

STATE POLICIES ON VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOLS IN TURKEY 1970 - 2013

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by

Yasemin Taşkın Alp

Boğaziçi University

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“State Policies on Vocational High Schools in Turkey 1970-2013,” a thesis prepared by Yasemin Taşkın Alp in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts in History degree from the Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History at Bogaziçi University.

This thesis has been approved on DATE (date/month/year) by:

Prof. Şevket Pamuk  
(Thesis Advisor)

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Prof. Ayşe Buğra

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Prof. Asım Karaömerlioğlu

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Title: State Policies on Vocational High Schools in Turkey 1970-2013

This thesis examines the last 40 years of vocational high schools in Turkey. Perceived as an input for future industrial growth, the area has drawn constant attention of policy-makers. Here vocational high schools are considered as the main form of skill formation in Turkey and compared with the skill formation literature. Looking at the path-dependent characteristics and the changes that occurred during the years marked by the neoliberalization of economic policies, two aspects of the persistence of the skill formation problems are analyzed: the lack of a model and a long-term strategy for vocational education and training. While tracing the components of these two aspects, it is revealed that the aspects defined as problematic and require a strategy remain the same. The state's interest on this issue continued. Furthermore, despite the neoliberal environment, vocational education remains a statist area in which the state's limitations in its commitment to the skill formation issue enabled the simultaneous occurrence of three different models of skill formation. This patchwork of different types of skill formation systems manifests the institutional continuities as well the particular way the changes were adopted. Overall, the lack of commitment to a model and a strategy complicates the institutional complementarities or relationships in the political economy. As the aspirations for a coordinated model are widely declared, the mechanisms compatible with this system are not formed. The absence of institutional complementarities between vocational schools and other realms of the political economy attenuates the chances of a viable and effective vocational education policy.

Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü'nde Yüksek Lisans derecesi için (Yasemin Taşkın Alp) tarafından (Month and Year)'te teslim edilen tezin kısa özeti

Başlık: Türkiye'de Meslek Liselerine Yönelik Devlet Politikaları 1970-2013.

Bu tez Türkiye'de meslek liselerinin son 40 yılını incelemektedir. Endüstriyel büyümenin bir bileşeni olarak görülen meslek liseleri politika yapıcılarının ilgisini sürekli olarak cezbetmiştir. Bu tezde meslek liseleri beceri oluşumu sisteminin temel biçimi olarak ele alınmış ve beceri oluşumu literatürüyle karşılaştırılmıştır. Ekonomi politikalarının neoliberalleştiği yıllarda meslek liselerinin tarihsel gelişimindeki menziline bağımlı (*path-dependent*) özellikleri belirlenerek beceri oluşumu probleminin devam etmesindeki iki unsur analiz edilmiştir: mesleki öğretim ve eğitim için bir modelin ve uzun vadeli bir stratejinin eksikliği. Bunlara dair gelişmeler takip edilerek incelenen 40 yılda problemlili olduğu düşünülen ve strateji geliştirilmek istenilen alanların aynı olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Devletin bu konuya olan ilgisi devam ederken aynı zamanda günümüze kadar tekrar eden problemlerin çözülemediği görülmektedir. Ayrıca, neoliberal bir bağlama rağmen mesleki öğretim ve eğitimin devletçi bir alan olarak kaldığı, ama bunların aksine devletin sınırlılıklarının üç farklı beceri oluşumu modelinin aynı anda uygulanabilir olmasına sebep olduğu saptanmıştır. Farklı beceri oluşumu sistemlerinin birarada uygulanabiliyor olması hem kurumsal devamlılıklar hem de değişiklikler açısından belirleyicidir. Belli bir modelin ve stratejinin uygulanamaması siyasal iktisadi kurumlar arasındaki bütünselliği ve ilişkiyi de zorlaştırmaktadır. Koordine olabilmiş bir modele dair istekler sıklıkla dile getirilmiş olsa da, bu sisteme uygun mekanizmalar oluşturulamamıştır. Meslek liseleri ve siyasal iktisadi diğer kurumlar arasındaki uyumsuzluk tutarlı ve etkili bir mesleki eğitim politikası şansını düşürmektedir.

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## CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION .....	6
Theoretical Framework for the Analysis of Vocational High School Policies....	17
2.THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND .....	35
History of Vocational Education in Turkey to the 1970s .....	35
Neoliberalization of Secondary Education in Turkey .....	46
3. INSTITUTIONAL EVOLUTION OF VOCATIONAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN TURKEY 1970-2013.....	61
Overview of Turkish Education System from 1970 to 2013 .....	63
Failure in Manpower Planning, 1970-1982 .....	68
Learning to Compete and Coordinate, 1982-2002.....	78
Challenge of Flexible Skills, 2002-2013 .....	97
4. TURKEY’S CASE FROM A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE: VARIETIES OF CAPITALISM AND SKILL FORMATION.....	115
Models of Capitalism .....	117
Skill formation Model in Turkey.....	124
Complementing and Coordinating the Fractures? .....	138
5. CONCLUSION .....	142
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	150

## TABLES

1. Variations in Vocational Training Systems.....	31
2. Vocational High Schools in Turkey, 1923-1980.....	45
3. Instability of the MoNE: Changing Ministers, Time Spent in Office, 1970-2013...	67
4. Comparative Annual Expenditure per Student at High Schools, 2010.....	129
5. Comparative Share of High School Expenditures in GDP, 2010.....	130

## FIGURES

1. Secondary education schooling rate, 1945-2013.....	64
2. Percentage of students in general and vocational and technical education in secondary schooling, 1940-2010.....	65
3. Ratio of the ministry's budget to the total budget and the GDP.....	66
4. Comparative share of vocational high school students among total high school students, 2011.....	127

## ABBREVIATIONS

MoNE	Ministry of National Education
ISI	Import Substitution Industrialization
SME	Small Medium Enterprise
SPA	State Planning Agency
Şura	<i>Milli Eğitim Şurası</i> (National Council of Education)
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VTE	Vocational and Technical Education



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

One of the criticisms to education policies in Turkey is the increasing responsiveness of the policies to economics: the neoliberal thinking behind the education strategies and education's position as an input to economic growth. On the other hand, the overall deficiency in education, as well as the lack of human capital formation and skill formation to assist economic performance are pronounced. While cheap labor has become a ubiquitous term to define the unskilled labor force in Turkey, the lack of high-technology growth and highly skilled industries characterizes the Turkish economy. In this setting, human capital or skill formation strategies to assist economic objectives are not carried out, or a structure of employment industries to foster skill formation has not been formed. Thus, a scene in which two conflicting claims that complement one another is present: a persistent criticism in economic studies of the lack of human capital, and a similarly strong criticism in education studies of prioritizing economics and reducing students to inputs of production. This ambivalence suggests an unsuccessful story of the link between education and economics in various dimensions, which will be discussed in the following chapters.

Vocational and technical high schools and policies pertaining to them stand right at the intersection of education and economics due to these schools' particular objectives for employment and skills. In general, the vocational high schools are scrutinized as part of vocational education and training (VET) policies. The OECD defines vocational education in the following manner: "Vocational education prepares participants for direct entry, without further training, into specific occupations".<sup>1</sup> A

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<sup>1</sup> Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, "Glossary of Statistical Terms,"

more broad definition of VET by the European Union (EU) shows the relationship between skills and education: “Education and training which aims to equip people with knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competences required in particular occupations or more broadly on the labor market.”<sup>2</sup>

Although a direct relationship of vocational education and economics is apparent, how exactly the link occurs and its consequences vary among different cases. Countries differ in terms of the way they approach skill and structure their skill formation systems. Due to different types of skill formation systems combined with other factors in their political economies, a wide range of economic and social results are observed. Influenced by meta-trends, such as the neoliberalization of policies or the increasing demand for higher education around the world, there may be certain similarities in the different countries’ skill formation systems as well. In the case of Turkey, before doing any social or economic analysis or criticism on the vocational education system, it is useful to understand how the skill formation system is structured and the way it is linked to economics when compared with other examples around the world.

In Turkey, vocational schools have been part of the skill formation system for a long time and are still a salient form of education. The vocational schools opened by the state date back to the late Ottoman period and currently about half of students in secondary education study at vocational high schools.<sup>3</sup> Vocational education is carried

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<http://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=5451> (accessed May 16, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> European Union, “European Union Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training Glossary,” <http://www.eqavet.eu/qa/gns/glossary/v/vocational-education-and-training.aspx> (accessed April 10, 2014)

<sup>3</sup> In the 2012-2013 academic year 45,5% of total secondary education students study at vocational high schools. Eğitim Reformu Girişimi (ERG), *Eğitim İzleme Raporu 2012*, (İstanbul: ERG, 2013), 201

out in vocational high schools, which is part of the centralized education system just as other secondary education institutions, such as the high schools that are academic education oriented and several others specialized in different fields. Similarly, there are higher education institutions specialized in vocational education, while others specialize in academic fields. On the other hand, vocational training involves a wide range of courses and programs other than formal education carried out in public institutions. Currently taking continuous attention of media, academia and policy makers, vocational high schools are a prominent part of the skill formation system and of the discussions on skill formation problem in Turkey.

In the wider context, this thesis examines the persistence of the skill formation problem in Turkey by focusing on the vocational high schools, and provides a political economic analysis from a comparative perspective using the varieties of capitalism and skill formation typologies. Path-dependent characteristics and possible links with other institutions in the political economy are identified, while vocational high schools are examined as a skill formation institution. At the same I discuss the extent of the neoliberalization of vocational education, and also the state's role in skill formation in Turkey. So, I approach vocational high schools by using a theoretical framework and doing a historical review in order to identify the system's main features and discuss aspects of the current state of the skill formation in Turkey. Keeping the current literature on the secondary education's neoliberalization in mind, the discussion inevitably includes the liberalization arguments and the state dominance on the issue.

My sample is vocational secondary schools in Turkey from the 1970s to 2013 while using the tools and perspectives of the skill formation and varieties of capitalism literatures. The analysis of the primary sources begins in the 1970s in order

to grasp the neoliberal period in a more comprehensive manner. So, a closer look at the policies and laws just before the neoliberalization of economic policies contribute to the discussions on the neoliberalization of education. By starting with the import substitution industrialization (ISI) period in the 1970s and including the shift to an export-led growth strategy in the 1980s, the continuities and changes in the vocational schools' adaptation to changing economic models will be presented. It is important to have an understanding of the vocational high school policies during the ISI period and even of those before the 1970s, in order to point out what actually can be called neoliberal policies in the later periods. Furthermore, the current nature of the system relies on its historical foundation. Therefore, in addition to my research on primary sources for the period from 1970 to 2013, I bring together the literature on the history of vocational education from the late Ottoman period to the 1970s.

As I bring together the historical information, I make use of the points of view in the theoretical literatures. So, the secondary sources for the period from the nineteenth century to the 1970s and the primary sources for the period from the 1970s to 2013 are analyzed by pointing out the path-dependent characteristics of the skill formation system. By doing so, the differences between the economics oriented policy-making and a neoliberal structure of vocational education policies are highlighted. Moreover, even though the emphasis consequently will be on the current problems, the inclusion of the discussions from the 1970s until today are critical for understanding the nature of the current problems since many of them remain the same. At the same time, while the neoliberalization of economic policies has taken place starting with the 1980s, the extent to which the vocational high schools have been liberalized will be discussed. As the vocational education's path-dependent characteristics and its adaptations to the changing economic and political conditions

are revealed, the intricacy of the state-led system that carries the characteristics of a liberal system, such as the USA, as well as a collective or a coordinated system like Germany's, become apparent.

My research on the matter indicates that the discourse on achieving growth via vocational high school students has never lost its stake and can still be interpreted as an unfulfilled prophecy. In fact, compared with the inconsistencies in the vocational education system, the policy makers' aspiration for economic growth by the input of vocational education has been consistent. The economic outlook of this particular type of education was evident even in the nineteenth century, although some changes that will be discussed below have occurred and a neoliberal vocabulary was adopted after the 1980s. Despite a more comprehensive approach and overall improvements on vocational high schools, vocational secondary education came to be seen as a chronic problem, while the incoherence and fragmented nature of questions to be solved remained the same. Overall, the commitment to solving this issue is problematic.

The two interrelated aspects of the problematic are explained below. Firstly, there is a lack of a viable, feasible strategy for vocational education and an absence of long-term policies, which continuously complicated the problems. Secondly, a particular type of skill formation system has not been formed. These include not providing a framework for skill formation and a clarification of the roles of actors. In this setting, it is difficult to expect that different actors will comply with principles and aspirations brought forward by the state. For instance, especially because individuals in different parts of the system will have differences in their education, they will be prepared for different types of on-the-job training requirements. So, a common knowledge on what each graduate of a certain program in vocational

education would have skills for is hard to occur in this case. Therefore, knowledge on the particular education and training experience of a student would be required for on-the-job training strategies. This is due to what is called the “patchwork model of skill formation” in Turkey, which complicates the training requirements a firm would have to calculate differently for each graduate of vocational high schools.

It can be asserted that the skills issue has not been prioritized looking at it from a comparative perspective, and combining my research with findings in the Turkish political economy literature. The findings in the political economy literature on Turkey support the view that skill formation was not a prioritized goal in the period under examination, since high-technology goods were not part of exports, and industrial and labor relations had a state-dominated feature. To this end, the skill formation models and the varieties of capitalism approach will be used. In line with this, as mentioned above, when compared to different models of skill formation around the world, Turkey still has not designated its own route in resolving this problem. While aspiring to a collective training model that requires the coordination of different actors, it was influenced by neoliberal thinking which brought parts of the system closer to a liberal model where solely individuals were responsible of their own skill formation in the market. In addition, with this comparative perspective, I will comment on neoliberalization on a wider scale. This meta-process results in the formation of similar institutions in different countries, but the typology I make use of pays attention to the differences among the market economies.

As will be presented, the neoliberalization of economic policies affects the education policies in Turkey, particularly because of the oscillating nature of education policy without a feasible strategy to solidify a particular objective. Without a concrete plan that determines the outlook of vocational education and the education system’s

propensity to adapting changing circumstances, neoliberal thinking influences vocational policies. However, the overall context of vocational education does not resemble a liberal skill formation model or a model completely relying on neoliberal policies. Vocational education is still path-dependent on its statist system of skill formation and on the lack of long-term planning. Instead, as it will be presented, during the neoliberal era, while aspiring for a collective training model there is the possibility of neoliberalization of fractures of vocational education system.

When starting this research, my objective was to understand whether vocational education was seen as a way of increasing the social inclusion of disadvantaged groups in the society or whether it was a way to increase human capital accumulation to foster industrial growth. This is a major research question in studies on vocational education around the world. A number of empirical studies on vocational education focus on vocational education's impact on growth. The empirical studies that look at individual outcomes, however, revolve around two main perspectives, whether vocational education is a "safety valve" or a "sink hole" for the individual. These studies try to ascertain whether these schools contribute to increased employment opportunities and greater social equality or whether they reproduce existing inequalities. My objective was to investigate this issue by looking at policies in the neoliberal era. However, as I continued doing research on education policies in Turkey, I realized that the situation is far more complex than the conflict between economic policies and class stratification during the neoliberalization process.

To grasp this question, I first tried to understand what the vocational education system is, and looked for a political economic review of it other than its neoliberalization. In the literature on Turkey, there are few of studies on the historical and political economic explanations of vocational education. What has changed in

vocational education since the 1970s in terms of the employment policies of graduates, and the state's perspective on this type of education over the years was not discussed. However, the neoliberalization of the vocational schools and their role in worsened inequalities in the recent years is present in the literature. But a political economic review in a historical perspective, which would present the vocational education system, is not available.

Here, rather than providing a history of every detail that has changed since the 1970s, the focus will be on the determinants of the type of skill formation and the variety of capitalism. It is seen that vocational education was path-dependent on some of its characteristics earlier than the neoliberal restructuring in the 1980s and these were prevalent in the way the system ended up in the 2000s. Responsiveness to changing social, economic and political context, ad-hoc changes, lack of coordination among different institutions related to vocational education, high levels of state involvement that did not actually result in commitment to individuals' skill formation were some of the characteristics that determined the variety of capitalism in Turkey in regard to the skill formation system.

Reaching data on this subject was difficult as the sources on this issue were scattered. There is no single document that presents data pertaining to vocational education. Instead, different documents, reports, and statistics are required to understand what has happened since the 1970s. The data are not kept in a single place, such as the Ministry of Education archives<sup>4</sup> and those in the archives are hard to bring

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<sup>4</sup> I gathered the data from Ministry of Education Archives, Milli Kütüphane, Beyazıt Milli Kütüphanesi, Boğaziçi Library and online sources on the state webpages. If I had included the activities of other ministries and other actors, the number of sources would have increased.



together due to problems in their organization.<sup>5</sup> These contributed to understanding the nature of the problem due to its difficulty in even carrying out a historical research on skill problem of education in Turkey. The difficulty in reaching data and its relationship to overall education policies was particularly evident while I was looking for a yearly plan for vocational education or an official report that presented vocational policies' core features. In the archives, I was not able to find documents on vocational education that presented annual evaluations or a detailed review of what happened in a particular time frame. Then I realized that before asking the purpose of vocational strategies as a safety-vale or a sink-hole, I had to understand whether there were any strategies and whether they showed a coherent structure.

The issue of skill formation is more complex to grasp than by narrowly focusing on vocational high schools; apprenticeships, on the firm training, active labor market policies are all part of the discussion. However, as will be discussed below, school-based skill formation strategies have been the initial and most pervasive form of vocational education and training in Turkey ever since the nineteenth century. Even though including activities of firms, chambers and several other actors would have provided a more complete and multifaceted assessment, due to the scope of this study it has been only possible to focus on vocational high schools

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<sup>5</sup> While doing research at the Ministry of Education Archives with a catalogue listing the items without a library classification method, I lost a great deal of time in searching and could not reach the majority of the materials I asked for due to lack of cataloguing. Similarly, not all reports and documents are collected and kept by the archives of the ministry. For example, I found an important document from the 1970s on VET in a theology faculty library. More importantly, despite the helpful officers, there were many cases when I asked for a particular material I was provided an irrelevant document. For example, I was being given an Italian play, lots of chemistry textbooks from the 1930s or later periods that was part of the curriculum in some period in history, when I asked for a technical education report from the 1980s. Furthermore, documents after 2006 were not available and an archive officer regretted that not all of the ministry of education documents were "sent" to archives. To sum up, there were cataloguing and archiving problems which made it difficult to reach data.

as the primary mode of skill formation in Turkey. Therefore, this thesis focusing on the vocational high schools can be seen as an initial step for carrying out a complete study on the skill formation institutions in Turkey.

The roles of other actors in the vocational school policies will be highlighted as long as they appear in state documents but research specifically on on-the-firm training has not been carried out for this study. Instead, I paid attention to private sectors, unions, chambers of commerce and several other actors' appearance in state documents, and noted their role in vocational education. This is especially because the education policies are centralized and state dominated in Turkey, and private schools are only a very small proportion of vocational schools.<sup>6</sup> The laws and policies (or their absence) determine the role of other actors in the vocational high school policies. So, the appearance of firms and employee organizations in documents related to vocational high school policy-making is an indicator for the weight of non-state actors in decision-making. Therefore, even though the firm aspect of training is not a question of this thesis, the firm involvement in the state's central policy making for public schools is examined.

In order to identify the nature of the problem of skill formation in Turkey, starting with the 1970s, policy makers' objectives and discussions have been followed in reports and documents prepared by Ministry of Education and State Planning Agency, government programs, legislation, and statistics related to vocational high schools. Other bodies' and ministries' documents are included as long as they were prevalent in the education policy makers' analysis and provide an insight to the discussion in the state documents. In addition, some schools, such as those for

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<sup>6</sup> In 2012-2013 academic year the share of private vocational school students among total vocational school students was 0.9%. Eđitim Reformu Giriřimi (ERG), *Eđitim İzleme Raporu 2012*, (İstanbul: ERG, 2013), 179.

teachers, military, police, and health, are excluded from the discussion in this thesis. Health schools were not tied to the Ministry of Education until recently, while the police and military schools still are not. Overall, a discussion of these types of vocational schools would have shifted the analysis from the economy and would have required research on different data sources as they were not part of the vocational and technical education discussions in the state documents and policy papers. Also, these topics are far more complicated to include in this thesis and deserve an analysis on their own.

Below, the theoretical tools that will be used in the remaining chapters will be introduced. Next, in Chapter 2 a history of vocational education in Turkey up until the 1970s will be presented based on secondary literature, and the neoliberalization of education and particularly secondary education in Turkey will be reviewed. As the prevalent view on education studies in Turkey, it will provide the background to Chapter 3 since here the focus is on the years that is named as neoliberal era by many thinkers. In the third chapter, the research findings will be presented. First, an overview of the education system in the periods examined will be provided. Next, the chapter organized in a way to give the institutional evolution of vocational schools in Turkey from 1970 to 2013 in three sections divided by historical periods. In the fourth chapter, the research findings will be evaluated by contextualizing Turkey's position in the political economy and by doing a cross-national comparison. Whether there are similarities with the type of capitalism in other countries or whether vocational education institution has complementarities with other developments in the political economy of Turkey will be demonstrated in this chapter.

## Theoretical Framework for the Analysis of Vocational High School Policies

In the 43 years investigated for this study, skill formation strategies and particularly vocational high school policies went in tandem with the desire for economic growth. The policy-makers' concern for economic outcomes is evident, but how they have actually formed the link between economics and education will be explored in the following chapters. Before presenting the results of my research and discussion in the next chapters, I introduce the relationship of education and economics in the literature, limiting the scope to the perspectives that will be used in this thesis. Scholars have taken several approaches to education and particularly education's impact on labor and economic development. This section covers some of the literature in economics and political economy which are relevant for the analysis in the following chapters.

### Human Capital Approach and Limitations

Education's impact on economic development and on individual outcomes in a society has been discussed for a long time by a variety of thinkers.<sup>7</sup> Theoretical attempts to capture education's impact on growth can be traced back to Becker's seminal work and the conceptualization of human capital.<sup>8</sup> The human capital approach looks at human capital as an asset or a value that exists or that has accumulated in an individual or in a

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<sup>7</sup> Nazım Öztürk, "İktisadi Kalkınmada Eğitimin Rolü," *Sosyo Ekonomi* 1 (2005): 27-44; Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Rev. ed. (New York, NY: Penguin Classics, 2004); John Cunliffe and Guido Erreygers, *The Origins of Universal Grants: An Anthology of Historical Writings on Basic Capital and Basic Capital* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

<sup>8</sup> Gary Becker, *Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis, with Special Reference to Education*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

country. Within this framework, agents make rational decisions on the amount of human capital they would like to invest. In other words, individuals determine their own education levels based on the outcomes they would receive, even though there may be some restrictions. Empirical studies or indicators of human capital translate this abstract notion to a comparable number, such as the average years of schooling in a country.

Looking at the amount of human capital invested by an individual or a country, this approach helps in drawing conclusions about a number of outcomes including the employment and the economy's growth performance among a number of other outcomes, ranging from civic participation of an individual in society to individual happiness.<sup>9</sup> The human capital approach has been used in a number of empirical studies in economics that look at the impact of education on an individual's labor market outcomes or the economy's growth.<sup>10</sup> Overall, there is agreement that human capital influences economic and social outcomes including equality and social mobility.<sup>11</sup> For example, considering human capital together with other dependent variables, a researcher may try to determine human capital's impact on economic growth. But unless an econometric variable that controls historical change is included in the econometric modeling, we do not know about

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<sup>9</sup> David Card, "The Casual Effect of Education on Earnings" in vol.3 of *Handbook of Labor Economics*, eds. Orley Ashenfelter and David E. Card (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1999), 1801-1863; Fabian Lange and Robert Topel, "The Social Value of Education and Human Capital" in vol. 1 of *Handbook of the Economics of Education* eds. Eric A. Hanushek and Finis Welch (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 2006), 459-509; Lance Lochner, "Nonproduction Benefits of Education: Crime, Health, and Good Citizenship" in vol. 4 of *Handbook of the Economics of Education* eds. Eric A. Hanushek, Stephen Machin and Luedwig Woessmann (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 2011), 183-282; Stephen Machin and Anna Vignoles, eds., *What's the Good of Education?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); Eğitim Reformu Girişimi, *Eğitim İzleme Raporu 2011* (İstanbul: Eğitim Reformu Girişimi, 2012).

<sup>10</sup> Öztürk, "İktisadi Kalkınmada," *Sosyo Ekonomi*, 27-44; Tuncer Bulutay, *Employment, Unemployment and Wages in Turkey* (Geneva: ILO, 1995).

<sup>11</sup> Marius Busemeyer and Christine Trampusch, eds., *The Political Economy of Collective Skill Formation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 3.

the historical and institutional processes that may have influenced an economy's performance.<sup>12</sup> Even then it must be noted that the scope of historical and political analysis would be limited.

On the other hand, there is a literature on objections to human capital theory and the way it is used in econometric analysis: Cooke writes that "The classic 'human capital' model (Mincer 1974) used to predict individual education and work decisions, however, ignores the importance of social context at each step of the individual decision process."<sup>13</sup> These objections vary on their actual target of objection, but in short, since individuals do not live in a vacuum and rationally and freely choose the adequate quantity of human capital investment for the outcomes they prefer, the social, political, and economic context in which they are situated in require more explanation than variables in an econometric model. Likewise, the education's role in social stratification is an early debate as well. The education's role in an unequal society has been debated since the nineteenth century such as in T.H. Marshall's and Mary Wollstonecraft's writings.

A main theoretical stance of this issue is the Bowles-Gintis approach,<sup>14</sup> which views the classroom as a replica of the labor market and the workplace. In this setting, students become accustomed to their roles in society and the labor market while they are at school. Therefore, education in general and particularly vocational education is a

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<sup>12</sup> Ceyda Özsoy, *Türkiye'de Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitimin İktisadi Kalkınmadaki Yeri ve Önemi* (Eskişehir: T.C. Anadolu Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2007).

<sup>13</sup> L. Prince Cooke, *Gender- Class Equality in Political Economies*. (New York: Routledge, 2011), 21.

<sup>14</sup> Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life*. (New York: Basic Books, 1976).

reproduction of the inequalities in society. Other studies look at how the neoliberalization of education objectifies individuals,<sup>15</sup> and how class structure is consolidated.<sup>16</sup>

### Institutions, Continuity, Change

The institutional analysis of skill formation and varieties of capitalism literature explain the institutional setting in a country, including a particular system of skill formation and a particular market orientation together with a number of consequences. So, in this historical institutional analysis, there are various actors who interact with each other and the explanations are comprehensive, historical, and based on political economy instead of rational decisions on human capital.<sup>17</sup> In this literature, vocational training is one of the institutional components that determine the variety of capitalism in a country.<sup>18</sup> These institutional studies also take notice of human capital approaches.<sup>19</sup>

First, a definition of institutions among the many definitions provided in the literature will be presented and then institutions' links with economy according to the literature will be discussed.<sup>20</sup> According to North, "institutions are rules, enforcement characteristics of rules, and norms of behavior that structure repeated human

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<sup>15</sup> Dave Hill and Ravi Kumar, *Global Neoliberalism and Education and its Consequences* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009).

<sup>16</sup> Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York, NY: Herder and Herder, 1970)

<sup>17</sup> Bussemeyer and Trampusch, *The Political Economy of Collective Skill Formation*, 3

<sup>18</sup> Peter A. Hall and David Soskice, eds., *Varieties of Capitalism: The Institutional Foundations and Comparative Advantage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

<sup>19</sup> Kathleen Thelen, *How Institutions Evolve: The Political Economy of Skills in Germany, Britain, the United States and Japan* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2004)

<sup>20</sup> See introduction section of Thelen, *How Institutions Evolve* for a number of definitions.

interaction.”<sup>21</sup> As can be seen from this definition, institutions encompass a huge area of activity such as the way commerce takes place in a country to the way vocational education is provided. North is cautious to differentiate institutions and organizations: “institutions are the rules of the game and organizations are the players.”<sup>22</sup>

According to the literature, numerous institutions and historical contingencies can have an effect on economic outcomes. Helpman, for example, exemplifies and comments on how institutions and economic growth can be related to one another while looking for different origins of the relation.<sup>23</sup> Rodrik, conveys how a number of institutions such as openness of economy, human capital, democratization, and welfare state can influence development.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, Pamuk illustrates how institutions influence economic growth such as increasing efficiency and encouragement of production.<sup>25</sup>

In the study of institutions a key research area is how institutional continuities and changes occur for which there is a range of accounts in the literature such as analyzing rational players in the game or doing a historical analysis of the way institutions were

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<sup>21</sup> Douglas C. North, “Institutions and Economic Growth: A Historical Introduction” in *International Political Economy: Perspectives on Global Power and Wealth*, ed. Jeffrey F. Frieden and David A. Lake (London: Routledge, 2004), 50.

