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TÜRKİYE'DE EĞİTİMİN VE EBEVEYNLİĞİN NEOLİBERAL DÖNÜŞÜMÜ

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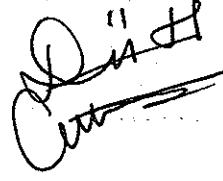
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ABSTRACT

It appears that there has been substantial progress in the attainment of the educational goals at a global scale on the basis of the conventional indicators of human development measures. Literacy levels and the percentage of the population which has access to the basic education improved dramatically since the 1950s. However, the same period has also witnessed commodification of the education and the rise of the perception of education not as a right stemming from citizenship but as an individual consumption item with the retreat of the welfare state after 1980s. Critiques of the approaches which focus on the impacts of the neoliberalization of education claim that privatization remained limited in the area of education compared to the other sectors subject to neoliberal reforms. This thesis, on the contrary, argues that neoliberal transformation of education goes beyond privatization of schools; and conceptualizes neoliberal transformation as a wider process, which shapes the perceptions of education and parenting around the notion of preparing the individuals to the necessities of the market. It tries to understand whether neoliberalization policies indeed changed the perceptions of education and parenting in Turkey although the number of private schools remained limited. In accordance with this objective, it focuses on the primary education, which aims to teach how to read, write, and convey basic mathematical skills rather than market-related qualifications. It analyzes the primary school preferences of families with similar socio-economic profiles and living in the neighborhoods with similar cultural and income levels. Why do some parents send their children to the private primary schools despite the availability of qualified public schools in their vicinity? With the same coin, why do some parents prefer the public schools although they can afford private primary schools? What are the similarities and differences between these two groups of families in terms of their perceptions of education and parenting? Research based on in-depth interviews indicate that neoliberal policies indeed changed the perceptions of education and parenting in Turkey despite the fact that privatization in education remained relatively limited. It is observed that the perceptions of education and parenting are similar among the private school and public school parents; that both groups have expectations from education compatible with the market requirements yet they choose different mechanisms.

ÖZET

İnsani gelişim ölçütlerinin geleneksel göstergelerine bakıldığında eğitim hedeflerine ulaşılması konusunda azımsanamayacak bir ilerleme kaydedildiğini görülmektedir. Okur-yazarlık düzeyleri ve temel eğitime erişimi olan nüfusun yüzdesi 1950'lerden bugüne çarpıcı ölçüde artmıştır. Ancak bu süreç 1980'lerde sosyal devletin gerilemesiyle birlikte eğitimin metalaşmasına ve eğitimin bir vatandaşlık hakkı olarak değil de bireysel tüketim ürünü olarak algılanmaya başlanmasına tanıklık etmiştir. Eğitimde neoliberalleşmenin etkilerine odaklanan yaklaşımları eleştirenler neoliberal reformlar yapılan diğer alanlarla karşılaştırıldığında eğitimdeki özelleştirmenin sınırlı kaldığını iddia etmektedir. Bu tez bilakis eğitimdeki neoliberal dönüşümün okulların özelleştirilmesinin ötesinde olduğunu savunarak neoliberal dönüşümü eğitimle ve ebeveynlikle ilgili algıları bireyleri piyasanın ihtiyaçlarına göre hazırlama görüşü etrafında şekillendiren daha geniş bir süreç olarak kavramsallaştırmaktadır. Çalışma özel okulların sayısının sınırlı kalmasına rağmen neoliberal politikaların Türkiye'deki eğitim ve ebeveynli algılarını değiştirip değiştirmediğini anlamayı hedeflemektedir. Bu hedef doğrultusunda piyasa ile ilgili vasıflardan ziyade okuma yazmayı öğrenme ve temel matematik becerilerini edindirmeyi amaçlayan ilkökul eğitime odaklanılmaktadır. Benzer sosyo-ekonomik özelliklere sahip ve kültürel-gelir bakımından benzer semtlerde oturan ailelerin ilkökul tercihleri incelenmektedir. Neden bazı aileler evlerinin yakınında kaliteli eğitim veren devlet okulları mevcut olduğu halde çocuklarını özel ilkökullara göndermektedir? Öte yandan neden bazı aileler çocuklarını özel ilkökullara gönderebilecek gelire sahipken devlet okullarını tercih etmektedir? Bu iki grup ailenin eğitim ve ebeveynlikle ilgili algıları arasında ne tür benzerlik ve farklılıklar gözlemlenmektedir? Derinlemesine görüşmeler yoluyla yapılan araştırma eğitim alanındaki özelleştirmenin sınırlı kalmasına rağmen neoliberal politikaların Türkiye'de eğitim ve ebeveynlikle ilgili algıları değiştirdiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Çocuklarını ilkökulda özel okula gönderen ailelerle devlet okuluna gönderen ailelerin eğitim ve ebeveynlikle ilgili algılarının benzer olduğu; her iki grubun da piyasanın ihtiyaçlarına uygun bir eğitim süreci beklentisine sahip olduğu; ancak farklı yöntemlerle hareket ettikleri görülmektedir.

Introduction

We are living in the neoliberal age which gained paradigmatic status since the 1970s. The rise of neoliberalism is not limited to privatization. The changes brought by neoliberal economic policies has also transformed every aspect of life as the changing relations in economy altered the social and political relations. Its paradigmatic position, maybe more importantly, transformed the perceptions of people in terms of what is a right and what is a privilege to be purchased. Education is one of the fields which cuts across the economic, social and political concerns hence it is both influenced from the macro level transformations and in turn transforms the society further. Mass education started as religious education, then expanded to contain sciences and philosophy, and eventually became a key area in the nation-building processes. The overall understanding of the function of education in constructing palatable citizenship has been adopted by the nation-states (Tröhler 2016). The way the function of education is conceptualized by the public authorities is also accompanied by an idea that education is a right which should be provided by the state. When education is considered as a fundamental right, parents expect the state to provide high quality education either free of charge or in an affordable manner. Main perception of education in the society in terms of its functions and importance also shape their attitudes towards the type of education that their children will get and this in return affects the perception of proper parenting. The perception of parenting in this context, evolved accordingly, leaving education of children to the schools and focusing on the task of caring and rearing.

More recently, the function of education is redefined by the public authorities to include making of the palatable consumers and employees in addition to being good citizens (Doherty 2007). This is also mirrored in the public perceptions. In the contemporary period, the perception of education shifted from being a right to being a privilege for the few who can afford better education. The contemporary parents want their children to be “global citizens” and to become persons who can respond better to the requirements of the new socio-economic order; and, they appear to be ready to mobilize every available resource to achieve these targets. They try to send their children to the best school that they can afford, add private tutoring classes to their schedules; and, try to transfer their own skills to their children during the time that they spend at home after work. In a way, the social responsibilities previously assumed to be the responsibilities of the public authorities have become the responsibilities of parents. Even child poverty is redefined to be a responsibility of the poor families to tackle with, as child poverty

is considered to be the fault of the parents rather than the wider system. In this context, parenting has become ‘austerity parenting’, trying to find personal resources for resolving economic and educational problems of their children without expecting much from the state (Simpson, Lumsden, and Clark 2015).

One might think that neoliberalization in education is more relevant for the developed countries in Europe and North America as neoliberal policies successfully adopted in full scale. With the same coin, it might be argued that education, especially compulsory education, would remain mostly public in the developing countries due to the lower levels of household income. However, the interconnectedness of the global economy makes these arguments implausible. While it is true that privatization of schools has been at a lower scale in the developing countries, similar discursive and practical approaches also dominate the poor societies. Neoliberalization at the global scale diversified the country experiences and created uneven outcomes (Harvey 2005); the protracted cases of neoliberalization had different problems. In other words, in the countries where neoliberalization of education remained relatively limited, we can speak of more different practices and outcomes rather than the absence of its impacts.

The initial efforts for making structural reforms to enable neoliberalization in Turkey emerged in late 1970s via putting pressure on the labor organizations so that the forthcoming policies would not be obstructed by the social opposition. The coup d’etat of 1980 has been crucial in this respect; and, neoliberal policies were put into effect as early as 1983. Since early 1980s, the efforts to minimize the economic initiatives of the state through privatization, expanding liberalization in trade and commerce, and attracting foreign investment have continued consistently despite brief periods of interruption. However, neoliberalization process remains far from completed. It is also very difficult to claim that neoliberalization policies accomplished the predefined targets. Current account deficit, low productivity in agriculture and industry, continued unemployment, and deteriorating income distribution continue to be major economic problems (Murat, et al. 2014). In this context, deterioration in the equality of opportunity due to the increasing income inequality has been most critical in the health and education areas (Şenses 2016, p. 26).

The impact of neoliberal policies on education in Turkey; however, should be approached from a critical perspective. On the one hand, it is possible to establish that increased exposure to the market forces eventually makes it more difficult for the children from low income families to receive good education; and then in return remained disadvantaged in the job market. On the other hand, the nature of neoliberal policies in Turkey should be taken into account to

understand the broader consequences. Similar to the American and English cases, neoliberalization of education has progressed under the influence of neoconservatism (Hill 2013). On the one hand, the military establishment which viewed political Islam as the biggest threat of 1990s, forced the governments to adopt educational policies that will secure the state control over the first eight years of education. This dynamic limited privatization in education until 2000s. Yet, the aim of making palatable citizens – secular, but nationalist and conservative – is maintained just like the marketization of the function of education did (Ercan 1980). On the other hand, neoliberalization of education gained a new momentum with the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP) governments in the sense of increased number of private schools, providing state subsidies to private education facilities and transforming the curriculum with more conservative-religious elements (Gök, 2004). It should be noted in this context that the political concerns of the subsequent governments since 2002 also led to massive state control over education. By the end of 2018, percentage of students in private schools is around 7.5 % and the number of private schools doubled in the last four years (Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı Strateji Geliştirme Başkanlığı 2018, p. 54). This ratio of private schools in Turkey is substantially lower than the average in Europe and the United States. However, other statistics reveal that capital investment in private institutions is dramatically higher than the corresponding expenditure in public institutions. In fact, capital expenditure in private institutions in Turkey is more than double of the OECD average (“Education at a Glance 2018: OECD Indicators” 2019, p. 310).

How can we assess the extent and impact of neoliberalization in education in Turkey within this context? Does the relatively lower percentage of private schools in Turkey indicate that the impact of neoliberalization on education so far remains limited? Or does it simply signify a different path than the other and more affluent societies? This thesis aims to understand the dynamics of the multilevel transformation in the education policies as well as in the perceptions of education and parenting in Turkey. It presumes that transformation of both the education policies and parenting are influenced from the neoliberal policies despite the relatively more limited level of privatization in education. The thesis focuses on the primary education in Turkey specifically. The primary education is more about learning how to read, write and basic mathematical skills rather than acquiring qualifications, which would be required by the market in the adult life. Hence, the impact of neoliberal education policies should be minimal at this level. In fact, the percentage of private primary school students among all students in formal education at the primary level is barely more than 4.5%, nearly half of the total percentage of

private school enrollment. If research finds that neoliberal policies have had impact on the perception of education and parenting even at the primary school level, this might contribute to our understanding of the transformation of education in Turkey and expand our insight into the effects of neoliberalism beyond privatization of schools.

Specifically speaking, why do some parents prefer to send their children to the private schools even at the primary education level even when they have access to relatively good quality public primary schools in their neighborhood? From another perspective, why do some parents with similar socio-demographic and economic background prefer to send their children to public primary schools, although they can afford private primary schools as well? The answer to these interrelated questions is important to understand the perceptions of the parents of education and parenting. The study presumes that preferring private or public schools at the primary education level might be more about perceptions rather than the objective level of privatization in education in this context.

The thesis starts with the transformation of perceptions and policies of education in a historical context. It discusses how the public education has become a norm in Europe and how the authorities and parents perceived the function of education. It then moves on to discuss how private education became a better alternative to public education in the eyes of the governments and people. Maybe, more importantly it questions how the perception of the function of education changed in this process. In this context, the thesis reviews the literature on the impact of the rise of neoliberalism as a paradigm on the perceptions and policies of education.

The main inquiry of the thesis is related to parenting and neoliberalization. Therefore, two groups of parents will be identified. The parents will be selected from similar background, in terms of their education and income level and their having access to the high quality public primary schools in the neighborhood that they live. By this way, the study tries to eliminate the factors such as finding a good public school in the vicinity, and the factors related to the background of the parents. The questionnaire for the in-depth interviews are prepared on the basis of the focused literature review and in a semi-structured fashion. However, the analysis of the interviews is made in accordance with the method of the grounded theory. Then, the study concludes by the discussion of findings in relation to neoliberal transformation of education and parenting.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Perceptions and Policies Regarding Education in a Historical Context

Education largely remained as a field under the control of the church in Europe until the 18th and 19th centuries; limited mostly to literacy acquisition and reading of the religious texts. It was also not common and universal. Local authorities and the local parishes affiliated with the major church provided education at the primary school level (Ansell and Lindvall, 2013, p. 507). Emerging nation-states in Europe started to expand their control over the education system from the late-18th century onwards, which contributed to the already existing conflicts between the states and churches. In this period, it should also be kept in mind that the term education remained limited to the primary school, which also forms the focus in this study. Three major developments in this period are considered to be the key aspects of the conflict over education between the states and the churches: centralization, secularization and subsidization (Ansell and Lindvall, 2013, p. 507). Accordingly, the nation-building process required the centralizing states to take control over the local rules and local religious authorities; secularization attempts of the states in terms of weakening the power of the religious authority made education as a key sector for gaining societal control, and in this context, the states became more willing to spend on public education. Overall, mass schooling or in other words, public primary education, is considered to be a part of centralization and secularization policies of the nation-building process. Studies based on this approach also point out that education, as part of nation-building process did not remain limited to the 18th and 19th centuries, in fact continued in the post-Second World War period (Telhaug, et al. 2004). Centrality of secularization to the expansion of public primary schools has been more contested.

The existing research on the European countries tend to take secularization as a key aspect. Reeh argues that not only education but also religious education was shaped by the state interests in the 18th century (Reeh, 2009). There is also research, which provides supporting evidence that this link between education and secularization was not limited to only a few cases; but rather has spread over Europe beginning at the same period (Mayrl, 2011). Scholars also extend this view toward the development of modern education system in the United States where nation-building efforts of the American states lead to the expansion of mass schooling without a strictly secularization attempt. While some findings emphasize the conflict between rival political and religious authorities in the expansion of mass schooling in the American

states (C. Smith 2003); others claim that state authorities collaborated with selected religious groups such as evangelical Protestantism (Meyer, et al. 1979).

