From Economic Crisis to Reform in Public Policy: Lessons from the education policy in Turkey

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ABSTRACT

The paper aims to investigate how economic crises translate into major changes in the policy-making and implementation process. It suggests that the fiscal pressure on governments following major economic crises are translated into policy reforms through the filter of three factors, namely the composition of the service recipients and the nature of service demand; the political bargaining power of the policy implementers; and the ideational roots of the politics around the policy field subject to reform. The field of education policy provides us with an excellent case to elaborate the above argument, and Turkey, hit by several, and huge, economic and fiscal crises since the late 1970s, offers us a very fruitful context to concentrate on. The paper indicates that the post-crisis interventions of governments tend to re-distribute the fiscal burden on public purse by employing a three-level preference set: economic policy issues vs social policy issues; among the sectors belonging to the same policy family; and among different levels/institutions of the same policy field. The paper also attempts to develop a initial categorisation of post-crisis reform strategies departing from the findings of the empirical analysis.

I – Problem formulation

Major structural changes in the policy process in capitalist countries are mostly, and inevitably, associated with critical turning points in the history of capitalism, all triggered by deep economic crises. Given this association, one might rush to explicate how the changes in the state-economy and state-society relations, as necessitated by a superior economic logic translate into new modes and structures of policy-making and implementation. That sort of a perception of the relationship between economic crises and the policy process, to a certain degree, eases our task. All we need to do is simply to investigate, departing from greater principles, what would (or should) be the new institutional arrangements, ideational frameworks and decision-making mechanisms to re-establish the shaken bonds between the state and society and the state and economy. Yet, the picture gets a bit more complicated than expected, a) once we begin to pay attention to the mechanisms that transmit, and translate, such crises into reforms in the policy process, which involves the question of how the crisis is

perceived and interpreted by the policy makers and the public opinion; b) to the question of how restructuring attempts interact with the past policy practices; c) and as we begin to compare and contrast the effects of the post-crisis intervention strategies on different fields of public policy, to see the variations in the policy responses to a given crisis.

As long as we are concerned with the fields such as economic policy, industrial policy, etc, it is apparent that the time distance between a major crisis and radical changes in such policy fields is rather short, and that the government measures could be turned into radical policy reforms, immediately. Yet, when it comes to the policy fields such as education, health, etc, the time distance is longer and it is much harder to initiate radical reforms. There are four reasons: First, in the eyes of the policy-makers, their political priority vis a vis the above mentioned fields is relatively lowered during such transition periods. Secondly, some time has to pass before the social tensions produced by an economic crisis is translated into a new, identifiable set of demands from the government. Thirdly, especially at times of crisis, when the governments need their legitimacy most, any radical (pro-market) reform attempt with destructive consequences in such policy fields in the short run will prove to be a political suicide. Fourthly, the policy implementation structure and the nature of the policy outputs in such fields are radically different than the first set of policy fields. Street level bureaucrats play a much critical role in both policy-making and implementation process, functioning in a much more complicated service delivery mechanism with concrete deliverables, received and experienced by the citizenry on a daily basis.

Given the above reasoning, and given the fact that this latter set of policy fields correspond to the largest segment of the public administration system in any single country, one is justified in claiming that we need to pay more attention to the policy fields pertaining to the social welfare, if we are to understand how economic crises translate into major changes in the practice of public administration. In the remainder of this paper, I will address this broader question by concentrating on the education policy in a developing country, Turkey.

II – How to conceptualise the relationship between economic crisis and education policy

It can be argued that education is a policy field in a state of constant crisis. Here, by crisis, not only do we mean economic crises, though, but also political crises as well as the political consequences of economic crises. Economic crises restrict the availability of financial resources required by the public services, thereby narrowing the room for maneuver for the policy-makers for a particular period of time (until the end of the economic decline). In the case of services like education, however, where the client base is large and heterogenous in terms of their expectations and demands, and where the service provided also assumes ideological, social and political functions (see Carnoy, 1985: 170)[1], the sort of instability in policy-making experienced in other policy fields at times of economic crisis gain a constant character, turning the field into a contentious one.

According to McCarthy education policy is characterised by a set of tensions, namely those between a) Immediate results vs long-term goals; b) Equity goals vs standards-based reforms; c) Government vs Nongovernmental actors in education; d) Local control vs the

[1] "Education is viewed by the state as having substantial political value in itself for meeting aspirations of populations for literacy, skills, credentials and status. As a public service, education may be a cheap way to secure such political value or legitimacy, compared to making structural changes in the economy that would redistribute income and wealth. Spending on education is on the one hand a way to provide a consumption good (children's education) to low income populations, and on the other hand it places responsibility for material gains resulting from such educational opportunities squarely on the shoulders of parents and children themselves. Such spending also probably makes labour more 'trainable' and hence subsidizes investment in physical capital, even though the social return to educational investment may be relatively low" (Carnoy, 1985: 170).

advancement of national education goals; e) as well as the tensions across levels and branches of government involved in education services (2009: 844-846). It could be argued that these tensions serve as a screening mechanism as a structural economic crisis creates a new pattern of policy (making and implementation) in education. We will turn back to those tensions later. For the moment, it is also important to note that this constant state of crisis in education has a twin, constant reform in education.

These tensions and the associated reform pressure emanate from the fact that education has gained a public service character through the history of capitalism (Şimşek, 2000), and demand for which has constantly grown and become complicated (Plank and Keesler, 2009), while it turned into a major battleground for social equality. Hence, if we want to understand the potential consequences of recent economic crises for public administration in the field of education, we have to address the question of how policy-makers cope with an incessant pressure for expansion in the scope of service and demand for higher quality service, in a politically sensitive policy-field, and under increasingly severe economic constraints.

What is more important is the fact that the reforms to respond to the recent global economic crisis have to meet a double-challenge. The responses to the global economic crisis of 1974 relied on shifting the economic burden to the service recipients. Today, however, the service recipients are already overstretched in terms of their ability to pay, and social inequality issues have already been on the agenda. Thus, not only do current governments have to find alternative ways to finance public services on constant demand, but also have to cope with the danger of a coming social unrest and widespread political crises. Here, education policy, once again, constitutes a key policy area in terms of its needs and political functions.

We will return to the question how education policy and administration could take new forms as a response to the recent global economic crisis in the conclusion section. But, first, we have to take a closer look at how past economic crises affected public policy and administration in the case of the education sector.

III – Change in education policy and administration in the context of economic crisis

The end of the welfare state, itself triggered by a worlwide economic crisis, and subsequent subordination of the social to market logic has taken place across the capitalist world through reform attempts almost identical in spirit and method. But, the results have been different. I argue that three factors have affected the translation process of neoliberal principles into solid policy programs and changes: a) the composition of the service recipients (the degree of heterogeneity of the service recipients, and the nature of service demand); b) the political bargaining power of the policy implementers; c) the ideational factors (significance of education for the political system and the social justice).

Before we proceed to discuss how these factors shaped the restructuring process of the education sector in the aftermath of a major global economic crisis (post-1974), we have to make a distinction between two types of economic and/or political crisis: a) deeper structural crises radically altering the state-economy and the state-society relations, and b) those crises produced by the internal inconsistencies and failures of the (new) economic order. The crises of the first sort not only bring in new ways of service provision, but also reshape the policy agenda and priorities, while the second type pose challenges mainly for service delivery. As we analyse the consequences of economic crises for public policy and administration, we will keep this distinction in mind. Now, let's elaborate on how the factors mentioned above might have affected the transformation process in education.

3.1. The selectivity problem

To start with the first one, Plank and Keesler, in an attempt to explain why the state's role has been shrinking in the field of education, put forward an interesting argument:

> In practical terms, the growing weight of expectations that schools bear is a challenge that the education system is almost certain to fail. Under circumstances where more and better education is proposed as the solution to a wide array of social and economic problems, no amount of education can ever suffice; even being 'best in the world' falls short, as rivals strive to catch up. Moreover, the persistence of the problems that the education system is expected to solve breeds cynicism and distrust about the capacity of schools and teachers to accomplish public goals, and a corresponding reluctance to increase the quantity of resources in the system without solid evidence of success (2009: 698)

There are two conclusions that follow: a) the policy paralysis in education is not necessarily a direct result of economic crisis; b) that the scope and aims of any public service can play a crucial part in determining its resilience to political onslaught at times of austerity. Hence, the more weight is placed in a society on the shoulders of education as a way out of complicated socio-economic problems, the more complicated the policy challenges will get, and the more dispersed and diversified will become the administrative structure established to meet various, and sometimes conflicting policy goals to be achieved. At this point, the heterogeneity of demands and the composition of the service recipients gain significance.

In fact, neoliberal policy reforms were partly presented by the governments as a response to the problems raised in the above quote, in an attempt to justify market oriented changes. To narrow down the sets of goals to be achieved through education, it has been interpreted as a means to enhance national economic performance/competitiveness and as a service accruing benefits to individuals that could be exchanged in the market.[2] Although the resultant reforms in education further deepened social inequality (one of the key problems education has been supposed to meet) (see Ball, 1993; Hall, 2001; Hursh, 2006; Hill, 2007) and created new complications in administration of education (see below), still the experience in neoliberal reforms in education indicate that economic crises might actually serve as an excuse, or serve as a corrective moment, to intervene with instability in a particular field of public service.

Homogenisation of the service recipient (in the neoliberal case: as individual customers, independent from their class position, ethnic background etc) can be seen as a strategy to shape the demand structure. Nevertheless, in practice, this homogenisation process requires that the policy maker choose between different types of policy recipients. This takes place at three different levels: a) through a strong preference for economic concerns over the social ones (preferring a family of policy fields – economic, financial, industrial, employment - over the others – health, education, social security) (Reimers, 1991: 349); b) through preferring a particular policy field over the others, within the same family of policy fields (such as preference for social security over education); c) through preferring particular policy programs and services over the others, in the same policy field (preference for higher education over primary and secondary education). Hence, simplification of the policy process – neoliberal in spirit or not - inevitably results in biased results in terms of its social

[2] In fact, that sort of an understanding of education is not new, see Tural (????)

outcomes,[3] and it becomes important to pay attention to the question of how this selectivity is constructed politically.