<sup>22</sup> Douglas C. North, “Institutions and Credible Commitment,” <http://www.artsrn.ualberta.ca/claypool/courses/art301-2009/301%20pdf%20files/Chicago%20copy.pdf> (accessed May 16, 2013).

<sup>23</sup> Elhanan Helpman, *The Mystery of Economic Growth* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004).

<sup>24</sup> Dani Rodrik, “Institutions for High-Quality Growth: What They Are and How to Acquire Them,” Paper prepared for an International Monetary Fund conference on Second Generation Reforms, <http://www.sss.ias.edu/files/pdfs/Rodrik/Research/institutions-high-quality-growth.PDF> (Accessed April 10, 2014); Dani Rodrik, *One Economics, Many Recipes: Globalization, Institutions, and Economic Growth* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

<sup>25</sup> Şevket Pamuk, *Türkiye'nin 200 Yıllık İktisadi Tarihi* (İstanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2014).



formed.<sup>26</sup> Especially, path-dependence is a major explanatory term for explaining institutional continuities and changes. Mahoney states, “historical patterns in which contingent events set into motion institutional patterns or event chains that have deterministic properties.”<sup>27</sup> Although there are several understandings of how path dependency effects institutions such as a sticky initial choice or increasing returns to a particular agreement reached in the past, the study of historical contingencies are emphasized. In line with this, how change occurs is also contested among scholars.<sup>28</sup> The view that critical junctures occur and may bring about change in the path of the institution is adopted in this thesis.

Another definition that is of importance to my analysis is that of credible commitment and institutions. Credible and non-credible commitments/awards/threats are terms in the institutional economics and in game theory. A non-credible threat, for example means that an actor looks as if it is committed but does not implement the threat since it is not in its best interest to do so. In institutional economics a credible commitment occurs “if the players continue to want to honor the commitment at the time of performance.”<sup>29</sup> In the following I will use this term to point out the gap between the discourse, the promise or the announced projects, and the practice and what actually takes place.

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<sup>26</sup> For a quick review of this literature, see Thelen, *How Institutions Evolve*, 23-31.

<sup>27</sup> James Mahoney, “Path Dependence in Historical Sociology,” *Theory and Society* 29, no. 4 (2000): 507; David Paul, “Clio and the Economics of QWERTY,” *American Economic Review* 75, no. 2 (1985): 332-337.

<sup>28</sup> For a review of institutional change and continuities see Thelen, *How Institutions Evolve*.

<sup>29</sup> North, “Institutions and Credible Commitment,” 6.

## Models of Capitalism and Skill Formation Institutions

While considering vocational education as a critical institution in the political economy, this thesis will make use of the viewpoints in the models of capitalism and skill formation literatures. The varieties of capitalism approach gives the chance to compare the vocational education system in Turkey to other countries while considering the vocational education a component of the political economy. So, in this framework, instead of taking vocational education as a singular unit, its status as a node connected with various different features in an institutional constellation can be shown. The way this literature explains the relationship of vocational education to other spheres of the political economy will help to demonstrate the disorganized structure in Turkey in the next chapters.

The varieties of capitalism approach also gives a framework for comparing the skill formation systems of different political economies. In this thesis, due to its specific focus on vocational education varieties of capitalism approach of Hall and Soskice will be introduced. However, since their dichotomous explanation of the skill formation systems is of limited use for discussing the case of Turkey, a different skill formation typology will be explained below. This way Turkey's state dominant vocational high schools can be considered together with the policy-makers' aspirations for a skill formation system like that of the USA or Germany.

There have been several models of capitalism with different theoretical perspectives such as the social embeddedness model, the power resource model, the historical institutionalist model and the rationalist functionalist model.<sup>30</sup> These studies

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<sup>30</sup> For a review of different models of capitalism, see Colin Crouch, "Models of Capitalism," *New Political Economy* 10, no. 4 (2005): 439-456; Wolfgang Streeck, "E Pluribus Unum?: Varieties and Commonalities of Capitalism," Discussion Paper, Max Planck Institute For the

differ on their account of capitalism and the institutions that make up a particular type of political economy. Yet all of them focus their analysis on classifying certain institutions to a certain model of capitalism. The institutions that are related to the form of capitalism in a country are wide-ranging, such as legal system, employment, welfare policies, market mechanism, vocational education and training. Particularly my interest lies in the fact that skill formation institutions have been identified as key for the variety of capitalism.<sup>31</sup>

One of these approaches is Hall and Soskice's approach to varieties of capitalism, which focuses on firms and individual behavior in line with the institutions in five spheres of the political economy: industrial relations, vocational training and education, corporate governance, inter-firm relations and employment. In this setting there is a dichotomous understanding of the way in which firms solve their coordination problems: national economies are classified into liberal market economies (LMEs) and coordinated market economies (CMEs). LMEs are marked by the dominance of market relations whereas nonmarket relations are highlighted in CMEs.

Hall and Soskice say that their approach can be extended to understanding economies that are not ideal types and they also identify a Mediterranean variety of capitalism.<sup>32</sup> However, more importantly their approach to capitalism then comments on the economic robustness of these two systems and on their comparative advantages. Both because of the implications they draw and the methods they apply

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Study of Societies, <http://www.artsrn.ualberta.ca/claypool/courses/art301-2009/301%20PDF%20files/Chicago%20copy.pdf> (accessed August 24, 2014).

<sup>31</sup> Thelen, *How Institutions Evolve* p. xi.

<sup>32</sup> Hall and Sockice, *Varieties of Capitalism*, 35.

they are criticized for its functional rationalism and sterilization of capitalism as well as overlooking unsustainability of capitalism.<sup>33</sup>

But still considering vocational education as a separate sphere and highlighting its relationship with institutions such as employers' associations and unions, they contextualize vocational training in the wider political economy. Rather than building upon the robustness and economic superiority arguments, I will use the institutional comparisons in order to analyze Turkey's model of skill formation. In this sense "institutional complementarities" and "incentive compatible policies" are important to understand viability of vocational education strategies. Hall and Soskice state "two institutions can said to be complementary if the presence (or efficiency) of one increases returns from (or efficiency of) the other."<sup>34</sup> On the other hand, Amable asserts that institutional complementarity and structural isomorphism is not the same thing. He says that changing one institution will have effects in other spheres as well and complementary institutions may be needed to be changed together in order to have efficient results.<sup>35</sup> This brings us to the idea of incentive compatible policies: "economic policies will be effective only if they are *incentive compatible*, namely complementary to the coordinating capacities embedded in the existing political economy."<sup>36</sup>

Taking institutional complementarities as functional and robust, and overlooking the historical process, ongoing conflicts and changing coalitions are

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<sup>33</sup> For a criticism, see Gary Herrigel and Jonathan Zeitlin, "Alternatives to Varieties of Capitalism," *Business History Review* 84, no. 4 (2010): 637-674; Streeck, "E Pluribus Unum?."

<sup>34</sup> Hall and Sockice, *Varieties of Capitalism*, 17.

<sup>35</sup> Bruno Amable, *The Diversity of Modern Capitalism* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2003), 7

<sup>36</sup> Hall and Sockice, *Varieties of Capitalism*, 46.

criticized. Particularly Thelen says that, “there is no reason to think that the various “pieces” will necessarily fit together into a coherent, self-reinforcing, let alone functional, whole.”<sup>37</sup> Unlike rationalist functionalist approach, she disagrees that certain institutions increase returns from one another. Different actors with different interests can sustain a system or conflict with it in different ways.<sup>38</sup> For example, as shown in the literature training and wage bargaining are not necessarily in a functional complementarity.<sup>39</sup>

Furthermore, Busemeyer and Trampusch list and discuss the accomplishments of and limits to varieties of capitalism literature as well. Although this literature has underlined the importance and diversity of skill formation regimes in the wider context of political economy, one of its drawbacks is that it is what they describe as “less interested in understanding political and historical origins of skill formation systems than in understanding their effects on political economies.”<sup>40</sup> So, the historical institutionalist literature looks at how particular skill systems occurred historically, not only in terms of economy’s standing, but also how it influenced wide array of economic and political results.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, there is a focus on understanding the historical-institutional formation, including the political coalitions and political conflicts that may have caused a particular outcome.<sup>42</sup> Another thing to keep mind is the state’s role in the formation of institutions. Thelen pays attention to “state played a crucial role in establishing the power of key actors, in influencing the kinds of

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<sup>37</sup> Thelen, *How Institutions Evolve*, 285

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 289-291.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 32.

coalitions that were likely to come together, and thus in shaping the landscape in which institutions were being constructed” in the four case studies she examines, USA, Japan, UK and Germany.<sup>43</sup>

In the fourth chapter of the thesis these types of economies, institutional relationships and skill formation systems will be explained in more detail using USA and Germany as examples while trying to contextualize Turkey’s skill formation system. I will make use of the institutional package given by Hall and Soskice to situate Turkey’s skill formation system in the current political economy of Turkey. On the other hand, before doing so an analysis on what vocational schools are and how they make up the skill formation system in Turkey is necessary. A historical account identifying path-dependencies and changes is necessary to study vocational high schools in the neoliberal era as well as to determine the core features of the skill formation system in Turkey.

### Types of Skill formation Systems

The skill formation literature does a political economic analysis of institutions with regards to the range of policies that contribute to the emergence of skills in a country.<sup>44</sup> In this literature, the link between education and economics is not reduced to human capital. Instead, skill formation occurs in a country by a number of actors in strategic interaction, and by a number of factors and processes occurring at the same time.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 31

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Introduction in Hall and Sockice, *Varieties of Capitalism*

I will briefly outline some of the terms in skill formation literature that will be helpful for my analysis in the thesis. In Hall and Soskice's approach, countries differ in their vocational education and training systems according to their CME and LME characteristics. CMEs have a vocational and training system that includes coordination of different actors such as state, unions and associations. The system ensures the provision of specific skills as well as the employment of those who take place in the education and training. On the other hand, LMEs have a formal education system that provides general skills. In this setting individuals and each firm act separately. However this approach does not tell much about all the other countries like Turkey that are not included in this dichotomy and neither does the approach shed a light on the variation within LMEs and CMEs.

In order to grasp the system in Turkey it is required to look at the grey area in between this dichotomy and understand its historical formation. The historical institutionalist literature presents two of the key questions which are especially pertinent in these aspects: why there are different trajectories with respect to skill formation and how institutional arrangements forged in the distant past actually make it to the present.<sup>46</sup> To understand the current system Thelen looks at the particular moment that the skill formation system incepted in Germany during the nineteenth century.<sup>47</sup> The author traces the historical development of Germany's skill formation system and compares this country with the UK, Japan, and the USA. By looking at institutional evolution and path dependencies she demonstrates the differences between these four different systems.

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<sup>46</sup> Thelen, *How Institutions Evolve*, xii.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

Rather than adopting the robustness argument of Hall and Soskice, Busemeyer and Trampusch take institutions to be “temporary and contested solutions to ongoing conflicts about the distribution of power.”<sup>48</sup> In their wide ranging study on the origins of and changes in skill formation systems, they posit that vocational training systems “are not self-sustaining institutional ‘equilibria’.” On the contrary, they are vulnerable and fragile institutions that need “continual redesign.”<sup>49</sup> In all skill formation systems different roles are played by firms, associations and state, and the separation to different systems occur especially with regards to their four questions:

the division of labor between the state, employers, their associations, and individuals on the provision (who provides?) and financing (who pays?) of vocational education and training (VET), the relationship between firm autonomy and public oversight in the provision of training (who controls?), and the linkages between VET and the general education system.<sup>50</sup>

Busemeyer and Trampusch provide four ideal types of skill formation systems based on these questions but especially on the ranging commitment of firms and state: the statist skill formation system, the collective skill formation system, the liberal skill formation system, and the segmentalist skill formation system, as can be seen in the table below. There are other typologies of skill formation systems that focus on different dimensions of variation, which are included in their analysis as well. Busemeyer and Trampusch list some of the dimensions as

dominant venue of training, the degree of standardization and certification of skills, the degree of stratification and differentiation in the system of occupational degrees, the role of the state, and the linkages between skill formation and other socioeconomic institutions such as the production system, industrial relations, and the welfare state<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Busemeyer and Trampusch, *The Political Economy of Collective Skill Formation*, 4.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 5.



As Table 1 presents, in the four different systems, skills differ in terms of their certification and portability; and schools and apprenticeships have different weights. Similar to Hall and Soskice, Busemeyer and Trampusch also posit that liberal training system relies on general education and is provided in the markets with limited firm involvement and apprenticeships. In the segmentalist system, public commitment is low and the firm undertakes the task of training employees. In collective training systems there is the collaboration of various actors including the high commitment of state and the firms. Funding and administration include firms and intermediary associations are active which ensure that training standards are maintained. In the end, portable certified occupational skills are provided in schools and in firms. In the statist system, state is the highest committed actor and vocational education is promoted as well as encouraging tertiary education. But Busemeyer and Trampusch express that firm involvement is low despite the state's attempts to increase their commitment and we see that state also has the objective of social integration.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 14.

Table 1. Variations in Vocational Training Systems

	Involvement of Firms in Vocational Training LOW Schools Dominant; Apprenticeships Play a Supplementary Role	Involvement of Firms in Vocational Training HIGH Apprenticeships Dominant; schools play a Supplementary Role
	Statist skill formation system France, Sweden. Schools dominant; some apprenticeships for highly skilled workers	Collective skill formation system Germany Dual system of schools and apprenticeships  Denmark
Public Commitment to Vocational Training HIGH Certified, portable skills		
Public Commitment to Vocational Training LOW Noncertified, nonportable skills	Liberal skill formation system Great Britain, United States General skills/education Few Apprenticeships	Segmentalist skill formation system Japan

Source: Busemeyer and Trampusch, *The Political Economy of Collective Skill Formation*, 12, 45. Table 1.2 and Table 2.1.

Thelen approaches this distinction from the viewpoint of credible commitments as well. She highlights the issue of credible commitment as a problem among wide range of actors in a training contract that can be solved with skill certification. But still, historically countries differed in terms of the way they tackled with the credible commitment issue in a training contract. For example, an apprenticeship and firm have to ensure that they will commit to the training and intermediary institutions such as skill certification may support this process.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Thelen, *How Institutions Evolve*, 17-19.

## Critical Junctures and Current Challenges to Skill Formation Systems

Bussemeyer and Trampusch describe current common challenges and critical junctures to which all countries react differently by their policy choices. According to Bussemeyer and Trampusch, critical junctures are periods of “significant change, which typically occurs in distinct ways in different countries ... and which is hypothesized to produce distinct legacies.”<sup>54</sup> These have to do with the meta political economic processes that shaped the overall institution setting in countries. But for the purpose of the skill formation analysis, these three junctures are identified especially with respect to skill formation: in the nineteenth century when intensive industrialization first took off, in the 1960s and 1970s, when economic globalization started and postwar growth came to an end, and “current period of intensified economic and political globalization and the rise of the service and knowledge economy.”<sup>55</sup>

In line with these junctures, the current challenge posited by Bussemeyer and Trampusch are a shift from the industrial to the service and knowledge economy; academic drift or the “rising demand for high-level skills and university enrollments”; gender issues which include women’s participation in employment and increasing level of education; and the Europeanization of education policy.

It is important to note that it is also during these junctures that deskilling, the tertiarization of economy and flexible labor relations come into existence. Even though the subject at hand is the state’s intense aspiration for high skilled individuals for industrial growth, during this period, we see a process in which the skills of individuals

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<sup>54</sup> Bussemeyer and Trampusch, *The Political Economy of Collective Skill Formation*, 8.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

erode and the service sector, instead of the industrial sector, takes on the leading role.<sup>56</sup>

Similarly, the labor literature indicates that individuals are increasingly being required to take more than one job, or take up more than one vocation in this period.<sup>57</sup>

## Conclusion

The years of vocational schooling one receives would not be adequate for economic success since other aspects of education as well as other aspects of the political economy are also critical. Different scholars have studied the way the vocational education system is linked to economics from various perspectives. Here, vocational high schools were considered as a part of the skill formation institutions and the related terms in the study of institutions were defined. Particularly important for this thesis is the view that the way skill is formed in a country is expected to have complementarities with the way institutions work in other spheres of the political economy. Moreover, the skill formation system itself is a consistent whole in which certain characteristics, such as the portability of skills, the state and the firm involvement in the skill formation, and the decision-makers of the system, are all complementary to one another. So, in this framework, besides the relationship the skill formation system has with other characteristics of the political economy such as the wages, working hours, unions, and industrial relations, the system consists of complementary features in itself.

In the next chapters, the problems associated with human capital and skill formation in Turkey with respect to the vocational high schools in the last 40 years will

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<sup>56</sup> Guy Standing, *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011).

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.; Richard Sennett, *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism* (New York, NY: Norton, 1998).

be analyzed keeping the theoretical framework of the varieties of capitalism and the skill formation institutions approaches. In Chapter 2, the historical review of vocational high schools will include the path-dependent characteristics of the system. Then, the review of the literature on the neoliberalization of secondary education will form a building block for discussing the type of skill formation system vocational high schools belong.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

This section presents a survey of the history of vocational education in Turkey and the neoliberalization of secondary education in Turkey. First, a succinct historical background of vocational high schools in Turkey based on secondary sources will be given. The theoretical tools introduced in the first chapter will be utilized as far as the data on secondary sources refers to the features of the skill formation system. Then, the issue of neoliberalization of education in Turkey argument will be dealt with separately with a specific focus on secondary education. This perspective has been the common theoretical and political position in regards to the developments in education in the period under discussion and is part of both the historical and theoretical background to the issue. In particular, the history of vocational high schools and the current debates on its neoliberalization will reveal the two of the conflicting tendencies of the skill formation system that will be discussed in the following chapters, its historically state-dominated structure and the impact of the current meta-trend of liberalization.

#### History of Vocational Education in Turkey to the 1970s

Throughout the initiation of vocational schools during the Ottoman period to the 1980s that look up to the EU policies in vocational education and to the 2000s that try to capture the flexibility of markets and tertiarization of the economy via reforms in the vocational education system, there is the policy maker's unending creed and belief in acquiring a developed economy by forming schools and educating individuals. It is either the hope of saving the empire from the downfall, or the target competing with world markets via a

high skill jump, but in all instances, it is always the hope of being able to compete with the industrial powers by viewing people as a potential skilled labor force. More importantly, it is the state that has the foremost responsibility and say in these policies.

### Ottoman Response to Industrialization: School-based Vocational Education

In the early Ottoman period vocational training was in the form of apprenticeship and took place in *ahi* organisations, then in *gedik* and finally in *lonca* organizations in the nineteenth century, which were finally abolished in 1912.<sup>58</sup> The history of the state opening schools for vocations goes back to educational reforms to modernize the Ottoman army,<sup>59</sup> which presents us a path-dependency in the way state deals with the problem of skill formation. Yıldırım claims that a qualified labor force in the Ottoman Empire was a major problem during the early industrialization attempts from the 1840s. The state's introduction of vocational education was seen as a panacea throughout the empire, based on industry's need and future investments.<sup>60</sup> So, we see that vocational education was planned to be responsive to the demands of the economy. The schools

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<sup>58</sup> Ünlühisarcıklı explains that *ahi* means brother and this system of organization occurred for each trade for the Muslim population. It provided training but also had other rules that organized the social life of the member. Later, in the eighteenth century, *gedik*, which means monopoly, was used as a form association for tradesman and artisans. It provided license for the practice of a certain trade. Finally *lonca*, which is perceived to be similar to a guild system, took place in the nineteenth century. Ünlühisarcıklı, Özlem. "Vocational Training through the Apprenticeship System in Turkey" <http://www.wallnetwork.ca/inequity/LL%26W2005/OzlemPaper.pdf> (Accessed January 14, 2014)

<sup>59</sup> Selim İlkin and İlhan Tekeli, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Eğitim ve Bilgi Üretim Sisteminin Oluşumu ve Dönüşümü* (İstanbul: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1999).

<sup>60</sup> Kadir Yıldırım. *Osmanlı'da İşçiler (1870-1922): Çalışma Hayatı, Örgütler, Grevler* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2013), 27-31.

opened in agriculture<sup>61</sup> aimed at increasing productivity in this prominent sector of the economy and several other schools aiming technical production and skill formation were opened to ameliorate industrial competition.<sup>62</sup> Similarly, during the period participation of the individual in society by acquiring a profession in vocational schools were highlighted. Starting from the 1860s, technical schools for orphans and poor children were encouraged<sup>63</sup> as well as the inclusion of women in society via industry work and technical education.<sup>64</sup> This period also saw the evolution of a small unit in the state of a ministry of education with reforms in 1839 up until 1857.<sup>65</sup> Preeminently, the nineteenth century was a period of educational reforms, even though they were not perceived to be adequate.<sup>66</sup>

After the Tanzimat, the main argument behind vocational education and training was the growth of the economy and industry's need for skilled and disciplined labor.<sup>67</sup> In

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<sup>61</sup> Donald Quataert. "IV. Bölüm. Reformun Temelleri: Ziraat Okulları" in *Anadolu'da Osmanlı Reformu Ve Tarım (1876 - 1908)*. (İstanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2008). İlhan Tekeli İ. and Selim İlkin "Devletçilik Dönemi Tarım Politikaları (Modernleşme Çabaları)" in *Türkiye'de tarımsal yapılar*, eds. Şevket Pamuk, Zafer Toprak (Ankara : Yurt Yayınevi, 1988), 37-91.

<sup>62</sup> Necdet Sakaoğlu, *Osmanlıdan Günümüze Eğitim Tarihi* (İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2003).

<sup>63</sup> Ergin Bulut, "Learning to FlexLabor: How Working Class Youth Train for Flexible Labor Markets," in *Neoliberal Transformation of Education in Turkey: Political and Ideological Analysis of Education Reforms in the Age of AKP*, eds. Güliz Akkaymak and Kemal İnal (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 71-83.

<sup>64</sup> Erdal Ceyhan, *Türk Eğitim Tarihi Kronolojisi* (İstanbul: Ulusal Yayınlar, 2004), 19; Hıfzı Doğan, "Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim," in *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Eğitim*, ed. Ministry of Education (Ankara: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1983), 358.

<sup>65</sup> İbrahim Ethem Başaran, "Türkiye'de Eğitim Sisteminin Evrimi," in *75 Yılda Eğitim*, ed. Fatma Gök (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 1999), 95.

<sup>66</sup> Pamuk, *Türkiye'nin 200 Yıllık İktisadi Tarihi*.

<sup>67</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Çıracılık ve Mesleki Eğitim Konseyi Hazırlık Dokümanı, Mesleki ve Teknik Öğretimin Milli Eğitim İçerisindeki Yapısı*, 11; Yıldırım, *Osmanlı'da İşçiler*.



the 1860s, the shortage of skills and lack of a system for skill formation in the country was important. Yıldırım demonstrates in his work in late Ottoman labor relations that There were problems with capital, raw materials, transfer costs. But even further there was a lack of labor force to be employed in the factories and especially a lack of skilled labor force.<sup>68</sup> All of these troubled many factories opened by the state. Furthermore, Yıldırım writes that in 1914, the same problem of a skilled labor force and the inconvenience of the then proposed solution of inviting foreign experts which until today continued to be a salient feature of policy response to skill formation problems. Yıldırım quotes a factory manager saying that “opening up a factory is the easiest thing to do with money, but the lack of managers, electricians, machinists, technicians and engineers make these [factories] defunct.”<sup>69</sup>

Confronted with this lack of skills in the country, in the early 1900s, schools for husbandry, farming, silk-farming continued to be established, just as in the earlier periods. During this period the management and financing of vocational schools, which would specialize in the sectors most needed at each region, belong to provincial bodies except for a case in 1903 in which the finance belonged to people in the industry.<sup>70</sup> Therefore, it can be said that the centralized vocational education system led by the state had not been formed yet. But the industries’ demands and state’s involvement in the problems in line with these demands are prevalent.

In the early years of the republic and still today, the educational policies reflected a general indecisiveness and frequent change in educational policies. For example, the

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<sup>68</sup> Yıldırım, *Osmanlı'da İşçiler*, 27.

<sup>69</sup> Yıldırım cites the work of an author in 1914, “Azmi, fabrika açmanın parayla yapılacak en kolay iş olduğunu, ancak bu fabrikaları yönetecek memur, elektrikçi, makineci, teknisyen ve mühendislerin eksikliğinin bunları işe yaramaz hale getirdiğini belirtmişti.” see Yıldırım, *Osmanlı'da İşçiler*, 27.

<sup>70</sup> İlkin and Tekeli, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Eğitim ve Bilgi*, 76-87.

name of the ministry was changed eight times from 1920 to 1991, on average once every decade.<sup>71</sup> Frequent changes in the organization of the ministry and ministers, undersecretaries, and school types follow this trend, too.<sup>72</sup> It must also be noted that many schools opened in the late Ottoman period were closed, especially after the First World War, some of the schools were closed down, as they were not within national borders anymore or found to be unneeded.<sup>73</sup> But after the war and the Independence War, policy makers recognized that educating the people was necessary for industrialization, especially because of the lack of qualified people during wars even to drive cars.<sup>74</sup>

### Centralization of Vocational Education and Training

During the early years of Republic, emphasizing vocational education went in line with modernization and progress visions. According to Topses, one of the goals of education in the first ten years of the Republic was educating villagers and providing them with occupations and professions.<sup>75</sup> One of the most important laws defining the institutional structure of education was the *Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu* (Law on Unification of

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<sup>71</sup> Başaran, “Türkiye’de Eğitim Sisteminin Evrimi,” 99. Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey. *2002 Yılı Başında Milli Eğitim*. Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 2001, 5. The ministry was called the following for the indicated years, 1923- 1935 Maarif Vekaleti, 1935-1941 Kültür Bakanlığı, 1941-1946 Maarif Vekilliği, 1946 onwards Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 1950 - 1960 Maarif Vekaleti, 1960-1983 Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 1983-1989 Milli Eğitim Gençlik ve Spor Bakanlığı, 1989- Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı.

<sup>72</sup> Department of Strategy Planning of Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Türk Milli Eğitim Sistemindeki Gelişmeler*, Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 2010.

<sup>73</sup> Doğan, “Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim,” 358.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 359.

<sup>75</sup> Gürsen Topses, “Cumhuriyet Dönemi Eğitiminin Gelişimi” in *75 Yılda Eğitim*, ed. Fatma Gök (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 1999), 11.

Education) in 1924, all education institutions including vocational schools and courses were centralized within the Ministry of National Education (will be referred to as MoNE from here onwards), except for some vocational schools tied with different ministries such as health, military. Also, with this law the medreses were closed down and there was no institution left to educate imams, which would be substantial for the establishment of the *İmam Hatip High Schools* (public high schools that gives education on Islam for training imams and hatips/preachers) later. In 1930, the imam hatip high schools which were established after the closing of the medreses were also shut down, which reflects the political tensions between secularism and Islamism in Turkey.<sup>76</sup> By the end of the single-party-regime and up until the 1970s, the imam hatip schools started to be considered together with vocational schools in its legal status. But it also stood in the mid-line when compared with academic oriented high schools. Undoubtedly, the law in 1924 can be considered to be the start of the “imam hatip high school-vocational school policy tensions” that will trouble the sustainability of vocational education strategies in the following years.

In the Republican reform years, vocational policies were centralized and vocational education was organized in the ministry in response to socioeconomic factors. In 1926, with *Maarif Teşkilatına Dair Kanun* (Law on the Organization of Education), a unit for vocational and technical education was established in the ministry, which in 1933 was changed into an undersecretariat. The units for vocational education got more detailed being separated to different headings together with a segregation of male and female technical education units.<sup>77</sup> During this period the state viewed the vocational and

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<sup>76</sup> Rıfat Okçabol, *Türkiye Eğitim Sistemi: Tarihsel Gelişim, Sistemin Betimlenmesi, Çözümlemesi ve Yeniden Yapılanması* (Ankara: Ütopya Yayınevi, 2005), 178; Server Tanilli, *Nasıl Bir Eğitim İstiyoruz?* (İstanbul: Adam Yayınları, 2005).

