

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE TURKISH VOCATIONAL TRAINING
SYSTEM: CREATION OF LIFELONG LEARNING, LOYAL TECHNICIANS

by Ergin Bulut

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Title: The Transformation of the Turkish Vocational Training System: Creation of Lifelong Learning, Loyal Technicians

This thesis scrutinizes the current transformation of vocational training system in Turkey. Beginning with the question “Why did the vocational high schools become the problem of the country all of a sudden?” it tries to cover the social and economic dynamics and motives behind this transformation. Establishing the link between Turkey’s integration with the global economy and the general trends in global economy and education, it lays out the motive behind the attempts of capital circles to transform the current system to a modular one, which is based on lifelong learning. Questioning the meaning of concepts such as knowledge economy and lifelong learning, it seeks to decipher what kind of implications this might have regarding the creation of modular, lifelong learning blue collar workers. The thesis aims to challenge the mainstream functional perspective on vocational training system and underlines the political character of education in general and vocational education in particular. With a field work carried out in a district of İstanbul, the thesis seeks to find out what kind of techniques and strategies the capital resorts to in order to train its loyal technicians. In this regard, this study suggests approaching the current integration of private companies and vocational schools within the context of the internationalization of capital, need for qualified labor and flexible markets which certainly require a cultural transformation of the minds of the youth and the normalization of social inequalities in their perception.

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Başlık: Türkiye'de Mesleki Eğitim Sisteminin Dönüşümü: Yaşamboyu Öğrenen Sadık Teknisyenlerin Yaratılması

Bu tez, Türkiye'de mesleki eğitim sisteminin şu anki dönüşümünü incelemektedir. “Meslek liseleri birdenbire neden memleket meselesi oldu?” sorusuyla başlayan tez, söz konusu dönüşümün arkasındaki sosyal ve ekonomik nedenleri ortaya çıkarmaya çalışmaktadır. Türkiye'nin küresel ekonomiyle bütünleşmesinin dünyada genel olarak ekonomi ve eğitimde görülen eğilimlerle ilişkisini kuran çalışma, sermaye çevrelerinin mevcut sistemi yaşamboyu öğrenmeye dayalı modüler bir biçime sokma çabalarının sebeplerini ortaya koymaktadır. Tezde bilgi ekonomisi ve yaşamboyu öğrenme gibi kavramların anlamları sorgulanmakta ve bunların, modüler, yaşamboyu öğrenen mavi yakalı işçilerin yaratılması açısından ne gibi implikasyonları olabileceği deşifre edilmeye çalışılmaktadır. Tez, mesleki eğitim sistemine ilişkin hakim işlevselci perspektife meydan okumakta ve genel olarak eğitimin özel olarak da mesleki eğitimin siyasi yapısını vurgulamaktadır. İstanbul'da bir meslek lisesinde yapılan saha çalışması ile bu tez, sermayenin kendi sadık teknisyenlerini eğitebilmek için ne gibi teknik ve stratejilere başvurduğunu bulmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu anlamda tez, özel şirketler ve meslek liselerinin mevcut entegrasyonuna, sermayenin uluslararasılaşması, vasıflı işgücü ihtiyacı ve esnek piyasalar bağlamında bakılması gerektiğini önermektedir. Zira bütün bunlar, hiç şüphesiz gençlerin zihinlerinin kültürel olarak dönüşümünü ve toplumsal eşitsizliklerin söz konusu gençlerin algılarında normalleştirilmesini gerektirmektedir.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is about *the* problem of this country, as the slogan of KOÇ group's campaign '*Meslek Lisesi Memleket Meselesi*'¹ suggests. Vocational high schools and vocational training have been of great interest to many circles for a period of time. However, this issue has largely been focused as a problem of regime. The first thing that comes to people's minds, as far as vocational training is concerned, is the religious schools (*imam-hatip okulları*). Yet there is more to the issue. Designed to raise the required workforce for the industry, vocational training has been undergoing a great transformation, the cause of which is basically Turkey's integration with the world economy in particular and the changing economic conditions throughout the world in general.

The greatest demand for a transformation in the vocational training system stems from big capital groups and of course the government, which aims to keep pace with global competition. Within the framework of this global competition – a word which we so easily use and has come to be a neutral, normalized one – there seems to have appeared a world which actually “reinforces inequalities and in which the least skilled are regularly excluded and relegated to deskilling and deskilled jobs.”² Again, this global competition has required a skilled, flexible workforce, ready to learn how to learn. The need for a workforce which can adapt itself to the

¹ This is a campaign, which can be translated into Turkish as “Vocational High School is the Problem of the Country.” It is organized by one of the largest capital groups of Turkey. The group provides scholarships for 8,000 students and gives them the opportunity to have their apprenticeship training at the companies of KOÇ holding. The aim is to raise a well-equipped intermediary workforce in the information, industry and service sectors.

² Laurence Roulleau-Berger, "Introduction," in *Youth and Work in the Post-Industrial City of North America and Europe* ed. Laurence Roulleau-Berger (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2003).

changing economic conditions and new technologies has reached its peak. In this context; concepts like employability, lifelong learning, flexible learning and modular education have become more attractive. The motto is as follows: The more educated a nation is, the wealthier it is. However, under the uneven conditions of global capitalism, as Carnoy writes, “the education system continues to function as if young people’s trajectories were predictable.”³ In other words, a traditional view of education, which “emphasize the role that education plays in altering individual characteristics and the position of that individual in the economy,”⁴ is prevalent and in such kind of a perspective, there is a contradiction in the sense that “individuals in their collectivity are immersed in a universal pool ... and each individual is at the same time separate, responsible for himself or herself at this moment of history, separate from past history, past culture, and past interactions.”⁵

In this manner and the discourse of efficiency and profit marginalization, the voice of marginal groups – in our case vocational school students – is suppressed.⁶ The school is considered to be a black box. As Apple succinctly puts it, “one measures input before students enter schools and then measures output along the way or when ‘adults’ enter the labor force ... the concrete experience of children and teachers – is less important in this view than the more global and macro-economic

³ Ibid., 3.

⁴ Martin Carnoy, "Education, economy and the State," in *Cultural and Economic Reproduction in Education: Essays on Class, Ideology and the State*, ed. Michael W. Apple (London: Routledge, 1982).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ There are works which give the floor to the kids, including Dilek Kayaalp, "Educational Attainment of Working Students: Evidence from Iskitler Industry and Vocational High School in Ankara" (M.A., METU, 2002), Jane Nagle. "Voices from the margins: the stories of vocational high school students ". (Place Published: New York: P. Lang, 2001 (accessed, Catherine Raissiguier, *Becoming Women, Becoming Workers: Identity Formation in a French Vocational School, Power, Social Identity, and Education* (New York: SUNY Press, 1994), Paul Willis, *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981).

considerations of rate of return on investment, or, more radically, the reproduction of the division of labor.”⁷

Vocational high schools are schools which are designed to train the workforce of the market. The system is also considered to be an ameliorative one since it integrates marginal groups with the labor market. However, if we do not ask questions like “who attend these schools?”, “what is taught in these schools?” we might implicitly contribute to a mechanism which uncover the “hidden institutional meanings and relations”⁸ of the school. For instance, if we ignore the fact that “the very choice of school knowledge, the act of designing school environment are often based on ideological and economic presuppositions,”⁹ we might fall into the trap of human capital theorists, who very often disregard the social and economic relations in which schools are embedded.

Here, actually comes the tension between the consensus and conflict approaches in education. This also applies to vocational education. The consensus approach holds that “the particularities of everyday life – our relationships, economic activities, and social outlooks – have been superseded by universal ways of being, knowing, and relating to others.”¹⁰ For the conflict approaches, on the other hand, the issue of social class is significant and such approaches assume that “there are systematic blocks or barriers to upward social mobility, which generates social classes.”¹¹

⁷ Michael Apple, *Ideology and Curriculum*, 2 ed. (New York: Routledge, 1990).

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Hugh Lauder et al., "Introduction: The Prospects for Education: Individualization, Globalization, and Social Change," in *Education, Globalization and Social Change*, ed. Hugh Lauder, et al. (Oxford, 2006).

¹¹ Ibid.

In this respect, this thesis aims to investigate what goes inside the black box. In other words, this project explores on behalf of whom the whole system is being transformed. In the first chapter, the kind of outcome global economic changes have led to as far as education and vocational education is concerned will be examined. There, the desires of nation-states to establish high-skill educational systems within the framework of human capital theory will be explored and the deficiencies of this approach exposed. After positing what kind of a transformation vocational education is undergoing, comes the second chapter. The second chapter includes a brief history of vocational education in Turkey. Following that, laws and projects to establish a sound relationship between educational sector and industry will be mentioned. Then, why, all of a sudden, vocational high schools have become the issue of the whole country will be discussed. In order to find an answer to that question, the economic transformation Turkey is experiencing will be touched upon. Having laid down that general framework, the reader will come to the stage of the transformation of the whole vocational system, in line with lifelong learning policies.

The last chapter is on the black box. What is going on inside the school? In order to find an answer to that, I chose Şişli Industrial High School, where a number of companies have signed protocols with the Ministry of Education. I undertook a critical ethnography as far as I could, since I agree with Robertson that “the overriding concern of critical ethnography is to free individuals from domination and repression” and more importantly, “critical ethnography makes no apology for being openly ideological.”¹²

Here, the school is an exception since the Turkish vocational system is consistently said to be deprived of an organic link with industry. Rather than

¹² Terry Robertson, "Class Issues: A Critical Ethnography of Corporate Domination within the Classroom," *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies* 3, no. 2 (2005): 6.

focusing on the input-output figures of the students, I adopted a different approach. First of all, I tried to find out how these companies have penetrated the schools. Then, I tried to lay out what kinds of students were attending the school. Finally, I investigated what kind of educational differences the brands created and what kind of techniques these brand resorted to in order to form the blue collar subjectivities they desired.

It is no secret that vocational education reproduces the working class.¹³ Yet, it might be especially important to state that once again since the consensus approach mentioned above (or what will be called the integrationist approach in the coming chapter) is more than dominant in Turkey. I assume it is especially vital nowadays – when politics in Turkey has been squeezed between the dichotomies of progressive-reactionary – to underline that the educational system (both academic and vocational) hides and legitimizes the inequalities it creates by resorting to certain concepts like modernization and reform. It is also important when the dominant discourse and understanding in vocational circles is such that success is considered to be an individual case and does not have anything to do with what is social.

Since “discourses constrain the possibilities of thought,”¹⁴ it is not that easy to say a single thing against the mainstream literature or understanding. In our case, the discourse of development, efficiency, success and progress serve to hinder the generation of another perspective both in theory and in real life and one faces the question, “So, how should that be?” I do not have a fully-fledged answer regarding how it can be, but I tried to figure out how it cannot be. In order to find an answer,

¹³ This does not necessarily mean that education is not a site of struggle or there is no agency or resistance of either the students or teachers against this mechanism.

¹⁴ Stephen J. Ball, "Introducing Monsieur Foucault," in *Foucault and Education: Disciplines and Knowledge*, ed. Stephen J. Ball (London and New York: Routledge, 1990).

perhaps we should also ask questions like “Who is growing?” or “Who is approaching EU standards?” because when the children of the upper classes can go abroad to learn a second and perhaps a third language, the children of the working classes have a little bit honey on their tongue¹⁵ and they are forced to be grateful for what capital owners offer them in the process of profit maximization. On the other hand, vocational high schools have increasingly become places where “kids are raised not thoroughly equipped (artistic, historical, critical) but only within a uni-dimensional vocational perspective.”¹⁶ In that sense, what is taught to whom is not a purely technical, curricular issue but rather a political one. Seçkin Özsoy, in a meeting of DİSK (Confederation of Revolutionary Worker Unions) on the structural transformation of education and vocational education, said that capitalism is not a pathological but a pathogenic system. That is, it causes, it produces the disease. Regarding my answer as to what kind of a system we need ... Perhaps, as Berna Müftüoğlu – again in that same DİSK meeting – said, it is necessary to transform everything in order not to change anything and this ultimately requires both political and intellectual pain. However, this intellectual pain, as Apple¹⁷ refers to John Masefield’s lines, needs to be compared with a different sort. And if this thesis can contribute to understanding and eliminating the pain described below, I would be more than happy.

To get the whole world out of bed,
And washed, and dressed, and warmed, and fed,
To work, and back to bed again,
Believe me, Saul, costs worlds of pain.

¹⁵ The Turkish idiom I have used above means that a little is offered to the working class kids in return for a bigger thing, where the capital is the one who gains from this process.

¹⁶ Ferda Uzunyayla, "Avrupa Birliği'ne Giriş Sürecinde Eğitim ve İstihdam Politikaları" (M.A., Marmara University, 2007).

¹⁷ Michael Apple, *Education and Power* (New York Routledge, 1995), 59.

CHAPTER TWO

GLOBAL TRENDS IN ECONOMY AND EDUCATION

This chapter first aims to outline the general framework of economic trends around the globe and their implications for education and vocational education. It tries to ascertain the background of the increasing need for qualified labor and the establishment of high-skill educational systems throughout the world. In addition to that, I propose to establish a link between educational concepts such as lifelong learning and economic trends in the world. The chapter aims to touch upon the changing meaning of education under the circumstances of globalization. Within this framework, how vocational training has developed throughout the years and *is being transformed* under the circumstances of changing economic conditions and technology will be discussed. The chapter will conclude with the specific conditions of Turkey that necessitate a VTE reform. These specific conditions will then lead the reader to the second chapter.

Towards The Formation of High Skills and Lifelong Learning Policies

In *Modern Times*, we see Charlie Chaplin desperately working on assembly line. He resorts to some basic skills like screwing in screws, the pace of which makes him go mad. It seems as if he did not have to go through a comprehensive education in order to earn his bread. Anyone using his/her two hands at a certain pace might have had the opportunity to work in that factory. These are of course assumptions, but it is for sure that life is not as easy as it used to be for those without *high* skills. Competition and survival in a globalized market are much more difficult today. This applies to both individuals and nation states.¹⁸ Refreshing and innovating oneself are

¹⁸ Globally, many politicians have consistently underlined the significance of this new shift and thus, the vitality to have access to knowledge and utilize it. For instance Bill Clinton, in a major address on education, tells us that “in the 1990s and beyond, the universal spread of education, computers, and high-speed communications means that *what we earn will depend on what we can learn and how well we can apply what we learn to the workplaces of America.*” See A.H. Halsey et al., “The Transformation of Education and Society: An Introduction,” in *Education: Culture, Economy, and Society* ed. A.H. Halsey, et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 8. Another example is that of Tony Blair, who states that “Fail to develop the talents of any one person, we fail Britain. See Philip Brown, Andy Green, and Hugh Lauder, eds., *High Skills: Globalization, Competitiveness and Skill Formation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1. Many countries are struggling to

two essential strategies for survival. One is supposed to behave like a chameleon, adapting to the changing market conditions. This does not necessarily mean that markets used to be rigid mechanisms. However, it would be wise to take the rapidity of the change into consideration. Jarvis writes down major factors and concepts behind this phenomenon include “the convergence of information technologies and their integration in the workplace, the need to free up and speed up the flow information and decision-making, the increasing emphasis on teamwork and project work, and the need for flexible work practices, along with a new vocabulary of networks, empowerment, leadership, teamwork, downsizing, rightsizing, re-engineering and contracting out”¹⁹ Köstekli argues that changing organization structures have even “changed the concepts of work and worker”²⁰ and these have all led to a substantial change in how jobs are defined and how education is to be designed as far as employment and global competition are concerned.

Economically speaking, such factors as “the transition from national ‘walled’ and regional economies towards global ‘free’ trade and markets, the declining importance of geographical, national and cultural borders and boundaries leading to greater interdependence of people and countries worldwide, greater connection and interconnectedness through information technologies such as the internet, and cheaper transportation including shipping and air travel, more extensive global

modernize their educational systems within the framework of lifelong learning and there are many policy papers designed for this task, the common themes of which include “competitiveness, competencies, widening participation and the need for workers to keep up on learning so that countries can maintain their place in the economic world, and their people their standard of living.” For examples of such policy papers, see Peter Jarvis, "The Learning Society and Comparative Education," in *The RoutledgeFalmer Reader in Sociology of Education*, ed. Stephen Ball (London New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2004).

¹⁹ Halsey et al., "The Transformation of Education and Society: An Introduction."

²⁰ Şeyma İpek Köstekli, *İstihdam Stratejileri ve Türkiye İçin Bir Model Önerisi* (İstanbul: İSO Yayınları, 2006), 1. In this new era, the competition of knowledge, quality and efficiency has been witnessed. While industry has maintained its importance, the share of services has been increasing. Since global success determines the fate of companies and countries the standard employment model of 20th century is being replaced by flexible employment models.

networks of companies, universities, students, migrants, faith groups, etc, an exponential increase in global flows of goods, money, services, music, film, knowledge, people, information, ideas, tourists, etc., more extensive and rapid diffusion of technologies, knowledge and ideas, the compression of time and space across the planet”²¹ have all contributed to the emergence of what we today call the knowledge-based economy,²² in which nations with high skilled labor can have a more competitive edge in the global economy. Formerly, skill formation issues via education and vocational training “were couched in the context of ‘walled’

²¹ Lauder et al., "Introduction: The Prospects for Education: Individualization, Globalization, and Social Change," 25.

²² Various concepts have been used to define the last 20-25 years, among which are postmodern, postindustrial, information societies. However, one should be careful when using this terminology not only with regard to Turkey but other geographies as well. One can analyze the statistics and figures of OECD, where the share of sectoral contributions to economy are listed. From 1994 until 2004, the share of industry in Germany, for instance, has declined from 32.9 to 29.1 %. As far as the employment rates of agriculture, industry and service sectors, the figures indicate that the deindustrialization trend is not as strong as the mainstream discourse suggests, even though the rise of employment in service sector cannot be ignored. The details of the OECD report are available at: www.oecdobserver.org/news/get_file.php3?id/25/file/OECDInFigures2006-2007.pdf. On the other hand, there is another point one should be cautious of. First of all, this discourse of transition from industrial to post-industrial society legitimizes the discourse of capitalist progress. Secondly, there are serious, empirical criticisms against the fetishisation of such a society and the loss of working class it is supposed to lead. For instance Kurtar Tanyılmaz – even though he warns against a fetishisation of industry – also argues that the industrial working class constitutes the core of the contemporary working class. While he acknowledges that the share of industrial working class decreases in advanced capitalist countries, its share in the total workforce cannot be underestimated. Even in Western Europe where the sharpest decrease of industrial workforce is observed, states Tanyılmaz, the level of industrial workforce in the overall working class has only fallen down to 33 % when compared to 45 % of 1960s. In Germany for instance, the share of industrial workers is still above 1945 level. As far as Asian countries are concerned, on the other hand, has witnessed a significant increase between 1964-1993. The figure for Turkey is an increase of 65 %. For the details of counter deindustrialization thesis, see Kurtar Tanyılmaz, "İşçi Sınıfı Buharlaşıyor mu?," *Devrimci Marksizm*, no. 3 (2007). For another objection to the rise of services sector and the change in the nature and even existence of the working class, see Phillip Brown and Anthony Hesketh, *The Mismanagement of Talent: Employability and Jobs in the Knowledge Economy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). The authors again warn the reader against the possible ideological background of the dominant transition discourse. Thus, we should once again repeat and underline that Turkey is on the one hand trying to catch up with what is called ‘knowledge society’ and trying to raise a qualified workforce in order to accomplish its global integration in its specific conditions. What is of our interest here is that nation-states are trying to move to a high-skills society.

economies for most of the twentieth century.”²³ In other words, there used to be a limitation on employees’ task definition and the skill they required.

Production workers required narrowly defined manual skills; sales people needed social competences; administrative personnel needed organizational and accounting skills; product designers needed creativity; and managers required judgment, initiative, leadership, and coordination skills. It is on account of this specialization that employees could readily be divided into distinct, well-defined occupations, over which the traditional distinctions between “skilled” and “unskilled” workers could be made. In this environment, relatively little attention was given to people’s capacity to acquire and use multiple skills; if a person happened to have more than one occupational aptitude, he generally had to decide which particular one to use and let the rest lie follow.²⁴

Employment and skill formation pattern of pre-knowledge-based economy times “emerged in co-evolution with Fordist institutional set-ups like full-time employment, clear occupational assignments, and a well-established career pattern over the worker’s life span, corresponding to the concept of a guaranteed “job for life.”²⁵ As if characterizing Richard Sennett’s main character Enrico’s life,²⁶ Mayer

²³ Brown, Green, and Lauder, eds., *High Skills: Globalization, Competitiveness and Skill Formation*, 8.

²⁴ Assar Lindbeck and Dennis Snower, "Multitask Learning and the Reorganization of Work: From Tayloristic to Holistic Organization," *Journal of Labor Economics* 18, no. 3 (Jul 2000): 353-76.

²⁵ Kurt Mayer, "Vocational Education and Training in Transition: from Fordism to a Learning Economy," in *Shaping Flexibility in Vocational Education and Training [electronic resource]: Institutional, Curricular, and Professional Conditions*, ed. Wim J. Nijhof, Anja Heikkinen, and Loek F. M. Nieuwenhuis (Dordrecht ; Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003). For a useful discussion of how this ‘job for life’ and stable occupational identities are being transformed, see Ursula Huws, "Fixed, Footloose, or Fractured: Work, Identity, and the Spatial Division of Labor in the Twenty-First Century," *Monthly Review* 57, no. 10 (2006).

²⁶ Richard Sennett, *The corrosion of character : the personal consequences of work in the new capitalism* (New York ; London W.W. Norton, 1999). In his famous book, Sennett describes a father (Enrico) and his son’s (Rico) careers. Enrico has pursued a lifelong career, whereas his son constantly quits his job and moves throughout the country. The linearity of one’s career is important in terms of the concept of lifelong learning to be touched upon later, since even the word career has lost its original meaning. Sennett tells us that the word career corresponded to the destination where the whole economic activity of one was directed. However, today, the core meaning of this word seems to have changed. For another example of the changing character of work and worker, one can also look at Catherine Casey, "Restructuring Work: New Work and New Workers in Post-Industrial Production," in *Rethinking Vocationalism: whose work/life is it?*, ed. Rebecca Priegert Coulter and Ivor F. Goodson (Ontario: Our Schools /Our Selves Education Foundation, 1992).

states that what the youth needed for employment hardly changed and education was constructed within a context of certainty. That is, “technological developments were assumed to be ‘automatic’, hence the requirements of the production process and the features of occupations just had to be anticipated, codified and translated into different educational steps, qualification standards, and examination demands.”²⁷ As for the students, they were supposed to complete an educational process which was clearly defined from start to finish. In the “good old days” the systems were built on stable economies and labor market institutions or were built on a *low-skill equilibrium*.²⁸

As far as skill acquisition is concerned, Lindbeck and Snower argue that the above-mentioned restructuring of the organization of work is common in many countries and sectors. The current emphasis, according to them, is on “team work, job rotation, *continuous learning*, development of complementary skills ... direct participation of employees in decision making on multiple fronts.”²⁹ From now on, a single skill will not be enough for a worker. He/she has to acquire more than one skill.³⁰ As Huws put it, “employers want people who are digitally literate, self-

²⁷ Wim J. Nijhof, Anja Heikkinen, and Loek F. M. Nieuwenhuis, *Shaping Flexibility in Vocational Education and Training [electronic resource] : Institutional, Curricular, and Professional Conditions* (Kluwer Academic Publishers,, 2003).

²⁸ Ibid. Emphasis is mine.

²⁹ Lindbeck and Snower, "Multitask Learning and the Reorganization of Work," 354. Emphasis is mine. It is also argued that it was not until the 1980s that the detailed division of labor based on low skilled, low trust relation (Fordism) was successfully challenged in Britain and the US as the principal paradigm of economic efficiency. See, Brown, Green, and Lauder, eds., *High Skills: Globalization, Competitiveness and Skill Formation*, 4.

³⁰ According to a classification of skills by Ducatel, there are 3 types of skills: physical (hand-eye coordination, dexterity, power), cognitive skills (analytical thinking, verbal and numerical skills) and interpersonal relation skills (communication, surveillance, leadership and teamwork). With the transition to knowledge-based economy, the emphasis will shift from physical skills to cognitive skills. Cited in Mehmet Ali Kelleci, "Bilgi Ekonomisi, İşgücü Piyasasının Temel Aktörleri ve Eşitsizlik: Eğilimler, Roller, Fırsatlar ve Riskler," ed. Ekonomik Modeller ve Stratejik Araştırmalar Genel Müdürlüğü (Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 2003), 34. Yet, it is also stated that even though there

motivated and good team players and who possess soft skills, employability and entrepreneurship.”³¹ In addition to that, they are behind employees who are “prepared to keep on learning new skills as the technology or the market changes, sometimes described as “a commitment to lifelong learning.”³² According to Lindbeck and Snower, there are a variety of reasons behind this transformation, among which are “the introduction of computerized information, introduction of flexible machine tools and programmable equipment and the steady growth of human capital per worker, generated by education systems, vocational training programs.”³³ And in order for the companies to compete in this global knowledge-based economy, highly qualified labor force is required, since in such an economy, “the motor force of growth and development are not natural resources or physical goods but rather knowledge.”³⁴ World Bank Turkey Director Andrew Vorkink’s remarks at Hacettepe University underline a similar trend in Turkey, regarding both the shining star of education and skill patterns. Vorkink states that the first question countries should ask themselves is not how many industrial resources they possess, but how educated

are certain core skills, sectoral and occupational differences play a significant role with regard to the skills preferred.

³¹ Huws, "Fixed, Footloose, or Fractured: Work, Identity, and the Spatial Division of Labor in the Twenty-First Century."

³² Ibid. According to Huws, the required skills are never-ending and they imply a world in which there are no limits, in the sense of “this is what I do; but this is what I don’t do as part of my job,” where each job description is infinitely elastic and there is never a point at which the worker can sit back and think, “At last, I’m trained. I have a recognized occupation. Now I can relax and just get on with the job.”

³³ Lindbeck and Snower, "Multitask Learning and the Reorganization of Work," 354-55. The authors state that computerized information have provided employees with greater access to information about other employees’ work within the organization and also made it easier to communicate with others. By means of new information technology, individual employees have become more able to respond to the needs of the customers. They have become more involved in each other’s tasks.

³⁴ Kelleci, "Bilgi Ekonomisi, İşgücü Piyasasının Temel Aktörleri ve Eşitsizlik: Eğilimler, Roller, Fırsatlar ve Riskler," 1. Within this context, firms are also being transformed to learning structures.

the workforce is.³⁵ Vorkink here draws a new binary category. From now on, the distinctions between countries are not based on whether they are developed or not. What matters is educated countries, more educated countries and the most educated countries. Another important aspect of Vorkink's speech, with regard to skill patterns we have mentioned above, is related to the new skill demands of industry. Even though Vorkink acknowledges that the graphic he presents pertains to the USA, he argues that these skill trends are valid for the medium-term and long-term future of Turkey. According to Vorkink, the last 25 years witnessed a tendency towards complex skills. Based on a study carried out in 2001, Vorkink's graphic indicate that expert thinking – scientific thinking, diagnostic skills – rapidly rises. Another trend is that of complex communication: effective communication (persuasive correspondence, staff management, legal writings, advertisement and marketing) so as to convince other people. As opposed to these complex skills, routine manual tasks – physical tasks that can be defined well by implementing rules – are rapidly declining. Another category of rapidly declining tasks is that of routine cognitive tasks (mental tasks which can be well defined by implementing rules of logic) like book keeping and repetitive customer service. As early as 1980, the cornerstone academics on VTE in Turkey stated that “modern technology has changed the mechanical and muscular skills of past times and they have been replaced by critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving. Thus, they have acquired a mental

³⁵ Available at http://www.sendika.org/yazi.php?yazi_no=4162

feature.”³⁶ All in all, as the economy grows and becomes more complex, employers demand high-skills from employees.³⁷

Education and Vocational Training in the “Good Old Days” and the Re-invention of Education as the New “Economic” Gospel

“Education is a must” is the motto of a recent advertisement. Why? What does education serve? What is education supposed to be for? With reference to Roger Dale – a prominent sociologist in this realm – Stoer and Magalhaes argue that this mechanism serves “the development of individual capacities, in addition to the education of responsible citizens, and the preparation for work.”³⁸ And there are strong foundations and reasons for the establishment of a strong trust in education. This optimist view of education holds that “rational knowledge is able to supply individuals with a potential for consciousness, for action on the world and for citizenship that enables them to be the lords of their own destiny.”³⁹ This belief had its roots in both the Enlightenment and the relatively stable environment of the welfare state. Some authors, in order to define welfare state, argue that “prosperity, security and opportunity underwr[i]te life.”⁴⁰ These three principles were bound

³⁶ Hıfzı Doğan, Cevat Alkan, and İlhan Sezgin, *Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim Prensipleri* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1980), 1.

³⁷ “Türkiye’de Eğitim Reformu” available at http://www.sendika.org/yazi.php?yazi_no=4162. Accessed on 23 December 2006.

³⁸ Stephen R. Stoer and Antonio M. Magalhaes, "Education, knowledge and the network society," *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 2, no. 3 (2004): 319-35.

³⁹ Ibid.: 321. However, according to Stoer and Magalhaes, it is the same mechanism – as far as employment and work are concerned – that leads to the emergence of a different structure which aims to create “good workers ... to develop discipline, punctuality and the honesty of workers, for what counted was not only creating good workers, but above all *good* workers.”

⁴⁰ Halsey et al., "The Transformation of Education and Society: An Introduction." Even though this introduction is not the kind Özbek criticizes, for a critical view of the optimistic perspectives on welfare state, see Nadir Özbek, "Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Türkiye'de Sosyal Devlet," *Toplum ve Bilim*, no. 92 (2002). Özbek asserts that we must consider the welfare state to be a governmental strategy.

together by the view that “the state ha[s] not only the power but also the responsibility to deliver prosperity, security and opportunity ... Underpinning this sense of state responsibility was an awareness on the part of the state and big business that the most effective way of achieving economic growth and profits was by also delivering economic security through *full employment*, and opportunity through education, social welfare, and occupational mobility.”⁴¹ This correspondence between education and progress was reinforced by the fact that “in the 1960s, education in underdeveloped countries, where it had a special place, was neatly dealt with by developmentalist authors and thinkers. Experts focusing on development literature have cultivated many theoretical frameworks regarding the significance of education for the advance of developing countries.”⁴² As Andy Green also puts it, “the major impetus for the creation of national educational systems lay in the need to provide the state with trained administrators, engineers and military personnel; to spread dominant national cultures and inculcate popular ideologies of nationhood.”⁴³ In order for a nation to reach the level of modern societies and become a developed country, the role of education was considered to be (and still is) enormous. If a nation does not stand on the same level as modernized societies, one of the primary factors behind this phenomenon is education. “Seen as self evidently a good thing ... it is

⁴¹ Halsey et al., "The Transformation of Education and Society: An Introduction." Emphasis is mine. The authors of the introduction very aptly argues that the big corporations needed full employment so as to realize their large profits and the period was one of a reconciliation of the interests of capital and labor based on the three principles mentioned above.

