature also talks about a practice that has become less common in today's world: closure. In the twenty-first century, there are only a few authoritarian regimes that have abolished civil associations (e.g., North Korea and Turkmenistan) (Lewis, 2013, p. 325). Therefore, hybrid regimes typically develop other mechanisms to coexist with an active civil society. These mechanisms can be covert and successfully lead to indirect state control (Teets, 2013).

So far, I talked about literature that focuses on regimes with "state capacity" to consolidate civil society at different degrees (Lewis, 2013, p. 327). Alongside the increasing control and legitimization, there are also cases in which civil society is able to contest the existing regime. So, civil society as "challenger and stabilizer" create ambivalence in the state and civil society relationship under hybrid regimes (Giersdorf & Croissant, 2011, p. 10). On the one hand, civil society can operate under these regimes as long as it confines the official discourse; on the other hand, civil society faces preventive measures when it circulates non-official discourses (Lewis, 2013, p. 331). For instance, Giersdorf and Croissant (2011) showed that Malaysian civil society was able to challenge the state by creating an alternative space through internet communication, but the control over the traditional media spilled over as the online material was deemed as defamatory (p. 12). Ultimately, when civil society contests the regimes, the organization can be closed, or its representatives face criminal charges, prosecution, or imprisonment (Lewis, 2013, p.332; Giersdorf and Croissant, 2011, pp. 12-13).

Lastly, the literature provides idiosyncratic methods of containing dissent and its mobilization. A recent example from Russia shows that the state may create illicit agreements with universities to prevent student mobilization (Forrat, 2016). Such support from civil society toward the oppressive regime can occur noticeably and voluntarily. Recent studies show that associations may opt for supporting the regime without any external pressure (Foster, 2007; Yang, 2004).

In this section, I tried to summarize the literature on state-civil society relations. While the literature on civil society is immense, it remains unable to clearly and conclusively define civil society and its relationship with the state. Previous studies indicate a substantial role of civil society in democratic consolidation. However, little is known about civil society under hybrid regimes. Recent studies posit that civil society may be co-opted, compelled through legal mechanisms or closed under hybrid regimes in order to control civil society practices and legitimize state policies.

## 2.2 Contextualization of the Turkish civil society

Associational life in Turkey has a long history; religious organizations and associations have been noted as two critical forms of civil society in the Ottoman Empire (Zencirci, 2014, p. 4). The mushrooming of modern forms of civil society occurred in the 1980s, following global trends. The Marmara earthquake in 1999 provided further impetus to civil society growth (Jalali, 2002; Kubicek, 2002; Paker, 2004). Similarly, in the following years, the EU accession process and *acquis communautaire* substantially contributed to the growth of civil society (Heper & Yıldırım, 2011, p. 7; Ketola, 2012; Rumelili & Çakmaklı, 2017).

This relatively new but comprehensive literature on civil society in Turkey is dominated by a focus on democratic consolidation and the statist tradition. As many scholars point out, there is a strong state in Turkey (Heper & Yıldırım, 2011; Kalaycıoğlu, 2004; Kubicek, 2002; Sunar, 1998). In this regard, Sunar (1998) claims that the Turkish state is a “passive-exclusive state” that neither promotes nor resists the entry of civil society. Even though the Turkish state has elements of civil society in abundance (in terms of quantity), their qualitative impact on political life is relatively trivial (Kalaycıoğlu, 2004; Keyman & Öniş, 2007; Şimşek, 2004).

Lack of civil society impact on political life paves the way for the central authority’s coercive power; the state and societal actors reside in a hierarchical relationship (Ertugal & Bolukbasi, 2018). Turkish governments tend to pursue policies unilaterally without consulting the public in their formulation; thus, interest groups play a marginal role in the agenda-setting, policy formulation, and decision making stages of the policymaking process (Ertugal & Bolukbasi, 2018, pp. 361-362). Additionally, the state is not in favor of autonomous societal actors playing role in policymaking (Heper & Keyman, 1998, p. 265); this is often described as state antagonism towards civil society actors.

The state impedes the inclusion of CSOs in policymaking through various means. The Turkish state over-produces laws and by-laws, creating a civil servant hegemony and strengthening the bureaucracy (Ertugal & Bolukbasi, 2018, pp. 359-360), or uses inconsistent policymaking in different areas. Similarly, reports on Turkey by the European Commission underline the state’s unwillingness, and bureaucracy’s sluggishness as reasons for the inadequacy of civil society in policymaking (European Commission, 2010, 2011, 2012).

Still, this portrayal of an antagonistic relationship is more nuanced than typically presented. According to Kalaycıoğlu (2004, p. 259), there are two types of state-civil society relations in Turkey: one is cooperative and symbiotic, culminating in a corporatist relationship while the other is conflict-ridden and culminates in clashes. In the former type, sincere cooperation and patron-client relationships can coexist, while in the latter form there is clear friction among parties (Kalaycıoğlu, 2004, p. 259). However, relationships may be both cooperative and conflict-ridden (Kadirbeyoğlu, Adaman, Özkaynak & Paker, 2017, p. 1731). Moreover, the same organization can utilize different modes of interaction in certain situations (Paker, Adaman, Kadirbeyoğlu, & Özkaynak, 2013, p. 768)

While there are various studies on civil society focusing on the environment (Adaman & Arsel, 2016; Boşnak, 2016; Paker et al., 2013), human rights (Nas & Özer, 2012), and women rights (Çaha, 2015; Diner, 2015; Doyle, 2017), the literature doesn't fully explore educational policies. One significant exception is the TÜSEV report on educational CSOs in Turkey, which provides a glimpse into these organizations (Aksay, 2009). According to Aksay's (2009, p. 8) analysis, CSOs impact educational policies in terms of "substantive (changes in policy itself); structural (changes in political institutions involved in policy-making process); sensitizing (changes in public attitudes towards the issue) changes." However, at the procedural level, the state dominates the field and sees CSOs as service providers, innovators, or informed critics and advocates (Aksay, 2009, p. 3). This report ultimately reiterates the general literature argument of the strong state and weak civil society.

In addition to the antagonism of state and civil society, recent studies have introduced a more complex picture of this relationship following the crucial AKP-led

change in the political regime (Doyle, 2018). This leads us to discussions of non-democratic regimes and their relation to civil society. Civil society practices under hybrid regimes are the subject of a growing body of literature. These scholarly works primarily focus on a puzzle: understanding the role of civil society within a hybrid regime. Moreover, these studies particularly focus on civil society that engages with political activism. So, most of the scholarly work also touches upon the social movement literature. However, examples from different parts of the world show that this phenomenon has varying repercussions; these regimes find unique ways to silence dissent. So, it is important to capture the regime's journey in Turkey to better grasp how and why the relationship between the state and civil society has changed. Also, looking at educational civil society might provide new insights, as these organizations in Turkey primarily seek input on policy formation rather than challenging the state through political activism.

Literature on rising authoritarianism in Turkey under the AKP regime focuses on various changes both in the political sphere (i.e., executive, judicial, and legislative) and the public sphere (for instance, everyday life, social mobilization, and social practices), trying to explain the changing dynamics of the regime. This literature reveals a trend in the changing AKP position. The period from 2002 to 2007 is known as the golden years of the party, from 2007 to 2011 as the transition period from democratization to authoritarianism, and from 2011 to the present as one of rising authoritarian tendencies and personification of the regime (Öniş, 2016, p. 142).

The literature agrees that during the early years of the party, we see the accession process with the EU and the struggle of the party with secular statist traditions paving the way for the AKP's democratic initiatives (Özbudun, 2012).



With the end of 2007, the failure of the EU process and Abdullah Gül's presidency changed the political sphere in favor of the party. The transition period is often defined as the years in which the party focused on consolidating power, and the 2010 referendum is often referred to as a watershed (Arato, 2010; Özbudun, 2012; Saatçioğlu, 2016). Additionally, the party successfully ended the power of the tutelary regime and pacified the veto powers in this period (Esen & Gumuscu, 2016, p. 1585).

Problems with Kurdish, Alevi, and non-Muslim citizens along with acquisitions chapters on international relations matters (e.g., the Cyprus issue) led to Euro-fatigue and the AKP government alienated itself from early policies in accordance with the EU. Replacing Euro-enthusiasm, Euro-fatigue proved that the party lacked a practical democratization package independent of the EU process and inconsistencies between the discourse and policies of the government were abundant (Cizre, 2008, pp. 2-9). While the literature largely argues the AKP failed to have a real democratic agenda during this period, Insel (2003, p. 89) does not agree, instead claiming that the party has relied on a culturally conservative movement with strong authoritarian tendencies and a vigorous nationalistic vein since the early years.

The literature continues a taxonomic debate within the democratization discourse (Akkoyunlu & Öktem, 2016). On democratization and authoritarianism, it adopts the same historical differentiation that I have mentioned above. In the democratization literature, we see that the AKP's initial attempts to achieve democratization in line with the EU process did not continue but were rather replaced by an ever-growing consolidation and personification of power.

The 2010 referendum stands as a critical juncture in AKP history; the party's consolidation of power, aligned with Euro-fatigue, enhanced its power over different

areas (Özbudun, 2014, p. 158). The referendum may also be interpreted as a critical change in the party structure; the *kulturkampf* in Turkey has expanded, and the current structure can be interpreted as a delegative democracy Özbudun (2015); focus on the support of the majority in elections and ignoring the rest of voters through an excessively majoritarian political sphere is interpreted as plebiscitary democracy (Özbudun, 2014, p. 157); consolidation of power may lead to a super-presidential system if not controlled (Özbudun, 2015, p. 54); the 2010 referendum paved the way for informality in the regime (Akkoyunlu and Öktem, 2016, pp. 512-513); and it created of a cult of personality and authoritarianism (Selçuk, 2016, p. 576). Changes in the political sphere were reflected in the public and private spheres and interpreted either (predominantly) as Islamization (A. Kaya, 2015, p. 47; Özbudun, 2014, p. 156) or the ghettoization of secularism (Uluengin, 2013).

Özbudun's (2014) initial attempt to predict and define rising authoritarianism in Turkey was echoed by others. A few years later, Esen and Gumuscu (2016) interpreted Turkey as a "competitive authoritarian regime." They claimed that changes to the AKP regime were not unique to the Turkish case but rather part of a global trend of rising authoritarianism afflicting developing and even developed countries. The central features of competitive authoritarian regimes are unfair elections, an uneven playing field, and violations of civil liberties (Esen & Gumuscu, 2016; p.1586). Still, as Akkoyunlu and Öktem (2016, p. 506) claim, the fluid and fast-evolving nature of the regime in Turkey make defining the regime a tricky job.

In terms of civil society, novel ways to co-opt and control CSOs were introduced under the AKP governments (Doyle, 2017, pp. 252-253). In understanding these matters, the liberal conceptualization of civil society should be abandoned and the Gramscian view adopted, which presents state intervention as a

common practice. Moreover, the state is able to create its own CSOs. These CSOs, as an “extension of the state power” (Levitsky & Way, 2010, p. 62) not only alter the meaning of civil society but also allow for efficient monitoring of collective action (Wiktorowicz, 2000, p. 43).

There are four ways in which state can control or co-opt CSOs: violence against and the imprisonment of activists; restrictive legislation; closure; and the creation of state-friendly CSOs (GONGOs) (Doyle, 2017, p. 255). Through these GONGOs, the state can create “a cloak of democratic legitimacy” for policy decisions and disseminate government ideas (Doyle, 2018, p. 1). CSOs may still be able to challenge the state, but they are not able to be fully effective in policymaking. This is not unique to the Turkish case. As White (1994) argues, different elements of civil society may or may not be politically involved, may or may not support authoritarian rule, and some may be received as more progressive in terms of their approach to and embracement of the liberal democratic polity.

In this section, I contextualized civil society in Turkey and gave a brief historical overview of associational life in Turkey. In addition, I delved into the state and civil society relationship and underscored that there are different forms of this relationship. Rather than seeing the state as either wholly inclusive or exclusive, recent scholarly works show that the state can utilize different approaches at the same time. Moreover, I discussed the democratic reversal and its impact on civil society under the AKP regime.

In this chapter, I tried to present an overview of the literature on civil society and its relationship with the state under democratic and hybrid regimes. Additionally, I included the contextualization of Turkish civil society in order to introduce the theoretical framework of the Turkish context. The civil society literature remains

elusive in defining the concept and its relationship with the state. Moreover, little research has been conducted to examine this relationship under hybrid regimes. Current research underscores the state's aim to control civil society and the need to legitimize state policies as two critical reasons why hybrid regimes use various mechanisms like co-opting, legal mechanisms, or closure to repress civil society. With the democratic reversal during the AKP period, studies on the Turkish civil society follows similar lines with the theoretical framework and emphasize control and legitimization as critical modalities.

## CHAPTER 3

### FROM COOPERATION TO SELECTIVE INCLUSION: A HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE POLICY PERIODS

In this chapter, I provide historical background for the two periods of policy change (i.e., the 2004 curriculum reform and 2012 system change known as “4+4+4”). In the first section of this chapter, I contextualize the policy changes, explaining what these policies were and how and when they were implemented. Afterwards, I explore actors who played crucial roles in the policymaking processes in order to articulate the various aspects of these changes. This chapter highlights the differences among the policy periods in order to demonstrate that the state substantially altered its policymaking. It suggests that while the state adopted a cooperative attitude during the first policymaking period, it opted for selective inclusion during the latter.

#### 3.1 2004 curriculum reform and 2012 system change (4+4+4)

One of the policy areas in which dissent is common and the AKP regime is often criticized by its constituencies is education. These criticisms are based on various reasons (e.g., frequent changes in the education system, the increasing role of Islam in schools, lack of resources). While there have been several changes to education policy, two have brought radical alterations: the 2004 curriculum reform<sup>4</sup> and 2012 system change (4+4+4). Both policies significantly changed existing conditions of education, and these changes were considered salient issues at the time. In my pilot

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<sup>4</sup> Although the reform took place from 2003 to 2005, I primarily focus on 2004, the year where inclusion of the non-state actors occurred. Thus, I refer to this policy period as 2004 curriculum change.

study, all interviewees pointed to the 2012 system change (4+4+4) when asked about critical changes in Turkish education in recent years. When I asked the same question for the early years of the AKP regime, interviewees identified the curriculum reform as a key policy period.

In 2003, Minister Hüseyin Çelik of the Ministry announced that a curriculum reform was to be implemented in the eight-year compulsory education (primary education). According to the Ministry, the primary impetuses for this change were world developments and the EU accession process (Z. Çelik, 2012). Moreover, he identified six major problems of the existing curriculum: the low schooling rate, inadequate physical conditions of schools (infrastructural inequalities), unorganized counseling system, poor quality of teachers, and outdated curriculum (Z. Çelik, 2012, p. 117). This change paved the way for a shift in Turkish pedagogy, “from behaviorism to constructivism” (Dinçer, 2015, p. 7); an individualistic and probabilistic pedagogy that takes the student as the center of the learning process was adopted in place of a reductionist and singular understanding that embraces didactic teacher-centered learning. Moreover, there were eight main points that caused children to have difficulties in the existing curriculum: critical thinking, problem-solving, scientific research, creative thinking, entrepreneurship, communication and information technologies, and using Turkish efficiently, correctly, and well (Z. Çelik, 2012, p. 122). As a result, the curriculum reform was celebrated for reflecting contemporary thinking. Moreover, it enabled project-based learning, time to be allocated for social activities, and extensive use of information technologies in education (Aksay, 2009, p. 5).

In terms of the policymaking process, the reform process extended over two years (2003-2005), in which the proposal, research and development of the reform,

and its implementation took place. Table 1 summarizes the key events of the curriculum reform.

Table 1. Timeline of the 2004 Curriculum Reform

September 2003	Announcement of the reform by the Ministry
September 2003-August 2004	Research and development of the reform
August 2004	Introduction of the proposed curriculum to the public
2004-2005 School Year <sup>5</sup>	Pilot study conducted in nine cities
2005-2006 School Year	Implementation of the reform in all schools

In 2004, Minister Çelik initially announced a one-year pilot study. In preparation for the reform, the Ministry and Board included various actors in the process: 37 CSOs, eight universities,<sup>6</sup> 53 academics, 697 inspectors, 2,259 teachers, 26,304 students, and 9,192 parents, either directly or indirectly (Çalışkan, 2012). Alongside these actors, the Ministry also examined nine other countries' education systems, various international reports, and academic work on contents of curriculum (Çalışkan, 2012). Because the curriculum reform was introduced to the public and discussed online via the internet, Minister Çelik claimed that anyone could make suggestions or recommendations. Thus, the organization and negotiation of the reform required an excessive workforce outside of state institutions; the Ministry financed officers via EU budget contributions (Ergüder, 2004). In interviews with Üstün Ergüder, Minister Çelik and President of the Board Ziya Selçuk explained that they were able to take individual comments into careful consideration thanks to these officers; they were employees paid by the state and EU, aiming to create a culture of transparency and

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<sup>5</sup> School year runs from September to June in Turkey.

<sup>6</sup> These universities were Middle East Technical University, Gazi University, Ankara University, Abant İzzet Baysal University, Karadeniz Technical University, Hacettepe University, Marmara University, and Bilkent University.

increase communication skills in the Ministry. Additionally, in determining the stakeholders during the preparation period, Minister Çelik claimed that a democratic method was employed in selecting the experts rather than using a predetermined list (Ergüder, 2004).

Despite the elaborate implementation and meticulous process, there were also criticisms of the new curriculum. The proposed curriculum was seen as problematic for various reasons: the lack of fit to national education practices, persistent infrastructural inequalities (time, money, space, and staff), teachers' inability to perform the curriculum's requirements (teacher training problem), and continuance of the existing exam system (Z. Çelik, 2012, p. 127). Nevertheless, at the end of the pilot study, the policy was implemented throughout Turkey for the 2005-2006 school year.

The policymaking process in the 2012 system change differed from the curriculum reform. Before the parliamentary discussions in 2012, this change was proposed in the 16<sup>th</sup> Council. Since the decision of the Council did not become reality, the same suggestion was made in the 17<sup>th</sup> Council (2006), nine years later, by Republican People's Party deputies. Nevertheless, the policy change was not implemented until it was suggested by the President of Eğitim-Bir-Sen, a government-friendly union, in the 18<sup>th</sup> Council in 2010. On February 21, 2012, deputies<sup>7</sup> from the AKP proposed a draft law to the parliament using the 18<sup>th</sup> Council as their reference.

This proposal consisted of multiple changes to existing law on the education system: prolonging compulsory education from eight years to 12 years, dividing the

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<sup>7</sup> The deputies were Ayşe Nur Bahçekapılı from İstanbul, Mustafa Elitaş from Kayseri, Nurettin Canikli from Giresun, Mahir Ünal from Kahramanmaraş, Ahmet Aydın from Adıyaman.



system into three tiers (4+4+4) instead of two (8+4), changing the names of certain universities,<sup>8</sup> and extending the contracts of private companies working as part of the Movement to Increase Opportunities and Technology [*Fırsatları Arttırma ve Teknolojiyi İyileştirme Hareketi*] (FATİH) project. The proposed system change aimed to create three stages in education, each consisting of four years (primary, secondary, and high school); i.e., “4+4+4”. Deputies based their proposal on the decisions of the 18<sup>th</sup> Council, in which 12 years of compulsory education was proposed, albeit in a different from in 2010.<sup>9</sup> The two main aims behind the Council’s decision and deputies’ suggestion were: increasing the average schooling rate and rearranging the system in order to direct individuals toward their interests, needs, and talents (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2012a). Other justifications offered by the Ministry included the necessity of obtaining at least a high school education due to the contemporary standards of education, classifying of education as a new trend in educational practices (providing guidance in terms of the skills and physical conditions of the student), and democratizing and elasticizing education (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2012a). The system change entailed various adjustments as well. The school starting age was lowered to 60 months (five years of age) instead of 72 months (six years of age). Also, a three-tier system aimed to initiate the process of apprenticeship in the second stage of education, corresponding to students ten years of age. Additionally, various political and economic goals of the state were woven into this complex change; then Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan claimed that

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<sup>8</sup> The draft law aimed to change Rize University’s name to Recep Tayyip Erdoğan University, and Kayseri Abdullah Gül University’s name to Abdullah Gül University.

<sup>9</sup> In the 18<sup>th</sup> Council, there was a suggestion to prolong compulsory education, but the formulations of such change differed a lot. While some proposals sought compulsory pre-school education, others excluded it. Moreover, the number of years allocated to primary, secondary, and high school differed considerably. Formulations of divisions (keeping pre-school education optional) included (1)+8+4, 5+3+4, or (1)+4+4+4.

ensuring 12-year education would be a boost to the Turkish economy in comparison to other developing countries until 2023 which remarks the 100<sup>th</sup> year of establishment of Turkish state (Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı, 2011, p. 7).

In contrast to the curriculum reform, in 2012 the Ministry did not plan a pilot study or arrange meetings with civil society, experts, teachers, parents, and students. As seen in Table 2, the parliamentary discussion on February 23, 2012 paved the way for the inclusion of CSOs in a separate sub-committee meeting under the standing committee of parliament on February 28, 2012. The standing committee conducted only one meeting with CSOs because opposition parties insisted on the inclusion of CSOs. Other meetings under the standing committee were with deputies (seven meetings were held on February 23 and March 5-11, 2012). CSOs eligible to attend the sub-committee meeting were determined by the Ministry and had only two days' notice beforehand (TÜSEV, 2013, p. 6).