<sup>77</sup> Başaran, “Türkiye’de Eğitim Sisteminin Evrimi,” 100.

technical education of females as important as that of males,<sup>78</sup> but the professions and units in the ministry were separated based on gender especially since women's education included being good housewives. Later in 1927 and 1935, the vocational schools were centralized as well. The municipalities and provincial bodies no longer had the right to open up vocational high schools. This right as well as providing the content of education only belonged to the state.<sup>79</sup> Government programs from this period also emphasized policy measures on state's provision of education for agriculture, industry and trade.<sup>80</sup>

Applying to foreign expertise for local education problems was a common policy of Turkish education. In 1925 and 1927 two foreign experts invited from Germany and Belgium, respectively, prepared reports on vocational education.<sup>81</sup> Topses states that in these reports, the education of the labor force for agriculture and small industries was one of the key insights.<sup>82</sup> From 1927 to 1938, 65 foreign experts were invited to assist in the creation of vocational education policies.<sup>83</sup> From the 1920s till the 1950s, we see the impact of US, Germany and Soviets on education policies in Turkey.<sup>84</sup>

After the 1930s, arguments for education targeting production and jobs, including education for the village, started to gain momentum. An economic motivation for education had been prevalent ever since the beginning of the Republic and this case had been especially visible in the reports of foreign experts but the allocation of resources

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<sup>78</sup> Topses, "Cumhuriyet Döneminde Eğitim Gelişimi."

<sup>79</sup> Doğan, "Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim," 367, 368, 378.

<sup>80</sup> Topses, "Cumhuriyet Döneminde Eğitim Gelişimi," 15.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 14

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>83</sup> Doğan, "Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim," 367, 371.

<sup>84</sup> Topses, "Cumhuriyet Döneminde Eğitim Gelişimi," 19.

according to economic principles had begun in 1940s with the rise in state capitalism and had later accelerated in the state-planned-period.<sup>85</sup> The lack of skilled labor had always been an issue during the republican period and this required state resources in education to be spent to solve this problem.<sup>86</sup> Accordingly, this was a main motivation for the laws passed in education.<sup>87</sup>

### Expanding Education to Workplace and Industry

So, state planned for the needs of the economy and applied relevant policies, which can be considered as one of the rare instances of a successful education planning in the history of vocational education in Turkey. In 1936, four ministries and *Genel Kurmay* (General Staff of Turkish Armed Forces) prepared a program for vocational education and in 1941 gave the details for its implementation, which was seen as the key policy move for determining the vocational education system up until the 1980s.<sup>88</sup> Especially, Law No 3457 put vocational training that was carried out in industries into a legislative framework in 1938. Until 1986 it was the only law regulating on-the-job training. The law designates that business that employ more than 100 workers have to carry out training activities.<sup>89</sup> In 1940, with the passing of the law on Village Institutes, clear

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<sup>85</sup> Işıl L. Ünal and Seçkin Özsoy, “Modern Türkiye'nin Sisypheos Miti: Eğitimde Fırsat Eşitliği,” in *75 Yılda Eğitim*, ed. Fatma Gök (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 1999), 39.

<sup>86</sup> Ünal and Özsoy, “Modern Türkiye'nin Sisypheos Miti,” 40.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>88</sup> Doğan, “Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim,” 380-381.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 379.

emphasis was put on regional production and development.<sup>90</sup> These institutes had the aim of educating teachers and “in the tenets of Kemalist political culture” they were referred to as “change agents”.<sup>91</sup> A report prepared by MoNE in 1990 said that in 1942, due to high levels of investment to vocational education, there had been enormous amelioration of vocational and technical education.<sup>92</sup> Yet this had been due to the implementation of a detailed strategy prepared by different actors on vocational and technical education.<sup>93</sup>

In the 1940s and the 1950s, there was a belief that skill formation should be led by the state. Ozelli claims that especially in the 1950s, the vocational education policies of the state were to meet the skilled manpower demands of state-owned enterprises and bureaucrats.<sup>94</sup> However, in the 1960s, it was understood that school-based education was inadequate, and new approaches were discussed such as school-industry partnerships.<sup>95</sup> During this period, a legislative framework for apprenticeship was proposed and then prepared, but it had to wait until the 1970s to be passed in the parliament.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Topses, “Cumhuriyet Döneminde Eğitim Gelişimi,” 17.

<sup>91</sup> Tunç M. Ozelli, “The Evolution of the Formal Educational System and its Relation to the Economic Growth Policies in the First Turkish Republic,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 5, no. 1 (1974): 88.

<sup>92</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Çıraklık ve Mesleki Eğitim Konseyi Hazırlık Dokümanı, Mesleki ve Teknik Öğretimin Milli Eğitim İçerisindeki Yapısı Organizasyonu ve Gelişimi. Çıraklık ve Mesleki-Teknik Eğitim Konseyi, 3-5 Mayıs 1990*, Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 1990, 20-21.

<sup>93</sup> Doğan, “Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim,” 380.

<sup>94</sup> Ozelli, “The Evolution of the Formal Educational System,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 91.

<sup>95</sup> Doğan, “Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim,” 208.

<sup>96</sup> Cavit Sıdal, “Çıraklık Eğitimi,” in *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Eğitim*, ed. Ministry of Education (Ankara: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1983), 429.

### An Eternal Hot Topic and a Problem Area

The policy documents of the state planning agency (will be referred as SPA from here onwards), government programs, and the MoNE assemblies indicate education policies responsiveness to economic outcomes. Ünay and Özsoy posit that the five-year-development plans prepared by the SPA have been a very important factor in the education policies. In these reports, economic criteria are evident. In the first plan, education is discussed under the heading “The Labor force, Employment, Education and Research.” The second plan included education policies under the heading “Human Factor in Economic Development.” In the third plan, under the heading “Education and Culture”, and finally in the fourth plan under the heading “Education.” Similarly in the majority of government programs since the beginning of the Republic emphasis was given to vocational and technical education, or education targeting production, development, and jobs.<sup>97</sup>

Vocational education and training has been perceived as popular topics to be debated in policy discussions and it has not lost its attractiveness to policy-makers even today. In fact *Milli Eğitim Şurası*<sup>98</sup> (National Education Assembly, will be referred to as Şura) predominantly included improvements in vocational and technical education. Vocational education was the main topic designated by MoNE to be discussed in five Şuras in total, with the last one taking place in 1999.<sup>99</sup> In all the Şuras from 1962-1996, organizational issues and a re-organization of the ministry were discussed, too.<sup>100</sup> So,

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<sup>97</sup> Ünay and Özsoy, “Modern Türkiye'nin Sisiphos Miti,” 56-59.

<sup>98</sup> Şuras are councils organized by MoNE which is open to participation of different actors in education (Depending on the MoNE's invitation) and which makes decisions on education.

<sup>99</sup> The şuras that have focused on the vocational education took place in the following years: 1957, 1962, 1974, 1981, and 1999.

<sup>100</sup> Başaran, “Türkiye'de Eğitim Sisteminin Evrimi,” 103.

discussions of overall change in policies or in the ministry, and adapting to changing circumstances are frequent. But discussions of vocational education continuously conceived it as an injured part of education or the country's skill formation problem that requires constant attention.

Despite this continuous attention, the number of people these policy discussions targeted remained a small fraction of population and the aspired improvement did not take place, which makes the commitment of the state questionable. Looking at the numerical data on vocational and technical education in Table 2 below, it is clear that much of the training was informal in the period under discussion. The number of people in the formal system was limited, despite the increase in the numbers of schools, teachers and students.

Table 2. Vocational High Schools in Turkey, 1923-1980

Year	Schools	Teachers	Students	Graduates
1923-1924	64	583	6547	-
1940-1941	103	1355	20264	2995
1960-61	530	8333	108221	23507
1980-81	1864	33969	520332	101240

Source: *National Education Statistics, Formal Education 2012-2013*

After investigating the Turkish education system up until 1974 by periodizing the policies to “the reformist era,” the “etatist period,” and the “state-planned period,” Ozelli concludes that,

In sum, devoid of an educational philosophy, Turkish educational institutions came into being as ad hoc ‘solutions’ (as were perceived by the leaders of each era) to immediate politico-economic problems ... the Turkish educational system evolved to its present state without the guidance of institutions, market or manpower planning agencies, reciprocating demand and supply schedules of the educational industry and skilled labor markets. The Turkish education and labor markets



therefore evolved into a structure combining the worst aspects of both the market and the planned systems<sup>101</sup>

So, despite the responsiveness to economy in principle and the state's goals on burgeoning vocational education, a viable education strategy was not produced. Ozelli's study illustrates the fluctuating nature of the education strategies as the immediate context changes. The ad-hoc nature of education policies in general is doomed to influence vocational education, as a framework for vocational education strategies did not exist either.

### Neoliberalization of Secondary Education in Turkey

The neoliberalization of education in Turkey is part of a greater literature on neoliberalization of education starting from the 1970s.<sup>102</sup> Neoliberalization as an analytical tool and a concept is prevalent in the education literature in Turkey. In order to discuss vocational high schools within the historical institutionalist framework, it is important to understand the debates below. Although it is possible to talk about the neoliberalization of education in a range of skill formation policies in different geographies, many countries subject to neoliberalization of education policies differ in terms of institutional settings and experiences, including different vocational high school policies. By trying to bring together the institutional analysis of skill formation and the prevalent literature on neoliberalization of education in Turkey together, this thesis examines the ambiguity and contingency of similar broad-scale neoliberal policies that took place around the world. In addition, in order to identify the problem of skill

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<sup>101</sup> Ozelli, "The Evolution of the Formal Educational System," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 91-92.

<sup>102</sup> Hill, Dave, and Ravi Kumar. *Global neoliberalism and education and its consequences*. New York: Routledge, 2009.

formation in Turkey, it is important to take notice of neoliberalization of education policies in general, as will be explained in Chapter 3 neoliberalization adds “fuzziness” to the policies regarding the model of vocational education and training (VET) in Turkey.

### Neoliberalism as a Contested Topic

Neoliberalism is a contested topic and it takes different forms in different settings in the hands of different authors.<sup>103</sup> YAZICI illustrates the different analytical understandings of neoliberalism in the literature.<sup>104</sup> She is critical of the ubiquity of the term in the social sciences because it is usually used as the only explanation without a clear definition of what it is. YAZICI points out lack of historical, political, and cultural contexts and the lack of complicated processes as a theoretical weakness in many studies on neoliberalism. She emphasizes neoliberalism as an ongoing, complicated process that takes on different characteristics in different contexts. For example, one of the typical fallacies is to assume that the Washington Consensus and the post-Washington Consensus are replicated in different settings while public expenditures are decreased. Instead, in different settings, existing institutional legacies and the particular context will alter how the neoliberalization process takes place.

To overcome the basic fallacies regarding neoliberalism, YAZICI refers to a wide range of studies on understanding neoliberalism and describes the political economic and Foucauldian divide in terms of analysis. In the Foucauldian understanding of neoliberalism, one of the insights that will be useful for the analysis at hand is the

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<sup>103</sup> Berna YAZICI, “Güncel Sosyal Bilim Analizinin Sihirli Anahtarı: Neoliberalizm?,” *Toplum ve Bilim* 128 (2013).

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

promotion of neoliberal, entrepreneur-like, autonomous and self-sufficient individuals. Another position is that of Ong, who explains exceptions to neoliberalism; how neoliberalism creates its own zones where it sets its own context, while the overall context of a country may be quite different from the zone that is created.<sup>105</sup> Within this framework, how contingent and fragmented neoliberalism is becomes clear. Similarly, Brenner and Theodore posit that neoliberalism brings out an amalgam of new-market oriented reforms and the previous institutions.<sup>106</sup> On the other hand, England and Ward also sees neoliberalism as a process, and exemplify specific cases of how market and space extend to the points/domains that are not included in a political economic analysis, such as that of David Harvey.<sup>107</sup> Harvey's analysis relies on the asymmetries of class power, privatization, commodification, financialization and how new markets are created through neoliberal state interventions.<sup>108</sup> In their analysis neoliberalism has multiple trajectories in different geographies, and neoliberalism takes on different forms, such as a hegemonic project, a policy, a state form and, governmentality.

### Transformation of the Secondary Education System

The neoliberalization literature on secondary schooling in Turkey reveals a transformation in the overall system. The literature reviewed for this study includes the opening of new markets, the incorporation of market reforms to educational settings, the

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<sup>105</sup> Aihwa Ong, *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).

<sup>106</sup> Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore, *Spaces of Neoliberalism: Urban Restructuring in North America and the Western Europe* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 19.

<sup>107</sup> Kim England and Kevin Ward, eds., *Neo-liberalization: States, Networks, People* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007).

<sup>108</sup> David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

perpetuation of class asymmetries, privatization and commodification of education and knowledge in direct relation to business, and two ethnographic studies on the Foucauldian analysis of neoliberal subjects. First, presenting the overall picture from the literature, how education was restructured after the 1980s will be shown. Next, studies that emphasize the class structure reproduced by the neoliberalization of education will be discussed. This will also include an analysis of who is excluded and who is favored in the education policies in Turkey. Finally, curriculum change, the relationship between labor flexibility and education, the marketization of higher education and the neoliberalization of teaching profession will be discussed.

Gök claims that in Turkey neoliberal changes in education started in the 1980s. However, starting from the 1950s private state schools (*maarif kolejleri*) were established which can be interpreted as the “harbinger of *anadolu liseleri*,” (selective state high schools) that are highly correlated with the neoliberalization of education because they discriminate between different students based on their performance in examinations which require monetary investment in private courses for success.<sup>109</sup> Particularly, in the 1980s prime minister Turgut Özal declared that “welfare state was passé.” Gök writes that “Kenan Evren, leader of the 1980 coup d’etat, ... questioned the right of citizens to send their children to public schools free of charge. Moreover, Gök explains that during the Özal era, health and educational expenditures were perceived as major burden on public budget.”<sup>110</sup>

When considering these changes in terms of education, the bigger picture, which constitutes Turkey’s neoliberal economic transformation, has to be kept in mind. Turkey

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<sup>109</sup> Fatma Gök, “The Privatization in Education in Turkey,” in *The Ravages of Neo-Liberalism*, eds. Neşecan Balkan and Sungur Savran (New York, NY: Nova Science Publishers, 2002).

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 98.

entered the 1980s with a crisis from the import substitution industries period and in January 1980 announced that it would follow a list of rules that would begin the neoliberal transformation. The coup d'état and pressure on various groups within society eased the atmosphere for making top-down reforms. The economic reforms after the 1980s go in line with the Washington Consensus and later the post-Washington Consensus reforms. In this setting, export-oriented industrialization strategy had a profound impact on the economy and is still adhered to by the present AKP government.<sup>111</sup> The major shifts in economic policy were

liberalization of trading and payment regimes, elimination of price controls, freeing of interest rates, elimination of many government subsidies, substantial price increases for the products of state economic enterprises, subsidies and other support measures for exports and promotion of foreign capital.<sup>112</sup>

The government targeted reforms in a number of areas of the economy but it put a special emphasis on the pace of the reforms. The prominent goal was to be quick in the changes.<sup>113</sup>

These overall changes are important because the literature on the neoliberalization of education reiterates the change seen in the content of economics in terms of the major processes in education. The expectations from education were very much shaped by what was expected from the economy. Business groups lobbied for the same neoliberal policies in the field of education starting from this period. The 1990 report of TÜSİAD (Turkish Business Association) indicates these major changes: “Turkish high school students

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<sup>111</sup> Şevket Pamuk, “Globalization, Industrialization and Changing Politics in Turkey,” *New Perspectives on Turkey* 38 (2008): 272.

<sup>112</sup> Şevket Pamuk, “Economic Change in Twentieth Century Turkey: Is the Glass More than Half Full?,” in *Cambridge History of Modern Turkey*, ed. Reşat Kasaba (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 286.

<sup>113</sup> Ziya Öniş, “Turgut Özal and His Economic Legacy: Turkish Neo-Liberalism in Critical Perspective,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 40, no. 4 (2004): 130.

los[e] ground compared with their peers abroad and, thus, [we have] Turkish industry's inability to compete successfully with industrialized nations."<sup>114</sup> Following their "insight," TÜSİAD asked for an "increase [in] technical and vocational programs that are responsive to global market forces [and] to apply market principles to the school system."<sup>115</sup> Kaplan summarizes this process:

The transformation of the economy from one based on a protectionist model to one based on a more market-oriented one has made the national school system one of the prime sites of social change. With a drive for greater efficiency and productivity, the industrialists seek to implement educational policies that correspond to what they consider to be the economic needs of the country. In the name of progress, they aim at creating the conditions under which discourse about economic choices and relationships can be realized first at school, later in the workplace. To promote these aims, the TÜSİAD report invokes metaphors of choice, competition, individual competence, and freedom to impress upon the public the inexorable necessity of a neoliberal polity and society.<sup>116</sup>

Studies on the subject manifest the increasing role of industrialists in the economy. They extended their influence to different spheres with the overall neoliberalization project. In a general framework, as set out by Ercan and Uzunyayla, this case came to be viewed as directly linked to employment in a functional relationship.<sup>117</sup> Ercan and Uzunyayla say that the concepts used by business groups were incorporated into the education system with pressure from capital groups. Efficiency, quality, and flexibility are part of the curricula starting from primary school and are promoted as "key elements

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<sup>114</sup> Sam Kaplan, *The Pedagogical State: Education and the Politics of National Culture in the Post-1980 Turkey* (California, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), 126.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 126.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 127.

<sup>117</sup> Fuat Ercan and Ferda Uzunyayla, "A Class Perspective on the New Actors and Their Demands from the Turkish Education System," in *The Developing World and State Education: Neoliberal Depredation and Egalitarian Alternatives*, eds., David Hill and Ellen Roskam (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009), 110.

of social change.”<sup>118</sup> Furthermore, Ercan proposes that when compared with the pre-1980 period, the state’s determination on education policies is no longer the case in Turkey, we see a shift to allow business concerns to determine of education policies.<sup>119</sup>

In this regard, Ercan and Uzunyayla assert that a 2006 report of TÜSİAD posits how education provides flexibility to capital, increases surplus value, and has a functional status in employment policies.<sup>120</sup> TÜSİAD was not the only business lobby for neoliberalizing education. TURKONFED (Turkish Enterprise and Business Confederation) as well emphasized education’s role in utilizing youth for Turkey to get ahead in international competition. MUSIAD (Independent Association of Industry and Business) proposed changing the Ministry of Education’s name to the Ministry of Education and Human Resources to further this goal.<sup>121</sup> Within this framework, what is important is not what the business groups demanded for their interests but how much and on which scale business interests, shaped education policies. As will be shown below, the literature manifests by looking at the transformations that took place in the 1980s, the 1990s and later in the AKP period, that there has been a flow of policies favoring a business-centered understanding of education.

According to Gök, the 1980s and the 1990s witnessed a number of changes that deteriorated school quality. There was an increase in the number of private schools. Low teacher salaries caused many teachers to work in private institutions while the quality of

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<sup>118</sup> Ercan and Uzunyayla, *A Class Perspective*, 113.

<sup>119</sup> Fuat Ercan, “1980’lerde Eğitim Sisteminin Yeniden Yapılanması: Küreselleşme ve Neoliberal Eğitim Politikaları,” in *75 Yılda Eğitim*, ed. Fatma Gök (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 1999), 25.

<sup>120</sup> Ercan and Uzunyayla, *A Class Perspective*, 113.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

teaching in state schools worsened.<sup>122</sup> During this period, public schools were not financed well and private schools were subsidized due to the government policy of promoting private education.<sup>123</sup> An increasing number of private institutions, with increasing numbers of students and teachers were seen.<sup>124</sup> Gök stresses that, “one significant indicator of crisis in the education system in Turkey is the establishment of quasi-private schools by the state itself.”<sup>125</sup>

The Anadolu high schools selected students on the basis of a centralized examination, which compelled students to private courses and *dershanes* (non-formal private schools students attend besides formal schooling in order to prepare for university/high school entrance examinations), to prepare for these Anadolu schools that has better facilities and gives a higher likelihood of performing well in the university examination. This resulted in quasi-private school formation because students with low incomes could not afford to prepare for the selective examination. According to Balkan and Rutz, there was a demand for private schools from new middle class families, especially in Istanbul, who wanted to increase their class power:

The demand for privatization of education fit neatly into the neoliberal ideology of privatization and marketization of culture industries in general as well as many other ideas and forms of value that were being converted into commodities for the global market. New middle class families raised the bar for getting into elite middle schools with their competitive, aggressive approach to winning SMSEs [(selective examination for middle schools)]. New middle class families also stimulated a demand for new private universities and private schools on all levels of the education hierarchy, from preschool to university.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Gök, “The Privatization of Education,” 99.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>124</sup> Ercan, “1980’lerde Eğitim Sisteminin Yeniden Yapılanması.”

<sup>125</sup> Gök, “The Privatization of Education,” 101.

<sup>126</sup> Erol M. Balkan and Henry J. Rutz, *Reproducing Class: Education, Neoliberalism and the Rise of the Middle Class in Istanbul* (Oxford: Berghan Books, 2009), 47.



This was very much related to who was included and who was excluded from a certain right. The beginning of selective examinations may be seen as a way to regulate the high demand for good education but the requirements of succeeding in this exam reproduced the unequal distribution of income and class power. Especially in the case of vocational high schools, in general, vocational high schools are the least preferred end of the spectrum and remain a site of reproducing the existing inequalities in society.<sup>127</sup>

Although this neoliberalization project stemmed from the central authority, the Ministry of Education, there were exceptions to neoliberalism. Particularly, these reforms do not mean that whole education system and everyone was being transformed. Sam Kaplan made a case study in 1989 and 1991 in a town called Yayla in southern Turkey in the Taurus Mountains. He concludes, “so far, the free-market consumerist approach to education remains the privilege of the moneyed class alone. Villagers and inhabitants of small towns like Yayla remain excluded from the business community’s neoliberal imaginary.”<sup>128</sup>

Whether this is still the case is unknown, but it must be noted that there could be exceptions to neoliberalism in settings that are not included in the articles cited in this literature review. It is not the case that the same neoliberalization policies affected everyone in the same way. In Kaplan’s analysis, “What was clear to all was that the neoliberal economic order had created new forms of social exclusion. As a result of their un-educability, rural children become ‘othered’ in popular discourse as a counterpart to the cultured urban citizens.”<sup>129</sup> More importantly, there were no resources for these

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<sup>127</sup> Hasan H. Aksoy, “Toplumsal Eşitsizliklerin Yeniden Üretim Aracı Olarak Mesleki Eğitim,” *Devrimci Öğretmen* 4 (2012): 5-7

<sup>128</sup> Kaplan, *The Pedagogical State*, 127.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

students' preparation for entry examinations of the popular, prestigious, and selective schools. This, in return, adds to their exclusion.

Similarly, Gök indicates that the 1980s and the 1990s were marked with the marketization of education and the exacerbation of existing inequalities.<sup>130</sup> Starting from the 1990s, fees in compulsory education, *eğitime katkı payı* (the legal name for monetary contributions to education), donations, registration fees by means introduced to collect money from students/parents, become widespread.<sup>131</sup> According to Adıgüzel et al., the World Bank recommended to diversify sources of education finance and this is how individuals' financial burden increased.<sup>132</sup> The literature presents that the educational expenses of families rose in the last ten years while this was viewed as an individual participation/choice in education.<sup>133</sup> But whether this is due to the increasing burden on families rather than the state is unclear.

Scholars say that throughout the 1980s, the ratio of public spending on education and health services to gross domestic product showed a continuous downward trend. The withdrawal of the state from the provision of these services led to their commodification. Studies denote that from 1994 on, private investors started to move into these sectors due to generous government incentives. In 1996-97, the private sector's share in total education investments was 50 percent.<sup>134</sup> According to scholars, the AKP period has

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<sup>130</sup> Gök, "The Privatization of Education," 103.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>132</sup> Ergül Adıgüzel, Gülay Aslan, and Erdal Küçüker, "External Education Projects in Turkey," in *Neoliberal Transformation of Education in Turkey: Political and Ideological Analysis of Educational Reforms in the Age of the AKP*, eds., Güliz Akkaymak and Kemal İnan (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 98.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 98-99.

<sup>134</sup> Balkan and Rutz *Reproducing Class*, 23.

witnessed a proliferation of the commodification and privatization of education and knowledge, commercialization and marketization of education, and the contraction of the education budget.<sup>135</sup> From 2002 until 2011, the share of investment in MoNE's budget decreased despite the increasing monetary values of the overall budget.<sup>136</sup>

Studies indicate that during the neoliberal period there was also a heavy emphasis on lifelong learning, where we see “an inflation in certificates and credentials” and marketization of this type of education without the viable results of increased chances of employment.<sup>137</sup> Relatedly, Bulut's case study on working class youth and their training for flexible labor markets in vocational high schools concludes that failure/success narratives and the power of individuals in problem solving are promoted. He writes that the overall result is that “companies in the school aim to cultivate a particular blue-collar subjectivity without a guarantee of employment.”<sup>138</sup> Similarly, Erdem explains how after the neoliberal era, vocational high schools are only places to stratify working class youth coming from disadvantaged backgrounds.<sup>139</sup>

Changes in teaching, what teachers understand about their profession and the overall school management are other aspects of the neoliberalization of education that are

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<sup>135</sup> Nejla Kurul, “Turkey under AKP Rule: Neoliberal Interventions into the Public Budget and Educational Finance,” in *Neoliberal Transformation of Education in Turkey: Political and Ideological Analysis of Educational Reforms in the Age of AKP*, eds., Güliz Akkaymak and Kemal İnan (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 87.

<sup>136</sup> Kemal İnan, “The Educational Policies of the AKP: The Collapse of Public Education in Turkey,” in *Neoliberal Transformation of Education in Turkey: Political and Ideological Analysis of Educational Reforms in the Age of AKP*, eds., Güliz Akkaymak and Kemal İnan (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 22.

<sup>137</sup> Ercan and Uzunyayla, *A Class Perspective*, 111.

<sup>138</sup> Bulut, “Learning to FlexLabor,” 78.

<sup>139</sup> İlgin Erdem, “New Workers Confronting the Old Rules of Industrial Vocational Education in a New Era: Working Class Experience in Alibeyköy School” (Master Thesis, Bogazici University, 2007).

covered in the literature in Turkey. This is strengthened by the Europeanization of the education process. Ertürk explains the transformation of the teaching profession in Turkey by “the adoption of market rationality to the content of education as well as to the employment regime and the managerial and financial aspects of education.”<sup>140</sup> During the AKP government, teachers’ labor conditions have become more flexible via contracted and temporary teachers who are exempt from social benefits related to the profession.<sup>141</sup> The neoliberalization of education brought about “new-managerialism,” which applies corporate culture to schools. Scholars posit that as a result of changes in legal status, parent-teacher associations acted like firms to finance education expenditures. So, the existing informal collection of money became legitimized.<sup>142</sup>

Akkaymak argues that schools can be neoliberalized without privatization. The content of education could nurture neoliberal ideology’s embrace in children’s minds. This would imply neoliberal individuals who are market-oriented, take competition as a natural phenomenon and target personal success.<sup>143</sup> She sees this as an example of how the state transforms students to human capital, which are also commodities in the market.<sup>144</sup> Akkaymak takes the rise in entrepreneurial motives in the content of education as a component of the neoliberalization of education.<sup>145</sup> Similarly, according to Koşar-Altınyelken and Akkaymak, after 2005, textbooks value individualism and promotes

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<sup>140</sup> Esin Ertürk, “Transformation of the Teaching Profession in Turkey,” in *Neoliberal Transformation of Education in Turkey: Political and Ideological Analysis of Educational Reforms in the Age of AKP*, eds., Güliz Akkaymak and Kemal İnan (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 233.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 237.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 234.

<sup>143</sup> Güliz Akkaymak, “Neo-liberalleştirilen Öğrenciler,” *Eleştirel Pedagoji* (2010): 31.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 33.

“citizens as consumers, salespersons, and entrepreneurs”.<sup>146</sup> She argues that before the textbook reform in 2005, textbooks showed the individual as a member of family and society. Overall, after the 1990s, according to Inal, the “AKP has approached education as an economic investment to increase human capital and emphasized the importance of quality, competition, standards and governance in education.”<sup>147</sup> Inal further notes that when new models of schools and publications of MoNE are scrutinized, a market-oriented approach to education<sup>148</sup> is evident.