⁴² Fuat Ercan, "1980'lerde Eğitim Sisteminin Yeniden Yapılanması: Küreselleşme ve Neoliberal Eğitim Politikaları," in *75 Yılda Eğitim*, ed. Fatma Gök (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı 1999).

⁴³ Andy Green, *Education and State Formation* (London: Mcmillan, 1990). Cited in Halsey et al., "The Transformation of Education and Society: An Introduction," 3.

held to civilize the backward peoples of the world, to remove them from the chains of ignorance and superstition in which they have been confined for centuries.”⁴⁴

In line with what modernization theory asserts, there emerges a technical function theory of education.⁴⁵ Learning and education, in a sense, means liberation: “The modern age celebrate[s] knowledge, above all scientific knowledge, as the touchstone of the emancipation of individuals and nations ... In the last analysis, modernity hope[s] that the individual would be emancipated on the basis of the same knowledge that (it is hoped) would emancipate humanity organized in nation states”⁴⁶ The emancipation of the country and its people depend on economic and social development and the former would to a certain extent rely on vocational education.⁴⁷

However, the global economy has had many consequences in terms of the quality and occupational structure of employment. “In industry and services where advanced technology has shown a rapid increase, the need for qualified workforce

⁴⁴ Roger Dale, "Learning to Be... What? Shaping Education in "Developing Societies"," in *Introduction to The Sociology of Developing Societies*, ed. Hamza Alavi and Teodor Shanin, *Sociology of Developing Societies* (London: Macmillan, 1982), 408.

⁴⁵ This kind of an approach still seems to be valid even today. As if characterizing the approach in Turkey, Roger Dale states that the “first contention of this theory is that economic growth requires technological development. Technological development creates the needs for skills. Schools exist to equip people with these skills and hence increases in demands for skill create the need for expanded schooling systems. So, countries with the most technologically sophisticated economies will have the higher demand for skills and hence the highest levels of education; thus may the correlation be explained.” *Ibid.*, 410. Progress to what, on behalf of whom and similar questions have been to a large extent ignored, though.

⁴⁶ Stoer and Magalhaes, "Education, knowledge and the network society." Of course, these thoughts on education were shaped by the governments support for education, which was comprised of the effort to “keep politics out of education.”

⁴⁷ For instance, the rising position of Germany with regard to the world economy during the nineteenth century draws the attention of both American and British officials who state that “it was technical education ... that these wise (German) counselors looked for the means whereby their nation should regain and enhance its position in Europe and the world.” See, Aaron Benavot, "The Rise and Decline of Vocational Education," *Sociology of Education* 56, no. 2 (1983): 63-76.

has increased.”⁴⁸ As a response to the capitalist accumulation crisis in the 1970s and the internationalization of capital, increasing international economic competition not only resulted in the rising importance of research and development but also a change in the meaning of education and knowledge. The type of the relationship between education and employment has changed throughout the world. Over the years, production relations have changed and a flexible market regime has been established. As far as education is concerned, “from the 1990s on, concepts like efficiency, quality, and flexibility (which are commonly referred by capital circles) have come to be integrated into the curriculum from primary education and all they point to a reality based on the assertion that they are for the common good of all segments of society.”⁴⁹ In other words, education becomes the new economic gospel.⁵⁰ The better equipped people a country raises via the education system, the better off the nation has become the primary argument of such an approach. As Ashton and Green argue, “at no time in the history of capitalism has the education and training of the

⁴⁸ Köstekli, *İstihdam Stratejileri ve Türkiye İçin Bir Model Önerisi*, 8. In line with what Köstekli argues, an OECD study also indicates that even though OECD countries witness an employment loss in manufacturing, sectors based on high technology (from computer to drug) witness an increase in employment and high wage jobs. See OECD, "The Knowledge-Based Economy," (Paris: 1996). This study can be reached at <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/51/8/1913021.pdf> Another study of OECD also indicates that services sector of OECD countries requires qualified labor force and the employment loss in blue collars of manufacturing pertains to those without high skills. See OECD, "Information Technology Outlook 1997," (1997). Cited in Kelleci, "Bilgi Ekonomisi, İşgücü Piyasasının Temel Aktörleri ve Eşitsizlik: Eğilimler, Roller, Fırsatlar ve Riskler," 35. Kelleci's study mentions another survey carried out in Canada, where the manufacturing sector shifts towards knowledge-intensive activities which requires high skills and high technology. In this sector, low technology, low skill and labor intensive jobs are shrinking.

⁴⁹ I would like to thank Ferda Uzunyayla for sharing her preliminary remarks which are to take place in her M.A. Thesis (on the analysis of education and employment policies within the framework of Turkey's EU process) in progress. In addition to that, for a recent critique of the restructuring of primary school curriculum in Turkey, in line with concepts including smart school, multiple intelligence, flexible education, performance evaluation and total Quality management, see Kemal İnal, "Neoliberal Eğitim ve Yeni İlköğretim Müfredatının Eleştirisi," *Praksis*, no. 14 (2006).

⁵⁰ One can argue that the rising importance of R&D, innovation and the preference for high-skill route became prominent when Fordism was challenged in UK and US: See Brown, Green, and Lauder, eds., *High Skills: Globalization, Competitiveness and Skill Formation*, 4.

workforce assumed such widespread importance as at the present conjuncture.”⁵¹

According to Ashton and Green, there is a new consensus among nations regarding the salience of education and its role in development, international competition and people’s welfare.⁵²

Very briefly, this consensus approach holds that, as the economies of nations have become more compact by modern forms of technology which are primarily knowledge-based, “older forms of production, especially those based on Fordist mass production technologies and associated forms of work organization have become inefficient by comparison with newer forms that utilize the skills of the full range of the workforce, rather than just those of an elite managerial caste.”⁵³

Yet, there are strong objections to this perspective. Ashton and Green hold that the linearity between skill formation and economic performance assumed by the consensus approach is problematic. They argue that a social context is required in order to grasp the link between skills and performance. Furthermore, they assert that “education and training have to be understood as areas of potential conflict: both political at the level of national or international politics and more localised in terms of industrial relations system.”⁵⁴

⁵¹ David Ashton and Francis Green, *Education, Training and the Global Economy* (Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing, 1999). Differentiating the current significance of education from other times, the authors very aptly express that capitalism has mostly made its great forward leaps in human productivity on the basis of primitive accumulations of riches, of devastating exploitation of human labor, of revolutionary technological changes and alterations in the accepted patterns of work, or through the appropriation of vast accumulations of raw material wealth.

⁵² Here, it would be appropriate to report their counter arguments regarding this consensus. Even though they do not deny the significance of education, the authors point out that education and training are seen to improve performance in an unproblematic manner, by making people more productive workers. Added to this is the objection of the authors regarding the conflictual nature of training systems. For a similar point of view regarding the conflictual nature of education that criticizes the evolutionist consensus approach, see Lauder et al., "Introduction: The Prospects for Education: Individualization, Globalization, and Social Change," 8-13.

⁵³ Ashton and Green, *Education, Training and the Global Economy*, 3.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

Another foregrounded concept within the framework of the reorganization of global capitalism is innovation. The more important innovation has become, innovative companies “select more learning-oriented employees, and the market selects more change-oriented companies.”⁵⁵ In other words, the need for qualified labor has dramatically increased in the global economy based on fierce competition. Countries are now relying more and more on the skills of their workforce.⁵⁶ That is, human beings and the knowledge they possess have come to be regarded as another type of capital, namely human capital.⁵⁷ In a nutshell, human capital theory amounts to the proposition that “education or training can be regarded as investments with future material pay-offs, analogously to investments in physical capital.”⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Nijhof, Heikkinen, and Nieuwenhuis, *Shaping Flexibility in Vocational Education and Training [electronic resource] : Institutional, Curricular, and Professional Conditions*. The reason is quite easy. The standards of the Fordist period have disappeared and thus companies are forced to build an *ability* to configure information resources in novel ways which cannot be easily imitated or replaced by competitors.

⁵⁶ Some countries even facilitate the visa requirements for qualified labor. See Kelleci, "Bilgi Ekonomisi, İşgücü Piyasasının Temel Aktörleri ve Eşitsizlik: Eğilimler, Roller, Fırsatlar ve Riskler," 48.

⁵⁷ For instance, head of Dogus Group Ferit Şahenk declared at the tenth anniversary of NTV that the employees are the greatest assets they possess. Another example is that of Rahmi Koç, while delivering a keynote speech at the commencement day of Koç University, and saying the university was like a factory and there were no flawed goods. Along with that, the vitality of human skills in terms of productivity rose in importance only in the 1960s when the human capital theory was developed. See Brown, Green, and Lauder, eds., *High Skills: Globalization, Competitiveness and Skill Formation*, 5.

⁵⁸ Ashton and Green, *Education, Training and the Global Economy*, 14. The authors again raise their objection with regard to the human capital theory and argue that the fundamental weakness of the theory is that in regarding human capital as a ‘thing’, to be acquired and utilized alongside other factory inputs, it misses the social context of skill and of technology. Establishing a resemblance between the Marxist arguments regarding commodity fetishism, they state that the concept of human capital is a particular example of commodity fetishism in that even though commodities really do appear, the theory is ideological and gives a one-sided and incomplete perspective on the economy. See, Ashton and Green, *Education, Training and the Global Economy*, 17. Acknowledging that there are incentives to skill acquisition and these skills really do become marketable, the authors claim that it is an *ideological* process in that it obscures the nature of the social relations under which both commodities and human capital are produced – that is, capitalist relations in the economy, and an education and training system that indirectly reflects its capitalist context. In addition to that, Ashton and Green criticize the basics of the theory which “treat education and training process as a ‘black box’, in which skills are produced. They underline the vitality to analyze what goes inside the black box. Another sound critique of the theory is to be found at Brown, Green, and Lauder, eds., *High Skills: Globalization, Competitiveness and Skill Formation*. The authors aptly argue that the theory

According to human capital theorists, a new concept of capital including the skills,⁵⁹ knowledge and know-how of workers was required and this approach asserts that “individuals are able to increase their lifetime earnings by investing in them through education and training.”⁶⁰ As if the globe is homogenous and the social, economic contexts do not differ, “the theory of human capital is seen to have general applicability to developing as well as developed nations.”⁶¹ Thus, it can be argued that, the assumptions regarding the concept of human capital is “premised on assumptions of an evolutionary progression from a low skill to a high skill economy.”⁶² Moreover, there are studies indicating that the motivation for more education can differ in various contexts, depending on the social classes of the children attending the school.⁶³

has a mechanistic view of the individual worker. Moreover, they assert that works as a socially constructed category is treated as an innate part of human beings.

⁵⁹ Here, skill also pertains to the ability to learn how to learn as a continuous activity. See Brown, Green, and Lauder, eds., *High Skills: Globalization, Competitiveness and Skill Formation*, 15.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 5. The authors state that “it is individual ‘employability’ (that determines the values of one’s human capital) that is now seen as the source of economic opportunity, choice and occupational status.

⁶¹ Ibid., 7.

⁶² Ibid., 2. It is interesting to see the striking difference regarding how human capital was treated before. In Adam Smith’s famous book *Wealth of Nations*, labor, as opposed to human capital theories, was treated as a homogenous category. What mattered was how many workers one employed. And in Smith’s account of division of labor, his argumentations was such that the more complex division of labor a country had the more civilized it was. He also emphasized education but not in the way human capital theorists did. He believed education was to compensate for the corruption stemming from economic progress. Moreover, the state had to fund education in order that the masses would accept the divine authority of the superiors. Brown, Green, and Lauder, eds., *High Skills: Globalization, Competitiveness and Skill Formation*, 4.

⁶³ Willis, *Learning to Labor*. Paul Willis’s pathbreaking work in educational studies is very significant for this thesis. Willis’s work, emphasizing the agency of the working class kids, demonstrates that they create an autonomous environment for themselves at school through which they ultimately find themselves at the lowest part of the occupational ladder. Some of the working class kids (lads) differentiate themselves from the hardworking students (ear’oles) with how they get dresses and how they live. They fulfill only the minimum of the required things, not more. They enjoy having a ‘laff’ at school and they choose how to behave. Thus, readers are able to see how black box vision with regard to schools can be deficient. In that sense, the book also provides useful insights into how a non-mechanistic perspective on reproduction can be achieved. For a recently published critique of the book, see Nadine Dolby and Greg Dimitriadis, eds., *Learning to Labor in New Times* (London: RoutledgeFalmer, 2004).

Thus, it is crystal clear that education has become more of an issue of productivity and growth for nation-states and more of an issue for individuals to climb the occupational ladder. Nation-states, from now on, have to act as magnet economies and “the key priority is to lift the skills base of the entire population.”⁶⁴ As can be guessed, a country’s competition power rests on whether it has been able to create a “world-class labor force.”⁶⁵ Thus, there seems to be “a shift from bloody wars to knowledge wars.”⁶⁶ And all these trends have had implications for the establishment of a closer linkage between education and industry. This also applies to vocational education, the origins and transformation of which are explained below.

Development of Vocational Education

Traditional vocational education had an informal character and it took place on the job, “by practicing a trade, often from childhood and within the family. Apprentices acquired their trade by watching the master at work. They took an active part in the work and were given advice as they did so.”⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Brown, Green, and Lauder, eds., *High Skills: Globalization, Competitiveness and Skill Formation*, 10.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁶⁶ Phillip Brown and Hugh Lauder, "Globalisation, knowledge and the myth of the magnet economy," *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 4, no. 1 (2006). As far as the concept of knowledge-based economy is concerned, what readily comes to mind is well-paid service sector jobs. However, as the survey of Esping Andersen demonstrates, “the scale of the expansion of service sector employment varies between countries and this rapid expansion is primarily based on increasing the numbers of low skill, low waged jobs. In other words, service sector does not necessarily mean high-skilled workers. See Gosta Esping-Andersen, *Social Foundations of Postindustrial Economies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). Cited in Brown, Green, and Lauder, eds., *High Skills: Globalization, Competitiveness and Skill Formation*.

⁶⁷ Claude Pair, "Vocational Training Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow," in *Education for the Twenty-first Century : Issues and Prospects: Contributions to the Work of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century*, ed. Jacques Delors (Paris: UNESCO, 1998).

This structure was followed by the industrial revolution and changing structures of production and employment. These required an institutional structure for a sound and smooth flow of workforce for the industry. That is, the change in the economy had certainly its consequences for the skill formation strategies. “With the spread of factory production and increase of mass production, the skill structures have changed; integrated structures displaying an occupational integrity have emerged.”⁶⁸

However, the manner in which different nations have applied vocational programs has differed. Benavot states that many nations grasped the importance of this segment of education and by the end of the First World War, “England, France, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland and the Netherlands all passed national legislation providing for publicly funded vocational instruction in either separate vocational schools or dual-stream secondary schools by the 1920s.”⁶⁹ As for the nations rising from the ashes of colonialism, Benavot argues they followed a similar path, which focused on:

centralizing existing vocational courses under the authority of public state ministries, levying a special tax on industry and large commercial enterprises to aid and maintain new training schools. Subsequently, they would contract foreign technicians to implement and supervise vocational curricula and start training new technical teachers by granting scholarships to qualified individuals for study either within the country, when the necessary facilities existed, or abroad.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Işıl Ünal, Nejla Kurul Tural, and H. Hüseyin Aksoy, "Mesleki Eğitim ve Yaşamboyu Eğitim: Ekonomi Politik Bir Değerlendirme," in *Yaşamboyu Öğrenme*, ed. Fevziye Sayılan and Ahmet Yıldız (Ankara: Pegem Yayıncılık, 2005).

⁶⁹ Benavot, "The Rise and Decline of Vocational Education," 65.

⁷⁰ Ibid. Turkey seems to have followed this kind of a strategy, the details of which are to be touched upon later.

Whatever manner different nations have applied, it is clear that with the industrial revolution, “the number of occupations and the need for qualified technicians, semi-qualified operators increased and this necessitated the development of systems other than apprenticeship.”⁷¹ The changing production patterns, in that sense, “have altered the learning circumstances required for employment.”⁷² Thus, the “transition” to the industrial society have not only resulted in the emergence of an institutional necessity for vocational education, but also changed the skill patterns and consequently curricular forms, from stable ones to those designed with lifelong learning perspective.

Perspectives on Vocational Education

There are various perspectives on the rise of vocational education during the early part of this century and its later institutionalization especially after the II. World War. The technical-functional theory asserts that the increase in the mechanization of production and the centralization of production resulted in the boosting of specialized jobs, which in turn led to the inefficiency of traditional modes of on-the-job training. A second argument – that of the integrationist theory – “views the rise of vocational education as a natural outcome of expanding democratic societies bent on integrating and socializing new citizens.”⁷³ Integrationist theory holds that vocational education’s basic aim is to integrate immigrants and working class youth into the economy and at the same time, upholding basic moral commitments to equal educational opportunity.

⁷¹ Doğan, Alkan, and Sezgin, *Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim Prensipleri*, 19.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 26.

⁷³ Benavot, "The Rise and Decline of Vocational Education," 66.

The third perspective, the major proponents of which are prominent figures in the realm of education – Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis – considers vocational education to be “a class-based solution invented by capitalist businessmen and industrial managers to consolidate their power over the emerging corporate capitalist economies.”⁷⁴ Within the framework of this perspective – with reference to Bills’s metaphor – “even the term ‘vocational education’ raises eyebrows, simultaneously connoting the lofty sense of a vocational as a calling with the despised sense of ‘vocational’ as unworthy and degraded labor.”⁷⁵ As for the case of Turkey, the mainstream perspective has been closer to that of the technical-functional theory and consensus approach.⁷⁶ Apart from the recent emphasis on the need for qualified labor force, there are also ideological arguments regarding the grounds of vocational education. As far as social needs are concerned, it is argued that as “with the help of vocational education, the youth acquires ownership feeling and social success.”⁷⁷ In terms of economic needs, a society needs vocational education because “it is necessary for protecting and utilizing national resources, making use of human power in an economical way ... increasing the purchasing power of employees,

⁷⁴ Ibid. Bowles and Gintis’s major work, *Schooling in Capitalist America* stands among ones, which not only have been regarded as a touchstone but also have provoked much debate within the sociology of education. Yet, this book has been criticized for disregarding the role of culture and giving too much attention to economy. For such a critique, see Apple, *Education and Power*. The book has been translated into Turkish. Michael W. Apple, *Eğitim ve İktidar* (İstanbul: Kalkedon, 2006).

⁷⁵ David B. Bills, *The Sociology of Education and Work* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 153.

⁷⁶ The consensus view is based on an evolutionary model of society from the primitive to the complex. According to this perspective, even the simplest features of our everyday life have been superseded by universal ways of being, knowing and the state assumes the role of the bastion of efficiency and fairness. And it is this consensus view which holds that industrialism has transformed the economy to the point where ‘human capital’ becomes more important than land, machines or physical labor. For a detailed analysis of consensus approach to education, see Lauder et al., "Introduction: The Prospects for Education: Individualization, Globalization, and Social Change," 8-10.

⁷⁷ Doğan, Alkan, and Sezgin, *Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim Prensipleri*, 5. The authors argue that the unemployed youth feels the necessity to be bound by a movement which promises action and in a system deprived of VTE, young people have the tendency to easily become involved in an ideology which inspire the hope to join social activities.

benefiting from changing economic structure in the best manner.”⁷⁸ The authors also argue that taking the high percentage of illiterate people and limited educational resources, the objective should be to adopt “economic efficiency” as opposed to “mental perfection.”⁷⁹ Having briefly laid out various perspectives on VTE, it is now time to examine how VTE systems are being transformed within the framework of global competition.

The Transformation of Vocational Education⁸⁰

Under the global consensus regarding the necessity to upgrade the skills of a population and the emphasis on human capital, there emerged the ultimate consensus which holds that “vocational training should be driven by employers because they are best placed to make judgments about the demand for specific kinds of skill; and the role of the welfare state should be limited to encourage individual enterprise and incentives for people to invest in their human capital and to find employment.”⁸¹

⁷⁸ Ibid., 7. For other social and economic grounds, see Doğan, Alkan, and Sezgin, *Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim Prensipleri*, 55-58.

⁷⁹ Doğan, Alkan, and Sezgin, *Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim Prensipleri*, 10. For other examples of this functionalist view in Turkey, one can look at *Mesleki ve Teknik Öğretim* journal, published by Mesleki ve Teknik Öğretim Müsteşarlığı. For instance, in Hasip Aytuna, "Öğretimde İş Eğitimi ve İş Ahlakı," *Mesleki ve Teknik Öğretim* 1, no. 1 (1953). work is defined as such: “Work strengthens the morality and character of the employee ... Financial and spiritual joys follow each other . If a child, who grows up within and through work, gets to know the improving power of working, understands what a great protector work is for the individual and the society.” The journal is rich in terms of articles which emphasize the role of mothers with regard to raising healthy and responsible citizens for the nation.

⁸⁰ As far as the transformation of VTE and the push for reform is concerned, the number of studies in this field is limited, since before 1980s, “consistent research on VTE was rare in social sciences, except for the economic-based research in Germany.” Loek F. M. Nieuwenhuis, Wim. J. Nijhof, and Anja Heikkinen, "Shaping Conditions for a Flexible VET," in *Shaping Flexibility in Vocational Education and Training [electronic resource]: Institutional, Curricular, and Professional Conditions*, ed. Wim J. Nijhof, Anja Heikkinen, and Loek F. M. Nieuwenhuis (Dordrecht ; Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003), 8.

⁸¹ Brown, Green, and Lauder, eds., *High Skills: Globalization, Competitiveness and Skill Formation*, 11.

As far as transforming vocational education in line with the new impositions of global capitalism, some of the keywords have been “flexible,” “modular” and “employability.” Recent literature on the debate of flexibility has developed various maps. For instance, Nijhof and Streumer’s model consists of three kinds of flexibility. While input flexibility is related to how VET systems can respond to changing skill demands, throughput flexibility has to do with how a VET system can tackle individual differences of students. As for the output flexibility, it deals with the transferability of skills and the mobility of trainees.⁸² Whatever the social context of the country is, “in an emerging knowledge-based economy where changing skill requirements and changing market conditions are the only certainties”, it is argued that VET systems should be “responsive and proactive towards future development.”⁸³ Yet, since our discussion regarding the issue of human capital also demonstrates, the peculiar political, cultural and social context of each country might yield different outcomes.⁸⁴

For instance, taking into Turkey’s case into consideration, it seems inevitable that the level of integration with the global economy and the utilization of information technologies, the level of industrial production will determine the departments to be launched in different schools. The local labor market features and the demands of employers are also expected to play a vital role in terms of the direction the VET system is to take. Along with that, the integration of any country

⁸² W. J. Nijhof and J. N. & Streumer, "Flexibility in Vocational Education and Training: An Introduction," in *Flexibility in Training and Vocational Education* ed. W. J. Nijhof and J. N. Streumer (Utrecht: 1994).cited in Nieuwenhuis, Nijhof, and Heikkinen, "Shaping Conditions for a Flexible VET."

⁸³ Nieuwenhuis, Nijhof, and Heikkinen, "Shaping Conditions for a Flexible VET."

⁸⁴ For a discussion of how economic changes have affected this transformation and policies an vocational education, see Mike Flude and Sandy Sieminski, eds., *Education, Training and the Future of Work*, vol. 2 (New York: Routledge, 1999).

(in our case Turkey), the bilateral economic relations are also important as far as change in VET is concerned. As Nieuwenhuis, Nijhof, and Heikkinen aptly posit, transforming VET is an enduring objective and necessitates a dialogue between the groups involved in the system.⁸⁵ Moreover, since VTE reform is a socioeconomic issue as well, there are lots of things to be changed including “laws on education and labor; public-private arrangements; training funds; pathways to becoming skilled; training traditions.”⁸⁶ One of the major motives behind the desire to transform the system is that, as we have underlined, “old systems were built on stable economies and labor market institutions or were built on a low-skill equilibrium.”⁸⁷ Such factors as the global integration of markets and rapid technological innovation acted as two factors that force nation-states to upgrade their VTE systems. In other words, they are trying to “redesign their VTE system (which is still largely rooted in the Fordist industrial paradigm) so that it corresponds to the challenges of a learning economy.”⁸⁸

So, what is it that countries, including Turkey, are behind? What are the fundamental characteristics of the system they are trying to establish? Very briefly, they are trying to set-up a balance between “initial VTE and lifelong learning, since the old infrastructure is built on the delivery of initial VTE.”⁸⁹ The reformers of the VTE systems wish the new system were one that would have the infrastructure to

⁸⁵ The concept of social dialogue and social partners/stakeholders has been in use quite a lot in Turkey’s case.

⁸⁶ Nieuwenhuis, Nijhof, and Heikkinen, "Shaping Conditions for a Flexible VET," 6. It is not only Turkey that is trying to flexibilise its VTE system. According to the Authors, all states are seeking to flexibilise their VTE systems. The reform of the dual system in Germany (which has been believed to be among the strongest), shaping and reshaping of VET in Eastern European countries, new legislation in the Netherlands and changes in the Italian VET.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁸⁸ Mayer, "Vocational Education and Training in Transition: from Fordism to a Learning Economy."

⁸⁹ Nieuwenhuis, Nijhof, and Heikkinen, "Shaping Conditions for a Flexible VET," 7.

support lifelong learning. Another motive to reform the system is to find equilibrium between traditional occupations and flexible qualifications, because “old-fashioned occupations are slowly disappearing and the institutions are still built on the traditional occupational structure.”⁹⁰ It is noteworthy that this trend has forced government bodies to found the necessary schools in order to train the qualified workforce. Ansal reports that local governments “play a huge role in establishing flexible industry networks like launching vocational schools which in turn is vital in terms of creating innovation.”⁹¹ The authorities and employers also aim to re-engineer the system so that “learning steered by attainment targets is to be replaced by learning within changing communities of practice.”⁹² Thus, the direction of the change is such that there seems to have emerged a new mentality “from adaptation approach to the shaping principle.”⁹³ That is, “people should acquire competencies not just to adapt and to cope, but to shape their processes of work and technology implementation.” It is in this global context that Turkey is trying to adapt its VTE system both in line with the circumstances of knowledge-based economy and its own peculiar conditions, including its bid to join EU and desire to become a learning society, the structural transformation its manufacturing industry has witnessed since 2001 and the desire of capital to integrate in the global economy; its young population and the high rate of youth unemployment.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Hacer Ansal, *Esnek Üretimde İşçiler ve Sendikalar (Post-Fordizmde Üretim Esnekleşirken İşçiye Neler Oluyor?)* (İstanbul: Birleşik Metal-İş Sendikası, 1996), 46.

⁹² Nieuwenhuis, Nijhof, and Heikkinen, "Shaping Conditions for a Flexible VET." For a skeptical view of the feasibility of a high-skills strategy, see C Crouch, D Finegold, and M Sako, *Are skills the answer? The political economy of skill creation in advanced industrial countries* (New York: Oxford University Press., 1999).

⁹³ Mayer, "Vocational Education and Training in Transition: from Fordism to a Learning Economy," 28.

CHAPTER THREE

RESTRUCTURING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION: LEARN FOREVER, WORK FOREVER⁹⁴

In this chapter, the reader first will find a brief history of vocational education in Turkey. Then, the laws which target strengthening the relationship with the industry will be explored. This will be followed by the projects with the same aim. After trying to find an answer to the question why vocational high schools have become the issue/matter/problem of Turkey and why business circles are crying out for qualified labor. This section will include the changing demands of business circles within the framework of global competition. After that, the general framework of vocational high schools will be laid down with the help of studies on how the students perceive themselves, their employment status. The chapter will end with the latest modernization project, MEGEP (Project for Strengthening Vocational Education) and how it can be interpreted as far as lifelong learning policies and human capital concepts are concerned.

Education as a Political Category

In Turkey, if there are two concepts that have not been thoroughly questioned and the questioning of which are considered to be meaningless and even weird, they are perhaps progress and education. Progress is deemed to be the ultimate path to be taken and education is the sole way to attain that goal. In order for a nation to reach the level of modern societies and become a developed country, the role of education is enormous. Progress to what, on behalf of whom and similar questions have been to a large extent ignored, though. It might be argued that the Republic's need to raise educated individuals might have hidden the political character of education, which, on the whole in Turkey, is based on "rationalism, scientific knowledge, positivist

⁹⁴ Here, I would like to tell a part of a Rifat Ilgaz story. On a hot summer day, a worker works on the land. Then, the owner of the land comes and tells him that they are going to share the yield. Then, the worker begins to work more diligently. At the end of the day, the owner of the land comes and says: Work Osman work, the land is yours. Thus, we can make a comparison between the land and the life and say: Learn the students, the life is yours.

knowledge and secular world view.”⁹⁵ If a nation does not stand on the same level as modernized societies, one of the primary factors behind this phenomenon is education. What is to blame is the educational system rather than the social reality it is embedded in.

In the particular context of Turkey, education has undertaken an enormous role to catch up with the modernized societies. However, we have to bear in mind that “what should be taught is not only an educational issue but one that is inherently ideological and political.”⁹⁶ As Michael Apple puts it, schooling has been envisioned like a black box, the language of which “tends to be apolitical and ahistorical, thus hiding the complex nexus of political and economic power and resources that lies behind a considerable amount of curriculum organization and selection.”⁹⁷

That is perhaps due to the mainstream functionalist narrative⁹⁸ that we find ourselves with an unshakable belief in education. Teachers, students, headmasters all blame one another and it is nobody but the students who are considered to be deviant. For instance, what the minister during the 17th National Education Council (*Şura*) called for was an attitude devoid of any ideological content⁹⁹ and there was no

⁹⁵ Ayşe Güneş Ayata and Feride Acar, "Disiplin, Başarı ve İstikrar: Türk Orta Öğretiminde Toplumsal Cinsiyet ve Sınıfın Yeniden Üretimi," in *Kültür Fragmanları: Türkiye'de Gündelik Hayat*, ed. Deniz Kandiyoti and Ayşe Saktanber (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2003).

⁹⁶ Apple, *Ideology and Curriculum*, vii.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁹⁸ There are some very useful books where theories of education as far as reproduction is concerned are elaborated. See Raymond Allen Morrow and Carlos Alberto Torres, eds., *Social Theory and Education: A Critique of Theories of Social and Cultural Reproduction, Teacher Empowerment and School Reform* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995), Carlos Alberto Torres and Theodore R. Mitchell, eds., *Sociology of Education: Emerging Perspectives* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1998). For a huge collection on the sociology of education where many concepts are discussed both theoretically and methodologically, see Stephen J. Ball, ed., *Sociology of Education*, 4 vols., vol. 1 (London New York: Routledge, 2000).