3.2. The question of bureaucratic politics

Following Reimers, it can be argued that two factors play a key role in determining the politics of selectivity: a) the political significance of the service recipients, especially in terms of their capacity to influence the outcomes of national/local elections; b) the political orientation and the policy autonomy of the policy implementers. Concerning the former, it could be argued that potential political reactions from those to be affected negatively from a reform play a rather passive role in selectivity, shaping the decisions of the policy makers before the policy is made. Yet, the response by the policy implementers to a proposed policy scheme plays a rather proactive role in the selectivity, both prior to, and during the policy change. Especially in the case of education, a) the size and complexity of the implementation apparatus (universities, schools, teachers, academics); b) the fact that street level bureaucrats dominate the implementation process; c) that they develop political affinity for their service recipients (the students) (1991: 350; Lipsky, 1980; cf. Gitlin and Margonis, 1995: 380; Croll et al, 1994); d) and that major changes in the implementation structure tend to damage the autonomy of the implementers stand as key reasons why the selectivity of new policies are shaped through bargaining and struggle between the policy-makers and the implementers (also see the section "the ideational dimension").

Departing from the insights of the works by Reimers (1991) and Croll et al (1994) it can be argued that this struggle will take place on four different planes: a) intra-state struggle (between state departments); b) between the government and the educational institutions; c) between the government (and the ministr(ies) responsible for education) and teachers/academics as organised political groups (unions); d) at the workplace, by increasing the degree of administrative control over the educators' work. Reimers, looking at the dynamics of education policy change in Latin American countries, in the context of structural adjustment policies during the 1980s, argues that education as a policy area lost significance especially because of changing political balances between different ministries:

> Why has this new scenario led to changes both in the priority of education vis-a-vis other sectors and in the structure of the education budget? At one level these changes are the outcomes of bureaucratic politics and more simply of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the organizations involved. The disproportionate reductions in education may result from the education sector's inability to negotiate and defend its budget with the economic cabinet. Economic adjustment increased the power of the economic cabinet to set ceilings to the requests of the different ministers (1991, 348; also see Mundy, 2005: 9).

[3] What is more, this amounts to increased selectivity in service provision. Yet, as Standing convincingly argues, increased selectivity in the fields of social policy result in further complications:

> The more you target, the more you design criteria for selectivity, the more conditions that are applied, then the more complex the necessary procedures of identification, implementation, monitoring and auditing. In most countries, it is cynical or naïve to advise governments to adopt finely-tuned targeting, given poor administrative structures, lack of information, fear and lack of knowledge among potential beneficiaries, poorly trained, inadequately paid and overburdened officials, and pervasive distrust between applicants and officials. The system will end up being highly discretionary, prone to corruption and demoralizing for all concerned. (2001, 23-24)

This imbalance, according to Reimers did not simply stem from changing political priorities of the governments, but also from the weakness of the policy-making (and policy-analysis) capacity and organisational strength of the education sector in general, and various layers of the system in particular, which could otherwise enhance their political bargaining power (1991: 348-349). Hence, the political mobilisation capacity of teachers, is another key factor that determines the degree and depth of reforms, or lack of them thereof.

The unevenness of political bargaining capacity of different layers of education also influences the distribution of resources among those different layers: "Lower levels of education have less political leverage than higher ones despite the fact that the number of teachers is larger" (1991: 350) as, while the number of primary school teachers is larger, as they are dispersed geographically, their mobilisation capacity is lowered. Moreover, the policy-making capacity of those different layers is also critical. This is especially true for universities. According to Reimers: "the higher- education sector is better equipped than other levels to fight not only real political battles in the street [student activism] but also the bureaucratic battles [universities' policy analysis capacity]." (1991: 351)

3.3. The ideational dimension

Especially in the case of education, ideational tensions play a critical role as economic crises, and subsequent shifts in public service finance, are translated into new policy directions and programs. It can be argued that these tensions find their expressions along two, sometimes overlapping, axes of political dispute: a) those concerning social (in)equality (private vs public education, access problem); b) those about national unity (social cohesion and reproducing the legitimacy of the state) and strength (in both political and economic terms).

According to Ball, changes in education policy during the neoliberal era further deepened those tensions, rendering them ever more complicated:

> Stated in more general terms, two complexly related policy agendas are discernible in all the heat and noise of reform. The first aims to tie education to national economic interests, while the second involves a decoupling of education from direct state control. The first rests on a clear articulation and assertion by the state of its requirements of education, while the second gives at least the appearance of greater autonomy to educational institutions in the delivery of these requirements. The first involves a reaffirmation of the state functions of education as a 'public good', while the second subjects education to the disciplines of the market and the methods and values of business and redefines it as a competitive private good (2007: 42).

Especially in a context where economic and cultural globalisation poses serious threats to the political, cultural and territorial integrity of nation states, the public good aspect of education, as Ball notes, has been emphasised. We could still discern two dominant, co-existing, and sometimes conflicting approaches to the public good nature of education: as conducive to improved national competitiveness; and as a means of protecting national (political and cultural) unity (Carnoy, 1985; Reid, 2003: 567; Tural, ????; cf. Şimşek, 2000).[4] These two concerns play a key role as the curriculum - the substance of the education policy – has been determined.

[4] Here, it has to be noted that the latter approach does not necessarily imply a progressive concern with social inequality (in terms of improved access to school for poor family kids). Conservative values could well dominate the policy scene in education.

Once 'social justice' enters the scene, the picture gets a bit more complicated. I think the institutional structure of education policy in a particular country could be seen as a product of historically formed preferences made by the policy makers in terms of the degree of political significance attached to education, and the presence or absence of 'social justice' in the policy agenda. The table below provides a rough sketch of the possible outcomes of different preference combinations. Here, the axes of variation should be seen as ideal-types, representing the extreme cases, rather than an exhaustive description of real world of education.

Table 1: The policy making and implementation structures formed around two major axes of ideational tension in education policy

Dimensions of ideational tension in education	**National integrity (+)**	**National integrity (-)**
Social justice (+)	**(A)** Centralised policy making (national curriculum) + Centrally controlled, universalistic implementation structure (standardised school systems and personnel management + free schooling and improved access)	**(B)** Decentralised policy making (local curriculums) + Centrally funded implementation structure (standardised school systems and personnel management)
Social justice (-)	**(C)** Centralised policy making (national curriculum) + Dispersed, but closely supervised, policy implementation structure (see, for ex. Wrigley, 2009: 64, 70) (heterogenous school systems and personnel management + access determined on economic power of the households)	**(D)** Multiple school systems coexisting, with different curricula and personnel regimes. Community based schooling

To reiterate, these preference sets, and the resultant policy frameworks are historical products, and economic crises could be seen as turning points, triggering transition from one configuration to another (Şimşek, 2000). The changes in education policy outlined by Ball (2007) suggest that an agenda characterised by a concern with national integrity and disregard of social justice have a global currency (see for example, Cookson 2001: 31-33;). Yet, departing from Ozga and Lingard's following conclusions about contemporary education policy,

1) That at international level a coherent set of policy themes and processes (globalised policy discourses) has emerged, through which policy makers (at national, international and transnational levels) seek to reshape education systems.
2) That there has emerged a globalised education policy field situated between global pressures and local vernecular education policy responses.
3) That these globalised policy agendas and processes interact with traditions, ideologies, institutions and politics that have developed on national terrains, resulting in vernacular education policy outcomes (2007: 69);

we can argue that this tendency is not necessarily a natural response to global economic crisis, and that a possible move from one combination to another will be far from a smooth process. Especially, concerns with national integrity and an imposed global agenda (especially in developing world) prioritising a pro-market (global) education policy will have to co-exist, creating further confusion in education policy, thereby postponing the reform process in education.

Here, it is also important to note that institutional reforms of the sort outlined above necessitate increased control of the policy-makers over the implementers, curtailing their policy autonomy (Reid, 2003: 567-570). This increased control involves not only monitoring the delivery of curriculum closely (Gitlin and Margonis, 1995), but also rendering the educator's job insecure especially through causalisation, part-time working, contract based employment (abolishing the tenure system), and privatisation of education (Hill, 2007). In fact, in education the implementers (teachers and academics) are "intellectuals on salary" who enjoy a de-facto autonomy as they teach in the classroom (Sarup, ????: 70; cf. Croll et al, 1994: 344). Moreover, they do possess economic, cultural, organisational and social assets, which turn them into classed actors with considerable stakes and roles in social change (Robertson, 2000). Given those considerations, it is inevitable that policy-makers attempting to reform their education systems will have to negotiate with, or fight, teachers and academics to be able to achieve targets. This struggle will definitely have to involve an ideological struggle on the meaning of education, and the social status of teachers and academics.

IV – The case of Turkey: development of education policy in the midst of economic crises

4.1. Education policy in Turkey: Foundations, ideational dynamics, and trends in education policy

Education has had a political mission since the inception of the Republic of Turkey, that of building a nation. The very same day the founders of Turkey abolished the sultanate and caliphate (March 3, 1924), and established separate administrative bodies for religious affairs and the chief of command of the army (which used to be part of the executive system, organised under government ministries) thereby taking strong steps towards secularisation of the state and guaranteeing the political autonomy of the army, they also passed the Law on Unity of Education. These three laws were to fortify the political basis of the young republic, established few months ago (October 29, 1923).

This latter law aimed to give order to a rather dispersed community based school system inhereted from the Ottoman Empire (Table 1-D). In the older system, the minority groups' own primary and secondary schools, the schools established by missionaries, and the religious schools controlled by different Islamic orders coexisted, along with newly established modern public schools – fewer in number, without any coordination or standards. This was considered to be a major obstacle and threat to the political unity and cohesion of a newly born *secular nation state*. The new law subordinated all those schools to the ministry of education (Uygun, 2003: 108-114), and the public schools constituted the backbone of the education system of the new republic.