Another line of approach underlines the importance of the economic transformation and urbanization, which came with the Industrial Revolution. Accordingly, education became a key issue because, educated and disciplined labor force have become a need. The studies in this context do not exclude the importance of secularization. Instead, they point out that secularization and the emergence of nation-state went hand in hand with the rise of capitalist economy; and they place the transformation of the policies and perceptions regarding education within this particular and multilayered context. Contemporary societies want to have social returns from the public education like “*instilling patriotic values, developing a sense of community, inhibiting criminal and other antisocial behavior, providing a common language and cultural norms that improve the efficiency of communication and economic transactions, and providing young citizens with the tools to become informed, sensible voters.*” (Gradstein, et al, 2005, p. 3). From the perspective of the parents, this brought a change in the perception of education from a teaching of moral and religious values to a way of providing their children with the necessary social and economic skills in the job market. In other words, the societal importance of education was recognized by the states and the states started to constitute policies in this direction (Gradstein, et al. 2005, p. 11); the parents also started to see education from a similar perspective. This perception of education also influenced the perception of proper parenting. The parents started to perceive education both as an investment and as their own responsibility to provide the best education in addition to the education opportunities provided by the states.

The history of public and private schools is intertwined with these processes. It is interesting that private education in the form of private schools and tutoring actually precedes public education. In fact, compulsory public education and state funding of education did not become a widely accepted norm until the 16th century and the Protestant Reformation. The moral aspect of raising the young generations as palatable and devout members of the society can be considered as a continuation of the church domination of the education. After the Industrial Revolution, however, the emphasis shifts from a moral aspect to more pragmatic concerns although the moral concerns were not totally abandoned. Adam Smith defended that public education has to be compulsory, free and has to be based on moral values (Smith, 2019). In the eighteenth century, Prussia made education compulsory, started to train teachers and founded its Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs in 1817, which shows the historical link

between school and church even if Prussia was a secular autocratic state. While teaching, reading and writing; schools also had social impact on society and taught national identity concept and local administrators see the schools as an opportunity to assimilate Polish population into German culture. In the period of German unification, some groups thought that the impact of church on state schools are decreasing and this thought started protests for the changes in the education system. In France, in the early nineteenth century the centralized education system is founded by Napoleon, with the aim of creating a single national identity. Elementary education became free, universal and compulsory with the Ferry Law in 1882. In the United States, education was not centralized as Europe and remained under the control of the local administrators. Before the American Civil War, egalitarian education reform movement started and the movement has increased the involvement in the education. In that period, the system was not egalitarian for African Americans, there was discrimination in public education, but the goal was to have an egalitarian system also including all migrants and provide them education. In Africa and Asia, public education is also used for nation building process like some European countries. In 1970s, many African and Asian countries made education compulsory and free for elementary level (Gradstein, et al. 2005). Hence, education as part of secular nation-state building process required founding compulsory public schools all over the world despite the differences in terms of timing and system. Return of the private schools in this context and privatization of public education in this context implies that the needs of the states and their economies changed. Specifically speaking, while consolidation of the market capitalism and the nation-state required establishing compulsory public education in its early stages; globalization and the rise of neoliberalism changed the policies and perceptions once again.

1.2.The Rise of Neoliberalism and Education

Before discussing the change in the perception and policies of education in the sense of privatization of public education, education becoming a market commodity and the change in the parenting in this regard, we need to clarify how neoliberalism is conceptualized in this study as there are multiple definitions and understandings. Broadly speaking, neoliberalism is defined as the revival of the economic theories whose origins lay in the works of Adam Smith, and in which a positive attitude towards a self-regulating market and a minimal state continues to have a central place (Munck, 2005). Although the term started to be used since 1950s, it became a central concept in late 1980s. The attempt to redefine neoliberalism involves a critical approach.

Within the critical studies of neoliberalism, it is emphasized that monetarism is central to the new form of market capitalism, and state is attributed a new role in economy; but not for the sake of correcting for the market failures rather to ensure that a whole set of institutions ranging from the military to the legal framework will endorse the functioning of the market (Harvey, 2007). In this way, neoliberalism is not only about the technical organization of production and market system, but also political organization of every issue that affects human life. Defining neoliberalism as a “free-market project” makes the theory unilateral and the political side of the theory is deficient in that definition. With a critical view to neoliberalism, the notion has ideological and institutional meanings, which affects the policies -not only in the economic sphere- in every aspect of daily life (Peck, et al. 2018). In the economic area, neoliberalism can act like classical capitalism, which is based on exploitation between ruling class and the poor society. Additionally, neoliberal system has also political exploitation between social classes (Davidson, p. 55).

As the thesis focuses also on the perceptions of education and parenting beyond the economic implications of neoliberal transformation, studies which try to understand how the economic change brought a political-individual change also requires clarification. In this regard, Foucault provides an avenue which we can merge with the criticisms of the neoliberal economic theories. A line of research builds on the lectures of Michel Foucault in the late 1970s on neoliberal governmentality. According to Foucault, neoliberal governmentality is about creating people who govern themselves and become “homo economicus” -economic man- who aims to be entrepreneurs of themselves and make rational choices for themselves (Foucault, et al, 2008). Therefore, when they cannot be successful enough, it would be their fault. Thereby, neoliberalism becomes an everyday practice rather than a theory. Because it mixes public and private, private and personal. The profit that public would have also becomes a person’s profit in the system for the reason that a person becomes entrepreneur of her/himself also serves to the neoliberal order’s necessities. It is also about privatization of public services, like hospitals, schools and prisons. When these institutions became profit-making places, a person who cannot afford health and education services have her/his standard of life decreased. Neoliberalism has the tendency to minimize state power and governmentality and attributes the governing role to the market, because it becomes the determinant factor of the system. Hamann mentioned that economic man is not a “natural being”, therefore it is socially constructed within the market system and it has its own actions as an individual (Hamann, 2009, p. 42). In the discussion on neoliberalism and human capital notion, Foucault mentioned that “human capital” includes

every issue that a person has in her/his package, like genetic factors, skills, knowledge, educational background, nutrition etc. Thereby, economic man is about “the strategic programming of individuals’ activity”. In other words, neoliberalization is not a political transformation but the transformation of the perception of human nature and social existence. As Foucault compared liberalism and neoliberalism, the market in liberal system is about exchange, but in the neoliberal system, it is about competition. Therefore, the meaning of the market has also changed within the neoliberal context. The notion of “human capital” and becoming self-entrepreneurs has become the main issue. Foucault also mentioned the notion of governmentality, which is about self-governing and “homo juridicus”. Because “homo economicus” are governing themselves not with the rights and laws, but with interests and investment in the competitive system. Thereby, neoliberalism make capitalism seen as the only possible economic system, because it has changed the perception of human nature (Read, 2009).

When we combine discussions on both the economic theory of capitalism and its impact on the way the people begin to see themselves and the socio-economic order; privatization of public education and changing perceptions of education and parenting emerge as interconnected developments. In the age of global neoliberalism, in both the developed and developing world, states started to delegate their responsibility of providing education. This, on the one hand, results in the erosion of the function of education to create equality and enable social mobility through education. On the one hand, the changing school structures and education policies with neoliberalism across the world, on the other hand, the emergent competitive market in the education system bring social inequality and exclusion (Hill and Kumar, 2012). As the supportive role of state institutions change, the educational institutions’ role become, producing –actually reproducing- the working class within the capitalist system. In the capitalist system, especially after 1980s neoliberal free-market era, unequal distribution of wealth continues increasing. While it is increasing, the notion of education becomes an area of business to make profit, termed as ‘edu-business’ by Hill (2006).

In the present situation, state is not the only provider of the education, so there are other education alternatives in the market that parents can choose to send their children. This retreating of the state from providing free education for every child is named as “anti-public-welfare strategy”. Thereby, education started to be privatized and became a profit-making market in the globalized neoliberal world. In the neoliberal world, the first concern is not about public good but about profit in the market of every issue about public services. Therefore, to integrate in the neoliberal system, there is a need of procurement of a market in goods and

services, including the education sector. Cox said, “Theory is always for someone or for some purpose.” Therefore, the theory of neoliberalism is also *for someone or for some purpose*. (Cox, 1981). As education became a commodity once again, being able to afford better education also became a privilege before the expansion of compulsory public education; but in this new period, it also shaped the people’s perceptions of institutions including schools. Specifically speaking, if education served capitalism in earlier periods for reproducing the labor force and disciplining it; education in the age of neoliberalism serves for providing only the skills that the market would require and disregard other skills (Hill, 2010). In the curriculum, cultural and human-centered issues are started to be seen as insignificant or unimportant unless they serve to some purpose in the neoliberal economic system (Manteaw, 2008).

This in turn results in the fact that many people do not accuse the deficiencies of the education system or economic crisis as failures of capitalism, rather they try to compensate as parents what they cannot get from the available public education system either by turning to private schools or purchasing extra skills in addition to public school system. Besides, the new globalized neoliberal world has increased social inequality within and between states. When neoliberal system created a market for education, it also created inequalities between schools. This competition, marketization and privatization of school system started in England with conservative government in 1978 and then has spread across Europe (Hill and Kumar, 2012, p. 15–16).

Interestingly, even the attempts of education reforms tend to adopt similar attitudes of approving the new function of education in the neoliberal age. In 2002, an education reform named “No Child Left Behind” entered into force in USA, with a thought that it is necessary to have supportive reforms in the neoliberal globalized system to maintain the continuance of education process. This reform “NCLB” had a goal of reconceptualizing the purpose of education. The main aim is to have a more democratic education and societal system. Hursh mentioned that “NCLB” is a part of a larger change in social policies within the global economy of the world, to make a more accountable system in the neoliberal context. This is also related to how people think of their children’s education and their own parenting responsibilities. Hursh quoted Foucault’s perspective about neoliberalism’s return as that everyone becomes “entrepreneurs of themselves” (Hursh, 2007). Parents are trying to raise their children as competitive individuals and trying to make them gain niche skills, which could make them different from others. Thereby, when they grow up, they could become like a “stock corporation” and acquire competitive advantages in the inevitably neoliberal system. According

to Peters, neoliberal system “responsibilises individuals for investing in their own education” and this situation created inequality for the “structurally disadvantaged people” as it is giving more responsibility to individuals for investing themselves and make their own choices in every issue such as health, security and education (Peters, 2001). The competitive education system is seen as a key for future national prosperity and yet, it should not be seen as a reconstruction of the society but as a way of creating free self-rule individuals. In the globalized economy, with education, individuals could compete with other countries’ citizens and it is also seen as a good result of the competitive education system which people take their countries a step further. In this context, the transformation in the education system is a part of the notion of “enterprise culture” and this notion aims to develop the countries in terms of education, science and technology in 1990s within this broader framework (Peters, 2001, p. 65).

The American case provides a striking example in this regard. The United States, as a leading country of the neoliberal system, changed its education policies accordingly and defined increasing its citizens’ economic productivity as the first goal of the education. Therefore, their citizens will have a responsibility to change the conditions in the globalized free-market. In the U.S., education became a market gradually, for example; began in the form of providing public funding to the private schools. These schools known as the charter schools are mostly aiming to prepare “economically productive employees” at the same time reproducing and exacerbating the social inequalities (Hursh and Martina, 2003, p. 31–32). Schools fight for their consumers in the market, and vice versa, the parents and students fight for the best schools, which can prepare children to the competitive economic system that they will be work for in the future. It is not difficult to deduce that the losers of this competition will be disadvantaged later in the job market. The relation of privatization of public education to the parenting can be explained largely on the way the neoliberal reforms undermined the perception that free and compulsory education is a right. Tomasevski embraced the subject within laws, “*International human rights law defines education as a human right; international trade law defines it as a service.*” International human rights force the state to provide free and compulsory education, especially at the primary level (Tomasevski, 2005). This free and compulsory education should be for all children in all ages and in the quality that will abolish the inequalities which comes from their family’s economic background. International organizations such as UNESCO emphasizes the right to education. As it is quoted: “*Article 26 of the 1949 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) asserts, “Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be*

compulsory.” and “The 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) codifies the right to education, stating in Section 13 that primary education “shall be compulsory and available free to all” and that secondary education “shall be made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education.” There are also still attempts to put sanctions in this regard. An important example of the sanctions can be found in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is effective since 1989. *“Article 28 - Right to education: All children have the right to a primary education, which should be free. Wealthy countries should help poorer countries achieve this right. Discipline in schools should respect children’s dignity. For children to benefit from education, schools must be run in an orderly way – without the use of violence. Any form of school discipline should take into account the child’s human dignity. Therefore, governments must ensure that school administrators review their discipline policies and eliminate any discipline practices involving physical or mental violence, abuse or neglect. The Convention places a high value on education. Young people should be encouraged to reach the highest level of education of which they are capable.”* (UNICEF, 1989). As it is written in the article, the Convention promotes states to support each other economically about free education on primary level.

Nevertheless, the free-market does not work in a right based perspective and does not provide a protection mechanism for disadvantaged people, especially the children who faced poverty (Tomasevski, 2005, p. 4). As Davies and Bansel quote Peters about the bringing of neoliberalism; “there is nothing distinctive or special about education or health; they are services and products like any other, to be traded in the marketplace” (Davies and Bansel, 2007). Compulsory education is still partly supported by the states, generally at the primary school level. However, primary schools have also become a profit-making commodity. Even if it is free and compulsory, in many countries, the state schools -even at the primary level- requires some amount of money annually (Tomasevski, 2005). The most important issue that Tomasevski mentioned is that if free public education is guaranteed for all the children, parental choice can be exercised, but when the public education has the meaning of *poor education for the poor*, it is not choosing, therefore we cannot say parental choice can be exercised in this context because the amount of money that parents must pay for the public schools, which is called direct charges, are obligatory for the schooling of their children. (Tamoasevski, 2005, p. 14-22). Although it is not really choosing in the literal meaning of the word, within this framework, the school choice becomes a “parental choice” in terms of the perception of

education in the eyes of the states and the society. (Lakes and Carter, 2011). When the states are not the first providers of education, schools become different in their qualities. Therefore, when school choice becomes a parental choice, it includes the neighborhood they live in, the economic conditions they have and their education level. Thereby, the social inequality in all societies rises within the neoliberal education system and parenting acquires a new responsibility of providing for their children's becoming competitive in the market. The self-improvement notion of the neoliberal world influences the perceptions of proper parenting (Wilson 2007). Both the states and the individuals view the parents as chiefly responsible for the education and training of their children in every area, and this situation creates social inequalities, because not all the citizens have the same cultural and economic background to develop themselves to adapt into the requirements of the new conditions. It is also important to note that neoliberalism does not produce or even searches solutions for the necessary changes in the social problems, like inequality and poverty. With the self-improvement concept, unemployment and poverty can be read also as individuals' own responsibility (Wilson, 2007, p. 97-98).