⁹⁹ The information regarding this news can be found at <http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/news/390572.asp> and http://www.dunyagazetesi.com.tr/news_display.asp?upsale_id=287412. Hüseyin Çelik’s remarks: We have to get rid of ideological obsessions. With a supraideological perspective, Çelik stated in the

visible dissent against it. Regarding the issue of vocational education, the major topic of discussion is the *imam-hatip* (religious schools) schools and other kinds of debates are marginalized. As vocational schools were specifically designed to raise technicians for the market, this realm of education has purely been regarded as a technical one, where students are the input to act as individuals for the market production. The attendants of vocational schools, their motives for attending such kinds of schools and the concept of education in general and vocational education in particular as a reproductive mechanism are not taken into consideration. Having laid out the global economic trends which have increased the need for qualified labor in the first chapter, I aim to investigate how the changing economic conditions in the particular context of Turkey have affected vocational education curriculum and focus on the attempts to shape the curriculum and the mentality of teaching so as to re-integrate these schools more strongly with the market. Thus, I would like to explore the increasing intervention of corporate sector in vocational education not only on a discursive level, but also with their penetration into the schools by opening certain workshops. Why has this issue all of a sudden become an issue of the country? What does MEGEP stand for and what is the motive behind that? How should we interpret the discursive change from a developmentalist one towards one based on a discourse of global competition? But before, that let us begin with a brief history of vocational education in Turkey.

A Brief History of Turkish VTE

Classical Ottoman historiography has various examples telling us that education was considered to be the panacea for the Empire's backwardness. In order

closing session of the one-week council argued that "those willing to practice politics based on quarrel, unionism will not be able to contribute to the country".

to close the gap, the Empire resorted to various educational attempts including sending students to Western countries and opening schools with a Western approach. These mainly included technical schools to modernize the army. In addition to these high technical schools, children without parents were accepted into schools of Niş (1860) and Rusçuk (1864), which were founded by Mithat Paşa.¹⁰⁰ These houses of correction (*ıslahhane*) are argued to be “the first major step towards industrial schools”.¹⁰¹ Niş, for instance, produced what the army needed and both poor and orphan children were taught “tailoring, shoemaking, textile, car manufacturing, miller’s trade, printing business”¹⁰² As for Rusçuk, the first industrial school for girls was opened “in order to create employment for children without relatives and to create the workforce supply for artisanship (*küçük sanat*) need of the country and produce the clothing need of the army.”¹⁰³

As for the Republic, Tekeli writes that there was not a major leap during the first decade of the Republic and the legacy of the Empire, “especially boys’ technical schools were ones attended by orphans, kids of very poor families.”¹⁰⁴ The relatively disorganized condition of this sect of education was one of the major problems of the new Republic to take its way towards “modernization and progress.” This hardship

¹⁰⁰ Mithat Paşa is said to be inspired by Sadık Rıfat Paşa, who (in his book *İdare-i Hükümetin Kavaid-i Esasîyesi*) thought of vocational and general education as a whole and suggested opening schools that would raise people within the realms of skilled trade (*el sanatları*) and industry. See Cevat Alkan, "Türk Millî Eğitim Sisteminin Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim Boyutu," in *75 Yılda Eğitim*, ed. Fatma Gök (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1999).

¹⁰¹ M.E.B, "Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitimin Tarihçesi," (2005), 24.

¹⁰² Ibid., 27.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 26. For an organized compilation of these schools during the Ottoman Empire, please also see M.E.B, "Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitimin Tarihçesi.", Abdullah Nişancı, "Mesleki ve Teknik Öğretimin Millî Eğitim İçerisindeki Yapısı, Organizasyonu ve Gelişimi," (M.E.B, 1990), 9-12. Regarding the development of vocational-technical education, its legal status, changes in the organization of the system and schools, how the system was financed, another useful source is M.E.B, "Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitimin Sorunları," (1982), 22-33.

¹⁰⁴ İlhan Tekeli, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndan Günümüze Eğitim Kurumlarının Gelişimi," in *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları).

was recognized M. Kemal Atatürk who emphasized that real progress would be materialized by vocational/technical education. His remarks during his visit to an industrial school in İzmir in 1923 reveal his attitude:¹⁰⁵

One of the reasons for lagging behind the level that we are obliged to reached stems from our failure to understand the importance of art and artisans (*sanat ve sanatkarlar*) ... The Turkish Republic desperately needs the complete development of these schools. Let us once again remind the members of this school that they should not forget this need and reality.

What was underlined was *efficiency* and *realism*, in line with what the conditions of the Republic stipulated:¹⁰⁶

...We should totally get rid of big but imaginary and complex thoughts and see the reality with an effective gaze and establish contact with the hand ... Doing involves combining material and spiritual forces and intelligence and skills. The kind of education combining intelligence and skills will increase the efficiency of production.

In order for these goals to be attained, various things were realized including inviting education experts from abroad, enacting different laws and regulations and opening new schools. Alkan proposes an evolutionary history of vocational education which consists of 1) Elementary 2) Foundation 3) Spreading and 4) Becoming national.

¹⁰⁵ M.E.B, "Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitimin Tarihçesi," 31. *Vasıl olmaya mecbur bulunduğumuz seviyeye bugünkü kadar uzak kalışımızın önemli sebeplerinden biri, sanata ve sanatkârlara lâyük oldukları derecede önem verilmemiş olmasıdır. Türkiye Cumhuriyeti bu sanat mekteplerinin tam inkişafına çok muhtaçtır. Mensuplarının daima bu hakikatin, bu ciddi ihtiyacı nazarı dikkatte bulundurmalarını bir defa daha hatırlatırım.*

For a characteristic parallel between his idea of progress and education in general and vocational education in particular, see *ibid.*, 32.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 32-33. *Bunun için büyük ve fakat hayali ve karmaşık düşüncelerden tamamen sıyrılarak gerçeği etkili bir bakışla görmek ve el ile temas lazımdır ... Yapmak; maddi ve manevi kuvvetleri, zeka ve beceriyi birleştirmektir. Zekâ ve becerinin birleştiği bir eğitim de üretimin verimliliğinin artmasını sağlayacaktır.*

The elementary period consists of the apprenticeship and guild system, training military personnel and the first initiatives for industrialization. The foundation period (1923-1940) took the issue of vocational education in parallel with economic development plans. It primarily aimed to restructure VTE in line with the changing social and economic conditions. Steps taken in this period included: investigations carried out by foreign experts, central organization, and education of the required workforce, developing the existing institutions, opening new institutions, providing funding, education of the instructors and planned development.¹⁰⁷

For instance, Tekeli reports that efforts made to put an end to the disorganization of these schools by transferring the administration of art schools (*sanat okulları*) from special city administrations (*il özel idareleri*) to the Ministry of Education.¹⁰⁸ In 1926, Law No. 1052 was enacted to authorize the Ministry to educate instructors, develop programs and create the environment for education. 1927-1939 were years when the Republic sent personnel abroad.¹⁰⁹ A step in line with the transfer of the administration of the art schools (*sanat okulları*) to Ankara was taken on 22 June 1933, with Law No. 2287, leading to the foundation of General Directorate for Vocational-Technical Education (*Mesleki ve Teknik Öğretim Genel Müdürlüğü*).¹¹⁰ State-sponsored industrialization raised the importance of technical schools and 1934 was the year the government enabled schools to establish working capital and produce for the market. 1935 was the decision to decide to fund art

¹⁰⁷ Alkan, "Türk Milli Eğitim Sisteminin Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim Boyutu," 226.

¹⁰⁸ Tekeli, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndan Günümüze Eğitim Kurumlarının Gelişimi."

¹⁰⁹ Alkan, "Türk Milli Eğitim Sisteminin Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim Boyutu," 226.

¹¹⁰ Dr. Oğuz Zengingönül, *Avrupa Birliği'nde Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitime Yaklaşımlar ve Türkiye İçin Bir Uyum Analizi* (Ankara: Kozan Ofset), 141.

schools not from the cities but ministry.¹¹¹ A year later, under the leadership of Rüştü Uzel,¹¹² a commission prepared a technical education plan based the reports of former experts and the views of public sector and private sectors.¹¹³ The third period (1940-1960) witnessed the opening of many schools and the provision of special funding opportunities. Law No. 4304 of 1942 was a major step in launching a ten-year period for the implementation and spread of VTE activities, which was accompanied by establishing new buildings and facilities and education environments.¹¹⁴ It was in 1973-1974 that art institutes (*sanat enstitüleri*) were transformed into industrial high schools and girls' institutes were transformed to girls' vocational schools (*kız meslek liseleri*) as we know them today. Now that I the general framework of the institutional developments has been presented, it is now time to discuss the legal practices which outline the education-employment relationship.

¹¹¹ Tekeli, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndan Günümüze Eğitim Kurumlarının Gelişimi."

¹¹² For a review of his life, thoughts and works, see Dr. Kemal Turan, *Mesleki Teknik Eğitimin Gelişmesi ve Mehmet Rüştü Uzel* (İstanbul: M.E.B, 1992).

¹¹³ The plan aims to take such steps: educating the apprentices required by small tradesman (*küçük sanat erbabı*) or factories and industrial institutions in apprenticeship (*çıraklık*) schools; opening evening art schools (*akşam sanat okulları*) in order for the foremen (*ustalar*) to develop themselves; mobile and transitory courses (*gezici ve geçici kurslar*) for people doing primitive local arts (*mahalli sanatlar*); vocational and art schools (*meslek ve sanat okulları*) for factory workers at the level of technician; technical schools for producing workers to be employed at factories, chiefs required by public works, electricity installers (*elektrik tesisatçıları*) and technicians of a rank between expert engineers and expert workers. M.E.B, "Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitimin Tarihçesi," 39. For the details of the developments in this realm, see Zenginönül, *Avrupa Birliği'nde Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitime Yaklaşımlar ve Türkiye İçin Bir Uyum Analizi*, 142-43. and Alkan, "Türk Milli Eğitim Sisteminin Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim Boyutu."

¹¹⁴ Alkan, "Türk Milli Eğitim Sisteminin Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim Boyutu," 226. For Alkan, post-1960 period witnessed attempts to make VTE system a national, scientific, technological and global one. This period will be of more focus in the following part. However, for a very organized documentation of the schools, courses and developments between 1938-1986, see M.E.B, "Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitimin Tarihçesi," 39-46.

Laws to Establish Industry-Education Relationship

When compared with the first decades of the republic, the relatively disorganized system of the 1980s had to be restructured in line with the developments in technology. Law No. 3308 was enacted on 5 June 1986 in order to educate the necessary qualified workforce required by industry through the cooperation of schools and business, to support, develop and spread vocational-technical education in the totality of a system.¹¹⁵

The primary aims of VTE (vocational-technical education), according to this law, are:¹¹⁶

to integrate those left out of the formal educational system with an education of apprenticeship; *to give the students of VT schools the chance to upgrade their skills in the real work environment*; to prepare the youth without vocational requirements for employment with vocational courses; to provide financial sources for developing and spreading VTE services; to continuously support VTE with research; *to provide the basis for the participation of business life in planning, developing and evaluating VTE*; to develop production activities with educative aims.

As Zengingönül also states, this law has brought about the concept of research and development. Zengingönül's argument, based on the assumption of adapting VTE to the developments of new technologies towards production, can be achieved by "R&D activities and the maximum material and spiritual contribution of

¹¹⁵ Zengingönül, *Avrupa Birliği'nde Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitime Yaklaşımlar ve Türkiye İçin Bir Uyum Analizi*, 143-44. Italics are mine.

Mecburi öğretimden sonra çeşitli sebeplerle örgün öğretim kurumlarına devam etmeyen veya bu öğretim kurumlarının çeşitli kademelerinden ayrılan gençleri düzenli çıraklık eğitiminden geçirmek, mesleki-teknik okullardaki öğrencilerin becerilerini gerçek iş ortamında geliştirmelerine imkan vermek, istihdam için gerekli mesleki yeterliliklere sahip olmayan genç ve yetişkinleri meslek kursları ile istihdama hazırlamak, MTE hizmetlerinin geliştirilmesi ve yaygınlaştırılması için finansman kaynakları sağlamak, MTE'yi araştırmalarla sürekli destekleyip geliştirmek, iş hayatının MTE'nin planlama, geliştirme ve değerlendirme süreçlerine katılımını sağlamak, MTE kurumlarındaki eğitim amaçlı üretim faaliyetlerini geliştirmek.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

social partners.”¹¹⁷ Here, with the Law No. 3308, we see that “vocational education has begun to function in a dual manner and its relation with the market has reached a structural model”.¹¹⁸

Even though Law No. 3308 brings about the cooperation of school and industry¹¹⁹ “the transformation of economic, social and technological life, which was accompanied by the failure to renew education programs”¹²⁰ raised the necessity of holding a council specifically on the issue of VTE. In other words, the 16th National Education Council (22-26 February 1999) gathered as the Vocational-Technical Education Council. It might be useful to mention the decisions of the Council since it is a specifically allocated to this issue. But before the decisions, let’s examine the preparatory work which paved the way for those decisions.

The 16th National Education Council and Law No. 4702

When one looks at the preparatory works of the council, the wish to integrate with knowledge-based economy, to strengthen the link between education and

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 144. The issue of social partners, which will be touched on in more detail in MEGEP, raises questions regarding the debate around the state’s role in basic services including health and education. As we shall later see, the intervention of the corporate sector into VTE will become more visible and even desirable from the standpoint of the state. For an article regarding the cooperation of the state and business world in post-fordist accumulation regime, see Bob Jessop, "Changing Governance of Welfare: Recent Trends in its Primary Functions, Scale and Modes of Coordination," *Social Policy and Administration* 33, no. 4 (1999).

¹¹⁸ Hasan Hüseyin Aksoy, "Üniversiteye Giriş Sorunu Bağlamında Toplumsal Yeniden Üretim Mekanizması Olarak Mesleki-Teknik Eğitim," *abece* 226, no. Haziran (2005). Aksoy’s critique of the existing system is quite to the point. Citing Minister Hüseyin Çelik’s speech during 2005 budget talks, Aksoy criticizes his remarks to overcome the inequalities with an equal competition environment.

¹¹⁹ For the benefits of this law and Law No. 4702 regarding the students, state and employers, see Hıfzı Doğan, Ayten Ulusoy, and Fatma Hacıoğlu, *Okul Sanayi İlişkileri* (Ankara: Önder Matbaacılık, 1997).

¹²⁰ Av. Nurseli Tarcan, "Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim ve Yeni Düzenlemeler," *İşveren*, no. August (2001).

economy and improve the competitive power of Turkey in the global arena becomes clear.

An examination of the papers prepared before the 16th National Education Council reveals the emphasis on the rapid changes in science and technology, the increase in knowledge-intensive and advanced production technologies and the fact that these have a significant influence the content of occupations. In addition to that, a recurrent theme – that Turkey is lagging behind the advanced countries in the world, it was late¹²¹ in becoming industrialized and trying to catch up with knowledge society – manifested itself in almost every article presented. Trying to sketch a roadmap for VTE in a knowledge society, Ruhi Kılıç states that a country “needs to research, develop and use information technologies in order to reach the level of a knowledge society.”¹²² Kılıç strongly suggests that Turkey, as a country which missed the opportunity to catch up with the industrial revolution, should act rapidly and take the chance to become a knowledge society.¹²³ Kılıç further adds

¹²¹ We should briefly note that these papers have a developmentalist perspective like mainstream Turkish historiography, which is known to follow a linear and progressivist line on which the Ottoman Empire and Republic of Turkey lags behind Europe. As is known, with the emergence of a secular understanding of time, we witnessed the establishment of a chronological empty time – resembling a running track – in which some nations somehow started before and therefore are ahead of the others. That is where history comes into play and sets a causality which not only enables us to “understand” why the world is as it is but also legitimizes the hegemonic positions of the countries we as a “nation” are supposed to follow.

¹²² Ruhi Kılıç, "Bilgi Toplumunda Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim ve Mesleki Teknik Eğitimde Yeni Yönelimler," in *16. Milli Eğitim Şûrası Hazırlık Dökümanı* (Ankara: 1998).

¹²³ For the increasing need for qualified labor in knowledge society within the context of the *şûra*, see İbrahim Kadı, "Mesleki-Teknik Eğitimin Sorunları ve Öneriler," in *16. Milli Eğitim Şûrası Hazırlık Dökümanı* (Ankara: 1998). In his article Kadı figures out a developmentalist perspective on world history, from agricultural society towards post-industrial society and in the latest ‘stage’, the requirements of a desirable man are: in-depth knowledge in an occupational realm, proficient in oral and written communication skills in a foreign language, capacity to work in different fields and continuous learning ability, working in a group and decision-making ability, renewing oneself. In addition to that, an educated person is equipped with critical thinking, able to find the ways to reach new information, can adapt himself to innovations and is flexible. The author argues that since many routine tasks will be carried out by machines, mankind will be able to allocate more of his time to learning.

that this does not necessarily mean to stop industrial investments.¹²⁴ Touching upon the issue of the change in the structure of occupations, Kılıç argues that like guns, “information technologies have partially destroyed manliness or years of expertise in many fields and resulted in the emergence of new perspectives in occupations.”¹²⁵

As can be clearly understood, the government of the time took this issue very seriously and there was a great will to restructure the system in line with the changing market conditions. Very briefly, the council proposed¹²⁶ first to restructure the system as a broad-based and modular one to allow to acquire diplomas, various certificates. Second, it was recommended that VTE programs be carried out in such a way that they would facilitate to reach international standards and the integration process with Europe, and that the existing capacity had to be utilized 24 hours year round. In addition, the traditional structure based on skill acquisition deeply in a single occupation had to be abandoned. Instead, the issue required an approach from a perspective of knowledge, technology and implementation. Furthermore, it was recommended that efficient usage of time, management of finances, utilization and management of tools, equipment and sources, which are essential for various realms of life, be regarded within the scope of technology education.

The council stated that the VTE approach should be based on not only employment expectations but also in such a way that it would create a workforce that

¹²⁴ Making a comparison between information technologies and heavy industry investments, Kılıç posits that the former do not require huge energy investments.

¹²⁵ Kılıç, "Bilgi Toplumunda Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim ve Mesleki Teknik Eğitimde Yeni Yönelimler." The example Kılıç gives is noteworthy: We no longer need coyness (stemming from their ultimately accumulated years of experience) of those who first as an apprentice in manufacturing sector carries tea for years, then become foreman and then master. Thanks to CAD/Cam, mastership of a lather operator, emerging at the end of 30 years has become obsolete. A young technician can do the job more precisely and easily than a master. A young man with a sound academic background can apply the skills of very skillful masters with CNC programming.

¹²⁶ M.E.B, *On Altıncı Milli Eğitim Şurası: Raporlar, Görüşmeler, Kararlar* (Ankara: M.E.B, 1999), 111-27.

would respond to employment demands and expectations. The only viable way for achieving this goal was to assess regional needs for vocational education and to evaluate the development tendencies in vocational education, taking local and regional needs and regulations into account when establishing programs. Moreover, experienced experts of business life were recommended to participate in preparing and implementing educational programs and the business circles, as the party benefiting from the output of the system, were required to increase their share in financing the system in multiple ways.

Tarcan states that the council's final conclusion was that "bridging the gap to raise the workforce profile required by the twenty-first century can only be achieved by materializing the decisions taken."¹²⁷ What paved the way for this was "Law No. 4702."¹²⁸ As for the reasons for passing this law, it was stated that "developments in industrial and service sector, race for quality have affected the required characteristics of workforce and have raised the urgency to educate people that can *endorse team work, solve problems, are good at written and oral communication, that can undertake responsibility, plan and manage.*"¹²⁹ Moreover, it is crucial to maintain the continuity and integrity of secondary and higher VTE and thus establish a *flexible* system which will enhance horizontal and vertical transitions."¹³⁰ The law affected certain preexisting laws, among which were Law No. 2547 (Higher

¹²⁷ Tarcan, "Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim ve Yeni Düzenlemeler."

¹²⁸ The name of the law is: Yükseköğretim Kanunu, Çıraklık ve Meslek Eğitimi Kanunu, İlköğretim ve Eğitim Kanunu, Milli Eğitim Temel Kanunu, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı'nın Teşkilat ve Görevleri Hakkında Kanun ile 24.3.1988 tarihli ve 3418 Sayılı Kanunda Değişiklik Yapılması ve Bazı Kağıt ve İşlemlerden Eğitime Katkı Payı Alınması Hakkında Kanunda Değişiklik Yapılmasına Dair Kanun

¹²⁹ Emphasis is mine.

¹³⁰ *Raison d'être* for 4702 numbered law. Emphasis is mine.

Education), Law No. 3308 (Apprenticeship) and 4306. For our purposes, we will deal with Laws No. 3308 and 2547.

Changes Regarding Law No. 2547

What Law No. 4702 brought about in Higher Education Law was¹³¹ that the graduates of secondary VTE schools were allowed to continue their education (without examination) in the program, which is the continuation of their former program. Graduates of the higher VTE schools (*meslek yüksek okulları*) were allowed to make a vertical transition to colleges in their own realms (on the condition that there was a contingency not less than 10 percent of the total graduates). A VTE region was to be formed in relation with the integrity and continuity of VTE higher education schools and VTE secondary schools in the same city. Last, on the condition that industry and service sectors is are in need of and on the condition that the new foundation would not be an extension of any university or advanced technology institute, foundations will be able to form VTE higher education schools. The law enabled the cooperation and coordination of VTE higher education schools and VTE secondary schools in the same VTE region with the public and private institutions in the same VTE region.

Changes Regarding Law No. 3308

Law No. 4702 numbered law changed the name of Law No. 3308 to “The Vocational Education Law” and changed the scope of the law since a more flexible structure was preferred so as to respond to the continuous development and change in

¹³¹ M.E.B, "2002 Yılı Başında Eğitim," (Ankara: 2001), 104-10.

VTE.¹³² What this new law implied and what the promulgators of the law actually aimed at was “to restructure secondary education with a *stronger emphasis on vocational education* so as to protect the value of the citizens within the framework of the circulation of goods and services between EU and Turkey, to boost economic production, to become a country that not only buys and uses but also *produces and sells*”.¹³³

Law No. 2547

The above mentioned VTE regions were designed within the framework of Law No. 2547, which aimed to¹³⁴ benefit from the sources in the most efficient and productive way; to maintain continuity between and integrity of secondary VTE and higher education programs; to educate people with the skills and qualifications of the market; to set the ground for the participation of social partners (government, employer, labor unions); to prepare people for employment at a lower age.

Law No. 5544: The Occupational Proficiency Law

The need for this law is said to stem from a lack of an occupational examination and documentation system which defines occupational proficiencies in Turkey.¹³⁵ According to the document, the lack of standards leads to the exclusion of

¹³² For the new regulations brought about by the new law, see Tarcan, "Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim ve Yeni Düzenlemeler."

¹³³ Minister Metin Bostancıoğlu's speech delivered during the 2002 budget talks at TBMM General Assembly. See M.E.B, "2002 Yılı Başında Eğitim." Emphasis is mine.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 105-06. Here, one can also find the functions of these regions.

¹³⁵ MEB, "Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Stratejik Plan Hazırlık Programı Taslağı," (2006).

employers from vocational-technical educational programs and these programs fail to raise the students in accordance with the labor market. In this respect, the law aims to define occupational standards which will in turn determine the curriculum.¹³⁶ Added to this is the objective to educate the required workforce with the participation of social partners in line with the needs of both local and international labor market.¹³⁷

Previous Projects to Establish Industry-Vocational Education Relationship

Apart from these laws, several projects were carried out in order to establish a sound relationship between vocational education and industry. In other words, the latest project MEGEP is not new. Here are the previous ones: First, 1978-1979 (OSANOR) Project was carried out with the cooperation of MEB (Ministry of National Education) and Ankara University on the shared education of school and industry. The project was carried out in the industrial schools of Adana, Bursa, İzmir and İstanbul. The primary objective of the project was to raise the workforce required by the economy, to develop a system in which educational institutions and industry could work in collaboration so that the VTE needs of the individuals could be met. Second was METEP (Vocational and Technical Education Project). The scope of OSANOR was later extended under the name of METEP and the implementation was realized within the system of OSANOR. In 1986, when the project ended, 17 occupational realms had been taken into the area of implementation. Third was Intensified Educational Practice (*Yoğunlaştırılmış Eğitim*

¹³⁶ For the expectations of the business circles from this law as far as education-employment relation is concerned, see İsmet Sipahi, "Rekabetçi Ekonominin Temeli Mesleki Yeterlilikler," *İşveren*, no. Ekim (2006). This issue of the journal is rich in articles as far as this law is concerned.

¹³⁷ <http://www.megep.meb.gov.tr/megep/haberarsiv/yeni/mkyk/mkyk.htm>

Uygulaması). Workshop courses and occupational courses in areas where there was an intense industry that had become a bloc, thereby enabling the students to have their workshop courses in workplaces and creating a capacity surplus which could be filled with extra students. Thus, 1985-1986 educational year witnessed the intensified educational practice in some of the industrial high schools so as to establish a systematic relationship between school and industry. Fourth was METGE (Developing Vocational and Technical Education). The project was initiated by MEB Kız Teknik Öğretim Genel Müdürlüğü in 1993, in one city of every seven regions (Bursa, Erzurum, Eskişehir, İzmir, Malatya, Mersin, Trabzon). The main objective of the project was to prepare women for employment at a regional level. The other aims of the project were to determine the educational needs at a regional level, to put modern educational technologies like computer based, modular and individual instruction into practice, to develop programs in accordance with the occupational standards of EU, to increase the employment opportunities of women and to make them acquire entrepreneurial skills.¹³⁸

MEGEP is the latest and the most important of all. But before this comprehensive project, let us try to answer the following question: What is it really that makes İTO to announce 2007 as the year for Vocational Education? Why has VTE suddenly become the problem of the country? What are the fundamental

¹³⁸ There are other projects signed with WB with the aim of strengthening the link between education (not necessarily vocational) and employment. They are: The Industrial Education Project (*Sınai Eğitim Projesi*) signed in 1984 so as to increase the efficiency of the workers employed in the manufacturing-export industry; Industrial Schools Project (*Endüstriyel Okullar Projesi* in 1985, 57.7 million \$) to increase the number of well-educated workers; Informal Vocational Education Project (*Yaygın Mesleki Eğitim Projesi* 58.5 million \$) to increase the workforce supply educated through informal vocational education; The Industrial Education Project (*Sınai Eğitim Projesi* in 1988, 115.8 million dollars) aims to improve the Higher Education Council's (YÖK) technician programs and advance the quality of educated technicians employed at industrial sector; The Strengthening National Education Project (*Milli Eğitimi Geliştirme Projesi* 90.2 million dollars) with the aim of increasing efficiency in primary and secondary education. See Hasan Hüseyin Aksoy et al., "Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim" (paper presented at the Dördüncü Demokratik Eğitim Kurultayı, Ankara, 2004).

indicators of the Turkish VTE system as far as the country's global integration is concerned? And under the current circumstances, what are the problems of VTE that "prevent" employers from competing better in the global market?

Motives for Turkey's Current Vocational/Technical Education Reform

The Ninth Development Plan of Turkey is said to be the fundamental policy document which outlines the economic, social and cultural transformation the country is to undergo. In that sense, it might be useful to examine the plan along with other documents so as to understand why Turkey is in need of transforming its VTE system.

The vision of the plan is to create a Turkey which "grows in a stable way, shares its wealth fairly, has the power to compete on a global level, is transforming itself into a *knowledge society* and will have completed its EU harmonization process."¹³⁹ Within this vision, the plan defines some social and economic pillars, among which are developing R&D and innovation, accomplishing the transition to *producing high value-added goods in industry and services*, improving the labor market, *making the education sector more sensitive to labor demands*,¹⁴⁰ developing active labor policies and developing the education sector. These indicators correspond to realms which are directly or indirectly related to the current vocational training reforms with regard to Turkey's ability to compete in global economy.

¹³⁹ DPT, "Dokuzuncu Kalkınma Planı 2007-2013," (2007), 10. Emphasis is mine. Regarding a detailed documentation of Turkey's strategy action plan for transition to knowledge society, see DPT, "Bilgi Toplumu Stratejisi (2006-2010)," (2006). DPT, "Bilgi Toplumu Stratejisi Eylem Planı," (2006).

¹⁴⁰ Emphasis is mine.

It is clear that globally, “the spread of information and communication technologies has led to a change in organization structures and working styles and traditional factors like a cheap workforce, abundant raw materials which used to be efficient factors in determining production structure and the flow of international capital has relatively declined in terms of their significance.”¹⁴¹ The plan acknowledges that countries which emphasize specialization in international markets, can improve their production technology and capacity to create innovation are able to move into a phase where they can produce knowledge-intensive, high-value added goods and services. The fact that it is easier to benefit from the workforce of other countries and the development of knowledge-intensive industries “raises the significance of qualified labor and spreading educational opportunities throughout the world.”¹⁴² Within this context, it is clear that Turkey’s competitive edge depends on its ability to emphasize innovation and develop its human capital. Thus, it is argued that “science, technology and innovation policies which have been developed *independently* of industrial policies should be redesigned in order to correspond to the competitive power and strategic needs of companies.”¹⁴³ In that sense, a need for a stronger relationship between vocational schools, university and industry is stipulated. Having drawn a general outline, it is time to examine the specific factors which necessitate a VTE reform.

¹⁴¹ DPT, "Dokuzuncu Kalkınma Planı 2007-2013," 14. *Bilgi ve iletişim teknolojilerinin de katkısıyla küreselleşme, ülkelerin ekonomik ve sosyal gelişmelerini önemli ölçüde etkilemektedir. Bu süreçte, gerek organizasyon yapılarında gerekse iş yapma biçimlerinde büyük bir değişim gerçekleşmektedir. Geçmişte üretim yapısının ve uluslararası sermayenin akış yönünün belirlenmesinde etken olan ucuz işgücü ve hammadde bolluğu gibi geleneksel faktörler önemini görece yitirirken...*

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ DPT, "Dokuzuncu Kalkınma Planı Sanayi Politikaları Özel İhtisas Komisyonu Raporu," 15. Emphasis is mine. Along with that, the report states that technological progress does not only mean focusing on advanced technologies but rather improving the technological basis in all sectors. DPT’s report also backs the review of the regulations between academics and business world.

EU Perspective

Turkey's bid to become a full member of the EU is one of the main driving forces and motives to reform its VTE. First of all, the Customs Union "has facilitated the access to the most advanced market of the globe and created an atmosphere of competition."¹⁴⁴ As State Planning Organization (DPT in Turkish) Undersecretary Tıktık also states, Turkish industry has faced external competition since 1996, when the country signed the Customs Union Agreement. Under these conditions, the share of medium and high technology manufacturing sectors in aggregate exports has increased, even though there remains much to be done.

Table 1. Level of Technology for Production and Export After Customs Union¹⁴⁵

Level of Technology	TURKEY				EU	
	Export		Production		Export	Production
	1996	2004	1996	2003	2001	1999
High	2,8	6,8	3,3	3,5	23,5	12
Mid-High	18,2	28	17,2	20,6	40,2	31
Below Mid	21	25,6	27	22,9	15,3	24
Low	58	39,7	52,5	52,9	20,8	33
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100

It is also stated that "the EU process determines the external framework of the Turkish manufacturing sector and is vital in terms of the sustainability of economic modernization."¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 59.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 59. The report of SPO declares that among EU's industrial policy priorities are to achieve technological and organizational change through information technologies.