The first three, irrevocable, articles of the constitution (see article 4) (1921, 1924, 1961, 1982) underlie the ideational basis - and the conflicts around the priorities - of the education policy in Turkey. They read as:

ARTICLE 1: The Turkish State is a Republic.

> ARTICLE 2: The Republic of Turkey is a democratic, secular and social state governed by the rule of law; bearing in mind the concepts of public peace, national solidarity and justice; respecting human rights; loyal to the nationalism of Atatürk, and based on the fundamental tenets set forth in the Preamble.
> ARTICLE 3: The Turkish state, with its territory and nation, is an indivisible entity. Its language is Turkish. … (http://www.byegm.gov.tr/sayfa.aspx?Id=78, accessed on 28 April 2010, emphases added).

Especially the principles of secularism, national solidarity and indivisibility necessitated construction of a centralised policy making and implementation structure (Table 1-A, 1-B). Nevertheless, the principle of free and compulsory (primary) education for citizens, as a reflection of the social state principle, entered the constitution 38 years later (Constitution of 1961, article 50: http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/anayasa/anayasa61.htm, accessed on 28 April 2010; Constitution of 1982: Article 42, Articles 130-132). This, I think, has to do with the fact that that period was one of experimentation with different policy-implementation structures. This was a result of the lack of human (teachers) and other resources immediately available to establish a widespread and accessible education system, as well as an ideological fight between the communitarian and liberal wings of the founding cadre of the republic, over the proper nature of the state-society/economy relations (see Bayırbağ, 2007: Chapter 2).

During the reign of Atatürk (1923-1938), pragmatism was the paradigm to be followed in education policy. Dewey himself was invited to Turkey, and prepared a report proposing that the education system had to equip the individuals with skills of direct relevance to success in real life. "Learning by doing", was the basis of this thinking. Hence, vocational education was a preferred option, than general education. The ministers of education of the time Mustafa Necati and Hasan Ali Yücel, themselves being passionate intellectuals with a sense of mission, ardently followed this agenda, which resulted in the establishment of teaching institutions such as the Village Institutes (Köy Enstitüleri) (Erdem, 2008; Kocabaş, 2008; Özsoy, 2008).

The institutes aimed to take education, and Western enlightenment, to the rural areas where the most of the population lived. They were designed to train future teachers, who would teach the students not only subjects like mathematics and literature, but also how to improve agricultural production, tailoring, carpentry, etc. They were also communal units, where teachers and students would work collectively to meet their own needs. Yet, this experiment, still hotly debated today, ended in 1953, three years after the Democratic Party (a splinter from the Republican People's Party governing Turkey between 1923 and 1950, formed by the liberal wing of the RPP) assumed power. Subscribing to conservative values, the DP was not in favour of such an enlightenment project. Established by powerful rural landlords, extending education towards rural areas, was not a quite desirable option on the part of the DP (Boybeyi and Sallan-Gül, 2008). Hence, expansion of a comprehensive general education system didnot gain speed during this era.

In fact, the army, state bureaucrats[5], university students and professors constituted the most formidable opposition to the DP's policies during the reign of the party between 1950 and 1960, ended by the coup of May 27, 1960. The new constitution was prepared by the left Kemalist professors, strictly subscribing to the enlightenment ideals. Hence, universalistic free compulsory education (primary) entered the constitution. Nevertheless, it is hard to argue that the education policy of the era contributed to improvements in the education system by enhancing the masses' access to a universalistic education system. This, in part, can be related to the broader economic development and investment policy of the era (1960-1980), which

[5] During the one part rule of the RPP the party-state system made sure that the bureaucrats continued to remain aligned with the party's ideology, even after the transition to the multi-party rule.

favoured import susbstituting industrialisation strategy over social consumption concerns, especially those of increasingly proletarianised rural population flocking to the metropolitan cities.[6] What is more, especially the period of 1971 to 1980 was characterised by political instability and coalition governments rendering implementation of a broader reform agenda which would give order to a still dispersed, and incrementally evolving education system (cf. Aksit, 2007: 129) difficult. In fact, as we shall discuss below, there were reform attempts to do so.

Another point worth mentioning here is that vocational education, which was given strong emphasis especially during the formation years of the republic (1923-1950), was left aside. As of the education year of 1970-71, the number of students in general secondary (high) schools had already passed the number of students enrolled in the vocational schools (Table 2). In the case of teachers, the transformation was complete as of the education year of 1980-81. Here, it is interesting to note vocational education lost significance, despite the fact that industrialisation took the centre stage in economic policies during the this period. Two potential explanations could be put forward. First, that the industrialisation strategy relied on labour intensive sectors did not cause a demand in trained workers. Secondly, the main motive for reforms in education was political, rather than economic. In fact, a striking feature of the political history of Turkey is that major political turning points and reforms (the coup d'etats and the one-party governments) followed severe economic crises (global and national), and that the political reforms were also to facilitate the new economic regimes. Yet, in the case of reforms in education, political concerns such as national integrity and protection of secularism seem to have dominated the agenda. Below, we will analyse the major reform attempts in the education system, concentrating on the major legal changes in that area.[7]

Table 2: Changing priorities in secondary education between 1950 and 1981.

Years	**Number of students in general high schools (000)**	Number of teachers in general high schools	**Number of students in vocational high schools(000)**	Number of teachers in vocational high schools
1950-1951	22	1.954	53	4.488
1960-1961	76	4.219	108	8.333
1970-1971	245	11.219	235	15.021
1980-1981	535	41.334	355	33.690

Source: http://www.dpt.gov.tr/DPT.portal (Section: Ekonomik ve Sosyal Göstergeler (Economic and Social Indicators): 1950-2006)

An initial examination of the major legal changes in education since 1923 (Table 3) leads one to conclude that there have been three sorts of regulations:

[6] For a detailed account of the recent history of Turkey's political economy see İnsel (1984), Keyder (1989), Barkey (1990), Zürcher (1993), Ahmad (1995), Boratav et al (1995), Şengül (2001), Lewis (2002), Boratav (2003), Keyman and Öniş (2007), Yalman (2009).

[7] A recent detailed report produced by the Ministry of National Education (MONE – Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı) outlining "Organisation of Education System in Turkey, 2008/9" (MONE, 2009) gives the highlights of the major legal changes made in the system. Yet, the discussion that follows also benefits from a detailed query in the legal changes made in the relevant legal code, available from the parliament's website (http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/kanunlar_sd.sorgu_baslangic); as well from the website of the national union of cram schools (http://www.ozdebir.org.tr/TR/Icerik.ASP?ID=376)

a) Those about the general structure of the Ministry of National Education (MONE), mainly reform laws (number/year: 789/1926; 1739/1973; 3797/1992).
b) Those with heavy political undertones, targeting certain levels/institutions of the education system (430/1924; The new alphabet law/1928;; 3803/1940; 6234/1954; 222/1961: this particular law could also be considered in the below category; 4306/1997: this particular law could also be considered in the category above).
c) Those aiming to alter the education system through partial modifications, either to improve certain levels or sections of the system (especially vocational education), and/or to transform the implementation procedures in service delivery. These changes mainly reflect the neoliberal agenda in education (625/1965; 3035/1985; 3308/1986; 4702/2001; 4855/2003; 4967/2003; 5002/2003; 5005/2003; 5079/2004; 5204/2004; 5257/2004; 5381/2005; 5450/2006).[8]

Table 3: Major changes in the legal code on primary and secondary education in Turkey since 1924, and the timeline of major economic/political crises and policy shifts in Turkey[9]

Number/Year	Title and Major Concern
430/1924	(B) Law on unity of education
789/1926	(A) Law on organisation of the ministry of education
????/1928	(B) The new alphabet law (adoption of the Latin alphabet)
3803/1940	(B) Law on village institutes
6234/1954	(B) Law on merging village institutes with high schools for training primary teachers
Domestic economic crisis in 1958. Coup D'etat in 1960. Import Substituting Industrialisation strategy and planned development initiated.	
222/1961	(B; C) The primary education law
625/1965	(C) Law on private education institutions
1739/1973	(A) Basic law of national education
Global economic (oil) crisis in 1974. Domestic economic crisis in 1978. Unstable coalition governments between 1971 and 1980. Coup d'etat in 1980. Introduction of of neoliberal economic policies.	
3035/1985	(C) Law on private education institutions (re-issued, one year after it was abolished by the military junta government)
3308/1986	(C) Vocational education law
3797/1992	(A) Law on organisation and duties of ministry of national education
Domestic economic crisis in 1994. The rise of political Islam from mid-1990s onwards. Military Memorandum in 1997. Unstable coalition governments between 1991-2001.	
4306/1997	(B; A) Law on increasing the duration of compulsory primary education from 5 years to 8 years (which also amended various tax laws to provide the reform program with earmarked resources)
International economic crisis in 1998 (Asia and Russia). Domestic economic crisis in 2001. The beginning of single party government era (the Justice and Development Party, from 2002 up to present)	
4702/2001	(C) A comprehensive law making amendments in eight different laws on education (especially to rationalise vocational education)
4855/2003	(C) Amendment in the Law on organisation and duties of ministry of national education
4967/2003	(C) Amendment in the basic law of national education
5002/2003	(C) Amendments in the primary education and education law and the law on private education institutitons
5005/2003	(C) Amendment in the basic law of national education
5079/2004	(C) Amendment in the law on free boarding and bursary for the students in the higher education institutions that train teachers and education specialists, and social help for those students.
5204/2004	(C) Amendments in the basic law of national education and the law on civil servants

[8] There are two more laws, 5504/2006 and 5927/2009 which were introduced to make two minor procedural changes. So they are not included in this list.
[9] For a short list of studies on those major turning points in the political economic history of Turkey refer to footnote 6.