According to Ercan, the actors in educational change in Turkey are capital groups, labor unions and international actors, which include the EU, the World Bank, the OECD, and the ILO. In this setting, the state has a role in linking education and employment by the Ministry of National Education, the State Planning Agency and the Higher Education Council.<sup>149</sup> In line with demands from other actors, after 1990s vocational education and general academic education came closer to one another as education was increasingly only perceived as a means for employment. There are changes in regulations to foster education’s functionality in employment, which train students for vocations in line with business needs.<sup>150</sup> So the authors claim that the change in perspective is supported by the changes applied in regulations.

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<sup>146</sup> Güliz Akkaymak and Hülya Koşar-Altınyelken, “Curriculum Change in Turkey: Some Critical Reflections,” in *Neoliberal Transformation of Education in Turkey: Political and Ideological Analysis of Educational Reforms in the Age of AKP*, eds., Güliz Akkaymak and Kemal İnan (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 63.

<sup>147</sup> İnan, “The Educational Policies,” 20.

<sup>148</sup> İnal, Kemal. “The Educational Policies,” 21

<sup>149</sup> Ercan and Uzunyayla, *A Class Perspective*, 119.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

## Conclusion

As the historical review make apparent, right before the outset of neoliberal era, skill problems persisted together with increasing efforts to solve this problem. The centralized state-led vocational education system was part of the formal secondary schooling system, which was controlled and financed by the state in all aspects. Although the state was involved by all means, in the limited literature on vocational education, some indicators pertaining to the state's commitment to vocational education are weak. For example, the state committing to supporting employment or securing skill certifications is not presented. Correspondingly, other actors' role in the vocational education is not highlighted. Even though I did not come across a political economic analysis of history of skill formation in Turkey, the literature implies a state-based system.

This vocational education system was frequently facilitated by foreign expertise. Furthermore, it was inevitably infected by ad-hoc changes of the overall education system due to changes in the social, economic and political context. One of the critical examples of this legacy is the imam hatip schools, which is defined as a vocational school as well as an institution for accessing higher education. It was a result of the tensions between secularism and Islamism in education. Overall, vocational education was seen as a problem area, which nevertheless carried the potential of gaining momentum and leading to development of the economy.

It is proposed here that the neoliberalization analysis in this section provides only a partial basis for the examples from Turkey. It would have been better if the path-dependence and the contextually embedded characteristics of the institutional changes could be demonstrated. What is missing is how exactly this process occurs and whether it is the same in all settings, and whether it always results as the way it is intended to be.

What exceptions and contradictions does it bring about and the challenges occurring are interesting issues that are not included in the literature I reviewed. Designed as economic outcome-oriented schools from the very beginning, changes in economic policies inevitably influence vocational school policies. In the next chapter, some dimensions of vocational education will be presented with regards to changes in policies that determine long-term strategies and the model of skill formation. Accordingly, instances that reflect neoliberal thinking as well as the exceptions, conflicts and complications of neoliberalization as a process will be discussed.

## CHAPTER 3

### INSTITUTIONAL EVOLUTION OF VOCATIONAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN TURKEY 1970-2013

In this chapter a political economic presentation of the institutional evolution of vocational high schools will be given. How this skill formation institution (state led, school-based) has survived up to this day and why policy makers identify the “same old issues” as problematic will be discussed. The evolution of vocational schools from 1970 to 2013 will be examined while commenting on the recurring patterns during this process. At each subsection, the components of the model of skill formation system and core changes will be analyzed. Rather than providing a detailed historical analysis, the main themes of the historical periods will be explained. These are tied with the path-dependencies stated in Chapter 2, and are steps for discussing the type of skill formation and its relationship with the political economy of Turkey in Chapter 4.

The answer to these questions lies in the way state was committed to this issue. The problem of commitment in two (conflicting) senses will be explored: First, the state is committed to the ideal of growth via vocational high school graduates. For this end it is committed to the endeavor of adapting vocational schools to the changing circumstances. However, there are no “credible commitments.” For instance, the state is not committed to solutions in the sense of actually solving problems, sparing resources, and following up a viable strategy. To be more specific, the problem of commitment will be discussed under the following headings, how policies were ad hoc or lacked a strategy and long-term planning, and how the policy-makers were not able to identify a model for skill formation.



These issues are tied to how fragmented and interrelated problems distracted the arguments. Furthermore, the absence of credible threats or sanctions, and the absence of awards or incentives for vocational education weaken the policies. For instance, the incentives for vocational education such as employment policies targeting vocational high school graduates, and certification of the skills are weak. Similarly, accession to higher education is used as a threat mechanism for receiving vocational education. In this case, we see that the political tensions of secular and Islamic education, which is related to the ambiguous situation of imam hatip schools as an academic or a vocation oriented high school, causing a distraction in the way vocational education policies and the accession of vocational high school students to universities are carried out.

To present the issue of the state's commitment to vocational education, in all of the sections below, how vocational education strategies took place, how policies and aspirations were in line with the dominant economic policies of the period, and the model of vocational education with respect to the determinants of the skill formation systems explained in Chapter 2 will be examined. Moreover, the recurring themes as well as changes that occurred during the historical periods will be discussed.

At this point, it is important to acknowledge the institutional legacy from the previous periods, which are deduced from the literature as well as repeated by several studies on Turkish education system.<sup>151</sup> At the beginning of the 1970s, the vocational

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<sup>151</sup> Gök, *75 Yılda Eğitim*; Eğitim Reformu Girişimi, *Eğitim İzleme Raporu 2007* (İstanbul: Eğitim Reformu Girişimi, 2008); Eğitim Reformu Girişimi, *Eğitim İzleme Raporu 2008* (İstanbul: Eğitim Reformu Girişimi, 2009); Eğitim Reformu Girişimi, *Eğitim İzleme Raporu 2009* (İstanbul: Eğitim Reformu Girişimi, 2010); Eğitim Reformu Girişimi, *Eğitim İzleme Raporu 2010* (İstanbul: Eğitim Reformu Girişimi, 2011); Eğitim Reformu Girişimi, *Eğitim İzleme Raporu 2011*.

education system is statist, school-based, centralized, lacking long-term planning, lacking a structure, influenced by exogenous changes such as foreign expertise and changing political and economic context, and imbued with political tensions. While exploring the changing aspects of the commitment of different actors to vocational education, it will be revealed whether neoliberal-thinking had a different influence on vocational education when compared with neoliberalization of overall secondary education presented above.

### Overview of Turkish Education System from 1970 to 2013

The vocational policies that are under discussion affected a small fraction of population. In 2010, 57 percent of the population still had an education level below secondary schooling. The secondary schooling rate (percentage of the youth aged in the secondary schooling years enrolled in secondary schools) was 17.6 percent in the 1970s, and steadily increased to 76.5 percent in 2013, as can be seen in Figure 1. So, until 2001 when schooling rate reached 48 percent, policies examined in this chapter involved only less than half of the related age group.

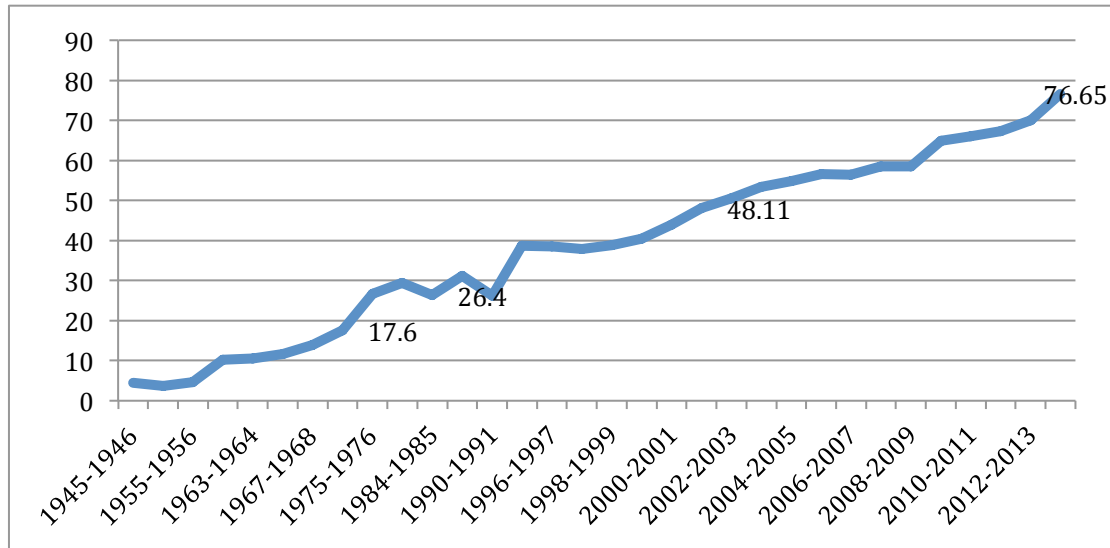


Figure 1: Secondary education schooling rate 1945-2013

Source: MEB (2010), *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Türk Milli Eğitim Sistemindeki Gelişmeler*. Ankara.

Similarly Figure 2 informs that even a smaller proportion of those in secondary schooling attend vocational schooling. This percentage is one of the main issues repeated by policy-makers from the 1970s to 2000s. While in 1970-71, 41 percent of those enrolled in secondary schooling were in vocational high schools, in 2009-2010, 43 percent of them are enrolled in vocational high schools. Despite all the policy changes and the most highlighted goal of increasing the rate of vocational high school students, there has been no change in terms of figures during the periods examined. Instead, general education was the predominant form of secondary schooling. Furthermore, there were fluctuations in terms of percentage of students in vocational education, reaching peaks and troughs in different periods as can be seen in the trend line in Figure 2. The highest percentage occurred in the 1990s, when a greater emphasis on vocational education was put. However, it must be noted that these figures include imam hatip school students since they are counted as vocational schools in ministry data. The intricacies of this fact will be explored in the sections below.

These 43 years are marked with fluctuations not only in terms of percentage of students in vocational education but also in terms of finance and the staff of the ministry. The ratio of the ministry's budget to the general budget was due to fluctuations. Particularly it has decreased from 1970 to 2010. From 1970 to 2003, a fall occurred and even the steady increase in the last years has not taken the ratio to 16.6 percent in 1970, which in fact was the highest ratio ever since 1923. However, unlike the increase in the last years, the data available on the ministry's budget's ratio to the GDP indicates that the budget has only slightly increased since 1998.

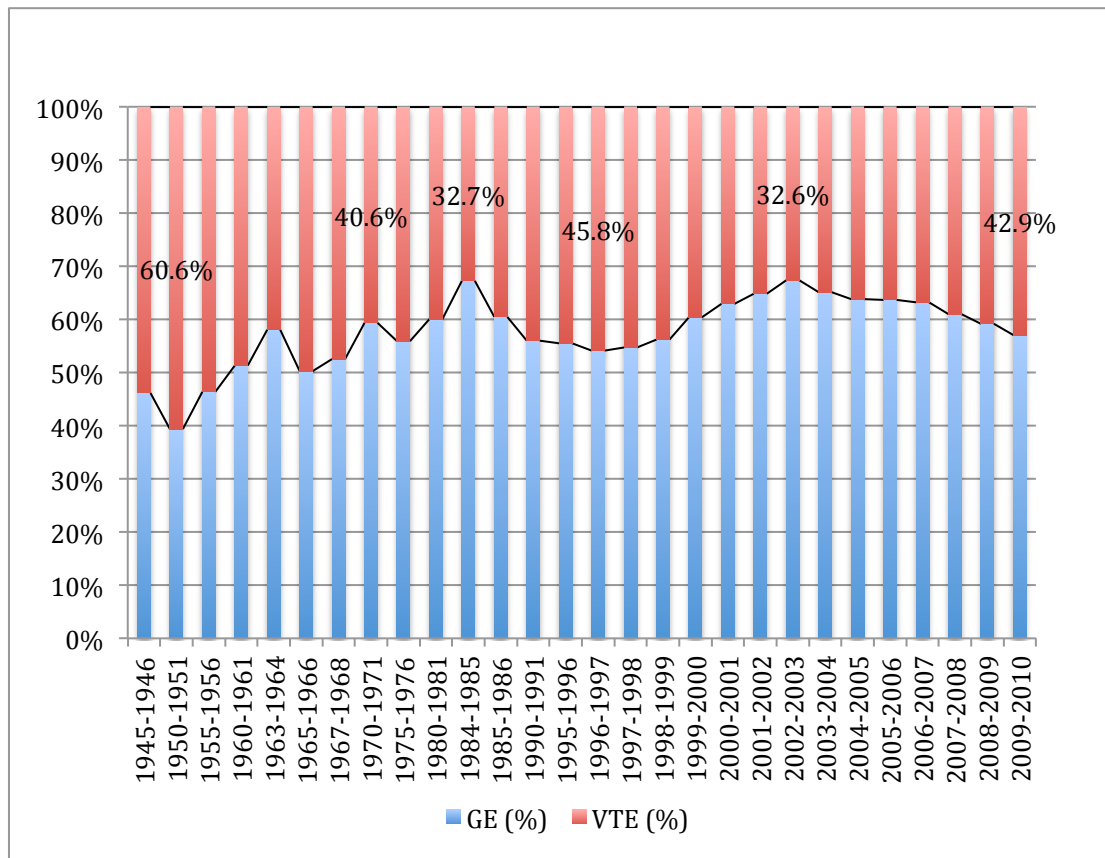


Figure 2: Percentage of students in general (GE) and vocational and technical education (VTE) in secondary schooling, 1940-2010  
Source: Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Education, *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Türk Milli Eğitim Sistemindeki Gelişmeler*.

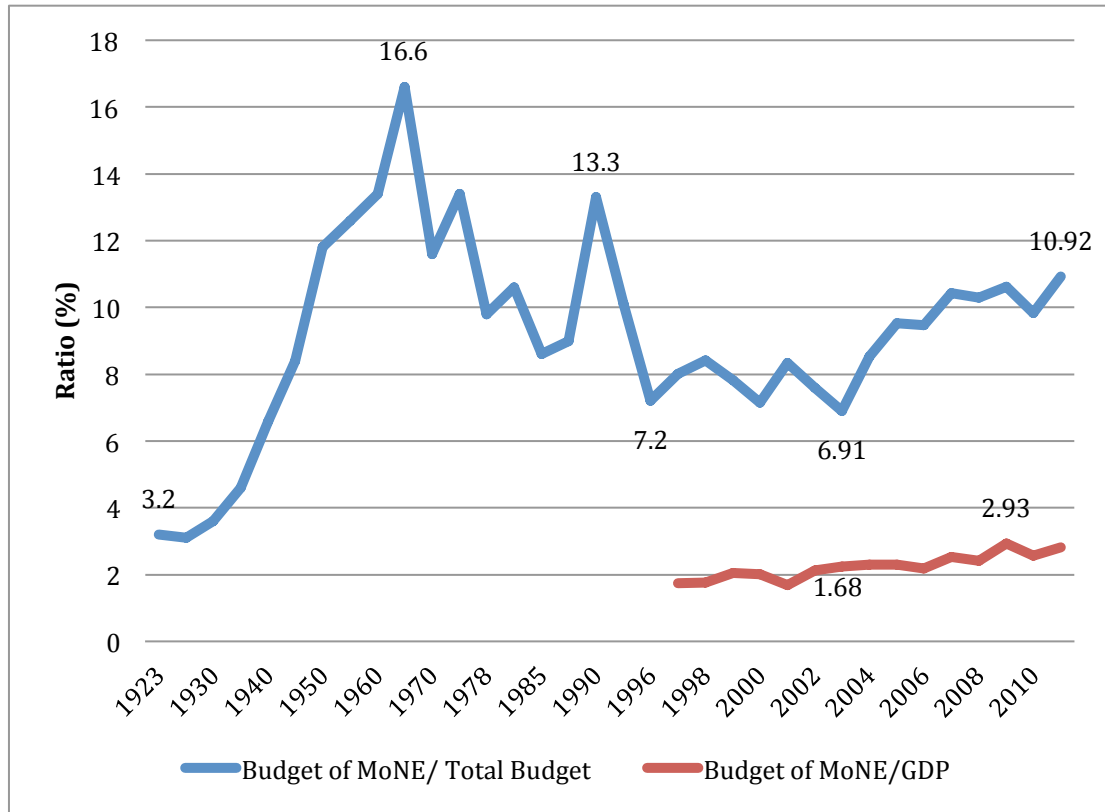


Figure 3: Ratio of the ministry's budget to total budget and GDP

Source: Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Education, *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Türk Milli Eğitim Sistemindeki Gelişmeler*.

As Table 3 shows, the period under investigation is marked by its inconsistencies in ministers of education just as it was the case until the 1970s as explained above in Table 2. This fact implies a discontinuity in policies considering a similar change in bureaucracy to accompany change of ministers, but it also presents a continuity of the inconsistency. There were 29 different ministers and 20 different undersecretaries from 1970 to 2013. On average, no minister has remained in office more than one and a half years or no undersecretary remained in office for more than two years. This instability aggravates the problems due to the lack of long-term strategy and a model for vocational education.

Table 3. Instability of MoNE: Changing Ministers,  
Time Spent in Office, 1970-2013

	Days	Years
median	502	1.4
minimum	25	0.1
maximum	2240	6.1
average	565	1.5
total number of ministers: 29		

Calculated from data on Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Education, *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Türk Milli Eğitim Sistemindeki Gelişmeler* and Republic of Turkey, "Hükümetler ve Programları", [http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/kutuphane/e\\_kaynaklar\\_kutuphane\\_hukumetler.html](http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/kutuphane/e_kaynaklar_kutuphane_hukumetler.html) (accessed November 01, 2013).

Nabi Avcı, current minister is excluded from calculation

In these 43 years, the general structure of the education system remained the same. Vocational education and training were separated into formal and informal education. Formal education included vocational high schools. Informal training included training taken after schooling such as in courses or vocational training centers of the MoNE. Despite changes in the organization of the ministry, different vocational high schools were connected to four main departments: Boys Technical Education, Girls Technical Education, Commerce Education, Religion Education. Many vocational high schools that had been tied to different ministries were incorporated to the MoNE only in the 2000s such as that of health high schools. To provide a continuous analysis, the focus here is given to the four departments.

## Failure in Manpower Planning, 1970-1982

The scene of vocational education right before the neoliberal economic reforms and particularly before the concrete change in the understanding of education in the 1982 fundamental law were marked by the efforts of the MoNE to building up a workforce for import substitution industrialization. The documents investigated reveal a story on the insistence of manpower planning<sup>152</sup> for the needs of the industry and how this has not been achieved failed.

An emphasis on education being adapted to the needs of economy can be seen as early as 1970 when the Şura in 1970 starts with the speech of the minister of education on how an education arranged according to the needs of the economy is required more than it was in any period before. Skilled workforce was seen as a vital input, as can be seen from development plans and government plans as well. Indeed, in 1974 the OECD states due to the speedy industrial growth in Turkey, there was a need for skilled workforce in Turkey.<sup>153</sup> Manpower planning began with the start of five-year development plans and was considered to be educational policies by the MoNE. These cannot be called education strategies really because they were primarily concerned with economic outcomes, particularly development.

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<sup>152</sup> The word manpower is used instead of “labor” power when translating *insangücü* (human power is the direct translation) because the term manpower planning, and manpower and growth were key concepts during the period. This term is also useful to point out the sexism of vocational education policies in Turkey. During the period, and even today, the majority of vocational and technical high school students were male. Female students mostly attended “girls technical/vocational schools.” As an OECD report in 1974 indicates, female professions were limited to the cutting of material and sewing, embroidery, home economics, kindergarten teachers, drawing and handicrafts. OECD report comments that the girls’ vocational/technical schools mostly targeted housewife training rather than providing an occupation. Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Republic of Turkey: A Study of the Needs in Vocational and Technical Education in Turkey* (Geneva: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 1974), 41.

<sup>153</sup> Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Republic of Turkey: A Study of the Needs*, 11.

The response of the vocational education policies to the demands of industry in this period suggests that neoliberal economic policies were not a beginning for economization of education but rather it changed the substance of economization. Policy makers pursued this goal in line with the model of economic development in the country, just as in the following periods. For example in 1974, a MoNE policy document identified meeting demands of the cooperative's personnel needs was important, and a vocational program on cooperatives in the Commerce High Schools was opened while this program disappeared as the country adapted to neoliberal policies and the make up of the economy changed.<sup>154</sup> Similarly, during this period state-owned enterprises' needs were prioritized.

Below the instabilities, particularly the political instabilities caused by changing coalition governments will be presented followed by a discussion of the MoNE's efforts to abide by the strict manpower planning of State Planning Agency's five-year programs, which constituted the first regular education strategy of the MoNE. Finally, the model of skill formation will be examined with an attention given to the 1973 National Education Basic Law, and the 1976 Apprenticeship Law, which were precursors for a collective training system.

### Political Instabilities: Coalition Governments

During this period, political instability, frequently changing coalition governments and the instability of the MoNE due to this inconsistency were prevalent. This can be viewed as one of the variables that cause ad-hoc changes and put abiding by a plan at risk. To be more specific, there were 13 different governments, 12 different ministers

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<sup>154</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Kasım 1974 Değerlendirmesi*, Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 1974, 56.



of education and seven different undersecretaries. The longest a minister stayed was for two years two months, while the shortest time interval was 25 days. The military coup in 1980 impaired the inconsistency of the agency in ministry even further.

Despite the political instabilities, government programs were committed to the vocational high schools, and skills, production and development. Even though discourse in government programs may not have resulted in the implementation of solutions, this is an indicator that vocational high schools continued to be a hot topic and a problem area to be addressed. Generally, there were some slight changes in the way different parties and coalitions phrased the importance of vocational policies. A salient feature of all programs except that of the MSP (*Milli Selamet Partisi*, the political party which is predominantly oriented to Islamism and nationalism) was the reinforcement of the skills of the workforce. Even the MSP, the only party that did not refer to vocational education in its program, was fine with this policy in coalition protocols.

It seems that one of the reasons behind ad-hoc changes in vocational was not the political parties that differed from one another. Same insights and strategies were offered continuously with only minor differences in the way governments suggested that they will commit to this issue. For example, the left-leaning Ecevit governments proposed disseminating vocational and technical schools even to the villages as well as not limiting higher education options to these students (including İmam-Hatip High Schools). The rightist Demirel governments, on the other hand, referred to on-the-job training, which may be taken as a more industrialist outlook. Furthermore, just as in the five-year development plans, the Demirel, and the İrmak governments' programs openly expressed the goal of gradually increasing the percentage of vocational high school students in total secondary education. Finally, the government programs

during the period also emphasized apprenticeship and promised to pass the law on apprenticeship, which was a recurring demand in the 1970s. All of these imply that there was not a problem in terms of the political will and there was a continuity of the mindset despite the rate of change in ministers and governments.

### Strict Manpower Planning of the SPA and Failure

A similar mindset of the changing political parties to vocational education was not adequate for overcoming the commitment problems to the five-year plans that targeted the parties' goals. During this period, the only sources of planning and strategy for the MoNE were the SPA's five-year development plans and Şura decisions, which were recommendations unless the minister approved them. In fact, as mentioned earlier the SPA made plans for the development of the country and therefore would not indicate all aspects of education. Predominantly, the five-year plans for the 1970 to 1980 reported the urgent need for skilled people and the corresponding exact calculations of this need. In this sense, the plans seem more relevant for vocational and technical education than general education.

The plans, despite the revision of goals and some insights, recognized the country's failure to reach the goals set in the previous manpower planning and the overall goals on increasing skill formation in the country. The expression of failure and the way it was presented, which will be conspicuous in all of the periods in this chapter, reveals a lack of commitment or coordination. The SPA constantly expressed that the education system was not in line with development plans.<sup>155</sup> But interestingly,

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<sup>155</sup> State Planning Agency, Republic of Turkey, *Dördüncü Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı Hazırlık Çalışmaları: Eğitim Planlaması Çalışma Grubu I*, Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 1975, 1-3.

most of the goals pertained to quantity such as the most popular goal of increasing vocational and technical high school students' ratio to general high school students. Even though there was increasing number of vocational high school students during this period, general high school students were increasing as well. Despite the ubiquity of this goal in the documents examined, the period started and ended with the same share of vocational high school students in secondary schooling: 41 percent to 40 percent except for a rise in 1976 to 44 percent.<sup>156</sup>

Although the expression of failure was ubiquitous as well, the plans did not state the responsible body or actors for the failure. Furthermore, while the exact plans of the investments of the MoNE and policies to be taken together with the responsible body and the time frame were presented in different SPA documents, the underlying reasons for the failure were not included in the plans.<sup>157</sup> Strikingly, from 1974 until 1983, there was no unit within the MoNE to coordinate with the SPA. So, targets for the next periods that had to be integrated one another were announced by the SPA: the exact number of students and the exact quantity of different types of workforce that are required for the development of the economy,<sup>158</sup> and the MoNE somehow had to manage it without a formal structure.

However, the state planners' insights on the aspects of failure reflected a number of interrelated question areas that will be bothering the MoNE and the vocational high school strategies up until today. The listed problem areas were:

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<sup>156</sup> This was particularly due to the rapid increase of number of imam hatip high school students, although their increase was not planned by the SPA.

<sup>157</sup> As an example of SPA's detailed plan on the MoNE's expenses and the required time plan for construction of schools, providing equipment, and policy measures, see State Planning Agency, Republic of Turkey, *III. Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı: 1975 Programı Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yatırım ve Tedbileri*, Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 1975.

<sup>158</sup> See the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> five-year-plans of the SPA.

shortages in the numbers of teachers (as well as teachers' preference for higher paid jobs in the industry), buildings, equipment, basic textbooks of some programs, curriculums, lack of related laws and regulations, finance, the ambiguity of employment of graduates of vocational schools, the lack of certification of the skills of different type of programs, the students' preference for higher education and lack of prestige of vocational high schools as schools for students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds.<sup>159</sup>

Remarkably, the planners were also aware that skill formation problems formed a vicious circle with the sectors in the economy. The rate of industrialization was not at the level of promoting capacity increase in VTE and because VTE was behind technological changes, students had limited employment options. The planners mentioned that particularly because of the abundance of labor force in Turkey, employers preferred to employ low cost employees and adopted causal training options,<sup>160</sup> even though there was no on-the-job training system or a legal framework.

As can be seen, some of these problems involved vocational education planning problems including lack of resources. Others, such as the ambiguity of employment options for graduates and skill certification were related to lack of incentives created by the state, which is directly linked with the model for skill formation as will be introduced below. Likewise, despite the commitment to the issue, there were not credible incentives created for solving the problems. The problems were listed all at once without an organized structured plan for how to tackle them. A

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<sup>159</sup> State Planning Agency, Republic of Turkey, *Dördüncü Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı Hazırlık Çalışmaları*, 8-17; State Planning Agency, Republic of Turkey, *1977 İhtisas Raporu*, Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 1977, 16-28.

<sup>160</sup> State Planning Agency, Republic of Turkey, *Hükümet Programı Çerçevesinde Eğitime Verilmek İstenen Yeni Yönelimler Üzerine Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı Görüşü ve Önerileri*, Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 1974, 20-40.

major lack of the most basic inputs of education reinforced the numeric failure in the state's goal of increasing the number of vocational education students. In this sense, it can be inferred that state showed a non-credible commitment to planning. Even though goals and plans were present, the will to implement did not occur.

### Model for Skill Formation

The system reveals a statist model in which the indicators of state commitment, such as roles of actors, skill certification, and employment opportunities are weak, and commitment requirements of firms are few. Although the SPA reports reveal much of learning is informal, the main form of organized skill formation is schools. However, the Turkish vocational education system experienced a slight relaxing of the statist school-based model with the 1973 law on national education, the 1977 apprenticeship law, and the limited number of industry school partnerships. In the SPA and MoNE documents for 1970-1982, there is no mentioning of a particular skill formation model but rather a list of diverse wishes and decisions. With the Turkish-German conference in 1981, which indicated a preparation towards the apprenticeship law to be passed in 1986, Turkey started to look for foreign models of skill formation.<sup>161</sup>

In 1973, the new law clearly delineated general and vocational education. More importantly, this law designated that education could take place in settings other than schools.<sup>162</sup> This is a signal of a change in the model since it leaved space for non-school based skill formation in secondary schooling. Similarly, the apprenticeship law

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<sup>161</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Türkiye'de Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim: Türk-Alman Mesleki Eğitim Semineri 30 Kasım-11 Aralık 1981*, Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 1981.