In addition to that, the Lisbon Strategy of the EU declares the wish of Brussels to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge economy. The document has a roadmap which “stipulates that a transition to knowledge economy and society has to be accomplished through accelerating the structural reform process for competition power and innovation.”¹⁴⁷

Apart from that, the high rate of unemployed youth in Turkey and the ageing population of Europe make Turkey a “window of opportunity”¹⁴⁸ and necessitate a vital VTE reform.¹⁴⁹ The fact that the EU is also modernizing its VTE system seems to constitute a driving force for Turkey.¹⁵⁰

The Structural Transformation of Manufacturing Sector and the Attempt to Move towards High Value-Added Production

Another significant factor for Turkey’s push for a VTE reform is the structural change it has been witnessing since 2001. It is even argued that before

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 64. The Union’s strategy also aims to invest in the individual and carry on social integration. In that sense, it is interesting to see a schizophrenic discourse, as Fuat Ercan also suggests. For his argument, see Fuat Ercan, "Eğitim ve İstihdam Politikalarına Toplu Bir Bakış," *Özgürlükçü Gençlik* 23 May 2006.

¹⁴⁸ It is considered to be an opportunity for Turkey, since the population of the country will get old in time. Yes, perhaps, the majority of the population is really going to get old, but the upper classes will remain young. Might this be the case as far as this concept is concerned?

¹⁴⁹ For a detailed analysis of the EU’s position, see European Commission Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs, "The impact of ageing on public expenditure: projections for the EU-25 Member States on pensions, healthcare, long-term care, education and unemployment transfers (2004-50)" (2006).

¹⁵⁰ DPT, "Sekizinci Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı Ortaöğretim: Genel Eğitim, Meslek Eğitimi, Teknik Eğitim Özel İhtisas Komisyon Raporu," (2001), 7. The free movement of goods and people within the Union necessitates the harmonization of the standards regarding VTE. In that sense, Brussels also aims to raise the required workforce and teach people the skills in line with the recent technology. Regarding the content of the VTE reforms being carried out in five English-speaking countries (Australia, New Zealand, England, Scotland and USA), see DPT, "Sekizinci Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı Ortaöğretim: Genel Eğitim, Meslek Eğitimi, Teknik Eğitim Özel İhtisas Komisyon Raporu," 17-18. It is understood that most of these countries underline the significance of teaching multiple skills, reducing the role of the state, creating a flexible and modular system, increasing the chances for lifelong learning, approximation of VTE and labor market, benefiting from the appropriate technologies in order to establish an educational system sensitive to international competition and mobility.

2001, such an economic climate prevailed that companies did not have to maximize their efficiency for survival.”¹⁵¹ Yet, after 2001, it was stated that the economic parameters enabling these companies to survive had changed.¹⁵² So, where does Turkey stand socially and economically in this process?

In Turkey, the largest contribution to growth stems from industry. Between 2001-2005, agricultural sector grew 1.1 %; whereas the figure is 5.1 % for industry and 4.3 for services. As a result of these trends, the share of agriculture in total value added has continued to decline (14.1 % in 2000 – 10.3 % in 2005) whereas industry and services have shown different trends (from 62.6 to 64.4 and 23.3 to 25.4 respectively). Statistics provided by MESS (Union of Turkish Metal Industrialists) is striking in that sense, as well. Kenar states that Turkey’s transition to industry and services society has been continuing since 1950. Yet, he further puts it that in 1950, the share of agriculture in employment was 85 % and it has fallen down 1 % on average per year. Yet, “the last two years have witnessed a dramatic decrease of 7 %.”¹⁵³

Along with that, manufacturing sector is said to have dramatically progressed in the last 25 years. For instance, the value added created by the manufacturing sector has tripled to 45 billion dollars since 1980.¹⁵⁴ The average growth rate

¹⁵¹ DPT, "Dokuzuncu Kalkınma Planı Sanayi Politikaları Özel İhtisas Komisyonu Raporu," 21. Gains stemming from inflation, generously allocated incentives and restricted international competition enabled the maintenance of the weight of traditional sector as opposed to the modern sector. In this traditional sector; small-scale, low technology companies employing unqualified labor and the majority activities of who were informal could survive in this way.

¹⁵² The report suggests that the rising competitive power of Asia makes life difficult for such companies.

¹⁵³ Necdet Kenar, "İstihdamda Yapısal Dönüşüm," *MESS Haber Bülteni*, no. 50 (2006). Kenar proposes the training of the people who have become and will become unemployed due to this transformation in line with the occupations required by the labor market.

¹⁵⁴ DPT, "Dokuzuncu Kalkınma Planı Sanayi Politikaları Özel İhtisas Komisyonu Raporu," 7. According to the report, 2001 is deemed to be vital and signifies a structural breaking point in terms of the transformation Turkey is undergoing. The report argues that the change of behavior in the public

regarding Industrial Value-Added is 7,9 % between 2001-2004, whereas it was 6,6 % between 1980-1990 and 4,2 % between 1990-2000.¹⁵⁵ During the Eighth Development Plan, “the share of food, textile, iron-steel have maintained their share, whereas automotive, machine, electronics, metal goods, petroleum products have increased their share as far as export is concerned.”¹⁵⁶ As a result, “the share of medium and high technology sectors’ share in manufacturing industry increased between 2002-2005.”¹⁵⁷ Within this ongoing transformation, it is argued that Turkey has such advantages as “the flexible structure of SMEs, the ability for medium-level technology production, the capability to adapt to demand fluctuations, *human resources which have the potential to become qualified.*”¹⁵⁸

Despite these steps forward, there are the structural problems of the manufacturing sector including “the deficiency to produce technology, *lack of qualified labor force*, the inability to spread modern technology utilization, *the limited production capability in terms of high value-added goods.*”¹⁵⁹ These factors are counted among the barriers hindering the competitiveness of Turkey. Even though there has been an improvement, it seems that there is much to be done.

has strengthened the stability atmosphere and these have coincided with the global competition which has been initiated by Customs Union and felt more strongly since 2001.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. These figures indicate that Turkey’s manufacturing sector is being radically transformed.

¹⁵⁶ DPT, "Dokuzuncu Kalkınma Planı 2007-2013," 41.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 42.

¹⁵⁸ DPT, "Dokuzuncu Kalkınma Planı Sanayi Politikaları Özel İhtisas Komisyonu Raporu," 55. Emphasis is mine.

¹⁵⁹ DPT, "Dokuzuncu Kalkınma Planı 2007-2013."

The Vision of the Manufacturing Sector for 2013

In the current development plan, it is stated that the desired manufacturing industry is one that “has a huge competitive power, based on advanced technology, produces high value-added, will have completed its harmonization with the EU and meets social expectations and full employment.”¹⁶⁰

This structural transformation of the manufacturing sector is said to vitally require a qualified workforce. Within this the context of this transformation, “rising sectors need a more qualified workforce when compared to traditional ones.”¹⁶¹ The report further stipulates the approximation of education to a position where “it will train employees who are able to respond to the needs of the private sector ... The educational system should be structured not on helping students acquire specific skills and knowledge but teaching them skills including problem-solving and relating different concepts, which can be adapted to various jobs.”¹⁶² In this respect, one of the priorities of the report includes solving the problems of the VTE system since the competitiveness of Turkey is now said to depend on different factors. In the 1980s, whereas the high exchange rate and low wages were the factors that contributed to the Turkey’s competitiveness, this is no longer sustainable.¹⁶³ In other words, the sustainability of growth depends on the extent to which the educational system can

¹⁶⁰ DPT, "Dokuzuncu Kalkınma Planı Sanayi Politikaları Özel İhtisas Komisyonu Raporu," 73. . Moreover, “it should have the vision and flexibility to replace its production methods with the new ones.” However, MEGEP – to be mentioned later – emphasized the concept of employability.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 16.

¹⁶² Ibid. In order to cope with the changing technology, the report also suggests strengthening on-the-job training services.

¹⁶³ Şeref Saygılı, Cengiz Cihan, and Zafer Ali Yavan, "Eğitim ve Sürdürülebilir Büyüme: Türkiye Deneyimi, Riskler ve Fırsatlar," (İstanbul: TÜSİAD, 2006).

train qualified labor and the extent to which the educational system is related to industry.

Thus, what actually matters for Turkey in its attempt to reform its VTE seems to be its desire to produce high value-added products in industry and services, sustain its growth and consequently establish a successful global integration. When signing the *Meslek Lisesi Memleket Meselesi* protocol with the Ministry of Education, Mustafa Koç (President of Executive Board of KOÇ Group) argues that the objectives of Turkey are much higher and states that with the steps taken,

Turkey has entered the same fast track with the advanced countries and the current aim is to bridge the gap ... Turkey, within its perspective to join the EU, has to achieve a sound, structural transformation, at the basis of which lies producing and exporting high value-added goods. One of the primary conditions for achieving this goal is a qualified labor force. That is why we declare that the Vocational High School is the problem of this country.¹⁶⁴

These all indicate that moving ahead in global competitiveness necessitates a qualified labor force, since “human capital has increased in economic significance to the point where it has become as important to contemporary society as land was to feudal society.”¹⁶⁵ The awareness regarding qualified human capital certainly applies to Turkey. First of all, “within the framework of globalization, the gap regarding the

¹⁶⁴ <http://www.meb.gov.tr/haberler/haberayrinti.asp?ID=1058>. *Özellikle son yıllarda yaptığımız hamlelerle, ülke olarak kendimizi gelişmiş ülkelerin koştuğu kulvara soktuk. Şimdiki hedefimiz ise onlarla aramızdaki farkı hızla kapatmaktır. Önümüzdeki 10 yılda AB'ye tam üyeliği hedefleyen Türkiye, ekonomide güçlü yapısal bir dönüşüm gerçekleştirmek zorunda. Bu dönüşümün temelinde de verimlilik ve katma değeri yüksek ürünler üretmek ve ihraç etmek yatıyor. Bu hedefe ulaşabilmenin en önemli ön koşullarından biri vasıflı işgücü. Bu nedenle Koç Topluluğu olarak 'Meslek Lisesi, Memleket Meselesi diyoruz.*

Mustafa Koç also wishes to create awareness throughout the society with regard to the significance of vocational training. In this respect, Koç Group's aim is to spread the seeds of cooperation between the state and business world, to contribute to raising qualified labor force and promote vocational training.

¹⁶⁵ Brown, Green, and Lauder, eds., *High Skills: Globalization, Competitiveness and Skill Formation*, 6.

value-added created by companies carrying out their production with qualified or non-qualified labor consistently widens.”¹⁶⁶ In line with that, the Medium Term Plan of 2006 – 2008 stipulates that “developing human resources and increasing employability and strengthening the capacity of the companies to raise their competitive power are among the development axes.”¹⁶⁷ It is argued that a single skill per person will not contribute much to the development of the country and Turkey’s competition power, since it is “a modern workforce that Turkey needs in information age which foregrounds a qualified labor force with multi skills.”¹⁶⁸

The global economic trends are also taken into consideration by authorities. Minister for Industry and Commerce Ali Coşkun reminds that within the framework of international competition, the demand for traditional goods and services decline. What replace them are knowledge-based industries. In addition to that, “as the life-span of products becomes shorter; companies, sectors and thus countries are forced to produce and adopt new technologies and determine their policies accordingly.”¹⁶⁹ Hisarcıklıoğlu, points to the rapid changes in the economy:¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁶ DPT, "Dokuzuncu Kalkınma Planı Sanayi Politikaları Özel İhtisas Komisyonu Raporu," 136. The report argues that companies operating without qualified labor are unable to compete with Asia and suggests upgrading the qualities of workforce employed at the manufacturing sector.

¹⁶⁷ Ahmet Tıktık, "Türkiye Ekonomisinde Rekabet, Verimlilik, Girişimcilik, İstihdam ve Eğitim," *Mercek*, Ocak 2006. In his article, Tıktık implicitly mentions about the emergence of flexible production systems and the trend in global markets towards the needs of the customers, rather than a supply based mass production. Within this framework, he emphasizes the decline in the competition power based on cheap labor and natural resources and underlines the emerging significance of specialization in international markets, improving production technology and the capability to create new products.

¹⁶⁸ DPT, "Sekizinci Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı Ortaöğretim: Genel Eğitim, Meslek Eğitimi, Teknik Eğitim Özel İhtisas Komisyon Raporu."

¹⁶⁹ Ali Coşkun, "2005 Yılında Türk Sanayii; Beklentiler, Sorunlar ve Çözümler," *Mercek*, Ocak 2005. In his article, Coşkun also states that lowering the legal responsibilities towards the employment will contribute to the efficiency of informal employment.

¹⁷⁰ Rifat Hisarcıklıoğlu, "Opening Speech" (paper presented at the 5. İstanbul Sanayi Kongresi, İstanbul, 2006). Emphasis is mine. *Birçok sektörümüzde dünün kâr marjları artık ortadan kalkmıştır. "Ne üretirsem satarım" devri kapanmıştır. Bu yeni ekonomik iklim, imalat sanayine yönelik yeni*

In many sectors, the profit margins of the past have gone. The era when people used to think “I can sell whatever I produce” has closed. This new economic climate requires the implementation of new policies regarding the manufacturing sector ... On the other hand, Turkey strongly needs a mobilization in terms of skill transformation. If competition is becoming more and more based on knowledge, we have to adjust the qualities of our workforce accordingly. The way to create more value-added depends on a more qualified, more equipped and knowledgeable workforce. *The source of unemployment today stems from the fact that what the industry needs and the skills our schools produce do not correspond to each other.*

In that sense, industry strongly recommends that its link to education must be strengthened.¹⁷¹ This applies to both general education and vocational education. As far as Turkey’s case is concerned, the need to raise the level of the workforce is of utmost importance, because in 2005, the composition of the workforce was as follows:¹⁷² 67.3 % consisted of people below high school level or illiterate people. Graduates of higher education amount to 11.5 %. These levels are higher when compared to 2000, but well below the EU level.

In this social reality and the global economic trend of knowledge economy, the economy is projected to become one that “possesses high technology capability, qualified labor force; one that swiftly *adapts* to changing conditions.”¹⁷³ In addition

politikaların uygulanmasını her zamankinden daha çok zorunlu kılmaktadır ... Öte yandan Türkiye'nin acilen bir beceri dönüşüm seferberliğine de ihtiyacı bulunmaktadır. Rekabet, bilgiye dayalı hale geliyorsa, işgücümüzün niteliklerini de buna göre geliştirmemiz gerekmektedir. Daha fazla katma değer yaratabilmenin yolu, daha kaliteli, daha bilgili, daha donanımlı bir işgücüyle mümkün olacaktır. Bugün işsizliğin kaynağı, artık sanayimizin ihtiyaç duyduğu becerilerle okullarımızın kazandırdığı uyumsuzluğu yakında daha açık bir biçimde görünür hale gelecektir.

¹⁷¹ The concept of entrepreneurship is of utmost importance. The ninth development plan complains about the educational system and argues that it does not promote the spirit of entrepreneurship. It also suggests universities should design new projects which support entrepreneurship and creativity.

¹⁷² See www.tuik.gov.tr and "İş Dünyamızın İhtiyaçları ve İşgücü Arzı Karşısında Mesleki Eğitimimiz: İş Dünyasının Mesleki Eğitime Bakışı," ed. Ömer Kayır, et al. (İstanbul: İTO, 2006).

¹⁷³ DPT, "Dokuzuncu Kalkınma Planı 2007-2013," 72. As far as the issue of knowledge economy is concerned, the OIK report gives the example of South Korea and the crisis it has witnessed in 1997. After the crisis, the country has launched courses on information technologies for 200,000 women. As the demand for the courses has risen, it has been expanded to include 10 million people and thus, % 20 of Korean population learned to use computer and internet. See DPT, "Dokuzuncu Kalkınma Planı Sanayi Politikaları Özel İhtisas Komisyonu Raporu," 145.

to that, the government aims to make Turkey a production center at the level of medium and high technology which include automotive, white durable goods, machinery, and electronics.¹⁷⁴

In order for these aims to be accomplished, a well-functioning labor market is believed to be a must. In that sense, the government proposes to establish a “flexible and secure”¹⁷⁵ labor market in which “the capacities of workplaces to adapt to the changes in the labor market will be accomplished by modernizing the work organizations, whereas the employees will acquire the knowledge and skills required by the new conditions.”¹⁷⁶ Within the framework of this flexibility and the requirements of the changing labor market, “a lifelong learning strategy will be developed in order to enhance the employability skills of people.”¹⁷⁷ Added to this will be creating labor market information database and generating a flexible educational system and labor market. In order to increase the efficiency of workforce and employment, the people to be trained should be among the ones required by the economy. As far as vocational training is concerned, a flexible and modular system will be implemented. This new system aims to raise students who are “able to work as a team, make their own decisions and solve problems, undertake responsibility

¹⁷⁴ DPT, "Dokuzuncu Kalkınma Planı 2007-2013," 87. In automotive, the objective is to create an industrial structure which produces high value-added, has a sustainable competitive edge, targets to export to the developed markets and has a sound R&D ability. See DPT, "Dokuzuncu Kalkınma Planı 2007-2013," 88. The iron-steel sector is among the targets, whereas the textile, garment industry, leather, furniture are said to require peculiar designs and product differentiation, through which a stronger competition can be maintained.

¹⁷⁵ DPT, "Dokuzuncu Kalkınma Planı 2007-2013," 91. As far as flexibility is concerned, it is noteworthy that Tıktık's article consists of a table, where the index for laying workers off is indicated to be higher than that of OECD. See Tıktık, "Türkiye Ekonomisinde Rekabet, Verimlilik, Girişimcilik, İstihdam ve Eğitim," 15. A similar graphic can also be found at DPT, "Dokuzuncu Kalkınma Planı Sanayi Politikaları Özel İhtisas Komisyonu Raporu," 146.

¹⁷⁶ DPT, "Dokuzuncu Kalkınma Planı 2007-2013," 92.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid. This strategy is to involve increasing formal and informal educational opportunities, strengthening the horizontal and vertical relationship between these two organizations.

and possess the skills required by the labor market.”¹⁷⁸ The awareness of the fact that the manufacturing sector desperately needs intermediary personnel has policy implications as well. Doubtless to say, the industrial sector in Turkey complains about the lack of sound relations with the schools. In that sense, one of the possible solutions is “to make vocational training system more attractive and the schools should be located within Organized Industrial Zones (*Organize Sanayi Bölgeleri*).”¹⁷⁹ But before other solution proposals and the current project MEGEP, let us examine the general outlook and problems of VTE and what the demands of employers are within the framework of global competition.

General Framework, Demands and Problems

VTE is a subdivision of the Turkish formal education system, consisting of industrial vocational high schools, technical high schools, Anatolian technical schools, girls’ vocational high schools, Anatolian girls’ vocational high schools, Anatolian girls’ technical high schools, Anatolian trade vocational schools, Anatolian communication vocational high schools, Anatolian tourism vocational high schools, trade vocational high schools, *imam hatip* high schools, Anatolian *imam hatip* high schools, multi-programmed high schools for the hearing-impaired, vocational high schools for the orthopedic disabled, multi-programmed high schools and Anatolian health vocational high schools”.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 93. It is noteworthy that the above mentioned characteristics are implications of TQM as an extension of flexible production systems.

¹⁷⁹ DPT, "Dokuzuncu Kalkınma Planı Sanayi Politikaları Özel İhtisas Komisyonu Raporu," 133. Thus, the graduates of these schools will be employed in the zone, whereas the companies operating in the zone will support the schools financially.

¹⁸⁰ M.E.B, "2002 Yılı Başında Eğitim," 46.

While these schools prepare students directly for industry, general secondary education is for higher education. In other words, there is a practical dimension of vocational education that goes hand-in-hand with business life and this is why there are attempts by both the government and industry to restructure vocational education so that it can meet the demands of industry. As far as the system is concerned, there is a dual system in Turkey. That is, “both the educational sector and the labor side are involved in initially training its labor force, particularly through the existence of an apprenticeship system.”¹⁸¹ As seen before, this was brought about with Law No. 3308. The new system enabled the foundation of an institutional relationship with industry and commerce. Following the act, “enterprises employing 50 or more workers started to provide skill training for vocational and commercial students.”¹⁸² From that point on, the school would provide the theoretical courses whereas the industry was to provide training at a practical level. Nevertheless, it is no secret that this system does not work efficiently. According to the comprehensive report prepared at the request of the European Commission, the efficiency of the dual system “varies enormously from region to region and the distribution of roles between schools and enterprises.”¹⁸³ In addition to that, various circles have different opinions on the issue. Some schools despise the tasks performed by the students in the workplaces whereas others hold the opinion that training in the workplace contribute to the knowledge acquired at school.¹⁸⁴ One of the most emphasized problems is that companies are not really interested in providing skill training to

¹⁸¹ Xavier Matheu, "An overview of vocational education and training," (European Training Foundation, 1999).

¹⁸² Ibid., 17.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 8. It is stated that some students have access to recent technology whereas others don't.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 34.

students, but in employing low-waged workers. In addition to that, there are also sharp criticisms of the Basic National Education Law's philosophy in that Law No. 1739 was prepared with a recurrent perspective.¹⁸⁵ However, there is now an emerging consensus with regard to the issue of lifelong learning and it is constantly emphasized within the framework of the rapidly changing technology. It is argued that formerly, "it was enough to practically do the job."¹⁸⁶ Orhan Devecioğlu, from Şişli Industrial High School says:¹⁸⁷

A graduate of a vocational high school used to go on for 10-15 years with the knowledge he acquired.

However, things seem to have changed:¹⁸⁸

Yet, it now has a daily basis. Take our occupation, for instance. In our Fiat group, a new technology is developed every 30 days ... When people in the market felt the necessity to develop new products and to possess a special place in the market, then technology accompanied this within the framework

¹⁸⁵ DPT, "Sekizinci Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı Ortaöğretim: Genel Eğitim, Meslek Eğitimi, Teknik Eğitim Özel İhtisas Komisyonu Raporu," (Ankara: DPT, 2001). In this respect, the report supports the improvement of the law within the framework of lifelong learning. It argues that Law No 1739 was designed in a period when Turkey adopted a mixed economy and thus aims to raise the individual within the requirements of such an economic system. Moreover, the document posits that students educated in such a system will expect the state to provide employment. It is argued that it is not the educational system here to blame, since preferences for the economic model have changed whereas the type of the man to be trained have remained unchanged. Now, the document says, it is time to change the Basic National Education Law in line with the man that a market economy requires. DPT, "Sekizinci Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı Ortaöğretim: Genel Eğitim, Meslek Eğitimi, Teknik Eğitim Özel İhtisas Komisyonu Raporu," 39.

¹⁸⁶ DPT, "Sekizinci Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı Ortaöğretim: Genel Eğitim, Meslek Eğitimi, Teknik Eğitim Özel İhtisas Komisyonu Raporu," 53.

¹⁸⁷ Interview with Orhan Devecioğlu, 6 March 2007, İstanbul. *Meslek lisesi mezunu önceden öğrendiği bilgiyle 10 sene 15 sene devam ediyordu.*

¹⁸⁸ Interview with Orhan Devecioğlu, 6 March 2007, İstanbul. *Ama artık günübirlik. Kendi mesleğimizden mesela.. Bizim Fiat grubunda, 30 günde yeni bir teknoloji üretiliyor ... Ne zamanki bu piyasada bulunan kimseler tarafından farklı ürün yaratma, piyasada farklı yer elde etme düşüncesiyle yenilikler yapma gayretini içerisine girdiler, işte o zaman bu yenilikler kapsamında teknoloji gelişti. Eskiden ihtiyacı gördükten sonra yenisi düşünülüyordu. Yeni modeller beraber, o müşterinin ihtiyaçlarını karşılamakla beraber teknolojisi de arttı.*

of these innovations. Formerly, people did not think of a new product as long as the current one fulfilled the needs ...

Thus, what the vocational high school students should do is not the same.¹⁸⁹

They tell the graduate of a vocational school to adapt to the changing technology. There is the concept of the Internet. If something is not taught at school, access to the Internet is free in many places. One can write *kamılreyl* at Google and learn what it is. That is, industry does not wish to employ anyone below a certain level. The student will not hide under the pretext of having not learned a special topic at school. Even if the school lacks that, you have other sources.

An OİK (Special Expertise Commission prepared by State Planning Organization) report also holds that the skills for employability have changed and it is even argued that “those who do not know to look for a job, unable to work in harmony with colleagues cannot find the chance to become employed even if they do have excellent vocational knowledge.”¹⁹⁰ In other words, there is a discursive shift from full employment to employability. This shift, undoubtedly, stems from the changes discussed in the first chapter. As a result of the internationalization of capital and the rapid change in technology, competition among firms and states has become fiercer and the need for a qualified workforce has reached its peak. In this process, workers are expected to keep pace with this change and thus refresh themselves with the skills required by the market. Apart from technological changes and technical skills, new economic conditions have also foregrounded certain skills, which are

¹⁸⁹ Interview with Orhan Devocioğlu, 6 March 2007, İstanbul. *Meslek lisesi mezununa da diyor ki, “teknolojiye ayak uyduracaksın”. İnternet diye bir şey var artık. Okulda gösterilmiyorsa bile bilgi sınırsız, çok yerde de ücretsiz. Google’den kamılreyl yazacaksın, öğreneceksin. Yani işletme artık yetişmemiş elemanistemiyor. Veya öğrenci artık “bu okulda yoktu, ben bunu öğrenmedim” mazeretini istemiyor. Okulda olmasa bile senin ulaşabileceğin kaynaklar var.* It is interesting to see that from now on, the student is being held from his own success.

¹⁹⁰ DPT, "Sekizinci Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı Ortaöğretim: Genel Eğitim, Meslek Eğitimi, Teknik Eğitim Özel İhtisas Komisyonu Raporu," 53. According to a survey cited in this report, industrial circles note that the students cannot comprehend the economic environment, are insufficient to carry out job and finish the job and they lack a concept of *making profit*.

underlined in a study carried out by TÜSİAD (Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association).¹⁹¹

TÜSİAD members believe that vocational high school graduates, apart from their technical knowledge, do not possess skills such as “group work, economic thinking, communication and foreign language.”¹⁹² The system, however, is also said to be malfunctioning in that there is a lack of reliable information regarding the demands of the labor market. This is said to result in the formation of an educational supply based on guesses, and therefore an accumulation in certain occupations.¹⁹³ For instance, a study regarding industrial high school graduates carried out by METARGEM (Research and Development Center for Vocational and Technical Education) in 1991-1992, indicates that 48 % of the employed ones were working at non-related jobs. According to a report prepared on the basis of a comprehensive meeting on vocational education, there is even a lack of national policy within this realm.¹⁹⁴ The report further touches upon the issue of the culmination of the services sector. In the report, it is stated that this phenomenon has to be taken into consideration and “the required workforce of information society”¹⁹⁵ should be counted among the primary goals of education. Moreover, occupations that create high value-added should be prioritized. Stating that some of the programs date back to 1983, the report underlines the importance of updating curriculum.

¹⁹¹ TÜSİAD is a very influential group in Turkey. It has many things to say from economy to presidential elections or a possible cross-border operation to Northern Iraq.

¹⁹² DPT, "Sekizinci Beş yıllık Kalkınma Planı Nitelikli İnsangücü, Meslek Standartları Düzeni ve Sosyal Sermaye Birikimi Özel İhtisas Komisyonu Raporu," (Ankara: DPT, 2001).

¹⁹³ Ibid., 37.

¹⁹⁴ İsmail Bircan, "Türkiye'de Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim," (İstanbul: Friedrich Ebert Vakfı, 1997), 14. This report, very distinctively touches upon the issue of religious high schools and declares that a comprehensive solution has to be found as far as reforms in vocational education are concerned.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 17.

Another report prepared as part of a larger project in 2000 covers the findings gathered at 14 vocational schools and 12 companies employing graduates from these schools in Ankara, İstanbul, İzmir and Bursa.¹⁹⁶ The study indicates that these schools are located at the nexus of a centralized system. Most of the teachers, administrators and industry representatives agree that “the provincial level education directorates should be given a substantial degree of autonomy.”¹⁹⁷ The headmasters of these schools all agree that there is no dialogue between the center and the schools. This also applies to their relationship with industry. While industry complains about the skills, perspective and creativity of the graduates, they are also ignorant about the kind of curriculum implemented in the schools.¹⁹⁸ Both the school principals and teachers agree that student placement to industries is done through informal contacts with the industry. The technology used in these schools is outdated and students enter industry without any prior orientation. In addition to that, all the principals accept that there is no coordinated effort to develop the skills and knowledge of the teachers.¹⁹⁹ The report by the European Training Foundation, quoted before, underlines a similar point. According to the report, “higher autonomy and accountability of individual schools would allow a better response to the local labor market needs and a better co-ordination and co-operation with the training activities provided by the industry.”²⁰⁰ The report also cites another study conducted

¹⁹⁶ Hasan Şimşek and Ali Yıldırım, "Vocational Schools in Turkey: An Administrative and Organizational Analysis," *International Review of Education* 46, no. 3 (2000). The schools were visited for 4 weeks and most of these schools are regarded as large scale schools, covering much specialization and serving more than a thousand students.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.: 337.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.: 333.

¹⁹⁹ It is reported that a teacher saying that they need industrial experience more than the students do.

²⁰⁰ Matheu, "An overview of vocational education and training," 40. This report also supports the reduction of high degree of specialization of the vocational training institutions.

in 1997. This study demonstrates that the curricula of the schools were developed “without taking into account business needs and they were built following a ‘narrow specialization fields’ approach.”²⁰¹ That is, there is a lack of a broad basic foundation of skills and knowledge in graduates. The curricula and schools are also said to be organized without taking the realities of the world of work into account and therefore should include such skills as “communication skills, team spirit, interaction and cooperation”²⁰² in order to boost efficiency. With regard to the issue of curriculum development, it is suggested that the schools should provide the core skills common to all employers and the employers must participate in students’ education so as to enable the learn the specific skills.²⁰³

In the same year as the 16th National Education Council, there also emerged a report²⁰⁴ by TÜSİAD, as well. The report, not surprisingly, underlines the significance of education as a *complementary to the market*. It states that the changing technology requires a workforce that can use this technology in a creative manner. The inability of the educational institutions to comprehend the technological developments results in their failure to raise such individuals. According to the report, the amount of knowledge one needs to learn is constantly rising and there is no occupation that remains unchanged when compared to the first time it was learned. TÜSİAD believes that the malfunctioning of the system stems from the insensitivity of political organs, the conflict between general and vocational

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid., 42.

²⁰³ Ibid., 43.

²⁰⁴ Ali Şimşek, "Türkiye'de Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitimin Yeniden Yapılandırılması," (İstanbul: TÜSİAD, 1999).

education, school organization based on gender discrimination²⁰⁵ (this finding of organization is based on a simple statistic stating that the percentage of male students in girls' high schools is just two and that of the girls in industrial schools is just seven), the high cost of vocational education, the increasing number of high school types, the fact that vocational schools are moving far away from their original aims, the fact that the graduates are pursuing their higher education in different areas, the uncertainty of the roles of higher VT schools, the inadequacy of guiding and consultancy services, the strict understanding of programs based on passing to one upper class,²⁰⁶ the lack of a sound link between education and working life which results in the re-education of the employees by the employers, indifference of NGOs.²⁰⁷ İTO's (İstanbul Chamber of Commerce) recent report,²⁰⁸ in a similar manner, considers the vocational education and market to be two different worlds.²⁰⁹

Table 2. Do you have a direct relation with vocational technical institutions?