Table 2. Timeline of the 2012 System Change

November 1-5, 2010	The 18 <sup>th</sup> Council was held
February 2, 2012	Deputies from the AKP proposed the draft law
February 28, 2012	CSO meeting under the sub-committee of the parliament's standing committee held
February 23 - March 10, 2012	Deputy meetings under the parliament's standing committee held
March 28, 2012	Draft law passed by parliament
2012-2013 School Year	System change (4+4+4) implemented in all schools

To explain this inclusion process, I refer to “selective inclusion” since CSOs were not part of the policymaking, and they were not considered shareholders at the first stage of the process. Selective inclusion occurs when the state prefers to work with “accommodating organizations” in the policymaking process and certain CSOs are

deliberately excluded from the process to silence dissent and critical voices (Paker et al., 2013, p. 767). In the 2012 system change, the state was forced to include these CSOs due to pressure from opposition parties within parliament.

There were numerous criticisms of the system change. Opposition parties, teachers' unions, parents and students protested the draft law, resulting in arrests and imprisonment ("Polis 4+4+4 protestosuna müdahale etti," 2012; Söylemez, 2013). Despite this, on March 29, 2012, parliament passed the proposed bill, thereby reshaping compulsory education. 295 AKP deputies voted in favor, while 88 deputies from the Republican People's Party and three deputies from the Peace and Democracy Party voted against the measure in parliament. Only one Nationalist Movement Party deputy was present but abstained from the vote. The president ratified the law on April 11, 2012.

The absence of a pilot study, hasty policy implementation, insufficient public discussion, lack of resources, space, time, and staff to implement classification, domination of ideology and religion in making the changes, adverse effects on girls' education, insufficient infrastructure, and inappropriate textbooks for the new age groups were just some of the criticisms raised by the opposition and experts before and after the law passed (Akan, 2017, pp. 259-260; TÜSEV, 2013, p. 5).

During the policymaking process, several other changes were made. Besides prolonging education through a three-tier system, the policy change also included new elective religious courses (The Life of Prophet Muhammad,<sup>10</sup> the Quran, and Basic Religious Knowledge), lowered the school starting age to 60 months instead of

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<sup>10</sup> The optional course "The Life of Prophet Muhammad" was originally submitted as "The Life of Our Prophet Muhammad," which created a dispute over its name. The initial name of the course denoted a particular belonging to Prophet Muhammad, which was considered exclusionary toward other religious groups. The name of the course was later changed.

72 months,<sup>11</sup> re-opened the Imam Hatip secondary schools, enabled distance learning and apprenticeship at early ages, and abolished coefficient hurdle<sup>12</sup> for the vocational students.

Both policies were considered fundamental changes to the existing education system, though there are significant differences in how they were implemented.

While the curriculum reform process was more inclusive of different aspects of civil society, the system change in 2012 was rather undertaken with a haste that excluded civil society; external actors were largely absent and their limited presence only possible through maneuvering by the opposition rather than the willingness of the government. In both processes, the actors involved in the changes were responsible for the divergences and varying trajectories of the changes. Thus, I will present the main actors in these policy changes and articulate the changing dynamics of the state-civil society relationship.

### 3.2 Actors of the policy changes in education

In this section, I provide general overview of the actors and their relationship with each other during the policy periods. Later, I delineate each actor and their role; I explain their primary role in education and their role during the two policy periods.

The Turkish state maintains the educational status quo by monopolizing the power to accept and implement policies. However, the state is not the sole actor.

There are numerous actors that can impact policymaking. Alongside bureaucratic

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<sup>11</sup> Ultimately, this decision was implemented only for one year. Later, the Ministry created an option for parents to decide whether to start their children's school at either as 60 or 72 months of age.

<sup>12</sup> The coefficient hurdle [*katsayı engeli*] refers to a decision by YÖK (the Council of Higher Education – Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu). According to YÖK, in national university exams, graduates of vocational and other high schools had different calculations if they choose a discipline that is irrelevant to their high school. While the former type of schools had 0.3 as a coefficient, others would have 0.8 if they choose a discipline that is irrelevant to their high school education.

institutions, there are non-state actors like civil society organizations, experts, academicians, and unions.

In 2004, we saw international and supranational actors' impact on policymaking through financial assistance as well as direct power over the policymaking process. Actors like the EU or WB affected the policymaking of public institutions like the Ministry and Board. The Ministry oversaw the policy implementation process and fulfilled the international/supranational actor's trajectory during the curriculum reform. Though the Ministry was the prime actor in negotiating with international bodies, policy implementation and programming required the expertise of the Board. The Board functions under the Ministry as the central organization for planning and implementing programs, curricula, and textbooks. Even together, these two actors were not sufficient to oversee the reform; the EU envisages higher levels of democracy through the inclusion of different sections of society in the policy implementation process, required as part of the EU access process. The monitoring of the project also necessitated the involvement of experts, CSOs, parents, students, and teachers. The relationship between the state and these actors did not follow a top-down approach. The feedback and comments of these actors in different meetings paved the way for a more balanced relationship, as seen in Figure 1. This process of reforming the curriculum took approximately two years, with a pilot study and research and development process aimed at creating a genuinely liberal and pluralistic order.

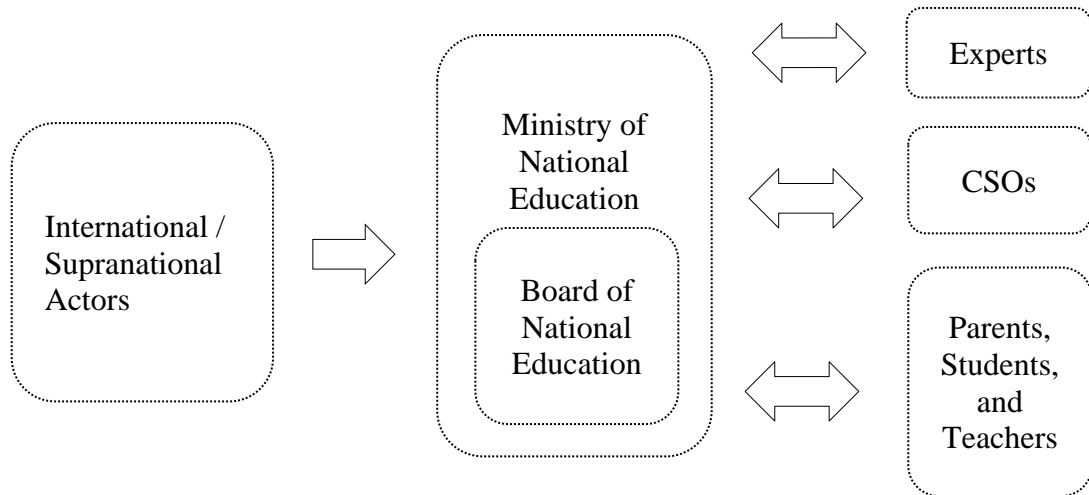


Fig. 1 Actors in the curriculum reform of 2004

The initiating actor of the 2012 system change can be seen as the 18<sup>th</sup> Council, in which the decision to change the education system into a three-tier and 12-year compulsory education system was taken. While increasing compulsory education to 12 years was not a novel idea, the 18<sup>th</sup> Council was significant since this decision informed the draft law proposed by AKP deputies, and they referred to the decisions of the 18<sup>th</sup> Council in their draft. The agenda building or initial policy formulation did not occur within the Ministry but was rather undertaken by deputies who had no previous connection to or interest in education. Following its submission, the draft law was taken up by the parliament's standing committee on education, in which deputies discussed the details of such a change. The Minister of Education and officials from the Board were present at these meetings, though often the minister and deputies who proposed the draft law were criticized for not attending all the meetings ("CHP'lilerden Ömer Dinçer'e protesto," 2012).

This standing committee also held a meeting with CSOs and experts in a sub-committee on education. Nevertheless, compared to 2004, affiliated stakeholders like

parents, students, and teachers were not included in the process as discussions were being held in parliament. Moreover, discussions with experts and CSOs were not bilateral; there was only one meeting with these actors and we can clearly demonstrate that their feedback was not heard during the standing committee's meetings. As seen in Figure 2, expert and CSOs feedback did not clearly resonate into the making of the policy. Moreover, the system change occurred within three months, without a pilot study or research and development process. The haste of the government to employ this change sparked harsh criticism by various actors, including CSOs, experts, affiliated stakeholders, etc.



Fig. 2 Actors in the system change (4+4+4) in 2012

In order to offer a detailed explanation of these changes, I will examine the following actors individually in the upcoming sections: the Ministry, Board, Council, international/supranational actors, experts, parliament and civil society (e.g., CSOs, unions, parents, students, and teachers).

### 3.2.1 Ministry of National Education

The Ministry of National Education [Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı] aims to plan and coordinate national education services at the central, provincial, and overseas areas.

It is a deeply-rooted institution that dates to the Ottoman Empire, in which education was institutionalized under the predominant control of the state in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The state's control over education was augmented with the establishment of the Republic (I. Kaplan, 1999; S. Kaplan, 2006). The Ministry has two fundamental laws that outline and regulate education, unifying and expanding different educational institutions according to the provisions of the Law on Unity of Education (no. 430) and the Basic Law of National Education (no. 1739). The basic principles and aims of the Ministry are defined in Article 2 of Law No. 1739 on National Education:

to raise individuals who are committed to Atatürk's reforms and principles; ... to bring up individuals who physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and emotionally have a moderate and healthy personality and mentality, the ability to think independently and scientifically , [and] a wide world view; ... to prepare individuals for life by ensuring that they have professions which will make them happy and contribute to the welfare of society through equipping them with the necessary knowledge, skills, attitude and habit of working cooperatively in line with their own interests, talents and abilities. (Resmi Gazete, 1973a) (see Appendix D, 1)

The Ministry has a highly intricate structure consisting of several service units, undersecretaries, deputies, councils, and advisory bodies. While the ministerial office comprises the minister, undersecretary, and deputy undersecretaries, there are numerous service units, advisory and supervisory units, auxiliary units, permanent councils, and specialized commissions. Figure C1 in Appendix C shows the Ministry's central, provincial, and overseas organizational categories. Figure C2<sup>13</sup> in the Appendix C shows the central organization of the Ministry.

The schools bear limited autonomy compared to the centralist state which organizes and controls various aspects of the education through various institutions

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<sup>13</sup> These figures reflect the Ministry's central organization prior to changes in 2012. The figure was drawn according to details from the OECD's background report on Turkish education (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development & Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2005).



dependent to the Ministry (i.e., provincial and district directorates of national education, and various directorates under the Ministry). The Ministry also highly benefits from auxiliary institutions and members in shaping the educational policies: the Council, Board, Directorate of Strategy Development, Vocational Education Board, YÖK, ÖSYM (Öğrenci Seçme ve Yerleştirme Merkezi – *Center for Measurement, Selection and Placement*), National Committee for Teacher Training, and external stakeholders consisting of international institutions (i.e., WB, European Investment Bank, UN (*United Nations*), UNICEF, and EU), private sector, CSOs, and teacher unions (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2013).

This already complex structure gains additional complexity as we look at the number of schools, teachers, and students in primary, junior high, and secondary education in recent years shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Number of Schools, Teachers, and Students in Formal Education

School Year	Number of Schools	Number of Teachers	Number of Students
2012-2013	56,574	806,697	16,156,519
2013-2014	56,506	847,889	16,473,493
2014-2015	53,574	889,695	16,403,328
2015-2016	54,415	961,331	16,379,852
2016-2017	63,153	989,231	17,702,938
2017-2018	65,568	1,030,130	17,885,248

Source: [Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2012b, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018]

Considering these numbers, the Ministry is a mammoth organization. Its complexity and size aggravate the burden of implementing certain policies since its fundamental duty is to provide service to over 16 million students. This also aggravates the financial burden of the Ministry, considering the resources necessary to service the

expenses of schools, students, and teachers. Thus, the Ministry often struggles to create a budget for investment as shown in Figure 3. While the investment budget of the Ministry has continuously risen, the proportion of investment in the budget does not follow a clear pattern.

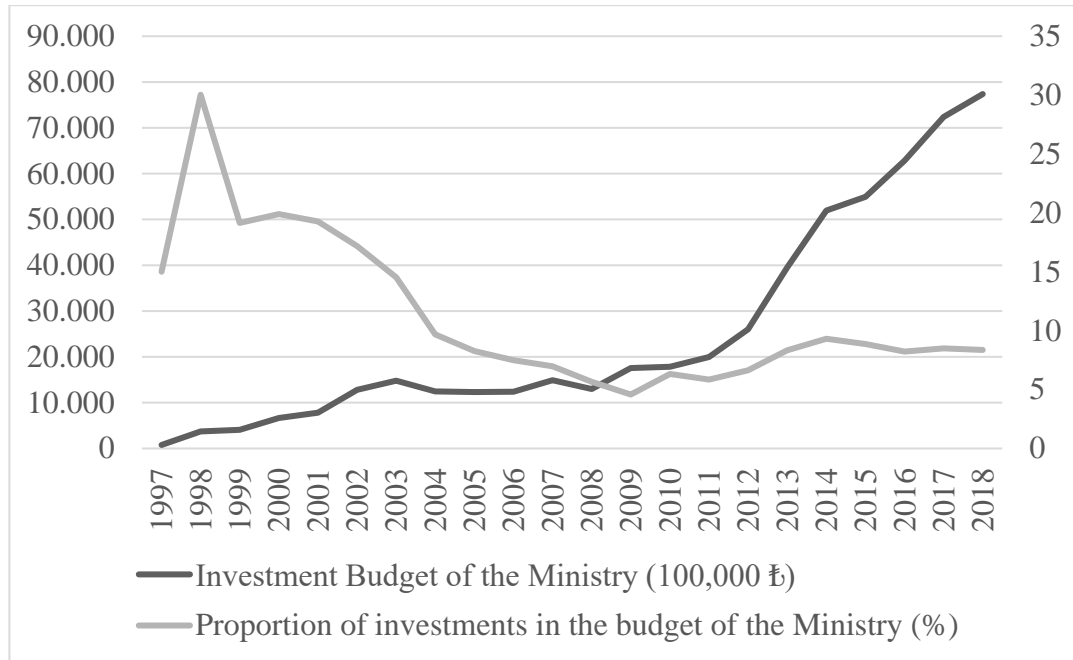


Fig. 3 Investment budget and proportion of investment in the budget of the Ministry

Source: [Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2018]

Regarding this, the Ministry requires significant resources to keep up with both fixed costs (like regular expenses of staff and schools) and variable costs (like research and development, and investments). While the Ministry has the biggest share of the general budget, this is often inadequate to meet its needs. In such cases, the Ministry seeks additional funding from programs and projects (like those from the EU and WB) designed to improve the conditions of education in Turkey.

Considering the Ministry's power and scale, it is important to analyze its role during the 2004 and 2012 policy changes. In 2004, the Ministry initiated the curriculum reform because of funding from the World Bank projects and efforts toward the EU accession process. The main motivation of the Ministry was to implement the policies outlined by the EU and WB. Considering this, the Ministry specifically sought to include stakeholders like the private sector, CSOs, and unions since participation and the reflection of different viewpoints in policymaking were essential parts of the EU accession process and understanding of democratic processes. Thus, the Ministry included various actors in the reform process: CSOs, experts, teachers, students, parents, etc. On the other hand, in 2012, actors like international/supranational institutions were absent prior to implementation of the policy, but the Council was crucial in terms of initiating the system change. Since the change was articulated in the 18<sup>th</sup> Council and deputies drafted the subsequent law, the Ministry was not the primary actor in the implementation. Instead, the Ministry was ignored, and the draft law prepared by deputies who had no expertise on education. The Ministry became involved when the draft law was discussed in parliament and stayed involved after the law passed. The Ministry was a fervent proponent of the change and supported the policy during parliamentary discussions.

### 3.2.2 Board of National Education

The Board of National Education [Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı] is under the central office of the Ministry. The Board is assigned to generate the national vision for education, employ research, improve the quality of teaching and educational administrative professionals, and develop the plans, programs and materials of the educational system. It is thus the primary body of the Ministry for scientific

consultation and inclusion in any decision making process (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development & Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2005).

Decisions and plans prepared by the Board need the approval of the minister. The duties of the Board are articulated in Article 6 of the Regulation on the Board of Education:

[The Board] plays the role of developing the education system in regard to the general and basic aims of national education, considering the universal standards of quality, equality, and effectiveness which are based on national and social values; ...if required, in order to prepare education and training programs, textbooks, subsidiary books, and teacher's guidance book, the Board can cooperate with higher education institutes, civil society organizations, and other state and private institutions and bodies; ...conducting or supervising research in the education system, education and training plan and programs, textbooks, and educational instruments... (Resmi Gazete, 2012) (see Appendix D, 2)

In 2004, the Board worked under the control of the Ministry to develop the new curriculum. In preparing the programs, textbooks, and plans, the Board organized meetings, conducted research, and cooperated with non-state actors. On the other hand, in 2012, the Board did not have as direct of a role as it did in 2004. Eventually, after the draft law was passed, the Board assisted in planning and organizing the new program and textbooks alongside the Ministry for a brief period of time.

### 3.2.3 National Education Council

The National Education Council [Milli Eğitim Şurası] is one of the permanent councils under the Ministry's central office. The Council is the supreme advisory council of the Ministry (Resmi Gazete, 2014). The Council assists the Ministry mainly in setting education policies.

Starting in 1939, National Education Councils were planned to be held every four years. The councils are formed at the national level, include participants from all

social sectors and aim to increase the available quality and quantity of educational services. Each Council is organized with the Minister's instigation, and preparations for the Council meeting began with provincial and regional meetings producing reports that define the key topics to be discussed. The Council generally gathers for three to four days, during which committees and subcommittees are established to discuss each topic. The Council consists of regular members, elected members, guest members, and observers. The number and attendee list are predetermined by internal regulations. Aside from the Ministry, its auxiliary and service units, and different state officials, the Council includes CSOs, unions, experts, newspapers, representatives from the private sector, teachers, students, and parents. Considering the job definition and its organizational features, Councils create a de facto collaborative space with the ability to propose necessary changes in policymaking through diverse participation.

As of 2014, 19 National Education Councils have been held on, with three occurring during the AKP period. Table 4 summarizes general information about the Councils that have been undertaken during the AKP government.<sup>14</sup> While in 2006 the Council focused on the EU accession process and exam system, in 2010 the focus was on 2023, the year in which the Republic of Turkey will celebrate its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. In both 2006 and 2010, the meetings of the Council were transcribed and reported. The 19<sup>th</sup> Council focused on problems facing programs, teachers, and administrators, and the report of the Council was not transcribed.

Due to frequent institutional crises and coups, the National Education Councils have not been properly organized every four years, despite the regulation. Also, over the

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<sup>14</sup> The National Education Council is supposed to gather every four years according to its regulations. However, in 2018, despite the four-year period having elapsed, the Council did not meet.

years, the regulations and content of the Councils have gradually changed. The initial regulation was enacted in 1946, with changes following in 1970, 1983, 1993, 1995, and 2014. The regulations governing meeting regularity are often ignored due to the fragile political environment of the country. This shows that educational policymaking is highly dependent on entrenched state tradition, the political nature of which has a considerable impact on the process.

Table 4. National Education Councils During AKP Governments

	17 <sup>th</sup> National Education Council	18 <sup>th</sup> National Education Council	19 <sup>th</sup> National Education Council
Date	13-17 November 2006	1-5 November 2010	2-6 December 2014
Place	Ankara (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Şura Salonu)	Ankara (Kızılcahamam Asya Termal Otel)	Antalya (Lykia World Hotel)
Name	Transition between Levels of Education in Turkish National Education, Guidance and Exam System, and Turkish National Education System During Globalization and the EU Accession Process	Vision of 2023 in Education	Instruction Programs and Weekly Course Charts, Enhancing Teacher Quality, Enhancing Administrator Quality, and School Security
Minister of Education	Hüseyin Çelik	Nimet Çubukçu	Nabi Avcı
Print Transcript	Available, Transcribed	Not available, Transcribed	Not available, Not transcribed

#### 3.2.4 Civil society organizations (CSOs)

Civil society refers to a web of social relations and organizations outside the state and business sectors. Generally, this concept encompasses civil organizations and non-governmental organizations in which people gather for social and political reasons. Since the Turkish state has a centralized education system, it dominates the field in educational planning and decision making. Thus, CSOs in education often depend on the state's trajectory in their work.

Case studies on CSOs related to the field of education claim that the state has become less antagonistic towards non-state actors after the 1990s (Aksay, 2009). Often, the state employs these organizations in order to use their workforce to provide services. The Ministry is more open to the inclusion of CSOs in administrative and operational tasks since CSOs can play different roles: service provision (in cases where state provision is inadequate), innovation (in cases where novel thinking and expert practices are needed) and offering an outside perspective (Aksay, 2009). The state therefore has altered its position and approach to CSOs in policymaking. This, however, should not be considered a radical change; CSOs continue to lack the power to affect making and implementing decisions. Thus, the state remains the dominant actor in the relationship.

Considering the political context of Turkey in 2004, the cooperation with CSOs signaled a change in civil society-state relations and the EU accession process. Incorporating and supporting CSOs were good governance practices that once employed by Turkey. Thus, the EU harmonization process triggered the inclusion of civil society in the state's policymaking process. One example of this inclusion was the curriculum reform.