The role of parenting changes a child's developmental progress. The socio-economic background, family background forms the parenting concept of a parent. Culture determines the society's type of parenting, because culture shapes the moral values of families. Thereby, parenting is not only about behaviors, it is also about parents' perspective of raising their children. The socio-economic background of parents changes their behaviors to their children. In higher level of socio-economic backgrounded parents' it is seen that they have positive and peaceful parenting approach, it is also valid when the educational background is high. Parenting changes among urban and rural. Especially, in Turkey, the fathers' perspectives change as traditionalist is rural and modernist in urban when generalized (Sen, et al. 2014). Actually, parenthood concept changed within the neoliberal transformation of every area of life. Parents started to invest more on their children in every aspect, not only with money, but they started to give their time and attention more than old generation's given attention and amount of time to themselves. Research on parenting finds that working mothers today are spending time to their children as much as stay-at-home mothers in 1970s (Miller, 2018). Fathers also increased the time they are spending and giving attention to their children, but still mothers are spending much more time and effort than the fathers like old generations. While this has positive consequences on the children, it also takes the burden of child raising from the state and gives it to the parents. Since 1990s, it has become increasingly common among the upper middle-

class families to pay for extracurricular activities such as piano, soccer, swimming even when they are paying for schooling. Parental investments to their children are changing according to their social class. Also, their investment to their children's education is changing according to their educational attainment. The time parents spend on their children is also changing according to their class and income. Therefore, income and class are acting correlated while the time and money spending by parents on children are observed. When the educational attainment and income level are higher, parents tend to spend more time and money on their children. It cannot be seen as income inequality is the main reason that parental investment is changing according to parents' classes but it is a data that should be considered. It is also about parents' cultural background, beliefs and expectations (Schneider, et al. 2018). Actually, the parents who choose "quality" over "quantity" have the tendency of having fewer children and give all their time and money spending opportunity to the children that they are not having difficulties while spending their money and time. Therefore, the parental time spending is about their family sizes, but there is not enough data to talk about the relation between money spending and family sizes (Kornrich and Furstenberg, 2013, p. 2). Parental spending on children has increased when the difference is observed in 1970s and 1990s. According to Kornrich and Furstenberg, in 1970s, spending on male children is seen remarkably. However, in 1990s, parental spending is changed in an equal spending manner. In 2000s, female children have an increasing positive discrimination on parental spending (Kornrich and Furstenberg, 2013). However, the gap between rich and poor children is expanding day by day. The main goal of parental spending is to create "human and cultural capital" with qualified education and qualified environment that children will grow up. Thereby, parents started to prefer private schools if they have the opportunity to pay for it -if they are in the upper-middle class. (Kornrich and Furstenberg, 2013).

What is interesting in this changing parenting is that extra spending on education and skills is not limited to affluent families. The lower classes who do not have the opportunity to pay, try to compensate by teaching and training at home after the children come from school and parents return from work. The main goal of this constant teaching is called "economic anxiety" by some scholars as parents fear that they fail as parents otherwise (Miller, 2018). The changing worldview of 1980s brought "helicopter parenting" which aims to protect children from every external factor and to create a circle of a "high-profile" children group surrounding their child (LeMoyne and Buchanan, 2011). Thereby, the new parenting became child-centered and even if the amount of the time that parents put effort on their children stay the same, the perception

of caring became “hands-on” caring. In return, overparenting or helicopter parenting affects the physical and mental well-being of the children and the parents in a negative way (Bristow, 2014).

When parenting is analyzed between different cultures, it is seen that the more Eastern parts of the globe are more “collectivistic” societies living in a group identity and raise their children accordingly. The more Western parts of the globe are more “individualistic” and raise their children accordingly. Turkey is seen as neither Western nor Eastern, it is in between, therefore there is a collectivistic and individualistic approach at the same time. In the 1950s, Turkey had a transformation of life-style of many citizens; the migration from rural to urban changed the cultural values. In the urban, women’s role has changed (Sen, et al. 2014). The transformation of the women’s role created a change in mothering. In urban, also the schooling of girls increased and it created a transformation in the country. According to the data from TÜİK, 72% of mothers were not working out of their houses in 2011 (Sen, et al. 2014). Therefore, especially in Turkey, parenting is more about mothering still. Even if the system is changing since the 1950s and mothers started working out of their houses, they are the ones who give care services to the children. There are different parenting styles according to different scholars. Boz and Erogenli divide parenting into three different styles according to the cultural background. One is encouraging, the other is limiting and the last one is neutral. Encouraging parents wish to raise children as self-entrepreneurs. They expect their children to become creative and self-confident and they support their children to have risks and start their own businesses. The limiting parents are involved in their children’s decisions in their career and social network (Boz and Erogenli, 2014).

One could argue that mass schooling of the 19th and 20th centuries by nature aimed to reproduce the labor force and did not consider improving social justice and equality unless it threatened the smooth functioning of the market. Hirtt, for example notes that, “*It really was a massification, not a democratization of education. Children from all social classes had a longer school career, but the relative social inequalities between them did not reduce.*” (Hirtt, 2004, p. 444). In fact, it can also be argued that the contemporary understanding is not much different than the earlier stages of nation-building; the system always created and/or prevented opportunities according to the students’ social classes (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970). As Weber puts, “class situation is market situation.” (Hill and Kelsh, 2006, p. 14). However, there are differences. Equal education does not mean equal opportunities; therefore, government intervention is required to maintain the equality in social life and education (Volante and Jerrim,

2018). When the neoliberal policies lead to the withdrawal of the state from the education system, it reproduces inequality in a new way. The children in poverty cannot access as easy as the children whose families are in better economic condition can when public education becomes increasingly less qualified and available (Pickett, 2018). Therefore, it is seen that the gap between rich and poor directly affect the children's education process, both in terms of continued enrollment after the primary school and the quality of the education in the marketized education system (Pickett, 2018). Dabla-Norris and Gradstein underline that, especially in the developing countries, public spending on education is in life sustaining importance. By the reason of the difficulties in accessing to education by the children who face poverty, free education system has a life changing effect. Because of the income inequality, generally, tertiary education is serving for the rich in developing countries, but the primary education must be free and compulsory for everyone to alleviate inequality (Dabla-Norris and Gradstein, 2004, p. 3).

The literature on the impacts of neoliberal transformation of education on the policies and perceptions of education and parenting – as briefly reviewed above – focuses mostly on the Western European countries and the United States. However, it is not far-fetching to deduce that neoliberalization in economy and education would exacerbate inequality and affect perceptions of parenting and education in a more drastic way in the countries where the economic performance has always remained below the European and American averages. In the next section, the transformation of education and parenting in Turkey will be discussed.

1.3. Transformation of Education and Parenting in Turkey

Education policies have had central place in the nation-building process of Turkey even before the establishment of the republic. Policies on other issues such as law, military, police and family have also been central. Education has not been the most important element of nation-building policies but it could be considered as the most effective one (Şimşek, et al. 2012). Although mass schooling became a state policy since the early years of the republic, it has accelerated especially from 1950s onwards. With the 1961 Constitution, as Turkey acquired a planned development policy, planning in education became an integral aspect of the state policies. Then, in 14 June 1973, Fundamental Law No. 1739 of Nation Education, education is defined as a right for every Turkish citizen regardless of their language, religion and social class. Thereby, equality of opportunity has been accepted before law in Turkey. In practice,

quantitatively, education level and schools increased dramatically compared to the founding years (Ulusoy, 1996, p. 76). Since 1960s, traditional agricultural society has started to change with urbanization and industrialization. This societal change has also affected enrollment rates to schools. As the state perceived education as an important factor for creating economic growth, and income per capita, state support to education also increased.

In the first years of Turkish Republic, starting from 1923, “Law for Consolidation of Instruction” was introduced. Ministry of National Education is founded and started to maintain the necessities for the education in every level. The five-year primary education became compulsory since the beginning of the Republic (Dulger, 2004, p. 4-5). To protect the disadvantaged groups, political authorities decided to start a compulsory education policy, with the thought of solving the inequalities. Before the 1970s, education was compulsory for five years, but it did not solve the least advantaged people’s problems while facing poverty. Turkish governments wanted to increase compulsory education five years to eight years; however, it failed to achieve its goal, as it would be financially problematic. In 1997, the eight-year compulsory education law has been introduced, which called “the Rapid Coverage for Compulsory Education Program”, the first five years were primary level of education and the newly added three years were the middle level of education. The continuous eight-year compulsory education system aimed to block the imam hatip schools expanding as Minister of National Education, Ömer Dinçer explained in 2012.

To make people send their children to the new eight-year school system, state gave incentives to parents, such as free books and meals. The schools were renewed and new schools are built. The girls in the rural areas, which is an important example to the disadvantaged groups, are increased 160% in the school enrollment rate in that period (Dulger, 2004, p. 1). With the incentives, people send their children to the eight-year education program. This change maintained the continuance to the education process and not to work on the very early ages. The vocational and religious schools are started to be rare. Even if the rareness annoyed the religious part of the society, it brought socioeconomic development and higher education level to the society. In personal level, it also brought better job opportunities to who have a diploma (Dulger, 2004, p. 2). Therefore, even if the parents, who face poverty, did not want their children to continue to schools rather than working and earning money, they realized that the more they educated, the more that they could earn.

With the new law, the students who finished fifth grade has to continue to the eighth grade since 1998. The school capacities were not ready for this change, and not all the parents could afford

to send their children to a school, which is away from their neighborhood (Dulger, 2004, p. 4). Therefore, the state has to invest for the new system; they built new schools, classrooms and raised new teachers as a necessity.

The eight-year compulsory education aimed to raise the educational standards of Turkey to a universal level. It includes increasing not only the duration of the education process, but also the quality of the education by building new schools, renewing the old ones. The 1997 Eight-Year Compulsory Education Enforcement Law (Law no. 4306) (Dulger, 2004, p. 6) supported the increasing of educational level in Turkey. However, the religious parents wanted their children to continue to religious education, therefore in addition to compulsory education, they continue to send their children to illegal religious courses to teach them the fundamentals of Islam. Actually, the goal of the eight-year compulsory education is to eliminate the religious education that makes Turkey fall behind in the universal system of education. In 2012, that year's Minister of National Education, Ömer Dinçer, expressed why the compulsory education became continuous eight years. He mentioned that the main goal is to block imam hatip schools and prevent its affects in the society.

The religious education has been discussed since the law on unification of education “Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu” (1924) and the decision about the religious education has been changed in accordance to the government's ideological position. With the Constitution of 1982, it became a legal and compulsory lecture in the primary level of education. The more important issue is not the existence of the lecture, but how it is applied. In the Republican period, all the educational institutions are linked to Ministry of National Education (MONE) and MONE approved foundation of religious schools, which is named “İmam Hatip Schools”. However, in 1930s (the one-party period), the imam hatip schools are closed and the religion lectures are removed from the public schools. In 1946, with the multi-party period, the demands of the religious education has been considered in accordance to the ideology of the second party and in 1948, the religion lectures are added to the program but as an elective course in the primary schools' fourth and fifth grade (Okçu, 2009). Therefore, religious education had become a parental choice in that period.

However, with the military coup in 1980, the religious education has been legally increased with the Constitution on 1982 (Okçu, 2009). It became a compulsory course and parents have no choice for not to send their children to the religion lectures within their eight-year compulsory education process.

About the religious education, the parents that do not believe the issues that is taught in the lectures applied to the European Court of Human Right saying that “the curriculum of the religion lectures are not fitting our belief and moral values”, it is not only in Turkey, there are also examples such as Norway’s compulsory Christianity lectures, which made a group of parents go to the European Court of Human Right (Okçu, 2009).

The new system that emerged in 2012-2013 educational year, twelve-year compulsory education (4+4+4), divided education process into three parts by saying the learning methods of the students changes in these ages quickly. Örs, Erdoğan and Kipici quoted Mehmet Şişman about the changing policies of education, Şişman said that every changing policy is a planned activity to achieve a goal. The goal is to raise persons in accordance with the ruling ideology and to construct an ideal society in accordance with the main ideology of the world. Therefore, education is a public policy that affected from the general political approach of the world order. (Örs, et al. 2013, p. 134). The twelve-year compulsory education is called 4+4+4, because the first 4 years are for primary school, the second 4 years are for middle school, and the last 4 years are for the high school. Also, pre-school education would become compulsory and it would be thirteen-year compulsory education system. There have been many changes in Turkey’s education policies and system that is criticized by the society, because of the adaptation problem that students experience.

The official data of the Ministry of National Education, shows that many schools are transformed into imam hatip schools and Eğitim-Sen called it as the abuse of religion. By the reason that imam hatip schools are adopting the idea of one religion and one sect, it created serious problems in the continuance of the education. For the third four-year period, the high schools are divided into three, first one is the academic high schools, the second one is the open high school, and the third one is the imam hatip high schools. If the student get the passing grade, she/he can continue to an academic high school, if the student cannot get the passing grade, she/he can continue to a vocational high school. However, in both situations, she/he can continue to an imam hatip school and a private school. Eğitim-Sen mentioned that the state is leading people to continue to a private school or if they cannot afford it, they have to continue to an imam hatip school, thereby, the state is leading people also to imam hatip schools. According to the data from Eğitim-Sen, the private school enrollments increased 15% by the new 4+4+4 system. Moreover, even if the compulsory education is seem to be increased in years; the open high school registrations are also increased (Haber Sol, 2013).

Because it is not continuous system like the eight-year compulsory education. Thereby, students may continue to open middle schools and high schools. It means that they do not need to go to school every day and they could be in the labor for in an illegal age in the informal sector. According to the data of Fişek Institute (Working Children Foundation), with the 4+4+4 system, 870000 children started to work in the free market in 2016 (Evrensel, 2018). The legal working age in the proper conditions for a child is when they finished their 14. However, it is seen that it could be decreased to the age of 13, because it is the graduation age from the second four-year period of the education. Apprenticeship (çıraklık) age decreased to the age of 9. (Biamag, 2012).

