



Deskilling of Teachers: The Case of Turkey*

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Abstract

Studies in various Western countries since the 1980s established that teachers find themselves increasingly more subjected to outside control and are often reduced to enforcers of decisions made by others. This study presents findings from a qualitative study with 20 teachers in an attempt to discover i) whether teachers' work is being transformed and ii) what type of transformation, if any, takes place. It first analyzes the debate on changes in teachers' skills in advanced industrial societies and moves onto a discussion of the nature of teachers' work, the transformation thereof and the alleged deskilling of teachers. The study later presents findings from a qualitative research indicating that there are significant similarities and differences between teachers' experiences in Turkey and in developed countries. This study reveals that the deskilling approach fails to adequately account for Turkish teachers' experiences, agency and adaptability. Furthermore, while teachers do not regard rather detailed curricula and guidebooks as a restriction of their professional domain, they express the opposite view regarding interventions by parents, inspectors and others. Finally, the study demonstrates that educators in Turkey have strong concerns regarding the future of their profession.

Key Words

Control, Decision-making, Deskilling, Guidebooks, Professionalism, Teachers' Work.

Teaching as a profession in Western countries underwent a significant transformation from the 1980s onwards. The changes occurred in two ways. First, the critical role of high-quality teachers within the education system began to draw increasingly more attention (Barber & Mourshed, 2007). As students' shortcomings and various social problems came to be associated with teachers' underperformance, decision-makers took various steps to render teachers more qualified and to transform teaching into a professional occupation (Ingersoll, 2012). Second, such steps, in turn, have transformed traditional forms of teaching as teachers' work has been subjected to increasingly

control from outside. As such, a number of decisions that teachers can reach and implement themselves have been redirected to outside decision-makers who presented teachers with certain decisions for implementation (Apple, 1988, 1995; Shannon, 1989). The outcome of these changes has been to move teachers away from decision-making processes. Studies show that teachers have no control over the majority of decisions regarding schools' daily procedures (Ingersoll, 2007, 2012). For instance, teachers in many countries are not even entitled to choose which textbooks to be used in their classes. As such, traditional definitions of teaching including *respect* (i.e., teachers want the

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best for their students), *trust* (i.e., teachers have the right skills to perform their tasks), *autonomy* (i.e., the teacher is responsible and accountable for education-related decisions in the classroom and the school) and life-long job security have become contested (Day, 2000). Considering that children spend a significant part of their lives at school, it is understandable for parents and the governmental authorities to become involved in education and to concentrate on teachers' qualifications. Meanwhile, teachers have increasingly less authority over teaching, undertake increasingly more administrative duties and face busier schedules as they come under more central control, make use of prepackaged educational materials, place greater emphasis on standardized tests and find themselves surrounded by *managerialism* in the workplace (Hall, 2004; Helsby, 2000; Luke, 2006). Furthermore, reform policies geared toward structural harmonization in many countries have worsened the working conditions of educators (Day, 2000). Overall, teachers in various countries find themselves seriously demoralized, disenfranchised and discouraged. Moreover, educators in both developed and developing countries experience more and more concern over their professional status. Meanwhile, academic publications and policy papers make frequent references to teachers' shortcomings while often ignoring studies on teachers' working conditions and living standards (Özoğlu, Gür, & Altınoğlu, 2013; Voluntary Service Overseas [VSO], 2002).

A considerable body of scientific literature has dealt with the transformation of teaching as a profession. As I discuss in greater detail below, existing studies mostly concentrate on post-1980 transformations in Anglo-Saxon countries. In contrast, with few exceptions, researchers paid almost no attention to developing countries (Wong, 2006). In light of this trend, there is a need to evaluate whether the various inclinations, shifts and changes in the aforementioned literature accurately reflect developments in Turkey. As such, based on the perceptions of teachers, this study aims to explore whether teacher's work undergoes any transformations and to demonstrate what type of transformations, if any, take place. In this context, I analyze the debate on employee skills in advanced industrial societies and then move onto a discussion of teachers' work and control. Following an analysis of the *deskilling* approach, I discuss what the above debates mean for teachers in Turkey and present the findings from a qualitative research on the subject matter.

Public debates on teaching as a profession in Turkey have largely concentrated on the question of who may become a teacher instead of teachers' work itself. In this sense, discussions on the profession of teaching embody a narrative of progress and changes in teachers' training systems and programs (Küçükahmet, 2003a, 2003b). Again, debates on the respectability of teaching as a profession typically tend to focus on teachers' financial circumstances and appointments (Celep, 2005). Based on the perception of teachers, this study, however, differs from above-mentioned discussions in attempting to tackle the question of whether or not teachers' work is being transformed.

Theoretical and Global Context

Prior to debating the various changes in teachers' work, one must engage the discussion about skill changes of employees in advanced industrial societies. Later, I shall consider the qualities of teachers' work and existing tendencies to control such work. Finally, I will analyze contemporary debates on deskilling of teachers.

Upskilling and Deskilling

There are at least two contradictory approaches regarding the transformation of work and professions in advanced societies: proponents of the first approach including Bell, Touraine, Habermas, Fuchs and Becker maintain that there will be greater demand for skilled (as such, educated) individuals as societies progress (Penn, 1983). Especially after World War II, economic growth in various Western advanced industrial societies entailed job creation, increased consumption and positive expectations for the future (Heisig, 2009). Accordingly, technological advances would result in greater demand for skilled employees and require employees to *upskill* and/or *upgrade* their skills. The latter approach, however, posits that –in contrast to the above-summarized expectations– employees have become exposed to *deskilling* especially from the 1960s and 1970s onward. A large number of Marxist theoreticians adopted the latter view: according to Braverman –who published *Labor and Monopoly Capital* in 1974– capitalist modes of production and increased control over work systematically destroyed artisanship (Braverman, 1998). In other words, working class labor and work faced devaluation. Braverman remarked that modern enterprises adopted the principles of Frederick W. Taylor (1856-1915) who was fundamentally interested in

controlling labor at a certain level of technological advancement. Taylor's notion of scientific management, accordingly, sought to separate design from implementation and thereby to accumulate all information and authority at the hands of management. As such, this approach redefined all work processes and distinguished between manual labor and intellectual work. Some evidence supports Braverman's claim that the aforementioned processes contributed to the devaluation of work. For instance, "the transformation of the knowledge base through scientific management led to the abandonment of the upward mobility of skilled manual workers and imprisoned them in the lower ranks of the firm" (Heisig, 2009, p. 1641). Notwithstanding, the number of jobs that require manual skills are decreasing and the view that laborers' work is devalued in order to control employees fails to adequately account for emerging realities (Heisig, 2009).

Generally speaking, both above-mentioned approaches represent largely deterministic views that predict certain isomorphic changes in response to technological advancements. These predictions, however, must be tested to see how the trends progress in different societies and what kind of response they receive from individuals (Penn, 1983). Especially from the 1980s onwards, the increasing integration of computers into work processes has resulted in employees' upskilling. As such, this new trend effectively pressured employees toward upskilling and thereby worked against deskilling. In other words, deskilling and upskilling processes occur simultaneously, at different levels and in different frequencies. Moreover, international comparative studies demonstrated that existing skill sets of employees tend to influence countries' and companies' preferred skill strategy (Heisig, 2009). In this regard, different countries adopt different skill development strategies in order to strengthen their positions in the international economic competition: In a competitive environment, the deskilling approach would not prove a reasonable option for countries as deskilling of employees might decrease a country's economic competitiveness. Furthermore, novel production structures simultaneously seek more qualified laborers while jeopardizing job security. In this setting, it becomes more and more important for employees to develop new skills including flexibility and adaptability to changing working conditions.