Options	Number	%
No Reply	370	15.4
No	1215	50.6
Partially	532	22.2
Yes	284	11.8
Total	2401	100

²⁰⁵ This traditional system, according to TÜSİAD, does not take individual differences into consideration and is against fundamental human rights since the students have to succeed in a system chosen by not themselves but others.

²⁰⁶ Emphasis is mine.

²⁰⁷ Şimşek, "Türkiye'de Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitimin Yeniden Yapılandırılması." For a brief summary of the report, see Ali Şimşek, "Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitimde Yeniden Yapılanma," in *75 Yılda Eğitim*, ed. Fatma Gök (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1999).

²⁰⁸ For a brief summary of the report, see Soyhan Alpaslan, "İşsiz Çok Ama İşe Yarayacak Eleman Yok," *İTOVİZYON* Mart (2007).

²⁰⁹ "İş Dünyasının Mesleki Eğitime Bakışı," 13.

Along with that, the research indicates that vocational education has lost its attractiveness because of university entrance exam quotient and the quality of vocational school graduates has deteriorated.

Table 3. The attractiveness of vocational education since the university entrance quotient has fallen down.²¹⁰

Options	%
No Reply	12.8
Yes	57.9
Partially	22.7
No	6.6
Total	100

What seems to be striking in this comprehensive research is that nearly half of the interviewees said that would like to expand their firm or even open a new workplace. This problem is said to create an obstacle for full capacity production and new investments. Moreover, they tend to hire foreign workers and the cost of additional educational activities rise and ultimately cannot compete in the market. Added to this is the number of unemployed youth, an underestimable segment of which are members of vocational high schools (10.89 %).²¹¹ The report makes a comparison with Asian countries and strongly emphasizes that Turkey has to take advantage of its young population. The report states that Asian countries in the 1960s and 1970s “implemented their window of opportunity, education and technology policies at the same time”²¹² and Turkey should follow a similar path. It also underlines the fact that the need for unqualified labor constantly declines (from 77.1

²¹⁰ Ibid., 21.

²¹¹ Ibid., 38.

²¹² Ibid.

% to 61.1 %) ²¹³ For example, in order for Turkey to compete with countries like China and India, the production capacity per unit time and quality has to transcend the low labor cost of these two countries.

There are also very assertive statements coming from companies which claim that there is a problem of qualified labor rather than job. ²¹⁴ In line with this claim, companies are not willing to hire people graduating from these schools. Thus, it is argued that there are serious problems in how the educational system and vocational high schools function and they have to be solved, especially in today's conjuncture, since the business world requires "human resources who will produce knowledge and develop knowledge, technology." ²¹⁵ The business world considers strengthening vocational education a must, since Turkey seeks to integrate into the global economy and become a member of the EU, where it cannot compete without qualified labor. ²¹⁶ In addition to that, bearing in mind the amount of foreign capital coming into the country, it is clear that these companies will also need qualified labor. Moreover, it is argued that the bright days of vocational education are over, due to YÖK's (Board of Higher Education) regulation regarding entrance into university, and vocational high schools have become "deserted places." ²¹⁷ Within this framework, what is needed, according to İTO, is a totally a new economic mind. ²¹⁸

²¹³ Ibid., 48. A detailed table of this trend including the types of occupations can be found in the report.

²¹⁴ 53.3 % of the participants believe that the issue is not unemployment but qualified people. Only 10.9 % believe vice versa.

²¹⁵ "İş Dünyasının Mesleki Eğitime Bakışı," 27.

²¹⁶ The report has an interesting statement here. Giving the examples of organic agriculture and greenhouse business, it is stated that "in Turkey peasants deal with agriculture whereas it is farmers in the West." See Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 28. The report states that ordinary students have come to attend these schools whereas the most intelligent ones should be attracted to these schools due to the rapid changes in technology. Citing İŞKUR, the report states that the unemployment rate of illiterate people without any qualification is the same as vocational high school graduates. In addition to that, the report also states that graduating from a vocational high school used to be a guarantee for employment.

The report also underlines the importance of the service sector and demands that this be taken into account as far as planning is concerned. Emphasizing the issue of high value-added sectors, İTO warns against defining outdated occupations and thus wants the authorities to give priority to high value-added sectors. In that sense, İTO report states that occupations based on advanced technologies should be taken into consideration and Turkey has to harmonize itself in such realms as information technologies, nanotechnology, and biotechnology. However, since these occupations and the new high skills paradigm required analytical skills as opposed to labor intensive industries, the report draws attention to the fact that the unemployment rate of illiterate people and vocational school graduates are equal, as İŞKUR (Turkish Institution of Employment) suggests. In addition to that, the objective of the National Education Ministry to allocate 65 % to vocational education and 35 % to general education has not been accomplished for 50 years. Finally, the report enumerates many proposals for the improvement of the vocational system. First of all, İTO wants the authorities to launch campaigns in order to promote vocational education. Furthermore, the representatives of the business world are called upon to participate in restructuring vocational education. İTO also suggests forming a board of trustees where the representatives of the business world will have authority and responsibility.

According to İTO, the university entrance system should be changed; and market needs and the opportunities for employment abroad must be taken into consideration before opening new programs. The finance system of these schools should be renewed and the authorities of vocational schools must be chosen from among those who are experienced in the business world. Advanced and pioneer

²¹⁸ This phrase seems to be very important in the sense that it tries to establish market ideology.

technologies must be given priority in vocational system and the system must be restructured within the framework of lifelong learning.²¹⁹

Apart from TÜSİAD and İTO, other business circles are also attaching great importance to this issue. TİSK (Confederation of Turkish Employers Unions), publishing the opinions of various businessmen, trade union and government circles, is one of them. The key concepts underlining the opinions of business circles mainly include quality, competition and efficiency. Because of the impact created by these concepts, firms are required to “react swiftly to customer expectations, to be flexible and harmonize themselves with changes, use high technology and be creative, dedicated workers.”²²⁰ These workers, according to Uzaslan (Bosch Human Resources Management Director) have to be open to new things and learning, think in a customer-oriented manner and be flexible. Thus, a flexible vocational system in line with the technological changes has to be established. Moreover, the educational systems are more becoming more in line with the economy since it is argued that “there is no guarantee for lifelong employment and the concepts of lifelong learning and employability have become valid.”²²¹ In that sense, Kurt (Arçelik Industrial Relations Manager) argues that “the private sector is the motor force of development and thus, the functions and the functioning rules of the state are to be reviewed.”²²² He also states education should not be the privilege of any class or group. Moreover, educational institutions must be reorganized within the framework of total quality management.

²¹⁹ "İş Dünyasının Mesleki Eğitime Bakışı," 87-88.

²²⁰ Tufan Uzaslan, "Gelecekte Mesleki Eğitim," *İşveren*, no. Mayıs (2004). The issues of *İşveren* cited here are all available online.

²²¹ Hasip Kurt, "Mesleki Eğitimde İşletmelerin ve Eğitim Kurumlarının Yaşadığı Sorunlar ve Çözüm Önerileri," *İşveren*, no. Haziran (2004).

²²² Ibid.

This concern of the business world is also shared by the government as well. National Education Ministry Undersecretary Necat Birinci, during the Vocational Education Board which gathered on 3 September 2004 stated that they “wanted to school the programs signaled by the market.”²²³ Moreover, there is certainly a shift towards governance. Hüseyin Çelik, the Minister of Education, is said to have stated that the ministry is going to undertake the responsibilities and at the same time share the duties. This approach is doubtlessly appreciated by TİSK President Refik Baydur.²²⁴ Çelik also expresses his wish to train the intermediary personnel of not only Turkey but also the EU.²²⁵ There are other assertive arguments where it is claimed that institutions like TOBB (The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey), TİSK and TÜSİAD can do the job better than the National Education Ministry. It is interesting to see that this statement comes from a former minister, Metin Bostancıoğlu.²²⁶ Representatives of worker unions are also willing to participate and express their opinions in this process. DİSK (Confederation of Revolutionary Workers Unions), Türk-İş and Hak-İş²²⁷ are among the stakeholders of the latest project, MEGEP. Moreover, some of them have a perspective which is similar to employer establishments. For instance Salih Kılıç, president of Türk-İş, puts the blame on the schools for the lack of enough qualified labor and with a developmentalist discourse, demands nearly the same things as TİSK.²²⁸ Likewise,

²²³ TİSK, "Mesleki Eğitim Kurulu Toplantısı," *İşveren*, no. Ağustos (2004).

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Hüseyin Çelik, "Mesleki Eğitimle İş Piyasası Her Anlamda Bütünleşecek," *İşveren* Ekim (2006).

²²⁶ Metin Bostancıoğlu, "Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitimin Temel Sorunu ve Geleceğe Dair Bir Öneri," *İşveren* Kasım (2006).

²²⁷ Türk-iş and Hak-iş are the other bir Worker Unions in Turkey.

²²⁸ Salih Kılıç, "İnsan Gücüne Duyulan İhtiyaç Had Safhada," *Asomedy*, no. Eylül-Ekim18-19 (2003).

president of DİSK, Süleyman Çelebi, states that cheap labor will not suffice to compete in the global market and adds that Turkey can take its place in the world league not with its cheap labor but with its high value-added.²²⁹ What is also interesting is that Eğitim-Sen President Alaaddin Dinçer, when enumerating the problems and solution proposals of his union regarding vocational education, finally resorts to the vocabulary of total quality management and states that Eğitim-Sen wants to develop programs which will train students who can “solve problems, have communication skills and have a team spirit.”²³⁰

What About the Students?

Various studies conducted on the status of students reveal that the students of vocational high schools are not happy because of the barrier to the university entrance examination. For instance, according to a study conducted in vocational schools of 12 cities, the students would transfer to another school, if they were given the chance. In this study of 4325 participants, 48 % of the vocational high school were not content with their school.²³¹ So, why do they attend these schools? First of all, there is a reproductive mechanism. In other words, these students are of lower class background and come from working class, migrant or unemployed families and thus have to start working as soon as possible.²³² They are said to be attending

²²⁹ Süleyman Çelebi, "Türkiye'nin Nitelikli İşgücü Açığı Hızla Giderilmelidir," *Asomedy*, no. Eylül-Ekim (2003).

²³⁰ Alaaddin Dinçer, "Mesleki Teknik Öğretim Sorunları İmam Hatip Tartışmalarıyla Gölgelemesin," *Asomedy*, no. Eylül-Ekim (2003).

²³¹ Önder Yılmaz, "Meslek Liseliler Dertli," *Milliyet*, 28 Şubat 2004.

²³² There are also examples indicating that they work while they attend school. For an investigation of how this affects their educational attainment, see Kayaalp, "Educational Attainment of Working Students: Evidence from İskitler Industry and Vocational High School in Ankara". For the short article version of this thesis, see Dilek Kayaalp, "Çalışan Öğrencilerin Eğitim Profili: Ankara İskitler Endüstri ve Meslek Lisesi'nden Örnek Bir Çalışma," in *Kapitalizm ve Türkiye II: Emek, Siyasal Yaşam ve Bölgesel Kalkınma*, ed. Fuat Ercan and Yüksel Akkaya (Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2005).

vocational schools because they cannot afford other ones or the students believe that they will not be able to attain much in other schools.²³³ The research published by Eğitim-Sen also demonstrates that the problems of the students are much deeper and comprehensive than the one created by the secular circles and their counterparts. Forty-eight percent of the vocational high school students would like to have started another high school.²³⁴

Table 4. The Preference of Vocational Students

School Type	Would you choose the same school if you had the chance?			TOTAL
	No Reply	Yes	No	
Boys' Technical	1 %	41.7 %	57.4 %	100
Girls' Technical	1.1 %	41.2 %	57.7 %	100
Trade and Tourism	0.7 %	40.7 %	58.6 %	100
Total	0.9 %	41.2 %	57.9 %	100

Moreover, more than half of the students state that they chose their schools and departments without prior information. Like the business circles, they also feel there are problems with regard to the linkage between the school and the industry. They hold the opinion that the schools are insufficient to prepare them for their future occupations.²³⁵

²³³ Esra Elmas and Nevzat Çiçek, "Katsayı Meselesi Memleket Meselesi," *Nokta Ocak* 2007.

²³⁴ Ömer Kayır, Şükrü Karaca, and Yılmaz Şenyüz, "Meslek Liseleri Araştırmasında Ortaya Çıkan Temel Bazı Bulgular," in *4. Demokratik Eğitim Kurultayı* (Ankara: Eğitim-SEN, 2004), 495.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 498. We should also underline the language of Eğitim-Sen. Even though Eğitim-SEN's commission report states that MEGEP views the individual as a commodity, leaving the other characteristics of education aside it has a developmentalist discourse when it asserts that "we are not allowed to produce within the realm of industry, the foundation of country development, and they demand us to deal with repair, assembly and maintenance."

Table 5. Thoughts of the Students Regarding School Quality

School Type	Is the education adequate enough to prepare you for occupation?				Total
	No Reply	Yes	Partially	No	
Boys' Technical	0.6 %	28 %	49.2 %	22.2 %	100
Girls' Technical	0.7 %	23.4 %	55.7 %	20.2 %	100
Trade and Tourism	0.3 %	15.5 %	58.0 %	26.2 %	100
Total	0.5 %	22.4 %	54.3 %	22.8 %	100

Another comprehensive study²³⁶ carried out by Mustafa Şen has serious implications for the composition and formation of vocational high schools. While vocational school students were mostly born in urban areas, the rate of those born in towns or villages is higher than those at Anatolian High School or private high schools. In addition to that, the educational status of vocational schools students' parents is also lower than other schools. The study indicates that only 11.1 % of them are above high school level and their parents are mostly primary school graduates.²³⁷ With regard to the socio-economic background of the students' families, the research implies that they are from the lower classes. What the research posits is that the percentage of housewives and a single worker per family is the highest in vocational schools students and *imam hatip* schools. In vocational high schools, the percentage of housewives and unemployed is 13 %, whereas the percentage of a single worker is

²³⁶ Mustafa Şen, "Liseli Gençlerin Avrupa Birliği'ne Bakışı," in *Küreselleşme ve Eğitim*, ed. Ebru Oğuz and Ayfer Yakar (Ankara: Dipnot, 2007). The study is said to be conducted in 12 cities following 17 December 2004 when Turkey was given the negotiation date with EU. 4,545 high school students participated in the research and 20 % of the students were from vocational high schools.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 341. The largest category for primary school pertains to vocational school graduates and imam hatip schools.

as high as 72,8 %.²³⁸ In this respect, the research indicates that vocational school students come from the lower classes or low-middle classes.

The ministry, in the last decade, has also attached utmost importance to this issue and launched studies to find out what the occupational status of the graduates are, where they are working and whether the job in which they are employed has anything to do with what they were taught at school. One of them was comprised of the 1991-1992 graduates of vocational high schools (industrial high schools and technical high schools) in Ankara.²³⁹ The findings indicate that 37 % of the graduates worked as waged laborers, whereas 49 % did not.²⁴⁰ According to the study, 37 % of the graduates were paid the minimum wage and 32 % of them was able to find jobs in more than nine months' time. The relationship between the courses they took and the workplace environment was also asked within the framework of the inquiry. The findings indicate that 48 % of the interviewees consider their education to be inappropriate to the work they are doing.²⁴¹ In line with this previous finding, 48 % of the graduates believe that the skill education [*beceri eğitimi*] they receive at school is not sufficient. This also applies to the sufficiency of the occupational courses. 45 % (more than that of those who think positively) of the graduates think negatively about whether these courses prepare them well for work. However, the interesting

²³⁸ Ibid., 345.

²³⁹ 47 % of the graduates are said to be employed at State Economic Enterprises. This information is significant in that the rising private sector is now the one to complain about the quality of these vocational high schools.

²⁴⁰ METARGEM, "Endüstri Meslek Lisesi ve Teknik Lise Mezunlarını İzleme Araştırması," (Ankara: 1995), 18.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 21.

outcome is that more than half of the graduates are willing to advise other people to attend their schools.²⁴²

The most recent of these studies was published last year. Within the framework of this study, the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 graduates of the electrics, electronics, furniture-decoration and leveling (*tesviye*) departments of industrial high schools, teachers of occupational courses during 2003-2004 and senior students of the above-mentioned departments during 2003-2004 were interviewed. This study again indicates that a significant amount of the senior students are not much informed about the department in which they are enrolled. The strongest motive for these students to attend these schools is that they will find jobs more easily.²⁴³ While more than half of the students do recommend their schools, those who do not recommend base their arguments on the fact that the educational programs are not sufficient (36.8 %) and the graduates cannot find a job easily (% 31.3).²⁴⁴ Thus, it can be argued that the strongest motive of the students seems not to be sufficiently met. While these students attend their schools since they are in need of swift employment, it is evident from the study that they are unable to pursue further education because of their family's financial situation and this once more reveals the reproductive character of education in general and vocational education in particular.

The study also covers the opinion of graduates. The recommendation rate of the graduates, when compared to the current students, is lower than the current students. The study indicates that they do not recommend their schools because they cannot find jobs (47.1 %) or the programs do not prepare them well enough (33

²⁴² The researches interpret this in such a way that it appears the students have understood the importance of vocational education.

²⁴³ EARGED, "Endüstri Meslek Liselerinde Verilen Eğitimin ve Mezunlarının İstihdam Durumlarının Değerlendirilmesi," (Ankara: EARGED, 2006), 130.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 33.

%)²⁴⁵ As far as the skills acquired at school are concerned, the graduates mostly believe that they are not in line with the business life.²⁴⁶

In another study of the ministry,²⁴⁷ various departments, which are regarded as redundant by NGOs, are listed. Teachers, students and graduates from these departments are interviewed. First of all, what is interesting and striking in this report is the emphasis on total quality management in vocational training, which “focuses on customer satisfaction.”²⁴⁸ According to the study (encompassing 57 high schools, 282 vocational course teachers and 950 graduates of 2002-2003) 48.3 % of the teachers are not informed about the business practices. 75 % of them believe that the method to choose students into the schools is not healthy.²⁴⁹ Nearly half of the graduates experience hardship in finding a job outside their locality and half of them are unemployed. Nearly 80 % of the graduates prefer vocational high schools in order to get an occupation.²⁵⁰

As far as the demands of business circles, the studies carried out not only by these circles but also the ministry and the problems in the system are concerned, the last project to overcome these problems in order to pave the way for Turkey’s desire to become a competitive economy is MEGEP (Project for Strengthening Vocational Education). MEGEP is more significant than the other projects not just because it

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 110.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 115. The rate of the graduates who believe the skills are in very much in line with the business world is not over % 7.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 2.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ We should here not that having a decent occupation for their life, family is the first motive for these students and it is for sure that since they come from lower classes, they do not aim to continue their education because of financial reasons. They want to join the labor market as soon as possible.

transforms the whole system. The way it tries to achieve the transformation and the new man it struggles to create has serious ideological implications.

MEGEP

Supported by the European Commission, the general objective of MEGEP is to develop a modern, flexible and high-quality vocational education with a lifelong learning perspective that can respond to the socio-economic needs of the country. A slight in the website of MEGEP – prepared by Jan De Voogd, a market expert working for the project – sets out the background of VTE reforms. They are²⁵¹ said to be globalization, technological change and the new structures of working organizations; transition to a society of knowledge and skills; developments in the labor market such as a decrease in permanent employment and instability of jobs; nonstandard working styles; increasing dependence on the external job market and an increasing comprehensive unregistered economy in some countries.

According to De Voogd, VTE has some additional characteristics such as alleviating the negative effects of income and labor market brought about by the ever-stronger international competition, increasing employability, efficiency and the capacity to generate income of the disadvantaged groups; to maintain meritocracy in employment outcome; fixing the dissonance between knowledge and skills; creating opportunities for transition to registered economy and more access to the labor market. In that sense, one thinks of a strategy to regulate and control a section of the population in order to maintain productivity and state's legitimacy.²⁵² A scheme,

²⁵¹ www.megep.meb.gov.tr

²⁵² For a counter-argument where VTE is asserted to be a reproductive mechanism, please see Aksoy, "Üniversiteye Giriş Sorunu Bağlamında Toplumsal Yeniden Üretim Mekanizması Olarak Mesleki-Teknik Eğitim."

provided by this market expert referring to ILO, clearly illustrates the changing mentality (that is what MEGEP aims) in vocational education.

Table 6. Change in Vocational Education Paradigm

The former paradigm	The new paradigm
Supply based approach	Demand-based approach
Education for employment	Learning for <i>employability</i> ²⁵³
Teaching and teacher-focus on the instructor	Individual learning and focus on the student
Education and instruction (<i>eğitim ve öğretim</i>) are separate	Integrated education and instruction
Specialization on a single skill	Search more multiple skills
Strict input and output	Flexible input and output
Education for waged employment Central system	Being aware of the importance of focusing on the registered and unregistered economy
Strategy and implementation are under the auspices of state	Education for waged employment and possessing one's own workplace
Governance is carried out by the state	A system that requires both strong national and regionalized institutions without a single center
	Strategy and implementation are separate and directed by the market; Participatory government, recognition of more than one participant and social dialogue

²⁵³ Emphasis is mine.

With this change in the mentality of vocational education, MEGEP aims to solve the requirements of the labor market, to review occupational standards, to prepare modular programs, to establish a national proficiency system, to create a lifelong learning policy and to develop a quality security system. Along with this aim, VTE will be restructured as a flexible and modular system in line with EU countries. So, what reforms are proposed by MEGEP? The above-mentioned developments result in the proposition of certain reforms, which are: modular education, education directed by demand, competition and market orientation, focus on basic skills and capabilities, more harmonization with the needs of the market, change in finance: shared finance, stronger participation of the private sector, new systems for career guidance.

These tendencies raise a question about the structure of the school. What will the new school look like? A school in MEGEP should²⁵⁴ be sensitive to local educational needs and determining the needs; have stronger cooperation with others, be able to use initiatives and authority at a local level, have the ability to develop modules in parallel with needs, enable the education to become operative according to occupational standards and certification, have the capacity to prepare instruction materials in line with individual learning, make the students become aware of business life and university life; follows its graduates, utilize the resources efficiently and in a fruitful manner; able to create new resources, provide continuous education for personnel, and restructure its system according to the principles of lifelong learning.

²⁵⁴ www.megep.meb.gov.tr

Mission

Turkey, for a long time, has been trying to develop its VTE system in order to improve the quality of the workforce and increase the employment opportunities in all sectors of the economy. This effort of Turkey has become more meaningful with regard to Turkey's competitiveness among other economies and within the context of the country's EU bid. In order to support Turkey's efforts, at the Helsinki Summit in 1999, it was decided to allocate Turkey a certain amount of MEDA funds. Turkey has consequently developed certain project ideas so as to *close the gap between the output of VTE schools and the required workforce of the economy*. As a first step of this process, Turkey and the EU signed agreed on MEGEP on 4 July 2000. With a budget of 52.8 million Euro budget, the project, on behalf of the Ministry of Education, is carried out by a consortium of 8 companies with the leadership of DHV Consultants. MEGEP proposes a modular system so as to harmonize Turkish VTE with the EU. What does that mean? What is a modular system and what is the motive behind that?

Modular System

A document by *Kız Teknik Öğretim Genel Müdürlüğü* (General Directorate for Girls' Technical Education) clearly puts it that "it is important to develop programs which could enable us to train individuals who are able to the age of technology, who can think, decide, design and solve problems. Since it is flexible

and can respond to changes quickly and enables individual progress and transitions, the modular approach is preferred in VTE.”²⁵⁵

In a modular system, a flexible framework program has been developed whereby “a student leaving school at any time can complete a certificate program with his/her skills or additional modules ... As time passes, unnecessary modules or knowledge and skills will be discarded, hence the addition of standards and behaviors in line with new technologies and processes”.²⁵⁶ What a module includes will enable a student “to conduct research, to communicate with other people and institutions, gather information, file the information, to make experiments, comparisons and critique; to make cost accounting, design new products, to prepare graphics and market.”²⁵⁷ With the standardization the system envisages, “whatever region the student is in, the individual will be able to perform the required knowledge and skills.”²⁵⁸ However, the existing system does not use a standard system, thus prohibiting the development of the appropriate curricular program ... The programs do not define the aimed phases; are teacher-centered and lack flexibility.”²⁵⁹

A modular system introduces such kind of a flexibility in a conjuncture of lifelong learning where “presenting the content in such a flexible manner so that it can be adapted to the needs of the individuals in different conditions.”²⁶⁰ The traditional system is not efficient or productive and it is costly. “It prevents the

²⁵⁵ Fatma Çiçekçi and Necla Mutlu, "Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitimi Geliştirme Projesi: Modüler Öğretim," (M.E.B, 2004), 1.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 2.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ www.megep.meb.gov.tr

²⁶⁰ Çiçekçi and Mutlu, "Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitimi Geliştirme Projesi: Modüler Öğretim," 8.

participation of certain social groups ... An isolated learning process does not contribute to the holistic learning process of the student and even hinders it ... The student, in certain educational, social and economic limits might be able to learn whatever subject he wishes in whatever place and time he desires. *It is necessary to regulate educational objectives according to the demands of the society, industry and service institutions; educational institutions have to be flexible ... Yet, the modular system cannot be reduced to the division of traditional programs into pieces.*"²⁶¹

When compared with the traditional one, "modular students can manage more than one job at a time; the student or a group of students (as opposed to the whole classroom) answers the exam questions."²⁶² In this system, "vertical and horizontal transitions are possible; skills and knowledge are taught bit by bit ... The student learns in an individual manner. When he feels it's time, the student can take the exam."²⁶³ The authors of the above-quoted book state that an opportunity of equality can be achieved for "the working people, for prisoners, for the disabled, for the unemployed, for those living in countryside, for those protected by social security services and living in these institutions, for those willing to change occupation or upgrade their skills, for those who would like to be a graduate of vocational high schools".²⁶⁴ Very briefly, what is modular education about? What is new about it and what are the 'benefits' of the system?

²⁶¹ www.megep.meb.gov.tr. Emphasis is mine.

²⁶² Çiçekçi and Mutlu, "Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitimi Geliştirme Projesi: Modüler Öğretim," 9.

²⁶³ Ibid. Apart from these, tools and equipment are located in such a manner that the student can react them. For the other benefits of the system please see Çiçekçi and Mutlu, "Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitimi Geliştirme Projesi: Modüler Öğretim," 10.

²⁶⁴ Çiçekçi and Mutlu, "Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitimi Geliştirme Projesi: Modüler Öğretim."

First of all,²⁶⁵ the modular system creates the chance for the individual to acquire skills in line with his/her interests and wishes. In this system, the student is not restricted to the knowledge resources in the school environment and the system enables an updated, intense flow of information. A modular system sets the ground for individual learning, and the student can transfer what he has learned and experienced outside the school into the classroom and share it. Here, the student can go in and out of the instruction program at different times and there is an opportunity to be transferred between different programs.

The new system has also some implications and innovations for the administrators of the schools, as well. From now on, the administrators²⁶⁶ will have to give the right decisions regarding the programs they will launch. They will be required to add new modules, add skills to the modules (according to the proficiency the occupation requires and in order to reflect the regional differences) discard the knowledge that is irrelevant. Furthermore, separate progress records will be kept for each and every student and schools will remain open 16 hours a day and the whole year so that the workshops and equipment will be used. Those with an experience in industry will also participate to determine the proficiency of the students and they will be required to announce the abilities and skills of the students to the student and workplace. The students will be free to go in and out of the system and will graduate when they complete the modules and qualify for formal education diplomas.²⁶⁷

In this system, apart from regionalization, it is clear that the meaning of knowledge is transformed in such a way that anything that is not functional and economically efficient is irrelevant. The lifelong learning principle also applies in

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 11.

this system in that the school will be open throughout the year. Someone *outside* the school has a word to say about the student. The fact that students are free to acquire another diploma gives us a hint about the flexible market conditions, which overall result in the establishment of a modular system. As for the teachers, “their classical role of transmitting knowledge has changed and they are required to orient the students; to have information about business life behaviors; if necessary, they have to be proficient to prepare modules.”²⁶⁸ It seems to be clear that modular system is a student-centered approach and a stronger integration of the market and education is the primary aim, as the teacher’s second duty mentioned above suggests.

Modular Man and Lifelong Learning²⁶⁹

With this project, we witness the creation of modular man.²⁷⁰ The concept of modular man comes from modular furniture. As opposed to modular furniture, the old kind of furniture forces you “to make an irrevocable commitment.”²⁷¹ It is hard to add new pieces to this kind of furniture. However, when one buys modular furniture, one can add other pieces if needed. Likewise, modular man is capable of “combining into effective associations and institutions ... and is able to combine into specific-purpose, *ad hoc*, limited association, without binding himself by some blood ritual.”²⁷² As Ercan also states, the changing mentality demands people to add new

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 12-13.

²⁶⁹ For various discussions regarding this issue, see a recent book that has been recently published. The book was first published as a special issue of ‘Educational Philosophy and Theory’ (Volume 38, issue 4). Jan Masschelein et al., eds., *The Learning Society from the Perspective of Governmentality* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007).

²⁷⁰ Ernest Gellner, *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and Its Rivals* (New York: Penguin Books, 1996). I would like to thank Fuat Ercan for bringing this concept to my attention.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 97.

²⁷² Ibid., 100.

qualities to themselves: to manufacture themselves.²⁷³ Ercan enumerates four indicators which affect education and employment policies, among which changing meaning of knowledge/education and lifelong learning are of our primary concern. Ercan states that the demands of capital have changed to the extent that they “no longer need knowledge. They just need skill. As far as work is concerned, they are not interested in whether the student/employee has knowledge of history or is talented in art.”²⁷⁴ Added to this is the emerging concept of lifelong learning. Ercan states that lifelong learning means non-stop adjustment to the demands of the business world. With reference to Foucault, Ercan argues that “the employees will be people who invest in their own workforce and manufacture themselves.”²⁷⁵ In other words, if one wants to find a job, one has to upgrade one’s skills and educate oneself within the framework of the daily demands of the market. People have to educate themselves “everywhere, outside universities, high schools, at home, in the street; in every realm of life.”²⁷⁶ Likewise, Gellner, as if describing MEGEP, states that in a market economy, not only prices but also opinions, convictions and knowledge can change. This takes us to the concept of lifelong learning.