Beginning in October 2003, the Ministry and Board incorporated CSOs from the field of education in their research and development process for the curriculum reform. In October 2003, the Board requested the opinions and suggestions of civil society organizations in developing the new curriculum. While the Board requested feedback from 25 CSOs, only seven responded with their opinions and suggestions. In 2004, the Ministry organized a meeting at Ankara Başkent Öğretmen Evi called “Geleceği Birlikte Tasarlamak” [Designing the Future Together] to which 37 CSOs were invited. Out these, 20 attended the meeting on May 4, 2004. Various organizations gathered in order to deliver their desires and visions for the new curriculum. Additionally, several meetings with experts had previously been conducted to design the new curriculum and content of the courses (including areas such as Turkish, science, mathematics and social sciences). Another meeting held was with publishing companies to gain their perspective on program development.

In contrast, in 2012, meetings with the CSOs did not occur as a result of the direction or interest of the Ministry or Board but rather due to rising opposition. The state’s disinterest in CSO input was also topic of discussion in standing committee meetings. Many deputies from the Republican People’s Party and the Nationalist Movement Party claimed that CSOs were not properly included in the policy process (Tutanak Dergisi, 2012d). This conflictual nature of the CSOs inclusion created further discussion on proper implementation of the change. After deputies proposed the draft law, the opposition demanded to schedule discussions within the parliament’s standing committee: National Education, Culture, Youth and Sports Committee. This standing committee organized a one-day meeting with CSOs invited by the Ministry and provided only two days’ notice beforehand. This meeting, held on February 28, 2012, hosted four unions (Eğitim-Sen, Eğitim-Bir-



Sen, Eğitim-İş, Kamu-Sen and Türk Eğitim-Sen), two academicians from universities, one confederation (TESK), eight non-governmental organizations (ERG, TEV, İlmi Yayma Cemiyeti, TEGV, ÖNDER, TEPAV, TED, and ENSAR). This meeting was an amalgam of two different ideologies: those who supported the current government (Eğitim-Bir-Sen, İlmi Yayma Cemiyeti, ÖNDER, and ENSAR) and those who were critical of the current government (Eğitim-Sen, Eğitim-İş, TEGV, TEPAV, and TED).<sup>15</sup>

### 3.2.5 Experts

Experts on education also took part in educational policymaking during these periods. Certain abovementioned actors, like the Ministry and Board, CSOs, and international or supranational actors, also employ in-house experts as personnel. Here, by experts, I refer to external individuals who are not representatives of state institutions or civil society organizations, and who are often from universities' education faculties or independent organizations (our cases also include columnists among the experts). Compared to in-house experts, they are able to work independently from institutional regulations. Experts contribute to policy changes as their specialty enables them to reflect on issues and respond with knowledge and experience. My emphasis on external experts derives from the need to explain how inclusive the policy process was. The presence of external experts alongside in-house experts signifies a high level of inclusiveness during policymaking. However, in the two cases examined here, there is a clear disconnect that exists between the two instances of policy change that needs to be illustrated.

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<sup>15</sup> Of these actors, only İlmi Yayma Cemiyeti did not attend the meeting.

Experts' role in 2004 curriculum reform were prominent compared to the 2012 system change. In 2004, the Board and Ministry particularly included experts from university's education faculties for in the programming and planning for specific courses in primary education. The Board discussed the programs and curricula of courses like Turkish, science, social studies, and mathematics with experts. Each course was the subject of specific meetings where experts shared their visions for the prospective curriculum. In addition to specific courses, experts were also consulted in general meetings regarding program organization and curriculum design.

In contrast, in 2012, experts were not prevalent actors in the policy change. The parliamentary minutes of the standing committee meeting with CSOs indicate the presence of two academicians from education faculties: Yaşar Özden from Middle East Technical University and Ali Gürbey from Gazi University. Other than these experts, the expertise and knowledge of experts in the field was not sought in designing the policy. Therefore, experts were clearly not prominent actors in the 2012 system change.

### 3.2.6 Affiliated stakeholders: Teachers, students, and parents

In terms of other stakeholders, teachers, students, and parents may directly or indirectly have a role in policymaking. Individuals are also directly or indirectly affected by the policy change but may not be organized into specific associations in civil society. In both of the cases examined, however, these people play a significant role.

In 2004, the Ministry created a transparent policymaking environment, using the internet to include teachers, parents, and students in the research and

development process. Performing a pilot study was another way to include affiliated stakeholders in the policymaking process.

In 2012, the policymaking process was precipitated outside affiliated stakeholders' sphere of influence. Neither the parliamentary discussions nor standing committee meetings included teachers, students, or parents. The critical role played by these affiliated stakeholders was not in the making of the policy but as opposition to it. Those who opposed the system change gathered and demonstrated against it. Nationwide protests of parents, students, and teachers gained attention of the media. These actors were not alone; unions like Eğitim-İş, Eğitim-Sen, and KESK also organized protests (KESK, 2012).

### 3.2.7 International/Supranational actors

International or supranational actors are another factor in educational policymaking that we must take into consideration because they play a significant role in terms of finance and expertise. In understanding the role of international or supranational actors, we should also look at the Ministry since it is the executive decision making body for international projects affecting education. Moreover, it leverages the support of international/supranational actors into an auxiliary service unit. Since its establishment, the Ministry has pursued the support of international organizations at different levels of education; this assistance mainly consists of credits or investments that are used in various aspects of educational policies (Akyüz, 2015). However, these actors represent more than a simple financial resource for the Ministry. Aside from financial support, the Ministry also benefits from their expertise in gaining an international perspective for developing the education system. As of the 1990s, institutions like the WB, European Investment Bank, European Training Foundation

(ETF), UN, OECD, UNICEF, and EU have played a significant role in the policymaking process for developing countries that need financial assistance. Along with financial instruments, these organization also employ technical instruments in implementing, administering, and harmonizing policies. All in all, these institutions have a particular interest in education policies, especially after the 1990s with the spread of the neoliberal agenda (Ínal, 2006, pp. 55-57).

Considering the 2004 process, the EU and WB were key actors. In terms of financial assistance, these institutions do not simply donate but also monitor where and how the money was spent. Thus in addition to the donation itself, the entire policymaking process is audited by these institutions. These donations are often controlled with the expert's opinions, and reports to guide and fasten the project implementation. This monitoring is often at odds with institutions like the Ministry. Often, the Ministry wants to keep interference by other actors at a minimum. However, in the 2000s, three EU-financed projects created an exception to the Ministry's preferences: the Support to Basic Education Program (SBEP), Strengthening the Vocational Education and Training System Project (SVET), and Modernization of Vocational Education and Training (MVET). These projects required monitoring and control via "Progress Reports" to the EU Commission. The duration and budget of these programs are summarized in Table 5. These three projects are significant both in terms of their financial impact as well as their role in furthering progress in the chapters of the *acquis*, especially the "Education and Culture" chapter.

Table 5. EU-Financed Project Duration and Budget

Name of the Project	Duration	Budget
Support to Basic Education Program	2003-2007	100 million euro
Strengthening the Vocational Education and Training System Project	2003-2007	18.5 million euro
Modernization of Vocational Education and Training	2002-2007	58.2 million euro

Source: [EDUSER, 2007; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and

Development & Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2005]

Among these projects, the Support to Basic Education Program (SBEP), initiated in February 2000 but implemented in 2003, was significant for the curriculum change. Project expenditures were provided by the EU under the monetary assistance program called the “Mediterranean Economic Development Area” (MEDA). This project aimed to educate those who drop out of basic education like girls, adults, and vulnerable children affected by poverty in rural areas and the shanty towns of cities. One of the outcomes of the program was the curriculum change and its policy formation process. The curriculum reform was financialized under the coordination of the Board, General Directorate of Primary Education, and EARGED (Eğitimi Araştırma ve Geliştirme Dairesi Başkanlığı - Department of Research and Development of Education) which undertook the pilot study (S. Çelik, 2010). Though the EU does not have a common education policy, it still aims to ensure a certain quality level and features. The Treaty of Maastricht (1992) has provisions that enable countries maintain responsibility for their own education system and not adopt a common policy. Only the Treaty of Rome (1957) has provisions for vocational education without any obligations (TEPAV, 2006).

Alongside the EU, the WB's BEP I and II played a key role in the curriculum reform as a financial resource. As mentioned before, the Ministry is an extensive organization with a massive workload. Thus, it also requires significant resources to maintain its operations. Generally, the national budget share of the Ministry is enough to respond to educational demands, but loans and grants are incorporated to implement projects and strengthen the education system (Akyüz, 2015, p. 193). While the EU-propelled reform programs in education indicate the state's endeavors in the accession process, for World Bank-financed projects, the state's economic relations should be taken into consideration (Akyüz, 2015).

Programs from the EU are based on donations, but projects funded by the WB are financed through loans. The first phase of the BEP aimed to extend eight-year compulsory education nationwide, improve the quality of primary education, promote interest in primary schools, and make schools a learning center for everyone in society while the second phase aimed to promote basic education, improve the quality of education, increase the capacity and access to education (S. Çelik, 2010). Both phases lasted for ten years in total, requiring a loan of over 500 million USD. World Bank reports claim that BEP I was not successful, but BEP II was partially successful (Z. Çelik, 2012, p. 81). These projects' lack of success was blamed on the complex structure of the Ministry, particularly the Ministry's complex organizational structure and disharmony between bureaucrats prolonging the projects' duration (Z. Çelik, 2012, p. 98).

Besides financial support and policy expertise, these organizations also play a significant role in determining the benchmarks for success in education. For instance, since 2002, Turkey has administered the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment), PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) and TIMSS

(Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) tests to assess the quality of education. The results of these tests are important in the Ministry's policymaking process. For instance, in 2004, Çelik argued that poor results in international exams like PISA, PIRLS and TIMSS support the necessity of changing the curriculum. Moreover, Turkey's poor performance compared to other countries highlights the inequalities and poor quality of education; thus, these exams become an important indicator. Similarly, in 2012, the system change was initiated in order to achieve a better ranking among OECD countries in both economic and educational terms.

These institutions are not specifically interested in one subject or even necessarily curriculum reform. Instead, the investments and projects supported by the EU and WB vary; other programs focus on vocational education, the quality of education, equality in education, and teacher education and training, etc. (Dinçer, 2015). Alongside with directly or indirectly being responsible for a variety of programs, the Turkish government also acknowledges these institutions' role in education. The 17<sup>th</sup> Council report stressed the fact that both the EU and Turkish government envision the Turkish education system as appropriate to the conditions and provisions of the EU. Such a mentality affected not only the decisions of the Council but overall educational policymaking of the time. This mentality also paved the way for other actors' inclusion because MEDA and Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) funds provide for the inclusion of CSOs in the executive and operational structure of the Ministry (Akyüz, 2015). This coincides with the neoliberal agenda, which has increasingly emphasized the non-state actors' role of providing social services in fields like education but can be also seen as increasing the level of democracy from these institutions' perspective (Sutton & Arnove, 2004). Not just the existence of CSOs but also growth in the number of associations are

crucial evidence of further democratization taking place as a result of programs financed by the EU or WB (Ketola, 2012).

### 3.2.8 National Education, Culture, Youth and Sports Committee

The final actor in this chapter is the parliament's standing committee in which the draft law was discussed. The standing committee was only involved in the 2012 system change because the curriculum reform did not require legislative agenda-setting.

As mentioned before, the standing committee met in order to discuss the details of the proposed law as well as to determine if it should advance to parliamentary vote. The standing committee is a specialized committee of parliament; it is concerned with bills and draft laws referred by parliament regarding education, history, culture, art, youth and sports, university establishment, religious affairs, and similar subjects (Resmi Gazete, 1973b). Since the policy change in 2012 was a draft law proposed to parliament, the draft was delegated to the standing committee.

The standing committee works according to the internal regulations of parliament. The standing committee must finalize the draft law (whether it is dismissed or affirmed) within 45 days, as stated in Article 37 (Resmi Gazete, 1973a). The standing committee is open to the media and other deputies as observers, but only standing committee members can propose or vote on a motion. One third of the members must be present for motions to be voted on. Membership in the standing committee is determined according to the percentage each political party holds in parliament, according to Article 11 of the internal regulation. The standing committee is composed of 26 members, including a committee president,



spokesperson, and clerk. Parliamentary regulations governing standing committees, however, do not govern the details of how meetings are to be conducted and such decisions are left to the members. Thus, the members of the standing committee are not limited in terms of speaking time.

There were seven standing committee meetings held on February 23 and March 5-11, 2012. One of these meetings (a sub-committee meeting) was conducted with CSOs on February 28, 2012. Standing committee meetings defined the details of the system change, since the proposed law did not include any specificities on how the policy change was to be implemented. Many aspects of the policy were developed in these meetings, especially in the sub-committee meeting attended by the CSOs. The sub-committee meeting with CSOs was fruitful in making some adjustments to the draft law, including that apprenticeship age was not reduced to ten. The draft law also proposed that the Council of Ministers should be designated to decide on distance education for secondary schools. The meeting did not allow for authority on initiatives regarding secondary schools to be delegated to the Council of Ministers.

In this chapter, I have provided background information on two policy periods: the 2004 curriculum reform and 2012 system change. I explained the aims of each policy and how policymaking in each period was performed. In order to elaborate on each period, I also presented the actors and their role during these changes. Ultimately, I aimed to show the state's participatory and inclusive approach in the former process in comparison to the latter period in which we see a state that selectively includes civil society in policymaking.

## CHAPTER 4

### TWO MODALITIES OF CHANGE:

#### FORMAL AND INFORMAL INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

In this chapter, I focus on understanding how the relationship between the state and educational civil society changed in Turkey from 2002 to 2012. As shown in the previous chapter, the state adopted a selective approach in the making of the system change in 2012. In the 2004 curriculum reform, the state was an adamant supporter and practitioner of cooperation. In the system change, the state initiated the policy process in the legislative organ – the parliament – and bypassed educational institutions. Criticism from opposition parties in parliament paved the way for the inclusion of CSOs, but their participation was limited. This striking change needs an explanation.

Before explaining how this change occurred, I first examine the relationship between the state and educational civil society based on fieldwork interviews. I also engage with the literature and the previous chapter's framework to comprehensively elucidate this relationship. This section will be useful in understanding the changing role of these actors. I rely on my interviewees' comments and narration of the two policy periods to explicate this change. In this section, I underscore the changing attitude of the state as well as the evolution of the actors during these processes.

In the following sections, I explore related formal and informal institutional changes. Formal institutional changes focus on amendments to existing rules and regulations. Formal institutional changes include those at the Ministry of National Education (Ministry), the National Education Council (Council), and the Board of

Education (Board). I combine documents and interviews to demonstrate how these institutions underwent critical changes in their legal framework. Later, I delve into parliamentary discussions on the 2012 system change to highlight informal institutional changes. By informal institutional changes, I refer to the bypassing of governing rules and regulations within these bodies. This section will focus on how governing laws and regulations in the executive-legislative organs are bypassed.

#### 4.1 The state and CSO perspectives of each other

While literature on the relationship between the Turkish state and civil society emphasize the antagonism between actors, I want to take a more nuanced approach to the relationship during the curriculum change and system change. I demonstrate that the existing relationship is more nuanced than portrayed and should not be strictly defined as antagonistic. I depict a relationship that is manifold similar to what Paker et al. (2013) claimed for Turkish environmental organizations.

Part of my interview questions were aimed at understanding what these actors could describe about the policy periods in question. I also intended to delineate the state and non-state actors' perspectives of each other. I wanted to see whether the literature's claim of an omnipotent Turkish state in opposition to civil society was the reality for educational civil society. I asked: "Can you elucidate the curriculum change in 2003-2005 (or system change in 2012) in your terms?" I used probe questions like "Who were the actors of this process;" "What kind of relationship was established;" and "Do you think there is a difference between the two periods, and if so, can you elaborate?"

When asked about the policy periods, interviewees' narration described significant differences. For the curriculum change, most of the interviewees

emphasized the cooperative approach of the state that I examined in the background chapter (Chapter 3). Interviewees described this policy period as “cooperative,” “open,” “meticulous,” and “surprisingly effective” (Interviews 2, 6, 7, 14, 15). The curriculum reform struck the interviewees as an anomaly, since the state was not close to external actors in policymaking prior to the EU accession process and early years of the AKP regime. One CSO representative highlighted this unexpected participatory approach: “We were never asked about how to design a curriculum before” (Interview 3). The same interviewee claimed that all the CSOs were quite surprised and could not understand what was going on. This doubt did not hinder CSO participation. On the contrary, participation was high and there was “vigorous cooperation” (Interview 3).<sup>16</sup>

In contrast to the curriculum change, interviewees interpreted the attitude of the state during the system change negatively. They used words like “limited,” “selective,” “unfair,” “hasty,” and “coup-like” to describe the process (Interviews 2, 8, 12). One former state official and CSO executive juxtaposed these two policy periods and underscored the difference: “If you are talking about inclusiveness, it was quite limited compared to the 2003 process [curriculum reform]” (Interview 2).<sup>17</sup> The government’s inclusive processes from the previous period were discontinued, and the inclusion of CSOs, the private sector, and universities ceased (Interview 13).

When asked about the various actors’ role in policymaking, the interviewees mentioned different actors for the curriculum reform: numerous state bodies, international organizations, and civil society. One civil society representative claimed that the international organization’s assistance made the curriculum reform

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<sup>16</sup> Translated from: “Çoşkulu katılım”

<sup>17</sup> Translated from: “Katılımcılıktan etkiyi kastediyorsanız 2003'tekiye oranla bence çok limitli bir etkisi oldu.”

possible because “the EU was pushing, UNICEF was pushing, UNESCO, and Turkish civil society were pushing” (Interview 12).<sup>18</sup>

The early years of the AKP regime involved the participation of different actors in policymaking. These years also coincide with the party’s introduction to the international environment and its attempts to gain international and domestic legitimacy (Öniş, 2016; Özbudun, 2014). For instance, one civil society interviewee claimed that “2003-2007 was the period of modernization” (Interview 14).<sup>19</sup> Considering the international community’s expectations of Turkey’s new party in the early 2000s, the AKP responded with progress and modernization. This period was “a chance to alter the party’s image in the international arena” (Interview 12).<sup>20</sup> Other interviewees similarly agreed with this period’s inclusive approach and the importance of it for the party.

In contrast, there was a lack of diversity in educational policymaking actors in the 2012 system change. In addition to selective inclusion, participation in the policymaking process itself was also limited for CSOs. One interviewee who participated in the parliamentary discussions as a CSO representative emphasized the restricted ability to express knowledge and ideas: “There was no right to speak there. It was a quite limited arena” (Interview 12).<sup>21</sup>

Since the system change was initiated by deputies through a draft law, the state institutions responsible for education were also left out of policymaking. Another CSO representative argued that the Ministry and Board did not have prior knowledge of the system change and were ambushed by the deputies: “Our

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<sup>18</sup> Translated from: “AB bastırıyordu, UNICEF bastırıyordu, UNESCO... Türkiye sivil toplumu bastırıyordu.”

<sup>19</sup> Translated from: “2003-2007 dönemi modernleşme zamanıydı.”

<sup>20</sup> Translated from: “... uluslararası arenada imajını değiştirecek bir şey olarak gördü.”

<sup>21</sup> Translated from: “Söz hakkı olmuyor sana yani. Çok kısıtlı bir alan var orada yani.”

observation is that the Ministry and its bureaucrats did not have too much information [about 4+4+4], but there is no proof of that, it is just how we feel” (Interview 9).<sup>22</sup> Compared to the former policy period, interviewees evaluated the system change as a problematic process (Interviews 8, 10, 12, 15).

With respect to the interaction between the state and CSOs, interviewees underlined a worsening relationship from the early 2000s to 2010s. One CSO representative depicted the system change in 2012 as a “coup-like process” since non-state actors and even some state actors had no knowledge about the policy change prior to the parliamentary discussions:

I would define this policymaking process as a coup. In a snap, when no one is prepared, a draft law emerges. The country’s education system is changing within a month and a half. The fact that the parliament approves it doesn’t mean that there was deliberative democracy. These things cannot be done by inviting the CSOs for only one day. In fact, the inclusion of civil society had occurred in the curriculum reform. (Interview 12) (see Appendix D, 3)

In comparison to the curriculum reform, the 2012 system change not only restricted the inclusion of civil society into policymaking but also instrumentalized legislative agenda-setting in order to advance a policy within a short period of time. In addition, this selective inclusion paved the way for a different approach of the state towards civil society. For instance, one CSO representative underscored the mushrooming of government-friendly CSOs in policymaking and the state’s changing attitude towards different civil society groups as follows:

Of course, there was a period of support to CSOs, care for the dialogue with CSOs, where state bodies would be transparent towards CSOs, civilians and others who would work for this during the EU process. In the early times it was like this but gradually this story changed, and in the last couple of years policymaking is not inclusive. ... Ah, during this period they created government-friendly CSOs, that’s a thing. Later, they gave all the money to them. (Interview 5) (see Appendix D, 4)

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<sup>22</sup> Translated from: “MEB ve bürokratlarının bu yönde çok fazla bilgisi olmadığı yönünde kanaatimizde belirdi ama bu konu ile ilgili somut bir bilgi yok, bu gözlemimiz.”

The introduction of government-friendly CSOs to civil society challenged the state's relationship with other non-state actors. For certain CSOs, the state became more impenetrable. One former state official, who is currently a CSO representative, gave the following example to explain how the state favored certain CSOs that were supporting the regime's ideology and vision:

At times, when we would meet ERG representatives, they would complain they couldn't get a chance to meet with the state. We, as SETA,<sup>23</sup> were known as being close to the state. But, in meetings [with the state] we would also have problems. Because we were not telling them what they wanted to hear. (Interview 10) (see Appendix D, 5)

So, the state's selective inclusion overwhelmingly affected CSOs in the later policy period. Even CSOs that were close to the state may have been excluded.