Teacher's Work and Control

Allegations regarding serious transformations of teachers' work exist especially in English-speaking Western countries. The said transformation manifests itself in various forms. Hargreaves (2000) posits that a four-tier approach would best describe the various changes in teaching: (i) the pre-professional age, (ii) the age of the autonomous professional, (iii) the age of the collegial professional and (iv) the post-professional or postmodern age. During the pre-professional age, teaching represented a form of artisanship that did not require too much technical knowledge. As such, teachers' training relied on trial and error or occurred through apprenticeship. Especially from the 1960s onwards, the aforementioned countries moved into the age of the autonomous professional, when teaching evolved into an area of expertise that necessitated college-level education where teachers were allowed to follow procedures and approaches that they deemed preferable. The age of the autonomous professional came under scrutiny in the mid-1980s as teachers' work underwent yet another transformation. During this period, teachers found themselves increasingly compelled to adopt educational approaches that managers, experts and technocrats deemed appropriate. As such, the age of the collegial professional gave rise to more cooperation among teachers in an attempt to cope with rapid changes and transformations. Finally, the profession of teaching has (begun to) enter a new postmodern age in the new millennium. This post-professional period allows a greater number of groups to interfere in teachers' work and adds to the level of uncertainty in teachers' lives.

The above periodization did not occur in the same order in every country (Hargreaves, 2000). Furthermore, some studies rejected the view that teachers were entitled to a significant degree of autonomy until the 1980s as a myth and claimed that centralized examinations have directed and regulated teachers' work from earlier on (McCulloch, 2000). Overall, teachers maintained throughout the 20th century that their profession required higher learning and skills, and therefore deserved the same social status as medical doctors and lawyers (Özoğlu et al., 2013). The specific implications of the professionalization of teaching, however, remains contested. According to the *professional model* that sociologists use to analyze professions, professionals have the following qualities: Serious training and licenses/certifications, amenable working conditions,

active professional associations, significant levels of authority in the workplace and high prestige (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2011). From this perspective, teachers would seem to satisfy the criteria for professionalism—albeit not to the same degree as medical doctors and lawyers. Notwithstanding, the level of professionalization would differ according to the type of school and location. Similarly, each additional step to transform the profession of teaching inevitably changes the nature of teachers' work and gives rise to certain defense mechanisms. More important, teachers' reactions toward and perceptions of such initiatives might vary (Helsby, 2000).

From the 1980s onwards, observers claimed that various reforms affecting teachers have been implemented in order to render teachers more professional. Leaving aside the positive rhetoric, however, it would become clear that the various techniques and approaches adopted to promote professionalism imposed serious restrictions on teachers' autonomy (Popkewitz, 1991). In other words, efforts to equip teachers with greater responsibility and professionalism have effectively reduced their autonomy and power. For instance, educators in many countries exercise very little, if at all, control over curricula, class hours and decisions to pass or fail students (Özoğlu et al., 2013). Moreover, teachers' work has become more prone to outside control under the pretext of improving the quality of education. Although all such external monitoring takes place to boost the education system's performance, greater control effectively fails to make such improvements while compelling teachers to focus on monitoring processes at the expense of their work and thereby causing demotivation among educators (Ingersoll, 2012).

Deskilling Teachers

A number of studies attempting to demonstrate the various changes and transformations in teachers' work practices employed the term *deskilling* for this purpose. According to the deskilling approach, teachers increasingly lose control over their own labor. In other words, authorities present teachers with ready decisions in many situations where teachers are otherwise able to make their own decisions and implement them autonomously. This creates a situation where teachers are expected to serve as mere implementers (Apple, 1988, 1995; Shannon, 1989). For instance, teachers are increasingly expected to employ prepackaged curricula and teaching materials such as

guidebooks, textbooks, lesson plans and measuring tools at the expense of their capacity to tailor their programs according to local context and students' needs. As such, an ever-increasing gap emerges between the designing, creating and modelling teaching-related tasks and their implementation. Reflecting a need to control the teacher's every step, this approach regards education as the development of a set of educational processes and materials that even an inexperienced teacher can easily follow (Gür, 2006). Surely enough, various studies in a number of different countries have established that teachers are subject to increasingly more control whereby they are reduced to mere implementers of others' decisions and, as such, deskilled (Easthope & Easthope, 2000).

Teachers' deskilling entails a differentiation and intensification of their work. In other words, teachers are expected to perform more tasks in less time than before. Even worse, educators' involvement in administrative affairs often occurs at the expense of their attention to students' needs (Apple, 1988). Furthermore, teachers face intense pressure to work harder while coping with various changes under the same, if not worse, working conditions. Notwithstanding, it should be noted that the intensification process does not affect all teachers in the same manner (Hargreaves, 1994). Still, a number of factors including student-centered education reforms, technology's integration into education, decreased funding for education, changes in measurement and evaluation techniques, teachers' increased social responsibility, bureaucratic workload necessary for new accountability mechanisms, changes in student population and additional extra-curricular activities often require teachers to work harder. As such, teachers' work has become more complicated than before (Altunoğlu, 2012; Easthope & Easthope, 2000; Luke, 2006).

Whether the deskilling approach adequately reflects teachers' experiences or not remains up for debate. Although teachers' experiences with and opinions of the various transformations of their work matter, macro-level discussions did not pay enough attention to these factors (Day, 2000). Meanwhile, the initial belief that education policies in the United Kingdom have rendered teachers proletarian and reduced them into implementers was countered with later studies that demonstrated teachers did not act as passive recipients and instead developed their own defense mechanisms to resist outside control in various ways (Helsby,

2000). A study of English language teachers in Iran also revealed that some teachers did not employ guidebooks –that are often criticized for deskillling teachers- at all while their inexperienced colleagues closely followed the instructions and found useful (Zabihi & Tabataba’ian, 2011). In this sense, it would be inaccurate to claim that guidebooks have the same influence over and contribute to the deskillling of all teachers. Furthermore, such materials may serve to empower new and inexperienced teachers. Teachers, therefore, demonstrate agency and become actively involved in the implementation of decisions and teaching materials involving their profession. Similarly, as we discuss in greater detail below, teachers tend to lose certain skills while developing others.

Processes of teachers’ professionalization and deskillling tend to accompany simultaneous processes that allow them to develop new skills. For example, some teachers developed a new set of managerial skills in order to perform the tasks that the authorities expect them to undertake (Apple, 1988). A study in China demonstrated that decentralization efforts served to deskill teachers while a small number of educators updated their pedagogical practices and knowledge when faced with competition (Wong, 2006). Generally speaking, teachers tend to regard continuing education efforts as a key component of their professional development (Ifanti & Fotopoulou, 2011). Some observers recommend that professionalism should serve as a discourse that allows us to simultaneously recognize deskillling and upskilling. Professionalism as a discourse, then, would refer to the redefining of education, organization of educational work and the teacher’s role (Seddon, 1997).