5257/2004	(C) Amendment in the basic law of national education
5381/2005	(C) Amendment in the Law on organisation and duties of ministry of national education
5450/2006	(C) Amendments in the law on transfer of schools affiliated with public institutions and organisations to the ministry of national education, and in certain other laws and decrees with the effect of law

Departing from the above timeline, a number of initial conclusions could be drawn about how ideational considerations have influenced the policy making and implementation in education in Turkey, and in what ways economic crises have been translated into policy programs through such ideational dynamics. First, a quick glance at the earlier history of education in Turkey indicates that the concern with national unity and secularism/enlightenment was prioritised over that of establishing a universal education system, based on social equality. That the law on unity of education preceded a foundational law on re-establishing the ministry of education (as inhereted from the Ottoman Empire), and that the principle of compulsory free education entered the constitution 38 years later can be seen as striking evidences in that regard. It is also worth noting that changes introduced into the education system with political concerns tended to be focused rather than comprehensive. Particular levels of education, and especially primary education were targeted (the examples of village institutes and the laws on primary education dated 1961 and 1997). Such interventions were formulated into distinct large scale policy programs.

Secondly, as already noted, radical political shifts followed major economic crises, and facilitated the crisis intervention programs and major policy reforms in economy. Yet, in the case of education, large-scale reforms didnot follow immediately. Indeed, two comprehensive laws on the education system (coup d'etat of 1960: 1739/1973; coup d'etat of 1980: 3797/1992) came more than a decade after such radical breakthroughs, adopting a hands-off approach in the mean time. This trend seems to have come to an end, especially since 2001. Instead, we witness the rise of another type of policy-making: constant and active state intervention, yet through incremental changes, rather than a coordinated approach to problems in education.

Thirdly, it should also be noted that such comprehensive reform laws were produced by coalition governments,[10] not single party ones, which suggests that political stability is not a pre-condition for such reforms. Even, it can be claimed that single party governments, which generally come to power following big economic/political crisis tend to prioritise economic issues. The coalition governments, on the other hand, have to be constructed on political compromises based on social demands, and can be seen more symphatetic to reforms in education.

Fourthly, it is also noticable that education does not seem to have constituted a priviliged area of for post-crisis policy reforms. Foundational laws/reforms about/in the education system seem to have come as ex-post-facto interventions, to give order to, and to rationalise an incrementally developing, rather dispersed and fragmented implementation structure. It could be suggested that this dispersed and fragmented structure has been a result of experimentation in education and political disagrement and/or confusion over, or a central paradigm about the proper nature of education as a public service.

Lastly, this lack of a central paradigm, especially remarkable during the period of 1950 to 1980, ended with the introduction of neoliberal ideology into the education system, slowly overriding the fights around the secularity of education system, the last one fought during the late 1990s. Especially the post-2001 crisis reforms in education marked the turning point, in that regard. The tendency of neoliberalisation has been going hand in hand with the rise of conservatism (Okçabol, 2007; İnal, 2009). Nevertheless, it is hard to argue that the party

[10] For the service period of past governments in Turkey: www.basbakanlik.gov.tr/Forms/pCabinetRoot.aspx

currently in power does have an articulated view of curriculum yet, despite its pro-conservative policy interventions, as acknowledged by a recent report by a think tank close to the party (see Gür and Çelik, 2009: 30-33). Hence, even the presence of a strong single party government, even prepared to reform education system, is not a sufficient condition for the formation of a well formulated and coherent policy agenda in education. I think, this partly stems from the fact that the single party government in Turkey emerged as a political solution to the crisis in the political system (the fight between a radical political Islam and a secular state), as well as to the socio-economic crisis, with a mission to strike a balance between an austerity program formulated in 2001 (forcing the government to pursue a zero-budget-deficit policy), and to contain the discontent of an increasingly poverty-stricken population (Mecham, 2004; Atasoy, 2008; Bayırbağ, 2009).

We will continue to build upon the above conclusions in the following section, by especially focusing on a neoliberal post-1980 period. In particular, we will analyse how the selectivities of the new education agenda shaped the policy making and implementation structure.

4.2. The selectivity question

As noted, post-crisis strategies in education, and especially those adopted during the neoliberal era have been constructed on the basis of a tri-pillar policy preference set, so as to respond to the pressures on the budget caused by structural adjustment agreements with the IMF and the World Bank: a) preference for economic policies over the social ones; b) preference for a particular policy over others within the same family of policy fields; c) preference for a particular level/section of the policy implementation structure/unit over others. Below, we shall discuss different levels of the neoliberal policy preference set, that came as a response to a major economic crisis in Turkey.[11]

Reimers, through a detailed examination of the Latin American case, convincingly argues that "education, a long-term development activity, suffered disproportionately from adjustment programs with a short-run bias" (1991: 320). In the late seventies a Latin American concensus emerged to enhance the education services of those countries by their respective governments, and this commitment and the emergent long-termed policy programs were soon hit by economic crises during the 1980s. While Turkey did not have such a strong commitment to education during the 1970s, the effect of structural adjustment programs on education policy was similar. Both Heyneman (1990) and Reimers (1991, 321) emphasise that reductions in education spending is a function of increases in the debt service of the governments, and this was especially true for Turkey. Despite the fact that the post-1980 era (until 1988), unlike the previous period, witnessed a fast increase in public investments surpassing the level of private investment. Yet, the share of education and health in such investments decreased considerably (Karahanoğulları, 2003: 264-265. See Table 4).

Table 4: Sectoral distribution of public investments (percentage)

Averages	Energy and transportation	Education and Health	Agriculture	Manifacturing
1963-1979	37,3	11,2	13,4	19,3
1980-1989	50,5	6,2	9,0	13,6

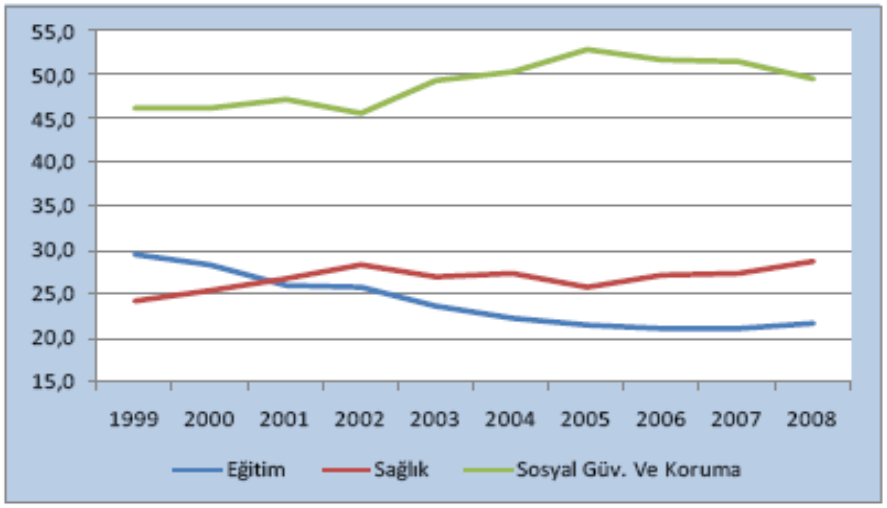
Source: Karahanoğulları, 2003: 265

[11] For a broader overview of neoliberalisation of education policy in Turkey, especially during the 2000s, see Okçabol (2007), Soydan (2007), Sayılan (2007), Acar (2008), Gül (2008), İnal (2009).

Heyneman's analysis of changes in education expenditure in a number of developing countries also support the above observation. His work indicates that in Turkey, between 1972 and 1986, central government expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure dropped from 18.1% to 11.9%, while this change was from 3.2% in 1972 down to 2.2% in health sector in 1987; and from 15.5% in 1972 to 13.5% in 1987 in defence sector. This sharp fall in government expenditures also found its reflection in the fall in per-pupil (primary school level) spending between 1980 and 1984/5, placing Turkey at the second lowest place among a list of 33 developing countries compiled by Heyneman (1990: 120). Obviously, education was one of the first areas severely affected by budgetary cut as a result of a crisis bailout program. These observations also indicate that, while fields of social policy were affected negatively by the post-crisis economic strategies, it was especially education that had to bear the consequences.

This observation about the 1980s as a post-crisis decade is also true for another post-crisis decade, the 2000s (after the international crisis of 1998 and the domestic crisis of 2001). A recent think tank report on financial policies of the government (TEPAV, 2009) indicates that during the crisis-recovery period, the share of education in total social policy expenditures has been in a state of constant decline when compared with those made for health and social security (Figure 1).[12] In fact, Table 5 and Figure 2 also support this observation.

Figure 1: The changing weight of health, social security and education in public social expenditures (%) between 1999 and 2008



Source: TEPAV, 2009: 17

[12] An empirically informed work by Poterba (1997) suggests that demographic changes could play an important part especially in affecting the balances between social security and education as two competing spending categories.