The Turkish state's non-cooperation with external actors is not a new phenomenon; one CSO representative gave the example of the Board and Ministry's attitude towards external actors prior to the AKP period: "The Board has this history as a bureaucratic structure. They position themselves as a higher body of very valuable state officials; they believe that education is vested in them" (Interview 12).<sup>24</sup> Similarly, another CSO representative underscored how the state eschewed CSO participation in policymaking before the AKP regime: "In the end, these institutions are hard to penetrate. They are closed and, based on my observations, they only ask for an opinion if there is a need. ... But sometimes, the state strongly supports [the CSOs]" (Interview 1).<sup>25</sup> Also, a state that is not inclusive toward

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<sup>23</sup> The Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research [Siyaset, Ekonomi ve Toplum Araştırmaları Vakfı] (SETA) is a public policy think tank known for their sympathy to the AKP regime.

<sup>24</sup> Translated from: "Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı mesela biraz böyle bir tarihi var bürokrat olarak. Kendilerini çok üst bir konumda kurguladığı için çok büyük devlet insanlarıyız biz şeklinde, devletin eğitimi bize emanet ... şeklinde bir bakış açısı vardı."

<sup>25</sup> Translated from: "Yani sonuçta bunlar çok kapalı yapılar. Kapalı yapılar ve ondan sonra ihtiyaçlar vs. doğrultusunda gözlemlediğim kadarıyla işte yeri geldiğinde görüş alıyorlar. Yeri geliyor çok destekleniyor."

external actors can cooperate if it deems necessary. This reflects the state's different relationships with non-state actors (Paker et al., 2013).

In terms of actors, the interviewees also discussed the role of parliament in policymaking. In the history of Turkish education, there are a number of examples of parliament meddling with the Ministry's duties. However, these examples are generally limited to periods under military rule. For example, the Council of Higher Education [Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu] (YÖK), one of the essential institutions regulating higher education, is a product of the 1980 coup. Another example can be seen with the interference of the army in the compulsory education and headscarf issues in a 1997 military memorandum.<sup>26</sup>

Besides these unusual instances, policymaking authority in education is vested in the Ministry and Board. Yet, the policymaking process of the 2012 system change started in parliament. The proposal of a draft law allowed parliament to directly intervene in educational policies while keeping related educational stakeholders outside of the policy process. One CSO representative claimed that: "Our parliamentary system allowed deputies to prepare a draft law without the knowledge of the Ministry" (Interview 15).<sup>27</sup> Moreover, in 2012, the Ministry and Board were excluded from policymaking; one CSO representative summarized the parliament's presence in 2012: "My intuition says that in the 2003 reform the Ministry and Board were the principal actors while in 2012 and onwards there was the parliament rather than the Ministry" (Interview 2).<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> After 1997 memorandum, the compulsory education set to eight years with five years of elementary schooling and three years of secondary schooling. This led to closure of imam-hatip secondary schools.

<sup>27</sup> Translated from: "Birinde 4 tane milletvekili teklif hazırlıyor ve bakanlığın hiçbir haberi yok doğrudan doğruya ki o dönemki parlamenter sistem zaten buna izin veriyor."

<sup>28</sup> Translated from: "Sezgim şu 2003'teki reformda TTKB ve MEB ne kadar başat etkin bir roldeyse, 2012'deki ve bence değil sonraki politika değişikliklerinde de esasında bakanlıktan çok meclis şeydi."



How can we understand this difference in the state's attitude towards educational civil society which I term "cooperation" and "selective inclusion?" The following parts will explain this change with reference to the formal and informal institutional changes. Formal institutional changes refer to alterations within the written governing rules and regulations. Informal institutional changes, on the other hand, to describe the bypassing of unwritten rules and regulations.

#### 4.2 Formal institutional changes

In this section, I examine the formal institutional changes within the Ministry, Board, and Council. I focus on the evolution of the laws and regulations of these bodies in detail.

Institutions are one of the central concepts in political science. There are various ways to define institutions, and often these definitions emphasize institutions as the embodiment of "rules of behavior" (North, 1990). Institutions consist of persons, funds, buildings, governing activities to achieve certain outputs (Heritier, 2007, p. 5; Ostrom & Kiser, 1982, p. 193). Additionally, institutions are shared beliefs (Greif & Laitin, 2004) about structures and procedures that embody the world, actions, and outputs. These beliefs or rules can be formal or informal, vague or clear, written or non-written, subject to constitution, laws or regulations or not (Hayek, 1967, p. 6; Heritier, 2007, p. 56).

Institutions change subtly over time (Thelen & Mahoney, 2010, p. 1). This change is explained differently by different schools of thoughts (e.g., rational-choice institutionalism, historical institutionalism, and sociological institutionalism) (Thelen & Mahoney, 2010, p. 4). Whether intended or not, institutional change can enable the

agency of actors within these institutions and/or support the existing system to maintain themselves (Thelen & Conran, 2016, p. 68).

In this study, I adopt the following definition: institutional change encompasses “marginal amendments, revisions, or additions” to existing rules that occur due to different reasons (Thelen & Conran, 2016, p. 65). In this section, I particularly focus on one type of institutional change: displacement (Thelen and Mahoney, 2010). In displacement, existing rules and regulations within an institution are held in abeyance while new rules are introduced (Thelen & Mahoney, 2010, pp. 15-16).

To explain formal institutional changes, I want to start with the Ministry of National Education since it is the main body that develops and articulates educational policies. In 2011, Decree having the Force of Law No. 652 (the Decree) substantially altered the structure of the Ministry. Before explaining the changes entailed by this decree, I want to explain this type of decree and its use.

Decrees having the Force of Law [*kanun hükmünde kararname*] were introduced to the Turkish legal framework with the 1971 amendments to the 1961 Constitution. Such decrees were later defined and clarified by the 1982 Constitution. According to the 1982 Constitution, two types of decrees having the force of law are possible: those issued during a state of emergency and those issued in the normal course of the state. Decree No. 652 is a product of ordinary times. Article 87 of the Turkish Constitution enables the parliament to provide “to scrutinize the Council of Ministers and the ministers; to authorize the Council of Ministers; to issue decrees having the force of law on certain matters” (Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, 2001). Article 91 regulates the power to enact decrees having the force of law:

The Grand National Assembly of Turkey may empower the Council of Ministers to issue decrees having force of law. However, the fundamental rights, individual rights, and duties included in the First and Second Chapter of the Second Part of the Constitution and the political rights and duties listed in the Fourth Chapter cannot be regulated by decrees having force of law except during periods of martial law and states of emergency. (Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, 2001)

Before the AKP regime, there was widespread use of such decrees by coalition parties to speed up legislation; this malpractice led to legal problems (Tan, 1995, p. 335). According to Tan (1995), there was abuse and misuse of these decrees since the authorization of the Council of Ministers was not explicitly required in the Constitution. In the 2002 election campaign, the AKP assured the public that the party would not use decrees if it came to power (Hazama & Iba, 2017, p. 329). This promise was kept until 2011, when the AKP government issued 35 decrees having the force of law (among these was Decree No. 652), which significantly changed the organization and function of various public service institutions (Hazama & Iba, 2017, p. 330). Despite having the majority in parliament, the AKP started to use these decrees in order to thoroughly change institutions.

Decree No. 652 targeted the organization and duties of the Ministry of National Education. There were several reasons to enact this decree: the sluggish bureaucracy, the hierarchical structure that hinders necessary changes, and the clash between the aims of the Ministry and its organization (Tabak & Güçlü, 2017, p. 413). The presence of numerous units stymied easy decision making because the vertical hierarchy slowed such processes; thus, the organizational structure of the Ministry clashed with its aim of rapidly making necessary changes. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Ministry is a massive organization with units and sub-units that made coordination and administration more difficult. There were also idle sub-units or units with contradicting duties (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2009). With this Decree,

the number of bodies in the central organization of the Ministry was reduced from 34 to 19. Bodies with similar organizational and functional purposes were merged and those considered idle were shut down.

Similarly, changes within the central organization were repeated in the provincial and overseas structures. While some interviewees (state officials and CSO representatives) saw this change as an opportunity to eradicate sluggishness (Interviews 15 and 13), there were others (civil society representatives) who claimed that the complexity of the Ministry remained despite the changes (Interviews 12 and 14). In addition to the organizational changes, there were other alterations regarding Ministry staff and teachers (the rules of appointment), provincial directors (the rules of rotation), contracted officers (their role and pension), inspectors (their role and pension), and the Ministry's definitions of certain positions within the institution and appointments to the related bodies. The Decree also gave substantial power to Minister Ömer Dinçer to alter the structure of the Ministry and Board. Thus, this law enabled the Ministry to gain the upper hand in policymaking by eliminating the power of the Board. During the system change, the Ministry did not struggle with opposition from bureaucrats or other institutions due to the structural changes achieved through Decree No. 652 (Interview 13). One senior state official gave the example of the 2012 system change to elucidate this power:

I passed the law [Decree having the Force of Law No. 652] and all the existing personnel in these institutions was purged. The re-structuring of the Ministry and Board is one of the most critical things during the AK Party period. The law enabled us to change the directorates under the Ministry, so I changed them. (Interview 13) (see Appendix D, 6)

This Decree enabled the Ministry to alter the positions of existing personnel, which led to a purge of numerous officials (H. Çelik, 2016; Memurlar.net, 2011).

Provisional Clause 3 of the Decree stated:

When this decree of having the force of law goes in effect the occupation of the following staff in these positions is ended: in the central organization of the Ministry, Undersecretary, Deputy Undersecretary, President of the Board of Education and its members, General Manager, Director of the Inspection Board, Director of Directorate for Strategy Development, Legal Counselor I, Assistant General Manager, Head of Department (of main and auxiliary units), Head of Department, Counsellors to the Minister, Press and Public Relations Counselor, Executive Assistant, Heads of Units, and Provincial Directors within the Ministry's provincial organization. (Resmi Gazete, 2011) (see Appendix D, 7)

The top-down purge and re-assignment of officials was interpreted by some as favoritism. According to one civil society representative, "There was extensive change within the staff. Dinçer aimed to fill these positions with yes-men" (Interview 12).<sup>29</sup>

Moreover, the Decree created turmoil and heated debates within the parliament. 116 deputies from parliament filed an appeal to the Constitutional Court, claiming that Decree No. 652 was unconstitutional and should be rescinded (Memurlar.net, 2013). The Constitutional Court rejected the full repeal of Decree No. 652; however, it also deemed numerous sub-sections, clauses, and items in the articles unconstitutional and rescinded them (Anayasa Mahkemesi, 2013).

Following these immense changes and consequent surge of power to the Ministry in 2011, it was puzzling that the Ministry was excluded from the making of the system change in 2012. While the state enabled the Ministry to gain the upper hand in education policymaking, in the system change, the parliament and deputy members hindered the Ministry. Instead of educational state institutions, the state opted for legislative agenda-setting power (Hazama & Iba, 2017). One former state official and CSO representative who had close links to Ömer Dinçer and the process within the standing committee in parliament was able to discuss this oddity:

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<sup>29</sup> Translated from: "Bir dolu kadroyu değiştirdi Dinçer böyle daha amacı o kadroyu doldurmak olan bir sürü insan geldi."

Ömer Dinçer was different from other politicians and deputies. I mean he is an unyielding man. He does not pay attention to anyone. Not to “Oh, the prime minister said. Oh, this that ...” or “Oh, for the A Party or B Party.” Not to civil society organizations, either. The party and every deputy know this attitude of Ömer Dinçer. If a policy is assigned to Ömer Dinçer, he will produce something rational. This rationality was probably at odds with the party. That’s why! (Interview 10) (see Appendix D, 8)

In 2013, Nabi Avcı replaced Ömer Dinçer. This replacement made Dinçer the minister with the shortest period in office in the Ministry of National Education. The reason for the conflict between Dinçer and other senior party leaders is unknown. One allegation was that the underperformance of the FATİH project during the Dinçer period displeased Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (“İşte Ömer Dinçer’i koltuğundan eden olay!,” 2013).

Ultimately, all these changes from the Decree were not permanent. As Ertugal and Bolukbasi (2018) argue, frequent laws and regulations that constantly change the institutional design are part of the strong state in Turkey. Still, the frequency and haste in the making of these laws have frequently led to institutional difficulties and disruption in the affected bodies. New laws created by such decrees eventually needed adjustments (Hazama & Iba, 2017). In our case, Decree No. 652 was changed several times over the years via amendment. With the presidential decree in 2018, Decree No. 652 was completely changed (Memurlar.net, 2018).

Another significant change occurred within the National Education Council. As explained in the previous chapter, the Council is a part of the central body and is the supreme advisory board of the Ministry. The structure of the Council allows the gathering of different stakeholders in education (e.g., students, teachers, experts, policymakers, unions, CSOs, and the media). This created an opportunity for an inclusive approach and opened a space for deliberation. One government-friendly interviewee underscored this inclusiveness: “In the past, the Ministry was the first

institution that always gathered the Council, engaged with society, took advice and accomplished its promises” (Interview 7).<sup>30</sup> Similarly, another interviewee pointed to the inclusive composition of the Council: “When we look at the composition of the Council, that organization represented public opinion and the educational community’s interests” (Interview 15).<sup>31</sup>

This inclusiveness and the Council’s role were modified as the Council’s regulations were changed. Initially, months before the 18<sup>th</sup> National Education Council in 2010, there was a critical change to the Council structure. As mentioned before, the Council is composed of ordinary members, elected members, guest members, and observers. In May 2010, a regulation changed the distribution and number of members of the Council. One fundamental change was made in the number of Council members, increasing from 500 to 752 (more than a 50% increase). Moreover, the ratio of members invited by the Ministry increased from 60% to 75%, while the ratio of ordinary members, who are not elected or invited, decreased from 28% to 18% (Şaşmaz, 2011). Among elected members, the ratio of academics decreased from 12% to 9%, officials from CSOs decreased from 7% to 5.5%, but officials from the Ministry rose from 47% to 49% (Şaşmaz, 2011). Again, unknown members, the Ministry’s invitees that are not known before the meeting rose from 4% to 11% (Şaşmaz, 2011). Compared to the 17<sup>th</sup> Council, the 18<sup>th</sup> Council showed a great difference in terms of the ratios of Council participants; Table 6 displays these differences.

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<sup>30</sup> Translated from: “Yani geçmişte her zaman Milli Eğitim, bakın şimdi, şura düzenleyen, toplumla kaynaşan, şura fikirlerini alan, tavsiye kararlarını alan ve hayata geçiren ilk bakanlık ve kuruluştur.”

<sup>31</sup> Translated from: “Şuranın kompozisyonunu zaten dikkate aldığımızda o düzenleme zaten toplumun gündeminde ya da eğitim camiasının içinde olan şeyler oluyor.”

Table 6. Council Member Ratio

		17 <sup>th</sup> National Education Council	18 <sup>th</sup> National Education Council
According to the institution that chooses members of the Council	Ordinary members	27.8 %	18.1 %
	The Ministry of National Education	59.8 %	75.0 %
	The Higher Council of Education	12.4 %	6.9 %
According to the institution or societal group to which members belong	Member of Parliament	4.8 %	3.2 %
	Executive or Representative from a State Institution	22.2 %	19.8 %
	Academia	12.4 %	8.9 %
	Civil Society	7.2 %	5.6 %
	Private School	2.4 %	2.4 %
	Member of the Ministry of National Education	47.0 %	48.8 %
	Unknown	4.0 %	11.3 %

Source: [Eğitim Reformu Girişimi, 2010, pp. 36-37]

As seen in the table above, the ratio of Ministry-related members increased incrementally for certain members. Also, the unknown member ratio increased considerably, from 4.0% to 11.3%. The Ministry can assign unknown members to the Council; the unknown members do not have to be associated with any institution (Şaşmaz, 2012). In the National Education Councils, the ratio of academic and civil society members dropped noticeably. Along with changes in the ratio of members, the quorum criteria for the meeting was also altered. Previously, in order to form a quorum, two thirds of the members had to attend the Council meeting, but in May 2010, the quorum was changed to an absolute majority of the members (Resmi Gazete, 2010). Therefore, 377 out of 752 members became sufficient to gather the Council (Şaşmaz, 2012).

The changes in the organizational structure allowed space for the Ministry's impact to grow, but the regulations on the role of the Council still provided it with an advisory position. Still, over time, the Council became a place where state-oriented



policies are discussed. One civil society representative summarized this process of change:

Over time the Council became a place where there are no limits to what you can discuss. For instance, in the 19<sup>th</sup> Council in 2014, numerous subjects came into discussion like abolishing coeducation; these are not supposed to be discussed in the Council. According to the regulations, subjects that are outside the Council's agenda or subjects that are not part of the preparation period cannot be discussed within the Council and cannot be voted on. (Interview 15) (see Appendix D, 9)

The change in the regulations in 2014 led to loss of power and impact of the Council.<sup>32</sup> The pronounced differences between these regulations are worth looking at. For instance, in the previous regulation, Article 5 stated that: “[The Council] is the supreme advisory board of the Ministry; it scrutinizes matters regarding the improvement of the Turkish National Education System, and enhancement of the quality of education and training; it takes *necessary* [emphasis added] decisions” (Resmi Gazete, 1995).<sup>33</sup>

On the other hand, in 2014, Article 5 was changed to: “[The Council] is the supreme advisory board of the Ministry; it scrutinizes relative matters regarding the improvement of the Turkish National Education System, and enhancement of the quality of education and training; it takes *advisory* [emphasis added] decisions” (Resmi Gazete, 2014).<sup>34</sup>

By downgrading Council decisions from necessary to advisory, the Council's impact vis-à-vis the Ministry was officially abated. Thus, the executive institution

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<sup>32</sup> Previously, the council's structure and operations were based on a regulation that is prevailed in 1995 with alterations in 1998, 2006, and 2010. This regulation was issued in the Official Gazette on September 8, 1995 with act number 22398. Recently, the National Education Council regulations changed in 2014. This regulation was issued in the Official Gazette on July 8, 2014 with act number 29054.

<sup>33</sup> Translated from: “Şura; Bakanlığın en yüksek danışma kuruludur; Türk Milli Eğitim Sistemi'ni geliştirmek, niteliğini yükseltmek için eğitim ve öğretimle ilgili konuları tetkik eder, gerekli kararları alır.”

<sup>34</sup> Translated from: “Şura; Bakanlığın en yüksek danışma kuruludur. Türk millî eğitim sistemini geliştirmek, niteliğini yükseltmek için eğitim ve öğretimle ilgili konuları tetkik eder; tavsiye kararları alır.”

(the Ministry) gained the upper hand in the operation of education once again.

Another example from these two documents involves the implementation of Council decisions. In 1995, Article 19 stated that: “The decisions that are going to be enacted are finalized with the approval of the Minister. The decisions take place in the Ministry’s execution plan according to their significance and priority” (Resmi Gazete, 1995).<sup>35</sup>

In 2014, the wording of Article 19 was completely changed, and the role of the Council was diminished: “(1) The decisions of the Council are advisory. The Secretary-General of the Council delivers the decisions to the relevant units” (Resmi Gazete, 2014).<sup>36</sup> This change paved the way for Council decisions to play a minimal role in policymaking. As seen from Article 19, similar to the previous article, the role of the Council was downgraded in such a way that the Ministry became the prevalent actor in deciding on Council decisions that reflect the agenda of the Ministry.

The Council’s role and its power were reduced; this change can be seen in a comparison between the 2004 and 2012 policymaking processes. In 2004, while the Council did not have a direct or indirect impact on the curriculum change, the Council’s main focus on the EU accession process reflected the state’s ongoing Euro-enthusiasm. For the 2012 system change, the Council became a tool as the idea for the system change as 4+4+4 was proposed in the 18<sup>th</sup> Council (2010) by Eğitim-Bir-Sen members (Tutanak Dergisi, 2012a). Eğitim-Bir-Sen was a fervent supporter of the system change and adopted the policy as its own. One civil society representative from the union explained:

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<sup>35</sup> Translated from: “Kararlardan hangilerinin yürürlüğe gireceği Bakan Onayı ile kesinleşir. Şura Kararları önem ve önceliğine göre Bakanlık icra planlarında yer alır.”

<sup>36</sup> Translated from: “Şura kararları tavsiye niteliğindedir. Genel Sekreterlik, Şura kararlarını ilgili birimlere gönderir.”

We realized we were the pioneer in 4+4+4. The government did not ask us about our final thoughts on the policy itself when they decided to bring up this subject. We also did not know about it. We explained our thoughts in the Council and wanted to transfer these decisions to society. (Interview 11) (see Appendix D, 10)

So, with the 18<sup>th</sup> Council (2010), there was an inversion of the Council's role: from advisory to a tool for legitimization.

Lastly, there were also critical formal institutional changes in the Board of Education. As explained in the previous chapter, the Board is a unit under the central organization of the Ministry. It handles various tasks including curriculum setting, textbooks, and educational vision and programming. Compared to the 2003-2005 curriculum reform, the Board lost its position as a policymaker in the 2012 system change. In the latter policy period, neither the Ministry nor the Board had any idea about the system change when the deputies drafted the law. In the 2011 Decree having the Force of Law No. 652, there were several critical changes: a decrease in the number of the members of the Board, the duties of the Board, and closure of sub-units of the Board.