The Turkish Context

The existing debate on deskillling has been largely informed by terms and experiences relevant to English-speaking Western countries. As such, discussions regarding remaining countries have been extremely limited. For instance, a study on how China’s decentralization efforts affect teachers revealed similar results to developed countries including that teachers were highly dependent on government guidelines in their selection of education materials and exam contents (Wong, 2006). Provided that governments continue to largely determine the domain of education, however, such outcomes must not be surprising. In this regard, Turkey -where the state maintains its central role in determining and implementing

education policies- would differ from Anglo-Saxon and Latin American countries with shrinking public education sectors. Compared to various countries that this study touched upon during its discussion of the deskillling approach above, Turkey displays various idiosyncratic qualities. Primarily, teachers in Northern and Western countries maintain some degree of autonomy over class themes and teaching methods within general standards that the authorities prescribe. As such, neither the United States nor Germany has one official textbook for a lesson. Similarly, local governments and school administrators contribute to education policies. In contrast, Turkey’s centralized approach entails severe restrictions. For instance, the Ministry of National Education centrally determines detailed curricula, education materials and textbooks. In this sense, guidebooks that are expected to assist teachers “appear to determine all aspects [of education] without granting the teacher any room for autonomy or flexibility” (Uysal, Alabaş, & Polat, 2011, p. 89). Considering that Turkish teachers indeed frequently use guidebooks (Güner, 2011), analyzing the influence of the country’s centralist approach to teachers’ work would be a worthy enterprise.

Guidebooks tend to present teachers with templates and expect their implementation instead of regarding teachers as experts with decision-making capabilities. For instance, a guidebook for first grade social studies teachers requests that teachers ask students the following question in preparation of the class on day and night: “Kids, the world is turning. Did you know that?” The book continues: “Cheer up the students by asking why we do not feel dizzy or nauseated if the world is turning. Begin the lecture with the question: Do you feel the world turning?” (Aldal, Kalın Falakaoğlu, & Çetin, 2009, p. 214). The guidebook describes what the teacher should do following the preparatory steps:

Say, “let us see and understand how this works,” then create a model of the sun and the Earth with a small ball and a flashlight. You can use a globe, if available, instead of a ball. Mark a spot on the ball with your pen and say: “Let us presume this is where we live.” Turn off the lights or shut the curtains to make the classroom dim. Turn on the flashlight and point it to the ball. Let a student slowly rotate the ball. As it rotates, the marked spot will be lit and remain in the dark.”

Instruct students to open pages 128 and 129 of their textbook. Ask them to study the figures in their textbook. (Aldal et al., 2009, p. 214).

Simply put, the teacher would not have to make any additional effort to explain class contents to students or to think of a class activity thanks to the guidebook (Özoğlu, Gür, & Çelik, 2010). The teacher's task would be to implement the pre-designed lesson. Still, the availability of guidebooks does not necessarily indicate that teachers follow them and relinquish all of their subjectivity and agency at work. Notwithstanding, some studies in Turkey indicate that guidebooks, school administrators, teachers' boards and inspectors exert restrictions on teachers' autonomy. As such, the majority of teachers stated that they were supposed to commit to the pre-determined educational approach and to follow guidelines for measurements and evaluation purposes (Taneri, 2011). Another study concluded that teachers willingly followed guidebooks and stated that they were expected to "absolutely" follow the instructions (Çelik, 2012). Similarly, teachers participating in another study seemed content with guidebooks even though they acknowledged that such materials restricted their autonomy (Güner, 2011). Such findings demonstrate that Turkish teachers find themselves faced with serious restrictions on their educational approaches (Uysal et al., 2011). As such, centrist policies that work at the expense of teachers' decision-making capabilities inevitably run the risk of deskilling educators (Güner, 2011). Finally, certain reforms and changes in the national education system tend to affect teachers' work. For instance, studies following the curriculum reform of Turkey in 2004 demonstrated that teachers had to devote increasingly more time to non-teaching responsibilities including filling forms and preparing class materials (Altunoğlu, 2012; Çelik, 2012).

Scope of Research

This research aims to find out whether teachers' work is being transformed in Turkey and what type of transformation, if any, takes place according to teachers' perceptions and experiences. Accordingly, the research analyzes the roles attributed to teachers in terms of making and implementing educational decisions in class environment in particular and to what extent teachers face pressure.

Method

This is a qualitative study which attempts to reveal teachers' experiences in whether their work is being transformed and whether they face pressure while making educational decisions. Within this scope, semi-structured interview questions have been prepared. Similar to other qualitative studies, this study mainly aims to find participants who could provide rich and diverse data (Creswell, 2003). The researcher did not decide the number of participants prior to conducting research and ended the research when he felt that sufficient and rich data was obtained for analysis.

Data Collection Instrument

The draft of semi-structured interview questions was prepared according to related literature and has been shared with four persons who are experts in educational sciences, sociology, and statistics. The set of questions has been finalized according to the experts' evaluations. Furthermore, a pilot study with a teacher has been carried out and questions have been revised accordingly.

Finalized major interview questions are as follows: *i) Who decides what to teach your students? Who should decide? ii) (For elementary school teachers) Do you use guidebooks? What is your assessment on using these books? iii) Apart from your teaching activities in your class, what are your other duties in the school as a teacher? iv) Is there any changes in your role or work as teacher in the recent years? v) What are your hopes or worries for the future of teaching as a profession?*

Participants

The data has been gathered from 20 teachers working at different grade levels in different schools of Ankara. Teachers from different grade levels (elementary, middle and high school) and different subject areas have been included in the study in order to enrich the data. Furthermore, the study has included teachers with different professional experience in terms of years in both state and private schools. Participant information is given in detail in the following table (Table 1). While 25% of the participants are from private schools, 75% of them are from public schools. In addition, while 55% of them are male, 45 of them are females. Moreover, 35% of them are class teachers (elementary school), 20% are Turkish language, 10% are Social Studies, 10% are Technology and

Design, and the rest are from English, Natural Sciences, and Geography. Moreover, 40% of them are from elementary schools, 50% are from middle schools, and 10% are from the high schools. The mean age of the participants is 34.

Processes

Semi-structured interview questions have been prepared to reveal teachers' experience regarding whether their work has been transformed and whether they face pressure while making educational decisions. Interviews were conducted in January-May, 2013. Participants were asked to remain anonymous in order to freely express themselves, and they were informed in this sense prior to interviews. Interviews were recorded upon the permission from participants. Furthermore, researcher also took quick notes during the interviews in order to support recordings (recordings were sufficient; therefore, researcher did not use these notes). Finally, pseudonyms were used in data analysis in order to maintain anonymity of participants.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted according to steps provided by Creswell (2003) for qualitative research. Firstly, recordings were sorted and arranged. Secondly, texts were read and reread to

obtain a general idea and to reflect on its overall meaning. Thirdly, similar topics were clustered and abbreviated as codes. Fourthly, a smaller number of themes were generated according to codes (Table 2). Fifthly, findings were interconnected; interconnected findings were discussed, and descriptive information about participants was conveyed in a table (Table 1). Sixthly, findings were interpreted and compared in the light of literature. In this way, whether the findings confirm or diverge from the past studies are discussed. New questions that need to be researched are also suggested.

Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability of qualitative researches is controversial. Notwithstanding the strategy of using an external auditor (Creswell, 2003) was employed in order for validating the accuracy of findings. Accordingly, two academicians who are experts in scientific research worked as external auditors throughout the process. The researcher informed auditors about the research process and final draft of the article, and auditors provided assessments. The article was finalized according to these assessments.

Table 1.
Participants' Information

| Nickname | Gender | Subject | Age | Professional Experience (Years) | Type of Institution | Grade Level |
|----------|--------|---------------------|-----|---------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Ayşe | Female | Turkish | 33 | 9 | Private | Middle School |
| Ali | Male | Geography | 28 | 8,5 | Public | High School |
| Hasan | Male | Mathematics | 40 | 17 | Public | High School |
| Onur | Male | English | 29 | 6,5 | Public | Elementary School |
| Haydar | Male | Class | 48 | 26 | Public | Elementary School |
| Yasin | Male | Class | 26 | 3 | Public | Elementary School |
| Emir | Male | Turkish | 41 | 16 | Public | Middle School |
| Eda | Female | Class | 35 | 14 | Public | Elementary School |
| Merve | Female | Class | 44 | 16 | Public | Elementary School |
| Erdal | Male | Class | 40 | 16 | Public | Elementary School |
| Erol | Male | Technology & Design | 32 | 9 | Public | Middle School |
| Elif | Female | Technology & Design | 33 | 13 | Public | Middle School |
| Zeki | Male | Turkish | 36 | 14 | Public | Middle School |
| Aysel | Female | Turkish | 41 | 8 | Public | Middle School |
| Veli | Male | Social Sciences | 28 | 6 | Public | Middle School |
| Seda | Female | Turkish | 31 | 8 | Public | Middle School |
| Ceren | Female | Class | 29 | 6 | Private | Elementary School |
| Nalan | Female | Class | 27 | 3 | Private | Elementary School |
| Sevda | Female | Social Sciences | 29 | 6 | Private | Middle School |
| Fatih | Male | Natural Sciences | 29 | 7 | Private | Middle School |

Table 2.
Major Themes and Codes

| Themes | Codes |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Decision-making | Determine Decide Interfere Bound by Design Implementation Impediment |
| Autonomy (and challenges) | Challenges Impediment Restrictions/support from parents/administrators |
| Pressure | Pressure from parents/inspectors Testing |
| Guidebooks | Guiding and orienting Inspections Distrust Pacification Scripted instruction |
| Workload | (Unwanted) labor Intensification Paperwork/bureaucracy Exhaustion Upskilling |
| Professional respectability | Loss of respect Status Questioning/objection Complaint Trust |
| Future expectations | Devaluation Worry Hope/hopelessness |

Findings and Discussion

The following section analyzes research findings from in-depth interviews with participating teachers. The material will be analyzed with reference to following themes: Decision-making, autonomy (and challenges), pressure, guidebooks, workload, professional respectability and future expectations.

Decision Making

Teachers’ opinions on what topics the students should be taught seemed to largely correspond with each other. As such, the study revealed that teachers had broad decision-making powers that various factors including curricula restricted. For instance, Ayşe –who has nine years of teaching experience– referred to this issue as follows:

The Ministry interferes with the curriculum. However, they are not too familiar with what goes on within the classroom. No matter how much influence they might have over the curriculum, the teacher does and will determine the contents. In other words, school administrators, the Ministry and even the Minister himself have no power. In this case, teachers are faced with students. ... No

matter the contents, the teachers determine how they will convey it to students. The teachers will decide what examples they provide.

As the above statement indicates, the participating teacher believed that determining every single detail of the curriculum would not absolutely restrict the teacher and her way of teaching. Other participants (Merve, Seda) also stated that while the Ministry of National Education determined *what* teachers would teach through programs and guidebooks, teachers’ individual preferences nonetheless were influential over *how* they would teach (i.e. methodology and techniques). For instance, Zeki, a Turkish language teacher, argued that teachers benefit from the programs but are not absolutely bound by them: “We ourselves determine methodology in line with the curricula/ programs, whose adequacy remains up for debate. We make up for the program’s shortcomings but their themes play a key role. Still, we all have our own ways.” Meanwhile, Fatih explains that he could play an active role in practice while lacking any involvement in the curriculum/program: “We have a curriculum that reflects the educational approach of my school which determined the framework. I, however, design class activities. I take care of design and implementation.” Ali, a geography teacher, defined the teacher’s defining role as follows: “For instance, I did talk about economics and sociology in my classes. We should not prevent such things if they help students’ learning.”

Eda, a class teacher, also emphasized the importance of experience and remarked that she personally decided how she would teach about a given topic depending on the students’ performance and levels: “I decide how I would teach and how [students] would understand better. The topics, however, are determined centrally.” Another participant (Aysel) also noted that they change what and how they will teach depending on the students’ level: “We benefit from methods and techniques that the guidebook recommends but mostly we have the final say based on the students’ conditions. ... There will be some flexibility in the classroom with regard to methods, techniques and duration.” Nalan, a class teacher at a private school, noted that the overall approach of her institution did not absolutely determine all aspects of teaching: “We practice direct teaching but integrate various other approaches including the traditional approach [into lectures].” Another participant (Elif) remarked that she asked for students’ feedback during classes: “I tell them about the topic. They voice their own opinions on how we

should proceed.” Another participant (Aysel) said that she decided on methodology together with the teachers’ board and students: “We decide as the teachers’ board. Then we reach a decision in the classroom. We certainly take into account students’ opinions about methodology.” Just like Aysel, Sevda too emphasizes the role of the teachers’ board: “I am the head of the teachers’ board so I have more initiative. I get to organize both the board’s activities and my class contents.” Ceren, a class teacher with a private school, however, stated that “the education coordinator decides content and methodology”.

One of the participants (Onur) distinguished between *what* will be taught and *how* it will be taught, and argued that we can no longer talk about the teacher’s absolute autonomy with regard to the latter: “The teacher really does not enjoy full autonomy on how we should teach but I can say there is no absolute restriction either.” Many participants commented that it was necessary to have certain frameworks along with some room for teachers’ flexibility. Aysel, for instance, remarked that “extremely strict rules would make it more difficult for the teacher to teach” and said that “teachers must be trusted.” Similarly, Haydar -who has 26 years of teaching experience- touched upon the importance of harmonizing guidebooks and the teaching environment: “We have available the Ministry’s guidebooks that prescribes certain actions. Furthermore, a teacher watches for the environment and shows some flexibility.” Some participants (Yasin) expressed that they employ additional materials based on students’ needs and opinions: “I read guidebooks and inform myself about the issues some more. I download tests from the Internet. I pay attention to what needs to be learned at first, then contemplate what I can do about it.” Similarly, Emir noted that he tried to follow the guidebook and take into account the environment:

There are guidebooks that the Ministry sends us. Most of the time, we teach according to these instructions and in line with the curriculum. Sometimes, depending on the flexibility of the subject, we provide some examples about current issues. What we do, however, is to follow the guidebook. Ideally, specialized teachers should also contribute to this process. [There are] environmental conditions [and] cultural differences. Even within the same school, there may be classes at different levels. Therefore, instructions may be too much [or inadequate] for some classes. We can reach that balance but teachers still need to make up their own minds.