<sup>162</sup> Republic of Turkey, *1973 Milli Eğitim Temel Kanunu*, [http://mevzuat.meb.gov.tr/html/temkanun\\_1/temelkanun\\_1.html](http://mevzuat.meb.gov.tr/html/temkanun_1/temelkanun_1.html) (accessed April 20, 2014).

in 1977 was a precursor to the dual education law in 1986, which implied a shift to a collective training system. However, the 1977 apprenticeship law was limited in scope: it entailed apprentices, who were 12-18 years old and did not go to school, and covered a limited number of cities and vocations.<sup>163</sup>

Other actors were interested in enhancing their capacities for commitment to training, too. But the role of actors were limited and in most cases consisted of attending conferences organized by the MoNE to gather different viewpoints.<sup>164</sup> For example, the apprenticeship law was demanded by a variety of actors, as expressed by government programs, five-year plans and participants from industry, public institutions, chambers, unions and ministries, as revealed in a conference organized in 1975.<sup>165</sup> But there was not a legal framework to coordinate and contribute different actors in vocational education and neither a continuous voluntary coordination. For instance, a single case of a union-ministry partnership was proudly explained in a MoNE report: a union applied to the MoNE for partnership in carrying out the necessary training scheme in the union law.<sup>166</sup> In fact, applying to the state with a particular demand was a more common practice than coordination. At a conference of the MoNE in 1975 on industry-school partnership, different actors appeared: state owned enterprises, the private sector, and ministries, were interested in coordination and cooperation. But they ended up listing their demands to the state since the state is the decision maker. This goes in line with the structure of decision-making in the

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<sup>163</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Türkiye'de Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitimde Gelişmeler 29-30 Nisan 1991*, Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 1991, 47.

<sup>164</sup> Ministry of Education, *Kasım 1974 Değerlendirmesi*, 24.

<sup>165</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Endüstriyel mesleki ve teknik öğretim ile sanayi ilişkileri sempozyumu*, Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 1976.

<sup>166</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *1970'de İnsangücü Eğitimi Genel Müdürlüğü Çalışmaları*, Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 1971, 25.

vocational education and training. A unit in the MoNE prepared all curriculums, regulations and draft laws and the Şura decisions relied on minister's approval.<sup>167</sup> So in the end the decisions were bound to the state bureaucracy, and especially the government.

Instead of wider-scale coordination, only a handful of industry-school partnerships during the period signal the fractured nature of this relationship. This can be considered as a legacy that influenced the actual form of neoliberalization as will be discussed below.<sup>168</sup> These partnerships also reflected the nature of ISI policies: most of them were with state owned enterprises and only one of them was with a chamber. Overall, case-specific and smaller scale industry school partnerships with national industries fragmented state-firm cooperation.<sup>169</sup> Agreements relied on single schools, on single programs, and on the terms determined by the MoNE.<sup>170</sup> In order to aid this lack of a legal framework, the MoNE began a small-scale project in four VTE schools in six programs in 1978. The project aimed at forming a system for industry school partnerships. In the end it was applied in 27 schools. The project was ended in 1981, restarted in 1982, with a different name and an increased scope of programs.<sup>171</sup> It can be said that the model of skill formation was debilitated with the ad-hoc nature

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<sup>167</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Türk Okul Sistemi Klavuzu*, Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 1975.

<sup>168</sup> Ministry of Education, *Endüstriyel mesleki ve teknik öğretim ile sanayi ilişkileri sempozyumu*, 25; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Republic of Turkey: A Study of the Needs*, 22.

Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Beyaz Kitabı: 1981-1982 öğretim yılındaki gelişmeler*, Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 1982, 43-46.

<sup>170</sup> Ministry of Education, *Türkiye'de Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim*, 17.

<sup>171</sup> Ministry of Education, *Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Beyaz Kitabı*, 46-49; Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *T.C. METARGEM Ticaret Eğitimi Araştırması*, Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 2003, 16.

of state's efforts and the disorganization of industry state relations prevailed in following periods, too.

Although the plans presented vocational high school students as vital for the growth of the economy, credible awards for graduation from vocational schools or incentives to enroll in these schools did not exist. However, the options of improving incentives, such as the need for skill certification were revealed in conferences, Şura decisions and SPA documents. Nonetheless, MoNE did not emphasize any employment policy targeting vocational school graduates.<sup>172</sup> Similarly, the standardization of vocations that would guarantee graduates of VTE an exact occupation was of limited scope taking place in MoNE with the help of teachers and administrators.<sup>173</sup>

The only policy measure used as an incentive for vocational education was access to higher education, which in fact, situated higher education at a more desired position. This problem was intertwined with the problem of imam hatip high schools' ambiguous position as a vocational or a general education school and making these schools less viable alternatives. Policy makers frequently mentioned the problem of the “accumulation at the gates of university”<sup>174</sup> to describe all the students that could not succeed to enroll in a university after the centralized university examination.<sup>175</sup> This fact went in line with the meta-trends in different countries as explained in chapter two. Vocational education particularly with a strict boundary between general

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<sup>172</sup> Ministry of Education, *Endüstriyel mesleki ve teknik öğretim ile sanayi ilişkileri sempozyumu*.

<sup>173</sup> Ministry of Education, *Kasım 1974 Değerlendirmesi*, 24-25.

<sup>174</sup> The phrase is “üniversite kapılarında yığılma” in Turkish. Development plans and şura decisions elaborate on the fear of the over demand for universities.

<sup>175</sup> State Planning Agency, *1977 İhtisas Raporu*; State Planning Agency, *Hükümet Programı Çerçevesinde Eğitime Verilmek İstenen Yeni Yönelimler*.



and vocational education was seen as a way of solving this problem.<sup>176</sup> Therefore, particularly laws on vocational education or apprenticeship were perceived to be important resolutions to the problem of accumulation at the gates of university.<sup>177</sup> Even though there was the concern for the need for specific skills rather than higher general skills, this perspective put vocational education in the position of a threat to not succeeding in the examination, rather than incentivizing VTE itself.

### Learning to Compete and Coordinate 1982-2002

From 1982 to 2002 the basic assumption of economic and education policies, seeing vocational and technical education as a catalyst for industrial growth, continued. A MoNE report on VET in 1990 states Turkey chose industrialization as the means of development and this caused demand for workforce that acquires vocational and technical education.<sup>178</sup> Similarly, the themes expressed above were still prevalent. The failure theme was expressed in five-year plans and particularly in 2001 there was an acceptance that no structural change had been successful ever since 1973.<sup>179</sup> On the other hand, in 1996, pride was expressed due exports of goods and construction of big

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<sup>176</sup> State Planning Agency, *1977 İhtisas Raporu*, 5.

<sup>177</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *1974 Milli Eğitim Şurası*, [http://ttkb.meb.gov.tr/meb\\_iys\\_dosyalar/2012\\_06/06021628\\_9\\_sura.pdf](http://ttkb.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2012_06/06021628_9_sura.pdf) (accessed April 20, 2014); Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *1981 Milli Eğitim Şurası*, [http://ttkb.meb.gov.tr/meb\\_iys\\_dosyalar/2012\\_06/06021603\\_10\\_sura.pdf](http://ttkb.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2012_06/06021603_10_sura.pdf) (accessed April 20, 2014).

<sup>178</sup> Ministry of Education, *Çıraklık ve Mesleki Eğitim Konseyi Hazırlık Dökümanı*, 2.

<sup>179</sup> State Planning Agency, Republic of Turkey, *Sekizinci Beş Yıllık Plan*, <http://www.kalkinma.gov.tr/Lists/Kalkinma%20Planlar/Attachments/2/plan8.pdf> (accessed April 25, 2014).

projects, which were supposedly tied to the VTE.<sup>180</sup> Overall, this was a period that carried high aspirations on achieving development via high skilled labor but did not produce efficient policies and mechanisms. More importantly this was a period in which both the objective of a liberal market economy and a coordinated market economy were continuously expressed with regards to vocational policies, coordinating and competing at the same time.

First, the ways in which the governments expressed their will in attaining an increasingly collective system that included different sectors will be presented. Then how the state tried to commit to the skill formation in the country, particularly how state took a leading role in vocational high school policies in line with Özal's neoliberal economic policies and Turkey's aspirations for relations with Europe will be discussed. Moreover, there will be a discussion on the influence of the German collective training system, and the law passed in 1986 on vocational training in firms which implies a juncture at which Turkey showed a transition to a collective skill formation system. Also, the specific examples that indicate how Turkey was looking for a role model in skill formation while creating "a patchwork of different models" will be demonstrated. Finally, it will be revealed that a stable long-term plan was lacking: there were many changes in school types, school system, and the organization of ministry while the lack of resources as well as depreciation of the existing resources were at stake.

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<sup>180</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Türkiye'de Eğitim: Tüsiad Raporu Üzerine Özal, Akbulut ve Akyol'un Konuşmaları*, Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 1990, 8; Ministry of Education, *Çıraklık ve Mesleki Eğitim Konseyi Hazırlık Dokümanı*, 169-174.

## Political Upheavals and Coalitions

The 1982 change in the fundamental law, which includes a clause on opening up universities with the intention of developing manpower, was taken as the beginning for this period since this shows the contradiction between liberal motivations on general skills, on economic competition and at the same time an aspiration for a collective training system like Germany.<sup>181</sup> In this law a similar clause on secondary education did not exist, but the emphasis on the economic aspect of education, and particularly on higher education shows an increased attention to economic returns. Specifically, an emphasis on higher education for building up a workforce was contradictory since the main theme of this period was increasing VTE instead of “accumulation at the gates of university.”<sup>182</sup>

In contrast to the political instabilities such as the military coup, changing coalition parties and later economic crises, over this 20-years the vocational education and skilled workforce never lost their status as hot topic areas in government programs. This period saw 14 different governments, 13 different ministers, and nine different undersecretaries. However, the only party that did not refer to vocational education or training or skilled workforce was the Islamist party’s leader Erbakan’s 1996-97 government, similar to the MSP in the 1970s. Other than this exception of Islamist politics, starting with the Uluşu government of the military coup, vocational

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<sup>181</sup> The phrase is “insangücü yetiştirmek amacıyla” in the fundamental law.

<sup>182</sup> The phrase is “üniversite kapılarında yığılma” in Turkish.

education is emphasized more than the 1970s and particularly during the Özal governments.<sup>183</sup>

In the programs, the target was to decrease the general education ratio in secondary schooling. Looking at Figure 2, up until the political instability in 28 February, we see rising figures of vocational students. In fact the highest number of vocational students were during the Erbakan years, which was basically due to the imam hatip high schools' increasing number of students. But during other governments as well, the imam hatip issue was still discussed with the same terminology of vocational schools. An emphasis on skilled personnel for religion occurred only during the Demirel and Çiller governments. So, once again when imam hatips distortion of the skill formation issue is not taken into consideration we do not see much of a change in terms of numbers.

A difference in the government programs of this period from previous governments was the inclusion of other actors, venues and a non industrial sector in the discussion of the issue. A public agency on supporting the small medium enterprises (SMEs), KOSGEB'S (Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization) education activities enters the government program in 1991 and thereupon was visible in programs. Starting with the second Özal government, after the law in 1986 on dual training, an emphasis on on-the-job training activities rather than vocational education was apparent. Similarly, in 1991, providing a skilled labor force for tourism entered the programs.

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<sup>183</sup> Republic of Turkey, "Hükümetler ve Programları", [http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/kutuphane/e\\_kaynaklar\\_kutuphane\\_hukumetler.html](http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/kutuphane/e_kaynaklar_kutuphane_hukumetler.html) (accessed November 01, 2013).

## Utilization of Vocational High Schools and Neoliberal Economics

During this period strong commitment to the ideal of vocational high schools appeared as a way to build up the workforce required for export-led growth. Özal's policies in the economy in the 1980s relied on export-led growth, industrialization, and the neoliberalization of the economic policies. Moreover, a profound belief in national education was key for development and industrialization remained.<sup>184</sup> In line with these economic goals, there was an enormous emphasis on the role vocational high schools could play in competing with world markets, especially on increasing high skilled workforce to strengthen Turkey's competitiveness and production capacities with the hopes of Turkey increasing its role in the European Community or the Customs Union.

The salient feature of this period was the aim of adapting the MoNE to the market conditions. To compete with other countries, vocation education policies and strategies as well as content and methods of vocational education had to be as quick as the market.<sup>185</sup> This fact, which is repeated frequently in SPA documents and Şura decisions, led to devoting an entire Şura in 1999 on VET. It is apparent in the content of schools as well: in the 1980s a few programs in vocational and technical education reached 59 in 1993; and in 2002, there were 200 programs.

Trying to be responsive to market conditions and competition went hand in hand with the European ideal: considering the European Community/European Union

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<sup>184</sup> XII. Milli Eğitim Şurası in 1988 begins with the minister's remarks. Development plans for the same period also manifest the same insight.

<sup>185</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim Sisteminin İncelenmesi Önerilerin Özeti: Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim Raporu 15 Temmuz 1994*, Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 1994, iv; Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Kız Teknik Öğretimde Gelişmeler II*, Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 1993, 17.

principles on VTE and preparing the state for possible inclusion.<sup>186</sup> As early as 1989, a minister of education participated in the European Council conferences on education and prepared reports on Turkey's education system and problems.<sup>187</sup> A document prepared by the MoNE in 1994 reports that especially the Customs Union agreement fostered the idea of urgent need for a high-skilled, competitive labor force, even though industrialization and skilled labor force had been important since the early years of the Republic.<sup>188</sup> Right at the end of this period, as Turkey became a candidate, Turkey prepared a document on how to implement the EU education objectives, and started to receive grants from the EU funds.<sup>189</sup>

During this period, there were also precursors to the confusion in terms of adapting to flexible markets in the early 2000s. The 1996 Şura, the five-year plan for the 1996 to 2000 period, and a report of the SPA in 2001 recommend the provision of flexible skills as a vocational skill to people, considering that a person would have more than one vocation in his or her lifetime.<sup>190</sup> However, another decision of the

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<sup>186</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim Raporu. Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim Sisteminin İncelenmesi 29 Temmuz 1994*, Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 1994, 3; State Planning Agency, Republic of Turkey, *Yedinci Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı 1996-2000*, <http://www.kalkinma.gov.tr/Lists/Kalkinma%20Planlar/Attachments/2/plan7.pdf> (accessed April 25, 2014)

<sup>187</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Enformasyon Toplumu ve Eğitim Sistemlerine Etkileri: Türk Eğitim Sistemi Açısından Yakın Geleceğin Değerlendirilmesi*, Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 1989.

<sup>188</sup> Ministry of Education, *Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim Sisteminin İncelenmesi*, iii.

<sup>189</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *2002 Yılı Başında Milli Eğitimi*, Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 2001, 297, 424.

<sup>190</sup> From the section named "Toplumsal eğitim ihtiyacının sürekli karşılanması" Clause 39. Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *1996 Milli Eğitim Şurası*, [http://ttkb.meb.gov.tr/meb\\_iys\\_dosyalar/2012\\_06/06021410\\_15\\_sura.pdf](http://ttkb.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2012_06/06021410_15_sura.pdf) (accessed April 20, 2014); State Planning Agency, Republic of Turkey *Sekizinci 5 yıllık kalkınma planı Ortaöğretim: Genel Eğitim, Meslek Eğitimi, Teknik Eğitim, Özel İhtisas Komisyonu Raporu*, Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 2005, 52.

<sup>190</sup> State Planning Agency, Republic of Turkey, *Yedinci Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı 1996-2000*, 27.

1996 Şura conflicted with this insight: there was an expectation that jobs would get more complicated and each person's specialization was needed.

In line with these, it can be said that in the minds of the policy makers there was an adherence to utilization of vocational high schools for skill formation and economic growth with a belief that the state could act like the market. Near the end of the period, there was an implicit realization of the shift to flexible markets and how vocational education can react to this. But in the end, in these twenty years, as will be shown, despite the neoliberal thinking and policy discussions, the state remained as the main actor, main decision maker, and financier of vocational education.

#### Ad-hoc Policies in Vocational and Technical Education

Looking at the publications of the MoNE for 1982-2002, no long-term education strategy developed by the MoNE itself is present: it was reported that the MoNE policies were based on laws and legislation, development plans, and Şura decisions as well as the National Program for carrying out the European Union objectives starting with 2002.<sup>191</sup> The changes in the structure of the ministry are due to *Kanun Hükmünde Kararname* (decree law) in 1983, 1984 and 2001 for which the 1984 change also included changing the MoNE to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.<sup>192</sup>

Changes in vocational school types and school system also reveal the confusion in terms of long-term planning and the incentives created for students'

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<sup>191</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Türkiye'de Endüstriyel Teknik Öğretim*, Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 1986. Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Türkiye'de Endüstriyel Teknik Öğretim*, Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 1996.

<sup>192</sup> Ministry of Education, *Çıraklık ve Mesleki Eğitim Konseyi Hazırlık Dokümanı*, 18.

preference for vocational high schools. This period saw the opening of Anadolu technical Schools, Anadolu vocational Schools<sup>193</sup> and *Çok Programlı Liseler* (multi-program schools). “Anadolu/Anatolian” schools, meaning the more academic-oriented schools, which carried out a bilingual education, were expanded to vocational high schools. These policies explicate the confusion and ambivalence in vocational education policies. Even though one of the main objectives stated in the five-year plans and the MoNE publications was to promote vocational schooling and even though there were numerous statements of policy makers on why these schools should be preferred by students, vocational education came closer to academic high schools as a way of strengthening and promoting vocational education. Academic schooling was used as a way of adding importance to the substance of vocational high schools, in which case it was declared that vocational high schools were weaker, less viable alternatives.

Çok programlı liseler, on the other hand, were presented as an alternative to the school-type based secondary schooling. It was planned that this type of school would be cost efficient in low population areas because it would save on building costs of different types of schools in separate buildings. In these schools students would be allowed to choose from different vocational, technical, religious or general education programs. These schools came to be seen as failures and were criticized for lack of planning or experimentation before they came into existence.<sup>194</sup> Even today, they are part of secondary schooling and still come under the same criticisms.

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<sup>193</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Kız Teknik Öğretimde Gelişmeler II*, 8. Decision 17. Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *1988 Milli Eğitim Şurası*, [http://ttkb.meb.gov.tr/meb\\_iys\\_dosyalar/2012\\_06/06021525\\_12\\_sura.pdf](http://ttkb.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2012_06/06021525_12_sura.pdf) (accessed April 20, 2014)

<sup>194</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *T.C. METARGEM Ticaret Eğitimi Araştırması*, Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 1995.



Furthermore, during this period vocational high schools linked with different ministries were not tied to the MoNE despite policy recommendations on this in the Şura.<sup>195</sup> To sum up, experiments with types of schools and a lack of a single framework for all vocational institutions occurred.

Another exposition of discontinuous policy was the access of students from vocational high schools to higher education, which today continues to be a hot topic. In this problem area, the continuation of the strict manpower planning with respect to who will carry on to with which level and program in education are debated.<sup>196</sup> Thereupon, once again, the planners interpreted everyone's insistence on proceeding to higher education to be grounded in the vocational and technical schools deficiencies in guiding students correctly. Overcoming "the accumulation at the gates of university" once again recurred in the discussions for strict manpower planning.<sup>197</sup> There was clearly a lack of a stable policy, and all ways of preventing "accumulation at the gates of the university" were considered. Even though policy makers tried to make vocational schools more attractive, they thought of solutions that made general high schools preferable by offering general students who did not succeed in the university entrance examination the option of studying a year of technical education.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *1996 Milli Eğitim Şurası*, [http://ttkb.meb.gov.tr/meb\\_iys\\_dosyalar/2012\\_06/06021410\\_15\\_sura.pdf](http://ttkb.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2012_06/06021410_15_sura.pdf) (accessed April 20, 2014), Decision 74.

<sup>196</sup> State Planning Agency, Republic of Turkey, *Altıncı Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı 1990-1994*, Clause 829. <http://www.kalkinma.gov.tr/Lists/Kalkinma%20Planlar/Attachments/4/plan6.pdf> (accessed April 25, 2014), 295. Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *1988 Milli Eğitim Şurası*, Decision No. 27. Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *1996 Milli Eğitim Şurası*, Decision No. 7 of Access to Higher Education.

<sup>197</sup> 1996 opening speech. Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *1996 Milli Eğitim Şurası*

<sup>198</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *1988 Milli Eğitim Şurası*, Decision No. 26.

The interrelated and distinctive reasons behind the incoherence signify how vocational education policies were distorted: the problems of the lack of higher institutions during the period, the issue of imam hatip high school graduates access to higher education and “utilizing” vocational high school graduates “efficiently” were intertwined. Imam hatip high schools once again had an unspoken presence in the policy documents.<sup>199</sup> They were not part of the policy measures on vocational and technical schools even though on paper they were vocational and technical schools. However, frequent changes in access to education policies for vocational high school graduates only took place in a tumultuous discussion on graduates of imam hatip high schools and the future of Turkey in terms of secularism and Islamism.

The weakness of the award/sanction mechanism of this recurring policy on promoting vocational education was the final issue. As will be discussed below, the policy makers’ frequent reliance on access to higher education as the only viable award and threat mechanism for vocational and technical high schools gave the impression that this was the actual “carrot” at the end of education of which vocational and technical high schools were occasionally and partly deprived. In that sense, the policy of promoting vocational education as a key education institution in and of itself was weakened not only because access to higher education policies were the sole policy incentives, but also because of the instabilities of these policies.

As an ex-undersecretary of the MoNE said, “In Turkey there is the case of one person making something and the other terminating it”, and also “changing the name of a project and showing it as if it is something new.”<sup>200</sup> Policy makers were keen on

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid., Decision No. 20.

<sup>200</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Çıraklık ve Mesleki Eğitim Konseyi Görüşmeleri ve Kararları, Çıraklık ve Mesleki-Teknik Eğitim Konseyi, 3-5 Mayıs 1990*, Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 1990, 169, 173.

making projects and making a change, yet there were projects that included the same objectives, but were not coordinated with one another. Furthermore, some of them continued to take place after the name of project was changed to something else with the change of government, just as was the case with the project that started in 1978.

During this period, there were various projects carried out by the ministry fragmented and lacked long-term strategy as well. Smaller-scale projects not in touch with one another carried out by different vocational directorates of the MoNE, Boys Technical, Girls Technical, and Commerce were some of the problems. The projects were on different aspects of the problems of vocational education: curriculum and other components of education, equipment, teachers, and the employment of students. All of these indicate a commitment to solving the problems of vocational education. Yet the scope was limited and in many instances the ties with previous and current projects were not constituted. Some projects had similar objectives, such as increasing the quality of teachers and determining vocation standards. The impact evaluation of these projects was not available in the archives (if such documents actually exist), even though there were some closing remarks and a report on what had been done.<sup>201</sup> The projects started in a few cities, other cities were added in some cases, and there were instances in which they were implemented to the whole system. Yet, why and how these projects were completed or rather continued to take place is unknown.

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<sup>201</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *METGE, Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitimi Geliştirme projesi 1999-2003: Proje Kapanış Raporu*. Ankara: 2004, 35. Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Türkiye'de Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitimde Gelişmeler 29-30 Nisan 1991*, 58-62. Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Kız Teknik Öğretimde Gelişmeler I*, Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 1991, 21, 28, 45, 51.

Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Geçmişten Günümüze Kız Teknik Öğretim Genel Müdürlüğü*, Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 2006. 204-205. Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *2002 Yılı Başında Milli Eğitim*, 3.

Moreover, there were no policy papers on the impact evaluation and further solutions while carrying out these projects.

The lack of resources as well as depreciation of existing resources were problematic as well. In 1988 policy makers were still trying to stop teachers at the vocational and technical high schools from transferring to jobs in industry.<sup>202</sup> In the 1980s, 1990s, and even in 2001, despite the increasing number of students complaints about the lack of laboratories, outdated technology, lack of textbooks, insufficient number of schools, equipment, teachers, as well as overall quality in education continued.<sup>203</sup> Even though vocational and technical high school students were perceived as inputs of production that would boost growth in the long-term, the fact that inputs of vocational education will have to depreciate, as would be the case in any production activity, is not taken into consideration. These reveal that there was a lack of long term planning or a credible commitment to fostering vocational education or a mismanagement or lack of finance.

Just as in the 1970s, throughout 20 years, solutions to the vocational and technical education problem in Turkey were discussed through conferences on vocational education and skill formation, although it is not clear how these conferences turned into policy papers. In 1999, a complete Şura was devoted to vocational and technical education, which once again discussed the same problems about this type of education. The state tried to commit to vocational education problem by adapting to the circumstances. These included taking neoliberal principles

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<sup>202</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *1988 Milli Eğitim Şurası*, Decision No. 44.

<sup>203</sup> State Planning Agency, Republic of Turkey *Sekizinci 5 yıllık kalkınma planı Ortaöğretim*, 78-79.

State Planning Agency, Republic of Turkey, *Yedinci Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı 1996-2000*, 26, Clause No. 44

Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Türkiye’de Endüstriyel Teknik Öğretim*, 18, 66.

and being influenced by them, but still continuing the state-led policies. However, the commitment lacked a long-term strategy, how all these conferences turned into policy measures or not is unclear.

#### Juncture: Apprenticeship Law in 1986 – Transition to a Collective Training Model?

In 1986, the law on apprenticeship and on-the-job training passed in the parliament. This was the first time that there was a law designating a clearly defined role to the industry about vocational education after the law in 1938, which required firms that employed more than 100 people to invest in education and training. This time firms that employed more than 50 people were required to invest in training, which shows an increasing reliance on the commitment of firms considering the SME abundance in the Turkish economy. Moreover, a fund for apprenticeship and vocational education was created which was an attempt of changing the state's position as the sole financer of vocational and technical education. Also, unions were required to spare a portion of their income to training. When compared with the apprenticeship law in 1976, this one had a larger scope of covering jobs and municipalities.<sup>204</sup> Most importantly, this law brought a dual model in which vocational high school students take a part of their education on-the-job.

The 1986 law signaled a transition to a collective training model in which firms also committed to vocational education and training. However, the degree of firm commitment and the state's commitment to this law was limited, as will be

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<sup>204</sup> In 1979-80 5 municipalities, in 1986 40 municipalities and in 1990-91 60 municipalities are covered by this law. Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Türkiye'de Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitimde Gelişmeler*, 47.

explained in the next subsection in more detail. The VTE system continued to suffer a clear designation of actors' roles and a model in the VTE system.

However, there are both adjustments of the law in 1986, such as the firms size, but also discontinuities and problems regarding the law. The fund that was created was abolished in 2001 due to ambiguities about what was actually being done with the money collected. Second, there were conflicts regarding laws: unions could not spare income for the fund because unions law restricted this contribution which resulted in the MoNE complaining to the Ministry of Finance in 1991.<sup>205</sup> Moreover, the law on dual education was not a grand scale one: in the 1989-90 academic year 28 percent of students were trained in industries. In addition, public institutions did not accept students for dual education.<sup>206</sup> Therefore, the potential for transforming traditional understanding of apprenticeship to dual education is ambiguous.

Apprentices, students, and industry participants at a conference on vocational and technical education in 1990 reported that in some cases students did arbitrary jobs that were unrelated to their programs at school and employers did not know their responsibility in dealing with students.<sup>207</sup> In line with this there was criticism about this law because of its potential in justifying child labor. Also considering the fact that according to the 1986 law, apprentices were paid 30 percent of minimum wage and did not have social security coverage by law, they were forced into a vulnerable position. Even though industries were limited by number of students they could employ, at most five percent of their total employees, the implication of this fact for

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<sup>205</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>206</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Çıraklık ve Mesleki Eğitim Konseyi 3-5 Mayıs 1990 Ankara. Okul ve İşletmelerde Mesleki Eğitim Komisyonu Raporu*. Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 1990, 3-6.

<sup>207</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Çıraklık ve Mesleki Teknik Eğitim Konseyi Görüşmeleri ve Kararları*, 3-6, 142-143.

the model of skill formation lay in the neoliberal policies' intersection with aspirations for a collective training system. This resulted in a stance reminiscent of the liberal skill formation model: individuals pay up 70 percent of the minimum wage in order to get the training, and firms involvement or level of commitment was not clearly set out by law. So, it can be said that the limitations of this law in the beginning was due to the ad hoc nature of change, many of the legislative framework that supports and sustains 1986 law should have taken place prior to this law.