In sum, 4+4+4 system of twelve-year compulsory education moved working age back and children started to be a part of the free market as labor forces in their early ages. The new education system is feeding the neoliberal transformation of Turkey.

In the pre-republican period, there were madrasah schools, which are considered as foundation schools, they can be seen as private schools rather than public schools. In Ottoman Empire, education was only for a group of people, who are soldiers and statesmen. The society only had religious education or foundation schools, there were no public schools, which is founded by the state. In the world, the mass schooling is related to the Industrial Revolution to raise the labor force as the necessity of the industry. Public schools are founded by states to raise the labor force and bourgeoisie class sent their children to private schools to raise them as qualified persons, who will reproduce their class identity. (Uygun, 2003, 108). The private schools in today's understanding has started in the "Tanzimat" period, starting from 1839, private schools are founded for the upper-class persons in the society. In 1856, with "Islahat Fermanı", minorities had the right to have their own schools with or without the religious education. Before the "Islahat Fermanı" minorities also have their own madrasahs near their house of prayer, like Ottoman people have near the mosques. In 1876, with the "Kanun-i Esasi" Constitution, educational activities liberated in the supervision of the state. Thereby, after the "Tanzimat", school system had three subbranches, first one is the traditional schools (madrasahs), the second one is the new public schools which are to raise statesmen and soldiers, the third one is the foreign schools that is called missionary schools with is non-muslim and non-state. There was no order in the educational system until republican period. (Uygun, 2003, p. 108-109). Even if the Ottoman Empire was not politically content that the missionary schools expanded in a short span of time, it did not prevent their activities, because the students who graduated from these schools are qualified for the necessities of the free market with their

language skills and cultural aspects. Thereby, the dominant Islamic education had an alternative that could bring good qualifications. However, state tried to prevent the effectiveness of missionary schools with extending the public schools and give incentives to Turkish people who could found private schools. The first private school “Şemsülmaarif” that founded in 1884 by Turkish people in Istanbul. By 1903, there were 28 private Turkish schools and 4500 students. From 1908, with the second constitutionalist era (II. Meşrutiyet) the private schools extended broadly (Uygun, 2003, p. 110). With the republican era, in 1924, the law on unification of education “Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu” unified all the educational activities under the board of education (maarif vekaleti). Board of education restricted the missionary schools’ expanding. To achieve the unification goal, the state undertook the financing of the education. However, the state has no enough capital to finance all the educational activities, therefore they called entrepreneurs to help the state. After the call, the state and the private sector founded “Türk Eğitim Derneği (TED)” (Turkish Educational Association). TED aimed to give qualified education, so people would not need to prefer missionary schools, and provided scholarships to the persons who cannot afford but successful (Uygun, 2003). Until 1960s, there were not so many private schools and their numbers are not increasing. After the 1961 Constitution, it is underlined that education is not under the monopoly of the state, but under the superintendence of it. The law about the private schools is enacted in 1965 within the 1961 Constitution. “Private Training Institutions Law 625” includes all the private schools, the Turkish schools, missionary schools, etc. and the itinerary is determined with the law. Therefore, all the private schools had to have the goals and paths, which is decided by the state. (Uygun, 2003). In the 1980s, there was the literacy campaign, which fed mass schooling. Not only public schools, but also the Public Education Centers gave extra lectures and tried to make every citizen literate. (Okçabol, n.d.)

Critical approach to neoliberalism and education dominates the literature on Turkey as one may expect. Neoliberalism is mostly perceived as a system viewing competitiveness and entrepreneurialism as part of every individual’s well-being and ignoring the social inequality and injustice that the emphasis on competitiveness bring (Bağçe 2004). Accordingly, neoliberalism is argued to be a factor in undermining the public aspect of the state in favor of the market economy (Yolcu, 2010).

The controversy in the Turkish context as to whether privatization and decentralization of the public education is a positive or negative development resonates with the debates at the international literature. One approach views this process as the solution for the economic,

politic, pedagogic and administrative problems of education system, while the counter approach emphasizes the education as a right which should be provided as public education by the state. According to the first approach, the state should remain in charge of the system in general, but it should not be the producer of the services (Ömür, 2016). This view no longer see education as part of the public service, rather sees it in the service of the market. Besides, with the change of the definition of education, the aim of the service also changed. Now the discussion is not about the state to maintain equal and qualified access to education for everyone, but about sustaining administration and accountability (Ömür, 2016). It should be noted that while the first view dominates the education policies, it is rather the criticism of this approach which prevails in the literature on Turkey. Besides, criticisms of the educational transformation in Turkey is mostly contextualized within globalization and the rise of neoliberalism at the international level. As neoliberalization is interrelated to globalization, perception of education both in Turkey and the rest of the world changes in favor of viewing the chief function of education as improving the human capital who will work and serve for the state and the market. Therefore, the parents in Turkey similarly feel the need to invest in their children to raise them as the human capital of the state in the future (Taş and Yenilmez, 2008). The role of education in Turkey is also analyzed as part of transmitting the cultural inheritance to the next generations and socially constructing the role of the individual in every aspect of life, like economically and socially (Taş and Yenilmez 2008, p. 158). Hence, we observe a similar tendency in the literature on Turkey to emphasize that mass schooling has been related to the better functioning of capitalism from the beginning; and has always had a role in reproducing and legitimizing inequality in the society (Ulusoy 1996, p. 64). Scholars however also acknowledge that access to public education is important at both micro and macro levels in improving personal and societal welfare (Çalışkan et al. 2013, p. 30-32).

In the studies on education and social mobility in Turkey, it is emphasized that adaptation to school and success in school are not independent of children's cultural and economic background. Parents' education level and income level are seen as two important determinants for a child's education process. Therefore, it is argued that economic inequality in a society is not genetic, but it is about social and cultural background – which is also about education – it can be changed with education. Hence, education can create social mobility (Ulusoy 1996, 65-66). However, if access of the children to good education becomes limited due to income, education functions more in the direction of reproducing inequality across the classes rather than enabling social mobility (Ulusoy, 1996, p. 84).

The developing countries' progress can be seen clearly because there have major differences quantitatively in schooling and reducing poverty. Thus, the schooling rates are getting higher in Turkey, it is also important to see why. When the education level of parents increase, it also increases the children's school enrollment. Especially, it is important for the closing gap between girls and boys in schooling rates. In the undereducated parts of Turkey, it can be seen that the schooling rate of the girls are below the boys' rates (Öztürk, 2001). Parents' education level also affects their gender perspective.

Today, change is inevitable. The new world that we live in, has the characteristic of changing. Therefore, according to Arslan, Satici and Kuru, to raise qualified persons who can adapt the quick changes became a must. To raise qualified persons, the need is to have qualified schools. They mentioned about effective schools, which believe every student have the potential to learn and create them a nice learning environment. As it is seen that the quality of the public schools in Turkey has decreased, the schools' effectiveness also decreases. There was a project called "sending 10.000 successful student to private schools" which summarizes the situation. (Arslan, et al. 2006). It means that the public schools are not enough for the successful children.

The effect of education on income level is an important subject that many scholars worked and still working on. It is been researched since 1990s. The relationship between education and income became important with globalization, as globalization created social injustice and a huge gap between rich and poor. Education create difference in micro level – a person's income – and in macro level – the economic growth. The developing countries should be attentive to equality of opportunity, thereby the income distribution can be in an equal way. Actually, it is observed that, when the level of education increases, the equality in the income distribution also increases. However, schooling rates are also about the income distribution, poverty effects schooling negatively, which is an important problem of Turkey. (Taş and Yenilmez, 2008, p. 167-169).

Income distribution is a key for the maintenance of social justice, social peace and moral values. The problematic income distribution widens inequality in the society and decreases the welfare that economic growth brings. The unjust distribution of the income should be addressed in all macro policies. It affects the economic and political life of a state. (Palaz, et al. 2013). Sex, age, ethnicity, job, personal specialties are some of the determinants of the income level. (Sarı, 2003). The injustice of education is seen as the main reason that creates the unjust income distribution. Because the role that individuals play in the production relations directly effects

their income level and social conditions and their education level is a determinant of their role in the production relations. (Palaz, et al. 2013).

The income distribution had become unbalanced and unequal by the changes in the education policies after 1980s in Turkey. Because the neoliberal education system has no policies for equality of opportunities, thereby a qualified education started to require high income level and it resulted in low level of education in poor areas -especially rural areas- in Turkey. (Altınışık and Peker, 2008, p. 108). Education, as a responsible element of the change in a society has to integrate the changing systems in the world before any subject. States see their people as human capitals and see their children as future human capitals, see education as a mean to grow qualified people who is well-supported to serve the economic growth of their state with their information and qualification. High level of education is also seen as the key for socio-economic development, which will serve equal distribution of income. Therefore, when education become a cultural habit, the society of a state will have less inequality in income distribution. In addition, when educational level of an individual increases, their level of income also increases concurrently. For example, African countries could not increase their education level, therefore their share of income cannot increase. This situation creates an unequal society. Because according to some scholars, it is thought that education creates a social mobility in every country, so when individuals have the same opportunities of education, the income distribution of their country becomes more equal. Education is not the only determinant of the income level and income distribution; however, it is an important modificatory issue. (Altınışık and Peker, 2008, p. 110-112).

Research Design

This thesis focuses on the changing parenting mindset in school preferences when the parents have two different choice about their children's educational process starting from the primary school level. There are two questions, first one is; why do some parents prefer to send their children to the private schools at the primary education level even when they have access to relatively good quality public primary schools in their neighborhood? The second one is, from another perspective, why do some parents with similar socio-demographic and economic background prefer to send their children to public primary schools, although they can afford private primary schools as well? To find answers to these questions, the necessity was to find similar socio-economic backgrounded parents, who have different preferences on public school and private school.

I interviewed 10 parents, 5 of them are sending their children to private school, 5 of them are sending to public schools. All the parents that participate to the research are mothers. It was not determined that they should be mother or fathers, however, mothers were volunteer for the research and it became a data to show the gender roles in parenting. Even if they are working, mothers are tended to care more about children's life progress in every aspect of their life, like education, nutrition and socialization.

I wish to emphasize again that the all parents I interviewed, have the financial capabilities to send their children to the private schools, but when half of them prefer to send their children to a private school and the other half of them prefer to send their children to a public school. Therefore, I wanted to see different perceptions of the parents while investing their children's educational process. It is also inquirable why did they not send their children to a private school while they have the economic opportunities. I saw that I did not considered class based and political diversification while choosing parents. However, I do not intend to succeed in generalization, diversification was not at the core of my research. I saw that in the future studies I should consider class and political diversification. All of the public-school parents are from Kadıköy region, the neighborhoods under Kadıköy are generally have an upper-middle class population. When I asked them, if they would send their child to a public school in Sultanbeyli, they all said no. Therefore, I saw that they choose the public school they send their child accordingly to their neighborhood. It shows that the environment and social sphere of the child is also important for the parents.

In first eight questions,

- What is your name?
- How old are you?
- What is your level of education?
- What is the other parent's level of education?
- Can you tell me the names of the schools you graduated?
- And the other parent's schools' names?
- Are you working now? What is your profession?
- How many children you have? How old are they?

I wanted to know the parents and understand their educational and cultural background. Their ages, their level of education, the schools that they graduate, their employment situation and how many children they have are determinants of their cultural and educational background. Therefore, to understand their position in the society I asked the main questions to understand their decisions about their children's education and life. Two of the parents have three children, other eight have two children. Thereby, I did not interview a parent who has one child, it determines a specialty of the group that I interviewed. Culturally, having more than one child can be seen as a traditional issue in Turkish society. In a neoliberal society, which people try to integrate their children into the economic system as entrepreneurs of themselves, parents have to invest on their children, however it becomes harder when they have more than one child. By reason of wanting to give the equal opportunities to all of their children, it becomes difficult to invest higher amounts of money for two or three children.

The parents' level of education is a determinant of their children's level of education. However, their educational background determines their perception of education. Therefore, even if they are university graduated, which high school and university they finished matters. It may not change their school preferences, because it is more about their financial situation, but it changes their priorities while choosing which area to invest on their children.

Questions between nine and thirteen,

- Can you tell me their schools' names and what grade they are in?
- Do you think that your child has good education in her/his school now?
- What is your perception of good education?

Does it contain good level of language skills or get trained for the TEOG exam?

- Why did you choose to send your child to a private school? / Why did you choose to send your child to a public school?
- Would you send her/him to a public school in *Sultanbeyli*?

are asked to understand the parents' perception of education, according to their school preferences, and their priorities in their children's education process, like learning foreign language or preparing exams like TEOG. I wanted to understand their expectations from the school they sent their children, not only about their education, but also about socialization. Because, the schools are the places that children spend most of their times with their peers. With thinking that school choosing is also an environment choosing for a child, I asked their preferences of schools. I made the interviews in Kadıköy region in Istanbul, with the parents from private and public schools. The public-school parents are the ones who can send their children to private schools financially, but preferred to send them to a public school in Kadıköy region. "Sultanbeyli" is a region in Istanbul, which is facing poverty, discrimination and polarization because of the increasing number of migrants from within and without Turkey. Therefore, when compared with a public school in Kadıköy, Sultanbeyli is a very different and difficult experience. All of the parents mentioned that they would not send their children to a public school in Sultanbeyli, because it means to learn to survive -with a negative meaning- and learn to discriminate. They all said that especially in the primary level, the environment in a public school in Sultanbeyli will harm the children's psychology.

The questions between fourteen and twenty

- Are you planning to send her/him to a private school in the level of middle school?
- Are you planning to send her/him to a private school in the level of high school?
- What would you want your child to do for living in the future?
- Do you believe that the current education she/he has is going to take her/him to have a profession?
- Would you believe she/he will have a profession if you had sent her/him to a public school?
- Do you have financial difficulties while investing to her/his education?
- What do you expect as outcomes of your investment do your child's education?

are about the future of their children, the next educational levels and also about their life after graduation. These questions are asked to understand why the parents invest on their children's education, what do they expect in the future as the feedbacks of their investments. I asked if they have difficulties while financing the educational investment to understand the relation between their financial situation and their school preferences.

The questions twenty-one and twenty-two

- Do you think that education is a key for economic development?

- What are the changes that education brings to a society?

are to understand the parents' sociological perspective about education, and their ideas about the societal changes that education brings. For the question twenty-three,

- Did you think that sending to your child to a private school as a necessity?