Similar to the Ministry, the units and sub-units that were considered idle were closed via this decree. Moreover, the number of the members of the Board was decreased to 10 from 15. The decrease in the number of members ensured a smaller role for the Board. For instance, one former state official and civil society representative claimed that the Board lost its power in regard to its relationship with the Ministry:

If you ask me the impact of the Board in policymaking today, it is nothing. With Ömer Dincer's movement, the Board's power was diminished. ... Nowadays, the Board is in bad shape. It no longer has the power to insist on stuff. But it used to have it. (Interview 10) (see Appendix D, 11)

The change to the number of members as well as the Decree on high-level bureaucrats enabled the Ministry to completely change the Board's members. The personnel change led to the Ministry's supremacy over the Board. One civil society representative gave the example of a change within the Board's ability to decide on textbooks:

In previous times, the Board had certain degree of independence. On some matters, the Board was able to decide freely. However, in recent times, some of the decisions of the Board have caused problems in terms of the regime's actions and discourse. In particular, there were problems related to textbooks. The Board used to decide on the publication of textbooks. (Interview 13) (see Appendix D, 12)

The loss of power over certain matters was part of Decree No. 652. Although this interviewee (Interview 13) gave the case of textbooks as an example, he/she did not explain why there was a clash between the Board and regime. However, I am able to show that the Board lost its power over textbooks with reference to Decree No. 652.

Before the enactment of Decree No. 652, the Board was governed based on the 1993 regulation. This regulation gave substantial power to the Board on various issues including textbooks. For instance, in 1993, the regulation defined one essential duty of the Board as "to inquire, develop, and *decide* on the education system and educational plan and programming of all the tools and equipment [emphasis added]," and "to prepare, or order to prepare, or purchase the textbooks and supplementary textbooks" (Resmi Gazete, 1993, p. 16).<sup>37</sup>

On the other hand, in 2011, the Decree did not allow such power over textbooks, rather it claimed that the Board could "research and have someone research the education system and educational plan and programming of all the tools and equipment" and "cooperate with universities, civil society organizations, and

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<sup>37</sup> Translated from: "Eğitim sistemini, eğitim plân ve programlarını, eğitim araç-gerecini araştırmak, geliştirmek ... Ders kitapları ile yardımcı ders kitaplarını hazırlamak veya hazırlatmak."

other state and private institutions to prepare textbooks, supplementary textbooks, and teacher's guidance books *if necessary* [emphasis added]" (Resmi Gazete, 2012).<sup>38</sup> One state official underscored how the Ministry was able to alter the power of the Board:

I overcame them [bureaucratic challenges within the Ministry] easily. How? First, I made a law and displaced everyone. Second, I changed the methods and ways. Thus, they couldn't hinder me. I changed every director with this law. More precisely, you cannot simply make a law and fire all personnel. To do that, I initially re-configured the Ministry and Board. ... I changed the phrases on the Board's ability to examine textbooks and courses. Since the law allowed for changes in personnel, I also changed them. Thus, they could not hinder me. (Interview 13) (see Appendix D, 13)

So, the impact of Decree No. 652 on the Ministry and Board and alterations to the Council regulations paved the way for substantial changes within the institution.

These institutional changes in the Ministry, Board, and Council led to changes in the power structure among these bodies. Although the Ministry has always had greater authority, the changes within the inclusive structure of the Council and the Board's structure and duties boosted the Ministry's power. While the Board lost its function of assisting the Ministry and deciding on critical aspects of education, the Council was deprived of its inclusionary structure for different state and non-state actors.

#### 4.3 Informal institutional changes

Another modality that explains how the relationship between the state and civil society has changed is informal institutional changes. I use "informal" institutional changes in reference to the bypassing of laws and regulations in institutions. There were numerous transgressions made by state bodies and representatives to maximize

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<sup>38</sup> Translated from: "Eğitim sistemi, eğitim ve öğretim plan ve programları, ders kitapları ve eğitim araç-gereçleriyle ilgili araştırma yapmak veya yaptırmak ... Gerektiğinde eğitim ve öğretim programları, ders kitapları, yardımcı kitaplar ile öğretmen kılavuz kitaplarının hazırlanmasında yükseköğretim kurumları, sivil toplum örgütleri ile diğer kamu ve özel kurum ve kuruluşlarıyla işbirliği yapmak."

their agenda-setting power and overhaul the legislative process during the system change in 2012.

Informal institutional changes refer to the bypassing of governing laws and regulations within an institution in which its actors covertly or overtly do not abide by these rules. Moreover, this informality includes the unofficial nature of actors within these bodies who often violate or overlook existing rules and regulations or take advantage of loopholes within the existing system.

Informal institutional changes do not only refer to actors within institutions. In addition, there are instances of institutional bypassing. I want to highlight the fact that the 2012 system change also excluded educational state institutions from the policy process. Thus, not only the laws but also certain institutions were bypassed in the making of the system change. I believe this is a particularly crucial dimension of hybrid regimes. Because maintaining a democratic façade is an arduous and prolonged task, informal institutional changes benefit the regime by allowing it to make rapid decisions in a short period of time. The 2004 curriculum reform included numerous parties and an extended period of time to plan and execute a policy. On the other hand, in the 2012 system change, educational state institutions and related non-state actors were deliberately bypassed in order to implement a state policy within a short period of time (45 days to be exact). Although this section particularly focuses on informal institutional changes to the rules and regulations in 2012, it is also important to keep in mind that this informal change also refers to bypassing of related educational institutions.

This modality mainly aims to explain the legislative process in the making of the system change and demonstrates decaying democracy. I intend to explain not just the making of the educational policies but also the legislative agenda-setting of the

AKP period, which is often hard to describe since the abuse of and non-conformance with the laws and regulations of governing bodies in the state are not part of functioning democracies. Thus, I want to underline informal institutional changes as a term to explain the policymaking process in hybrid regimes.

In their study of legislative agenda-setting, Hazama and Iba (2017) claimed that the AKP uses omnibus bills<sup>39</sup> to create significant changes within existing laws while maintaining the status quo process and silence any possible veto. However, the lack of parliamentary discussion on the changes leads to legal errors and deficiencies. This process usually ends up with the Constitutional Court annulling these laws. Although the study from Hazama and Iba (2017) particularly focuses on omnibus bills, their perspective on legislative agenda-setting brings new insights. This study shows that in transitioning regimes (e.g., Turkey), legislative agenda-setting precipitates a “majoritarian tendency and erosion of the separation of powers” (Hazama & Iba, 2017, p. 313). I want to contribute to this explanation by adding another dimension. Hazama and Iba (2017) mainly use laws and their annulment in their analysis; however, I want to shed light on the legislative agenda-setting process. So, I will use the parliamentary discussions on the draft law about the system change to understand how the AKP established a majoritarian power and to what extent the party was able to silence dissent and gain the upper hand in policymaking.

I gave the details of parliamentary meetings in the background chapter (Chapter 3). These meetings of the standing committee continued for nine days, in which CSOs were able to participate in only one session. Committees and sub-committees in parliament must follow the same internal regulations as the parliament

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<sup>39</sup> Omnibus bills (or *torba yasa* in Turkish) are package legislation that include one or more diverse subjects within a single document. Thus, these bills can be approved with a single vote in the legislature but contain numerous changes or regulations that may or may not be related to each other.

itself. Accepted in 1973, this regulation covers the rules of parliamentary gatherings and the governing regulations on the order of these meetings. I will address only a few articles of this regulation since the following examples fall under specific sections of the internal regulation. I particularly focus on one central issue in these meetings: despite violations of internal regulations, the meetings were continued, and decisions were made.

The party ratios of committee members are the same as their ratio in parliament. The committee must provide a decision on the subject that they are assigned within 45 days (Article 37) (Resmi Gazete, 1973b, p. 10). The committees are governed by a president; to gather a meeting, one-third of the members are required; to vote, an absolute majority of the members is required (Article 27) (Resmi Gazete, 1973b, p. 8). If there is no quorum, the representative of the committee can disallow the suggestions or remand the subject to be discussed again in the committee (Article 45) (Resmi Gazete, 1973b, p. 11). Members have to attend the meetings of the committee to which they belong, and, in case of three sequential absences, the member can be removed from the committee by the party he/she belongs to (Article 28) (Resmi Gazete, 1973b, p. 8). Members can speak upon their request (Article 29) (Resmi Gazete, 1973b, p. 9). Lastly, if a member is interrupted or offended on personal matters by another member (*ad hominem*), and the peace of meeting is disturbed, the president of the committee can call for an intermission or postpone the meeting and address the matter to parliament (Article 46) (Resmi Gazete, 1973b, p. 11).

Violation of these articles of the internal regulation disrupted the order and conduct of meetings on the 2012 system change. Despite Article 27, there were cases in which a quorum was not satisfied. However, in these cases, discussions on the



draft law continued and motions were approved. Only a committee representative can disallow or remand the meeting (Article 45); however, AKP committee representative Avni Erdemir did not use his power on this issue despite opposition parties' protests. Thus, the AKP was able to use its majority on the committee to overhaul the policymaking process.

The meetings were also interrupted on the issue of speaking time for the members. Since the internal regulation does not mention the amount of speaking time allowed for committee members, this created a loophole. The president of the standing committee (Nabi Avcı<sup>40</sup>) decided to limit speaking time, but deputies from opposition parties protested (Tutanak Dergisi, 2012c, pp. 23-24). Moreover, AKP deputies tried to limit the number of motions that one member could submit; however, such a limitation is not discussed or allowed in the internal regulation.

Informal institutional changes did not only occur through the actions of the ruling party. There were also instances stemming from the opposition party. Despite the short notice and abruptness of the draft law, opposition parties' interest and perseverance were noticeable in these meetings; a filibuster even occurred to protest and draw attention to the issue in the media (Erdem, 2012; Tutanak Dergisi, 2012b, p. 57). The Republican People's Party deputy from Sakarya, Engin Özkoç, engaged in a filibuster, speaking for over 12 hours and noting that civil society did not have a voice in these meetings. Özkoç protested the attempts by AKP deputies to limit speaking time. He read reports from CSOs like Otizm Vakfı, TÜSİAD (Türkiye Sanayici İş Adamları Derneği – Turkish Industry and Business Association), TED, ERG, AÇEV (Anne Çocuk Eğitim Vakfı – Mother Child Education Foundation), ÇYDD (Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği – Association for the Support of

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<sup>40</sup> Nabi Avcı was an AKP deputy in 2012.

Contemporary Living), and ADD (Atatürkçü Düşünce Derneği – Atatürkist Thought Association). With only with few minutes of rest, Özkoç continued to speak until 3:20 am, and fellow party deputies supported his actions by giving him food, providing him books and reports to read, and not leaving the meeting room.

Another form of informal institutional change was the indifference to evidence and research by opposition parties and CSOs on the system change, which was repeatedly brought up by opposition parties on different days of the standing committee meetings (Tutanak Dergisi, 2012b, pp. 9-15; 2012c, pp. 4-26; 2012d, p. 23; 2012e, p. 11; 2012f, p. 87). For instance, one civil society representative demonstrated this indifference with the example of the school starting age discussion in the standing committee meetings:

While he [Selçuk Pehlivanoglu<sup>41</sup>] was talking, he received a phone-call. Then, Fikri Işık<sup>42</sup> asked what would happen if we lowered it [the school starting age] to one year earlier. Mr. Selçuk was surprised and said: “I don’t know, maybe” and they said: “OK, we are lowering the school starting age by one year.” So, they managed to work something in that did not come from the draft law. ... I do not have any explanation for this. (Interview 12) (see Appendix D, 14)

Instead of following the draft law’s articles, AKP spokesperson Fikri Işık made an addition to the draft law without proper discussion and articulation. The same CSO representative also underscored AKP deputies’ detrimental effect on fruitful discussions:

While I was talking about these matters and were able to express things correctly, Fikri Işık interrupted us and said: “Of course, what matters is how many stages exist in education not how many years. For instance, I went to the U.S.A. and learned that they teach children inches using finger segments” as if he was trying to talk about his memories and troll the discussion environment. Nur Serter [Republican People’s Party deputy] got mad and

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<sup>41</sup> A representative from TED.

<sup>42</sup> Fikri Işık, the AKP deputy from Kocaeli, served as a spokesperson of the National Education, Culture, Youth and Sports Committee in 2012.

shouted to Işık: “What are you talking about?” Such absurd things occurred. (Interview 12) (see Appendix D, 15)

So, alongside the dismissal of rules and regulations, practices that hindered fruitful discussion sessions were also dominant in these meetings.

Additionally, the absence of certain AKP deputies from the meeting was noticed by opposition parties. While a standing committee member, Hakan Şükür<sup>43</sup> did not attend the meetings that discussed the law. One interviewee claimed that he was watching a soccer match while the discussions were going on (Tutanak Dergisi, 2012b, p. 93). Moreover, Minister of National Education Ömer Dinçer and officials from the Ministry did not attend the meetings regularly. Opposition parties protested Minister Dinçer’s lack of participation (Tutanak Dergisi, 2012f, p. 25). Opposition parties accused Dinçer and Ministry officials of being indifferent to the process. One CSO representative commented on Dinçer’s unfamiliarity with the draft law: “I don’t believe he had any role. I think he did not know the draft law” (Interview 12).<sup>44</sup>

The meetings went on for hours. Meetings that ended at midnight left the deputies exhausted, the discussions leading to a dead-end. Ultimately, this wearing process led to arguments and physical fights between members of the standing committee. On March 8, 2012, the committee meeting was occupied by non-member deputies. As Nabi Avcı announced that Article 3 of the draft law was accepted, deputies from opposition parties invaded the speech platform and protested the process of voting. Article 3 aimed to divide the education system into a three-tier track (4+4+4) in which elementary, secondary, and high school students would have

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<sup>43</sup> Hakan Şükür, former AKP deputy, was a soccer player. Recently, he left Turkey after accusations that he was a member of FETÖ. It is acronym for “Fetullah Terrorist Organization” which is considered as a parallel-state infrastructure that attempted on coup in 2016. The coup attempt led to a state of emergency.

<sup>44</sup> Translated from: “Hiçbir rolü olduğunu düşünmüyorum. Hiç bence bildiği falan yoktu yasayı.”

separate schools.<sup>45</sup> Opposition deputies did not agree with the AKP decision, and a quarrel among the deputies turned into a physical fight in which one Republican People's Party deputy from Kocaeli, Haydar Akar, was punched by one Hakan Şükür's (AKP deputy) advisors. The verbal and physical quarrel continued in the corridors of parliament as Nabi Avcı called a two-hour intermission (E. Kaya, 2012).

Four days later, as the debates got heated, hundreds of AKP deputies flooded the meeting room to support fellow deputies on the standing committee in the last day of the meetings (E. Kaya, 2012). Since the room was only large enough for committee members and a limited number of guests, opposition deputies were not able to sit or stand in the room. Republican People's Party's Yalova deputy Muharrem İnce cried "committee has been invaded" and quarrels escalated (E. Kaya, 2012). In the same meeting, the AKP deputies were able to pass 20 clauses of the draft law in less than half an hour; the meeting lasted from 15:10 to 15:34 (Tutanak Dergisi, 2012c, pp. 1-15). Although Nabi Avcı removed the press from the meeting room, the physical fights got out of control when Avcı was struck by an unknown object, and several deputies kicked and punched each other. While the verbal and physical quarrel continued, clauses on the draft law were voted on, and the law passed despite the unhospitable environment.

In this section, I tried to show how informal institutional changes in parliamentary discussions led to the bypassing of rules and regulations. Moreover, in the 2012 system change, not only the laws but also institutions were bypassed. By proposing a draft law, AKP deputies interfered in the policymaking purview of educational state institutions. Thus, they bypassed the Ministry, Board, and Council in the making of the system change. In discussing the informal institutional changes,

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<sup>45</sup> A three-tier education system allows the opening of imam-hatip secondary schools.

I tried to show how internal regulations of the parliament were overlooked by deputies in discussions of the draft law. There were cases of verbal and physical altercations during meetings despite the poor discussion conditions of the standing committee, an inhospitable discussion environment, and other shortcomings. All in all, this discussion of informal institutional changes aimed to demonstrate how the AKP gained a majoritarian stance in legislative agenda-setting and silence dissent.

In this chapter, I aimed to answer how the relationship between the state and civil society changed from 2002 to 2012. I used formal and informal institutional changes to explain this alteration in the relationship. Regarding formal institutional changes, I show how written rules and regulations governing critical state institutions were altered. These alterations paved the way for the strengthening of the Ministry. Independent and advisory institutions lost their relative power and became subject to the Ministry's authority. Similarly, informal institutional changes demonstrated the bypassing of parliamentary rules and regulations worked to the advantage of the AKP and AKP deputies. Even though there are rules and regulations governing the parliament and its committees, the disregard of the legal framework enabled the AKP regime to silence dissent and ensure a majority in agenda-setting and policymaking.

## CHAPTER 5

### LIMITED STATE CAPACITY AND CAPACITY BUILDING

In the previous chapter, I described the formal and informal institutional changes to elucidate how the relationship between the state and educational civil society changed during the AKP period from 2002 to 2012. The formal and informal institutional changes indicated how the legal framework of existing educational institutions was changed or bypassed. Still, it is crucial to understand why this relationship changed.

In this chapter, I argue that the democratic reversal of the Turkish state led to a change in its relationship with CSOs. In addition, the rupture with the EU accession process abated state accountability towards non-state actors and the international community. Since the party was able to overcome the strong veto powers in Turkey (the president, judiciary, and military) and did not conform to the EU accession process, it was able to consolidate its power and often did not pursue inclusive policymaking.

I argue that CSOs are an essential part of educational policymaking in Turkey. Despite the democratic reversal of the AKP, the policymaking process in the 2012 system change did not ostracize the CSOs. Nonetheless, the party altered its cooperative relationship to selective inclusion in educational policies because it needed CSOs as a service provider to implement its policies due to limited state capacity. To pursue its policies, the party opted to include government-friendly CSOs and build their capacity within the educational field. Educational institutions gained power over non-state actors through formal and informal institutions, which

facilitated selective inclusion and the party's ability to work with government-friendly CSOs.

I start this chapter by explaining the motivation of hybrid regimes in their relationship with civil society. The literature presents control and legitimization as two critical factors that explain hybrid regimes' attitude towards civil society. In order to control or legitimize, these regimes particularly use co-optation, closure, and legal mechanisms. Before explaining legitimization within the Turkish context, I give a succinct overview of control as a modality.

Later, in the second section, I explain the limited state capacity and implications of legitimization. While the literature claims that hybrid regimes use government-friendly CSOs to legitimize its policies, I show that the AKP pursued legitimization prior to regime change during the EU accession process. So, I propose the state's capacity to implement educational policies as a critical factor that explains the change within the relationship between the state and CSOs. In the last section, I demonstrate how limited state capacity is mitigated through the sharing resources with government-friendly CSOs. I utilize government protocols to demonstrate how government-friendly CSOs gained more space and resources in educational policymaking.

## 5.1 Control as a modality

According to existing literature, educational civil society practices differ in two ways. First, the literature of hybrid regimes mainly focuses on civil society with regard to contentious politics. These studies are primarily part of the social movement literature, in which engagement in associational life represents a means to contest policies. However, the policy periods under the scrutiny here and educational

civil society in Turkey, in general, mainly strive for a role in policy formation.

Although there were active teachers' and students' unions that engaged in protests and demonstrations during both policy periods, these acts were not representative of educational civil society's main goal. Overall, in terms of this study's framing, educational civil society sought to remain in the political field and part of policy formation.

Secondly, as regimes shift toward authoritarianism, we expect them to shun collaboration in policymaking. In our case, the Turkish state preferred selective inclusion in the 2012 system change, in which we observed the state's alliance with government-friendly CSOs. This reflects the hybrid regimes' Janus face: maintaining a democratic facade through the inclusion of CSOs in policymaking while co-opting and controlling civil society through the inclusion of government-friendly CSOs. The AKP regime did not eliminate its relationship with civil society as it became increasingly authoritarian; instead, it created its own CSOs. It is crucial to understand why the state needed government-friendly CSOs when it was able to refrain from inclusive policies.

An obvious answer to why the Turkish state altered its relationship with CSOs is the regime's evolution from democratic to hybrid. Consequently, it selectively includes civil society and refrains from fair collaboration in policymaking. Hybrid regimes also balance democratic and autocratic features. For instance, the AKP had to include CSOs in the parliamentary discussion on the 2012 system change when opposition parties demanded an inclusionary policymaking process. However, the parliamentary discussions with CSOs introduced another mechanism of hybrid regimes: government-friendly CSOs. As mentioned in the literature review (Chapter 2), these regimes often resort to the co-optation of existing



civil society or creation of new government-friendly CSOs to control and monitor existing civil society. Their role in supporting regime policies is a critical aspect of associational life and needs further investigation.

As mentioned in the literature review, hybrid regimes use different mechanisms to sustain themselves (Schedler, 2006). These scholarly works underline how, as regimes evolve, the state challenges, controls, represses, and eventually eradicates civil society (Lewis, 2013). These regimes resort to co-optation, legal mechanisms, or closure to expand their control. Besides control and repression, this nascent literature adds legitimization as a reason why these regimes adopt different mechanisms to suppress civil society (Gerschewski, 2013). Similarly, Doyle (2018) claims that the AKP regime uses government-friendly CSOs to disseminate the regime's ideology and create democratic legitimization.