### Searching for a Model: Patchwork Model of Skill Formation

Although the law that passed in 1986 signaled a transition to a collective training system, continuous discussions on forming a model occurred, which implies a lack of awareness about skill formation systems in general. Moreover, different agreements on small-scale projects on vocational education with countries that have different skill formation systems imply that there were different types of expertise pertaining to different skill formation systems being implemented in different parts of the system.

There was confusion on what type of skill formation system the country was following. Despite Özal's announcement that Turkey was applying the German training model, in 1991 an expression of searching for a system of VET for the previous 20 years could be seen.<sup>208</sup> In the 1990s, policy makers still believed that they are direction-less and the publishing of research reports on training systems of

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<sup>208</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Türkiye'de Eğitim*, 16. Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Türkiye'de Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitimde Gelişmeler*, 75.

different countries by MoNE continued.<sup>209</sup> Similarly, in a conference in 1990 on VET, a UNESCO representative presented different skill formation systems in different countries, such as Germany and Japan, and said that all of them have different advantages and the important thing was following a particular well made system. In response to this, the Minister of Education, Avni Akyol, directly replies that Turkey “approximately applies and evaluates all of these models.”<sup>210</sup>

During the same conference, participants could not form a consensus on what they understood from vocational and technical education and training and on basic terminology, which implicates both the ambiguity of the laws and the model of skill formation in Turkey. An expert from Germany presented how Germany financed its system, which implied that despite the 1986 law and the announcement on having a German training system, there was still no route with respect to a model of skill formation. However, from 1987 to 2002, partnerships with Germany on schools and on assisting teachers were apparent.<sup>211</sup> While a report prepared by the MoNE in 1994 posited that by the 1986 law, “Turkey, after scrutinizing many different systems, inspired by the German system establishes METARGEM” which was a training and

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<sup>209</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Federal Almanya’da Mesleki Eğitim (İnceleme Raporu)*, Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 1992. In the ministry archives same type of studies exist for Holland, Japan and several other countries.

<sup>210</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Çıraklık ve Mesleki Teknik Eğitim Konseyi Görüşmeleri ve Kararları*, 90-96

<sup>211</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *1987 yılı çalışma programı*, Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 1987, 117. Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *2002 Yılı Başında Milli Eğitim*, 297.



education center that covered different programs and actors.<sup>212</sup> The report also posited that this way there would be coordination among industry, business and schools.<sup>213</sup>

A policy document from the MoNE states that the state was willing to make further partnerships with Holland, the USA, Denmark, Japan, Germany, and France while most of the partnerships were with Germany.<sup>214</sup> Since all of these belonged to a different skill formation system, Turkey was aspiring to a patchwork system in which different fragments showed characteristics of different systems.

The partnerships that were formed also reveal this patchwork model. In 1986, there were small scale partnerships with different countries: for industrial technical education Saudi, Italian, German, Japanese, and UNICEF.<sup>215</sup> There were agreements with Germany, France, and Japan on different matters on single high schools and on a project that included seven cities in Turkey.<sup>216</sup>

Although there was a continuity of commitment in the political party and government programs, policy makers were confused about the particular system of skill formation in the country. In line with this, still in 2001, a report on vocational education and training by the SPA explicated that there was not an agreement on even

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<sup>212</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim Sisteminin İncelenmesi. Önerilerin Özeti*, 91.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>214</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Türkiye’de Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitimde Gelişmeler*, 70

<sup>215</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Türkiye’de Endüstriyel Teknik Öğretim Mart 1986*, Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 1986, 36.

<sup>216</sup> The projects taking place are the following: in 1988-1992 Haydarpaşa Anadolu Teknik Lisesi; in 1988-1992 Ankara Dikmen Mesleki Eğitim Projesi; in 1988-1992 Antalya Anadolu Otel Turizm Lisesi; Turkey-Germany Vocational Training Project West Berlin-Turkish-German Partnership Institution; the MoNE and TESK project in 1983 in 7 different cities. 1987-1992 project with Japan. Turkey-France project in 1987-1992. Government-UNICEF project in 1991-1995.

the basic concepts and a new model that was beyond the laws in 1973 and 1986 was required, especially due to the ambiguity of these laws.<sup>217</sup>

The discussion of certification of skills and definition of vocations provided by a different institution and the MoNE's involvement in this matter continued in the five-year-plans, Şuras and MoNE documents.<sup>218</sup> Particularly, increasing ties with the EU was seen as motivation for the certification of skills.<sup>219</sup> Moreover, throughout the period, there was confusion about what a model was. The planners expected that industry should take a place in education and contribute, “just as it is in developed countries”, as if industry contributed in all developed countries.<sup>220</sup> Industry-school partnership still differed in different cases.<sup>221</sup> Plus, there was still a policy expectation

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<sup>217</sup> State Planning Agency, Republic of Turkey *Sekizinci 5 yıllık kalkınma planı Ortaöğretim*, 56, 39.

<sup>218</sup> State Planning Agency, Republic of Turkey, *Yedinci Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı 1996-2000*, 29. State planning Agency, Republic of Turkey, *Altıncı Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı 1990-1994*, 298, Clause No. 867. State Planning Agency, Republic of Turkey, *Beşinci Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı 1985-1989*, <http://www.kalkinma.gov.tr/Lists/Kalkınma%20Planlar/Attachments/2/plan5.pdf> (accessed April 25, 2014), 143, Clause no. 549. Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *2002 Başında Milli Eğitim*, 26. State Planning Agency, Republic of Turkey, *Yedinci Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı 1996-2000*. Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *1999 Milli Eğitim Şurası*, [http://ttkb.meb.gov.tr/meb\\_iys\\_dosyalar/2012\\_06/06021346\\_16\\_sura.pdf](http://ttkb.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2012_06/06021346_16_sura.pdf) (accessed April 20, 2014), 2; Clause No.3, 4; Clause No. 18. Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *1996 Milli Eğitim Şurası*, Decision No. 51, Decision No. 73.

<sup>219</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Türkiye’de Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitimde Gelişmeler*, 55. Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *1999 Milli Eğitim Şurası*, Clause No. 5.

<sup>220</sup> State Planning Agency, Republic of Turkey, *Yedinci Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı 1996-2000*, 12.

<sup>221</sup> For continuation of OSANOR to METEP see Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Beyaz Kitabı*, 46-49. For limited scope of METEP see Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Türkiye’de Endüstriyel Teknik Öğretim Mart 1986*, Tablo 9, 11. Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *1996 Milli Eğitim Şurası*, Decision No. 71. Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *1988 Milli Eğitim Şurası*, Decision 27 of “Temenni Kararları.”

that different actors such as unions, chambers, would contribute to the financing as well as individuals.<sup>222</sup> Even though the MoNE reports that different actors were getting increasingly involved, the contribution to decision making was limited to participation in conferences where usually only one union contributed. There were still discussions on how different actors' roles, such as that of students, workers, unions, chambers, could be increased.<sup>223</sup> The state asked for private schools to be formed in vocational education throughout the 20 years, but still private vocational schools were only a small fraction of total students and total schools.<sup>224</sup>

The MoNE documents included discussions on the employment of graduates, but no specific program targeting vocational high school graduates.<sup>225</sup> In the 1996 Şura, one of the decisions included providing low interest credits to vocational education graduates to become entrepreneurs for the ends of everyone taking care of unemployment problem themselves, which is a characteristic of a liberal market economy and a liberal skill formation system.<sup>226</sup> This shows a conflicting message

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<sup>222</sup> See "Finansman" section of 1996 Milli Eğitim Şurası. Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *1996 Milli Eğitim Şurası*, 17, Decision No. 12. State Planning Agency, Republic of Turkey, *Yedinci Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı 1996-2000*, 25, 33. State Planning Agency, Republic of Turkey, *Beşinci Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı 1985-89*, 143, Clause No. 551. See 4702 numbered law in 2001.

Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *1988 Milli Eğitim Şurası*, Decision No. 27.

<sup>223</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *16. Millî Eğitim Şûrası Hazırlık Dokümanı. Konularla İlgili Kamu-Özel Kurum ve Kuruluşların Görüşleri*. Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 1998. Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *2002 Yılı Başında Milli Eğitim*, 32, 61. Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *1999 Milli Eğitim Şurası*, 2, 4, 16, Clause No. 59.

<sup>224</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *1999 Milli Eğitim Şurası*, 10, Clause 48. Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim Sisteminin İncelenmesi. Önerilerin Özeti*, iv, 6. Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *1988 Milli Eğitim Şurası*, Decision No. 21.

<sup>225</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *1999 Milli Eğitim Şurası*, Decision No. 49, 7-11, 8; Decision No. 11, 19; Decision No. 49. State planning Agency, Republic of Turkey, *Altıncı Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı 1990-1994*, 298, Clause No. 868.

<sup>226</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *1996 Milli Eğitim Şurası*, Decision No. 67, Decision No. 73.

that reminiscent of the neoliberal understanding of a self-sufficient individual. Since a majority of the participants' approval was needed for coming up with a decision in a Şura, there was no consensus on what type of model Turkey had. Still access to higher education was used as an award or threat mechanism.<sup>227</sup> Few schools existed in which a project on supporting employment of graduates took place.<sup>228</sup>

The problem was these mixed messages: either not knowing what the model was, or knowing it and trying to commit to it, and adhering to liberal policies. All of these conflicted one another and left the insight that in this 20 year period there was a patchwork of different models.

### Challenge of Flexible Skills 2002-2013

Despite the continuity of the same party in government, there were five different ministers despite Hüseyin Çelik's having stayed at the post for six years as the second longest minister after Hasan Ali Yücel in the 1940s, and six different undersecretaries in these eleven years. Moreover, during this period there were two changes to organization of the ministry at the beginning and at the end of this period.<sup>229</sup>

In 2002, other than the start of the AKP government, there was a unification of all regulations related to VET, which implied greater coordination between different

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<sup>227</sup> State planning Agency, Republic of Turkey, *Yedinci Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı 1996-2000*, 25.

<sup>228</sup> For limited scope of employment support to graduates see the same source p 12. Protocols signed for Girls Technical Schools up until 2002 see Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Geçmişten Günümüze Kız Teknik Öğretim Genel Müdürlüğü*, 219-225.

<sup>229</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim Çalıştay 24-25 Şubat 2012 Manavgat, Antalya*. Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 2012.

actors as well as closer ties between education and training.<sup>230</sup> More importantly this period began with the program prepared by the *Ulusal Ajans* (National Agency) on implementing the EU's education objectives.

In the beginning of the AKP's government programs, the government was not particularly aware of the importance maybe even reminiscent of the MSP of the 1970s in its reluctance regarding the subject. In the second and third government programs of the AKP, it resembles the previous governments discourses in a more comprehensive way, implying that the AKP was in the trajectory set forward by previous governments and was very much affected by the Europeanization trend, which will explained below.

In the first program the only reference to vocational high schools was related access to higher education and particularly with an unspoken reference to İmam Hatip High Schools. The government posited that it would change the access to higher education system which “decreases the demand for vocational and technical education, causes unfair and unjust practices” in a way that would promote competition and justice.<sup>231</sup> It said it would focus on vocational training of disabled individuals and public employment institution's (İŞKUR) involvement in training. In a stark contrast, the following programs of AKP restated the goal of the last 40 years: vocational high school students' fraction in overall secondary school students would

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<sup>230</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *EARGED Mesleki ve teknik eğitim merkezi olarak yapılandırılan ortaöğretim kurumlarının değerlendirilmesi araştırması*, Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 2006, 2.

<sup>231</sup> AKP's first government program states “Meslekî ve teknik eğitime talebi düşüren, haksız ve adaletsiz uygulamalara sebep olan mevcut üniversiteye yerleştirme sistemi, yarışmayı teşvik edecek ve adaleti sağlayacak şekilde değiştirilecektir”. See Republic of Turkey, “Hükümetler ve Programları”, [http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/kutuphane/e\\_kaynaklar\\_kutuphane\\_hukumetler.html](http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/kutuphane/e_kaynaklar_kutuphane_hukumetler.html) (accessed November 01, 2013).

be 50 percent. Now, the programs reflected even a more vocationalist approach than the Özal period. The importance of other actors and employment opportunities in VET as well as being in line with the EU perspective were emphasized. Moreover, in line with the previous governments, private sector would be encouraged to establish private vocational schools. So, once again, signals of liberal policies together with collective training policies and a strong commitment to the ideal of a collective system were apparent.

### Trying to Adapt vs. the Impossibility of Adapting.

During this period flexible markets influenced both the policy-making and model searching endeavors. Bits and pieces of speeches on how difficult it was to keep up with the speed of the markets and technology for vocational and technical education came to its zenith in the speech of ministry of education in 2012 on the impossibility of the ministry keeping up with the speed of market. General skills and flexibility in terms of vocations due to the increased speed of changes in vocations were eulogized.

<sup>232</sup> However an increase in the number of programs in the vocational schools continued. At the end of 2013 there were 62 different departments and 226 different programs.

In the 1980s and 1990s, despite some decisions of the Şura and clauses in the five-year plans that considered the importance of general skills and flexible skills in a market where individuals could switch between vocations, the overall policies reflected the fact that state was trying to adapt to this speed. Once again, between

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<sup>232</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim Çalıştayı*.

2002 and 2013, despite talks on flexible and general skills, vocational education was still promoted and the numbers of programs in vocational high schools increased. As will be demonstrated below, this ambivalence resulted in some liberal skill formation type policies rather than the collective model which some of the legislation supported. Yet, the most important change in vocational education policies occurred in 2013 with the preparation of a strategic plan for the 2013-2017 period.

### The Europeanization of the Framework

The AKP entered the scene when a National Program had been prepared and National Agency, a body responsible for the European education programs, had been established in 2001 to implement the EU objectives. When the AKP took office, there was already a unit responsible for the Europeanization of the education system and two programs on Europeanization of vocational and technical education within the MoNE. During this period a commitment to this meta-trend of Europeanization, which was the case for all countries related to Europe.

This trend brought a new vocabulary. In 2005, there were two conferences on how Turkey would tackle Europeanization, which included various participants from different sectors, ministries, and the EU.<sup>233</sup> During this conference, there was a consensus on the terminology being used, unlike the case in the conferences in the

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<sup>233</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *AB Kopenhag süreci ve Maastricht Bildirgesi açısından Türkiye'deki mesleki öğretim ve eğitimi bekleyen zorluklar uluslararası konferansı*, 7-8 Haziran 2005, Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 2005.

Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *AB Kopenhag süreci ve Maastricht Bildirgesi açısından Türkiye'deki mesleki öğretim ve eğitimi bekleyen zorluklar uluslararası konferansı*, 7-8 Haziran 2005, Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 2005.

1980s and 1990s. The reason is that starting with 2001, there was a clear list of things to be done in National Program on carrying out the EU objectives.<sup>234</sup>

The projects did not intersect one another in their content: they all had different yet coordinated targets. MEGEP (*Milli Eğitim Geliştirme Projesi*), one of these projects took place from 2002 to 2007, and included curriculums and programs together with guides on how they would be implemented.<sup>235</sup> Here, how the different actors could take part in the writing of curriculums was clear as well. More importantly, curriculums were tied to 576 vocations and an institution describing vocational qualifications and certifications were established, which was a crucial step for the skill formation model in Turkey.<sup>236</sup>

Due to the establishment of the National Agency, Turkey could benefit from programs and funds of the EU, which according to the EU targeted strengthening the vocational system of each country rather than imposing a single skill formation system to all. These programs are open to application by an institution or a student or teachers.<sup>237</sup> Another project that took place between 2002 and 2007 included the adaptation of teacher education to the EU.<sup>238</sup> Overall, it can be said that the EU

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<sup>234</sup> EU Delegation in Turkey, “Avrupa Komisyonu Türkiye Temsilciliği Mesleki Eğitim ve Öğretim Sisteminin Güçlendirilmesi Projesi, Teklif Çağrısına Cevaben Hibe Başvurusunda Bulunacaklar için Rehber.” <http://www.meb.gov.tr/duyurular/duyurular/megephibebasvururehberi/megephiberehbertr.pdf> (accessed December 10, 2014).

<sup>235</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *MEGEP*, [www.megep.gov.tr](http://www.megep.gov.tr) (Accessed May 02, 2014)

<sup>236</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim Çalıştayı*, 3.

<sup>237</sup> Ulusal Ajans/National Agency. [www.ua.gov.tr](http://www.ua.gov.tr). (accessed May 02, 2014)  
Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Geçmişten Günümüze Kız Teknik Öğretim Genel Müdürlüğü*, 205-206.

<sup>238</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim Çalıştayı*, 3.



changed Turkey's commitment to vocational education, but whether there would be consistency remains unclear.

### An End to Ad-hoc Policies?

Up until 2010, the SPA's five-year development plans were the only regular documents on long-term planning of education. When finally a long-term educational strategy paper on the MoNE's policies was published in 2010, and later a vocational strategy paper in 2013, the SPA five-year development plans continued to be key policy directives because strategy papers demonstrated they were coordinated with each clause of the SPA five-year plans on education. The SPA documents continued to exhibit the failure in planning and achieving goals. Looking at the ninth and eighth five-year development plan, the same old problems are evident: curriculums and programs at the vocational and technical education were not responsive to business demands, skills had not yet been consistently certified, lack of equipment, lack of qualified teaching personnel, lack of well build up relations between industry and schools, and increasing number of students of vocational and technical high school students ratio to general high school students continued. The theme of building up a workforce with vocational high school graduates to achieve development remained. Also, the goal of increasing vocational high school students' rate to 50 percent is mentioned repeatedly.<sup>239</sup>

During this period appeared more sophisticated policy papers on the auditing of the MoNE, reports on its activities and budgets were prepared, and finally a long-term strategy document for overall secondary schooling for 2010 to 2014 and a

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<sup>239</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim Çalıştayı*

strategy document for vocational education and training for 2013 to 2017 were produced. Emphasis on the lack of resources continued in these documents too: the shortages of teachers, classrooms, not all modules being prepared yet (lack of textbooks and courses), lack of legal framework. Yet, the vocational education and training strategy paper presented the policy measures clearly, provided the responsible bodies for each policy measure and gave a time frame for completion.<sup>240</sup> More importantly there was a part for evaluating previous goals' completion, what was left blank and was to be completed in the next strategic plans.<sup>241</sup> The strategy paper on secondary education for 2010 and vocational education and training strategy for 2013 to 2017 had similar goals to those in the 1970s. This was partly because they were exactly tied to the SPA goals, which remained same in the 40 years.<sup>242</sup>

Since these strategy papers were still new and because the time scale for the completion of vocational education and training strategies had not passed yet, it is unknown how many of these goals had been achieved or whether it would challenge the ad-hoc policy making tradition. On the other hand, two educational policies are already known which were not included in the 2010 to 2014 education strategy, but

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<sup>240</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Meslekî ve Teknik Öğretim Yönetimi Süreci İç Denetim Raporu*. 20 Ocak 2012 2011/5. [http://icden.meb.gov.tr/digeryaziler/33\\_Mesleki\\_Teknik\\_Ogretim\\_2011\\_5.pdf](http://icden.meb.gov.tr/digeryaziler/33_Mesleki_Teknik_Ogretim_2011_5.pdf) (accessed May 05, 2014) 25, 28-29, 31-32. 34.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid. Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı 2010 Yılı Kurumsal Mali Durum ve Beklentiler Raporu*, [http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/but\\_kesin\\_hesap/2010\\_yili\\_kurumsal\\_mali\\_durum\\_raporu.pdf](http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/but_kesin_hesap/2010_yili_kurumsal_mali_durum_raporu.pdf) (Accessed May 05, 2014). Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *2009 Yılı Bütçe Raporu*, [http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/but\\_kesin\\_hesap/2009\\_butce\\_raporu/2009\\_butce\\_rapor\\_web.pdf](http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/but_kesin_hesap/2009_butce_raporu/2009_butce_rapor_web.pdf) (accessed May 05, 2014).

<sup>242</sup> See appendix 2 of Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı 2010-2014 stratejik planı*. <http://abdigm.meb.gov.tr/dokumanlar/stratejikplan.pdf> (accessed May 05, 2014). The table shows how goals of the SPA and this strategy document match one another.

took place in an ad-hoc manner, just as was the case in the tough decisions given in the periods before: the change of the school system with the 4+4+4 law (a law in 2012 that separated the compulsory education to three parts, changed compulsory education age, and reopened middle schools for imam hatip), and the closing of the dershanes and their transformation into private schools. Even though both the 4+4+4 system and the closing down of the dershanes were mentioned in a clause in the Şura in 2012 and the development plan, there were no later discussions on how and why these policy measures would be carried out.<sup>243</sup> Looking at these content and developments during the periods of strategy paper it can be said that Turkey was still learning to compete and coordinate.

Just as in the previous periods, instant changes in access to higher education continued to exhibit the ad-hoc changes characteristic of educational policies in Turkey. Conflicting policies regarding access to higher education, which reflected the inner tensions about imam hatip schools, were apparent. In 2003, a law making it more difficult for vocational school graduates (including imam hatip schools) to enter higher education for anything other than their specializations. In 2009, this rule was abolished, but could not come into practice with the decision of *Danıştay* (Council of State). Finally, in 2011, this rule was abolished completely. Vocational high school students and general high school students were on the same terms with respect to rules about access to higher education.<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> State planning Agency, Republic of Turkey, *Yedinci Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı 1996-2000*, 12, 28 .

<sup>244</sup> 2012 Milli Eğitim Şurası states that the transition to higher education should be regulated. 2006 Milli Eğitim Şurası also discusses the transition to higher education. Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *2012 Milli Eğitim Şurası*, <http://ttkb.meb.gov.tr/www/18-milli-egitim-surasi/icerik/20> (accessed, December 10, 2013). Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *2006 Milli Eğitim Şurası*, [http://ttkb.meb.gov.tr/meb\\_iys\\_dosyalar/2012\\_06/06021327\\_17\\_sura.pdf](http://ttkb.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2012_06/06021327_17_sura.pdf) (accessed December 10, 2013).

Once again, discontinuous projects took place along with discontinuous conferences on aspects of education without a clear objective about how those conferences would be transformed into policy. These exhibit the non-credible commitment aspect of the MoNE's interest in making a change. There were unrelated topics at the conferences and no discussion of how these conferences would turn into policy, except for the conferences directed at forming a strategy paper for the VET that began in 2012. Except for these conferences on constructing a strategy paper, there were no sequels to the conferences and they were not focused.<sup>245</sup> Short-term projects took place with longer-term projects with the EU and World Bank. The MoNE was committed as long as a project lasted. However, since there was no grand scale strategy paper defining which project aimed at which particular target, only a list of discontinuous projects of which some share same aims can be seen.<sup>246</sup>

### Still Forming a Model for Skill Formation

The purposes and definitions of the vocational and technical education in

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<sup>245</sup> There exists even a participant presenting "Satanizm and Secondary Schooling", see p 539-544. Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Ortaöğretimde Yeniden Yapılanma Sempozyumu 20-22 aralık 2004 Bildiriler*. Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 2006. Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Uluslararası Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim Konferansı 15-16 Ocak 2007 Ankara TC Yükseköğretim Kurulu. 1. Uluslararası Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim Teknolojileri Kongresi Eylül 5-7, 2005. Bildiri Kitabı Cilt-I*. Ankara: Republic of Turkey, 2005.

<sup>246</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Ortaöğretim Projesi*. <http://oop.meb.gov.tr/> (accessed April 4, 2014). Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, METEK. <http://metek.meb.gov.tr/index.php/tr>. (Accessed May 02, 2014). Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *EARGED Mesleki ve teknik eğitim merkezi olarak yapılandırılan ortaöğretim*,vi-vii. Also see the "Sunuş" section of the same source. Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Geçmişten Günümüze Kız Teknik Öğretim Genel Müdürlüğü*,163, 192, 196, 219. Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim Çalıştay*, 3. İKMEP Project is the relevant project.

different policy documents were sought. As become increasingly visible by the end of the 1990s, in the 2000s promoting entrepreneurial activities was declared to be one of the components of vocational and technical education. In the 2012 Şura, one of the decisions was to provide low-interest-rates to the graduates of vocational and technical schools for their entrepreneurial activities.<sup>247</sup> In the strategic plan of the MoNE for 2010-2014, the purpose of vocational and technical education was to provide formal and informal “education services” for the needs of industry and service sectors and also informal activities that enhanced entrepreneurship. As can be seen, these exhibit neoliberal thinking by both referring to education provided by public as a “service” and by its emphasis on entrepreneurship and creating self-sufficient individuals.<sup>248</sup> While in the MoNE internal audit report in 2012, the purpose was defined as acquiring intermediate skills and providing skilled intermediary staff or employee to the “labor market.”<sup>249</sup> Now at least there was recognition that graduates were not being directed to the industries or job positions but to the “market” where they were on their own. So in these statements, the lack of employment policies specifically targeting vocational and high school graduates was apparent: their chances in labor market have been enhanced by the skills they may have acquired in vocational schools, but they were on their own in the market conditions. These neoliberal messages conflicted with other aspects of vocational education that signified the adoption of collective training institutions, which will be discussed below.

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<sup>247</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *2012 Milli Eğitim Şurası*.

<sup>248</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı 2010-2014 Stratejik Planı*, 26.

<sup>249</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Meslekî ve Teknik Öğretim Yönetimi Süreci İç Denetim Raporu*, 20. The report states “işgücü piyasasına ara eleman sağlamak”.

MoNE was still aiming at learning about different models of skill formation while getting assistance from different foreign experts for the different components of its provision of vocational and technical education. In 2013, the Director of VET, together with other officials from the MoNE visited Japan within the framework of “Industrial Automation Technologies’ Dissemination to Central Asia and Middle East” project and visited universities, high schools and business. In the mean time, the MoNE officials carried out a study on the Japanese education system, its curriculum, and the partnerships with industries.<sup>250</sup> This project implies Japan’s economic ties with different countries and its direct investments in different countries possibly with the intention of increasing its production quality or quantity in these countries. However Turkey’s participation to the project indicates that there was still confusion about whether a segmentalist or a collective system is being created in Turkey.

Just as was presented above, Ozelli’s insight into the education policies until the 1970s indicated an adoption of policies due to the changing political and economic conditions, Turkey’s adoption of different VTE models may be seen depending on its ties with different countries’ investments. This as well suits neoliberalism creating its exceptions; a space where it creates its own rules despite the overall system and institutions with a different outlook. Similarly for girls’ technical education, in 2004 and 2005 expertise agreements were signed with Japan since the current framework allowed for distinctive agreements in different settings.<sup>251</sup> In 2012, in the workshop organized by the MoNE for the preparation of a strategic long-term

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<sup>250</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, “Japon mesleki eğitimi mercek altına alındı.” last modified December 12, 2013. <http://mtegm.meb.gov.tr/www/japon-mesleki-egitimi-mercek-altina-alindi/icerik/536> (accessed April 20, 2014).

<sup>251</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Geçmişten Günümüze Kız Teknik Öğretim Genel Müdürlüğü*, 197-198.

plan for vocational education and training, a very explicit, detailed and well organized presentation of different models of skill formation was provided. Yet still, it is obvious that there was no understanding of to which of these models Turkey belonged or whether it had a distinct model of its own.<sup>252</sup> So, the policy makers were still unsure about the particular model of education they were following. This was intertwined with the problem of long-term planning and adhering to the plans.

The scope of industry-school partnership was still not clearly defined and case-specific practices continued. For example, one of the most popularized and marketed projects on industry-school partnership during this period was *Meslek Lisesi Memleket Meselesi* (Vocational Schools A National Cause). The name of the project, reflected the obliqueness of the understanding of industry-school partnerships. The report on the project shows that, it started in 2006 in 81 cities in 264 schools. The project provided the opportunity of internship/on-the-job training to 8000 vocational high school students while also providing scholarship opportunities. When compared with other projects, it was the first large scope project by the private sector on promoting industry-school partnership in Turkey.