Table 5: The share of the Ministry of National Education in the amount allocated to investment in the consolidated budget

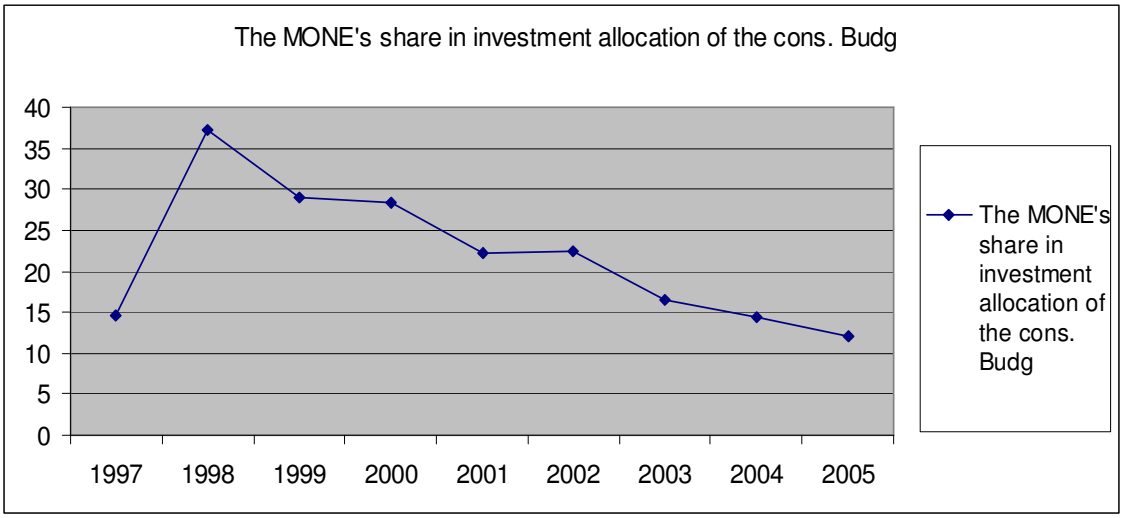
Year	Investment Allocation in the consolidated budget (1)	The investment allocation for the Ministry of N. Ed. (2)	% (2/1)
1997	524.600.000	76.884.950	14,66
1998	999.975.000	373.262.000	37,33
1999	1.410.000.000	408.341.000	28,96
2000	2.352.000.000	666.782.000	28,35
2001	3.500.000.000	779.855.000	22,28
2002	5.736.000.000	1.281.690.000	22,34
2003	8.998.500.000	1.479.050.000	16,44
2004	7.368.361.000	1.060.762.160	14,40
2005**	10.143.886.000	1.230.306.000	12,13

* 2004-2005 Data obtained from the Ministry of education

** 2005 Fiscal year estimate

Source: Karaarslan, 2005: 50

Figure 2: The MONE's share in invesment between 1998 and 2005



Source: Produced by the author, employing the data in Table 5.

Our brief analysis of the post-crisis trends in public spending indicates that it was education which had to bear the negative impact of austerity policies most, even when compared with other social policy sectors. Below, we shall discuss further how the post-crisis periods altered the policy priorities in education. We will examine how different levels of the education system have been affected, and how public spending in education has responded to crises, by concentrating on longitidunal changes in different cost categories (investment, personnel, other recurrent expenditure, transfers).

Data provided in Table 6, and Figure 3, help us to compare and contrast how public spending in primary and secondary education differed from the spending in higher education, in relation to changes in GNP. The shaded cells in column 1a indicate those years when there was a sharp fall in GNP. Although it is difficult to build a mathematical model of the relationship between GNP changes and public spending in different levels of education, especially Figure 3 clearly indicates that spending in primary and secondary education has been much more sensitive to economic fluctuations, than higher education, which might be

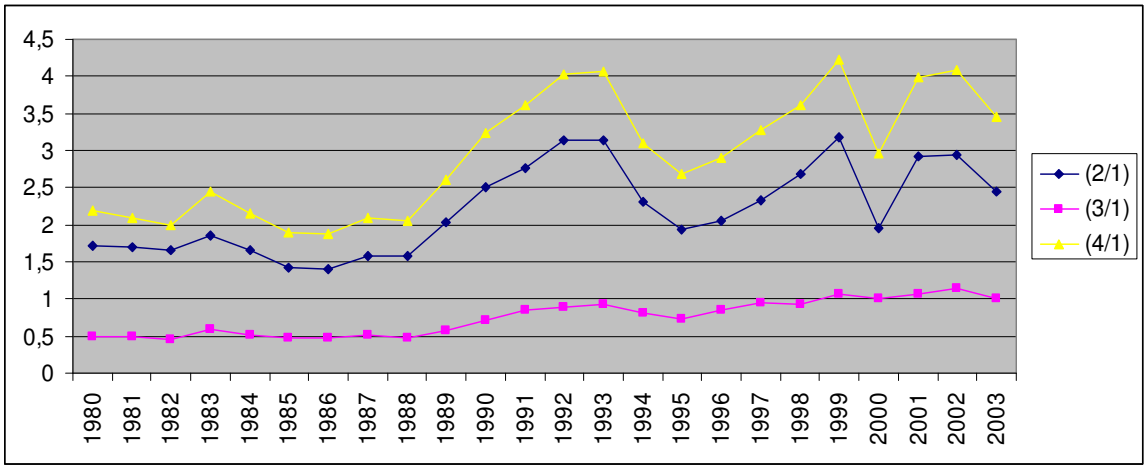
explained by differences in the bargaining power of different levels of education, as Reimers (1991) suggests.

Table 6: The share of the public expenditure on education in GNP (1980-2003)

Year	(1) GNP (1000 TL)	(1a) GNP change % (by 1987 prices)	(2) Ministry of NE budgetary spending (1000 TL)	(3) Higher Educ Council+Univ. budgetary spending (1000 TL)	(4) (2+3) Total budgetary spending on education	(5) (2/1)	(6) (3/1)	(7) (4/1)
1980	5.303	4,4	91	26	117	1,72	0,50	2,2
1981	8.023	5,7	136	40	176	1,70	0,50	2,1
1982	10.612	4,6	175	48	223	1.65	0,45	2,0
1983	13.933	4,2	259	82	341	1,86	0,59	2,45
1984	22.168	7,1	365	112	477	1,65	0,51	2,15
1985	35.350	4,3	506	167	673	1,43	0,47	1,90
1986	51.115	6,8	718	243	961	1,40	0,48	1,88
1987	75.019	9,8	1.189	384	1.573	1,58	0,51	2,10
1988	129.175	1,5	2.043	603	2.646	1,58	0,47	2,05
1989	230.370	1,6	4.711	1.308	6.019	2,04	0,57	2,61
1990	397.178	9,4	9.988	2.855	12.843	2,51	0,72	3,23
1991	634.393	0,3	17.533	5.340	22.873	2,76	0,84	3,61
1992	1.103.605	6,4	34.524	9.876	44.400	3,13	0,89	4,02
1993	1.997.323	8,1	62.725	18.438	81.163	3,14	0,92	4,06
1994	3.887.903	-6,1	89.695	31.001	120.696	2,31	0,80	3,10
1995	7.854.887	8,0	152.612	58.189	210.801	1,94	0,74	2,68
1996	14.978.067	7,1	308.669	127.065	435.734	2,06	0,85	2,91
1997	29.393.262	8,3	680.610	280.295	960.905	2,32	0,95	3,27
1998	53.518.332	3,9	1.435.675	497.801	1.933.476	2,68	0,93	3,61
1999	78.282.967	-6,1	2.481.260	830.848	3.312.108	3,17	1,06	4,23
2000	125.596.129	6,3	2.460.792	1.256.792	3.717.584	1,96	1,00	2,96
2001	176.483.963	-9,5	5.145.078	1.875.366	7.020.444	2,92	1,06	3,98
2002	273.463.168	7,8	8.043.014	3.108.077	11.151.091	2,94	1,14	4,08
2003	356.680.880	9,4	8.757.055	3.584.103	12.341.158	2,45	1,01	3,46

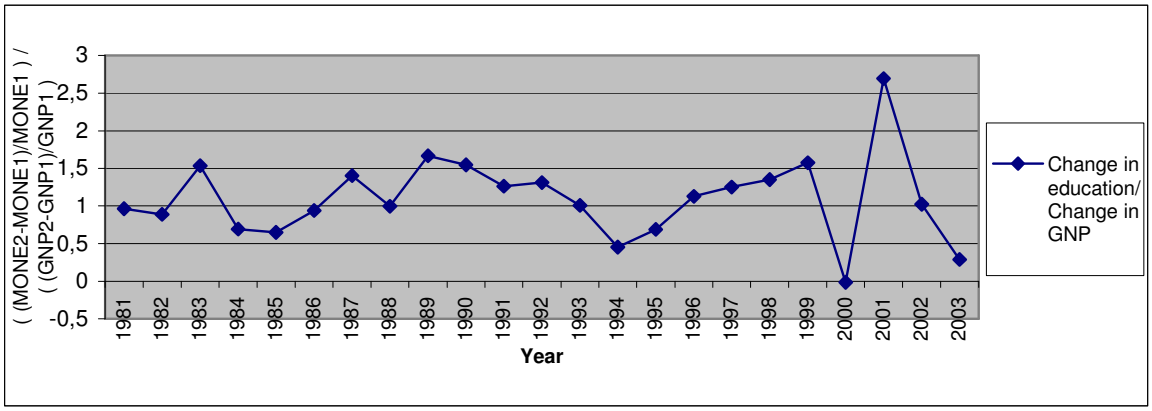
Note: a calculation mistake in row 1986 was fixed here.
Source: Baykal, 2006: 95.

Figure 3: The MONE and Higher education spending's share in GNP (1980-2003)



Source: produced by the author, employing the data in Table 6.

Figure 4: Change in MONE spending in relation to change in GNP



Note: The value is 1 where the rate of annual change in expenditure is equal to the rate of annual change in the GNP. ">1" is where former exceeds the latter, and "<1" is vice versa.

Source: produced by the author, employing the data in Table 6.

As the values shown in Figures 3 and 4 are calculated in relation to the GNP, it can be reasoned that, for example, relative increases in spending is actually a result of the spending remaining relatively constant, while the GNP takes a dive, and decreases could well be explained by increases in the GNP, again the spending being constant. There are, however, spots that do not fit into this pattern, especially where the value for a particular level of education decreases, even while the GNP takes a dive. This is especially the case with the MONE values for the post-1997 period. The unstable pattern between 1999 and 2003 indicate that especially after the international crisis in 1998 and the domestic financial crisis of 2001, the relative decrease in MONE's spending was much faster than the dropping growth rate. The increase in year 2001 actually reflects the sharp fall in the GNP in that year. Yet, after 2001, and despite the fact that the recovery started in 2002, change in the MONE spending remained well behind the change in the GNP.