In light of these findings on decision making, it would seem that the Ministry’s close involvement in structuring curricula and guidebooks by and large determines what educators teach. Notwithstanding, this does not mean that the teachers’ decision making authority has been completely eliminated. In contrast, teachers tend to reconcile framework documents including curricula and guidebooks with their individual surroundings and make alterations according to their experiences. In this context, teachers seem to find themselves equipped with a considerable amount of authority in terms of methodology and approaches. Moreover, a number of participants do not regard the availability of guidebooks and common programs as an impediment on their autonomy. An earlier study had revealed the same seeming contradiction: Accordingly, although teachers believe that centrally-prescribed educational materials and guidebooks represent a restriction upon their autonomy, they do not share the view that such restrictions result in deskilling (Güner, 2011). Such findings reveal that teachers continue to feel that they largely maintain decision-making authority within their classrooms. As such, research findings in Turkey differ from alleged restrictions of teachers’ autonomy in the United Kingdom and the United States from the 1980s onward (Hargreaves, 2000; Popkewitz, 1991). Perhaps the leading cause of such differences may be that Turkish teachers did not fully experience what Hargreaves famously calls the age of the autonomous professional. In other words, the ancient roots of Turkey’s strongly centrist education system might be related to Turkish teachers’ failure to identify detailed programs and guidebooks as an interference with their professional autonomy.

Autonomy (and Challenges)

The participating teachers’ experiences in implementation of their own educational ideas differ. As explained above, some participants told that they freely implement their own ideas while others stated that they are restricted due to different factors. A large number of participants told that they implement their ideas “easily” (Erol), “very easily” (Aysel), “absolutely” (Eda), and “without facing any problems,” and that they are “free in the class” (Zeki) and they can do whatever they want “in line with the program” (Haydar). These participants explained that they face challenges arising from infrastructure, attitude of school administrators and parents. For instance, Turkish teacher Emir

noted as follows: "It is impossible to employ the directives in the guidebooks in 40 minutes. ... Furthermore, some classes are crowded. There is not any other [challenge]." Similarly, classroom teacher Yasin remarked insufficient infrastructure as the biggest challenge: "We have heating problem. Infrastructure itself is a problem and I don't have my own projector. I don't have any other problems." In addition to insufficient infrastructure, teachers also noted educational and income level of families among other obstacles: "Environmental conditions here are very unfavorable. Families are uneducated; they have low income. We, of course, pay attention to these factors while we are trying to convey what we want to convey. After all, these factors have an influence-though a little" (Merve). One of the leading challenges for teachers to implement their own educational approach is the attitude of school administrators. Teachers feel free as long as they receive support from school administrators (Emir). Onur explained how he implements his own ideas as follows: "I can implement whatever I want in this school. I believe that this is because the school administrator is flexible. The administrator did not interfere in what I did." Ali also remarked that there is close relationship with teachers' experience and the interference of the school administrator: "[School administrators], for instance, may interfere with the work of teachers who seem to be younger, more inexperienced and troubled. Whether they are effective is another issue." Certain attitudes of school administrators negatively influence teacher motivation. For instance Ali stated that even asking for permission for a weekend tour out of working hours was a problem.

Same participants remarked certain restrictions or problems they face while implementing their own educational ideas. For instance, Ayse, who has previously worked in a school in a rural area, explained the pressure from parents and the distrust of the Ministry of National Education in teachers as follows: "If we are to compare private schools and state schools, the parents here are restricting. Indeed the complaint phone line introduced by the Ministry of National Education shows its distrust in teachers whom the state itself has educated." Ayse told that parents try to interfere with how teachers should teach, and private school administrators fail to support teachers in this sense. Participating teachers stated insufficient infrastructure and problems in implementation as the biggest challenges in implementing their own educational approaches while they did not consider the Ministry's determination of how the

assessment and evaluation in education will be by regulation as a problem. Underlining that they hold exams according to the textbooks in line with the official regulations, Merve explained flexibilities as follows: "we make other assessment and evaluations whenever we want; we make written examinations, evaluations at the end of units, themes or subjects." Similarly, other participants stated that regulations are not "limiting" (Erdal) or not "restrictive" (Erol). In addition to aforementioned positive comments on the regulation, some participants emphasized that teachers should decide some details such as "the number of examinations" (Emir). Interestingly, as mentioned before, some participants considered the determinative role of regulations as restrictive, while other did not. For instance, a classroom teacher, Eda explained serious restrictions in terms of assessment and evaluation as follows: "Different evaluations should be adopted. We should be free in this sense. We are restricted due to the (official) regulations."

In brief, teachers believe that they are not strictly restricted by curricula or official rules and regulations but rather by school administrators or parents. Interestingly a high number of teachers do not consider highly detailed curricula and guidebooks as interference to the professional autonomy. However, highly detailed official regulations are considered as interference in professional boundaries by some participants. These findings, as mentioned before, may be related to the fact that teachers in Turkey did not have the characteristics of the "age of the autonomous professional." The restriction of teachers' work by inspectors, parents and programs in Turkey seem to fall under the category of the "post-professional or "post-modern age" (Hargreaves, 2000). Interference from other persons such as parents or inspectors can be related to the fact that professional boundaries of teaching are not crystal clear in Turkey. A high number of participants do not consider the highly detailed determination and restriction of teaching and learning processes by the Ministry as a serious constraint.

Pressure

The participants used different expressions about whether or not they were being subject to any pressure. Some of them straightforwardly expressed that they did not feel any pressure (Emir, Eda, and Veli). One of the participants (Haydar) shared his thoughts by explaining: "I did not feel pressure," another participant (Seda) reflected her thoughts as "There is no pressure; somehow we

find a middle ground.” On the other hand, some of the respondents pointed out parents as the most important source of pressure. Hasan clarified this point as “There is a group of parents who think they know everything. Unfortunately, there are people who have no clue about this job, but try to learn by reading a few books here and there.” Zeki confirmed that parent complaints cause anxiety among teachers, “An ungrounded pressure stems from parents and education policies. All teachers fear of complaints. The complaints are not filtered justly. Another source of pressure is CALL 147 [Ministry’s telephone hotline for complaints from parents].” Another participant explains the parent pressure as follows:

We have pressure from parents. From homework we assign to written tests, they [parents] try to mix into our business. ‘Why did you give this assignment? What did you this or that?’ I mean, there is this issue of parent interference. We constantly feel as if we will be complained. We already feel the pressure of the Complaint Line [CALL 147] anyway. I give up if I have the slightest doubt about being complained by a student when I try to make a tiny bit of change; this kind of pressure. (Veli)

Interferences in teachers’ area of expertise create a serious loss of motivation and unhappiness. Some of the participants said that central exams are also a source of pressure. English teacher Onur elaborates that administrators pressurize teachers to be more successful for central/national exams: “Administrators and people from upper posts keep pressuring and saying ‘Increase the success rate, we want such and such number of successful students in the SBS exam [placement test for the high schools];’ so we concentrate on exams willingly or unwillingly.” The point worth paying attention to is that the pressure does not come from outside but from the administrators in the Ministry of Education. A private school teacher, Sevda says that “We were not an institution focusing on the exams, but the current system urges us to do this gradually” adding that the exam turns into an element of pressure.

Another cause of pressure on teachers is the attitudes and behaviors of inspectors. For instance, Ayşe, working in a private school, shares her experience with inspectors as saying:

While I was working in a state-run school, I had a student who was not even literate. He was in the 7th grade. At the end of the school year, we started to comfortably read a book together.