Repressing and controlling civil society are not novel mechanisms in Turkey. Legal mechanisms are one of the central tools of these regimes to control civil associations, and Turkey adopted these mechanisms to harness civil society (Gilbert & Mohseni, 2018). These legal mechanisms enable the state to monitor the political activities of these organizations. In 2005, legal reforms regarding civil society organizations ensured that CSOs receiving foreign funding required a state permit, which allows the state to attend meetings of these organizations (Gilbert and Mohseni, 2018, p. 458). These changes in the legal frameworks enabled the state to enhance its control over civil society in Turkey (Interviews 2 and 15). Moreover, these mechanisms are not particular to educational civil society. As Third Sector Foundation of Turkey [Türkiye Üçüncü Sektör Vakfı] (TÜSEV) head Tevfik Başak Ersen noted, “there is no legally binding document for government to consult CSOs,

it's very arbitrary" (Büsch, 2016). For instance, one CSO representative explained the restrictive impact of the legal mechanisms:

We used to have no problem with the places we visit, the schools, directories in the provinces and districts. But after that law [legal reforms in 2005], the Ministry wanted to know "what are you doing, how are you practicing those programs, we want to see the content of these programs". (Interview 2) (see Appendix D, 16)

Similarly, co-opting became a popular mechanism since it enables the state to dominate and benefit from civil society's service capacity (Gerschewski, 2013). Thus, CSOs in these regimes function as service providers while not exceeding the boundaries of the state's ideology. Although not novel, this practice is also used in Turkey in which we see government-friendly civil society emerging to support the policies of the state. While this co-optation is not unique to the AKP period, I will detail these organizations under the current regime in the following sections of this chapter.

A final approach used by these regimes to silence dissent is the closure of CSOs. This aggressive approach towards civil society is a challenging practice for hybrid regimes because maintaining a democratic facade allows these regimes to thrive. So, in the twenty-first century, there are only a few countries that use closure to arbitrarily silence dissent (Lewis, 2013, p. 325). After the coup-attempt in 2016, there have been a growing number of prosecutions, detentions, or closures of civil society representatives or organizations in Turkey. This contrasts with the early years of the AKP period, in which the general trend for civil society was improving and state support and endorsement were abundant (European Commission, 2006).

During the EU accession process, the state implemented a series of reforms, including reforms in the legal framework that affected civil society. In 2004, a new Associations Law was enacted in accordance with the EU and opened a space for

active civil society (European Commission, 2010, 2011, 2012). Similarly, in 2008, the Foundations Law was adopted, which improved the existing legal framework. Still, these initiatives did not provide complete safety for civil society since there were certain problems impeding overall improvement: the vague language of the laws, lack of fiscal independence from the state, unstable democratic process, and sluggish bureaucracy remained impediments to the development of civil society (Heper & Yıldırım, 2011; Karaman & Aras, 2000; Şimşek, 2004). Since the laws did not require non-state actors to be part of the policymaking process, inclusiveness was arbitrary and often depended on the bureaucrats. One former state official and CSO representative underlined this vagueness and the lack of a legal framework:

Now, it entirely depends on the manager's initiative for relations with CSOs or other organizations. Ah, there is no legal framework that organizes CSO inclusion in program research. You don't have to include CSOs. As a manager, if you believe that this would be helpful, you can do it, but nobody would question why you did not do it. (Interview 14) (see Appendix D, 17)

This legal structure enabled the state to abuse the closure practice in recent years. One way to observe this process is by looking at the annual reports of the European Commission on Turkey, which has a section on Turkish civil society. From 2002-2005, these reports advised closer cooperation and dialogue between the state and civil society. The 2006 report celebrated the developments within civil society concerning the legal framework while being cautious and reminding the need for improvement (European Commission, 2006, p. 16). The 2010 report underscored the development of civil society in its nascent stage and highlighted closure cases and the disproportionate amount of administrative checks and fines (European Commission, 2010, p. 26). As underlined by the European Commission report on Turkey (2018), there has been severe backsliding in associational life (European Commission, 2018, p. 4). The aftermath of the Gezi Protests in 2013 led to a

crackdown on civil society. Moreover, the state of emergency declared in July 2016 paved the way for a massive purge of CSOs. Among the many closures of organizations associated with FETÖ<sup>46</sup> was Gündem Çocuk, a fervent advocate of children's rights known for its drive to prosecute the sexual abuse case involving ENSAR,<sup>47</sup> a government-friendly CSO.

The co-optations, legal mechanisms, and closure in the Turkish context show that the party consolidated its power over educational civil society over the years. While the restricted political realm for civil society became more permeable during the EU accession process, the improvements did not last following the party's democratic reversal. Still, controlling or repressing civil society does not fully explain the motivation of the hybrid regime in Turkey or its changing relationship with CSOs. So, I will address the limited state capacity and capacity building in the following sections.

## 5.2 Limited state capacity

The literature also uses legitimization to elucidate why hybrid regimes use various mechanisms to repress civil society. For the AKP, the need for legitimacy was prevalent during the early years of rule. In these years, the party sought consensus through the EU process because it was not yet able to consolidate its power. Thus, the literature's explanation regarding legitimization is not helpful to understanding the Turkish case. In this section, I reject and demonstrate the inapplicability of the legitimization argument and propose limited state capacity in its stead.

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<sup>46</sup> FETÖ is acronym for "Fetullah Terrorist Organization," which is considered a parallel state structure and blamed for the 2016 attempted coup that led to a state of emergency.

<sup>47</sup> In 2016, a teacher was accused of raping 45 children aged nine to ten in the illegal student dormitories of ENSAR, Karaman Anatolian Imam Hatip School, and KAİMDER (Karabük İmam Hatip Lisesi Mezunları ve Mensupları Derneği).

Legitimacy is one of the central concepts in political science. One way to define legitimacy is how it stems from the belief of what is proper in society.

Legitimacy is “the capacity of a political system to engender and maintain the belief that existing political institutions are the most appropriate or proper ones for the society” (Lipset, 1959, p. 86). Another aspect of legitimation is “the process of gaining support,” or seeking “active consent, passive obedience, or mere toleration within the population” (Gerschewski, 2013, p. 18).

This legitimization process or gaining support and consent is a conventional technique used by the AKP even in the early years. These years were also challenging for the party in terms of its relationship with the veto powers and the international community. However, the party took advantage of the EU accession process prior to the 2004 curriculum reform, as mentioned by one senior state official the party gained strength “from the financial support of the EU” (Interview 13).<sup>48</sup> Thus, the financial support of the EU helped the party gain dominance since additional budget allows for comprehensive policymaking. Another civil society representative added that “the party had concerns over its international image” (Interview 12).<sup>49</sup> Still, the veto powers challenged the party, as one civil society representative claimed:

Ziya hodja [Ziya Selçuk<sup>50</sup>] knew that the teaching program and curriculum were debated subjects, and they required consensus. You see, the AKP was a newly ruling party, and it was seeking something since it was not that strong at the time; it was seeking a consensus. (Interview 2) (see Appendix D, 18)

In the curriculum change, which happened two years after the 2002 election, the AKP was trying to achieve a substantial reform. This reform required a consensus in

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<sup>48</sup> Translated from: “Avrupa Birliği destekliyordu mali olarak da.”

<sup>49</sup> Translated from: “Uluslararası imajını güçlendirme kaygısı var.”

<sup>50</sup> Ziya Selçuk was the president of the Board of National Education during the curriculum change. He became the Minister of National Education as of 2018.

education while meeting the conditions of the EU accession process. Özbudun (2014) argues that there was concern over its image within Turkish society as well as the international realm in the early years of the party. So, the AKP struggled with legitimizing its policy in two different contexts. While the party enjoyed the support of the EU and other international bodies, the national context was challenging. In the early years of the regime, a strong veto power was vested in three bodies: the president, the Constitutional Court, and the army. One former state official and civil society representative pointed out the role of the veto powers as follows:

In 2003-2004, there was a government that needed to boost its legitimacy in every aspect. If you talk to Ziya Selçuk, he will tell you wonderful stories. Things like how he had to go to the MGK,<sup>51</sup> and how he persuaded the MGK. ... But when it comes to 2012-2013, the Ministry did not need legitimacy through other actors. There was no need for legitimacy from the outside. It is especially about the timing. (Interview 10) (see Appendix D, 19)

These veto powers later had an attenuated role, as explained in the literature review on Turkey's transition from democracy to a hybrid regime (Esen & Gumuscu, 2016, 1585). So, especially during the initial years of the party, there was a need for legitimacy from domestic and international actors.

As shown in the earlier chapters, in the 2012 system change, there were CSOs that adopted the state policy and advocated for it. So, the state created another form of legitimacy aligning the party's ideology and power with the educational civil society. This legitimization helped the party to maintain the facade of democracy while establishing a majoritarian approach in the policy arena. Moreover, the party needed to frame its decisions as a need expressed by society (Interviews 10, 11, and 12). Thus, using civil society to create an illusion of inclusion and participation was necessary since civil society encompasses the problems and desires of society. This

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<sup>51</sup> The Milli Güvenlik Kurulu [National Security Council] (MGK) develops national security policies.

legitimization process is particularly true for the 2012 system change period. For instance, one former state official and CSO representative explained the making of the system change in 2012:

It did not happen like “Ah, this was proposed by the Eğitim-Bir-Sen so let’s make it happen.” They [state officials in the Ministry] would tell you that they did it. Look, we did this, while I was working for the Ministry, I was in the Board’s department that took care of stuff like this, the policy department. And we had to write a script to legitimize it. As a justification, we said “lots of civil society organizations attended the National Education Council; it is an advisory decision.” But, this was purely political. (Interview 10) (see Appendix D, 20)

Another aspect of this legitimation process was creating the illusion that civil society participated in policymaking. Several of my interviewees referred to this process as “pretending” or *-miş gibi yapmak* in Turkish. In order to describe the process of the meetings for the system change, one civil society representative claimed that “... they are pretending. There is no strong civil society in Turkey like in the U.S.A. or UK” (Interview 3).<sup>52</sup> So, the participation of CSOs was “participation on paper” (Paker et al., 2013, p. 767). Another civil society representative added: “In these meetings, things to do are already determined; in fact, they are doing these meeting for the sake of rules, fulfilling the requirements” (Interview 1).<sup>53</sup>

One civil society representative that attended the parliamentary discussions argued that this pretending was harmful to the existing discussion environment: “They [deputies] are trolling; literally, there was a cacophony. They were able to say that ‘They should come,’ and we listened to them” (Interview 12).<sup>54</sup>

This form of legitimization, where pretending led to a cacophony, did not solely benefit the state; there were benefits and drawbacks of this illusion of

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<sup>52</sup> Translated from: “-miş gibi yapıyorlar. Sivil toplumda devletin otoritesi çok önemli ve Türkiye’de bu var. ABD, İngiltere’de çok güçlü sivil toplum var.”

<sup>53</sup> Translated from: “Yapılacaklar belli zaten belirlenmiştir hani bu toplantıda aslında şey âdet yerini bulsun diye, şekil şartını yerine getirmek için yapılyordur.”

<sup>54</sup> Translated from: “Trollüyorlar, hakikaten bir kakofoni olurdu. Gelsin, dinledik bunları da.”

inclusion for participating CSOs as well. One benefit the government-friendly CSOs enjoyed were material gains. The details of this argument will be elaborated in the following section on capacity building. Also, CSOs that supported government policies enjoyed patronage relations in the policymaking process. For instance, one government-friendly CSO representative gave an example from their institution to explain how they gained more influence as a CSO:

Immediately, we had to get rid of this coup-product [1997 memorandum] problem [eight-year compulsory education]. Since then, for this matter, we slowly grew as a union, the number of our members increased, we gained members from the AKP community, and we were able to execute the program [4+4+4]. (Interview 11) (see Appendix D, 21)

So, government-friendly CSOs flourished and enjoyed state support to execute their agenda, which was in line with the party's ideology.

Another aspect of this relationship is the fact that "pretending" came with a cost for CSOs. Government-friendly CSOs could not fully engage with policy discussions or act critically. When asked about these government-friendly CSOs in the parliamentary discussions, one civil society representative claimed that: "They were not in a position to object. As I remember, you were presenting your case and moving aside. There was no right to speak there. It was a quite limited arena" (Interview 12).<sup>55</sup> So, legitimizing the state's policy implies that the organization could not be critical toward the policymaking process.

This pretending for the sake of support and appropriateness also altered the way CSOs positioned themselves. Although I only had two interviewees from government-friendly CSOs, their claims demonstrate the hybrid regime's toxic attitude toward civil society. Although the literature examines government-friendly

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<sup>55</sup> Translated from: "İtiraz etme durumu gibi yok onlara zaten. Hatırladığım kadarıyla sen sunumunu yapıp çekiliyorsun. Söz hakkı olmuyor sana yani. Çok kısıtlı bir alan var orada yani."



CSOs in Turkey (Doyle, 2018), these studies do not explain what their nature means for them. I believe government-friendly CSOs eventually alter how civil society positions its role and duties. For instance, when asked about their presence in the 2012 system change process, one government-friendly civil society representative claimed that:

We do not belong to the parliament. What we do is with the Ministry. ... What I mean by sharing our ideas with the Ministry on changes to laws and regulations is that we inform the Ministry about our thoughts; the rest belongs to the parliament. (Interview 7) (see Appendix D, 22)

Although the Ministry was considered a body that CSOs should interact with, the representative did not see the parliament as a place for associations to share their knowledge and opinions. Another government-friendly civil society representative claimed the following when asked about the system change process:

It is something outside of CSOs domain. ... It does not matter what we think. There is a state policy; it is linked to some EU policies, related to that stuff. I mean the legal matters in the parliament, these are about law-making, and this is not our job. (Interview 6) (see Appendix D, 23)

Thus, this process of legitimization altered the civil society concept for them as well; they do not see playing a role in the system change policymaking as a CSO responsibility. One CSO representative indicated that this is an issue: "... we observe that a civil society organization or a foundation that is supported or funded by state institutions is no longer able to criticize or execute free projects, and this is a general problem" (Interview 9).<sup>56</sup>

Moreover, seeking and gaining legitimacy doesn't guarantee a successful policymaking process. Although the state was able to pass the draft law in 2012, the educational institutions responsible for implementing the policy struggled during the

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<sup>56</sup> Translated from: "Bir devlet kuruluşu tarafından desteklenen ya da fonlanan bir sivil toplum örgütünün ya da vakfın bir süre sonra artık eleştiremeyen, artık özgür projeler ortaya koyamayan bir hüviyet sergilediğini görmekteyiz ki bu genel bir sorun."

implementation period. Since the parliamentary discussions did not produce strategies to implement the policy, problems arose. For instance, one CSO representative claimed:

If the decision comes from the parliament, it is legitimate, but at the same time, it is important how the society perceives your method. I mean, does society see this method as legitimate? ... When you change the first stage or elementary school to four years, what does it mean? There will be a need for teachers. And did it happen? Yes, it did! Maybe there would be a chance to adjust things [through parliamentary discussions] but tension and frustration did not allow for it. There were opportunities to revise, instead there was fighting. (Interview 15) (see Appendix D, 24)

Despite the presence of government-friendly CSOs and apparent legitimacy in the policymaking process, it did not result in a smooth implementation. More interestingly, the state's need for civil society continued after the draft law was passed. The Ministry invited CSOs to develop strategies for implementation. For instance, one civil society representative claimed that the Ministry needed the CSOs in the implementation of the 2012 system change, noting "Because during the Dinçer period, in March when the law passed, Dinçer called us and a few other CSOs to implement it. For, suggestions on how to implement. He was baffled" (Interview 12).<sup>57</sup>

There was a conspicuous need for CSOs, both government-friendly and not. Ömer Dinçer sought the advice and support of CSOs in order to rapidly implement this major policy change. Interviewees from CSOs emphasized the Ministry's constant need for non-state actors. For instance, one CSO representative claimed that: "They [the Ministry] say, 'we are a massive institution' and, when appropriate, the Ministry needs help, too. When it is ok for them, they say they are open to

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<sup>57</sup> Translated from: "Çünkü Dinçer zamanında da biz yani Mart'ta çıkınca yasa sonra uygulanması için Dinçer bizi çağırdı, çok küçük bir toplantı yaptı biz ve birkaç STK ile daha. Biz bunu nasıl uygulayacağız diye? Adamın kafası da karman çorman olmuştu yani."

cooperation” (Interview 1).<sup>58</sup> However, this need is not specific to the 2012 system change. As mentioned in the literature review (Chapter 2), Turkish CSOs were often seen as a service provider, utilized to cover the Ministry’s needs (Aksay, 2009). Using CSOs as a service provider is a common practice among hybrid regimes (Lewis, 2013). Another CSO representative emphasized the importance of CSOs for the state in the policymaking process in a general sense:

This is a reciprocal relationship. But the common good is education. Sometimes they need information and experts, and sometimes we need them. Sometimes we must tell stuff they do not want to hear. Our need for them is obvious. They are the decision makers. They are executors. This is not a unilateral relationship. (Interview 14) (see Appendix D, 25)

The constant need for a relationship between the state and non-state actors in educational policies ensured CSOs played the crucial role of providing services to the state and society while continuing to be obedient to AKP policies. So, these organizations provide legitimacy for both the policies and state institutions in the performance of their duties. In democratic contexts, CSOs play a role in democratic consolidation as an agent in agenda-setting (Diamond, 1999); however, in non-democratic contexts, like hybrid regimes, CSOs mainly play the role of a service provider. Additionally, the greater presence of government-friendly CSOs and their interactions with the hybrid regime alter their vision of civil society itself.

In this section, I showed why the legitimization argument does not suffice to explain the relationship between the Turkish state and educational civil society.

While in the early years the EU was a critical source of legitimization despite strong veto powers, the party used government-friendly CSOs in the later years to disseminate its ideology and provide legitimization. Instead, I argue that limited state

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<sup>58</sup> Translated from: “Çok büyük bir teşkilatız, uygun olduğu noktalarda MEB’in de ihtiyacı oluyor. Uygun olduğu şekillerde iş birliğine açığz diyorlar.”

capacity explains why the AKP regime has been using different tools to get authoritarian while maintaining the facade of democracy towards educational civil society. As the regime skewed the playing field of educational policymaking through elaborate changes, state bodies (especially the Ministry) gained an inordinate amount of power. This paved the way for the regime to tilt the financial and legal playing field in favor of government-friendly CSOs. This abuse needs further explanation.

### 5.3 Sharing the spoils: Capacity building

Limited state capacity to implement certain policies paved the way for the inclusion of government-friendly CSOs. Sharing the spoils of power became a critical tool to utilize government-friendly CSOs to implement policies during the AKP period. To explain this, I use protocols as a dominant financial and administrative method in utilizing government-friendly CSOs and capacity building for them.

Although there are various methods in which the spoils may be shared (like the allocation of state resources or EU funding), I will focus on protocols because other forms of favoritism were impossible to address due to limited data.<sup>59</sup> For instance, as part of the IPA, the EU provided nine billion euro to Turkey for the 2007-2020 period to improve the rule of law, governance, and human resources; this includes education, employment and social policies (Schlee, 2018). The European Court of Auditors (ECA) published a special report, “EU pre-accession assistance to Turkey: Only limited results so far,” that highlighted the problems that IPA I (2007-2011) and IPA II (2012-2020) encountered. According to the report, EU funding to

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<sup>59</sup> Comprehensive data on EU grants does not exist. The Central Finance and Contracts Unit of the Ministry of Treasury and Finance provides financial data on IPA I and IPA II on a yearly basis, but this data provides information about grant receivers only if they are receiving a grant from a program. However, some information is available through news and reports.

Turkey that was supposed to support reform efforts was not effective; the ECA also criticized the European Commission for not using corrective measures and ensuring better use of the funds (European Court of Auditors, 2018; Schlee, 2018). The report also emphasized that there should be more funding to reform the rule of law, judiciary, and civil society (European Court of Auditors, 2018, p. 21).

Similarly, we saw examples of government-friendly CSOs receiving funding or state resources. Organizations that receive public benefits are politicized:

Civil society organizations favored by the government often enjoy “public benefit” status, meaning they have broad license to solicit tax-exempt donations. The government tends to favor CSOs to which it feels an ideological affinity ... Given this politicization, the organizations that enjoy public benefits status have shifted over the years; secular groups favored before the AKP have given way to new groups—which are often more religious—that share the government’s outlook. ... These government-backed groups enjoy increased operational capacity and can do good work, but often lack legitimacy outside the AKP constituency, which limits their capacity to address some of the most controversial issues confronting the country. (Center for American Progress, Istanbul Policy Center, & Istituto Affari Internazionali, 2017, p. 23)

At the same time, these government-friendly CSOs have organic links with the ruling party and its leaders. From 2008-2012, Türkiye Gençlik ve Eğitime Hizmet Vakfı (TÜRGEV–Turkey Youth and Education Service Foundation) received around 100 million USD in aid from abroad. While President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is the founder, Bilal Erdoğan (Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s son) is a member of the general assembly, and Esra Albayrak (Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s daughter) is a board member of TÜRGEV. Also, in 2015, TÜRGEV received state land to construct buildings and dormitories for imam-hatip secondary schools (Türküne, 2015).<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Imam-hatip secondary schools were re-opened with the system change (4+4+4) in 2012. These schools were closed down when compulsory education was limited to eight years. Similar to imam-hatip high schools, these schools have a curriculum specific to religious education.

As mentioned in the previous section, the Ministry is in constant need of CSOs to provide service. Government-friendly CSOs provide both service and legitimacy to policies; the state kills two birds with one stone. Since the government needs CSOs to implement policies, the AKP resorted to co-opting CSOs, taking advantage of their role as service providers and supporters of state policies. Moreover, by creating these CSOs, the government also ensured that the policies that are planned gain legitimacy since civil society represents public opinion.