I asked if they see sending their children to a private school as a necessity, I also changed the question for the parents who said that they are planning to send their children to a private middle school. I asked them why do they plan to send them to a private middle school and if they see this decision as a necessity. All the parents, both public and private school parents said yes, it is a necessity to make sure that they are having an "objective, secular and qualified education". About the questions twenty-four and twenty-five,

- Would you make an effort to send her/him to private school if your financial situation has changed in a negative way? What would you sacrifice?
- Did the investment you make decreased your standard of life?

I asked about the parents' financial situation and standard of life. Nine of them told that if their financial situation changed in a negative way, they would sacrifice many things to send their children to a private school in the middle level. Moreover, all of them mentioned that their standard of living decreased after the second child.

The questions between twenty-six and twenty-nine

- Would you prefer your children receives a high salary or have a good status or do the job she/he likes but receives a low salary?
- Would you be worried if she/he has a low salary while working in a job they like?
- Do you care about who are the classmates of your child and her/his classmates' parents?
- Do you think that the person she/he will get married in the future should have the same educational level? Does education level of her/his partner is important for you?

are about their future and environmental factors. Most of them wants their children to earn a good amount of money, it does not make any difference even it is a high-salary job or their own job that brings them good amount of money. All of them wants their children to be happy with their jobs. All of them care about their classmates and especially the parents of the classmates, they want them to be "good persons", if they are culturally similar it would make them also happy.

About the last three questions,

- How many meals that your child should eat at school? In her/his current school, how many meals they eat? Are the meals' ingredients important?

- Do you take your child to a private hospital or public hospital when they get sick?
- Which responsibilities the other parent should have? What are the other parent's responsibilities about your children?

the meals are important to understand changed parenting mindset, because the nutrition part of parenting has also changed within the neoliberalized world. Upper-middle class parents, especially mothers, try to cook organic food for their children and consider the menu of the school daily. However, in my research there is only one mother that cares meals, the others are only thinking of their children be full up. The private and public hospital difference is also giving the data of neoliberalized health sector is correlated with new parenting mindset or not, and it also shows the parents' financial situation. The last question is about the other parent's responsibilities, in my case, it means the father's responsibilities, because I only interviewed with mothers. I asked that to understand gender roles of their family and the distribution of work in their houses.

In first eight questions, I wanted to know the parents and understand their educational and cultural background. Their ages, their level of education, the schools that they graduate, their employment situation and how many children they have are determinants of their cultural and educational background. Therefore, to understand their position in the society I asked the main questions to understand their decisions about their children's education and life. Two of the parents have three children, other eight have two children. Thereby, I did not interview a parent who has one child, it determines a specialty of the group that I interviewed. Culturally, having more than one child can be seen as a traditional issue in Turkish society. In a neoliberal society, which people try to integrate their children into the economic system as entrepreneurs of themselves, parents have to invest on their children, however it becomes harder when they have more than one child. By reason of wanting to give the equal opportunities to all of their children, it becomes difficult to invest higher amounts of money for two or three children.

The parents' level of education is a determinant of their children's level of education. However, their educational background determines their perception of education. Therefore, even if they are university graduated, which high school and university they finished matters. It may not change their school preferences, because it is more about their financial situation, but it changes their priorities while choosing which area to invest on their children.

Questions between nine and thirteen, are asked to understand the parents' perception of education, according to their school preferences, and their priorities in their children's education process, like learning foreign language or preparing exams like TEOG. I wanted to understand

their expectations from the school they sent their children, not only about their education, but also about socialization. Because, the schools are the places that children spend most of their times with their peers. With thinking that school choosing is also an environment choosing for a child, I asked their preferences of schools. I made the interviews in Kadıköy region in Istanbul, with the parents from private and public schools. The public-school parents are the ones who can send their children to private schools financially, but preferred to send them to a public school in Kadıköy region. “Sultanbeyli” is a region in Istanbul, which is facing poverty, discrimination and polarization because of the increasing number of migrants from within and without Turkey. Therefore, when compared with a public school in Kadıköy, Sultanbeyli is a very different and difficult experience. All of the parents mentioned that they would not send their children to a public school in Sultanbeyli, because it means to learn to survive -with a negative meaning- and learn to discriminate. They all said that especially in the primary level, the environment in a public school in Sultanbeyli will harm the children’s psychology.

The questions between fourteen and twenty are about the future of their children, the next educational levels and also about their life after graduation. These questions are asked to understand why the parents invest on their children’s education, what do they expect in the future as the feedbacks of their investments. I asked if they have difficulties while financing the educational investment to understand the relation between their financial situation and their school preferences.

The questions twenty-one and twenty-two are to understand the parents’ sociological perspective about education, and their ideas about the societal changes that education brings. For the question twenty-three, I asked if they see sending their children to a private school as a necessity, I also changed the question for the parents who said that they are planning to send their children to a private middle school. I asked them why do they plan to send them to a private middle school and if they see this decision as a necessity. All the parents, both public and private school parents said yes, it is a necessity to make sure that they are having an “objective, secular and qualified education”. About the questions twenty-four and twenty-five, I asked about the parents’ financial situation and standard of life. Nine of them told that if their financial situation changed in a negative way, they would sacrifice many things to send their children to a private school in the middle level. Moreover, all of them mentioned that their standard of living decreased after the second child.

The questions between twenty-six and twenty-nine are about their future and environmental factors. Most of them wants their children to earn a good amount of money, it does not make any difference even it is a high-salary job or their own job that brings them good amount of

money. All of them wants their children to be happy with their jobs. All of them care about their classmates and especially the parents of the classmates, they want them to be “good persons”, if they are culturally similar it would make them also happy.

About the last three questions, the meals are important to understand changed parenting mindset, because the nutrition part of parenting has also changed within the neoliberalized world. Upper-middle class parents, especially mothers, try to cook organic food for their children and consider the menu of the school daily. However, in my research there is only one mother that cares meals, the others are only thinking of their children be full up. The private and public hospital difference is also giving the data of neoliberalized health sector is correlated with new parenting mindset or not, and it also shows the parents’ financial situation. The last question is about the other parent’s responsibilities, in my case, it means the father’s responsibilities, because I only interviewed with mothers. I asked that to understand gender roles of their family and their distribution of work in their houses.

Interviews: “I would sell my house and car to invest in my children’s education.”

The empirical research in the thesis does not seek generalization. Rather, it aims to go deeper into the perceptions and assessments regarding education and parenting. Therefore, in this section, I will first present each interview one-by-one; and then discuss the main findings arising from the research.

1)The first parent that I interviewed is Mrs. Ş. T. who is 44 years old and have 2 children; one of them is 15 years old, the other one is 8, which I will interview about. Both parents’ level of education is university. Mrs. Ş. T is biologist and worked as a pharmaceutical representative for long years but today she is teaching biology to the children who are preparing for TEOG exam, she is not a teacher with a pedagogical formation but she is helping children with her biology knowledge. I did not wish to do interviews with teachers but her perception of education gave me some different perspective. Her son, who is 15 years old are now continuing to a private middle school which is named Özgür Boza Schools. The school’s motto is “Köy Enstitüleri Ruhuyla” (with the spirit of village institutes), which I found interesting. He graduated from Erenköy İlköğretim Okulu, which is a public primary school and then continued to a private school in the middle level of his educational process. Her daughter is in İlhami Ahmet Örnekal primary school, in second grade. Mrs. Ş. T. told that she wanted her daughter to study in İ.A.Ö. primary school, because it is systematic, socially active. She mentioned that today, in every public school the population of the classes decreased and the number of branches increased. Thereby, the population of the class stays under 30 children and it is a proper population that teachers can give their attention to every child equally. Mrs. Ş.T.’s definition of good education is, to teach children basic sciences and arts according to her/his age, but it is not only about academic learning, it is also about learning for life. For example, she mentioned that in her daughter’s school they are doing social responsibility activities. Because, she told that the important issue in these ages are to learn empathy and to have a sensitive approach to the nature and disadvantageous people. The main reason that she sent her children to public schools in primary level is that she wished them to meet different children and learn to become friends with everyone. However, when I asked if they would send their children to a public school in Sultanbeyli, their answer was no. The main reason is that they are afraid the atmosphere that their children could face there. Therefore, I understand that it is not learning to be friends with “every child”.

Mrs. Ş. T. mentioned that the primary school is the main age range to learn empathy and other sensitive skills that everyone needs in their adult life, it starts from childhood and it is a lifelong

process. She thinks that every child could manage to achieve successful exam results and it is not the most important issue about their educational process. The class teacher is the key element that she sent her child to İ.A.Ö. School, because she thinks that the teacher is determinant of children's learning progress. In the middle school, she wishes to send her daughter to a private school like her son, because she gives importance to language learning. Today, Mrs. Ş. T.'s daughter is going to an English language course to complete her school's deficient part of education.

In the middle school she thought that private school is important because if her daughter falls behind a subject, it cannot be recognized in the public school, therefore it will be hard to prepare properly to the high school. Thereby, Mrs. Ş. T. thinks that academic education becomes more important in the middle school when compared to the primary level. She indicates that the private middle school teachers are caring about every students' educational progress in every subject, because the teacher has the time with less student in her/his class when compared to a public middle school. Mrs. Ş. T. said, "Hence, the teacher supports a student when she/he falls behind in any subject. Also, psychological counseling and guidance services are more effective in private schools, because there are less students. In public schools, teachers and psychological counseling and guidance services are working with the "problematic" situations, because the numbers unfavorable to give same amount of attention to every student."

About her daughter's future, she mentioned that if her daughter's job would be a profession that she also has the time for herself, thereby, her life would not be formed only by her job. She gave an example from her life and told that she traveled a lot for her job and loved her job and travelling together but today she is at her happiest moment because she had the opportunity to do whatever she wants in her own life, teaching biology is like a half-time job for her now. Thereby, she wishes her daughter to be happy, therefore, Mrs. Ş. T. thought that her daughter should allocate time to herself. She gave the examples of professions like psychology or researcher, so she could work part-time. About her daughter's future job, Mrs. Ş. T. told that she would be happy if her daughter earns her life with the job she loves and she added "If she works low-paid it won't be a problem for me, if she is happy with it. But my son loves status and money but do not like to work. Therefore, I don't think that he would be happy if he is low-paid and does a job he likes. However, in my opinion, if they are high-paid but unhappy with their jobs, it is meaningless to live like that." Mrs. Ş. T. said that she won't be worried if their children are working low-paid, but she told that if her son is working low-paid it would not be the "ideal job" for him. "Because he wouldn't be happy if he works low-paid."

Besides, Mrs. Ş. T. defined the new childhood as the “internet children” and wishes them to have different interests, so she made her daughter start to play piano, not to make her a musician, but to give her an interest. She mentioned that “education is a self-investment, today I am investing to my children with my education and it is also for our country’s good.” She added that education brings respect, consciousness and empathy to a society and it prevents prejudice, but it is not about the academic education, it is learning for life and self-investment.

If their financial situation is changed in a negative way, Mrs. Ş. T. told that they would try their best and sacrifice their own necessities and try to make their children continue to a private school because they believe that they will get “good education” in a private middle school. In addition, she mentioned that they could also support their children to have scholarship from a private school in middle level. Today, she told that they could not manage to send their children in a high-paying private school, but they could manage to send their 2 children to Özgür Boza Schools. “Because if we do not send them to a private school in this range, we have to send them to “dersane” and other courses that we should support their education. Therefore, it almost costs the same.”

Mrs. Ş.T. mentioned that she gives attention to the other students’ parents in the primary level, but in the middle school children started to change different ways from their parents. She said that it is important in the primary level, because children learn to be respectful to the others, learn to apologize and to thank. However, in the middle level, even if their families teach them everything, a child could act differently or vice versa. For the person her daughter will marry in the future, Mrs. Ş.T. told that she would prefer them both are graduated from the university, because of the universities’ cultural gaining and experience, which department they continue is not important but the important issue, is to be a university graduated person.

“The meals they eat at school are important by their ingredients but it is also important that if they eat or not. For example, our teacher has a system that, when there are 4 different dishes in their plate at lunch, students have to eat 2 of them and taste the other 2. Normally it should be 3 meals but in public schools there is only lunch.”

“About the responsibilities, we pass to each other with my husband, he also has the same responsibilities with me.”

She mentioned that if there is an emergency, they would prefer to go to a private hospital but if it is a branch that they need to make an appointment, Mrs. Ş. T. told that they prefer university hospitals.

2) My second interview was with Mrs. A. T., who is 43 years old and has 2 children. One of them is 14, the other one is 8 years old. She graduated from university, department of sociology and the other parent is graduated from distance university education, department of business. She worked in the area of public relations in sales department for 19 years but now she is not working. The other parent is working in logistic sector. Her child who is in the middle school is in Doğa Koleji, at 8th grade. The other child is in İlhami Ahmet Örnekal İlköğretim Okulu, at 2nd grade. She told that her other child is also get primary education in Erenköy İlköğretim Okulu, which is a public school, but in the middle school they preferred a private school. For İ.A.Ö. school, Mrs. A.T. told that without English, she could say that the education is good for basic level. However, if there are no financial difficulties, she would prefer to send her 8 year old daughter directly to a private school. When I asked about their perception of good education, she told me that, in addition to reading and writing, it is also important to “meet the discipline” because in preschool education, they all played games and now they are learning how to be a student and to integrate to education process. She mentioned that of course there is “good language skills” in her perception of good education, however they cannot afford it. So, for the primary level it is not just about the academic learning but learning for life. Therefore, she thinks that her child’s school is good for her expect English education. Mrs. A.T. said that “because the first 4 years of education is an important base for further education life and also social life”.

Mrs. A.T. told that the other children’s parents’ profile is important, and she added “not the first thing that make me choose İ.A.Ö. school but I knew that this school has a similar parents’ profile like our family. But I never consider that if there is an important CEO’s child in our school or not, it is only about family types. I want to give an example, which is surprising for me, there were no divorced parents at the class, which contains 30 students, of my first daughter when she was in Erenköy İlköğretim Okulu. However, we saw in Doğa Koleji that most of the children’s parents are divorced.” I told her that maybe it does not mean that all the parents who are not divorced are creating a happy environment, maybe not divorcing is also a cultural indicator.” Mrs. A.T. told me that her parents are also divorced, therefore it is an uncomfortable situation for her, therefore she finds divorce as a very negative issue and considers not to be divorced as a similar type of families with their family.