Learning, like education, is loaded with positive meanings. Lifelong learning, on the other hand, sounds quite nice. It is, almost as good as “peace in our time.”²⁷⁷ Yet, if we listen to Ünal, it becomes clear that learning does not require specific

²⁷³ Ercan, "Eğitim ve İstihdam Politikalarına Toplu Bir Bakış." The full text can be reached at http://www.sendika.org/yazi.php?yazi_no=6197

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Glenn Rikowski, "Marx and the Education of Future," *Policy Futures in Education* 2, no. 3&4 (2004).

conditions and corresponds to a natural process. Human beings actually go on learning throughout their lifetimes. What makes this new lifelong learning project different and dangerous is that it is “guided by the neoliberal society project and activities, the content and conditions of which have been predetermined and called “learning” and thereby hiding this aim.”²⁷⁸ As Ünal implies, education is one of the main pillars of capitalist society, the latest stage of which forces individuals to continuously renew themselves. Thus, the concept of lifelong learning “involves a pedagogist misbelief which holds that everything related to life can be taught with educational programs and has the aim to uniform and control social life.”²⁷⁹ This control is achieved since the unemployment phenomenon, insecure working conditions, are unaccompanied by the “rising lifelong learning sector which forces the adoption of risky working environment.”²⁸⁰ Within the framework of this sector, it can easily be guessed that education will become “a tool in the fetishisation of certificates.”²⁸¹ In this new social reality, “lifelong learning replaces school and continuous surveillance replaces examination. This is, the surest way of transferring school to corporation.”²⁸²

Education, supposed to be the main pillar of enlightenment and emancipation, is transformed into lifelong learning which stands as the Sword of Damocles, reminding the individual that he/she can any time become unemployed and therefore

²⁷⁸ Işıl Ünal, "Yaşamboyu Öğrenme: Bir Müebbet Mahkumiyet mi?," *Ölçü* Aralık (2006). In other words, is there any bad education?

²⁷⁹ Ibid. This concept of learning does not concern only formal education. We are told that we can learn democracy, human rights, social relations, speaking properly and even love with the help of courses. Access to these courses is, of course, achieved with money. We are unable to find the truth. The experts have it. We can buy the cure!

²⁸⁰ Ibid. As Ünal puts it, taking a risk has become an indispensable quality to be possessed.

²⁸¹ Mark Olssen, "Understanding the mechanisms of neoliberal control: lifelong learning, flexibility and knowledge capitalism," *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 25, no. 3 (2006).

²⁸² Gilles Deleuze, "Denetim Topluları Üzerine Ek," *Doxa* 2, no. Mayıs (2006).

has to refresh his/skills. Departing from Michel Foucault, it is easily understood that lifelong learning constitutes a form of bio-power in that “it aims to discipline subjects.”²⁸³ Disciplining oneself and adjusting to the changing conditions of the labor market requires one “to learn to learn, to reorient and even to forget, when new circumstances demand it.”²⁸⁴ To succeed in the labor market, one has to become competent and “to be competent is to acquire the capacity to constantly recycle oneself, to have the ability to be permanently retrained.”²⁸⁵ In this kind of an approach, “pedagogy’s impact on the educational process (namely the effects of the basic assumption that the main goal of education is the development of the individual independently of its social and economic relevance)”²⁸⁶ is ignored, whereas the concept of performance is foregrounded. Here, we witness a process in which “knowledge is literally dehumanized ... and no longer educates the individual and society, rather it becomes a tool for positioning individuals on (or excluding from) the labor market.”²⁸⁷

According to Olssen, the discourse of lifelong learning “constitutes a specific technology which makes both the tertiary and non-tertiary labor force subject to a new form of flexible rationalization.”²⁸⁸ In that sense, it can be argued that throughout his/her life, it is the individual who can be held responsible for the education; in other words there is “the individualization of responsibility for

²⁸³ Olssen, "Understanding the mechanisms of neoliberal control," 223.

²⁸⁴ Anna Tuschling and Christoph Engeann, "From Education to Lifelong Learning: The emerging regime of learning in the European Union," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 38, no. 4 (2006).

²⁸⁵ Stoer and Magalhaes, "Education, knowledge and the network society."

²⁸⁶ Ibid.: 42.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.: 44.

²⁸⁸ Olssen, "Understanding the mechanisms of neoliberal control."

education”²⁸⁹ and “responsibilising of the self.”²⁹⁰ It is the individual to blame. As Olssen also puts it, “the technology of lifelong learning enabled a downgrading of social rights within any particular national territory in preference for a global level playing field.”²⁹¹ As noted before, what we have been talking about is nothing but “both a legal and institutional transformation and a change in our educational practices, the meanings we attach to education and our relationship with education”.²⁹² What leads to this transformation is the radical change in the structure of the economy and a transition to flexibility. Presented with slogans including “lifelong education, individual learning and individual development; the new approach does not create an employment guarantee and expectation of employment; it makes people believe that this new model leads to an increase in employability”.²⁹³ In other words, “lifelong learning structures hide the corporation-dominated education agenda, which emphasize employability skills at the expense of free education. Because lifelong learning is about regarding the flexible organization of labor market and flexible working conditions as inevitable, accepting external surveillance and buying education packages in order to survive in the market, is about seeing life to be nothing other than business life and internalizing all of

²⁸⁹ Ibid.: 221.

²⁹⁰ Michael Peters, James Marshall, and Patrick Fitzsimons, "Managerialism and Educational Policy in a Global Context: Foucault, Neoliberalism, and the Doctrine of Self-Management," in *Globalization and Education: Critical Perspectives*, ed. Nicholas Burbules and Carlos Alberto Torres (New York, London: Routledge, 2000).

²⁹¹ Olssen, "Understanding the mechanisms of neoliberal control," 221.

²⁹² Ünal, Tural, and Aksoy, "Mesleki Eğitim ve Yaşamboyu Eğitim: Ekonomi Politik Bir Değerlendirme," 136. For a historical development of the idea of lifelong learning, see Serap Ayhan, "Dünden Bugüne Yaşamboyu Öğrenme," in *Yaşamboyu Öğrenme*, ed. Fevziye Sayılan and Ahmet Yıldız (Ankara: 2005, 2005).

²⁹³ Ünal, Tural, and Aksoy, "Mesleki Eğitim ve Yaşamboyu Eğitim: Ekonomi Politik Bir Değerlendirme," 144.

these.”²⁹⁴ However, capitalism – by its very nature – is a system based on changes and crises and it is not viable to create an educational system in capitalism where there is a win-win situation. If we remember the statements of the business circles, it becomes evident that their discourse tries to normalize capitalism and hide the intrinsic character of unemployment it creates and desires. Thus, lifelong learning actually creates “workers and citizens who can adapt themselves to the market.”²⁹⁵ In the new modular system, “the task of schooling is increasingly subject to the logic of industrial production and market competition.”²⁹⁶ It is nothing but the curriculum being “prespecified and tightly controlled by the purposes of “efficiency, cost-effectiveness and accountability.”²⁹⁷ With a stronger market intervention in VTE, it is claimed that the system will be rational, supraideological, devoid of any political content and therefore be successful. Yet, we should also bear in mind the lack of cultural capital and linguistic capital of the ordinary kids to express, “market and articulate themselves” with the market.²⁹⁸ After all, these children are coming from poor districts and working-class backgrounds. In that sense, it is doubtful whether the

²⁹⁴ Barrow R and Keeny P, "Lifelong Learning: A North American Perspective," in *Lifelong Learning: Education Across the Lifespan*, ed. F Field and M Leicester (London: Routledge, 2000). Cited in Ünal, Tural, and Aksoy, "Mesleki Eğitim ve Yaşamboyu Eğitim: Ekonomi Politik Bir Değerlendirme," 147.

²⁹⁵ Ünal, Tural, and Aksoy, "Mesleki Eğitim ve Yaşamboyu Eğitim: Ekonomi Politik Bir Değerlendirme," 148.

²⁹⁶ Stephen J. Ball, "Management as Moral Technology: A Luddite analysis," in *Foucault and Education: Disciplines and Knowledge*, ed. Stephen J. Ball (London and New York: Routledge, 1990).

²⁹⁷ Michael Apple, "Mandating Computers: The Impact of New Technology on the Labour Process" (paper presented at the International Sociology of Education Conference, Westhill College, Birmingham, 1986). Cited in Ball, "Management as Moral Technology," 155.

²⁹⁸ During the interviews to be touched upon in the coming chapter, the difficulty they have experienced in expressing themselves and the fact that they had to prefer industrial high school as opposed to a normal one reveals this fact. For the link between social class and language see Tahsin Yılmaz, "Toplumsal Sınıf, Dil Yapısı ve Okul Başarısı," in *75 Yılda Eğitim*, ed. Fatma Gök (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1999).

project is going to satisfy the demands of capital. Therefore, it seems logical to take MEGEP as a project within the context of new vocationalism.²⁹⁹

With reference to Brown, this new vocationalism is actually “motivated by an attempt to maintain (indeed extend) educational and social inequalities rather than to equip pupils for adult life”.³⁰⁰ Moreover, the discourse of MEGEP is some kind of a reproduction of the modernization theory and maintains the linear relationship between education and development. Even though the discourse of learning and lifelong learning is loaded with many ideological implications, the dominant agenda hides this and the hegemony over the kids of lower classes is being established with a discourse of modernization, development and global competition. What is interesting is that from the collapse of Empire till today, the educational reforms have taken modernization narrative as their motto. Is it not the modernization theory itself which defines a prescribed route and in this way hides the logic of capitalist accumulation regime which is based on social and economic inequalities? All in all, what we witness is the capitalization of human beings³⁰¹ and as Rikowski puts it, “what is required is a critique of all human capitalist social life, the attempt of which pushes to the fore the ‘negativity of all passes for the positive in the capitalist society.’”³⁰² If the ideological implications of lifelong learning “as a kind of learning unto death”³⁰³ cannot be properly understood, working class kids will be the new Chaplin on their

²⁹⁹ In the British context, new vocationalism refers to the attempt of the Thatcher government to restructure the educational system to meet the demands of the industry. According to Phillip Brown, this approach in education has manifested itself in a number of recent programs such as the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative, the Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education (CPVE) and City Technology Colleges. See Phillip Brown, *Schooling Ordinary Kids: Inequality, Unemployment, and the New Vocationalism* (London and New York: Tavistock Publications, 1987), 2.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ Fuat Ercan, *Eğitim ve Kapitalizm* (İstanbul: Bilim Yayınları, 1998).

³⁰² Rikowski, "Marx and the Education of Future," 568.

³⁰³ Ibid.

way to become the screw we have mentioned at the very beginning while trying to adapt to the market, even if lifelong learning is supposed to be lifelong earning.

CHAPTER FOUR

SCHOOL-INDUSTRY RELATIONSHIP: AN ATTEMPT AT A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

In the Turkish vocational education system, the school-industry partnership is considered to be weak. However, recent years have yielded some exceptions, among which is Şişli Industrial High School. This section will include how private companies have signed protocols with the Ministry of National Education and founded laboratories at a school. My aim is to approach the issue not with a functionalist perspective. With a different perspective, we can have a different insight of what goes inside the black box and how blue-collar subjectivities are produced.

Changing Mentality: The Move towards an Organic Relationship for an Equipped and Flexible Workforce

Turkey is undergoing a transformation. This entails the change of its economic structure. It has been repeatedly stated that it needs a qualified labor force to sustain this change. As far as vocational education is concerned, apart from the new modular perspective that is being introduced (and which has been discussed in the previous chapter), there is also the aspect of industry-school relationship. One of the pillars of a sustainable vocational system, this has constantly been ignored in the Turkish case. In this regard, a strong emphasis on strengthening the vocational system is apparent not only in the current development plan but also the former ones.³⁰⁴ Figures also indicate that the targets set for the distribution of students regarding general and vocational system have been missed.³⁰⁵

³⁰⁴ Milli Eğitim Gençlik ve Spor Bakanlığı, "Kalkınma Planlarında Eğitim Gençlik ve Spor," (Ankara: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1987).

³⁰⁵ Sinan Temur, "Ankara İli Altındağ İlçesindeki Endüstri Meslek Liseleri Öğrencilerinin Toplumsal Yaşam ve Yüksek Öğretime İlişkin Görüş ve Beklentilerinin Eğitimde Eşitlik İlkesi Açısından Değerlendirilmesi" (M.A, Ankara University, 2005), 42.

Table 7. Realization of Targets with Regard to Vocational Education in the Development Plans

Year of Education	Plan Targets		Realization	
	General Education	Vocational Technical Education	General Education	Vocational Technical Education
1973-1974	61.11	38.89	55.45	44.55
1977-1978	55.25	44.75	54.68	45.32
1981-1982	50.85	49.15	60.40	39.60
1986-1987	45.20	54.80	51.36	48.64
1991,1992	39.5	60.50	56.65	43.25
1995-1996	35.00	65.00	57.43	42.57
2000-2005	55.00	45.00	64.00	36.00

So, what lies beneath this phenomenon? Why is the number of students attending vocational schools less than those in general education and what is the reason for the failure to establish an organic relationship between schools and the industry? Hıfzı Doğan, a leading name in the realm of vocational education in Turkey, makes a classical distinction between the West and “us” so as to explain the lack of such a relationship.³⁰⁶

When vocational education was first founded, there was not such business life. The perspective was as follows: We are going to establish the schools and these schools will train people and those people will found workplaces. In other words, it is completely the opposite of what it is like in the West.

³⁰⁶ Interview with Hıfzı Doğan, 26 April 2007, İstanbul. *İlk kurulduğu zaman mesleki eğitim, böyle iş hayatı yoktu. Bakış şuydu: Biz okulları kuralım, okullar insan yetiştirir, o insanlar da iş yerlerini kurar. Yani bu tamamen batıdaki gelişmenin zıddı bir şey ... Aşağı yukarı 50’li yıllara kadar hiçbir zaman acaba hani piyasada ne oluyor, ne değişiyor diye düşünülmemiştir. Okullar bir bakıma kendini endüstrileşmenin lideri olarak görüyordu.*

Nobody thought about what took place in the market or what was changing until around the 1950s. Schools were in a sense considered to be the leaders of industrialization.

Thus, Doğan argues that the concept of market and the understanding of market is determinant in terms of school-industry relationship. However, with the immigration of Turkish workers to Germany, Doğan goes on, there appeared empty positions in the market and the educational needs began to be discussed both in the private sector and the public sector. Doğan roughly points to the 1970s for the beginning of this relationship. Yet, as late as 1978, when the School-Industry Cooperation Project was being carried out, he remembers many headmasters who despised business life.³⁰⁷

That is, many headmasters did not consider business life to be anything. I mean, they thought there was nothing they could learn from business life and they assumed they knew everything. Thus, in that closed economy, schools didn't have much relationship with business life. They said they were the leaders and they did the best.

Ülkü Çalık, vice principal of Şişli Industrial High School points to a similar point.³⁰⁸

There were no school-industry relationships in the 1960s or 1970s. There was the expectation that it was the state's responsibility to train the students and then business owners would employ them. As far as the state was concerned, they thought education was their business. However, one cannot expect just the Ministry of National Education to deal with all. This is the matter of all

³⁰⁷ Interview with Hıfzı Doğan, 26 April 2007, İstanbul. *Yani, hala çoğu müdür, iş hayatını çok şey görmüyordu. Yani, onlardan öğreneceğimiz bir şey yok, biz herşeyi biliyoruz, yani düşünce tarzı vardı. Böylece o kapalı ekonomide aslında yani okulların böyle iş hayatıyla çok şeyi yoktu. Yani biz lideriz, biz iyisini yapıyoruz.*

³⁰⁸ Interview with Ülkü Çalık, 16 November 2006, İstanbul. *Okul-sanayi İşbirlikleri 60'larda, 70'lerde hiç yoktu. Devlet yetiştirsin, biz de alalım beklentisi vardı. Ve devlette de eğitim bizim işimizdir anlayışı vardı. Halbuki sadece M.E.B'den beklenmesi düşünülemez. O ülkede yaşayan bütün fertlerin ortak meselesidir. Eğitimli insanların olduğu yerde vergi ödenir, işler kolaylaşır.*

the citizens living in that country. Taxes are paid and things are easier where there are educated people.

However, within the framework of Turkey's integration with the world economy, there is an ongoing change. Now, business groups are more willing to establish partnerships and sign protocols with the schools. Yet, before the case of such an exception, we should also keep in mind that this issue has been handled in the literature in a linear understanding of history which is based on technological determinism.³⁰⁹

The requirement for a sound relationship between school and industry cannot also be thought independently of the changing economic structure throughout the world. Namely, the rapidly changing technology has implications as far as the skill requirements are concerned. A better relationship between school and industry is assumed to refresh the knowledge and skills of both the teachers and the students in line with what the new technologies stipulate. Thus, the assumed relationship is vital for a well-equipped workforce. Apart from that, the demands of the capital have changed to the extent that the more flexible an employee, the better it is for the employer. I have tried to elaborate on the reasons for this transformation in the previous chapters. However, Ülkü Çalık offers insight into how this process has gone in Turkey from the perspective of educators.³¹⁰

³⁰⁹ For examples of such views, see Aişe Akpınar and Hakan Ercan, "Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim Raporu," (Ankara: Türkiye Ulusal Gözlemevi, 2002), Doğan, Ulusoy, and Hacıoğlu, *Okul Sanayi İlişkileri*, Nurettin Ergen and Mustafa Metin, *Türkiye'de Meslek Eğitimi ve Sorunları* (Ankara: Türk Eğitim Derneği Yayınları, 1983), Nezahat Seçkin and Harun Aslan, *Sanayileşme Sürecinde Türk Eğitimi ve Sorunları* (Ankara: Türk Eğitim Derneği Yayınları, 1992). The common point in this literature is based on the view that the humanity has been moving from agricultural towards post-industrial society. In this respect, the case of the Turkish system is again considered to be lagging behind its Western counterparts.

³¹⁰ Interview with Ülkü Çalık, 16 November 2006, İstanbul. *Piyasanın beklentileri şöyle değişti. 20 yıl önce, 30 yıl önce sanayi sektöründeki teknoloji sadece belli bir alanda bilgi sahibi olmayı gerektiriyordu. Ama şimdi günümüzde motor tamircisi mesela... Motorun eskisi gibi tek bir bölümü falan yok, tek bir civatayı sökecek takacak falan değil. İçinde hidroliği var, elektronik var, mekanik*

The expectations of the market have changed as such: 20 or 30 years ago, the technology in the industrial sector required one to possess knowledge in just one realm. However, take today's engine repairer, for instance. The engine does not have just one part. The man is not to dismantle or fix one screw. There are hydraulics, electronics and mechanics. The market needs people who are to know each of them and even recognize what is missing and then fix it ... The industrialist, first of all, wants employees who understand these complex technologies.

Thus, Mr. Çalık's remarks clearly indicate that there is a trend towards complex skills. Moreover, the emergence of flexible production systems – as the demands of the capital we have discussed in the second chapter demonstrate – has led to the emergence of new concepts like total quality control, public relations, team work, solving problems and improving the work itself, which can be counted among the vocabulary of post-fordist organization systems:³¹¹

Secondly, having knowledge itself is not important. Today, the concept of public relations is very significant. Personal relations must be really good. They want employees who can come up with solution proposals while doing the work. Technicians must possess the capacity to develop what they are doing.

While Çalık further states that computer literacy is one of the fundamental requirements that capital expects from the workforce, a service director from

var. Hepsinden anlayacak, hatta eksiklerini görüp tamamlayacak nitelikte eleman arıyorlar ... Sanayici bir defa bu karmaşık teknolojileri anlayacak bilecek adam istiyor.

³¹¹ Ansal, *Esnek Üretimde İşçiler ve Sendikalar (Post-Fordizmde Üretim Esnekleşirken İşçiye Neler Oluyor?)*. Interview with Ülkü Çalık, 16 November 2006, İstanbul. İkincisi.. *Sadece bilgi sahibi olmak yeterli değil. Halkla ilişkiler çok önemli bugün. İnsan ilişkileri çok iyi olmalıdır. İşini yaparken de çözüm önerisi üretebilecek adam istiyorlar. Teknisyenlerin, yaptıkları işi geliştirme kapasitesi olması gerekiyor.*

companies that invest in the school underlines the importance of flexibility and efficiency.³¹²

Actually, this is what we expect Şişli to do in the coming period. The graduates of this school are still – this is unfortunately something we have been unable to overcome – thinking that they are going to be people who deal with engines, since this is an engine vocational high school. First of all, as a nation, we haven't been able to work with a target in mind. When one comes to the workplace, what is required is to fulfill 80 % of what is demanded, in other words, productivity and efficiency. They are not aware of any of these. Therefore, the most important thing is the phenomenon of working with a target in mind and making this a habit.

The link between school and industry has another dimension, though: shaping the minds of the youth. This is the point this chapter mainly aims to touch upon. In this framework, this chapter analyzes a field work which has been conducted at Şişli Industrial High School. In this school, there are private laboratories founded with the partnership of Ministry of National Education and five automotive companies. The field work was carried out among the junior and the senior students. It aims to discover how the entrance of private companies has transformed the school physically and what the implications of management ideology are. Within the framework of my study, I conducted more than a hundred questionnaires³¹³ and about thirty interviews. In doing so, I tried to grasp what kinds of people were

³¹² Interview with Fiat service director, Turan Gürses, 14 June 2007, İstanbul. *Zaten Şişli'den de önümüzdeki dönemlerde beklediklerimiz de bu. Bu okuldan mezun olan öğrenciler hala hala – maalesef bunu bir türlü kramadık – gittikleri tesislerde motor meslek lisesinden geliyor ya burası. Motorcu olacağım zannediyor ... Bence en başta, hedefe yönelik çalışmayı millet olarak beceremedik. İşyerine geldiğinizde, sizden istenen 8 saatin yüzde 80'ini doldurmak, yani kapasite kullanımı .. üretkenlik ve verimlilik. Bunların hiçbirinin farkında değiller. Dolayısıyla en önemlisi hedefe yönelik çalışma olgusu ve alışkanlığı sağlamaları.* This interview was conducted during the director's visit to the school and his conversation with the Fiat instructor. During the conversation, the director asked the instructor what their expectations were and the reply was: "We had many expectations. The advertisement we have made for Fiat is immeasurable. Yet, we were unable to get the response." What the instructors needed include free meal for the students and three teachers and shirts for summer. Added to these are some technical equipment.

³¹³ Most of the questions in the questionnaire were borrowed from Kayaalp, "Educational Attainment of Working Students: Evidence from Iskitler Industry and Vocational High School in Ankara".

attending the school, what their thoughts regarding school were. In addition to that, the questionnaires provided me with the chance to get insight into what the aspirations of these students were. However, the main problem in this chapter is to lay out the implications of management ideology. This, of course, has to do with what goes inside the black box. In that sense, this search for the implications of management ideology will – I hope – provide a different perspective as far as vocational education and its perception is concerned. Before that, let's have a quick look at the history of the school.

A Brief History of Şişli Industrial High School and the Protocols

The historical Tophane Art Institute had to change its location because of the construction of a road on the coast. Then, a department of the school – the engine department – was moved to Şişli Abide-i Hürriyet Tepesi and turned into the İstanbul Engine Art Institute in 1960-1961. The name of the school changed many times and it ultimately took its current name in 1982-1983 with the addition of a Metal Works, Electricity and Electronics Department.³¹⁴ After the opening of the telecommunication, computer departments, 1992-1993 witnessed the signing of the first protocol with the automotive industry, namely Toyota. A year later, in 1993-1994 a protocol was signed between Tofaş Oto Ticaret and the school in order to improve skill training, to provide machinery and equipment and gain revenues for the State Treasury. In 2003-2004, Mercedes-Benz came to the school and this was followed by Doğu Volkswagen Group, Harley-Davidson and Fiat.

³¹⁴ The history of the school can be found in the website of the school. <http://www.sisli.k12.tr/>

The school is unique in the sense that many protocols³¹⁵ have been signed in relatively a short period of time. So, how did the capital penetrate in this period of time? Now it is time to listen to the teachers in order to see how the process has worked out. Sabri Türeten, head of Engine Car Technology Department has the details:³¹⁶

The content of the protocol is not that complex. The issue is how to adapt the educational system of the company to that of the school. Regarding the process... There protocols emerge from our attempts to go to these companies and convince them. Apart from Toyota, no company has come to the school and established a laboratory in the school. We go to them. When they do not want us, we try to find any other way to persuade them.

Türeten explains the school's function as follows:³¹⁷

We provide the companies with some opportunities. We provide them with free space and we choose qualified students. In return, they provide us with any kind of educational support of the firm and employment chance for the graduates. That is, we prepare the ground in order that qualified students can meet qualified companies.

As the words of Türeten indicate, there is no guarantee for employment.

However, he states that the kids receive a brand-based education for three years,

³¹⁵ The protocols are generally signed for 4 or 5 years. If the company decides to leave before the expiry date, there are no sanctions. The main motive is to raise an educated workforce, to maintain brand loyalty and the factors due to the rapid changes in technology and the content of occupations.

³¹⁶ Interview with Sabri Türeten, 21 June 2007, İstanbul. *Protokolün içeriği o kadar karmaşık değil. Bir de firmanın eğitim sistemi okuldaki eğitim sistemine nasıl adapte edilebilir onlar konuşuluyor. İşin sürecine gelince, bunlar hep genelde firmalarla bizim görüşüp onarı ikna etmemizle ortaya çıkan şeyler. Toyota haricinde hiçbir firma gelip de burada Mercedes laboratuvarı kurayım diye gelmiyor. Biz gidiyoruz, kapıdan kovuyorlar bacadan giriyoruz.*

³¹⁷ Interview with Sabri Türeten, 21 June 2007, İstanbul. *Biz firmalara imkan sağlıyoruz. Boş bir alan sağlıyoruz, kaliteli öğrenciler seçiyoruz. Onlar da bize her türlü eğitim ve firmanın desteğini, çocuklar mezun olduktan sonra onlara da iş imkanı sağlıyorlar. Yani biz kaliteli öğrencilerle kaliteli firmaları buluşturmuş oluyoruz.*

adopt the brand and want to go to that brand. According to Türeten, there was no resistance or complaint with regard to these protocols:³¹⁸

After this job is done, the Ministry of National Education states that everything is done quite well and this is how it should be. Nobody just asked how we share the workshop of the state with the private sector. They all appreciate this, since we cannot follow the new technology with our own efforts and abilities.

Here, it should be noted that the downsizing discourse of neo-liberal times has been endorsed by the teacher. While it is the state's responsibility to undertake these tasks, the entrance of companies into schools is legitimized under this discourse:³¹⁹

Our partnership here is an organic one. We are dependent on each other. They desperately need us for qualified workforce and we are dependent on them. Why? In order to bring the new technology to the school.

Moreover, it is evident that the "legitimacy" of the existence of vocational high schools depends on the firms.

Selection Criteria: Discipline and Brand Loyalty

So, who is eligible to use these laboratories? Bearing in mind the fact that attendance problems and discipline records are not rare in vocational high schools, it becomes evident that entrance to a private laboratory is not that easy:³²⁰

³¹⁸ Interview with Sabri Türeten, 21 June 2007, İstanbul. *Yani Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı da bu iş olduktan sonra, a ne güzel olmuş, işte böyle olması lazım diyor. Hiç kimse bize, ondan sonra, kardeşim siz devletin bir atölyesini niye özel sektörle paylaşıyorsunuz dememiştir. Hepsi takdir etmiştir. Çünkü biz yeni teknolojiyi kendi imkanlarımızla, el yordamımızla takip edemeyiz.*

³¹⁹ Interview with Sabri Türeten, 21 June 2007, İstanbul. *Buradaki birlikteliğimiz organik bir birliktelik. İkimiz de birbirimize muhtacız. Onlar bize muhtaç kaliteli eleman için, biz de onlara muhtacız neden? Yeni teknolojiyi okula getirebilmek için.*

³²⁰ Interview with Sabri Türeten, 21 June 2007, İstanbul. *Çok ciddi, önce sınav yapıyoruz. Sınavdan sonra mülakat yapıyoruz. Çocuğun devamsızlığının olmaması lazım. Disiplin suçu olmaması lazım. En önemlisi, mezuniyetten sonra bu mesleği yapma isteği olması lazım.*

We conduct a very serious exam. The exam is followed by an interview. The attendance of the students must be zero. The most important thing is that he must be willing to do the job.

Yet, there was one student who underlined the issue of being “presentable.”

With regard to the selection, the criteria are school performance and previous attendance. There are also those without a decent school performance but then, their facial appearance has a role to play. They select. They think about the student whether he will be beneficial or not. They select students with a nice face. They do not accept those who look bad. They think they will violate the order there.

Moreover, the criteria reveal that PR (public relations) is really important. In other words, manual and technical skills are not sufficient themselves. For instance, Türeten remarks that the candidate student cannot stammer, since he will deal with the customer and perhaps be promoted to the position of service consultant.

Representatives of the brands are also “desired to participate” in these interviews and they fulfill these desires:³²¹

Toyota, for instance, from their education directors to their foremen, considers the selection day a significant day and participates in the process with a crowded team and makes a serious selection. They might even cancel an important thing and postpone their visit to Japan. This is a vital issue since the students they select are the technicians they are going to employ in their post-sale services.

³²¹ Interview with Sabri Türeten, 21 June 2007, İstanbul. *Özellikle Toyota mesela, eğitim müdüründen servislerden formenlerine kadar o günü ciddi bir gün addederek, hem servislerden hem eğitim merkezinden kalabalık bir ekiple gelmek suretiyle burada ciddi bir seçim yapıyorlar. Hatta ve hatta önemli bir işi var diyelim ki japonya'ya gidecek, bunu bile erteleyebiliyor. Çünkü bu hayati bir konu, bu seçtiği öğrenciler kendi satış sonrası hizmetlerinde kullanacağı teknisyenler oluyor.*

The desire of the brands to participate in these interviews is understandable when the change in the content of occupations is taken into consideration, as Ülkü Çalık also states:³²²

The human factor in industry is constantly decreasing. Consequently, occupations are disappearing, as you are also aware. What happened to the former welders? CNC counters appeared. You instantly use the PC. What happened to the molders? They are disappearing. An indicator of this process is that 1007 students passed their classes to the tenth grade and two students chose metal technology. There are 12 teachers and a huge workshop there. Yet, nobody prefers it. Why? Because it is not valid in the market. That is, some departments are becoming nonfunctional. Everybody desires the computer department.

In other words, the former educational mentality based on master-apprentice relationship has changed.³²³

The former definition and logic of a technician has gone. To change a part ... for example, in order to change the injector in many of the diesel engines is like changing a part of a computer. That is, we must make the brain of the diesel engine management system recognize the injector with its serial number. That is how sensitive it has become.

So far, we have understood the determination of the companies to hire qualified technicians on which criteria and due to what kind of economic,

³²² Interview with Ülkü Çalık, 16 November 2006, İstanbul. *Sanayide insan faktörü giderek azaltılıyor. Bunun neticesinde meslekler de kayboluyor biliyorsunuz. Eski tornacılar ne oldu. CNC tezgahları geldi. Hemen PC ile giriyorsunuz. Kalıpcılar ne oldu, gidiyor. Bunun bir göstergesi de şu. Lise 9'dan 10'a 1007 talebe geçti. Metal teknolojisini 2 kişi tercih etti. Orada da 12 öğretmen var, dev gibi atölyesi var. Kimse tercih etmiyor. Neden, piyasada geçerliliği yok. Bazı bölümler işlevsizleşiyor yani. Herkes bilgisayar istiyor.* See also, Huws, "Fixed, Footloose, or Fractured: Work, Identity, and the Spatial Division of Labor in the Twenty-First Century.", Sennett, *The corrosion of character*.