In education, protocols gain a critical role in terms of capacity building. Protocols are agreements that the Ministry can sign with state and non-state actors for certain projects and plans.<sup>61</sup> Basically, protocols are formal documents of cooperation that delineate the partners and their role. State bodies often seek the assistance of other state institutions and prefer protocols. The partners in protocols can be ministries or sub-units of state institutions.

However, in a collaboration between a state and non-state actor, protocols provide substantial power to the non-state actor since it allows them to ally with a state institution. Non-state actors can benefit from the state in different ways: accessing resources, gathering data, and easily obtaining permission for entering schools. When asked whether protocols are beneficial for non-state actors, one senior state official elucidated this aspect of the protocols as follow: “Of course! Through a protocol, we opened all schools to CSOs. So, they can use these spaces for trainings or meetings” (Interview 13).<sup>62</sup> Similarly, a CSO representative underscored the importance of protocols: “In order to reach a critical mass, protocols are important.

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<sup>61</sup> The Ministry does not provide any data on protocols. Thus, I rely on desktop research and interviews in conveying their framework and analysis.

<sup>62</sup> Translated from: “Tabii. Protokol ile biz okulları ve okullara ait bütün tesisleri STK'ların kullanımına açtık. İstiyorlarsa orada eğitim ve toplantı yapabilirlerdi.”

... Usually, nobody can freely enter into schools” (Interview 1).<sup>63</sup> Another civil society representative underlined the authority that protocols provide: “... it [a protocol] eases our job. There was no problem at the schools and provincial directorates of the Ministry we visited” (Interview 2).<sup>64</sup> Protocols provide significant influence and power to CSOs since they can ease the process of data sharing and accessibility to schools, teachers, and students.

Since there is no clear data and framework about protocols, I had a chance to learn more about them as my interviewees elaborated on the matter. Protocols are agreements. A state institution can approach a partner to sign a protocol, or a non-state actor can reach out to a state institution for a protocol instead. One CSO representative gave an example from their organization’s process for a protocol that they had with the Ministry:

And I went to the Ministry and said, “We are a volunteer for schools’ free time activities.” They asked, “How?” We explained to them that with our volunteers we can provide this and that activities for children. And, we turned this into a protocol. (Interview 3) (see Appendix D, 26)

However, this does not mean that protocols are easily obtained, especially when the state has a selective inclusive approach towards non-state actors. For instance, one CSO representative highlighted the vagueness of the bureaucracy surrounding the protocols:

In short, they signed protocols with certain CSOs, but there was no routine. They don’t have a conduct. A CSO has to exert itself. It constantly has to knock on doors since there are no instructions on how to collect papers or gather the necessary documents. (Interview 8) (see Appendix D, 27)

According to my interviewees, a common way CSOs were able to sign protocols or initiate the process was to have a connection within the Ministry (this might be a

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<sup>63</sup> Translated from: “Ciddi bir kitleye ulaşmak için protokoller önemli. ... Yoksa elini kolunu sallaya sallaya kimse okullara giremez.”

<sup>64</sup> Translated from: “Milli Eğitim ile biz o protokole dayanarak çok rahat şekilde çalışıyorduk. Gittiğimiz her yerde, okulda, il ilçe milli eğitim müdürlükleri hiç sıkıntımız olmadı.”

senior level official or manager within a unit). When talking about the relationship with the Ministry, a representative claimed that “... the bureaucrat matters the most, rather than the institution. Like, Ziya Selçuk was kind of an open-minded person” (Interview 12).<sup>65</sup> So, bureaucrats become a link between the state and organizations; as put by another representative: “Not every bureaucrat is the same, not every one of them likes us not every bureaucrat is against us” (Interview 14).<sup>66</sup>

Alongside with the vagueness in the legal and procedural framework to obtain protocols, the playing field for educational civil society has changed dramatically as government-friendly CSOs presence has increased. Protocols also became a field of contestation since the Ministry preferred to work with government-friendly civil society; according to a civil society representative:

There are different actors in the field, especially ideologically different. The state used to have respect to conventional institutions like AÇEV and TEGV. Nowadays, they are not alone. Both national and foreign CSOs are entering the scene. Thus, there is open competition. ... Currently, the state is making protocols with certain CSOs. ENSAR and others... They all have protocols that are quite relaxed. If and when we have a protocol, it is very restrictive and controlling. (Interview 2) (see Appendix D, 28)

In deciding whether to sign protocols, the Ministry has substantial power. The change in the playing field regarding protocols has led to an ambiguous process for other CSOs. As institutional changes led to the dominance of the Ministry over policies and programs, protocols became a critical tool for Ministry to alter the playing field in education. This also meant that the protocols were contested. Having a connection within the Ministry became a criterion to signing a protocol (Interview 5).

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<sup>65</sup> Translated from: “...kurumdan daha çok oradaki bürokrat önemli. Ziya Selçuk'un açık kafalı olması gibi.”

<sup>66</sup> Translated from: “Her bürokrat aynı değil, her bürokrat bizi sevmiyor, her bürokrat bize düşman değil.”



While this creates hurdles for certain CSOs, government-friendly CSOs enjoy this process, as one government-friendly CSO representative underscored: “Because they gave financial assistance to us. They give financial support now. This is how close of relationships exist now” (Interview 7).<sup>67</sup> While some CSOs enjoy the support of the state, others struggle with the vagueness of laws governing the protocols.

Additionally, some non-state actors could not extend their protocols even after years of successful projects. One civil society representative highlighted this issue, referring to another institution: “Of course, there were protocols and stuff. But they could not renew these protocols” (Interview 5).<sup>68</sup>

Government-friendly CSOs impact on associational life meant that the spoils of the regime were directed towards them. For instance, one civil society representative demonstrated how protocols became contested:

I examined this carefully but for a long time I did not look at to whom, how, when, where the money goes, or how these projects happen. But there was a time that I closely examined them, around we could say, 2010 to 2013-2014, maybe earlier. When I looked at the list of the organizations that received funding, I was like “who is this association, institution, whatever for God’s sake?” Then when you look at them, most of them are GONGOS. This sort of thing happened. Their number increased and they started to get serious shares. We do not know what happened to the funding that these organizations got. (Interview 5) (see Appendix D, 29)

Moreover, these government-friendly CSOs mainly have Islamist tendencies and have organic links with the state (Interview 5).

This section on capacity building aimed to explain how the AKP regime skewed the playing field of protocols in education which paved the way for government-friendly CSOs to take a bigger share of the pie. While these CSOs

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<sup>67</sup> Translated from: “Çünkü böylece bizlere parasal destek verdiler. Paralı destek bile veriliyor artık. Bu kadar artık sıkı ilişki içine girilmiş.”

<sup>68</sup> Translated from: “Protokoller falan yapılyordu tabii ki. Hatta o protokolleri yenileyemediler.”

enjoyed the spoil of protocols, other CSOs faced challenges in applying for a protocol or getting one signed.

In this chapter, I aimed to answer why the relationship between the state and CSOs changed during the AKP period 2002-2012. Building on the formal and informal institutional changes, I claimed that the consolidation of power allowed the party to change its relationship with educational civil society. Both eliminating the veto powers and the rupture with the EU accession process enabled the state to abandon its cooperative policymaking process from the early years of the party. However, power consolidation did not lead to elimination of educational CSOs in policy-related arena. Due to limited state capacity, the state needed CSOs for certain educational policies. Besides controlling associational life or legitimizing party policies, CSOs were crucial actors as service providers. Thus, the AKP altered the playing field in education through building capacity. Ultimately, the party ensured the authority of the state and state institutions, leaving non-state actors out of the policymaking process.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

This chapter presents, firstly, a summary of the key finding of the research. Secondly, the importance of the research and contribution to existing literature are assessed. The limitations of the research are subsequently presented. The chapter concludes with the implications for future research.

The primary objectives of this study were to understand how and why the relationship between the state and educational civil society changed during the AKP period (2002-2012). To answer these questions, this research employed two policy periods as cases. The first policy period was the curriculum reform (2003-2005) and the second was the 2012 system change popularly known as 4+4+4.

The main goal of the curriculum reform (2003-2005) was to improve the existing curriculum and education system through a shift in the Turkish pedagogy. The reform aimed to adopt a student-centered learning process. The reform was a two-year process; it included a research and development period and one-year pilot study. The policy process included members of CSOs, experts, teachers, parents, and students and numerous meetings within the Board and Ministry.

In 2012, the system change or “4+4+4” aimed to alter the eight-year compulsory education system. The change was proposed by AKP deputies on February 2012 as a draft law, and after parliamentary discussions, the draft law was passed in March 2012. The draft law consisted of multiple changes: prolonging compulsory education from eight years to 12 years, dividing the system into three tiers (4+4+4) instead of two (8+4), changing the names of certain universities, and

extending the contracts of private companies which work for the FATİH project. The draft law referred to the 18<sup>th</sup> National Education Council decision as impetus. The decision was proposed by the government-friendly union, Eğitim-Bir-Sen in the 2010 Council.

In contrast to the curriculum reform, the system change occurred in haste. Within three months, the draft law was passed and then implemented in all schools the following September. The policymaking process were not as collaborative as the curriculum reform, since the system change was proposed by party deputies and discussed in the related committee of parliament. While opposition party members of parliament demanded the inclusion of non-state actors, there was selective inclusion of CSOs. Still, the Committee decided to include a limited number of CSOs that included government-friendly CSOs and liberal organizations.

The thesis proposed two main findings on how and why the relationship between the state and educational civil society changed. I claimed that formal and informal institutional changes were critical mechanisms employed by the state to consolidate the power of certain educational institutions. In the section detailing formal institutional changes, I explored how the Ministry, Board and Council – three of the most important educational institutions in Turkish education – underwent critical changes in their legal framework. These changes shifted the playing field of education for educational CSOs, and supported the state's shift from cooperation to selective inclusion. In the informal institutional changes section, the parliamentary discussions were scrutinized to demonstrate how educational institutions and the governing rules of the Committee were bypassed. These informalities particularly explained the hasty policymaking process in the 2012 system change.

While the Minister and Ministry of National Education gained considerable power as an organ that decides on educational policies, the Board and Council were deprived of their role as critical actors in the policymaking process. The Decree having the Force of Law No. 652 altered the Ministry's structure and abilities. Numerous sub-units were shut down due to idleness. Downsizing within the Ministry was considered necessary to overcome the sluggish bureaucracy. Moreover, the Decree paved the way for the Ministry to purge directors and provincial directorates. The purge enabled the party to replace these bureaucrats with yes-men.

The Board was mainly responsible for the curriculum and textbooks, and the Council was an inclusive organ that gathered approximately every four years to discuss problems related to education, produce solutions and implement policies. Both the Board and Council lost power in the decision making process over the years with changes to their regulations.

The number of Board members was reduced, and duties were changed. The Board's ability to decide on curriculum change and its ability to conduct research on educational problems were eliminated. Similarly, the Council organizational structure was changed in a way that favored the state. The percentage of state organizations and bodies was increased while the percentage of non-state actors (i.e., academics and CSOs) was decreased. Moreover, Council regulations were changed, and decisions of the Council were changed from "necessary" to "advisory" indicating its loss of power in educational policymaking. All in all, these changes paved the way for the Ministry's dominance over educational policymaking and minimized the impact of the Board and Council in the agenda-setting or decision making process of education.

In parliamentary discussions, we witnessed the bypassing of laws and regulations in parliament, which were informal institutional changes. State bodies and their representatives committed numerous transgressions to maximize their agenda-setting power and overhaul the legislative process during the 2012 system change. By proposing the draft law to parliament, AKP deputies bypassed the Ministry and other educational institutions. Moreover, during the meetings, the deputies did not follow parliamentary regulations, instead overlooked certain rules and regulations. These informal institutional changes reflected the hybrid nature of the regime, in which educational state bodies and non-state actors were bypassed while the policy was implemented through the legislative organ. Thus, the party was able to maintain a democratic facade even if it selectively included non-state actors and pushed for a hasty process.

Another primary finding of this research was answering the question of why the relationship between the state and educational civil society changed. In my analysis, I argued that existing explanations do not fully explain Turkish educational civil society though certain arguments of the literature remain true. The need for legitimizing and controlling civil society remained a critical factor in why hybrid regimes repress civil society in the literature (Doyle, 2018; Gerschewski, 2013). However, in the Turkish case, we saw that legitimization was not a mechanism used by the hybrid regime; instead, it has been employed since the early years of the regime to gain strength against the strong veto powers. The legitimization of policies and control of CSOs remained critical explanations for why the Turkish state changed its relationship with civil society. Still, these explanations did not suffice to explain the change from cooperation to selective inclusion. Thus, I claimed that the

relationship between the state and educational civil society changed due to the democratic reversal of the party over the years.

This authoritarian turn altered the playing field for educational civil society since the party preferred to include and support government-friendly CSOs in policymaking. Despite the shift in the policymaking process, the limited capacity of the state in educational policy implementation forced the state to engage with CSOs. However, the state compensated for its limited capacity with favoritism towards government-friendly CSOs. Inclusion of these CSOs enabled the state to maintain a democratic facade while overcoming dissenting voices in civil society. Since the party consolidated its power in different areas, it was also able to assist government-friendly CSOs in capacity building through the use of state resources or funding. I primarily focused on protocols to explain how capacity building occurs. Protocols are agreements signed between the state and non-state actors. The legal framework of these agreements is rather ambiguous, which allows for their abuse and misuse. In particular, the state favored government-friendly CSOs in signing protocols and shared the spoils of being in power with these associations.

This thesis also contributed to the existing literature through its findings. The detailed tracing of both policy periods contributed to the Turkish educational civil society literature in terms of its empirical evidence. The case-specific approach and its findings also contributed to the existing literature on civil society under hybrid regimes. The findings of this research have provided further evidence that case-specific research in civil society literature can bring novel insights. Moreover, the present study shed light on educational civil society that has been lacking in recent research. While this research argues that the state and civil society relationship can take different forms, it also shows that these different relationships can re-shape the

perspective of the CSOs. The critical assessment of the different formulations of the state and civil society relationship showed that novel forms of this relationship may occur under hybrid regimes. Although clientelistic relationships can form under democratic regimes, the capacity building of government-friendly CSOs showed how hybrid regimes maintain a democratic facade.

In addition, civil society is considered a critical actor in democratic consolidation; however, the mushrooming of government-friendly CSOs demonstrate that these organizations play a passive role under hybrid regimes. Additionally, control and legitimization are critical modalities for hybrid regimes to repress civil society. However, this research showed that although control and legitimization could be applied to the Turkish context, the state capacity to pursue policies mattered significantly. Thus, the limited state capacity in the Turkish educational context was an answer to why the Turkish state needed government-friendly –or occasionally liberal– CSOs in policymaking.

When it comes to the constraints of this study, one of the obvious limitations was the lack of data, a limitation that prevented a clear generalized statement about educational civil society in Turkey. As mentioned in the literature review (Chapter 2), the current research agenda in political science understudies education due to the lack of established literature and scarcity of data. I encountered a similar lack of data in my study. While Ministry data on education facilitates descriptive study on students and teachers, the lack of data on educational civil society, their projects and funding clearly discourage generalizable study. Current data on civil society does not allow for even basic descriptive studies on educational civil society.

Additionally, the sampling was not diverse enough to adequately address the capacity building explained in Chapter 5. A larger sample that included more



government-friendly CSOs could pave the way the findings of the research question and generalization beyond the context of this research. Still, the existing limitations did not prevent sound findings and assessment of educational civil society.

Lastly, future research can be helpful in developing more generalizable findings. Both the literature on civil society under hybrid regimes and educational CSOs in the Turkish context can gain further insights through improvements to this study. While this research focused on Turkish educational CSOs, a comparative study on civil society under hybrid regimes can lead to fruitful discussions and contributions to existing literature. Although case-specific examples can introduce novel mechanisms used by these regimes, it is important to find similarities in a cross-country comparison to understand how these regimes engage with civil society. Also, studies on government-friendly CSOs can initiate a new research realm exploring how clientelism works within the CSO and state relationship. The hybrid regime's role in building capacity for select CSOs should be explored in order to understand whether these CSOs contribute to the democratic consolidation of the regime.

## APPENDIX A

### INTERVIEW INFORMATION

Interview ID	Interviewee	Place	Status	Length
Interview 1	CSO Representative	Istanbul	Conducted in person 12/04/2018	1 hour 30 minutes
Interview 2	CSO Representative/ Former State Official	Istanbul	Conducted in person 16/04/2018	2 hours
Interview 3	CSO Representative	Istanbul	Conducted in person 18/04/2018	1 hour 30 minutes
Interview 4	CSO Representative	Istanbul	Conducted in person 25/04/2018	1 hour 30 minutes
Interview 5	CSO Representative	Istanbul	Conducted in person 26/04/2018	45 minutes
Interview 6	CSO Representative/ Former State Official	Istanbul	Conducted in person 02/05/2018	1 hour 30 minutes
Interview 7	CSO Representative	Istanbul	Conducted in person 02/05/2018	1 hour 30 minutes
Interview 8	CSO Representative	Ankara	Conducted in person 09/05/2018	1 hour
Interview 9	CSO Representative	Ankara	Conducted in person 25/05/2018	45 minutes
Interview 10	CSO Representative/ Former State	Ankara	Conducted in person	2 hours

Interview ID	Interviewee	Place	Status	Length
	Official		25/05/2018	
Interview 11	CSO Representative/ Former State Official	Ankara	Conducted in person 25/05/2018	2 hours
Interview 12	CSO Representative	Istanbul	Conducted in person 12/07/2018	1 hour 30 minutes
Interview 13	CSO Representative/ Former Senior State Official	Istanbul	Conducted in person 13/07/2018	1 hour
Interview 14	CSO Representative	Istanbul	Conducted in person 16/08/2018	45 minutes
Interview 15	CSO Representative/ Former Senior State Official	Ankara	Conducted in person 03/09/2018	1 hour 45 minutes

## APPENDIX B

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS IN TURKISH AND ENGLISH

(In Turkish)

1. Kendinizi tanıtabilir misiniz?
2. 2003-2005 yılları arasında gerçekleşen müfredat reformu hakkında bana bilgi verebilir misiniz?
3. Kurumunuzun/Sizin müfredat reformunda nasıl bir rolü oldu?
4. Bu değişiklik sürecine dair deneyimleriniz neydi?
5. Bu değişiklik hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz?
6. 2012 yılındaki sistem değişikliği hakkında bana bilgi verebilir misiniz?
7. Kurumunuzun/Sizin sistem değişikliğinde nasıl bir rolü oldu?
8. Bu değişiklik sürecine dair deneyimleriniz neydi?
9. Bu değişiklik hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz?
10. Müfredat değişikliği ve 4+4+4 politikalarını karşılaştırsak, sivil toplum örgütlerinin bu iki süreçte nasıl bir rolü vardı? Sizce bir fark var mı? Var ise nedeni nedir?
11. Bu iki süreçte Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı nasıl bir rol aldı?
12. Bu iki süreçte Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu nasıl bir rol aldı?
13. Sizce AKP hükümetlerinin eğitimdeki sivil toplum örgütlerine karşı tutumu değişti mi?
14. Eğitimdeki sivil toplum örgütlerinin politika yapım sürecine ne kadar etkisi olduğunu düşünüyorsunuz? Bu etki AKP hükümetleri sırasında nasıldı?
15. Siz AKP döneminde eğitimdeki değişikliği nasıl yorumluyorsunuz?

(In English)

1. Can you tell me about yourself?
2. Can you inform me about the curriculum reform that happened in 2003-2005?
3. What kind of role you/your institution had during the curriculum reform?
4. What is your experience about the curriculum reform?
5. What do you think about the curriculum reform?
6. Can you inform me about the system change that happened in 2012?
7. What kind of role you/your institution had during the system change?
8. What is your experience about the system change?
9. What do you think about the system change?
10. What was the role of civil society organizations during these two periods if we compare them? Do you think there is a difference? If so, why?
11. What kind of role did the Ministry of National Education had during these two periods?
12. What kind of role did the Board of Education had during these two periods?
13. Do you think there was a change in the attitude of the AKP governments toward educational civil society?
14. Do you think educational civil society organizations had an impact on policymaking? Did this impact change during the AKP governments?
15. How do you interpret the educational policies during the AKP period?