Mrs. A.T. told that in the middle school, she will send her daughter to a private school like her bigger daughter. About their future jobs, she told that as she has 2 daughters, she wants them to earn their life and to stand on their own feet, but it can be any job they want. She added

“When I graduated from the department of sociology, it widened my perspective. Therefore, I think that even if they do not work, they need to go to the university and gain a vision.”

Financially, she mentioned that they have difficulties with 2 children and now that she is not working, it became harder. Moreover, about the investment to their children’s education, she mentioned that there are people who say, “after the high school start a business and by a car to your child, paying for the university is meaningless.” But, Mrs. A.T. is against that idea and told that she cares about education and if she had the financial opportunity, she would send her children to the best private schools without thinking. “However, my husband could say that, this amount of money is meaningless to spend on their education, because there are so many different schools, one of them is 20.000 TL, the other one is 80.000.” Her expectations about their investment to their children’s education is they would have a vision and a profession. Today, she saw sending her daughter to a private middle school as a necessity, because there are no qualified middle school in public area.

About the societal level, Mrs. A.T. told that everything that damages social, political and economic life of the country is because of the ignorance and education can change it. She added, “I think only the educated people can take a step for the world’s good.”

When I asked “what would you sacrifice for their education” Mrs. A.T. told that she would try her best but if she cannot afford it, she would send her daughter to a relatively good public middle school and relieve herself. She mentioned that “After the second child, standard of living decreases and after we send our bigger daughter to a private middle school, our standard of living decreased more. Therefore, of course we sacrifice from ourselves unavoidably. Because your salary does not change but everything gets more expensive day by day.” For her daughters’ future job, she said “Life is not perfect, but in an ideal world, I would prefer that that worked in a job that they like and has a high salary. Because if she likes her job but has a low salary, then she would be unhappy while she cannot manage to pay anything.”

For the question “the person she/he will get married in the future should have the same educational level”, she told that she is always wondering who would her children will marry in the future and prefers that they would be both university graduated.

“About the meals, they should eat 2 times at school. Ingredients are important but not as “they should be organic” but they should eat vegetables, soup etc. About the responsibilities parents should be divided but today, as I am not working, my husband should be the financial supporter about our children’s education”.

“We have health insurance for the inpatient treatment, therefore if there is an important illness, we use our health insurance and prefer a private hospital, but if it is not an important issue, we prefer a public hospital.

3)Mrs. P.T. is a metalurgist with a master degree and 45 years old. The other parent’s level of education is high school graduation (trade vocational school). She is working in an international trade firm and doing her profession. She has got 2 children, one of them is 7,5 the other one is 4,5 years old. Her big son is in the 2nd grade in İ.A.Ö. school, her other son is in a private kindergarten. After the preschool, she is planning to send her little son also to İ.A.Ö. She mentioned that before İ.A.Ö., her son was in a private school and there are no major differences between Çevre Koleji, which she sent her son in preschool and at the 1st grade, and İ.A.Ö. She added, “Performance of the school was not good, when there is the same curriculum, it is nonsense to send the children to a private school in primary level, because the financial difference is not worth it. Just the foreign language issue is important to consider, but I plan to narrow the gap with reinforcing outside the school.” About the perception of good education, Mrs. P.T. told that children should be educated with self-esteem and they should be interrogative people. In addition, she gave importance to not to see children as a part of the trade. She preferred to take her son from the private school to a public school, because she mentioned that she does not think private schools give the education that they assessed.

She told that other parents’ children were more important when his son was in the private school, because of her considering that her children should be with the people from every social and economic class. She said, “I was in Canada for many years, but when my children are growing up, I thought that they should get education in their own culture. I know that it is an opposite behavior while we compare with other parents; they try to send their children abroad. However, I believe that we grew up here and I have an international carrier, hence my children can also do it.”

When I asked, if she thinks to send her son to a private middle school, she told that if she can find a middle school like İ.A.Ö.’s quality, she would prefer to continue with a public school. Nevertheless, Mrs. P.T. gave more importance to the high school level; she said that if she cannot find a good quality middle public school, she would prefer to send him to a private middle school, so he can go to a qualified high school, which will lead him to the university. She added, “My children are citizens of Canada, so maybe if they cannot go to a qualified high

school, I would prefer to send them to Canada rather than a private high school in Turkey.” About the school choices, Mrs. P.T. mentioned that she felt before the educational process started, the preschool choosing would determine the children’s university; she called it a vortex that parents sink into and she added that she is not into that vortex and find it meaningless.

Mrs. P.T. told that in the private school she had financial difficulties more than she thought, because she considered that she would not need to send her son to a sportive activity or a social activity, that is why she choose private school, but when she saw that there is no difference and she needed to reinforce it out of school. Thereby, she thought that she would send him to a public school and reinforce sportive and social activities out of school, but she added, it is financially difficult for them. With her investment to the education, she expects her children to have the necessary cultural infrastructure that would make them men of the world.

If their financial situation changed in a negative way, she would not make an effort to send her children to a private school. Because she said “If a parent put herself/himself in difficulties and if it damages her/his psychology, there is no sense if you give your children everything. Because the things that you provide with your financial situation loses its meaning when you cannot create a happy environment for the children.” “Today, my standard of life has changed negatively, especially after the second child, I got worried about my first child and if I can provide the same standards to both of them.” She said that, she wants her children to be happy with their life and also have the financial capability to live comfortably, but if they have a job that they like but a low salary, she said that she would be worried but if they adapt their choices accordingly to their standard of life, it is okay. Therefore, the main issue that Mrs. P.T. focuses is that they should not be in need of or lean on other people and earn their life happily.

She used a “jungle” metaphor for the primary level of education, because she thinks, children learn how to survive in a new environment, therefore she cares that her sons see different people and environments, but she added, “at the same time risky for primary level ages, children affected easily by each other and therefore, the other children’s parents are important to know, not culturally or financially but I care about their being nice people, because I never want my children bullied or have a negative psychological experience with their classmates.” When I asked if she would send her children to a school in Sultanbeyli, she said, “No, but I can send in Ümraniye, it is not a cultural problem for me but socially in Sultanbeyli there is discrimination and I would not prefer my children to be in that environment.”

For the person who would her son will get married in the future, she told that it is necessary to experience the same educational processes, because of her own experience about different educational level marriage. She told that her ex-husband was developed himself in several areas but it became hard to see the world from the same perspective.

About the meals, they should eat 2 times at school. Ingredients are important, it should be from every food group, so it should be multiple and should be healthy.

Mrs. P.T. took her children to private hospitals but she is not happy with this. She told that she would prefer to take them to public hospitals with feeling safe, unfortunately it is not the case.

Lastly, she mentioned that mothers and fathers should have the same amount of responsibilities and they give same amount of energy for their children.

4)Mrs. B.O. is 45 years old and she is a nurse and have a master degree in the department of public health. The other parent also has a master degree (MBA in England). Now she is working as the director of a children sport and activity center. She has got 2 children, one of them is 5, the other one is 8 years old. The little one is in a private preschool. The other one is in the 2nd grade, in İ.A.Ö. school. She mentioned, “when the average is considered, my daughter is getting a good education in here. Good education for me is to develop 22 children’s learning skills, to see their talents and give them an infrastructure that they can ask everything.” “In my daughter’s school, I can see that families are similar to us, socio-culturally. The other children’s parents are important, but mostly I do not know them. From the neighborhood, I think we are similar and that is enough for me to know.”

She mentioned that they wanted their child to be capable of fighting every problem and a public school would be the proper environment for this and there are also financial problems, because there are 2 children and they wanted to give them the same opportunities. And, she said that if their situation does not change, they are not thinking to send their children also in the middle level to a private school. I asked that “if their children have a scholarship, would her idea have changed?” She told that it would be a reason to send her to a private school in the middle level. And in the high school, Mrs. B.O. mentioned that maybe politically they would have problems with a public school. Therefore, in the high school maybe they would consider a private school. When I asked “what would be a political problem for you?” she gave the example of religiosity.

“In the future, I would prefer my children graduate from a university and do something that they can earn their lives.”

Mrs. B.O. told that they do not have difficulties while investing to their children’s education, but she added that when she was a child, they were not paying anything to the public school they get educated.” However, today’s public schools require the 2/3 of the payments of private schools.” The expectations of Mrs. B.O. from the investment to her children’s education is to give them a chance to find what they like to do in the future, not only about their jobs but also about their hobbies, which will surround their lives even when they get old.

About the social changes that education could bring, she said “if the education level of a society increases, we won’t be fighting most of the things we fight today, like child abuse, drugs etc. There would be more healthy persons mentally.”

Mrs. B.O. said that, if their financial situation changed in a negative way, they would not make an effort to send their children to a private middle school with the exception of a political change that would make them feel obligated to send their children to a private school. She added “There is a competitive environment and parents want their children to be safe in the future, the key of this safety is education, which can assure their future. I am also working with parents, so I know that 9/10 would say that TEOG is really important, think that our children must have high salary. However, I observe that everyone, who works with high salaries try to change their jobs after their 40s. therefore the most important thing is to do the job they like and receive a recompense of their work.”

In the future, about the person who will marry her daughter, she prefers them to be at the same educational level, especially university graduated because of its vision bringing. It is not about the diploma.

About the meals, she told that only lunch would be enough.

Mrs. B.O. told that they prefer private hospitals because they have health insurances.

Lastly, she mentioned that mothers and fathers should have the same amount of responsibilities.

5)Mrs. M.Ç. is 48 years old and university graduated, the other parent is high school graduated. After the children, she quit working. She has got 3 children. One of them is 19, the others are 15, and 10 years old. Her biggest child get his education in public schools in primary and middle

level, but in high school he finished Uğur Koleji. Her other son in the middle school started to a private school Bahçeşehir Koleji, after that, he is in a public high school İstanbul Anadolu Lisesi. My daughter is in İ.A.Ö. in 4th grade. She told that there is no difference in the curriculum of private and public schools in the primary level. She added, “I have 3 children; therefore, I have the experience of both public and private schools. The only difference is language learning and additionally, in private schools, children are more tolerated, flexible, and there is also psychological counseling and guidance for every children, in the public schools there is no enough phycologists.”

In the middle school, Mrs. M.Ç. plans to send her daughter to a private school Anabilim Koleji. She said that there are many different private schools and Anabilim is a good one and financially affordable for them, her daughter also had some scholarship with her exam result. Because of its her last year in the primary level, they decided and made an early registration to Anabilim for the middle school. She said that she chose wished to send her daughter to a private school by the reason of language learning. Because she thinks that language learning is easier when we are children. She mentioned that “the systems always change; my 3 children get education within different systems from each other. For example now there is coding classes, which is started in private schools and now also good public schools started to bring instructor for these different types of classes.” “However, good education cannot be determined with only academic education, but also humanities.”

Mrs. M.Ç. said that they are having difficulties while investing to their children’s education. But she added, “we are not giving our everything for their education, there are 3 children, can you imagine if I sent all of them to the upper qualified schools? We also want to live properly, therefore, we try to act accordingly.” She thought that it is meaningless to invest all the money for their education, because she does not want her children to work for minimum wage after graduating good schools, therefore she thinks that after the university, her children would need investment for their job and she plans to help them at that point. She added that they are already sacrificing arbitrary issues for their children’s educational investments.

According to Mrs. M.Ç. education makes difference in being respectful, being fair in a society and it brings peace.

She told that she thinks that it is necessary to send her daughter to a private middle school because now there is no “qualified public middle schools” like in their time. She mentioned that

they choose to use their money in the middle school, because it would be helpful for their children to go to a qualified Anatolian high school, which is free of charge.

Her daughter's classmates' families are important for Mrs. M.Ç. and she thinks that they should meet often. She added "I want to know my children's friends, not only their families, because they lead each other."

About the person who will marry her daughter in the future, she would prefer him to be university graduated, however it is not the main objective of her, the most important issue is that he should be a nice person even if he graduated from a university or not.

Mrs. M.Ç. said that there should be 2 meals, but now in İ.A.Ö. there is only lunch, however, we -the parents- put a snack in their bag, so they can eat also in the evening.

She told that they prefer private hospitals because in there, doctors give more attention and there is no waiting problem. She added "when compared with the public hospitals, doctors are so busy that receiving right information becomes impossible."

About the responsibilities, she said that she is more concerned about everything and the other parent has the role of financing the necessities etc. When I asked that maybe if you were working, he would be more interested every issue about the children and she said "if he was university graduated, he would be like me today."

Then, I continued with private school parents.

6)Mrs. N.B. is 34 years old and university graduated. The other parent is started university but not finished. She is not working now, after her children are born. She has 2 children, one of them is 1, the other one is 7 years old. Her daughter is in Erenköy Işık Okulları, at 1st grade. She mentioned that she does not believe that there is a excellent education in every private school. She added, "for a 1st grade child, it is not right to have 45 minutes lectures and make them sit all day. There should be some activities that children will enjoy and discharge, like playing anything or there should be music, because they are starting at age 6 and its their playing period. Therefore, private schools in Turkey is not proper also like public schools." When I ask her perception of good education, she told me that socialization is the key, and teachers should determine the children's interests and abilities. She added, "now, while the economy is changing, there are new jobs and professions, like being a blogger or influencer in social media. Thereby, I think that when people are producing something, especially in a branch of art, they

will earn money and be happier. My all friends who works long hours on a desk are so unhappy and want to start their own businesses to work more flexible. I want my children to be artists. My daughter is going to a ballet course, taking violin lesson and now she will start swimming. She also loves to create something with her hands. Education should lead children to art and sports but I cannot see it even in the private schools.”

Mrs. N.B. thinks that academically, children learn so many things that they do not need to learn. However, she thinks language is really important, because especially when a child is in a language immersion school, they learn how to survive and communicate with teachers by themselves, it gives them self-confidence. In Turkish private schools, every teacher says “I will call your mother” and not try to communicate with the children, however children are individuals, it is also a part of her perception of good education. She added “I do not want my children to feel bad about this “success” system. TEOG is not the main reason that children have to work, that’s why I choose Erenköy Işık Okulları, because my children can continue there to high school.” She told that in the middle school, she wants them to continue in a private school because of its social opportunities and she added, “Erenköy Işık’s first positive effect on me is that it has a huge garden with many trees in the core of a city, it was surprising for me. And the garden is also a place for social activities and sportive activities.”

Mrs. N.B. told that the biggest problem of this era is that children do not curious about anything because they have everything within easy reach. She gave point to especially technology is the main reason that the children lost their curiosity. However, she told that she does not give cellphone or ipad to her daughter. Therefore, she said that there should be activities, which children wonder something.