³²³ Interview with Sabri Türeten, 21 June 2007, İstanbul. Artık eski klasik teknisyen mantığı, tamirci mantığı tarihe karıştı. Artık parça değiştirmek için bile ... mesela dizel motorlarının birçoğunda enjektörü değiştirmek bilgisayar parçası değiştirmek gibi. Yani dizel motor yönetim sisteminin beynine o taktığın enjektörü seri numarasıyla tanıttırmanız lazım. O kadar hassas hale geldi.

technological and occupational changes. However, Türeten constantly underlines the issue of motivation and the will to remain in that sector.

Here, he differentiates between Human Resources and their school in the sense that HR departments do not have the opportunity to get to know the employee for a long time, whereas the school is the place where the students spend their three years. Thus, actually, the school here begins implicitly (and perhaps explicitly) to act as human resources department. The school here becomes a partner which utilizes human beings as a resource. Brand loyalty is not only the issue of students because Sabri Hoca tells us that the attitude of the teachers is significant as far as the success of school-industry relations and the plans of companies are concerned. Because, even though one of the companies wanted to launch other partnerships in other cities and schools, Türeten says, they called off their plans since they understood that it is a matter quality as far as teachers are concerned. Moreover, the teachers make a difference since “teachers of Volkswagen say they are Volkswagen teachers. They state that it is *their* laboratory. There is no concept of overtime. Now it is summer time, I will go to my hometown. No, if there is training, it is the priority.”³²⁴ A statement of a Fiat instructor echoes Sabri Türeten.³²⁵

We do not consider ourselves to be different from Fiat service, from a unit of Tofaş or a unit of Birmot. I now consider myself to be an employer of Tofaş, as well as the Ministry.

³²⁴ Interview with Sabri Türeten, 21 June 2007, İstanbul. *O üç öğretmen, ben Volkswagenciyim diyor. Burası benim atölyem diyor. Mesai mefhumu yok. Yaz tatili geldi memlekete gideceğim. Eğitim varsa eğitime öncelikli olarak gidecek mesela. The loyalty of the teachers also manifest themselves in that Fiat instructor, for instance, refuse to share his own Fiat notes with the other teachers.*

³²⁵ Interview with Fiat instructor Orhan Devocioğlu and Fiat service director, Turan Gürses, 14 June 2007, İstanbul. *Biz şu an kendimizi bir Fiat servisinden, Tofaş'ın bir biriminden, Birmot'un bir biriminden hiç farklı görmüyoruz. Ben kendimi şu an M.E.B ile beraber Tofaş'ın da bir elemanı olarak görüyorum.*

In response to the instructor, the service director acknowledges that they cannot replace the ministry and states that it is actually what they are indirectly trying to do, to achieve brand culture. Beginning from 2000, he states that they would like to show the new face of Fiat in the school and to place it in the subconscious of students and their parents.³²⁶

The example above clearly indicates that the teachers are highly motivated. Yet in Toyota, for instance, the company used to pay an amount of money for motivation but that amount is now less than it used to be. However, Türeten, now again as if echoing Fiat instructor, argues there are other more important factors.³²⁷

Motivation is more important. The internal motivation of the teachers ... To say that “I’m an expert of Volkswagen, I’m an expert of Mercedes ... Because, to say that one is an expert of Toyota means being an automobile expert.

Educational Differences: The Emergence of Social Communication Skills, Foreign Language and Computer Literacy

So, what is different in these laboratories in terms of education? What makes these students more qualified? They are, first of all, provided with computer support through which they learn MS Office applications in order to prepare reports, make tables and presentations. Moreover, they are supposed to get acquainted with Internet

³²⁶ During the course of the conversation, the service director asks the instructor whether the students are dressed normally throughout the year or not. Because it was summer, the students were not wearing their Fiat shirts. In response to the question of the director, the instructor tells one of the students to bring a shirt. He also adds that they go to lunch altogether with their shirts on. In another interview, the instructor had told me that the students should eat regular meals as opposed to fast food due to health reasons. He also boasts about the students since they answer the calls by “Yes, please, Fiat laboratory” without mentioning another name.

³²⁷ Interview with Sabri Türeten, 21 June 2007, İstanbul. *Motivasyon daha önde geliyor. Öğretmenlerin iç motivasyonu... Ben Volkswagen konusunda uzmanım demek, ben Mercedes konusunda uzmanım demek... Çünkü ben Toyota konusunda uzmanım demek, otomotiv konusunda uzmanım demektir.*

since engine test equipment is updated not with CDs but over the Internet. The second thing is vocational English. In order for the students, perhaps not to speak but, to understand technical things by looking at the pictures on a book in English, they provide vocational English courses. Last but not least, the students of these private laboratories are required to read some of the books included in the 100 essential works of the Ministry so that they can develop their social skills.³²⁸ As far as these social skills and communication skills are concerned, students are also taught skills to welcome customers, to establish communication and learn concepts like customer, quality and total quality.

Nevertheless, the innovative thing about this particular kind of education is that it is brand-based. Seeing the brand's name at the entrance of the laboratory, the student has an intensive training, under the umbrella of the specific brand. The idea that they are selected students and the company is a family renders a message to the students.³²⁹

The student is motivated in such a way that and they are inculcated such beliefs that they assume that the brand will collapse were it not for them. In other words, they are told that they are significant and they are the ones to improve Toyota or they are the ones to increase the quality of Toyota. You are a part of this system ... A state of belonging is inspired and the message that they are a member of a big family is conveyed. This, of course, directly binds the student. Their shirts are different. Volkswagen or Mercedes is written on their back. The color is different. They are perceived in a different way at school.

³²⁸ We should note that these social skills have to do with public relations and customer services.

³²⁹ Interview with Sabri Türeten, 21 June 2007, İstanbul. *Şimdi öğrenci öyle görüyor ki, öyle öyle motive ediliyor ki, kendisi olmasa marka batacakmış gibi bir telkin içerisinde bırakılıyor. Yani siz çok önemlisiniz, siz Toyota ise eğer, Toyota'yı düzelterek, toyota'nın sistemini kalitesini artıracak elemanlarsınız. Siz bu sistemin bir parçası... hem aidiyet veriliyor hem de büyük bir ailenin üyesi olduğu mesajı veriliyor ... Bu da tabii ki öğrenciyi direct olarak bağlıyor. Onların önlükleri farklıdır. Sırtında Volkswagen yazar, Mercedes yazar. Renkleri farklıdır. Okulda ayrı bir şekilde bakılıyor kendilerine.*

The issue of different perception has some other implications as well.³³⁰

As students, we used to pass a word to girls. Now, it is the girls who do this because of the Fiat shirts. Even though they see Fiat shirts, they still ask whether they are Fiat students.

Having listened to the story of the protocols, it is now time to hear what students have to say as far as this process is concerned, what kind of a practice is present at school and how qualified blue-collar subjectivities are formed by the entrance of the brands into the school. Yet, before that, let us see what kind of people vocational school students are. Here, I would like to give some statistical data and interpret the questionnaires filled out by 100 students.

Who are the Students of the Engine Department?

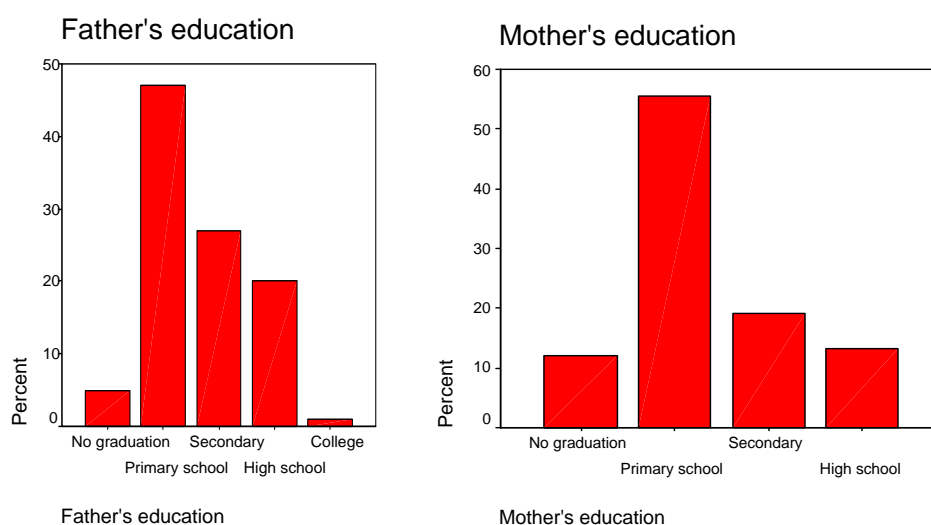
In this section, the reader will find the opportunity to get a glimpse of what kind of students are attending engine department at Şişli Industrial High School. I do not claim to present an overarching picture of the school. However, it can provide the reader with an idea of who might these students of engine department be. More than 100 students (freshmen and senior students) participated in the questionnaire stage of my field work. I take 100 of them into consideration. All of the participants were male since the engine department is classically known to be a male department.³³¹ Let's briefly look at the figures.

Among the students, 43 % have a family of four people. Sixty-seven percent of them live at their own house. Nearly half of the male parents are primary school graduates, whereas this amounts to 55 % regarding the mothers.

³³⁰ Interview with Orhan Devocioğlu, 30 November 2006, İstanbul.

³³¹ However, it is said that one of the companies aims to attract female ones since their services need female employees who are going to both deal with the customer and at the same time be informed about technical things.

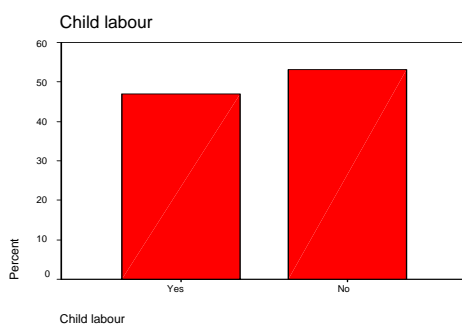
Figure 1 and Figure 2. Education Levels of Parents



The answers to “What’s your father’s occupation?” include doorkeeper, cook, worker, cleaner, retired, artisan, officer, bus driver, driver, worker in a car-body shop, teacher, police, and mostly occupations related to engine repairing and maintenance. As for the mothers, the striking thing is that 80 % of them are housewives. The other answers are cook, cleaner, janitor, administrative chief, employed at a ready-made clothing shop and textile. These categories reveal that the kids mostly belong to working class families. Moreover, the findings reveal that 60 % of the students previously worked and they state that they have worked near their father, in a grocery, Internet café, carpenter’s shop, steel door manufacturer, restaurant, coffee house, lathe shop, hairdresser and so on. In other words, the students can be said to be already used to working before they enter labor market. More strikingly, they are almost divided as far as their thoughts regarding child labor is concerned. The answers are as follows when asked whether children should work or not. Namely, 47 % of the participants said children should work, whereas 53 % were against the idea.³³²

³³² For instance, one of the students has written that he had been working for ten hours after leaving school and he is among those who believe that children should work. In addition to that, one of the kids has uttered that he had been working for 10 hours and this did not tire him.

Figure 3. Child Labor

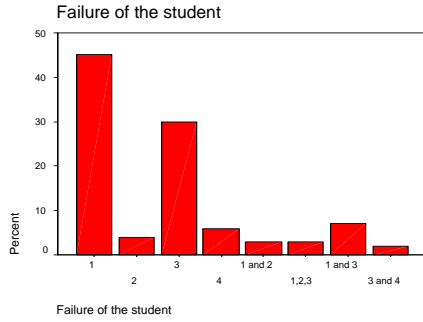


Then, in the questionnaire comes the question: Why should children work? 91 % of the students believe that children should work so that they can face the difficulties of life and gain experience. There was also a question regarding their future: Are you for or against your wife's employment? More than 60 % of the students replied negatively to this question.

During my field work, I observed that beating and insulting is not uncommon at school. So, there was the question regarding the quality of a school. The highest percentage was 32 %, which implied that a good school is the one where tolerance and sympathy prevail. When asked why they attend vocational high school, the answers are not surprising: Fifty-four percent of the students state that they would like to find a job upon graduation. After employment factor comes a comparison between normal high schools and vocational high schools. 21 % of the kids believe that courses at a normal high school are more difficult.

As far as failure is concerned, the students either blame themselves or the educational system. While 45 % of them assume that they are the ones to blame, 30 % put the blame on the educational system for a person's failure at school.

Figure 4. What Does the Failure of a Student Depend on?



Apprenticeship Training and Deviance

As stated in Chapter Two, Law No. 3308 was considered to be a revolutionary act. It was designed to narrow the gap and establish an organic relationship between industry and schools. As a part of our attempt to gain an insight into the students' life, this section will try to shed light on the everyday life practices and experiences of students, which in turn might demonstrate the relation between the top down policies and micro processes.

The law, as discussed earlier, was designed to allow students of VT schools to upgrade their skills in real work environments. Yet, there has been criticism regarding the fact that the students are exploited as cheap labor. Now, before how blue collar subjectivities are formed by the penetration of brands, let us document how students are 'upgrading' their skills in real work environment.

Bilgin, whose family consists of all vocational high school graduates, underlines the fact that they are treated differently as opposed to normal workers:³³³

Now, it is hard to go and work somewhere in a vocational high school. For instance, we attend the apprenticeship training, it is quite difficult. They don't regard us as normal staff. They consider us to be at a really low level. One can

³³³ Interview with Bilgin, 28 March 2007, İstanbul. *Şimdi şu an şartlar da zaten bir yere gidince çalışınca çok ağır meslek liselerinde. Mesela staja gidiyoruz, bayağı bir zor. Normal eleman gibi görmüyorlar. Çok aşağı bir seviyede görüyorlar. Arabayı zaten çok az görebiliyorsun. Gidiyor sana sab³³³ ahtan akşama kadar oraya gönderiyor buraya gönderiyor, temizlik yaptırıyor.*

see a car so rarely. They make you go here and there and make you do cleaning.

Erkut, on the other hand, enjoys work when *it is really work*:³³⁴

When you do something or are engaged in doing something, the training is enjoyable. But there are other things for example... They make us do the cleaning, there. I mean, sometimes we carry goods, heavy goods. If that's the case, you don't enjoy it.

During our conversation with Servet, a senior student, İbrahim Tatlıses³³⁵ was singing "Yalnızım Dostlarım" in the background, most probably from one of the students' mp3 player. Servet did not complain much about negative things during his training. Yet, he had things to tell:³³⁶

I do not do much cleaning. They generally make us work, work for learning. I do the cleaning in the evenings and take the rubbish out in the mornings. I generally work. They teach us.

Uğur, whose books³³⁷ for the university entrance exam were bought by Bilgi University students, complains about the attitude of his boss, who despises their skills and level of knowledge.

³³⁴ Interview with Erkut, 19 March 2007, İstanbul. *İş yapınca bir işle uğraşınca güzel, zevkli geçiyor. Ama bazı şeyler oluyor mesela... Orada bize temizlik yaptırıyorlar. Ne bileyim, yeri geliyor eşya taşıyoruz, ağır şeyler taşıyoruz. Öyle oldu mu insan soğuyor...*

³³⁵ He is a famous arabesque singer in Turkey. The song can be translated as 'I am lonely, my friends.'

³³⁶ Interview with Servet, 28 March 2007, İstanbul. *Ben fazla temizlik yapmıyorum. Genellikle çalıştırıyorlar, öğrenmek amaçlı çalıştırıyorlar. Bir akşamları temizlik yaptırıyorum bir de sabahları çöp döküyorum. Genellikle iş yapıyorum, öğretiyorlar.*

³³⁷ Uğur's mother is working at Bilgi University and he has only four books to study for university entrance exam. Interview with Uğur, 28 March 2007, İstanbul. *Açıkçası şu. Buradan biz eğitimle gittiğimiz için, bize çiraklık yaptırıyorlar açıkçası. Yerleri süpürtmeler, bir şey yapmalar. Mesela ben ustama diyorum, usta bir anahtar verin, vida tatalım. İşte, yapamazsınız edemezsiniz. Bilgin'in dediği de doğru. O yüzden hoşnut değildi ve değiştirmek zorunda kaldı. Ne bileyim ortamı iyi değil, yani söylemesi ayıp hakaretli konuşuyorlar... Siz böylesiniz, falansınız. Böyle şeyler oluyor illa ki. Ama benim pek bir problemim yok işyeriyle. Yeri geldiğinde iş de yaptırıyorlar, yeri geldiğinde temizlik de yapıyorum.*

To be honest, since we go there as educated students, they make us work as apprentices. They make us clean the floor, do other things... For instance, I ask my boss to give me a monkey wrench, let's touch a screw. They tell us that we cannot do it. It's true what Bilgin said. That's why he was not content and had to change his workplace. I don't know, the atmosphere is not good. They insult others, like you are this and that. Such things naturally happen. However, I don't have any problems with my workplace. They sometimes make me work, and I sometimes do the cleaning.

These narratives indicate that there is a huge gap between the top-down discourse and the everyday experience of the students. Even though the law was enacted to upgrade the skills of the students, some of them are not allowed to participate in such activities and are used as sources of cheap labor. The problem, according to the Industry Coordinator of Şişli Industrial School, mostly stems from institutionalization.³³⁸

Institutionalized companies give more of the rights of the kids. However, small ones can barely feed themselves and thus cannot give those benefits as much as the big ones.

The Industry Coordinator of Alibeyköy Industrial High School, on the other hand, states that students are either exploited or cannot participate in the production process, depending on the quality of the company.³³⁹

We send the students to the workplace and this is something we face very much these days. Since the workplaces are using old-fashioned methods, the students state that they are working under hard conditions. In places, where new-generation machinery or new technology are used, students are not allowed to work. They do not directly participate in production.

³³⁸ Interview with Bahri Uysal, 18 December 2006, İstanbul. *Kurumsallaşmış firmalar, büyük firmalar çocuklara sosyal haklarını daha fazla veriyor. Ama bunun yanında küçük işletmeler de kendini zor doyurduğu için de onlara o kadar yararı da veremiyor.*

³³⁹ Interview with Metin Hoca, 20 March 2007, İstanbul. *Gönderiyoruz iş yerine, şu sıralar bayağı da karşılaşıyoruz. Eski usul çalıştığı için iş yerleri, öğrenciler bir şekilde ağır çalıştıklarını söylüyor. Yeni nesil makinelerle çalışan, yeni teknolojilerle çalışan yerde de öğrenci çalıştırılmıyor. Doğrudan üretime katılmıyor*

Thus, it becomes clear that there are more than minor problems in the structure of apprenticeship training. Yet, there is one other issue, deviance, I would like to underline. The common denominator of the stories of vocational high school students were their reasons – not motives – for being at an industrial high school.

Bilgin, for instance, was obliged to attend his current school.³⁴⁰

My grades were not high in secondary school. That is, I was forced to attend vocational high school. I actually wouldn't like to attend vocational high school.

Turgay, a freshman Fiat student, believed that a vocational high school would be more appropriate for his education.³⁴¹

I attend vocational high school because I wouldn't be that successful in a normal high school. I can learn a vocation. Like a bracelet on my arm, I would learn a vocation. Then, I could work in services. I chose this department because a vocational high school would be more advantageous.

Yes, a vocational school might be more advantageous for Turgay, since he might be obliged to earn his bread upon graduation. Yet, the striking thing is that he seems to be rationalizing his class position by mentioning that vocational school presented him with a bracelet, as if he did not deserve that.

The problem of university is also determining in terms of attendance. Cengiz, a freshman Volkswagen student, states that they would not pass the university

³⁴⁰ Interview with Bilgin, 28 March 2007, İstanbul. *Notlarım düşüktü benim ortaokuldayken. Biraz mecburiyetten meslek lisesine geldim. İstemezdim zaten meslek lisesine gelmeyi.*

³⁴¹ Interview with Turgay, 17 May 2007, İstanbul. *Düz liseye pek başarılı olamayacağım için, meslek lisesine gitmeyi tercih ettim. Çünkü bir meslek öğrenirim. Çünkü bilezik gibi kolumda, bir meslek öğreneceksin. Ondan sonra servislerde çalışabilirsin, meslek lisesinin daha çok avantajı olduğu için bu bölümü seçtim.*

entrance exam if they attended a normal high school. Cengiz's classmate Recep, however, explains the issue by referring to his family but not in class terms:³⁴²

My father is a driver, my grandfather is a driver. This is something in my blood, in my genes. My father actually didn't want it. I felt like doing it. I have grown up with cars since I was born and even before that. This was what I wanted to do.

Having listened to the reasons why they are attending their school and their thoughts regarding their position in real life and school, we can evaluate these narratives as far as school's functions are concerned.

Like what Pierre Bourdieu explains³⁴³ regarding the fact that "less cultivated" people only confirm the beauty of museums and think they do not possess the required cultural codes to elaborate on the exhibition, the children of working classes seem to have the tendency to explain things with reference to their own failure. In other words, they consider themselves to be deviant. So, what kind of a function do schools have here? As Michael Apple also puts it, "schools produced knowledge of a particular kind, then at the same time as they recreated categories of *deviance* that stratified students."³⁴⁴ They not only process knowledge but also people.³⁴⁵ Thus, it is not only a reproductive mechanism but also a productive one.³⁴⁶ As the dialogues

³⁴² Interview with Recep, 23 May 2007, İstanbul. *Benim babam şoför, benim dedem de şoför. Benim kanımda var bu genimde var. ben bunu isteyerek yaptım. Babam aslında pek istemiyordu. İçimden geldi. Ben doğduğumdan beri, hatta onun öncesinden beri hep arabalarla büyüdüm. İçimden de bu geliyordu.*

³⁴³ Pierre Bourdieu, Alain Darbel, and Dominique Schnapper, *The Love of Art : European Art Museums and Their Public* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997).

³⁴⁴ Apple, *Education and Power*, 20.

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

³⁴⁶ Having said that, I do not claim to ignore possible resistance on the side of the students. In other words, the concept of a structure where "an individual is always-already a subject, even before he is born ... appointed as a subject in and by the specific familiar ideological configuration" must not be hastily resorted to. See Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1971). As Paul Willis, Angela McRobbie have shown in their works,

between the teachers and the students also demonstrated, the everyday life within the school “upholds those meritocratic values that justify differential rewards and the separation of the ‘successful’ from the ‘failures.’”³⁴⁷ As working class kids who are familiar with “failure”, they internalize failure as an individual problem and “the deviant label the school affixes to them as they act upon their own lived culture becomes them.”³⁴⁸

When we look at the narratives, the students constantly find the roots of their “failure” in their own actions, which certainly cannot be thought of independently of the social reality in which they are enmeshed, since these categories (competence, good student performance, proper behaviour) are not free-floating ideas but “responses to what are perceived to be real problems caused by very real environmental conditions within schools and often, economic and social conditions ‘outside’ that building.”³⁴⁹ More interestingly, they strongly believe in a meritocratic system and progress. Ünal, a freshman from Volkswagen, is a clear example of this.³⁵⁰

Look, some of the things in life are fixed. Do you know how? Now, if you work, it is for sure that you are going to be something in the future. This is

the site of education is a political, contested terrain where the dominant meanings are fought against and struggled. See Angela McRobbie, "Working Class Girls and the Culture of Femininity," in *Woman Take Issue*, ed. Women's Studies Group (London: Hutchinson, 1978), Willis, *Learning to Labor*.

³⁴⁷ Jerome Karabel and A.H. Helsey, "Educational Reserch: A Review and Interpretation," in *Power and Ideology in Education*, ed. Jerome Karabel and A.H. Helsey (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977). Cited in Apple, *Education and Power*, 54.

³⁴⁸ Apple, *Education and Power*, 54.

³⁴⁹ Apple, *Ideology and Curriculum*, 141.

³⁵⁰ Interview with Ünal, 23 May 2007, İstanbul. *Ya, bazı şeyler kesin. Nasıl kesin biliyor musun abi? Şimdi yani ileride eğer çalışırsan bir şeyler olabileceğin belli. Bunu hocalarımız da söylüyor. Tek bir şey var burada, herkes görevini yapıyor. Doğuş görevini yapıyor, hocalarımız da görevini yapıyor. Tek görev bize düşüyor. Ne kadar çalışırsak o kadar büyürüz. Sadece o var abi. Eğer çok çalışırsam çk büyürüm, az çalışırsam teknisyen olarak kalırım.*

also something that our instructors tell. There is one thing here: everybody does what they are required to do. Dogus Group fulfills its duty, our instructors fulfill their duties. The other things rest upon us. The more we work the more we grow. That is the issue. If I work a lot, I grow a lot. If I work not that much, I remain a technician.

Yet, I assume it is vital to challenge this notion of meritocracy, “for if we did in fact live in a meritocratic order, we would expect to find the relationship between test scores and measures of adult success rising over time, and the relationship between family background and adult success falling.”³⁵¹ Furthermore, the idea of meritocracy and progress serves to legitimize the capitalist accumulation process from which everybody cannot benefit equally. However, it is just this meritocratic ideology that forms the basis of the legitimization of the laboratories founded at school and serves to divide students as normal and selected, special ones. Even though the mainstream discourse considers these partnerships to be fruitful and constructive, I aim to approach the issue from a Foucauldian perspective and try to understand how the working class kids are governed and divided on the basis of meritocracy and brand penetration.

Management Ideology: Governing the Kids

This section, as discussed at the beginning of the chapter, aims to approach school-industry relationship from a different perspective. I will call this process not privatization but revocationalizing, since there are already similar partnerships in Germany for instance (which is proud of its system but experiencing problems and trying to carry out reforms) and the Turkish system, since 1986, is trying to form a dual system. Apprenticeship training has been carried out since then. Yet, the issue

³⁵¹ Michael Olneck and James Crouse, "Myths of the Meritocracy: Cognitive Skill and Adult Success in the United States," (Madison: University of Wisconsin Institute for Research on Poverty, 1978). Cited in Apple, *Education and Power*, 38.

of school-industry partnership has remained on the table and it is only recently that companies have been willing to participate in the process.

Total quality management, quality control circles, worker participation, brand loyalty are concepts of our times. However, human resources management can be traced back to the 1880s. Between 1880 and 1949, Hawthorne Experiments were carried out in Western Electric Company, which in turn led to the emergence of the Human Resources Approach.³⁵² The aim, as the name Human Resources suggests, is to find the most suitable resource, to measure and develop the qualities of the workforce, if necessary. In Şişli, what is called a private educational laboratory can be considered to be an extension of the Human Resources Approach, the language of which is deemed to be apolitical and ahistorical. However, concepts like dividing practices and governmentality can provide a different perspective.

For Michel Foucault, the problem of the subject is one of the main issues. He deals with how human beings are made subjects. In this respect, he offers three modes of objectification of the subject: “the first mode of the objectification is somewhat cryptically called dividing practices.”³⁵³ Here, we witness a process of categorization in which “human beings are given both a social and a personal identity.”³⁵⁴ According to Foucault, dividing practices combine the mediation of science and the practice of exclusion.³⁵⁵ This first mode includes confinement of the marginal groups like the poor and the mad. As far as educational processes are concerned, it is clear that “the use of testing, examining, profiling, and streaming in

³⁵² Sezai Ozan Zeybek, "Human Enterprise of Global Capitalism and the Golden Collars: Producing the Producer" (M.A, Boğaziçi University, 2006), 77.

³⁵³ Paul Rabinow, "Introduction," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984).

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

education, the use of entry criteria for different types of schooling, and the formation of different types of intelligence, ability, and scholastic identity in the processes of schooling are all examples of such practices.”³⁵⁶ Moreover, these techniques (creation of separate a different curricula, forms of teacher-student relationships in our case) without doubt have a role to play in forming, learning and carrying identities and subjectivities.³⁵⁷ The second type of objectification is “scientific classification arising from the modes of inquiry which try to give themselves the status of science.”³⁵⁸ The previous types are related to containing, controlling techniques. As Rabinow puts it, “the person who is put into a cell or whose dossier is being compiled is basically in a passive, constrained position”³⁵⁹ whereas the third type, subjectification, entails an active process.

This self-formation takes place through a variety of “operations on [people’s] own bodies, on their own souls, on their own thoughts, on their own conduct.”³⁶⁰ This process is guided by an external figure and in this case, it is the brand, it is the capital which conducts the students’ minds and thoughts. And it is since Turkey’s integration with the global economy (like the Renaissance in Foucault’s analysis of the state) that education and vocational education has become areas of reform and in this respect, students have become a political target as society became beginning from the middle of the sixteenth century. Thus, at the expense of repeating myself, I would like to once again underline that schooling is a realm which consists of “both

³⁵⁶ Ball, "Introducing Monsieur Foucault."

³⁵⁷ Ibid., 4.

³⁵⁸ Rabinow, "Introduction."

³⁵⁹ Ibid., 11.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

passive processes of objectification and an active, self-forming subjectification”³⁶¹ and it is actually this third type that will guide us in terms of understanding how the penetration of capital and brands conducts the kids.

It was mentioned that beginning with Toyota, a number of companies have taken in partnerships and even Honda is said to be planning to sign one. While the companies themselves consider the issue to be vital and has adopted corporate social responsibility approach, news regarding the issue has appeared in popular media as well.

The educational differences were mentioned above. However, there are other practices which enable the students to feel as a member of the corporate family. The students wear the shirts of the brands, one of the brands takes the students to lunch altogether so that they do not eat fast food since they have to be healthy. Therefore, it can be claimed that the companies resort to a governmental strategy³⁶² so as to find, educate and employ qualified workforce.

Mitchell Dean presents a bunch of meanings of the word *government* with reference to Foucault as “conduct of conduct.” First of all, as a verb, it means to direct. Yet, as a reflexive verb, to conduct oneself, consists of an ethical, moral sense which comes to mean “self-direction appropriate to certain situations, e.g. at work and at home, in business dealings, in relation to clients or friends.”³⁶³ Very briefly,

Government is any more or less calculated and rational activity, undertaken by a multiplicity of authorities and agencies, employing a variety of

³⁶¹ Ball, "Introducing Monsieur Foucault."

³⁶² Foucault identifies four techniques that human beings employ to interpret, control, and turn themselves into subjects. These are technologies of domination, technologies of self, technologies of production, and technologies of sign systems. See, Peters, Marshall, and Fitzsimons, "Managerialism and Educational Policy in a Global Context: Foucault, Neoliberalism, and the Doctrine of Self-Management."

³⁶³ Mitchell Dean, *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society* (London: Sage, 1999).

techniques and forms of knowledge, that seeks to shape conduct by working through our desires, aspirations, interests and beliefs, for definite but shifting ends and with a diverse set of relatively unpredictable consequences, effects and outcomes.

Here, human behaviors appear as an object to be directed, controlled and regulated for certain ends. In other words, “government of our own bodies, personalities and inclinations entails an attempt to affect and shape in some way who and what we are and should be.”³⁶⁴ It is related to practices which “try to shape, sculpt, mobilize and work through the choices, *desires, aspirations, needs, wants* and lifestyles of individuals and groups.”³⁶⁵

Let’s proceed with some questions, then. “By what means, mechanisms, procedures, instruments, tactics, techniques, technologies and vocabularies is authority constituted and rule accomplished?”³⁶⁶ In other words, how are discipline (which is a real problem in vocational high schools), efficiency and brand loyalty maintained in Şişli Industrial High School? What kind of techniques do the companies resort to? “What forms of person, self and identity are presupposed by different practices of government and what sorts of transformation do these practices seek?”³⁶⁷ One of the teachers, when mentioning about the selection criteria, gives a hint.³⁶⁸

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 12.