## APPENDIX C

### ORGANIZATION OF THE MINISTRY

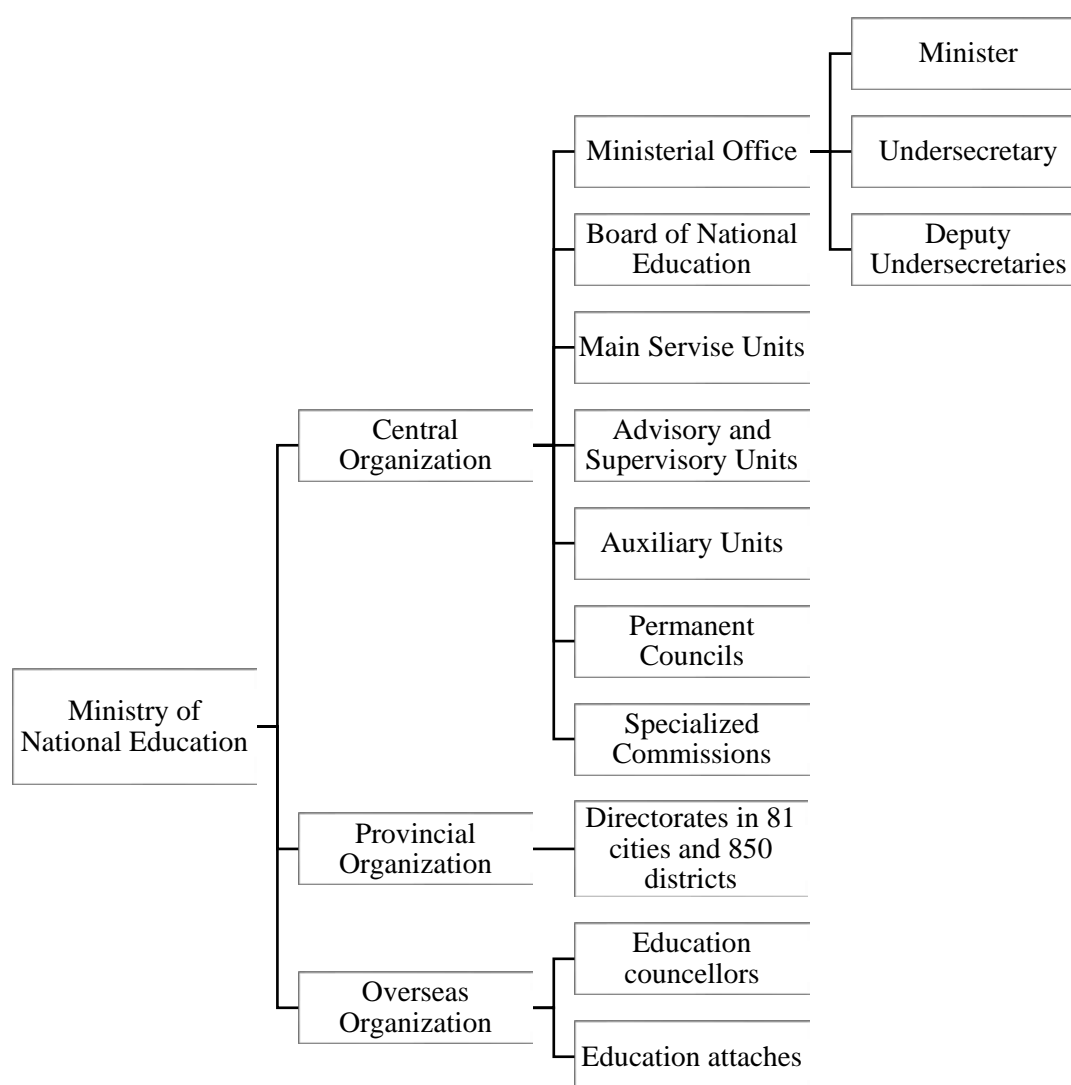


Fig. C1 The Ministry's central, provincial, and overseas organizations

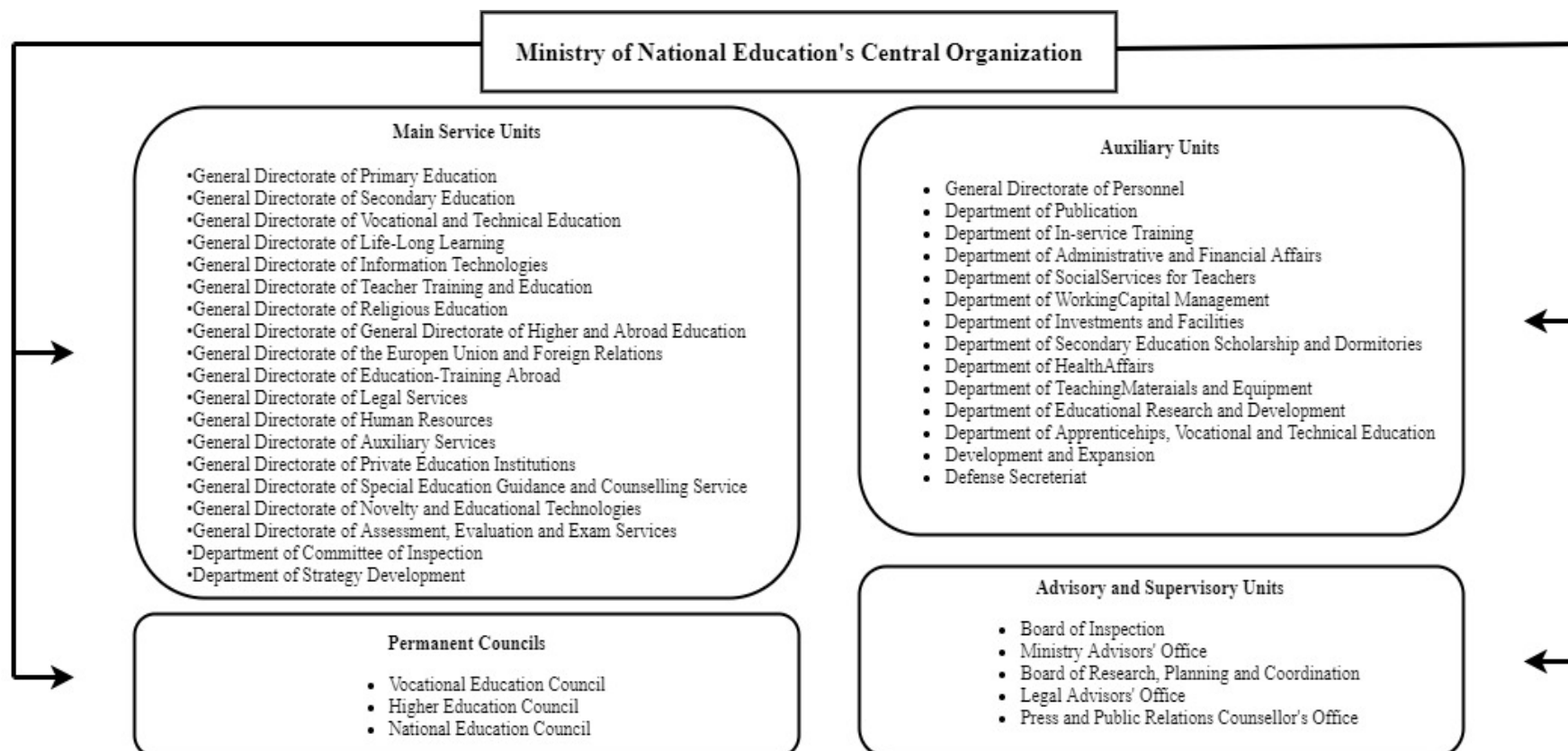


Fig. C2 Central organization of the Ministry

## APPENDIX D

### INTERVIEW QUOTES

1. Atatürk inkılap ve ilkelerine ve Anayasada ifadesini bulan Atatürk milliyetçiliğine bağlı; ...Beden, zihin, ahlak, ruh ve duygu bakımlarından dengeli ve sağlıklı şekilde gelişmiş bir kişiliğe ve karaktere, hür ve bilimsel düşünme gücüne, geniş bir dünya görüşüne sahip, insan haklarına saygılı, kişilik ve teşebbüse değer veren, topluma karşı sorumluluk duyan; yapıcı, yaratıcı ve verimli kişiler olarak yetiştirmek; İlgi, istidat ve kabiliyetlerini geliştirerek gerekli bilgi, beceri, davranışlar ve birlikte iş görme alışkanlığı kazandırmak suretiyle hayata hazırlamak ve onların, kendilerini mutlu kılacak ve toplumun mutluluğuna katkıda bulunacak bir meslek sahibi olmalarını sağlamak.
2. Millî eğitimin genel amaç ve temel ilkeleri ile evrensel değer ve standartları göz önünde bulundurarak kalite, eşitlik ve etkililik ilkeleri ile millî ve toplumsal değerlere dayalı olarak eğitim sistemini geliştirme çalışmalarını yürütmek; ... Gerektiğinde eğitim ve öğretim programları, ders kitapları, yardımcı kitaplar ile öğretmen kılavuz kitaplarının hazırlanmasında yükseköğretim kurumları, sivil toplum örgütleri ile diğer kamu ve özel kurum ve kuruluşlarıyla işbirliği yapmak; ...Eğitim sistemi, eğitim ve öğretim plan ve programları, ders kitapları ve eğitim araç-gereçleriyle ilgili araştırma yapmak veya yaptırmak.
3. Buna bulsam bulsam darbe tarzı politika yapma biçimi falan demek lazım. Çat diye kimsenin bir hazırlığı yokken, bir yasa teklifi geliyor, Bir buçuk ay içinde bütün memleketin eğitim sistemi değişiyor yani. Yani meclisten geçiyor diye aslında her şey katılımcı demokrasi içeriyor demek değil. Dostlar alışverişte görsün



diye bir günde STK'ları davet etmekle olmuyor bu işler yani. O iş aslında sivil toplum katılımı müfredat reformunda gerçekleşti.

4. Ama tabii AB süreci çok desteklediklerini, STÖ'lerinin diyalogunu önemsedikleri, insanlarla görüştükleri, devletin birimlerini STÖ'lere ya da sivillere diyeyim yani tüm insanlığa iş yapacak kişilere daha şeffaflaştırdıkları, açtıkları bir dönemleri oldu muhakkak. İlk zamanlarda böyleydi ama sonra dereceli olarak bu hikâye değişti ve son birkaç yılda son derece kapalı bir politika yürütüyor. ... E, bu süreç içerisinde daha hükümete yakın STK'lar oluşturdular, öyle bir yanı var. Daha sonra bu paraları da onlara vermeye başladılar.

5. ERG ile ara ara görüşürdük, ... Bundan çok dertlenirdi. Biz de hiç artık görüşemiyoruz diye. Bizim mesela SETA hükümete yakın olarak bilinirdik ama biz görüşmede en azından kendim için bir sıkıntımız var. Çünkü adamların istediği şeyi söylemiyoruz.

6. Bir kanun çıkardım, hepsini tasfiye ettim. TTKB ve MEB'in yeniden yapılandırılması Türkiye'nin en önemli hareketlerinden birisidir AK Parti döneminde. Kanun değiştiği için o yöneticileri değiştirebilecek bir zemin oluştu, onları da değiştirdim.

7. Bu Kanun Hükmünde Kararnamenin yürürlüğe girdiği tarihte Bakanlık merkez teşkilatında; Müsteşar, Müsteşar Yardımcısı, Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Başkanı ve Üyesi, Genel Müdür, Teftiş Kurulu Başkanı, Strateji Geliştirme Başkanı, I. Hukuk Müşaviri, Genel Müdür Yardımcısı, Daire Başkanı (anahizmet ve yardımcı hizmet birimi), Daire Başkanı, Bakanlık Müşaviri, Basın ve Halkla İlişkiler Müşaviri, Özel Kalem Müdürü, Şube Müdürü kadrolarında bulunanlar ile Bakanlık taşra teşkilatında İl Müdürü kadrolarında bulunanların görevleri hiçbir işleme gerek kalmaksızın sona erer.

8. Ömer Dinçer'in bütün siyasetçi ve bakanlardan bir farkı vardı. Yani şey çok kararlı bir adamdır. Kimseyi dikkate almaz. "Aman, başbakan söyledi. Aman şöyle..." falan değil. Ya da "Aman işte A partisi B partisi" değil. Ya da STK'lar için değil. Hani milletvekilleri de parti de Ömer Dinçer'in tavrını bilir. Ona verdiklerinde Ömer Dinçer yani daha bir rasyonalitesi olan bir şey çıkartır. O da şey muhtemelen belki de o partinin kendisine aykırı olabilir. O yüzden yani!

9. Zaman içinde şura öyle bir hale gelmiş ki aslında şura içinde neyin konuşulacağının sınırı bile olmayan bir yer haline gelmiş. Mesela 19. şurada 2014'de birçok konu gündeme geldi, karma eğitimin kaldırılması gibi, bunların tartışılması için yönetmelik düzeltmesine göre şura gündeminde olmayan ve hazırlık çalışmalarında ele alınmayan hiçbir konu genel kurulda tartışılmaz ve oylanamaz.

10. Bir baktık ki bizim yani şeyimiz bu karardaki hükümetin aldığı 4+4+4 kararındaki ön şey biziz. Hükümet mesela bu kararı getirdiğinde hadi bakalım yarın biz bu kararı getiriyoruz bu konudaki son söz söyleyeceğiniz var mı diye bize sormadılar. Bizim ondan haberimiz yoktu. Biz sadece şuralarda görüşlerimizi söyledik ve kamuoyuna da bütün şura kararlarını aktarmaya çalıştık.

11. Bana bugün şunu sorsanız şu an TTKB'nin politika yapımındaki etkisi nedir? Boş! Ömer Dinçer'in yaptığı hamle ile beraber TTKB'nin gücü azaldı. ... Şu an TTKB yani neredeyse bayağı durumu düşmüş durumdadır yani. Şeyi yok yani artık şu bu konuda ısrar etmek gibi. Ama o dönemde şey vardı.

12. Geçmiş dönemlerde TTKB'nin bir bağımsızlığı belli ölçülerde vardı. Belli ölçülerde TTKB bazı kararların kendisi alabiliyordu. Fakat son zamanlarda alınan kararlar iktidarın bazı eylemleri ve söylemlerinde sıkıntılar meydana getirdi.

Özellikle kitaplar konusunda sıkıntılar meydana geldi. Kitap basımı tamamen TTKB'nin elindeydi. TTKB bu konuda bağımsızdı.

13. Ben onları çok kolay aştım. Nasıl? Bir kanun çıkardım, hepsini tasfiye ettim. İki, yöntem ve usulleri değiştirdim. Dolayısıyla bana engelleyecek düzenleme yapamadılar, bütün yöneticileri kanunla değiştirdim ve yeniledim. Daha doğrusu bunu yaparken durup dururken kanun çıkarıp, personeli atıyorum diyemezsiniz. Onun için ben önce MEB ve TTKB'yi yeniden yapılandırımdım. ... TTKB'de kitap ve ders incelemeye dair ibareleri değiştirdim. Kanun değiştiği için o yöneticileri değiştirebilecek bir zemin oluştu, onları da değiştirdim. Dolayısıyla bana engel çıkaramadılar.

14. O konuşmasını yaparken bir telefon geldi dışarıdan. Bir yıl erkene çeksek nasıl olur dedi Fikri Işık. Selçuk Bey de şaşırды bilmiyorum ki olabilir dedi ve bir yıl erkene çekiyoruz okumaya başlama yaşını dediler. Bunun gibi o ana kadar yasada olmayan bir şeyi araya sıkıştırmış oldular. Hani benim başka bir açıklamam yok.

15. Tam ben bunları anlatırken tam her şeyi doğru ifadeye etmeye başlamıştık ki Fikri Işık lafımızı bölüp, "tabii önemli olan kaç yıl olduğu, kaç kademe olduğu değil, mesela ben ABD'ye gittim inch'i parmak boğumu ile öğretiyorlar" şeklinde anı anlatıp resmen ortamı trollemeye yönelik başka bir böyle bir yani orada yeşermekte olan discussion ortamını trollemeye yönelik bir çıkış yaptı. Nur Serter çıkıp Fikri Bey Allah aşkına ne diyorsunuz diye kızdı falan. Öyle saçma şeyler oluyordu yani.

16. Gittiğimiz her yerde, okulda, il ilçe milli eğitim müdürlükleri hiç sıkıntımız olmadı. Ama o yasadaki sonra bakanlık bizden de biraz daha işte ne yapıyorsunuz, o noktalarda nasıl programlar uyguluyorsunuz, programların içeriğini görmek istiyoruz gibi taleplerle geldi.

17. Şu anda tamamıyla STK'lar ile ya da başka kurumlarla ilişkide oradaki yöneticilerin inisiyatifi ile alakalı tamamen. Ya o program çalışmaları STK'ların katılımını sağlamak konusunda bunu düzenleyen hiçbir yasal düzenleme yok. Yapılmasa da olur. Eğer siz yönetici olarak bunu yapmanın iyi bir şey olduğunu düşünüyorsanız bunu yaparsınız ama yapmazsanız kimse size bunu niye yapmadın diye hesap sormaz size.

18. Ziya Hoca öğretim programı dediğimiz şeyin, müfredat dediğimiz şeyin çok netameli bir konu olduğunu ve toplumsal bir uzlaştırma gerektiğini biliyordu. İşte AKP yeni iktidar olmuştu, bir şey arıyordu, bu kadar güçlü değildi, dolayısıyla bir uzlaşma arıyordur.

19. 2003-2004'te hani meşrutiyetini arttırmasını gerekirken, her yerden meşrutiyetini sağlamak zorunda olan bir hükümet var. Yani Ziya Selçuk ile konuşursanız size çok güzel hikayeler anlatır. Yani MGK'ya gitmesi gelmesi, MGK'ya nasıl ikna ettiği vs. falan şeylerini. ... Ama yıl 2012-13'e geldiğinde artık hani dağılım ya da MEB'in kendisinin şey meşrutiyetine ihtiyacı yok. Dış bir meşrutiyete ihtiyacı yok. Özellikle şey bu zamanlama her şey dediğimiz gibi.

20. O kadar fazla 'A, bunu Eğitim-Bir-Sen getirdi de ondan yapalım' diye bir şey olmadı. Onlar öyle der, biz getirdik der. Bakın, biz şunu da dedik, MEB çalışırken ben TTKB'deydim daire olarak bu işlerle uğraşan daireydi, politika dairesi ve bir metin yazmamız lazım, meşrulaştırmamız lazımdı. Meşruiyet olarak işte efendim birçok sivil toplum örgütünün katıldığı şu tarihlerdeki milli eğitim şurası, tavsiye kararıdır diyerek. Yoksa bu doğrudan siyasal bir şey.

21. Bir an önce bizim bu darbe ürünü bu husustan kurtulmamız gerekiyordu, ondan sonra işte bunun için bizim de artık yavaş yavaş sendika olarak da büyümüştük, üye

sayılarımız artmıştı, AKP çevresinden üyelerimiz olmuştu, artık programları yapabiliyorduk.

22. Mecliste bizim işimiz yok! Bizim işimiz MEB ile. Yani bakanlık bizimle kanun değişikliği, yönetmelik değişikliği danışıyor derken biz fikirlerimizi bakanlığa söyleriz gerisi meclise ait yani.

23. Bu sivil toplum örgütlerini de aşan bir konu yani. ... Bizim fikrimizin ne olduğu önemli değil ki. Orada bir devlet politikası var, bağlı olduğu AB bağlı olduğu politikalar, onlarla alakalı bir şey. Yani bakanlık, mecliste olan şeyler kanuni şeyler, kanunu çıkarmakla alakalıdır, o da bizim işimiz değildir.

24. Meclisten verildikten sonra da meşrudur ama aynı zamanda o kullandığınız yöntemi toplumun zihninde nasıl ilişkilendirildiği de önemlidir. Yani toplum bu yöntemi mi meşru görüyor. ... İlkokulu ya da birinci kademeyi 4 yıla indirdiğinizde ya da 4 yıllık yaptığınız bunun anlamı nedir? Öğretmenler norm açığı oluşturur. Ve oldu mu? Oldu! ... Şeylerin belki de orada da bir düzeltilme şansı olurdu ama bu gerginlik ve gerilimler buna izin vermedi. Aslında revize edilmesi için fırsatlar varken orada kavgalar döndü.

25. Karşılıklı bir alışveriş bu yani. Ama ortak değer de eğitim. Onların bilgiye ihtiyacı oluyor, uzmanlara ihtiyacı oluyorlar, bazen bizim oluyor, bazen onların söyleyemediği şeyleri bizim söylememiz gerekiyor. Bizim zaten onlara olan ihtiyacımız çok açık. Kararı verenler onlar. Uygulayıcılar onlar. Bu monolitik bir ilişki değil.

26. Ve ben MEB'e gittim ve dedim ki serbest etkinliklere talibiz. Nasıl dediler. Biz serbest etkinlik saatinde geleceğiz gönüllülerimizle ve şu etkinlikleri yapacağız. Ve hemen bunu bir protokole bağladık.

27. Yani protokoller yaptılar bazı STK'lar ama bir rutini yok. Şeyi yok, yolu yordamı yok. Gidip bir STK uğraşacak. Durmadan kapısını çalacak yani bir yerde şu belgeleri toplayın şunları yapın diye yönlendirme de yok.

28. Ama şimdi tek başlarına değiller. Hem ülkeden başka aktörler var hem de yurtdışından çok fazla dışarı STK var sahada. ... Şimdi hangisine cevval ise, hangisi rüştünü ispatlamışsa, hangisi bağışını yapıyorsa o şeyi o alıyor. O açıdan da rekabet var. Ve hala, bu rekabette alt yapısı ve tecrübesi ile o eski kuşak STK'lar çok daha güçlüler. ... Şimdi o tür STK'lar daha rahat protokol yapıyorlar. ENSAR vakfı, benzer vakıflar. Hepsinin devlet ile protokolleri var. Geniş, rahat protokoller. Tabii ki bu dönemde onlar daha rahatlar ve daha iyi çalışıyorlar.

29. Ama çok yakın izlediğim bir dönem vardı ki işte 2010'dan 2013-4'e kadar diyebilirsiniz belki daha yakın. Çoktan o paraların verildiği listelere bakıp kim bunlar Allah aşkına dernekler, kurumlar, bilmem neler bir sürü birtakım isimler geçiyor. İşte, açıklanıyor açık ya çünkü o hibe kime verilmiş. Ondan sonra bakıyorsunuz çok büyük çoğunluğu tam GONGO. Yani öyle bir şey oldu. Onlar arttı ve ciddi paylar almaya başladılar. Bizler o paraların akıbetini bilmiyoruz.

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