About her daughter’s future job, she told that she really wishes to see her in a branch of art, but even she has a different job, Mrs. N.B. thinks that she needs to be a part of an art because of thinking that it will bring happiness. And she added “Today, I carry her to ballet and violin and now she wants to swim. Maybe, this is not the right thing to carry her everywhere but I do it with her wish. For example, she goes to ballet for 3 years and last week she wanted to drop out and told me that next year she does not want to continue and I said, okay however you like, but yesterday they had a show and she told me that she wants to continue one more year and again I said okay, however you like.”

Mrs. N.B. told that she got advice from a pedagog for the primary level and she mentioned that the curriculum in first 4 years is the same in the public and private schools, but she preferred to

choose a private school for the social parts of the school and also the attention to every children is higher than public schools. However, financially she told that they have difficulties.

She added about the social change with education, “If the governors do not give preferential treatment for the ones who do not qualified enough to determine policies about economy, education etc. the country would be fairer and more equal.”

Other children’s parents are considered important by Mrs. N.B. because she thinks that everything a child experience in school, will affect her psychology. And she told that if their financial situation changes in a negative way, they would try to keep her continue to her private school because the changes in her environment will affect her psychology in a negative way, therefore she thinks that they would try to keep her there. She added “we became friends with other families and we are communicating each other also without children and without children noticed.”

The person she would marry in the future is important for Mrs. N.B. because education change people’s vision. “For example, my husband and I have differences in our educational processes, therefore when the children are born he told me that I should give up my wish to work, because he just sees working as a mean to earning money and he thinks we do not need the money I brought, thereby I quit and give my attention to my children.”

About the meals that they eat at school, she told that in the preschool of Erenköy Işık, there were breakfast and now there is only a sandwich after the first lecture, however, her daughter does not like sandwich and she wants eggs and cheese in the morning like a normal Turkish breakfast, she wakes up at 06.30 in the morning therefore she cannot eat at that time, in sum she does not eat anything in the morning. Therefore, Mrs. N.B. told that the breakfast system at primary level does not ease their life.

She told that they prefer private hospitals.

Lastly, Mrs. N.B. added, “my husband plays with our children and helps them to sleep but he is not involved to the homework or school activities, I think he should also be a part of that.”

7)Mrs. A.K. is 42 years old, university graduated. She is not working actively but her mother and sister is working with their own business about textile in Bursa and she helps them in international trade of their products. She has got 2 children, one of them is 7, the other one is years old. Her son is in 1st grade in Moda Fen İlkokulu. Her perception of good education is not

only academic or not only socializing, therefore she mentioned, “I searched for a school that there are both academic and social opportunities with qualified language education, and I consider also the factors that teachers should give attention to every children to see their interests, to discover their potential and also I care about him to gain self-confidence. Also, being mindful and sensitive is really important in this era to be global, I mean civil society awareness. Therefore, I care about mental, social and physical development of my children and that’s why I did not choose schools like Bilfen etc.” She said that if there are no financial problems, she would send her son to a private middle school and a private high school. She added “If he can go to Galatasay Lisesi, Kabataş Lisesi, etc. with his own effort that would be nicer for his educational process to become a part of a rooted school.”

About the future job of her son, she said that she would prefer a job that he would be happy and that he can use his full potential and skills. When I asked if she send him to a public school, would her son could do a job that he would be happy and use his full potential, she answered “To be that full potential adult from a public school, my son has to be extraordinary skilled, but he is not and he is a normal child, it is hard to find interests and be self-confident while trying to survive and show his own self in a crowded place, which teachers cannot give attention personally.”

Mrs. A.K.’s expectations from their investment to the education is not only learn academic issues, because she told that information is easily reachable in this era, and the curriculum is similar with the public school, but she wishes the school to fire the curiosity in her son and make him want to learn. She said that education brings empathy, respect and order to a society.

If their financial situation changed in a negative way, she told that they would sacrifice their own arbitrary things and in case it is not enough, she mentioned that they can sell their assets. She added “Our standard of living changes in a negative way of course, with the second children saving money became impossible, therefore I do not know what would happen if our jobs retrogress.”

About her son’s future job, she said, “I hope he would do the job he loves and high earning at the same time, but if it cannot happen, I would prefer him to do the job he loves. However, I would worry about him. In the opposite case, if he works in a job that he is really unhappy but have high earning and a status, I would worry also at that scenario, because it means that he cannot enjoy the money he earns and have a stress to maintain his position, it is meaningless to have that much stress and unhappiness.”

Mrs. A.K. thinks that the other children's parents are important but not in an economic equality, but she said "children are affected by each other so easily, therefore I care about the other children are also have the same values and to be good persons. Actually, there are all types of persons and my son plays with all and be friends with all but he sees if there is something wrong, like if a child swears all the time, my son cannot be best friends with him because they are different."

The person who will marry him in the future, she said "I cannot say they must be from the same educational background, but for their happiness, it is important to be have the same vision."

About the meals, she told that when his son wakes up early, cannot eat, therefor there should be breakfast and lunch at school in her idea, and Moda Fen is giving breakfast and lunch, which has a positive effect on her school choosing. She added, "I need him to eat hot meal, which is cooked in a clean environment, it does not matter if it is organic or not, but I know many parents that choose their children's school according to this factor. I cannot always manage to cook them organic meal, therefore it may not be organic and that's okay."

About the responsibilities, Mrs. A.K. mentioned, "Mainly, I am nurturing them, but my husband also helps their homework, plays with them and feed them, but he does not cook. The sleeping process is only in my responsibility, that is because children prefer me. We do not have any determined roles except cooking. I need him to take the sleeping process from me, maybe he will try. The right thing is that everyone has the same responsibilities."

8)Mrs. G.A. is 35 years old and she has master degree in architecture. The other parent is university graduated. Now, she is not working, after the children she quit her job. She has 2 children. One of them is 8, the other one is 4 years old. He is at 1st grade in Terakki Vakfi Okulları. She told me why they choose this school; "because it is a rooted school, which we heard so many good things and it is not an exam-oriented school and it is near to our house. Language learning is also important for me, but I know that they are not perfect but enough in my opinion. Also, politically I saw that the school is "Atatürkçü" there for I think it is nice to be there."

In the middle school, she plans her son to continue to Terakki Vakfi Okulları. However, she said that in the primary school they did not want to bore and pressure their son, but for the high school they would send him to courses, because in Turkey there is an exam reality, therefore

they want him to study a little and do not continue from Terakki Vakfı Okulları and with his own effort, he can go to an Anatolian high school in free of charge and she said, “if it can be a rooted school like İstanbul Erkek Lisesi we would be so happy.”

About her son’s future job, she told that it should be a job that he enjoys and they would try to lead him to show what would he like. She added, “Because, when we are preparing for the university, we may not know what we would like to do and if we choose a department in the university, after graduation we may not know the job opportunities about that profession. Therefore, I think that families are important in that time to show the opportunities so their children, after that he could choose himself, of course. Actually, I do not know what will his father prefer, because fathers generally think that male child must save himself in life, but today he says, my children can do the job they would enjoy.” She pointed out that Terakki provides opportunities like meeting with writers etc. and she thinks that would be also a leading factor in a child’s choice.

Mrs. G.A. told that with one child, they do not have so much financial difficulties, but with 2 children it became harder. And about their expectations from their investments to their son’s education, she said, “actually, when you give this amount of money, you expect so many things like sportive and artistic hobbies, but the most important one is that we expect a character-wise person. I know that there are differences between public school children and private school children in cultural activities, I hope that there is a difference that worth this amount of money.”

When I asked if she see to send her son to a private school as a necessity, she told me yes and the reason is “social pressure” and when the financial situation is proper, they preferred a private school. She said, “if our financial situation changed in a negative way, we cannot send him to Terakki, but maybe we would find another private school, which is easier to pay. Therefore, I sacrifice the quality of his education. Maybe you can sell your car but not my house. But surely, I would change his school, because when you are in a school like Terakki, it has its own bringing, like trips, birthday parties, etc. I won’t do this with having difficulties, I would send him to a private school in this school’s half price. If it hardens our standard of living, I would not do it.” For his son’s future job, Mrs. G.A. told that she would prefer a high salary job for her son to feel satisfied with his work. She would be worried if her son has a low salary.

Her son’s classmates’ families are important for Mrs. G.A., she cares that parents are educated or not, but not only about academic education, also culturally. She added, “when we meet other parents in Terakki, we see that they are generally university graduated and working, we have

similar life styles.” For the person who will marry her son in the future, she said, “it may not be the same but there should not be huge differences in their educational level.”

Mrs. G.A. told that in Terakki, there are 3 meals, breakfast, lunch and snacks in the afternoon and it is ideal in her opinion. She mentioned that the meal lists are coming to their house, therefore she also knows their ingredients and thinks that it is proper.

About the responsibilities, she told that it is a problematic subject for her, because her husband is only a financier.

9)Mrs. E.A. is 48 years old and university graduated. The other parent is also university graduated in U.S.A. She is not working now. She has 2 children, one of them is 16, the other one is 7 years old. Both of them are in Işık Okulları, one is in the high school, the other one is in the primary school, in 1st grade. Her perception of good education is language learning, social activities. She also plans to send her daughter in Işık in the middle school. When I asked the high school, she said, “when a child starts the educational process in a private school, she/he would flounder in a public school if it is not a qualified one. Therefore, if she cannot have a very successful result in the exam, my plan is to make her continue in Işık’s high school. As a mother, I have to maintain the same opportunities to my both children.”

She mentioned that her main goal to send her children to a private school is to provide a perfect language learning environment to her them, not to have a perfect academic success. She added, “my daughter, who is in the high school, has a perfect English now. In my whole life, I tried to learn English perfectly, I did not want my children to strive with it after the school. I graduated all levels of education from public schools, thereby I could not learn it perfectly in school.”

Mrs. E.A. told that with 2 children it became hard to finance their education, because education is not only their schools, they also want to go to courses or activities. About her expectations from their investments, she wishes their children to have profession that they choose and be successful in their own ways.

When I asked if they see private school as a necessity, she answered it with language skills, because of it is a must now. Financially, even they have difficulties they can afford it, so they choose to send their children to a private school. She added “Today, also government gives promotion for sending children to private schools, so they lead us in this way.” If their financial situation changes in a negative way, she told that they will try to sacrifice for their children if it

is not totally decreasing their standard of living. Today, 2 children are decreasing their standard of living but it is sufferable.

About her daughters' future job, she told that her priority is their happiness, but also, she thinks that they must earn enough money to stand on their own feet. She mentioned that if her daughters' have low salary jobs that they like, as parents Mrs. E.A. and her husband would try to support them financially. She added, "I experienced working in a job that I did not like, I do not want my children to be in that process. I was a stockbroker and like my job, but some working environments made me unhappy and I did not want to go and it became a torture to go every morning. I also quit for caring my children, if my job was not taking my all time I would continue. That's why, I want my children to have flexible working hours."

Her daughter's classmates' families are important for Mrs. E.A. and she told that after the school, when they come home, she asks them how was their day and act like a friend. Thereby, she tries to know her life. If there is someone that she became close friends, Mrs. E.A. prefers to get to know her friend and that friend's family. When I asked what does she expect from these meetings, she pointed out that she wants to see if they have any bad habits etc.

About the one who will marry her daughter in the future, Mrs. E.A. thinks that it is a must to be university graduated.

In their school, there are 3 meals for primary level, 2 snacks and lunch. She considers meal as an important determinant while choosing a school, because they are paying it additionally. She told that her daughter eats breakfast at home and go to school, therefore this system is proper for them and she cares about her children to eat hot meal (like homemade), she is against to feed them with fast food.

The responsibilities are on her shoulders and her husband is only financing it. She told that he is working in Gebze, therefore even if there is an emergency, he could come in 1 hour. Hence, as Mrs. E.A. already quit her job, she took all the responsibility.

10)Mrs. Y.M. is 47 years old and university graduated. The other parent has PhD. She is a social media advisor, photographer and influencer. She has 3 children, one of them is 24, the others are 12, and 9. Her daughters are in Neslin Değişen Sesi, one of them is in 7th grade, the other one is in 3th grade. Her perception of good education is to raise self-confident and disciplined children. She preferred a private school because of her thinking that public schools are not

enough in both academic and social education. In the middle school, her plan is making her children continue to their school. In the level of high school, if her daughters would be successful in the exam and gain the right to start a qualified public school like Galatasaray Lisesi, she would send them happily to that school, but if they do not, they will continue to a private school.

Mrs. Y.M. thinks that the education that her children get, will prepare them to life in every aspect, in this perspective, they also would have a profession. She added, “they start to explore themselves in these ages and they will find what do they want to do in the future, when they find it, we will support them.” She said that financially they do not have difficulties now, if they would have, she told that she will sell her car or take bank credits, so she would try anything. About her expectation from this investment, she told that she wishes her children to be happy and be nice persons.

In a society with high educational level, Mrs. Y.M. mentioned that everything would be change in a positive way, and she added, “I do not want to separate people as educated and not educated, because when considered globally, there are many successful people who are drop out of school. However, in Turkey, we need so many changings, therefore education would be a key for his change.”

Mrs. Y.M. said that their standard of living did not change with educational investment but they had do change their house to live near the school, because she is against spending so many time to going to school on roads. She told that they wanted their children to learn French, thereby they choose the school that will suit them.

She said, “even if my children have low earning, I would prefer them to work in the jobs they like, because I want them to happy and productive and money does not bring happiness. I would not worried if they have low salary, I know that when a person does her/his favorite job, they would earn their lives and that’s enough.

Her children’s classmates’ families and classmates are important to Mrs. Y.M. She said that she wants to know who is her children’s friends and even if their families are distant acquaintance, she wants to know them, because families affect their children. She would prefer a similarly educated person to be the person who will marry her in the future, but it is not a must for her.

About the meals, there are 3 meals a day in their school, breakfast, lunch and a snack. She said, “it was a determinant issue for me while choosing a school, because I want them to eat healthy

meals and I am against to fast food. Therefore, I got advise from a dietician and told to school that at lunch, my daughter won't eat carbohydrate, I will put fruits to her bag and she will eat that after the meal.

She said about the hospital preferences, because of her husband is a doctor, they experience every hospital according the need and according to where the right doctor is.