It is also important to note that the new compulsory primary education act (the Basic Education Law) was passed in 1997 (4306/1997) and that it was supported by earmarked resources for investment, exempted from the changes in budgetary allocations. Thus, once the buffering effect of those earmarked sources are left aside, it is possible to argue that the real impact of a decrease in resources dedicated to education has been worse, and felt particulary on "investments in secondary education", as well as on the "salaries of teachers" at both levels of education. In fact, a recent report by the UNESCO on the impact of the 2008 crisis on education services in 10 developing countries lend support to this observation. According to the report,

> When education budgets were affected, financing for primary education remained most intact while post-primary levels experienced the most cutbacks. This is because technical/vocational and higher education tend to consume more non-salary current and capital spending, which are often the first areas to be cut. Furthermore, educational peripheral goods and services, including research and development (R&D) and national library services, are more vulnerable to budget cuts than core educational services (2009:12).[13]

[13] In fact, the table below indicates that the structure of per pupil spending in Turkey supports the conclusion in this quote.

In fact, despite that fact that non-salary items are the first ones to be hit by an economic crisis, the personnel expenditure also came under pressure, especially in a context where the invesment expenditure was secured through earmarked funding. Confirming the insights by Reimers (1991) and Mundy (2005), a World Bank report observes that:

> While the investment budget is largely financed through earmarked resources under Law 4306, personnel allocations are based on pooled government revenues and have to compete for appropriations with other claims on resources. In this sense, the MOF [Ministry of Finance] can impose certain restrictions on Personnel allocations, even if investments are properly funded (2001: 79).

Table 7 (and Figure 5) seems to lend support to the above observation. Although the values reflect the sum of expenditures of different authorities responsible for education, obviously, the personnel expenditure seems to have been under constant pressure since the iniation of neoliberal policy reforms in Turkey.

Table 7: The share of education (MONE+Higher Education Council+Universities) in the national consolidated budget expenditures (in respective categories)

Year	Recurrent	Personnel	Other recurrent	Investment	Transfer	Total
1980	27,7	39,8	7,2	10,5	1,4	16,6
1981	27,1	39,1	7,1	10,1	1,3	15,1
1982	26,6	38,9	6,8	9,6	1,2	14,7
1983	26,6	38,3	6,8	9,7	1,3	14,2
1984	25,6	38,4	6,4	7,9	3,4	14,3
1985	25,3	37,4	6,4	7,2	4,6	14,5
1986	24,6	36,9	6,0	6,6	4,8	14,1
1987	25,5	34,0	7,1	9,4	4,2	15,1
1988	26,2	34,4	7,3	14,6	3,4	16,5
1989	28,4	34,9	6,4	17,9	3,4	20,2
1990	30,5	36,0	7,8	20,7	5,7	24,1
1991	29,3	33,5	8,9	21,0	3,9	21,5
1992	30,0	34,1	8,5	31,6	5,5	24,5
1993	30,5	34,5	9,5	25,4	3,9	22,0
1994	27,8	32,7	7,9	24,6	3,3	20,1
1995	27,7	33,2	8,1	23,5	2,8	18,6
1996	27,7	34,1	7,3	23,4	2,7	17,8
1997	27,2	34,1	7,2	23,7	2,2	16,6
1998	29,1	36,4	7,5	31,5	3,4	20,5
1999	28,6	35,8	6,7	33,2	2,6	19,1
2000	27,3	34,9	6,5	29,1	2,7	18,0
2001	27,7	34,9	6,8	23,5	2,5	17,8
2002	29,0	36,1	8,4	23,3	2,1	17,5
2003	28,5	35,6	8,1	22.7	2	17,1

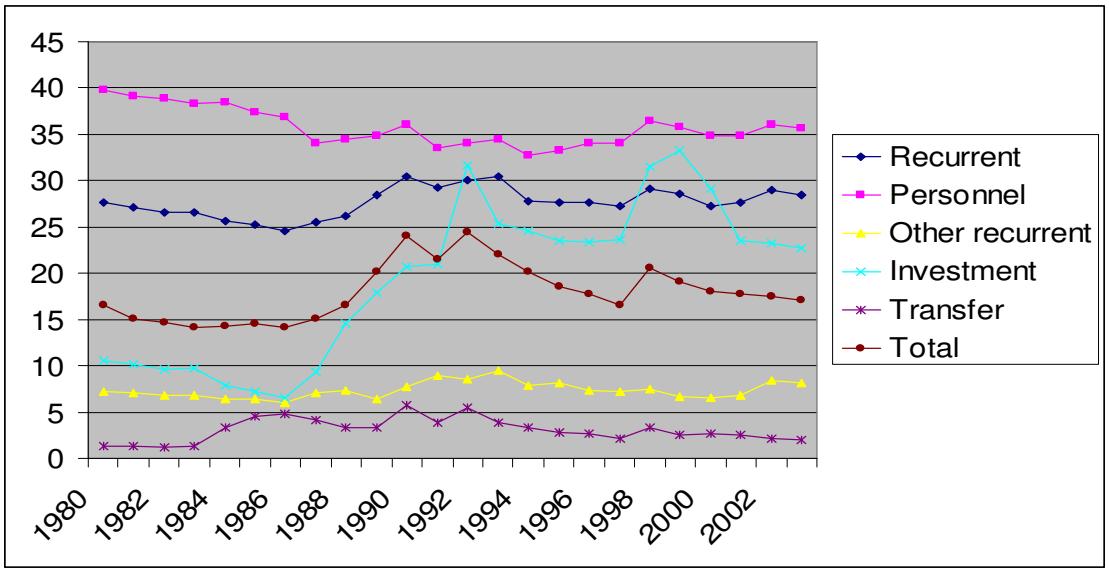
Source: Baykal, 2006: 90

Table: Public Expenditure by level of education and per-student spending for year 2002

Level of education	Amount of expenditure	Number of students	Expenditure per student
Pre-school	48.153.105	310.279	155,19
Primary education	7.278.038.742	10.175.751	715,23
Secondary education (general)	2.855.484.918	1.997.306	1.429,67
Secondary education (vocational)	1.973.376.334	980.288	2.013,06
Higher education (undergrad and grad)	6.573.911.235	1.918.483	3.426,62

Source: Baykal, 2006: 87

Figure 5: The share of education (MONE+Higher Education Council+Universities) in the national consolidated budget expenditures (in respective categories)



Source: produced by the author, employing the data in Table 7.

Interestingly enough, if we follow the reasoning introduced in Section 3 (the question of bureaucratic politics), it could be argued that the above trends could only be explained by increased political pressure on teachers and academics. Although this paper does not concentrate on the factors such as de-unionisation process of teachers, it is important to note that the increasing number of contract teachers without tenure or social security and the introduction of the teachers' ranking system (Ertürk-Keskin and Demirci, 2003; Acar, 2008) could be seen as indications towards this ever increasing pressure on teachers. Of course, salaries constitute the largest chunk of personnel expenditure. Yet, if we want to better understand how austerity policies affected the service provision process, and especially the financial deprivation of the teachers, we also have to look at how the workload of teachers has changed at different levels of education in Turkey.

Table 8 and Figure 6 suggest that the post-1980 education policies increasingly shifted the burden onto the shoulders of the high school teachers. Hence, while the salaries have increasingly come under pressure, money paid for amount of work has been relatively less, especially for general high school teachers. Here, it also has to be noted that the decrease in the number of students per teacher, especially from the year 2003/4 could partially be explained by the introduction of deputy/contract teachers policy (no tenure and social security, low paying) by the MONE (see MONE, 2009: 236), which increased the number of teachers while reducing the financial burden on the ministry's budget. Ertürk-Keskin and Demirci found that, for example, even before the temporary employment policy gained speed, during the year 2002/3, temporary teachers constituted 9% of the total workforce in education, in İstanbul (2003: 13)

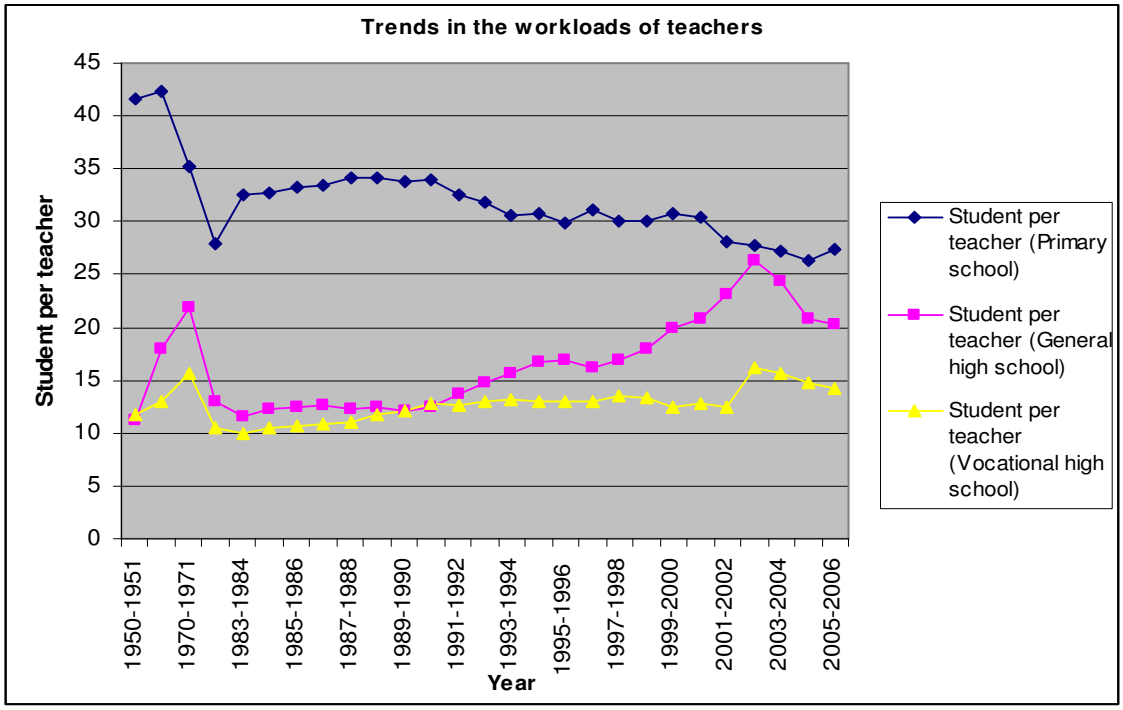
Table 8: Trends in the workload of teachers at different levels of the education system