I gave this student a separate written exam, different from other students’ exam, since my student was living far away. In addition, I also gave him oral exam. At the end of the school year, the inspector said to me, ‘This kid barely reads; but the other is fluent in all grammar rules. How did you give a score of 100 to both?’ So, in this sense you are even questioned by an inspector and it should be questioned whether or not an inspector has this authority.

As it is discussed below, teachers resort to guidebooks because of the attitude of inspectors. The attitudes of inspectors become a critical factor of pressure on teachers. The statements about whether or not teachers are pressurized are consistent with the statements of the previous teachers who mentioned about the obstacles that do not allow them to teach in their own way. The teachers participating in the research mostly felt uncomfortable from the pressure they get from inspectors and complaints for parents. The research findings have revealed that the CALL 147 complaint line seriously pressures teachers and they fear of being complained. This research brings out to light that the pressure by parents and exams show similarities with those on teachers in developing countries, such as China (Wong, 2006).

Guidebooks

Considering the meaning teachers ascribe to guidebooks, most participants make positive assessments about guidebooks:

Guidebooks are just an example. The point is that we are asked to generate different topics on common attainments out of guidebooks. Therefore, we are expected to make changes. But, on the other hand, it is possible to cut corners and follow guidebooks verbatim. I, however, make changes sometime. Attainments are of course there. Guidebooks are good guides; they lead us very well. (Veli)

Guidebooks in general are good. I wish teachers know the entire content. These are useful books. Basic behaviors are written in them. They are enough for us. Teachers should also follow guidebooks. Owing to guidebooks, there is no need for preparing lesson plans. Plans and guidebooks go together anyway. But a teacher notices discrepancies and inadequacies. It does not necessary to follow guidebooks verbatim. They simplify our job; and therefore they help teachers to focus on their real tasks. (Haydar)

Teachers approve guidebooks especially because they feel that the guidebooks reduce bureaucratic burden, simplify teachers' job and give good guidance. Some of the participants, on the other hand, said that they either rarely resort to guidebooks or not use them at all. The main reason is given as "inadequacy" (Fatih, Elif) and "too much typo" (Aysel). English teacher Onur elaborates this as "I started to teach Turkish this year because there was no Turkish teacher. So, I examined the guidebook for Turkish teachers. I definitely can tell that it was 'poor'. There are typos even for simple things." In addition, a class teacher in a private school, Nalan, said, "I don't resort to the guidebook because I don't like it."

Despite these criticisms about guidebooks, some teachers said that they use guidebooks because of the pressure coming from the inspectors:

We do use the guidebook. It's useful but not so well prepared. There are typos that have not been corrected for years. It's not comprehensive either. If it is well prepared, the guidebook may be useful for teachers. If some experts work on it, it will be really useful. We are not expected to follow the guidebook exactly. There are differences region to region. In this sense, the guidebook doesn't pressure us. What is important is not to lose the essence of the content. But of course, the teacher should be skillful. When inspectors check whether we use the guidebooks, this creates pressure on us. If you strictly follow guidebooks, your freedom in classroom will be limited. (Zeki)

Some inspectors check to see if we are following guidebooks. Some of them especially pay attention to this, i.e., I mean whether the guidebooks have been used, underlined or crossed. (Merve)

I am upset that they focus on details as if the teacher doesn't know anything. They focus on details unnecessarily... But the positive side of using guidebooks is that when you scan through a guidebook just a few days before the class, something pops up in your mind about what and how you will teach students. Obviously, it is educating you. The negative side of this is you are limited by the guidebook content and it most of the time doesn't allow you explore other things. Let me tell you this: The inspector came into the class, opened the guidebook, and checked whether it was underlined or not. ... I even know a friend who was scolded by an inspector like "Don't you use it?" Because the guidebook was clean. (Emir)

In addition to these excerpts, other participants also said that they are asked by inspectors to use the guidebooks. The participating teachers have developed different tactics to avoid pressure from the inspector. For instance, class teacher Erdal explained what kind of a tactic he has developed: "Inspectors want to see guidebooks that are underlined. I have a guidebook from years ago, it's underlined. When they come, I show it." Some of the responders confess that they do not strictly follow guidebooks as some others said that they occasionally use them. For instance, Yasin says that "I can tell that the guidebook doesn't limit us and incorporate teachers in the process. No one told me to follow a guidebook for 100 percent. A guidebook leads a teacher but cannot inform the teacher about every single detail." According to Seda, a guidebook doesn't limit teachers. She says "Guidebooks lead me, but honestly they are not my first resort. I want to make use of different sources."

Some of the participants expressed discomfort for the role assigned to teachers in guidebooks. Onur says that these books make teachers passive and approach teachers as if they are just narrators. According to Eda, the main reason for the role assigned to teachers is related to the administration: "the administration suggests us to directly follow the guidebook [because] the Ministry of Education doesn't trust teachers." While Ayşe becomes more critical about the Ministry, she says "Teachers never use and read the guidebooks prepared by the Ministry which treats teachers as they are fools." This is quite problematic, laments Ayşe saying "The owner of the publishing house, where I was working when the idea of using guidebooks was introduced, had said 'A guidebook should be prepared well in a way that even if a doorkeeper getting into class should be able to teach with the help of this book.' Ayşe asserts that this is the logic entertained by not only publishers but also by the Ministry. Ayşe went on to say:

This perception isn't originated by publishers only. A publisher adopts such a perception to sell books to the Ministry. I mean, it was the demand. So, we wrote something to meet the demand. This was what we did in that period. When I first heard about using guidebooks, I thought it will be good, I thought some additional sources will be given and I thought referrals will be made. So, we sat and wrote a guidebook. It was exactly 'a textbook for dummies' kind.

Ayşe asserts the logic behind guidebooks is problematic, but, she says, it is more problematic if some teachers follow guidebooks letter by letters.

In general, the findings demonstrate that teachers think guidebooks are very useful and that they do not question the role ascribed to teachers in these books are similar to the findings in the previous studies (Çelik, 2012). In addition, these findings are compatible with some in the previous studies in Turkey that have revealed the fact that some of the inspectors expect teachers to use guidebooks verbatim (Taneri, 2011). Some of the participants associate the logic behind preparation and implementation of guidebooks to the distrust the Ministry feels towards teachers. It may be said that teachers' tasks are kept under control to a great extent through guidebooks. As Apple (1988) pointed out, plans of teaching are predetermined and teachers are reduced to the level of practitioner; these keep teachers under control. Considering the fact that some inspectors, in particular, have asked teachers to use guidebooks faithfully, teachers in Turkey to some extent lose control over their works. When viewed from this aspect, the situation in Turkey shows some similarities with the situation in developed countries (Hall, 2004) where central control is tightened and teachers are deprived of their professional autonomy and skills.

Workload

Findings about the changes in the role and profession of teachers indicate a critical transformation in recent years. The participants purported that there has been an increase in workloads of teachers, extracurricular activities in particular:

Piles of paper works are assigned to teachers. The inspector asks of us a lot... Group studies etc. are reasonable, but there are superfluous bureaucratic burdens, too. We are tired of institutional reports etc. This is not our job. (Haydar)

Right now, we are going through a period of change in the understanding of teaching and education. In the past, we were in a well-respected position in the society, but now we are under pressure as if we are obliged to do some things, home visits are one of them. I am having a 15-minute parent-teacher meeting, but filling out a three pages long form. (Ayşe)

The participants are most disturbed by the increase of paperwork. This generally entails filling out various forms and questionnaires: "Especially filling out questionnaires is too much. Some are useful. It's OK if this reaches the goal but there are some extra chores... There is a constant increase."