About the responsibilities, her husband is the financier but also helping them with their homework. Even if she has the most part of the responsibilities, her husband always supports her. Lastly, she added that because of her husband's job is in health sector, he misses some of the show that her daughters prepare at school, but he tries to catch everything.

Discussion of the Findings: “I want my children to be happy.”

As the details of the interviews above suggest, private and public school preferences among the middle class parents in Turkey are influenced from the changing perceptions of education. None of the respondents referred to education as a right. On the contrary, the interviews indicate a tacit acceptance that education is no longer considered as a citizenship right; and, that the education of the children is mainly the responsibility of parents, not the state or the government. The responding parents do not state that they are sending their children to the public primary schools for normative reasons. Then, what might be other reasons given that the socio-economic backgrounds and the availability of good quality public primary schools are similar in both groups?

The responses to the question on what they understand from good education do not give a satisfying answer in order to understand the different choices. The private school parents that I interviewed said that social activities and language learning are crucial in ‘good education’. The public school parents likewise mostly said that their perception of good education is to raise decent human beings; however, this time by pointing out to the social profile of the public schools in the neighborhood: The students are living in the same neighborhood (so culturally and economically compatible with their own children) and the teacher are more skilled than those working in other schools. This indicates that perception of what makes good education does not change from private to public school families. It is rather how the good education will be provided. The private school parents, who say that they want to raise mindful and sensitive children, believe that this is possible with the school’s ideology and the social activities that school provides; while the public school parents claim that these will come from the social profile of the neighborhood. This finding supports the arguments that the discussion on the impact of neoliberal policies on education cannot be limited to the percentage of private school enrollment. There might be broader repercussions.

The responses to the subsequent questions on nutrition and medical treatment provide further clues in this respect. During the research design process, the idea of forming two parent groups with similar profiles and different school preferences stems from a presumption that the parents who send their children to public primary schools might have made an interim decision of saving for future expenditures on private education. Given that the families are middle class professionals who can afford private schools, rather than perceiving education as a right and parenting limited to child rearing, they might only be delaying private schools to a later stage. In order to gain insight to their perceptions of education and parenting, I asked questions to

verify whether they take their children to private or public medical facilities. As expected, based on the literature on changing parenting and education perceptions, there is a common tendency among both group of parents to pay for private treatment. All five private school parents already have private health insurance, therefore public hospitals are not considered to be an option. The public school families who do not have private health insurance still take their children to private hospitals on serious looking ailments. This finding is naturally related to the variation in the economic conditions within the middle-class families. However, it is interesting that even those families take health as a parental responsibility and ready to pay for medical expenditures. Health just as education does not appear to be perceived as a citizenship right even when the parents are middle class professionals who are regularly paying tax automatically. Nutrition issues on the other hand does not appear to be a serious concern for these families. This might be related to the social class. The responding families are able to provide good nutrition at home, therefore, they might not be concerned with the school meals as it can be easily compensated with dinners. One parent mentioned that her child does not like the school meals, and she is not anxious about it as she cooks at home. Housewife mothers of public school students are even more unconcerned with the meals; which suggest that nutrition issue is not about parenting perception but rather related to social class resources.

A point I had not considered when I was designing the questionnaire is the impact of the number and age of children. All the parents I interviewed have more than 1 children, 8 of them have 2 children, 2 of them have 3 children. Thereby, I had the chance to hear all of their educational investment stories and as some of them have the experience of public and private schools before their child who is started to a primary school sooner, they had different personal stories about the reasons they choose the schools. All of the mothers told that after the second children they started to have financial difficulties while investing in their children's education. They want to provide equal opportunities to their children. One parent with three children, two of whom are enrolled in private primary schools, did not express financial problems related to education expenditures. Eight parents have two children, four of them prefer private, four of them prefer public primary schools. However, the second children of the private school families are toddlers, and they commonly raise concerns about the school costs when the younger children come of school age. The public school families with two children have sent both children to public primary schools. The last family has three children, all enrolled in public primary schools, yet, are sent to private secondary schools. This overall situation confirms that perception of education and parenting does not differ between private and public school

families. They all appear to acknowledge education as a privilege to be purchased; the decision about primary schools are more related to their financial forecast. Education indeed seems as a commodity, when to purchase and how to purchase vary between the families. They believe that they can compensate language and extracurricular skills by private classes and parent schooling at the primary level. As one parent puts, 'I am sending my child to public school because I can teach her English at home'. Another one adds 'I am a biologist working part-time so I am giving science, math and language classes to my own children at home'. It is striking to see that education is indeed considered to be part of the parental responsibility and parenting expanded to controlling the lives of the children.

This is further reinstated by the statements of parents who are both working in full-time jobs. Even if they are working, all the mothers I interviewed, told that they pay attention to the children that their daughter/son become friends, they arrange meetings with other children's families, thereby they know each other and maintain a good relation with each other, especially mothers, and therefore their children are also seeing each other out of the school. In this way, mothers are choosing their children's friends when they are in primary level of education; they try to create a qualified social environment for their children to have healthy friendships. It is also a fact of changing mindset of parents and the new parenting. It is also named as helicopter mothering, which I observed when I talk with the parents. Because they all decide everything for their children, "for their well-being" and most of them do not plan to retire from parenting even when their children become adults even in terms of financial support. As a mother puts, 'if my child does not have a high income in the future, I will still support her so that he will be happy'. This notion of parenting becomes more interesting in the account of another mother, 'I am sending her to a public school, but this is for saving money so that she can start her own business in the future'. This way or the other way, the parents seem to be dedicated to equipping their children for the requirements of the market. A very interesting issue that I have come across is about this 'starting a business' issue. Some of the parents who send their children to public primary schools have financial resources enough for starting a business in the future and they are all self-employed. However, although the parents who send their children to private primary schools generally have high salary jobs but do not run their own businesses, said that they could not support their children in the future, therefore they want them to become global persons and have the self-confidence and social skills and hobbies that would carry them to a bright future; which is apparently more plausible if they attend private schools starting from the primary education level.

The perceptions of education and parenting based on the limited number of interviews, also imply the existence of austerity parenting in contemporary Turkey. Although all respondents are middle class families, there is a general financial and parenting anxiety in terms of personally taking responsibility of everything about their children sometimes even at the cost of dire financial difficulties. One of the mothers replied that she will sell her house and her car to pay for private school costs if the household income declines dramatically in the future. Others only consider withdrawing their children from the private school in case of financial difficulty for reasons of social problems with other classmates.

Having noted the changing perceptions of education and parenting through recurrent responses, it should be emphasized that the influence of neoliberalism is both material and perceptual. Neoliberalization of economy shape the education objectives of both private and public schools towards raising market-savvy generations. On the other hand, increasing number of private schools and increasing public financial support to the private schools, results in the erosion of the quality of public schools as the gap between the schools expand in terms of both infrastructure and teaching in this process. In this way, education system becomes a mechanism which reproduces inequality rather than providing social mobility. The parents go through financial and mental difficulties so that they can purchase better education for their children which they hope will secure better living standards for their children. Those who cannot afford private schools are very likely to be entrapped within a vicious cycle of mediocre education and mediocre living standards in the future.

I am deeply impressed by the extent of the impact of the transformation of education in Turkey. Mrs. A.K. said, “To come out as a full potential adult from a public school, my son has to be extraordinary skilled, but he is not and he is a normal child, it is hard to find interests and be self-confident while trying to survive and show his own self in a crowded place, which teachers cannot give attention personally.” Therefore, she thinks that starting her son’s education completely within the private education system as early as primary school is a necessity to give the opportunity to realize his full potential. If part of this is the changing perception about parenting, the rest is clearly related to the material deterioration of public education in Turkey.

Conclusion

Education, which should be a free of charge and qualified public service, has changed with the rise of the neoliberal policies. It has become a commodity; its aim and its perception have changed in accordance with the material change. The perception of parents has also changed and they became consumers of education because they are paying and investing in their children. Their aim is to raise them as happy, skilled, being a part of at least one branch of art or sports and working with a high salary. The perception of education shifted from being a right to being a privilege for the few who can afford better education. Even the parents who cannot afford all of the requirements of the new neoliberalized education system try to provide and maintain the conditions for their children to become qualified persons. When education is considered as a fundamental right, parents expect the state to provide high quality education either free of charge or in an affordable manner. However, when it became a privilege that can be purchased, parents became investors and customers. Because, to maintain a good future to their children become the responsibility of parents rather than the responsibility of welfare state, which provides education as a public service. Parents try to send their children to the best school that they can afford, even if it is a private or a public school, they add private tutoring classes to their schedules; and an activity of sports or arts is included to their investments to the children. Hence, self-entrepreneurship of Foucault (2008) became the main idea of educational transformation and it reproduces inequality with different the public and private schools with different qualities. When putting neoliberalization on the focus, it was important to clarify that the perceptions of education and parenting changed beyond the economic implications of neoliberal transformation, the economic change brought a political-individual change, especially in parenting.

In this thesis, I explored whether the perceptions of the parents about education and parenting changed in Turkey despite the fact that privatization of schools remained relatively limited. I made interviews with parents of similar profile in order to understand whether their school choice is related to their perceptual differences. My main finding is that what is expected from education and how they perceive proper parenting are not different among the private and public-school parents. Factors such as the household income, number and age of children shape the school preferences at the primary education level among the middle-class respondents of my research. They all acknowledge education as a privilege/commodity to be purchased; and, they acknowledge the function of education as raising market-savvy individuals. This holds

even though they emphasize that their priority is their children's happiness. 'Income is not that important; it is more important that my child does the job he likes. But I know that he will not be happy if he does not have enough income', says a parent. In the future studies, I believe, inquiring into the changing perception of happiness in relation to neoliberalization of education might provide interesting findings. As the perception of education and parenting appear to be really changing in Turkey, adding an intergenerational element to the future studies might be also contributing to the existing literature.

The thesis research also provided findings of personal value to me. I have attended private schools from primary school throughout tertiary education. In retrospect, I noticed when I was going through the interviews that my own education experience changed my vision in a way that it would have been if I had attended public schools. As one of the mothers I quoted above mentions, the contemporary public education system makes it impossible for children without extraordinary skills to realize their potentials. Although I did not ask in the interviews per se, my exchanges with parents underline the fact that this is a rather new development, which emerged especially after 1980s. Hence, education in the neoliberal age is means of reproducing inequality in the service of the market.

In Turkey, there has been many changes in the education system since the foundation of the republic. Especially, after 1980s, when privatization increased in every aspect that interest the society, also private schools started to increase in number. Even if private schools are still limited, the education sector became a purchasable commodity. As I asked two main questions in this research, "why do some parents prefer to send their children to the private schools even at the primary education level even when they have access to relatively good quality public primary schools in their neighborhood?" From another perspective, "why do some parents with similar socio-demographic and economic background prefer to send their children to public primary schools, although they can afford private primary schools as well?" It is seen that the parents that I interviewed, who are from similar socio-economic backgrounds, make financial calculations and decide where to invest. The ones, who prefer to send their children to a private primary school, prefer to invest in a full-time and qualified school, which their children benefit from not only the lectures but also the social activities and language classes. The ones, who prefer to send their children to a public primary school, prefer to invest in tutoring classes, art or/and sports classes as an extra and they plan to send their children to a private middle school. Thereby, the only issue that changes is the place/time that differs in investing. Both group of parents has changed in their parenting approach, they have extra spending on education and

skills. The people who do not have the opportunity to pay extra classes, try to compensate by teaching and training at home after the children come from school and parents return from work. Parents started to give all of their time and attention to their children when they are not working, they try to transfer their skills to their children for preparing them to future. Because, free-market economy does not work in a right based perspective and does not provide a protection mechanism for disadvantaged people. Therefore, every parent tries to create their own opportunities for their children to be individuals who can fulfill the requirements of the market. Even if the parents can afford their children's education, they expect their children to afford every issue they will need in the future, and be in the advantageous part of the society. One of the parents' that I interviewed said that "this amount of money is meaningless to spend on the education, because there are so many different schools, one of them is 20.000 TL, the other one is 80.000 TL". In sum, this quotation shows how education is commodified, it has many different alternatives and it became a parental choice.

For the further research, to see the transformation of education and parenting, semi-structured in-depth interviews should be conducted intergenerational. By this way, the changing approaches of parenting and perception of good education can be clearly seen. The age range of the parents that I interviewed are among 35 – 45. Thereby, their parents have children in 1970s and 1980s, in the years that neoliberalization started, but before its intensive affects is seen in every aspect of life. At their parenting period, there were no extra tutoring classes that provided by parents. Moreover, there were not many private primary schools as an option in school choosing. However, their perception of good education and parenting should be understood to see the difference among today's neoliberal globalized system. In addition, parents' education level changes their perception of education, and accordingly, changes their children's level of education. Being university graduated in Turkey increased after 1980s, therefore, the parents in 1970s and 1980s – especially mothers – are expected not to be university graduated as today's parents.

Moreover, the religious education has been discussed since the law on unification of education (1924). When compared with the parents in 1970s and 1980s, the ideas about religious education has also changed within today's globalized world. However, Turkey's education policies are affected by both neoliberalism and neo-conservatism; it would be valuable to make a comparative research among the changing cultural values and perception of education and parenting in Turkey.

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**ETİK KURUL DEĞERLENDİRME SONUCU/RESULT OF EVALUATION BY
THE ETHICS COMMITTEE**

(Bu bölüm İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurul tarafından
doldurulacaktır /This section to be completed by the Committee on Ethics in research
on Humans)


Başvuru Sahibi / Applicant: Begüm Sonbahar

Proje Başlığı / Project Title: Neoliberal Transformation of Education in Turkey after
1980s

Proje No. / Project Number: 2019-20024-74

1.	Herhangi bir değişikliğe gerek yoktur / There is no need for revision	XX
2.	Ret/ Application Rejected Reddin gerekçesi / Reason for Rejection	

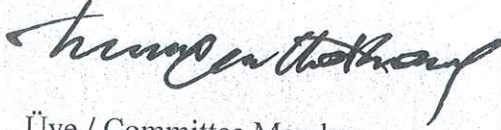
Değerlendirme Tarihi / Date of Evaluation: 10 Mayıs 2019


Kurul Başkanı / Committee Chair

Doç. Dr. İtir Erhart


Üye / Committee Member

Prof. Dr. Aslı Tunç



Üye / Committee Member

Prof. Dr. Turgut Tarhanlı



Üye / Committee Member

Prof. Dr. Hale Bolak Boratav



Üye / Committee Member

Prof. Dr. Koray Akay