Year	Student per teacher (Primary school)	Student per teacher (General high school)	Student per teacher (Vocational high school)
1950-1951	41,70895319	11,25895599	11,80926916
1960-1961	42,3290352	18,01374733	12,96051842
1970-1971	35,15507424	21,83795347	15,644764
1980-1981	27,84809121	12,94333962	10,53725141
1983-1984	32,5294941	11,50298426	10,04277478
1984-1985	32,80012031	12,2447268	10,45795952
1985-1986	33,28563868	12,44846178	10,61493411
1986-1987	33,45905734	12,54777664	10,76513485
1987-1988	34,06860046	12,3038359	11,0611132
1988-1989	34,11791824	12,40395548	11,76679544
1989-1990	33,80477557	12,00625858	12,18327703
1990-1991	33,9264218	12,5121363	12,81762986
1991-1992	32,5054094	13,62742558	12,63289326
1992-1993	31,75038386	14,7343067	13,05274836
1993-1994	30,55239721	15,56791104	13,1718198
1994-1995	30,6836184	16,7928064	12,9911602
1995-1996	29,90471343	16,89051403	12,97615194
1996-1997	31,15159266	16,19263361	13,04041197
1997-1998	30,0413886	16,93462885	13,43254466
1998-1999	30,00716109	17,98329222	13,38537266
1999-2000	30,84517439	19,9609336	12,50648535
2000-2001	30,37838935	20,79662107	12,77987936
2001-2002	28,11474508	23,03741342	12,5375365
2002-2003	27,67724878	26,38085252	16,24301929
2003-2004	27,27958976	24,41385379	15,72598965
2004-2005	26,32772473	20,78125503	14,81083261
2005-2006	27,37912938	20,23766584	14,29849159

Note: No direct link available on the portal. Click on the section "Sosyal ve Ekonomik Göstergeler", and then on "1950-2006", and the file name: T 8.25.xls)

Source: Produced by the author employing the data available on the State Planning Organisation's Website (www.dpt.gov.tr)

Figure 6: Trends in the workload of teachers at different levels of the education system



Source: produced by the author, employing the data in Table 8.

As for the implications of the policy interventions and spending for inequalities in education, as already noted, social justice rarely made it to the top of the priority list of the policy makers, although it was not totally out of the agenda. Yet, it looks like the Basic Education Law of 1997 seems to have changed the picture, to a certain extent. Let's first briefly touch upon the impact of this law on inequalities in education, and then discuss what this law tells us about the broader direction of education policy in Turkey. In fact, the reform seems to have helped overcoming the inequalities, at least in public spending at the level of primary schools.

> The expansion of compulsory schooling to eight years had the immediate effect of improving the distribution of public education spending across poor and rich households, at least at the primary level, where the share of expenditures for the lowest quintile of households increased from 15.8 percent in 1994 to 21.7 percent in 2001 [And the share of the richest quintile decreased, from 20.3 percent in 1994 to 13.9 percent in 20001] ... Nonetheless, secondary schooling continues to pose an equity challenge: only 13 percent of secondary school expenditures reached the poorest 20 percent of the population in 2001 [an improvement from 8.7 percent in 1994] while the richest quintile captured the highest share, 24.2 percent ... (Mete, 2005: 100; also see World Bank, 2001: 82 for the information given in brackets).

Here, few more words are needed on the motivation behind the 1997 reform. In fact, the anti-poverty orientation of the law went hand in hand with a deeper concern for the ideological basis of the secular republic. Indeed, the economic policies of the post-1980 period placed the burden on the working class. The return to populism especially after 1989 was no cure to the

problem, as the consequence was the economic crisis of 1994. The Islamist Welfare Party skilfully seized upon the masses' demand for social justice, beginning with the local elections in 1994, and capturing the government in 1995, as the major partner in a coalition government (Öniş, 1997; Mecham, 2004). Hence, the military memorandum and the subsequent anti-Islamist policies of the post-memorandum government aimed at both targets of poverty and the allegedly breeding ground of the Islamist movement: the Imam-Hatip schools (The Imam and Preacher Schools) which involved grades 5-8 and the high school. Originally established to control the teaching of Islam under the supervision of the State (in the spirit of the Law of Unity of Education – See section 4.1.), opening new Imam-Hatip schools has been effectively used by the national politicians as an election promise to garner the support of conservative voters, especially after 1950.

By extending the duration of compulsory education from 5 years to 8 years, the duration of education in these religious schools fell from 6 years to 3 years. What is more, those schools are considered to be vocational schools. In that regard a coefficient system was introduced into the centrally run national university entrance exam, which discriminate against the vocational schools by reducing the exam score of a vocational high school graduate who applies for a department falling outside the specialisation of her/his school. Thus, the aim was both to prevent the Imam-Hatip graduates attending the key universities/departments, which would allow them to capture key posts in bureaucracy and other fields of political and economic activity, and thus to render those schools unappealing to masses. Ironically enough, though, the students who attend such schools, along with other non-religious vocational high schools, are mainly from poor families. Hence, although the Basic Education Law helped redressing injustice in primary education to a certain degree, it seems to have created a deadlock for a considerable number of students from poor households in the high school system, who constitute around 1/3rd of the students in secondary education, as of 2009 (MONE, 2009: 136). What is more, it is also worthy to note that not all vocational high schools are Imam-Hatip schools. Hence, the secularity concerns seem to have contributed further injustice in the high school and university system.

Of course, our foregoing discussion mainly departed from an initial analysis of public spending. As long as private spending for education is concerned, both critiques (Ertürk-Keskin and Demirci, 2003; Ertürk-Keskin, 2004) and the analysts closer to the party in power (Gür and Çelik, 2009) note that the amount of private expenditures had already more than doubled the public spending as of 2002/3, when the neoliberal reforms began to gain speed with the coming to power of the Justice and Development Party. This very much have to do with commercialisation of education. In their field study dated 2003, Ertürk-Keskin and Demirci (2003: 37-42) detected 30 different items of private expenditure in primary and secondary education, one of the foremost being the "contribution" fee introduced in 1995 in public schools (a year after the crisis of 1994).[14] Conducting a field survey, and taking into account most common 18 private expenditure items, the authors found that a family on average paid around 1,398.15 TL as total contribution to public school funding, annually. Of course, this does not include the fees for cram schools that began to fill in the gap between the lowered quality of general high schools and highly selective university system (Gür and Çelik, 2009: 29-30; also see Table 3, Law 3035/1985).[15] The authors calculated the average annual fee for a cram school around 2,000.00 TL (the average in Ankara).

[14] The authors also cite tragic news of poor pupils not being admitted to the classes and sent back home for even smaller amounts of contribution fees. In fact, such news are still on the media, especially during the registration period, including enforcement of parents of those kids who could not pay the fees to clean the school, or to do – mainly humiliating - tasks requiring physical labour.

[15] For example, in 2003, 1,502,644 students entered the exam. According to the national examination centre, 1,171,719 students were successful, and placed into a higher education institution.

Then, it could be argued that, especially for the students in grades 10 and 11 (and after 2005 grade 12 was added) the annual total cost for a pupil's family was around 3,400.00 TL, almost equal to the annual minimum wage, 3672.00 TL (306.00*12). Hence, for the families living on minimum income, it has been impossible to send their children to cram schools, thus blocking the path to vertical social mobilisation. Again, in the same year, the income per capita in Turkey was 3,383.00 USD (http://www.belgenet.com/eko/die310304.html, accessed on 08 May 2010; and annual average exchange rate was 1 USD: 1,493 TL: http://www.ekodialog.com/istatistik/doviz_kur.html, accessed on 08 May 2010), and 5,050.82 TL. Hence, it could be suggested that even for average citizens, making the 2nd and 3rd quintile in the income distribution, it has been very difficult to send their children to the cram schools, thereby making it only possible for the upper-middle and high income groups' kids to attend such schools, and be successful in the university exam.[16] In fact, the profitability of the cram schools does not seem to have subsided, if not gained speed. The number of cram schools jumped from 2,615 in 2003 (Ertürk-Keskin and Demirci, 2003: 10) to 4,167 in March 2010 (ookgm.meb.gov.tr/rapor/html, accessed 31 March 2010).

4.3. Concluding discussion: The institutional structure, selectivity question and current reforms

Implications of incrementalism for policy implementation and social justice

It looks like the post-1980 education policy, mainly formulated and implemented in the context of a series of economic crises, seems to have placed much stress on the shoulders of secondary education, and general high schools in particular. It is also interesting to note that a strange combination of social equality concerns with a concern with the ideological roots of the country seems to have contributed towards this imbalanced structure in the education system. This imbalanced system also finds its reflection in the institutional structure of the high school system. According to Gür and Çelik, there are currently 79 different types of secondary schools functioning under six separate general directorates of the MONE. There is also a hierarchy among these different types of schools, which include special high schools giving education in English (Anatolian High Schools), the Science High Schools, etc, with differences in curriculum, classroom sizes and class hours, varying from 30 to 45 hours of classes per week in grade 12 (2009: 24-25).