However, once again, rather than a legislative framework, it was presented as a project for which the time scale is not certain and, most importantly, as a philanthropic endeavor of the Koç family, who owns of the Koç Conglomerate and executed this project. The purpose of the project was to contribute to skilled workforce, but most of the analysis on the impact of the project explained how by this project students became more motivated as workers, and how company-spirit and company reputation were facilitated. There are also some survey results which indicate students would not have been able to continue vocational and technical

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<sup>252</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim Çalıştayı*.

education if scholarship had not been provided and the “state’s burden was alleviated” due to the Koç’s contribution.<sup>253</sup> Considered as philanthropy, this project cannot be taken as an indicator of the increased long-term commitment of the state or the firms. This is another revelation of case-specific discontinuous policies particularly because Mustafa Koç announced in 2012 that now they “hand over the flag” like relay race, to many other firms for this national cause.<sup>254</sup> The Koç family’s lost motivation in the issue was revealed in the website’s news and scholarship announcements website as well, since 2011 there has not been activity.

Industry school relations consisted of single firms signing protocols with the MoNE for a program in one or a number of schools. For example, between 2002 and 2006, only seven protocols were signed with the schools tied to the Girls Technical Directorate.<sup>255</sup> On the MoNE’s website, there was news about signed protocols with firms, but a list of all partners and the terms for each one of them were not provided.

The 3308 law passed in 1986 including later adjustments to this law remains a benchmark for the skill formation model in Turkey because it provides a legal framework and incentives for commitment from industry, the state and individuals. The MoNE indicated that vocational high school students had to do an internship in industry in their last two years of high school by law. Currently, the state provides social security coverage, and the business pays a portion of minimum wages and therefore individuals can be considered to be paying the remaining portion of the

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<sup>253</sup> Meslek Lisesi Memleket Meselesi, *Meslek Lisesi Memleket Meselesi Sosyal Etki Raporu*. İstanbul: Vehbi Koç Vakfı, 2010.

<sup>254</sup> “Koç: Meslek lisesi projesi çözüm aracı oldu.” *haber7*, June 22, 2012. <http://ekonomi.haber7.com/ekonomi/haber/894491-koc-meslek-lisesi-projesi-cozum-araci-oldu> (accessed March 20, 2014) <http://ekonomi.haber7.com/ekonomi/haber/894491-koc-meslek-lisesi-projesi-cozum-araci-oldu>

<sup>255</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Geçmişten Günümüze Kız Teknik Öğretim Genel Müdürlüğü*, 219-225.



minimum income since that is their opportunity cost. In 2011, 295,000 students among the total of 2,072,487 vocational students took part in company training.<sup>256</sup> However, in 2012 there were still discussions on bettering the social security conditions of vocational students who did a training at a firm.<sup>257</sup> So whether this practice would serve as vulnerable child labor or indeed boost their skills remains a question.

Commitment to the certification of skills was apparent in this period due to the efforts to adapt to the European Qualifications Framework and European standards in training in general. Still, there was the absence of credible incentives despite these improvements: in the market those who did not ask for certificates, or did not use them were not fined. As discussed above, certification of skills, the type of skills, stratification of vocations were of the key determinants of skill formation systems and also differences between liberal and coordinated market economies. Since the topic is limited to vocational and technical high schools, a brief presentation of developments will be given and the role of MoNE and its acknowledgement of these developments will be presented.

The Vocational Qualifications Institution (VQI) was established after the project with the World Bank. Such a framework was included in the EU objectives as well. A legislative framework was provided in 2006, and in 2011 it started its activities. With this institution, certification of skills and levels of skills for different vocations in different sectors were based on a legal framework. Plus, there was the

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<sup>256</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Meslekî ve Teknik Öğretim Yönetimi Süreci İç Denetim Raporu*.

<sup>257</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, 2012 Milli Eğitim Şurası.

application system for new vocations and skills.<sup>258</sup> A 2012 report of the MoNE cites the employment unit of Ministry of the Work's activities on job definitions, 4264 definitions are completed.<sup>259</sup> In the internal audit report in 2012, MoNE is shown to aim to provide skill certificates that were internationally acknowledged to students upon their graduation from schools, but whose accreditation activities were not completed yet by the VQI. Furthermore, the MoNE reported that in 2011 in their meeting with the VQI that 488 vocations and 667 different levels of skills had been standardized.

The VQI works with 26 different sector representatives while the MoNE's role in this process is to write the modules.<sup>260</sup> Here we see a more sophisticated division of labor when compared with the MoNE trying to provide definitions of vocations and skill levels on its own in the 1970s. This was also a step towards ensuring skills were portable and certified, which presented an increased commitment of the state as was presented in the skill formation models in Table 1. Currently, there are subsidies for those with certificates, but still whether coordination with vocational high schools and whether the commitment will be continuous are key factors will be seen in the future. So how these policies will be tied with the employment of vocational high school graduates will be key for the skill formation system in Turkey.

In this period different actors were involved in the VET. Chambers, associations, and public institutions began to coordinate. In the Şura in 2006, one of the decision clauses invited chambers and civil society institutions to take greater role

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<sup>258</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim Çalıştayı*.

<sup>259</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey. *Meslekî ve Teknik Öğretim Yönetimi Süreci İç Denetim Raporu*, 21. The report cites the state employment agency saying that 4264 vocations have been defined.

<sup>260</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Meslekî ve Teknik Öğretim Yönetimi Süreci İç Denetim Raporu*.

in the VET.<sup>261</sup> The 2010 to 2014 Strategic plan of the MoNE manifested the MoNE's preference for other actors such as chambers and private sector to take increasing roles in the provision of the VET.<sup>262</sup> The same policy paper featured a list of *paydaş* (stakeholders of education) which included students, parents, public institutions, unions in the appendix of the document. It is claimed that views of stakeholders were considered as well, although we do not know the exact procedure for their involvement.<sup>263</sup>

Starting with 2002 partnerships began with the KOSGEB at the same time as partnerships with the EU.<sup>264</sup> Even though it did not directly target vocational and high school students, a large scale employment policy emerged with the partnership of the MoNE, TOBB (The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey), and İŞKUR, financed from the general budget, that aimed at training one million young people for five years.<sup>265</sup> Similarly there were many examples of the KOSGEB, and TOBB inviting different institutions such as the social security institution, vocational qualifications institution, İŞKUR, Turkish Accreditation Institution for increasing their VET capacities, which implied increasing coordination among the different actors.<sup>266</sup> All of these suggest increased commitment to a

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<sup>261</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *2006 Milli Eğitim Şurası*.

<sup>262</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı 2010-2014 Stratejik Planı*.

<sup>263</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı 2010-2014 Stratejik Planı*, 26.

<sup>264</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Geçmişten Günümüze Kız Teknik Öğretim Genel Müdürlüğü*, 192, 194.

<sup>265</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim Çalıştayı*, 4. UMEM Project.

<sup>266</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, "Mesleki Eğitim TOBB'da ele alındı." Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim Genel Müdürlüğü Haberler, last modified

collective training model.

## Conclusion

The state's lack of long-term planning, lack of a vocational and training model, and commitment to the ideal of growth were constant during all periods. In all three periods changes occurred in the economic and political context. It is accustomed that with the changing actors and economic policies there would be attempts of reforming vocational high schools in line with the new goals.

Until the AKP period, it could be asserted that the ad-hoc changes and lack of a model for skill formation were due to the changing coalition governments. But the discontinuous and unplanned policies since the AKP came to power suggest a more embedded problem of coalitions.

It can be claimed that Turkey is moving towards a collective training system under the influence of neoliberal thinking, yet the role of firms cannot be ascertained. However, the state has been central in all aspects of vocational high schools since the 1970s. Even the neoliberalism that can take place in different areas of the system, such as industry school partnerships for a specific program at a specific school occurs in the terms put forward by the state.

The overall skill formation system, and vulnerability and fragility of Turkey's case when compared to the ideal types will be shown in the next chapter while presenting why skill formation systems are key for other institutions of the political economy. In line with this, by using the insights of this chapter, in the next chapter

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November 28, 2013. <http://mtegm.meb.gov.tr/www/mesleki-egitim-tobbda-ele-alindi/icerik/534> (accessed April 20, 2014)

Turkish skill formation system will be situated in the political economy of Turkey. The longitudinal analysis in this chapter will help to identify how Turkey lacked a skill formation model in the fourth chapter where a cross-national comparison of Turkey will be made to USA and Germany in line with skill formation and the varieties of capitalism literature.

## CHAPTER 4

### TURKEY'S CASE FROM A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE: VARIETIES OF CAPITALISM AND SKILL FORMATION

Looking at the evidence in the third chapter, it can be inferred that Turkey oscillated between collective and liberal skill formation policies while the main features of the statist system remained. In Chapter 3, the patchwork that came into existence when the ad-hoc nature of policies added up to the fragmented nature of vocation education policies was demonstrated. Especially, the instabilities and problems associated with the system stayed more or less the same in the last 40 years. When the history of vocational education in Turkey starting with the late Ottoman period is considered, there were characteristics that were endemic to the system, which I identified as path-dependencies that stayed the same or adapted to the changing conditions at the period of junctures in the system. As the system adapted to the neoliberalization in its fragments, the centralized school based system kept its dominant presence.

Now, by giving a brief review of skill formation models in the political economy of a country with a particular emphasis on Germany and USA, I will speculate on the economy-wide significance of the skill formation problem in Turkey. I chose Germany and the USA as key examples due to Turkey's oscillation between the collective training model of Germany and the liberal skill formation model of the USA, as well as these country's key positions as two polar ideal types in Hall and Soskice's varieties of capitalism approach. Even though this theory provides a simplified and generalized version of institutions in these countries, the political economy-wide perspective provides an insight on the vocational education policies in Turkey. Using these theoretical frameworks, the vocational school policies stands as a

misfit, while the overall policies undermines the skill formation strategies. This is due to the fact that institutions that support and monitor the efficient working/operation of skill formation strategies are minimal. On the other hand, the patchwork of the political economy provides a suitable habitat for the survival of the patchwork model of skill formation that adapts to different tendencies of the political economy.

In order to exemplify my claims, first the models of capitalism will be introduced. Then, the USA and Germany's skill formation in the context of the political economies of these countries will be presented. Finally, the insight on Turkey's place in this literature will be discussed. While using these theoretical frameworks, I do not intend to rank countries in terms of superior economic performance or indicate comparative advantages, as is done in the models of capitalism literature. Here, despite conflicts and instabilities at each political economy, I intend to show the "institutional constellations" that exist in different countries in line with their skill formation model.<sup>267</sup> In line with this, my findings in the previous chapter will be used to situate Turkey's skill formation system in the typology. This particularly involves pointing out how the wider context of neoliberal political economy complicates the experiment of collective training without a history of coordination and supporting institutions of neither of the two types. By comparing Turkey's situation with these countries, it is also possible to see that Turkey's commitment to skill formation complies with the non-credible commitment to institutions definition.

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<sup>267</sup> The phrase institutional constellations is taken from Thelen, *How Institutions Evolve*.

## Models of Capitalism

As explained in the theoretical section in Chapter 1, there are various conceptualizations of models of capitalism and ranging number of ideal types. Here I will present Hall and Soskice's definition of ideal types and complementary institutions, in order to discuss my findings in Chapter 3 and situate Turkey's skill formation model in the political economy of Turkey. Hall and Soskice's approach, seen as part of the rationalist functionalist conception and criticized for its functionalism among many of its problems, still provides insight into how Turkey differs from the ideal LME (liberal market economies) and CME (coordinated market economies) types, the USA, and Germany respectively.<sup>268</sup> These cases are important because models of the USA and Germany are the ones most adhered to or inspired Turkish model. By looking at the institutional set up of these countries, a list of complementary institutions for an effective skill formation institution can be given. At the same time, by comparing Turkey to these types, it is possible to elaborate on the non-complementary nature of the skill formation system to its surroundings in Turkey.

Unlike Hall and Soskice's approach, I will not comment on the robustness or the economic superiority of any of these types nor provide insight into employers' strategies. The variety of capitalism approach is utilized to present Turkey's skill formation model as a patchwork and to hint the importance of considering skill formation together with other institutions. So, here, the characteristics of vocational

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<sup>268</sup> For criticism see Streeck, "E Pluribus Unum?"; Herrigel and Zeitlin, "Alternatives to Varieties of Capitalism," *Business History Review*.



high schools deduced from the historical developments are brought together with examples on the institutional package of different models of capitalism.

The issue of institutional complementarities is crucial for each variety of capitalism. Although different institutions are encountered, they operate with one another and the nature of one institution is similar to another related institution. The nature of the institutions also have an impact on the way actors in the economy determine their behavior, on the way the policies are formed, and more importantly on the economic results. It can be said that in Hall and Soskice's approach the actors actions are analyzed from a strategic behavior approach. For instance, "in the sphere of *vocational training and education*, firms face the problem of securing a workforce with suitable skills, while workers face the problem of deciding how much to invest in what skills".<sup>269</sup> On the other hand, the way these actors will determine their actions is bound to the institutional set up of the whole political economy. The way things operate in the whole system provides incentives or disincentives for certain preferences. For example, for firms to invest in training there has to be other institutions that ensure poaching will not take place once they invest in an employee such as "institutions providing reliable flows of information about appropriate skill levels, the incidence of training, and the employment prospects of apprentices."<sup>270</sup> In other words, ensuring that free-rider problems will not occur would give the firms incentives to invest in training. Furthermore, knowing the exact level of skill employees possess would result in viable training strategies. Similarly, the security of employment would give the employees incentives to increase their skill levels as apprentices. To sum up, just as it is explained in the institutional literature, in the case

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<sup>269</sup> Hall and Sockice, *Varieties of Capitalism*, 7.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid., 10.

of vocational education institutions both operate with each other and influence the behavior of the people in the country, too.

Hall and Soskice claim that liberal market economies and the institutions are characterized by market arrangements and the institutions related to vocational education rely on this fact.<sup>271</sup> Although the institutional complementarities reminds one of a domino effect, it should be noted that they are mutually related and there is not a causal relationship that traces the origin of this institutional set up. In this setting, labor markets are “fluid,” which encourages individuals to acquire general skills.<sup>272</sup> Due the fact that workers may have to be required to change jobs easily, they are inclined to gather general skills. Moreover, the risk of being laid off gives people the incentive to gain marketable skills and not industry specific skills. Similarly, the education and training systems of LMEs go in line with these incentives with a reliance on formal education that gives people general skills. Since people are loaded with general skills, firms provide in-house training, which has a lower cost. Even in this case, companies prefer to invest in non-transferable skills. In tandem with this, due to the competitive market arrangements that hinder firms’ collaboration, companies do not invest in apprenticeship due to poaching. Hall and Soskice assert that this especially boosts service sector jobs.<sup>273</sup> So, the way labor, industry, and education are organized impact the behavior of all agents and the economic results.

The USA is designated as a typical example of LMEs where competitive market relations prevail. According to Hall and Soskice, the following complement this fact: firms are competitive, labor markets are fluid, working hours are longer,

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<sup>271</sup> Ibid., 8 .

<sup>272</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid., 30.

direct product competition occurs, innovation takes place faster, wage bargaining occurs at the firm level, and cooperative wage bargaining is not strong, employment protection is lower, unions are not strong and income distribution is unequal. The vocational education and training system both effects and effected by all of these facts. In the end, people receive formal education from high schools and colleges and high technologies, and service sector has a comparative advantage. In this framework, Thelen and Culpepper say that strong general skills, such as university education, are rewarded and high skills can occur. In this setting, the “demand for training on the part of young people is driven by intense competition among firms and associated high labor mobility.”<sup>274</sup> Although the impact of increasing competitiveness, fluid markets, and unequal distribution on the lives of individuals is questionable, skills are produced by a consistent institutional set up for the skill formation system.

According to Hall and Soskice, in contrast to the above, coordinated market economies rely on “on non-market relationships to coordinate their endeavors with other actors and to construct their core competencies.”<sup>275</sup> In this setting, skills are specific, inter firm relations are collaborative, trade unions and collective bargaining are strong, labor markets are not fluid, employment protection is higher, working hours are shorter, and other actors in the economy, such as employers associations, monitor the operation of the system. More importantly, intermediary actors ensure that graduates of this system will be employed.<sup>276</sup> Here, the system ends up with specific skills, where apprenticeships provide industry specific skills. Overall, there

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<sup>274</sup> Kathleen Thelen and Pepper Culpepper, “Institutions and Collective Actors in the Provision of Training: Historical and Cross-National Comparisons,” in *Skill Formation: Interdisciplinary and Cross-National Perspectives*, ed. Karl Ulrich Mayer and Heike Solga (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 24.

<sup>275</sup> Hall and Sockice, *Varieties of Capitalism*, 8.

<sup>276</sup> Hall and Sockice, *Varieties of Capitalism*, 26.

are higher wages and higher technology manufactured production. In line with this, income distribution is more equal when compared with the LMEs.

Germany is considered a typical example of CMEs. In Germany, various actors coordinate with one another. Business associations and trade unions sustain the provision of industry specific skills. Since the industrial relations system ensures that apprenticeship will take place and graduates will have employment, specific skills can be ensured. Moreover, the standards for skills are ensured in coordination. Equally important, due to higher wages and job security, and through work councils and cooperative wage bargaining, the system is more stable when compared with LMEs. Overall, both in Hall and Soskice's conception and in the literature, Germany is perceived as a "high skill, high wage, high value added manufacturing economy" in which there is a social partnership with labor and capital especially for manufacturing.<sup>277</sup> Apprenticeships and a highly stratified education system with a strong boundary between academic and vocational education, for which the quality is ensured collectively complements this setting.

It must be noted that Hall and Soskice's approach describes the current state for both types of economies. The historical institutional approach introduced in Chapter 1 shows that the current state is not necessarily robust, and for instance, Germany did not come to its current collaborative state only through a history of collaboration among actors. Although Thelen indicates that there can be contingent events and disruptions that led to this coordination while different actors, such as unions and artisanal associations, were in conflict with one another, the resulting scheme indicates how different institutions are able to coordinate for the provision of specific skills without necessarily aligning to market arrangements.

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<sup>277</sup> Thelen, *How Institutions Evolve*, xii.

When looked at these examples, it is asserted that policies have to be compatible with the institutional setting in these countries in order to be effective. This is due to the differences in the institutional set up of these types of countries. It is expected that different types of institutional complementarities will exist and different policies will be viable at each one. Hall and Soskice claim that in a LME, achieving policies that rely on coordination would be more difficult. This both because due to the character of business and labor associations and the lack of influence of other actors on ensuring the sustainability of government policies.<sup>278</sup> So in a way, the level of the experience on coordination is important to be able to adopt coordinating policies. Instead, the theory claims that if LME's are to invest in vocational programs, a policy on marketable skills would be more effective.<sup>279</sup>

#### To Include Other Countries in the Varieties of Capitalism Approach

Models of capitalism and skill formation do not only include this dichotomy. As I had explained in the theoretical framework section above, the varieties of capitalism literature has been expanded, such as the South Asian variety, the Latin American variety, the South European, the Eastern European, and the BRIC varieties.<sup>280</sup> Both due to the extension of varieties and the differences between theoretical standings, the understanding of institutional complementarities and its results also differ.

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<sup>278</sup> Hall and Soskice, *Varieties of Capitalism*, 48.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>280</sup> Herrigel and Zeitlin, "Alternatives to Varieties of Capitalism," *Business History Review*, 672.

In Hall and Soskice's work, the countries that do not fit into LME and CME types are identified as the Mediterranean variety of capitalism, which also includes Turkey. Hall and Soskice report that these countries are

marked by a large agrarian sector and recent histories of extensive state intervention that have left them with specific kinds of capacities for nonmarket coordination in the sphere of corporate finance but more liberal arrangements in the sphere of labor relations.<sup>281</sup>

So, in a way, Hall and Soskice's classification situates the Mediterranean variety right in the middle of the LMEs and CMEs with tendencies for each of these types. But this extension is not found to be adequate in the literature to cover the variety of capitalisms in many countries. For instance, according to Amable's classification of countries into five different types includes education as a separate institutional sphere as well. But it includes a very limited explanation on vocational training and education. Here, the Mediterranean model includes Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Greece. Turkey is not included in this typology. In this set up, together with "more employment protection and less social protection," we see "a workforce with a limited skills and education level does not allow for the implementation of a high wages and high skills industrial strategy."<sup>282</sup> Moreover, its vocational education system is weak and there is an emphasis on general skills while public expenditure on education is lower.

There is only one study that looks at BRIC countries and also at the variety of capitalism in Turkey. On a volume on BRIC countries variety of capitalism, Özel situates Turkey between liberal, patrimonial and statist market economies. Özel looks at these dimensions: corporate governance, state-capital relations, labor-capital, labor-

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<sup>281</sup> Hall and Sockice, *Varieties of Capitalism*, 21.

<sup>282</sup> Amable, *The diversity of modern capitalism*, 15.

state relations, social policy and privatization but does not consider skill formation. She emphasizes the coexistence of continuity and change in the institutions. While a change occurs starting with 1980s, Özel claims that Turkey preserved its statist and patrimonial characteristics. She says that there is “persistent state interventionism in market dynamics and adaption of new forms of patron-client relations, despite the retreat of state from the markets in terms of ownership”.<sup>283</sup> In particular, Özel views labor-state relationship and state-corporate governance relationship as state dominated.

### Skill formation Model in Turkey

Looking at Germany and the USA it can be said that Turkey fits neither of these models. First, I will discuss Turkey’s skill formation model based on the typology of Trampusch and Meyer, as explained in the theoretical framework section and the CME-LME conceptualization. I will then briefly tie this with the institutional complementarities to discuss the skill formation system’s implications.

### Which of These Models Resemble Turkey?

In the previous chapter I traced the historical development of the skill formation system with a focus on the state policies on the vocational high schools. Path

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<sup>283</sup> Işık Özel, “Emergent, Hybrid and Illiberal: The Turkish Variety of Capitalism,” in *The BRICS and Emerging Economies in Comparative Perspective: Political Economy, Liberalisation and Institutional Change*, ed. Uwe Becker (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2013).

dependent institution building despite the neoliberal environment and neoliberal adaptations to the institution, as well as the basic indicators for the skill formation model as provided by Busemeyer and Trampusch typology were identified. By looking at all of the skill formation models identified in Chapter 1, it is possible to discuss Turkey's propensity to each of these models by using my research findings. It is useful to remember Table 1, which shows four different skill formation systems depending on the changing public and firm commitments: the liberal skill formation, segmentalist skill formation, collective skill formation, and statist skill formation systems. Here, I will be discussing the three main tendencies of the Turkish system with a focus on the vocational high schools: statist, collective and liberal skill formation systems based on the ideal types presented in Chapter 1.

#### Statist Tendencies and Limitations:

The centralized structure has been preserved to this day. As the decision maker and the funder, the state determines the content, the venue, and the role of other actors in vocational education. The public commitment to vocational education is non-credible due to ad-hoc changes and lack of a long-term strategy. So, the capacity of public commitment is limited and this fact hinders me from saying that the system is statist.

When we look at Figure 4, comparative data on percentage of students in vocational education compared to general education, Turkey's share of students is very close to the OECD average. It stands in the middle of Austria, which has a collective training system and a share of 76 percent students in vocational high schools, and Canada where only three percent of students receive vocational education. Since the USA does not have vocational high schools, it is not included in



this table, but it can be said that Turkey also stands approximately in between Germany, which has a 49 percent share of students in vocational education, and the USA, which has none.

Even though share of students in vocational students does not say anything about the quality of education and neither the commitment to skill formation, it shows that the school-based education system in Turkey is characteristic when compared with liberal training system countries such as the United Kingdom and a country with segmentalist skill formation such as Japan. Therefore despite the liberal tendencies, which will be discussed below, school-based vocational education is a feature that cannot be overlooked in the skill formation system.

The ad hoc changes and repeated expression of deficiencies in basic educational requirements (classrooms, teachers, curriculums, and similar inputs of education) prove that the public commitment is non-credible. This fact blurs the model of skill formation. Because when we consider the indicators of public commitment to VET, such as certified, portable skills, with the research findings on Turkey, it can be interpreted that the public commitment is existent but limited. A prominent contradiction to the state commitment to vocational education in Turkey is the limited financial capacity. Table 4, which shows annual expenditure per student on general and vocational education across countries, reveals that state's involvement in the issue is limited in Turkey in terms of financial commitment. In fact, Turkey has the lowest level of expenditure per vocational high school student in US dollars.

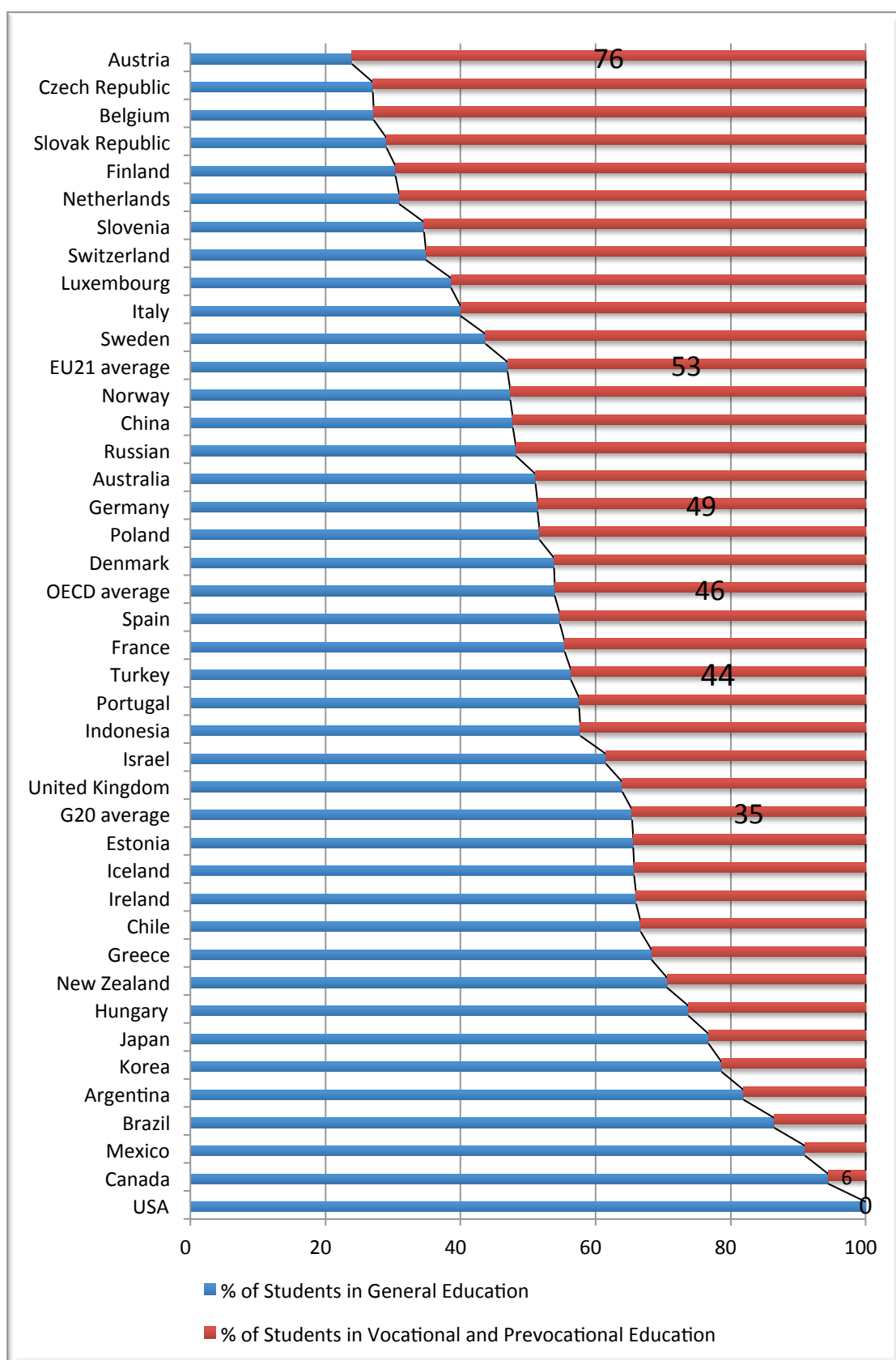


Figure 4: Share of vocational high school students among total high school students, 2011

Although this rate is slightly higher than the portion devoted to general education, considering the cost of vocational education, which is higher than general education costs at greater rates, the figures are still very low.<sup>284</sup> Germany makes the highest expenditure per vocational student and this figure is a lot higher than the amount spent on general education. The USA's expenditure on general education also suggests that Turkey's overall commitment to secondary education is limited. Compared to a country that has a statist skill formation system, or another developing country such as Mexico, the amount Turkey spares is even more peculiar.