(Merve) Similarly, Eda complains about filling out too many forms, "We have a lot of chores... We make the announcement about family doctors to parents, etc. I think we have so many drudgeries whether or not they are related to us." Teachers describe these papers as errands and said that they fill out these papers because it is imposed, because this is only for show, and that they are not very useful for students: "There are so many paper works to do. Everything is on paper." (Zeki). According to the participants, excessive workload means "taking work home" (Ayşe), "working until bedtime" (Ceren) and "being busy all the time" and "always feeling tired" as a result (Nalan). Heavy load of extracurricular activities negatively affects quality of lectures, and even private life: "Workload makes me unhappy because it is reflected on my normal life" (Nalan). A science teacher in a private school, Fatih, describes the extracurricular activities as follows: "due to different implementations in the institution I work for, I have to work at least two hours at home."

Some of the participants said there is an increase in extracurricular activities, some others did not. Teachers are involved in additional activities for the improvement of students. This increases workload outside the class hours. Turkish teacher Seda explains these activities as follows: "There is counseling. I meet with students and parents outside to see if I can help any further. Besides this, we have our own activities outside the school; activities that we can keep children busy with socially and psychologically." Geography teacher Ali makes similar comments, "parent visits... various tasks assigned by the administrators. I recently have observed that schools are getting more competitive in fraternity and social activities." As for the workload indirectly related to education, Eda says, "As the system improves, teachers should do this and that, it has been told; the work of the headman of the neighborhood or of registrar, etc. Once we have registered the illiterate citizens during door-to-door visits." An English teacher with 6.5 years in profession, Onur, talks about the increasing workload as:

We have so many works at school, especially administrative works. If you are an English teacher, you have more work to do. The European Union projects and international projects require foreign language. So, English teachers are assigned to these kinds of works. Other than these, we are involved in school improvement and administration teams, total

quality management implementations, etc. All of these are non-essential bureaucratic chores for teachers and I don't think they contribute to education. ... Instead of getting prepared for classes, I am dealing with paperwork, making analyses, writing reports and preparing for award programs.

In addition to the project and total quality management, other works that increase extracurricular load are works of activities on certain days and weeks. Emin clarifies: "We are Turkish teachers. Special days are usually inflicted on us. For instance, today is March 12, National Anthem Day. We will have a ceremony shortly. We organize the April 23 and May 19 national holidays as well." Another Turkish teacher Ayşe adds that extracurricular activities vary depending on branches, "We coach students at the theatre club and try to do something descent about the April 23 Children's Day... Literature teacher organize the National Oath and the National Anthem ceremonies as well as the Mehmet Akif Memorial Day. Actually, this is a little bit showcase work." Turkish teacher Aysel talks about extracurricular activity load, "After the class or after the school, or in my free hours, I am additionally preparing students who are preparing for contests in the province. My workload comes from social activities."

As seen in the responses, the workload of Turkish teachers is often related to extracurricular activities. One of the factors increasing extracurricular workload is that shortcomings in schools are generally met by teachers. For instance, technology and design teacher Erol also provides technical support to his school: "When there is a technical problem, I take care of it. But it takes plenty of time. I even can be called during class hours". Differently from the aforementioned fixations, some of the participants (Hasan) said that their extracurricular activities do not require much time. Technology and design teacher Elif, emphasizing that the extracurricular activities are not increasing, says that: "There have always been paper works; now the situation is not different."

One of the changes in workload of teachers is about new skills. For instance, a class teacher in a private school, Nalan, expressing that she spends extra time to learn something new, says that: "There is mental arithmetic for instance. We had to learn this, too. OK, we, as teachers, improve our personal skills and abilities, but this is still for me." About the attainment of new skills, Emir says this: "In-service trainings, especially in technology, that I have had

in the last eight years are remarkably useful for me." Hasan also explained that they attend new seminars about the Fatih Project and have new skills.

As seen in the aforementioned views that one of the changes in the role and routines of teachers is the increase in workload. This finding overlaps with those of the researches that have been conducted so far in the developed countries, the US, Australia and Britain in particular (Apple, 1988; Easthope & Easthope, 2000; Hall, 2004). The findings reveal that teachers spend a great deal of their time for extracurricular activities. This finding is also consistent with the findings of studies in Turkey and other countries. The workload of teachers has increased in many countries due to extracurricular activities varying from student center training reforms to entering data and parent-teacher meetings (Altunoğlu, 2012; Hargreaves, 1994). Besides, these findings seem to be inconsistent with the belief that teachers spend just 15-20 hours for in-class teaching and work less than other civil servants in Turkey.

Professional Respectability

According to the participants, another change is related to respect towards teachers. They said that students are not as respectful to their teachers as they were in the past and that the prestige of the teaching profession is decreasing:

My concern is that student behaviors have changed a lot in a negative way... I think the prestige of teaching is decreasing. (Merve)

Teachers are losing prestige. This profession has started to become a [routine] civil service rather than a real profession. Expectations are high. Families and superiors as well have expectations. We have deficiencies in terms of authority and responsibility. There are discipline issues in secondary schools. We cannot inflict a disciplinary punishment. (Zeki)

Another point that the participants draw attention to is that it is easy to complain about teachers. Erdal says "There are complaints always. I think ministries see teachers as baby-sitters." Another participant Elif relates the change of role in teaching profession to the change in perspectives of parents: "Social status has changed a lot. The perspective has changed... 'do what I say; if you don't, I will issue a complaint!' This is the most pathetic part I guess." Aysel, who has eight years of experience in teaching, says the following about the nature of the relations between student, parents, and teachers:

I may not have enough experience in this profession, but every passing day, I see that students are really disrespectful towards teachers perhaps as a result of the state of affairs in this province. Parents regard us as an employee not as experienced professionals. But this is a profession of heart, of love. They come as if they will hold us accountable “You must do this, you will do this.” Teachers today are not found trustworthy as they were in the past and are not paid attention. They always call teachers to account. ... I think CALL 147 negatively affects the prestige of teachers. Students look confident because they think like “If I have a problem, with my mom I will call school and complain about my teacher.” Even there are attitudes like “You cannot do this, or that, or I will complain” against administrators. These rights are exercised always without thinking and under any circumstances.

Similarly, Turkish teacher Seda refers to a serious change: “There is a change in parents. Parents’ perspective about teachers has changed. They question more and more... Students often feel free. They are treating us as if we can be held accountable.” Some participants believe the change in parent behavior has something to do with parents’ not paying attention to the child’s education and blaming the teacher instead:

[They think that] teachers should be more active on occasions when parents are not. The reason is that parents fail to develop a desirable attitude especially during the puberty period of children; therefore, expect of teachers to fill this gap. In case of crises, parents hold teachers responsible rather than the family environment or the development of the student. This is yet another dimension. That is to say, parents have always been there as the third party, but it seems that now the burden are on teachers more than parents; especially while mothers now participate in business life. (Fatih)

In addition, another pivotal change is the changes in curricula and pedagogy. For instance, Geography teacher Ali saying that a student-centered approach causes some problems: “It’s been told all along that teachers are seen as guides... But I will say bluntly that teachers are seen as servants rather than guides.”