I think this variation in school quality is partly a result of the experimentation policy, in an attempt to better the secondary education as a whole. Yet, it also looks like this incremental strategy backfired by resulting in new hierarchies inside an already overstretched secondary education, especially letting the general high schools stay well behind such specialised schools in the quality of education and success in university entrance exams, thereby further deepening social injustice in the education system. It also has to be noted that such special schools accept their students through another national entrance exam (in the past

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(http://www.osym.gov.tr/Genel/BelgeGoster.aspx?F6E10F8892433CFFAC8287D72AD903BEB6FAF75C3ACDF77C). Yet, 195,139 students were placed into the Open University (education from home) (http://yayim.meb.gov.tr/dergiler/sayi51/tekin.htm). So, it was 976,580 student who were accepted into real tertiary education, and it should be noted that not all high school students enter the exam, and some of the entrants are those who take the exam a second time. So, around half of the high school graduates who enter the exam are eliminated by the system.

[16] In fact, there was a recent news of tragic death of a young man committing suicide due to their debt to a cram school. As the family couldnot pay for the debt, his mother was sued and jailed, putting him into psychological depression ... In fact, such stories have been an important reason why the author of this paper decided to study education policy ...

it used to be a single exam, now taking place over a number of years, turning the grade 6-8 students also dependent on the cram schools). In that regard, it is not surprising to hear recently that the current Minister of Education, Mrs. Nimet Çubukçu, introducing the program to restructure all general high schools in Turkey as Anatolian High Schools by 2013. (http://www.cnnturk.com/2010/turkiye/05/07/duz.liseler.anadolu.lisesi.oluyor/575289.0/index.html, visited on 08 May 2010). This attempt can also be seen as an attempt to standardise the high school system, to a certain extent.

Here, one is tempted to conclude that a holistic approach to education policy could well have reduced overcrowding, waste and injustices in education policy. It looks like especially in a policy field where incrementalism is the dominant mode of policy-making and implementation, economic crises seem to have worsened the problems, ever increasing the necessity for reform and policy coordination, while rendering the endeavours for reform much more complicated, thus contributing to a vicious circle in education policy. In that regard, for example, even attempts to address inequality in education such as the busing system and regional boarding schools introduced in the underdeveloped regions of Turkey resulted in new types of social injustices and waste. According to a World Bank report,

> What is more, programs designed to enhance the access of poor children to schools, especially in eastern and southeastern anatolia, like the busing system, produced worse outcomes in that around 25,500 schools were closed during the school years of 1998/9 and 1999/2000 (11,000 and 14,500 respectively), while the pupils per teacher also increased significantly in the schools where those students were directed, thereby lowering the effectiveness of teaching in the central schools (2001: 85).

What is more, in these primary boarding schools, pupils have to leave their families at quite early ages, resulting in psychological problems, again finding their place in the media in saddening news.

Financing and decentralisation

Ironically, and despite the apparent problems associated with a fragmented and diversified implementation structure, the governments, and especially the current government, continue to create new fragmentations especially in education finance. This involves decentralisation of school funding, increasingly relying on contributions by the parents. In fact, two recent articles by Ertürk-Keskin (2005, 2008) indicate that privatisation of education finance was initially designed at the central level through a national charity organisation (Milli Eğitim Vakfı) soon after the coup d'etat of 1980 (1981) under the control of the MONE, also as a source of earmarked funding for education (the Özal government).

Yet, this centrally controlled funding mechanism eventually left its place to school based funding, especially with a protocol between the MONE and the MOF, allowing the parents' union of the schools to run the properties of the school as managers (like running the schools's front yards as parking lots when the schools are empty), dated 15 March 2004. The author rightly relates this decentralisation to the influence exercised by the World Bank on the governments, through its credit agreements (Ertürk-Keskin and Demirci, 2003; Ertürk-Keskin, 2004). I think that this shift within neoliberal approach to education finance also indicates that the governments are already overstretched in funding primary and secondary education, and were thus forced to give up on a privilige they enjoyed by centrally controlling an informal budget, which could well be utilised for clientelistic purposes by the national politicians.

Following this logic, it could also be suggested that earmarked funding (by centrally channeling either public or private sources) also has its practical limits. Given these initial observations; given the already fragmented nature of education finance in Turkey (World Bank, 2001: 76); and given the fact that private funding also seems to have reached its limits, thereby increasingly narrowing the set of real beneficiaries from the education system (deepening social injustices to the degree of harming the government's legitimacy), the governments will be forced to re-centralise and universalise the education finance (cf. Mundy, 2005: 9). Most probably, they will continue to rely on private contributions to a certain degree, but will attempt to diffuse costs by introducing mechanisms like a voucher system. Another expected, and already in progress in Turkey, development is internalisation of certain cost items like teaching material (books), thereby increasing the transfer costs (see Ertürk-Keskin and Demirci, 2003).

Given the limits to private funding, the governments have to choose between investment or personnel expenditures. Here, the current decentralisation program of government in education (for a detailed analysis see: Acar, 2008) which involves the proposals for transferring the responsibility for personnel management to provincial local governments suggest that the verdict is against teachers. Hence, it should come as no surprise that the current government is very much interested in installing the quality check schemes in service provision (like the Total Quality Management system; the educational regional scheme, and the pilot schools project), to standardise an education system on the way to be decentralised.

Dynamics of reform

So far, the article has advanced the argument that policy-making and implementation process in Turkey has been mainly incremental in nature, and that political concerns, national integrity being first and social justice second, seem to have dominated the policy agenda. Nevertheless, once these priorities continue to be implemented incrementally, especially in the context of economic crisis, the policies informed by such policies backfire, thus throwing the national governments in the middle of a hard dilemma between political legitimacy (and other political concerns) and the pressures on the budget. In fact, although essentially incremental in nature, "focused policy programs" strategically targeting certain parts of the education system could be seen effective instruments of policy change. According to Dülger, for example.

> The Rapid Coverage for Compulsory Basic Education Program", with its special provisions for poor children, is considered Turkey's largest poverty-alleviation program. The program was designed and implemented during a period of severe economic crises and short-lived coalition governments. Given economic and political instability, the government chose a "big bang" approach to basic education reform. By acting quickly, it became too difficult for potential opponents to overturn the reform or cut its financing. Yet, the approach precluded the government from building coalitions, developing more quality-enhancing components of the program, or undertaking complementary steps to assuage different interest groups and populations (2005. 146).

To reiterate this striking insight, the big-bang approach, although effective in the short term to operationalise a program in administrative and financial terms, is not politically sustainable. In other words, two major concerns emerge here, which might help us to develop a typology of public policy responses to economic crises: the scale/focus of change and the

temporal design of reform. If we re-think the above concerns in the form of a matrix, I think a typology of reform approaches/alternatives to economic crisis could be produced (Table 9).

Table 9: A suggested typology for reform approaches/alternatives in the context of economic crisis

Time dimension	**Scope and size**	
	Piecemal	**Comprehensive**
Short	(A) Incremental/eclectic modifications, additions	(C) Rationalisation attempts
Long	(B) Big-Bang approach	(D) Structural reform

We have seen that the history of policy change in education in Turkey, in response to economic crises, has been mainly piecemal, and mainly incremental (A) except for few focused interventions (B) like the once described above. Two other options, are those mainly comprehensive in nature, with different time dimensions. The option C stands for those reform attempts where the whole education system is affected (instead of choosing between different levels, for example). The interventions are made at once, and mainly into the factors such as the personnel regime and the service finance,without changing the overall institutional structure of service provision. D, albeitly, speaks for itself, and looks like the most difficult option to pursue for many governments. Yet, as we have also suggested in Table 1 the pressure on governments, especially after this latest crisis in education, will push them to pay more attention to national/social integrity and justice concerns, which definitely requires a structural reform along with a degree of standardisation in education services. In fact, according to Carpentier

> The relationship between education and economy is an evolving construct, potentially subject to continuity as well as change. .... The reversal of the relationship between education and economy after the Second World War, however, presents a challenge for the policy-makers. Received wisdom, since the 1970s, has been that public spending, including that devoted to education, must be restrained during periods of slowdown. Prior to 1945 [since the 1830s], however, evidence suggests not only that public expenditure on education *increased* during periods of economic crisis, but also that it provided a way out of crisis. (2007: 38, emphasis, original)

Given our above reasoning regarding the legitimacy challenge before the governments, it could be argued that the historical reversal in the relationship between economy and education in 1945 is once again to be reversed. Yet, this time, spending has to be reconstructed through adoption of alternative funding mechanisms given the fact that the burden of spending had already been shifted to the household budgets.

Then, which path to reform will be chosen? Şimşek has an answer,

> The ongoing reform debate in education since the early 1980s have produced three lines of reform proposals: decentralization, choice and privatization, and systemic

> reform ... we have most likely exhausted the creative energy of educators and policy makers to frame the crisis in abstract terms and to develop working models to resolve the crisis. There is enough evidence that implementation of these three reform proposals for change have been proceeding at full speed internationally, the rest of the reform efforts in the coming years will most likely be concentrated around further implementation, revision, and perfection." (22)

Hence, according to him, even if there is to be a reform, it will increasingly be more pragmatic in nature, falling into cell (A). In fact, the history of education policy in Turkey confirms this insight, to a certain degree. Nevertheless, we have also seen that this pragmatism is not a product of this current era, and nor was there a lack of active interventions of the sort discussed earlier. Moreover, we cannot simply assume that policy change stems from the wishes or creativity of educators or policy-makers, leaving aside the social and political function of education. Apparently, there will always be social pressure on education and education policy. Here, I would like to benefit from another insight by Şimşek, who conceives the reform process itself as a chaotic one (2000:1), to argue that the politics of reform, and especially bureaucratics politics (the role played by teachers and educators), could well play a critical role in the formulation of new alternatives, or in forcing the policy-makers to adopt a certain reform strategy, in the midst of chaos. Hence, further analysis of the impact of economic crises on public policy and administration, particularly in the field of education, should pay further attention to the bureaucratic politics of reform.

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