Looking at this data compared to the GDP per capita, Turkey once again has the lowest amount of expenditure for high school students at 0.8 percent. This amount is equal to a segmentalist country like Japan for which public involvement in secondary education is characteristically low, and less than a liberal country, the USA with 1.1 percent of its GDP devoted to high school expenditures. So, the public funds spared for vocational education resemble liberal and segmentalist countries with less public involvement in vocational education.

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<sup>284</sup> ERG, vocational education is more costly. Eğitim Reformu Girişimi, *Eğitim İzleme Raporu 2012*.

Table 4: Comparative Annual Expenditure per Student at High Schools, 2010

Country	All programs	General	Vocational
United States	13,045	13,045	a
Turkey	2,470	2,291	2,685
Chile*	3,119	3,036	3,286
Mexico	3,617	3,580	3,993
Slovak Republic	4,501	3,661	4,895
Poland	5,530	5,709	5,376
Czech Republic	6,244	5,380	6,563
Australia	9,966	11,364	6,723
Estonia	6,834	6,586	7,284
Finland	7,912	6,895	8,317
<b>OECD average</b>	9,322	7,984	8,690
<b>EU21 average</b>	9,396	8,557	9,424
New Zealand	9,007	8,637	10,196
Sweden	10,497	10,664	10,381
Austria	12,390	12,154	12,472
Netherlands	11,750	9,957	12,585
France	11,287	9,171	13,028
Switzerland	12,874	12,558	13,359
Luxembourg	15,595	12,696	17,191
Germany*	17,813	15,614	19,278

\* 2009 data for Germany and 2011 data for Chile.

OECD reports this data is calculated in equivalent US dollars converted using purchasing power parities for GDP.

Source: Source: OECD (2013), Education at a Glance 2013: OECD Indicators, OECD Publishing.

doi: 10.1787/eag-2013-en

Table 5: Comparative Share of High School Expenditures in GDP, 2010

Country	Share of GDP	Country	Share of GDP
Turkey	0.8	Portugal	1.2
Spain	0.8	Italy	1.2
Brazil	0.8	Austria	1.3
Australia	0.8	OECD average	1.3
Japan	0.8	EU21 average	1.3
Luxembourg	0.9	Netherlands	1.3
Mexico	0.9	Sweden	1.3
Ireland	1.0	Estonia	1.3
Hungary	1.0	Iceland	1.4
Argentina	1.0	France	1.4
Slovak Republic	1.0	Denmark	1.4
Poland	1.1	Korea	1.5
United States	1.1	Switzerland	1.5
Czech Republic	1.1	United Kingdom	1.6
Germany*	1.1	New Zealand	1.6
OECD total	1.1	Finland	1.6
Slovenia	1.2	Israel	1.8
* 2009 data			

Source: OECD (2013), Education at a Glance 2013: OECD Indicators, OECD Publishing.  
doi: 10.1787/eag-2013-en

It was seen that starting with the Ottoman period, school-based education targeted increasing productivity and industrial competition. The cultivation of high skills with these goals was the most pronounced goal in the policy documents I reviewed. Moreover, in the Ottoman period the goal of social inclusion in the sense of integrating disadvantaged individuals was apparent. This aim, which pertains to the statist skill formation systems according to Busemeyer and Trampusch's typology, was expressed rarely in the documents investigated. However, the stigma attached to vocational high schools has troubled policy-makers in the last 40 years. This can be taken as a call for the understanding of these schools in the public: a social inclusion project for disadvantaged youth, rather than prestigious academic high schools supposing higher prospects of success. Since my study included the state's view and actions on the issue of vocational education, it can be easily inferred that the policy-

makers had a firm belief in achieving economic growth with the skill production these schools would have provided. But as presented in Chapter 3 the way the stigma attached with vocational schools enters state documents implies that these schools' have a function involving the disadvantaged youth in the society. Overall, this fact occurs rarely in the published state documents compared to the prominent industrialist and productivist discourse and targets on vocational high schools.

Since the policy-makers were keen on overcoming this presupposition and the human capital input these students would provide to the industry were more emphasized, it can be said that the discourse targeted an audience from the industry. In the discourse, in laws and regulations and plans state's role as the most important actor and decision-maker in the provision of high skills to the industry for competing with world markets was prominent. Looking at the way education policies are put forward in laws and development plans, it can be seen that the industry is more like an audience rather than a direct and open contributor.

### Collective Training Tendencies and Limitations

Although there were laws on opening up the path to collective training before the 1980s, we begin to see the main tendencies to this model beginning with the neoliberal era. Education activities of firms were put on a framework in 1936, and then in 1976 apprenticeships were regulated. However starting with the 1986 law on dual education and the amendments to this law, school based education has taken a workplace component as well. With the law on dual training, apprenticeships allow firms to commit to this issue by contributing to funding and to the content of education. The state provides social security and thus also contributes to this

education. Students pay a portion of their costs of education since they are paid below the minimum wage. However, social security and inspection of the workplace component were amended later and overall the lack of planning limited the collective tendencies. Especially the dissolution of the collectively spared fund proposed by this law due to the lack of a transparent accounting shows that the fragility of vocational education policies decreases the tendencies for a collective system.

On the other hand, new projects and institutions that increase firms and chambers contribution to content of education and standardization and certification of skills is a collective training system aspiration. Recent laws allow unions and employers association's active participation to training. But in a state dominant setting the role of other actors to ensure the operation of training is questionable. Furthermore, the sanctioning of those who do not conform to the new standards and certifications is questionable. More importantly both the lack of employment link to apprenticeship and skill certifications' utilization for it weaken the collective training reforms. So we do not know whether the system indeed helps non-portable skills at this point. The future developments in this field and the commitment to the ongoing skill certification policies would be critical for discussing the portability of the skills.

The existence of industry-school partnerships show that others actors' are involved in vocational education despite the centralized structure. But the case-based partnerships leave us clueless about the extent of partnership. We do know whether the state or the firm dominates the agreement and acts only on its interests. The ad-hoc unplanned nature of vocational strategies is apparent here too and leaves us with discontinuous fragmented examples of industry school partnerships. So, once again the absence of an exactly laid out structure and standards for carrying out industry school partnerships weakens the viability of a certain model of skill formation being

implemented. Other than the ambiguity of the weight of the industry in these partnerships, the continuity of the industry's interest and involvement depends on the terms of the agreements at each case. Since the agreements are carried out on a program at a school or at a number of schools, it is expected that the levels of firm and state involvements would differ at each case. These make it difficult to deduce whether a liberal, statist or a collective model is occurring in these instances without studying the cases themselves. Since no record of these cases are provided in the archives and in the MoNE websites, another study on these cases is necessary for understanding what happens in the different parts of the vocational school system.

Furthermore, as examined in Chapter 3, consideration of skill formation as a philanthropic endeavor in the *Meslek Lisesi Memleket Meselesi* (Vocational High Schools a National Cause) project implies that vocational education is still seen as a way of social inclusion for disadvantaged youth and also reveals the uncoordinated nature of industry-school relationship. The project presented itself like charity and had a time-frame in its reports and website, rather than an initial and a permanent step for beginning coordination among industry and state. Since this project has a publicity as an exemplary industry-state partnership for vocational high schools, it can be inferred that what is understood from industry-school partnership is variable. However, the variability implies less inclination for coordination among industry and state. The appearance of industry in this matter is perceived as industry's unexpected, dutiful and fortunate goodness, rather than a partnership that will benefit all parties, the students, industry and the state. So, looking at the state documents' portrayal of industry's involvement, the collective skill formation is limited for the case of vocational high schools.



For the case of collective training system tendencies of the Turkish system, exogenous effects are prominent. The EU is indicated as an anchor in vocational education policies in the recent years.<sup>285</sup> Not only is the EU's impact important, but also and contrastingly, the neoliberal era brought forward the aspirations for collective training system. So, rather than a law that directly changed the vocational high school system to a liberal one, the policy-makers aimed to form a collective model without abolishing the state controlled school-based education.

Likewise, the governments worked on strengthening the factors that would form a collective skill formation system. While skill certification was attempted within the ministry with the help of teachers and administrators, with the “push” from the EU an organization for this purpose was formed by the state to coordinate all relevant actors. Similarly, with the EU and the World Bank involvement, policy-makers intended to prepare curriculums with the contributions of a wide range of actors. Equally important, vocational standards began to be formed.

### Liberal Tendencies and Limitations

In the previous chapters, I discussed how neoliberalization of the economic policies may not necessarily have caused the liberalization of the skill formation system.<sup>286</sup>

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<sup>285</sup> Eğitim Reformu Girişimi, *Hayat Boyu Öğrenme Çerçevesindeki Mesleki Beceri Kazanımı: Uluslararası Eğilimler* (Istanbul: Eğitim Reformu Girişimi, 2012).

<sup>286</sup> A substantial claim of the neoliberalization of education literature is the way lifelong learning is put into practice which has not been traced in this study. Starting from 1970s the phrase “learning from cradle to grave” was present in SPA and MoNE documents. However the phrase “lifelong learning” enters the vocabulary of MoNE with Europeanization. In order to understand this a detailed study of cases is required since solely the usage of this word in policy documents does not reveal an insight. As Eurostat data reveals, collective training models, statist models and liberal models have changing share of people that participate in lifelong learning. Moreover, the education typology of Amable in his study of five different types of capitalism show that lifelong learning is an aspect of non-liberal systems as well.

Another thing to keep in mind is that state dominance can continue as there may be instances in which the policies of vocational education acquire a neoliberal mindset. However, throughout the 43 years studied, the state kept its presence in the vocational high school policies. At the same time, the vocational education policies adapted to the changing economic conditions, particularly in the fractures of the state's capacity, and in the new aspirations for an economy like that of Germany. In the periods discussed in Chapter 3, the state intended to adapt to the changing economic and social circumstances, such as the ISI policies, the EU initiatives, and neoliberal economic policies. At the same time, vocational education policies also showed a tendency to adapt to the economic conditions. For example, the MoNE acted in a way to resemble the market. Being as quick as the markets to capture the variety of different skills required further public involvement by opening up new programs, funding these programs, and determining their curriculums. Only in the case of the minister's acknowledgement of the impossibility of state catching up with the markets, did the state seem to withdraw from this role.<sup>287</sup> However, as examined in Chapter 3, despite these expressions on the difficulties the MoNE encounters, the vocational strategies implicate a continuance of school-based vocational education.

As explained above, due the problems with long-term strategy, resources, skill certification, and employment policies, a low firm commitment and a non-credible public commitment there are limitations to all actors' involvement. The indicators for public commitment are not strong and the policy papers and laws define a limited role for other actors, such as firms. Only very recently a framework for other actors' involvement are created. Similarly, the discussions on students as entrepreneurs, or lack of employment policies directly targeting vocational students

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<sup>287</sup> Ministry of Education, Republic of Turkey, *Mesleki Eğitim Çalıştayı*.

highlight the individual's responsibility in acquiring skills. As a result, these can be taken as indicators of a liberal model. Similarly, the Anadolu vocational high schools have a policy to boost general skills of vocational students, which also imply a liberal system. On the other hand, the boundary between vocational and academic schooling is still kept which is not a tendency for a liberal model. Despite the demand for general skills and even higher general skills in the universities globally, the policies ensured that a distinct vocational education that gives specific skills has remained. Even though the public capacity is limited and neoliberal thinking is visible in the state documents, this institution, which contradicts a liberal model, has remained.

The neoliberal literature is critical about the way the industry-employment-education relations take place in Turkey. In fact, as discussed in the previous sections, my research findings also show that such a link has not been formed in a coordinated way. The lack of an all encompassing framework for industry-education relationship works through case based agreements and hinders me from making conclusions about the partnership without looking at each particular case. Particularly, the absence of the mechanisms that would ensure employment for the students in apprenticeships takes the model closer to the liberal one.

Despite the mentioning of flexible skills, and the emphasis on general skills as strategy on vocational education and training, the state's preservation of its leading role reveals that the system cannot be called a liberal one. As discussed above, the neoliberalization of education literature vilifies this period due to the commodification of education, citing such occurrences as the privatization of education, the economization of educational principles, and the segregation of students based on class differences. As vocational education in principle is always responsive to economic outcomes, the neoliberalization of vocational education

cannot be analyzed using the same criteria as in scrutinizing general or academic secondary education. Particularly, the low percentage of private schooling and a higher reliance on public funds in vocational education complicates this analysis. However, the Anadolu or more academic and more prestigious segregation among school types occurs in vocational education, too. Just as it is asserted in the neoliberalization literature, only those who can afford to go to a dersane by private means can end up in an Anadolu vocational or technical high school. As it is claimed in the neoliberal literature, this can be considered as a semi-private school since it requires the individuals' own resources. Moreover, the case-based industry partnership may cause segregation and differences among schools and among students in a single school.

On the other hand, it is possible to talk about neoliberalisms in this period. The lack of a model for skill formation in Turkey incorporated with the neoliberal thinking causes fuzziness with regards to the type of skill formation. This means a mix of different goals is seen, that of liberal skill formation system and/or a collective skill formation system. One of the reasons for the multiplicities is the lack of a clear legislative framework for industry-school partnership leaves which gives no answer to what may actually have happened in terms of the neoliberalization in each vocational school, each department, and each program or in each fracture of the un-framed system as these were not recorded and communicated in policy documents.

Consequently, Turkey fits neither of these models and is a patchwork of different models while the weight of state in skill formation has still been strong. As demonstrated above, this is both due to the policy-makers confusion on adopting a certain model, and due to the space it leaves for the adoption of policies with ranging targets of state, individual and firm contribution to be applied simultaneously. I posit

that a fragmented-fractured- statist system takes place, in which we see collective and liberal tendencies taking place in different fractures. So, the space that the lack of commitment of the state created gives the chance for the deployment of different models.

### Complementing and Coordinating the Fractures?

Above, I identified problem areas in vocational education and training in a historical perspective. Looking at the skill formation tendencies and these insights together, it can be said that a policy making that considers the whole of the economy is not apparent in the case of Turkey. Looking from the perspective of Hall and Soskice, this implies that neither the coordinating nor the competitive institutions complement the vocational education and training.

Overall, the patchwork model of skill formation is complementary to the patchwork mechanism accompanying skill formation institutions. For example, collective training policies may be compatible with certain particles of the political economy, it may work for a particular sector, chamber and association. As Özel argues, the state's dominance in labor and corporate relations field goes in line with the state's dominance in skill formation. The nature of this relationship also suits the state dominant vocational education and training policies.

So, this patchwork and the persistence of the skill problem may be due to the confusion with the model and the limitations to the state capacity but also because vocational high schools may not be complementary to the remaining institutions in the economy. In the setting of an interventionist authoritarian state and low unionization and cooperative wage bargaining, ensuring high specific skills would have been an anomaly. The model is not supported by complementary institutions,

which would coordinate with vocational schools. For example, at such a state dominant setting, it is not clear which institution would monitor and sanction the state in its vocational policies. Employers associations and chambers only recently acquired the legal framework to take part in training, and their role in being able to coordinate with the state as equal stakeholders is questionable.

Another impediment to coordination among institutions is the way the MoNE operates. For example, the participation of different actors to the Şura decisions is obscure. Moreover, the decisions depend on the minister of education and thus each government's own stance over the issue. Similarly, the coordination among the actors already existing in education policies is questionable. As had been mentioned, the lack of a viable monitoring mechanism for the implementation of even the SPA goals does not exist. Chapter 3 reveals that there was a lack of accountability and the lack of a sanction when the MoNE did not abide to plans and strategies. Likewise, the ambiguity on what the vocational strategy will be in the long term may make it difficult for other actors to coordinate with the school-based system in the long run. This justifies the motivation of the firms for short-term case based partnership with a school.

Also, due to neoliberal changes in political economy, the skill formation model with collective aspirations is simultaneously undermined because of the changes in other institutions. In the wider context of neoliberalism, it is expected that individuals would be tempted to acquire general skills in the fluid labor markets and employment relationships. Therefore, the law of 1986 and its amendments provide the opportunity of collective provision, but in a way it is a node left alone in an institutional constellation that has a different nature than the node itself.

Although a more thorough analysis is required, taking a historical perspective on the issue shows that Turkey prefers to work on its low wage advantage rather than committing to the skill formation strategies which were limited and ad-hoc but had high aspirations of high skill value added growth. As mentioned in Chapter 3, beginning with the 1970s, despite the high-skill demands of the industry, the SPA regretted that firms preferred to apply low-wage and casual training options. At the same time, however, we see that the industry demanded the passing of the law on apprenticeship, even though the coordination among actors was limited during this period. When we look at the complementary institutions, starting with the decrease in 1980s unionization rates and wages, short-term gains rather than a setting suitable for high technology growth were emphasized by the firms.<sup>288</sup> Despite an increase in the skill formation during the ISI period,<sup>289</sup> later on, firms preferred to rely on the main form of business success: having close ties with the state.<sup>290</sup> Following this, low wage and labor intensive methods were preferred where employment protection was low.<sup>291</sup> Likewise, higher technologies were not adopted due to lack of skill formation.<sup>292</sup> Looking at the production for exports, even though the rise in manufactured exports was enormous,<sup>293</sup> it has not consisted of high value added products.

In this setting it would be anomaly to expect coordination among actors to monitor and operate a system, since they would prefer to be close to the state. The

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<sup>288</sup> Pamuk, *Türkiye'nin 200 yıllık iktisadi tarihi*, 251, 271.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid., 270.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid. 251, 311

<sup>291</sup> Ibid. 306.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid. 306

<sup>293</sup> Ibid., 307. Share of manufactured goods in exports rose from 35% in 1980 to over 95% in 2010.

collective system is forced by the state by laws, but the conditions for voluntary equal contribution is not present. While competition was not enhanced and the LME model was not adopted, neither the coordinating intermediary associations for the CME model was present.



## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

In this thesis I aimed to discuss three questions. First of all I presented a detailed understanding of the vocational high school policies in Turkey as a component of skill formation system in Turkey. Secondly, I questioned the neoliberalization of vocational schools. This is due to two reasons: the years I studied overlaps with the neoliberalization of economic and several other policies. The second reason is that the skill formation typology I make use of includes the liberal model of skill formation and enables me to discuss the liberalization of vocational schools as a skill formation system while I try to determine the type of the system in Turkey. The third question I demonstrated was the complicatedness of statism with a focus on this case study. As a final objective I provided a brief discussion on how skill formation institutions in Turkey should be discussed together with the rest of the institutions in the political economy using the institutional complementarities approach of the varieties of capitalism literature.

Before presenting my research on the issue, the theoretical tools that is useful for the analysis in this thesis are introduced, since the way the data is approached in this thesis depends on these viewpoints in the theoretical literature. Rather than adopting a human capital approach, or studying the content or the quality of education, I took vocational education as an institution in the political economy. To look at the changes and the continuities in this institution, understanding the historically path-dependent characteristics is important. Especially, the varieties of capitalism approach considers vocational education as a vital institution for the performance of the economy. This literature considers vocational education together with complementary institutions, such

as the way chambers and unions operate in a country or the way employment relations are carried out. So, this theoretical perspective emphasizes the interrelatedness of institutions and enables me to carry out a political economy oriented analysis on the vocational education policies. The way vocational education is studied in the varieties of capitalism approach is tied with the type of skill formation systems as studied in the literature. A typology on the skill formation institutions separates the types to four: liberal, collective, segmentalist, and statist skill formation systems. These systems differ based on the level of public and firm commitment to the issue among many other indicators. By using these typologies, the vocational policies that took place can be interpreted in terms of the way a consistent skill formation system operates, and of the way the policies are related to other institutions in the political economy.

Chapter 2 includes a history of the vocational schools until the 1970s and a literature review on the neoliberalization of secondary education starting with the 1980s. The section on the history of vocational education utilizes the theoretical foundations given in Chapter 1 as long as data exists in the secondary sources. The historical review reveals the centralized state-led and school-based vocational education, which occurred gradually starting with the late Ottoman period and the early years of the republic. Similarly, the changes to the system took place in an ad-hoc manner and were influenced by the changes in the social, economic and political context.

The subsequent section consisting of a literature review on the prominent literature on the neoliberalization of secondary education elucidates the main insights of these studies. The literature review brings together the scholars' views on the economization, commodification and the privatization of secondary education, as well as the rising influence of business in education. These result in the stratification of students in the education system according to their social classes. This literature argues for a

substantive change in the secondary education starting with the 1980s neoliberal economic policies. Chapter 2, as a background to my research on the vocational high schools from the 1970s to 2013, suggests a contradictory scene in which a statist historical formation of vocational high schools encounters the neoliberal policies on secondary education. This scene presented in Chapter 2, is elaborated on in the following chapters with arguments showing the context-bound nature of neoliberalization. Although the literature review goes in line with some of my findings in different parts of the vocational education system, the insights gained from the research findings in Chapter 3 show that the path-dependent characteristics of the system are still valid.

The institutional evolution of vocational high schools is presented in Chapter 4 with a focus on two aspects of the system, the policies' ad-hoc nature and way the vocational policies formed or have not formed a certain type of a skill formation. Three historical periods were investigated with these considerations, 1970-1982, 1982-2002, and 2002-2013. These periods were perceived as junctures. The first one captured the ISI nature of economic policies and the policy makers' creed on coming up with manpower planning. However, both the target of achieving planning and the basic inputs of education, such as classrooms, teachers, and curriculums were lacking. This period also included two laws that set out the way vocational high schools were structured in the system and how apprenticeship would take place in the firms.

In 1982 starting with the shift to a liberal economic model and the change in the constitution, the policy-makers' attention moved towards a collective training system. This system required coordination among actors. The policy-makers attempted to achieve this but the ad-hoc policies and the state dominance in determining vocational high school policies continued. Overall, a patchwork of different models of skill formation came into existence. Although a law passed on 1986, which implied a collective training

regime, has survived with several amendments, the system continued with its patchwork tendencies. The neoliberal vocabulary entered the scene and had an impact on the way policies were discussed. But the basic form of the vocational high schools remained.

The next period begins in 2002 to capture the impact of the AKP period. In fact, this period was highly influenced by the vocational policies of the EU process that began in 2001. The AKP period, despite the continuity of the same party's government, revealed ad-hoc vocational policies and an inconsistent system of skill formation as well. This period also included the attempts to abide by a vocational strategy and including participants from different sectors in the vocational education policies. However, the results of these attempts are unknown at this point.

Building upon these findings in Chapter 4, Turkey's tendencies for different skill formation systems were discussed. It was seen that Turkey preserved its statist foundation despite the limitations of state capacity. Moreover, the liberal and collective models existed in different fractures of the system. This was argued together with the limited capacity of public involvement such as funding and ad-hoc policies. So, the patchwork model of skill formation was discussed in a theoretical framework. The patchwork model was explained in detail in Chapter 3 by the references given to the indicators of skill formation, such as training taking place in the firms, the way industry-school partnerships were carried out, and portability of skills among many other indicators. Subsequently, a brief analysis on the way the vocational high schools are positioned in the political economy of Turkey is provided. By using the varieties of capitalism approach and the skill formation typology, the position of Turkey's vocational high schools in the political economy can be compared with examples like the USA and Germany. The policy makers considered both of these countries as examples of economic success that should be aspired to. But looking at the way institutional complementarities were not calculated in a

long-term and integral perspective, institutions that would operate in harmony with vocational high schools are not present.

Overall, I found out that vocational schools' statist nature remained while it allowed for liberalization of certain parts and had collective skill formation aspirations. Also, the findings denote that the neoliberalization of vocational schools cannot be discussed in the same terms as the neoliberalization of overall education policies. Thirdly, the limited competency of state education policies leaves space for uncertainties in the system when compared with other examples that are presented as institutional frameworks that have a harmony in the way complementary institutions interact with each other, such as the USA and Germany.

By making use of the models of skill formation and models of capitalism typology, this thesis examined Turkey's position. Tracing historical patterns and elaborating on the path-dependencies and the changes in the system, I showed that despite the impact of neoliberalisation and the system's ad-hoc nature, the main features of the vocational and training system in Turkey has been preserved in the last 40 years. However, the skill formation system have not worked in a mutually effective and efficient way with other institutions. The evident role of the state in this area exhibited liberal tendencies as well as possibilities for a collective training system if the commitment could be achieved. Furthermore, my research findings explicates that the vocational education and training issue in Turkey shows how context-bound neoliberalization is. By depicting the complications in the vocational high schools as a component of the model for skill formation, and the nature of vocational strategies of the state, as well as these two aspects' relationship with each other, my research also shed a light on why skill formation continues to be a problem in Turkey.

This research has filled a gap in many ways. First of all, studies on vocational education rarely touch upon what the vocational education and training institutions actually are and how they relate to the rest of the institutions in Turkey. Furthermore, this study offers a new perspective on the way industry-school partnerships take place. These partnerships do not necessarily have to imply a liberal model. The literature on how a change had occurred in vocational high schools and how projects on industry-school partnerships took place had made me curious on what the system had been like before. By doing a historical study from an institutional and skill formation perspective, I saw that the way industry school partnerships take place in Turkey today is a result of makes up the legal framework and the historical background of the issue. Only when supported by a viable framework, these partnerships would be expected to make a change in the type of the skill formation system and possibly in the results achieved from these partnerships.

Similarly, the historical perspective on the state's policies provides a contribution to the literature. Since the influence of business and economization of education is a prevalent debate, this study showed that the status of vocational education is distinctive. One of the reasons is that economics oriented perspective was apparent from the very beginning. The studies on this usually referred to the SPA plans to prove that education is becoming more responsive to economics. But looking at the SPA plans since 1970s, it can be seen that the way vocational education has been approached did not change much. Especially considering the fact that the SPA five-year plans are the only consistent state document on vocational education that can be found for this 43 year period, it can be said that the objectives and also the problems associated with vocational education were similar over the years. Likewise, government programs even at the time of inconsistent coalitions included vocational

high schools. Moreover, together with the targets on economization of the education, expressions on how almost none of the goals stated were reached were included in the state documents investigated. So, the studies and current discussions' usual reference to the most recent five-year plans to justify their points on the economization of education is not exactly valid for the case of vocational high schools. From a historical perspective I have shown that the development plans differ from one another on a very small scale in terms of the vocational education system.

Furthermore, although the lack of a “holistic” perspective of education by the MoNE is a common discussion area, the relationship of this with the model of skill formation had not been discussed. By both focusing on the inconsistent vocational policies, and the lack of a formation of a certain model of skill formation, I emphasize two interrelated attributes of the absence of a viable policy-making on education.

Looking at my research and discussion, it can be inferred that if the MoNE can manage to stick to its long-term goals, and the monitoring of the implementation of the goals is possible, the probability of an increase in skill formation is higher. However, in order to analyze institutional complementarities, a detailed study on the relationship between these institutions is necessary. In my research in the literature, I did not come across a study on the role of employer's associations, or intermediary associations in skill formation in Turkey, neither on firms and skill formation. So, my research on vocational high schools policies of the state presents only a portion of these studies. Moreover, a case study on a vocational high school to see how policies actually reach these schools and how they are implemented would be one of the key areas to understanding what actually happens in practice. Furthermore, another insight from this research project was that despite the MoNE's current inefficient archival system, the well-kept records of conferences with each speaker's remarks and

contributions being recorded are valuable sources. This gave me great insight into how things worked out and the horizons of confusion with regards to skill formation as well. Especially reading the speeches of people from businesses and the problems they mention, it would be even more worthwhile to do a study on the firm aspects of this problem. Most of the readings I did were not included in this study. How the business, state, students see the current system were deducible from these records. Similarly, a study on unions and training is required because they appeared occasionally in state documents, which can be taken as an indication of their ties with the MoNE. All of the above would be helpful for producing a complete analysis of the skill formation system in Turkey.

The same old problems continued in the last 40 years with the lacks in teachers, classrooms, and curriculums while high aspirations, such as that of being in the most industrialized league of nations continue to be declared. At the same time diverse wishes on the way the system would be formed were expressed continuously, particularly in the Şura decisions. But most of these expressions were did not come into practice. In a way, the limits of state commitment caused deficiencies in the education but also prevented the occurrence of even a more diverse patchwork with different propensities at each particle. However, the ambiguity of the state's commitment to such a state-oriented issue caused a configuration in which liberal tendencies would fill the gaps, and coordinated tendencies would occur. In this setting, the aspirations for achieving economic success through the skills provided by vocational high school graduates and the wish for a collective training system that operates in coordination with different actors would be possible, if the state and the institutions in the political economy comply with the conditions for coordination.



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