In general, participants say respect for teachers is decreasing and there is a change in parents’ attitude towards teachers. This is in line with the findings that teachers live in a world of ambiguities and that parents seriously question some values that are the

description of teaching profession such as respect and trust (Day, 2000). Besides, it has been revealed that teachers face a severe loss of motivation resultant of the transformation they experience. The finding is consistent with the findings of the researches that indicate decrease in teachers’ motivation especially in developing countries (VSO, 2002). In the same vein, the studies conducted by a trade union of teachers in Turkey have brought to the light that teachers are pessimistic about the prestige of teaching profession and that this pessimism increases in time (Eğitim-Bir-Sen, 2004, 2008).

Future Expectations

It has been revealed that almost all of the teachers have serious concerns about the future of the teaching profession. Several findings reflecting despair, concerns and anxieties are as follow:

My biggest concern is devaluation of this profession. (Hasan)

After seeing students of today, I think the teaching profession is losing its value. (Sevda)

I am worried. I believe it is getting worse; teaching as a profession is being less respected. (Erol)

Youngsters will not dream about this profession and it will be less popular. (Zeki)

I have my concerns. I think respect for teaching will decrease more. (Eda)

By looking at the past, I can say that respect for teachers is lessening... In the eye of people, a teacher is regarded as a person who works part time and sleeps the other part but has a three-month summer vacation. (Yasin)

A teacher is regarded as a person who does nothing but a burden on the state. (Fatih)

I don’t have any hope. There is a pessimistic picture of teachers. (Elif)

No one will be willing to become a teacher in the future. (Erdal)

As it is seen in the above excerpts, teachers are seriously concerned about the future and have no hope. They believe the teaching profession is no longer respected and is less appreciated as time goes by. One of the basic reasons behind this is the changing perceptions about teachers. With his 28 years’ experience in teaching, Haydar explains this change in the following way: “Due to economic concerns, the teaching profession is losing prestige.

The society today perceives teaching differently; sees this profession as a lower class and doesn't value enough." On the other hand, some of the participants are not as pessimistic. Ayşe having a nine-year teaching experience believes that the profession of teaching will survive as "it is an old tradition and has committed to ancient traditions."

In brief, the findings indicate that teachers face a severe motivation problem; they are concerned about the future of this profession and are hopeless. This is consistent with the findings of a previous research conducted in developing countries in particular and revealed that teacher motivation is dropping gradually (VSO, 2002). Studies in the US also show that the decrease in motivation is related to the ineffectiveness of teachers in almost any subject regarding students (Ingersoll, 2012).

Conclusion

As being partially consistent with the deskilling thesis (Apple, 1988), teachers in Turkey are also deprived of some skills, such as outlining syllabus or writing lesson plans, but gain new skills such as using technology or learning mental arithmetic. However, it is seen in the overall results that a majority of the primary and secondary school teachers who participate in the research find guidebooks very useful, resort to them, and do not question the role of a teacher attributed to them in these books. On the other hand, some of the participants relate the logic behind the preparation and implementation of guidebooks to the distrust of the Ministry of National Education towards teachers. This is confirmed by the attitude of some inspectors who check guidebooks whether or not they are underlined by teachers. In this perspective, the situation in Turkey is even worse than the situation in the developed countries, where the central control is increased, teachers lose control over their own profession and skills (Hall, 2004). However, what is partially different from the deskilling thesis has been that the predetermination of all teacher tasks even to the tiniest detail by means of guidebooks affects teachers' works in a limited way. In other words, although control mechanisms determine works of teachers in detail and some inspectors expect them to strictly follow guidebooks, this does not mean that teachers will apply this plan verbatim and have no agency. On the contrary, teachers believe that they have an area of action to make any changes they wish to make within the general framework of the curricula. The research results indicate that teachers still believe to

have the decision-making power to a critical extent in class. However, although some teachers say to have the freedom to make any changes in their way of teaching in class, they still seem to depend significantly on guidebooks (Çelik, 2012). An overall assessment shows that the deskilling thesis is deterministic and not strong enough to explain the capabilities of adopting changes, experiences and agencies of teachers in Turkey.

One of the intriguing findings in this research is related to teachers' professional boundaries. Although many teachers do not consider the very fine details in the curricula and guidebooks as a limitation on the sphere of their profession, they do see the involvement of inspectors or parents as a restriction. This result differs from the theses claiming the existence of a serious limitation to teachers' area of profession through textbooks, and basal readers in particular, auxiliaries and ready-made course materials in countries such as the US and Britain in the post-1980s (Hargreaves, 2000; Popkewitz, 1991; Shanon, 1989). Within the scope of this research, it has been suggested that such a difference might be related to the fact that teachers in Turkey have never fully experienced the "age of the autonomous professional" (Hargreaves, 2000). Indeed, the education system in Turkey has a longstanding centrist approach. Consequently, a majority of teachers in Turkey do not see the very detailed curricula, guidebooks and the instructions that explain every step of teaching as an intervention to their professionalism. On the other hand, teachers in Turkey believe that inspectors and parents seriously limit teachers' works. This reflects the characteristics of the age of the "post-professional" or the "post-modern era" (Hargreaves). As part of this research, the involvement of parents and inspectors with teachers is related to the fact that the professional limits of the teaching profession have not clearly formed in Turkey.

In conclusion, the results of this research have revealed that, as is the case in many developing and developed countries, the role and profession of teachers in Turkey are also undergoing serious changes. For instance, similar to those obtained in many developed countries and Turkey (Altunoğlu, 2012; Hargreaves, 1994), there are findings showing that extracurricular activities of teachers are increasing. On the other hand, the assessments of the teachers participating in the research are that the traditional respect for teachers has decreased already and that parents and inspectors question

teachers' works more and more. These assessments are in tune with those made in other countries (Day, 2000). Besides, again similar to the findings in developing countries (VSO, 2002), the findings in Turkey indicate that teachers have a serious loss of motivation resulting from the transformation that they experience and that they are seriously concerned about the future of the teaching profession.

Suggestions

- Teachers' development of a clear definition of their professional domain represents an important factor for both raising their awareness about their tasks and responsibilities and preventing interventions from parents, inspectors and the Ministry. As such, education unions and professional associations should assume a more active role in marking the professional boundaries and autonomy of teachers.
- This study revealed that teachers' workload has increased. Additional research is necessary in this area. Such research may challenge the conventional wisdom that teachers do not work hard as others and inform the discussions of public policy related to teaching and teachers' salaries.
- Additional research is necessary to analyze similarities and differences between Turkey and other countries in term of teachers' work. For instance, the correlation between gender and increased control in the United States (Apple, 1988) did not emerge in in-depth interviews with Turkish teachers in this study. Additional research is necessary as this difference might reflect contextual factors. Moreover, additional research is necessary to develop a better understanding of how Turkish teachers perceive professionalism.
- Within the scope of this study, some evidence has been revealed that teachers in private schools are subject to greater outside control than their colleagues in public schools. Additional research should be carried out to shed light on the frequency of such discrepancy and its causes.

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