³⁶⁵ Ibid. Italics are mine.

³⁶⁶ Ibid., 31.

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 32.

³⁶⁸ Interview with Orhan Devecioğlu, 6 March 2007, İstanbul. *Bir, sınıfını doğrudan geçmiş, zayıfı olmayan. Ortalama dersleri üç ve üçün üzerinde olan. Disiplin cezası almamış olmak. Devamsızlık süreleri koyduk, mesela devamsızlıkta da mazeretsiz devamsızlık süresi 5 günü geçmeyen öğrenciler. İkincisi başlangıçta bir matematik, türkçe ve genel kültür sınavı yaptık. Ve bu sınavda en yüksekten not alan öğrencilerden – barem yetmişti – mülakat yönetimiyle ... ve her öğrenci 5 tane laboratuvara müracaat edebiliyor ... girmek istediği laboratuvarı ilk başa yazıyor. Mesela o da bizde çok belirleyici oluyor. Tutup da puanı çok iyi olmasına rağmen mülakattan da iyi not almasına rağmen benim laboratuvarımı dördüncü tercihe yazdığı için birinci tercihe yazan daha düşük puanlı öğrenci girdi o*

First, the students must pass his class directly, without any failed courses. The GPA must be at least 3. The second thing is that he won't have discipline punishment. We have also formed a period of attendance. The limit for unexcused attendance cannot exceed five days. At first, we made an examination of math, Turkish and general culture. The scale was 70 and then came the interviews. Each student can apply to 5 laboratories ... The favorite laboratory is written at the top. For example, this is something determining for us. If he has a good score and is also successful in the interview but has written my laboratory as his fourth preference, a student with a lower score but who has chosen my laboratory as his first preference was accepted though the former one was not. *In other words, he will love it. The student will want Fiat, Toyota or Harley Davidson.*

Here, one answer is love, but not love for learning or the love for solidarity. It is the love for the brand. Love becomes the tool for having a privileged identity at school and position at labor market. One might even face a situation, where he (for instance, Fatih from Fiat) has to choose between his wife and brand, the two beloved:³⁶⁹

They asked why I chose Fiat. For example, Fiat was my first preference. They asked me whether I would go to a distant place if they sent me. They said that my future wife might not like me because of the job I do. It seems that they liked my ideas and accepted me.

Let's turn to the first question. What about the rhetoric and techniques with regard to forming the loyal technicians of the future? Now, the black box speaks. Emre, who tells me that his father decides to work depending on his mood, replies by telling us what his company, Volkswagen does:³⁷⁰

öğrenci giremedi. Yani mesela buna aşık olacak. Öğrenci fiatı isteyecek ya da toyotayı isteyecek, harley davidson'ı isteyecek

³⁶⁹ Interview with Fatih, 17 May 2007, İstanbul. *Fiat'ı neden tercih ettin diye sordular. Mesela ben ilk olarak tercih etmişim birinci olarak. Seni dediler, staja göndersek uzak bir yere gider misin diye sordular. Evleneceğin kadın dediler, belki seni beğenmeyebilir bu işi yaptığından dolayı diye sordular. Bunlara cevap verdikten sonra demek ki fikirlerimi beğenmişler onun için aldılar.*

³⁷⁰ Interview with Emre, 23 May 2007, İstanbul. *Çanta getirdiler, defter getirdiler. Yani burada hiçbir atölye şeker bayramında öğrencilerine bir şey vermezken, bizim doğuş bayramımızı kutladı, bize kutularla şeker gönderdiler, öyle bir iyilik yaptılar yani. Bize sahip çıkıyorlar burada.*

They brought a bag, they brought notebook. Here, even though other workshops do not give anything to the other workshops, Dogus congratulated our religious holidays and sent us boxes of candies. They did such a favor. They endorse us.

Ünal joins the conversation:³⁷¹

For instance we didn't pay anything for the shirts, books or notebooks. We had no expenses. They sent a bag, a small bag like a pocket book diary.

Yet Volkswagen has its demands, since Emre mentions about a change in apprenticeship policy. Moreover, what Emre tells below signifies that the kids are actually being indebted to the company by means of resorting to what is morale for them.³⁷²

They try not to take any money from us, so that we can be [fruitful] to them ... Normally, we do not have to attend apprenticeship training next year but they call as for the training. We were not going to have apprenticeship training but it is said that we should .

When Ünal, from Volkswagen, was describing their practices, he told me that it is difficult to see the students outside the laboratory. I replied by saying that students from the penal-colonies were just dying to get out when the bell rang. At that particular moment, one of Ünal's friends said that "they were just hanging out."³⁷³ Why is that the case? First of all, Ünal gives the answer. They can stay in because there are computers and the teachers let them use the PCs. On the other

³⁷¹ *Biz mesela önlüklere falan hiç para vermedik, kitaplara defterlere. Hiçbir harcamamız olmadı. Çanta yolladı ayrıyeten ufak çanta yolladı ajanda şeklinde.*

³⁷² Interview with Emre, 23 May 2007, İstanbul. *Bizden para almamaya çalışıyorlar. Çalışıp onlara şey olmamız için ... normalde seneye staja gitmememiz lazım ama bizi staja çağırıyorlar. Önümüzdeki sene gitmeyecektik, zorla diyorlarmış gidelim...*

³⁷³ The kid said: *Onlar takılıyor*

hand, even though there is no sharp class-difference between the two groups, we can resort to Pierre Bourdieu in order to have an evaluation of why this is so. According to Bourdieu, “whether students stay in school or drop out, and the course of study they pursue, depends on their practical expectations of the likelihood that people of their social class will succeed academically.”³⁷⁴ With reference to Bourdieu, we can claim that “a child’s ambitions and expectations with regard to education and career are the structurally determined products of parental and other reference-group *educational experience* and cultural life.”³⁷⁵ Here, the promise of the brand and the expectation of the kids to be employed there might play a role in kids’ staying inside during the breaks, whereas the others are wandering around.

There is also the opposition between the strict teacher and friendly boss/teacher. Whereas the teachers of the normal workshops,³⁷⁶ which are called penal colonies, are strict and sometimes ruthless towards the kids, the teachers of the laboratories are quite student-friendly.³⁷⁷

The other workshops are stricter. Our instructors both resort to discipline and they also act in a friendly manner. That’s better.

Moreover, as the instructor of the Fiat company states, the brand acts as a mechanism for observation,³⁷⁸ since the students of Fiat cannot play long donkey in

³⁷⁴ David Schwartz, *The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 197.

³⁷⁵ Ibid. Italics are mine.

³⁷⁶ There is a point we should note here. On the walls of the private workshops, laboratory is written, whereas the normal workshops are simple workshops.

³⁷⁷ Interview with Fatih, 17 May 2007, İstanbul. *Diğer atölyeler mesela aşırı disiplinli. Bizde hocalar öğrencilerle gerek çok disiplinli gerek arkadaş gibi davranıyorlar bizlere. Daha iyi yani...*

³⁷⁸ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 191. As Foucault also states, these practices can seem to be trivial if we forget the role of this instrumentation, minor but flawless, in the progressive objectification and the ever more subtle partitioning of individual behaviour.

the school due to the fact that “Fiat” is written on the shirts they wear. As we see, with the techniques the capital resorts to, a blue-collar subjectivity based on brand loyalty is produced. The students, given a chance to study in much better conditions, position themselves as technicians of this or that company and differentiate themselves from the other students. In order to find out whether these techniques are successful, the comments of a Fiat student, Berkan might be helpful. When we were conducting the interview, Berkan initiated the process by asking which channel I was representing and I told him that I was a student as well. Then I asked his name. He gave the answer and even before I asked his thoughts about Fiat, he began to talk about the issue:³⁷⁹

The reason I preferred Fiat is that it is a local brand. I am keen on local cars. Fiat has been a famous car for ages. Taking this into consideration, I joined here. There was an interview at the beginning of the semester and then we came here. The functioning here is good. When you look at the other normal laboratories, the functioning is at a low level, though. Fiat service is widespread, on the other hand.

Here, what is striking is that the company offers him employment opportunity at an authorized service of Fiat, not in the “dirty” and ordinary workshops of the industry. Furthermore, it is evident that the language of competition is based on a dichotomy between local/foreign brand. Berkan, who enjoys wearing a beloved brand and loves Thursdays since it is his day to study at the private laboratory, did not hesitate to stress the brand when I asked what his parents were doing:³⁸⁰

³⁷⁹ Interview with Berkan, 17 May 2007, İstanbul. *Şu anda zati fiatı seçmemin sebebi fiat zati yerli bir araba. Yerli arabalara bir düşkünlüğüm var. Zati Tofaş fiat olunca da zati eskiden beri ünlü bir marka. Ben de bunu değerlendirerek buraya girdim. Zati ilk dönem başında ilk sınıftan mülakat sınavı yapıldı ondan sonra buraya geldik. Ve burada çok güzel işleyiş. Ama diğerki devlet atölyelerine bakarsanız orada biraz düşük işleyiş olarak. Hani Fiat servisi de yaygın.*

My father is a taxi driver. The car is Fiat Albea. All the drivers at that taxi station chose Fiat. Fiat Doblo, Fiat Albea, Marea. Fiat has many advantages. All measures have been taken in that car. There is the comfort of the passengers. Those who buy it are content with the comfort. That's why everybody uses Fiat.

The above quote indicates that the capital has penetrated to the everyday life perception of Berkan, since the example below also demonstrates that he locates places by means of brand. Look, how he listed the names and whereabouts of the Fiat services when I asked where he was living:³⁸¹

I live in Kuştepe, Şişli. And there is Gülsu Automotive at where Kuştepe begins. Then come Birmot, in Zincirlikuyu. There is Deha in Çağlayan. I visit these places, they are nice services.

As the examples above demonstrate, the educational attempt of the companies to raise a qualified workforce and loyal technicians seems to be working. Reminding us of total quality management systems which aim to reduce the errors to zero, the target is "to integrate the subjectivity of the working individual into the objectives of the organization."³⁸² While doing this, the discourse of efficiency and development is used and the discourse seems to have been adopted by the students as well. Sedat Kiriş, from Fiat, resorts to the discourse of the capital owners when mentioning about the reasons as to why Fiat launches a laboratory at his school.³⁸³

³⁸⁰ Interview with Berkan, 17 May 2007, İstanbul. Babam taksici, araba da Fiat Albea zati ... Babam Villa Taksidi, etiler'de. O duraktaki herkes zati fiatı seçti. Fiat doblo, fiat albea, marea seçtiler hepsi. Zati fiatın üstün yönleri çok farklı. Arabada alınmadık önlem olmuyor. Arabada herkes yolcu konforu var. Alan kişiler de zati konforu beğeniyor. Bu yüzden yani herkes fiatı kullanıyor.

³⁸¹ Interview with Berkan, 17 May 2007, İstanbul. *Kuştepe'de oturuyorum. Şişli. Zati Gülsu otomotiv var Kuştepe'nin başında. Ordan sonra Birmot geliyor Zincirlikuyu'da. Çağlayan'da Deha var. Bu bölümlere gidip geziyorum güzel servisler.*

³⁸² Zeybek, "Human Enterprise of Global Capitalism and the Golden Collars", 117.

³⁸³ Interview with Sedat, 17 May 2007, İstanbul. *Fiatın buraya bi laboratuvar açmasının amacı kaliteli öğrenciler kaliteli işçiler almak için yani şöyle bi baktığın zaman çalışacağın yerlerde bile yani usta çıracak ilişkisiyle yetişen kişiler var. yani teknik bilgi kapmış kimse yok çok az sayıda var*

The reason for Fiat's opening a laboratory here is to train qualified students and workers. When you look at where you are going to work, there are people who have been raised within the framework of the master-apprentice relation. That is, there aren't many people with technical knowledge, because – remember there is the project of Koç Group – vocational high schools are the issue of the country. Were it not for vocational high schools, the country wouldn't develop. This is the most crucial point, guiding yourself to the vocation. It is the vocation that develops a country.

Sedat's classmate, Turgay, draws a causal relationship between the development of human beings and the opening of similar workshops:³⁸⁴

It is a very good thing. We would like to see more laboratories being opened in terms of promoting our school and beauty. There is no school which have such laboratories ... They are innovative.

Fatih Karaçuha, a freshman Fiat student, underlines the difficulties of the companies to find qualified workers:³⁸⁵

There aren't qualified workers. Upon employing a worker, one or two years are spent for teaching him the job. Yet, when this is the case, you both learn the occupation adequately and there is no waste of time. You directly start the job, show your performance and people start to get products from you. Moreover, the quality of our country also increases as opposed to other ones.

There is the other side of the coin, yet. In other words, the students who are studying at "penal-colonies." Zafer, a freshman student, does not believe in the superiority of the brands:³⁸⁶

çünkü meslek lisesi koçun da başlattığı bi proje var zaten, meslek lisesi memleket meselesi. meslek liseleri öğrencileri olmasa ülke kalkınamaz en önemlisi bu zaten mesleğe yönelmek yani meslek olmadan zaten ülkeyi kaldıran meslek.

³⁸⁴ Interview with Turgay, 17 May 2007, İstanbul. *Çok iyi bir şey. Daha da açılmasını isteriz. Okulumuzun hem duyurulması açısından hem güzellik bakımından. Hiçbir okulda yok çünkü böyle laboratuvarlar. İnsanlar hem de daha çok gelişir böyle laboratuvarlarda ... Çünkü yenilikçi oluyorlar.*

³⁸⁵ Interview with Fatih, 17 May 2007, İstanbul. *Eğitilmiş işçiler yok. Bir işçiye işe aldıktan sonra bir sene iki sene sırf iş öğretmekle geçiyor. Ama bu şekilde olduğu zaman hem işini tam olarak öğreniyorsun, hem de vakit kaybolmuyor, direkt işe başlıyorsun, direkt çalışmaya performansını göstermeye ürün almaya başlıyor insanlar senden. Hem de bu şekilde ülkemizin kalitesi de artmış oluyor diğer ülkelere göre.*

I assume there is discrimination here. When students cannot attend a private workshop, they feel sorry. It would be better if there were private workshops. There is no difference between Fiat and here. They just have a name. They open workshops in order to promote their company. Fiat students' respect for us is not much. They try to make us jealous by saying that Fiat offers food for them.

However, Fatih, from Fiat, blames the other side of the coin in particular and human beings themselves in general for the situation they are in. Here is Fatih's reply³⁸⁷ to my question: Who is responsible for a person's failure?

The issue of clothes when coming here, for instance ... At the moment, our clothes are free but when coming to the interview, we wore a jacket. Some had their hair straight up, the tie is totally loose and the shirts are not inside the pants. That's how they came. They also knew but just for the sake of image. We entered the interview appropriately³⁸⁸ and answered the questions appropriately.

Zafer, from the other side of the coin, also considers himself to be deviant:³⁸⁹

The fact that students here do not attend classes stems from not teachers but students themselves. It is because of our blind behaviors. It is because we do

³⁸⁶ Interview Zafer, 5 December 2006, İstanbul. *Bence burada ayrımcılık var. Öğrenciler özel atölyeye gidemediğinde üzülüyorlar. Daha özel atölyeler olsa daha iyi olur ... Fiat ve burası arasında bir fark yok. Onların adı var Fiat şirketin tanıtımı için atölye açıyor. Fiat öğrencileri bize saygı duymuyor. Fiat bize yemek veriyor diyerek bizi koskandırmaya çalışıyorlar.*

³⁸⁷ Interview with Fatih, 17 May 2007, İstanbul. *İlk başta mesela kılık kıyafet, gelirken mesela... Bizim şu anda serbest ama kılık kıyafetimiz, mülakata girdiğimizde normal, ceketle falan giriyorduk. Bazıları saçları dikmiş, kravat sonuna kadar açık, gömlekler dışarıda. O şekilde geldiler. Onlar da biliyorlardı aslında ama sırf görüntü icabı geldi yani. Biz adam gibi girdik, adam gibi girince, sordukları soruya adam gibi cevaplar verdik.*

³⁸⁸ Doesn't this remind Foucault in the sense that he considers the examination to be highly ritualized in all the mechanisms of discipline? See Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 197.

³⁸⁹ Interview Zafer, 5 December 2006, İstanbul. *Burada öğrenciler derslere kendi yüzlerinden girmiyor, öğretmenlerden dolayı değil. Kötü davranışlarımız yüzünden. Çünkü neden, çalışmak istemiyoruz. Ama sonra pişman olacağız. Sorun öğrencilerde, başka şeyleri düşünüyorlar. Dışarıda daha mutlu olacaklarını sanıyorlar ama bilinçsizce kendi hayatlarını mahvediyorlar. Derslere girseler herşey farklı olur. Hayatlarının yarısını okulda geçirmeyi istemiyorlar.*

not want to study. Yet, we will regret soon. The problem lies within the students, thinking about other things. They assume they will be happier outside but they are unconsciously ruining their lives. If they attended classes, it would be different. They reject the idea of spending half of their lives at school.

Moreover, on this other side of the coin, not total quality management but strict discipline speaks. Whereas members of the penal-colony receive an education of “punctuality, neatness, respect for authority and other elements of habit formation”³⁹⁰ the brand students – they also learn these but not explicitly I guess – learn how to be flexible, team work and solve problems. Just as the New England First Reading Book teaches the alphabet to the kids³⁹¹; the symbols, pictures and signs in these penal-colony workshops are not as neat disciplinary techniques as in the private ones.

Figure 5. A Writing on the Wall of Normal Workshop³⁹²



This dividing practice of the brands, based on the “knowledge and practices drawn from the educational sciences provides modes of classification, control and

³⁹⁰ Apple, *Education and Power*, 62.

³⁹¹ Michael W. Apple, *Neoliberalizm ve Eğitim Politikaları Üzerine Eleştirel Yazılar*, ed. Fatma Gök (Ankara: Eğitim-Sen Yayınları, 2004). Alphabet is taught to the kids as follows: A clever son satisfies his father, a stupid son is a burden on her mother ... Christ lets everyone who works and suffers rest.

³⁹² On the wall, the words of the founder of the Republic: We need one thing and that is to be hardworking.

containment, often paradoxically linked to humanitarian rhetoric of reform and progress.³⁹³ This rhetoric of reform in vocational education, on the other hand, seems to disguise the capitalist accumulation logic, which in turn works itself out in such a manner that the students regard themselves as deviant, since they begin to state that “It is my fault. If only I had tried harder.”³⁹⁴ Nevertheless, it is only natural that “these lower-class students do not score as well on questions requiring broad cultural knowledge, because they lack the background of their upper-class schoolmates.”³⁹⁵

When we look at the narratives of the students, we understand that the “human psyche itself has become a possible domain for systematic government in the pursuit of socio-political ends.”³⁹⁶ As Nikolas Rose puts it, the shaping of the private self to achieve a socio-political aim is achieved not directly, since it would be an illegal invasion of privacy in a liberal democracy.³⁹⁷ On the contrary, this aim is accomplished indirectly “by way of the persuasion inherent in its truths, the anxieties stimulated by its norms, and the attraction exercised by the images of life and self it offers us.”³⁹⁸ In other words, the capital has understood that the aspirations, desires of working class kids can be worked through and in this way, productive, loyal technicians can be achieved within the process of both national and global competition. In this context, in line with Foucault’s bio-power whose target is the

³⁹³ Basil Bernstein, *Class, Codes and Control*, vol. 3 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975). Cited in Ball, “Introducing Monsieur Foucault,” 4.

³⁹⁴ Apple, *Education and Power*, 54.

³⁹⁵ Schwartz, *The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*, 201.

³⁹⁶ Nikolas Rose, *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self* (London: Routledge, 1989).

³⁹⁷ Peters, Marshall, and Fitzsimons, “Managerialism and Educational Policy in a Global Context: Foucault, Neoliberalism, and the Doctrine of Self-Management,” 120.

³⁹⁸ Rose, *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self*, 10.

body, capital resorts to another thing, which is busno-power.³⁹⁹ It is “directed at the subjectivity of the person not through the body but through the mind, through forms of educational practice and pedagogy so that people come to accept certain “truths” about themselves.”⁴⁰⁰ This busno-power, establishing a “meritocratic” system within the school, first selects the bodies and than tries to influence the minds with certain techniques. Here, the discourse of a neutral, ahistorical educational system forms the legitimacy of the selection process and the aspirations of the working class kids to get a decent job become the target of the brands.

As far as the level of unemployment of vocational high school graduates is concerned, the dominant discourse argues that one of the reasons is the inadequacy of school-industry partnerships. However, one very significant point seems to be ignored. The discourse of the market, based on a management rationale, is “a view which contends that social life can be mastered scientifically and can be understood and organized according to law-like generalizations ... It presents itself as an objective, technically neutral mechanism.”⁴⁰¹ By putting the blame on “deviant” students, teacher and parents, individuals are permitted “to effect their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and a way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immorality.”⁴⁰²

³⁹⁹ Peters, Marshall, and Fitzsimons, "Managerialism and Educational Policy in a Global Context: Foucault, Neoliberalism, and the Doctrine of Self-Management."

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., 122.

⁴⁰¹ Ball, "Management as Moral Technology," 157. Ball further states that management is an imperialist discourse which views the social world as locked into irrational chaos, as needing to be brought into its redeeming order. The managed are fragile, prone to irrationality, atavistic practices, and surfeits of emotion. The problem is taken to be in the person rather than the system and collective interests, other than those of the system are in effect deconstructed.

⁴⁰² Ibid., 161.

As Ball very aptly puts it, here we see that efficiency is deemed to be a neutral category and “the costs involved for workers (in our case students) in achieving greater efficiency are rarely considered”.⁴⁰³ Nevertheless, what we see through the penetration of capital is the creation of an enterprise culture. In this respect, even though some might consider the issue as a beneficial one for working class kids in terms of integration with the labor market, there is a risk for the kids to lose their subjectivity, since it is formed within a context which only seemingly makes them the subjects of their lives. They actually learn to capitalize themselves while trying to find a decent job. When we compare the number of brand students to the total number of the students in Şişli Industrial High school, it is a drop in the ocean. After all, as İnal asks, how many of these students can meet the demands of the business circles and find a job appropriate to their positions?⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰³ Ibid., 154.

⁴⁰⁴ Kemal İnal, "Kapitalizmde mesleki-teknik eğitim ve emek/piyasa ilişkisi," *Evrensel*, 19 Şubat 2007 2007.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The desire of the capital owners to approximate education and vocational education with the needs of production is not a secret. Policy papers, speeches of businessmen and officials all point to a consensus regarding this “need” and “desire.” This outcry indicates that there are problems or perhaps resistance as far as this project of approximation is concerned. What is understood by the remarks of business circles is that the public sector feels hesitant to make a step ahead in this process. Back in 2000, for instance, Naomi Klein wrote that one of the pamphlets in 4. Annual Kid Power Marketing Conference said the market of youth was a virgin source of revenue,⁴⁰⁵ which means the commercialization of the space of youth is a recent phenomenon.

However, this is finally being overcome, as we have seen. Youth and childhood, “ha[ve]s simply been transformed into a market strategy and a fashion aesthetic used to expand the consumer-based needs of privileged adults who live within a market culture that has little concern for ethical considerations, noncommercial spaces or public responsibilities.”⁴⁰⁶ The commercialization and the penetration of brands, of course, is not in vain, since “each kind of social formation requires a particular kind of individual.”⁴⁰⁷ When we think that we have been constantly hearing phrases like “entrepreneurial culture” and “lifelong learner,” it

⁴⁰⁵ Naomi Klein, *No Logo*, trans. Nalan Uysal (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 2002), 109.

⁴⁰⁶ Henry A. Giroux, *Stealing Innocence: Youth, Corporate Power and the Politics of Culture* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 19.

⁴⁰⁷ Apple, *Education and Power*, 138.

becomes easier to situate the context of the penetration of the brands into the school. Schools are important sites, in this respect since, they “help produce agents for positions outside of the school in the economic sector of society; and second, produce the cultural forms directly and indirectly needed by this same economic sector.”⁴⁰⁸ In other words, apart from the allocation of the individuals in line with what the market requires, they act as institutions through which students understand, give meaning to the social reality and in that sense, schools produce meanings. As Richard Johnson also posits, “it is not so much a question that schools ... *are* ideology, more that they are the sites where ideologies are produced in the form of subjectivities.”⁴⁰⁹

So, what kind of a personhood and subjectivity do the capital owners target in vocational high schools? It is clear from the ongoing transformation that the new blue-collar worker is assumed to be qualified, flexible, keen on learning and adapting himself to the changing market conditions and loyal to the brand for which he/she is going to work. Within this process, it is also evident that the school is transformed to be an extension of private companies and match the right students to the right companies. For one thing, they have to, because the existing system is such that ‘the least successful students’ of the system are attending their schools. As Orhan Devocioğlu from Şişli Industrial High School indicates⁴¹⁰, this was not the issue before the duration of compulsory education became 8 years. He tells us that

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid., 41.

⁴⁰⁹ Richard Johnson, "Three Problematics: Elements of a Theory of Working Class Culture," in *Working Class Culture*, ed. John Clarke, Chas Critcher, and Richard Johnson (London: Hutchinson, 1978). Cited in Apple, *Education and Power*, 138.

⁴¹⁰ Interview with Orhan Devocioğlu, 6 March 2007. 70’lerde, 74’lerde, 90’lı yıllara, yani ilköğretimin 8 yıla çıkarıldığı zamana kadar meslek liseleri üniversite ayarındaydı. Fen lisesi ayarındaydı, süper lise ayarındaydı. O zamanlar buralara sınavla girilir, sınavı kazanamayan öğrenciler düz liselere gidiyorlardı. Meslek liselerinin önünde bir engel yoktu.

vocational high schools had the quality of today's most successful high schools, where there was an intensive education in science and math. In the 1970s, for instance, people had to pass an exam to attend these schools and those who couldn't, would attend normal high schools. Moreover, there was no barrier ahead of the graduates. After all, this is a matter of legitimacy. Why do these schools exist? Therefore, entrepreneurial headmasters took the initiative and tried to get companies invest in their school. As the "quality" of the students has decreased and there is the issue of university entrance exam quotients, the companies are more willing to participate in such partnerships. When we take the case of Toyota, they have been there for more than a decade, whereas Volkswagen has launched a second partnership in Kartal and Fiat, Harley Davidson were the last ones to make the same step. Honda is expected to become the last company.

The strategy of the companies seems to be working through the aspirations of the kids; they aim to create the subjectivity of the technician they require. However, we should note that there is no official guarantee of employment, even though most of the kids are employed by these companies. Moreover, the companies might withdraw from the partnership when they fill the empty positions. In this process, the school becomes implicitly accountable to the company and the market in terms of the quality of the students. What is more important, in my opinion, is that through the selective mechanism, the meritocratic ideology is maintained. In this respect, an implicit naturalization of the market economy, which entails promoting failure/success narrative and glorifying the power of the individual to solve problems,⁴¹¹ takes place. Like the School to Work programs in the USA, this kind of

⁴¹¹ Faith Agostinone-Wilson, "Downsized Discourse: Classroom Management, Neoliberalism, and the Shaping of Correct Workplace Attitude," *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies* 4, no. 2 (2006).

a partnership “brings with it the training courses, the discourse, the curriculum, and the culture of the corporate entity.”⁴¹² The thing is, even though this mechanism provides – perhaps better – employment conditions for future blue collars, “the cost of creating such workers of efficiency will be a loss of autonomy, non-participation in decision making, a denial of democratic freedom, and a lack of personal development through work.”⁴¹³ Moreover, for the sake of creating docile, qualified graduates, the educators seem to be neglecting the fact that “the power of corporate culture, when left to its own devices, respects few boundaries and even fewer basic social needs, such as the need for uncontaminated food, decent health care, and safe forms of transportations.”⁴¹⁴ Furthermore, what kind of a language, as Terry Robertson states, do these educators use? Does this language of efficiency also refer to “the truth about the world in which we live”⁴¹⁵ as Yates asks when he evaluates his personal story from a working class kid to become a professor. Does that tell anything about the arts except the 100 essential works selected by the Ministry?

This discourse of loyal technicians and efficiency,⁴¹⁶ actually assumes that “education can be conceptualized and managed like any other service or institution and it homogenizes all technical or institutional problems as *management*

⁴¹² Robertson, "Class Issues: A Critical Ethnography of Corporate Domination within the Classroom."

⁴¹³ Ibid. Robertson gives the example of HSBC which has formed a partnership with Malta's schools. Quoting a study, he tells us that the introduction of corporate power into the educational process leads to the corporation becoming the primary agent, agenda setter and major beneficiary of the partnership. *It impacts what students think and eventually their actions.*

⁴¹⁴ Giroux, *Stealing Innocence: Youth, Corporate Power and the Politics of Culture.*

⁴¹⁵ Michael D. Yates, "Class: a personal story," *Monthly Review* 58, no. 3 (2006). For suggestions regarding a critical work education, see Richard D. Lakes, "If Vocational Education Became Critical Work Education," *Philosophy of Education* (1993). The article is available at http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/EPS/PES-Yearbook/93_docs/LAKES.HTM

⁴¹⁶ Here, it might be helpful to remember Gaye Yılmaz's remarks that efficiency cannot be shared; it is not efficiency if it is shared. See Gaye Yılmaz, "Verimlilik Paylaşılmaz; Paylaşılsa, Verimlilik Olmaz..." *Evrensel Kültür*, no. July (2002).

problems”⁴¹⁷ A reproduction of the modernization paradigm, this reform discourse – based on competition, productivity – imposes “a whole set of presuppositions as inevitable: it is taken for granted that maximum growth, and therefore productivity and competitiveness, are the ultimate and sole goal of human actions; or that economic factors cannot be resisted.”⁴¹⁸ As Bourdieu very aptly posits, “there is a radical separation between the economic and the social, which is left to one side, abandoned to sociologists.”⁴¹⁹ Moreover, this discourse considers educational realm as one where all actors are playing the game on equal terms. In that sense, it “lacks the ability to acknowledge students’ histories, the stories that inform their lives.”⁴²⁰ If this kind of an inadequate approach were that successful, Artur, a senior student who claimed to shake Turkey with what he would tell me, would not ask me whether I was there just to complete an assignment or to make their voices heard. If I have ever come close to decentring myself⁴²¹ and letting them speak, then I will assume that I have done something.

⁴¹⁷ Peters, Marshall, and Fitzsimons, "Managerialism and Educational Policy in a Global Context: Foucault, Neoliberalism, and the Doctrine of Self-Management," 112.

⁴¹⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, *Acts of Resistance: Against the New Myths of Our Time* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), 30.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁴²⁰ Giroux, *Stealing Innocence: Youth, Corporate Power and the Politics of Culture*. When conducting my field work, I witnessed that the kids made many mistakes when filling in the questionnaires in terms of grammar, for instance.

⁴²¹ Arif Dirlik, "Culturalism as Hegemonic Ideology and Liberating Practices," in *The Postcolonial Aura*, ed. Arif Dirlik (Colorado: Westview Press, 1997).

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