Education Policies in the Context of Political Communication in Turkey

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Abstract: The present study aims to discuss how political communication shape education policies in Turkey: How does political communication make education policy a political product based on ideology? What are the ideological differences between education policies in Turkey? The political party programs and election manifestos related to the General Election held on June 24, 2018 in Turkey are examined with the content analysis method in the context of political communication. The data of this research confirmed that political party's ideologies are effective in the determination and the application process of education policies in Turkey. As a result, the impact of political communication on education policy is defended as a political product in this paper.

Keywords: *Education policy, political communication, political party, party program, election manifesto.*

Introduction

Political communication is the basic principle of political system. This is one of the preconditions for a democratic system. The history of democracy is based on the relationship between politics and communication (Wolton, 1995). Since politics have caused controversy due to their nature, they include also communication within their structure. Politics cannot be isolated from communication. Political communication is a "voters persuading strategy" that constitutes the basis of political election (Bouzidi, 2016). It should be noted that political communication is an area that examines the relationship between politics and communication (Mutlu, 2012).

Political communication is as old as politics. Previously, it was used to refer to the government's contact with the electorate and then to political parties contact during election periods (Wolton, 1989). This is a strategy with which a political party imposes implicitly its ideology on electorate (Aziz, 2003). "Ideology" refers to a "doctrine combining prescriptive or descriptive proposition" (Boudon, 1986). Particularly during election periods, the aim is to inform the electorate in a particular subject (for example, education) or to transmit opposing ideologies (for example, education policies). Political communication has three basic functions valid in a democratic system: "(1) identify problems in terms of a political party; (2) transmit these problems to the electorate through journalist and (3) include them in political discussions and remove unactual problems from the agenda" (Wolton, 1989).

In the current use of political communication, the scope of this notion has been expanded in line with era needs. The most important is now to analyze the impact of mass media on social life. Political communication is the transmission of political discourse through mass media such as surveys, marketing and advertising widely used during election periods (Wolton, 1989). Political communication process follows a different course: "This situation is directly related to the position of a political party" (Çağlar & Özkır, 2015). Political parties present ideology-based discourse (election promise) transmitted to the electorate through political communication tool (Olivier-Yaniv, 2010). Since ideology-based discourse content is different from each other, it could only be appreciated in a political environment (Charaudeau, 2002). Political parties produce their policies ideologically (for example, education policy): They present them as a "product" (or a "marketing object") to the electorate and in return, they request to vote for their party (Bayraktaroğlu, 2002).

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They organize many ideology-based activities to influence the voting behaviors and to engage voters (Rivière-De Franco, 2006): They use political communication to make a difference in the number of votes (Bongrand, 1992). It would not be wrong to say that political communication is actually at the core of each political activity (Aziz, 2003). For example, in the context of Turkey, political communication comes into effect every five years in the general/local election period. For these reasons, election results are directly related to political communication activities that are organized before, during and after the election (Çağlar & Özkır, 2015). The purpose of political parties is to inform the electorate of their political decisions and particularly to influence ideologically their voting behavior through mass media (Swanson, 1990).

One of the major topics of political communication is education policy in Turkey. There is an inevitable relationship between education and politics. Political communication and education policy cannot be separated from each other; there is a cause-effect relationship between these notions. As an "ideological apparatus" of state (Althusser, 2010), education policy becomes a direct product of political communication in the sense that political parties shape these policies according to their ideology (Boudon, 1986). Different ideologies of political parties are effective in the determination process ("basic policies") and application process ("policies application") of education policy. However, an educational system is determined according to a "dominant ideology" that ensures society continuity (Althusser, 2010; Tural & Karakütük, 1991): "A backward society is a society which is already back in education" (Adem, 1997). This is the reflection of sociocultural, economic and political situation of a country.

The determination and application of education policies are considered as an important step in the society development (Durkheim, 1968; Güler, 1989). Education policy acts as a bridge between state and society (Wiborg, 2000). This notion refers to ideologies, political principles and decisions that are applied to educate individuals with social patterns learned in a timely manner and with desired mental and socio-cultural characteristics and to nurture society in accordance with the educational culture accepted in the country (Eren, 2018a). In other words, education policy provides the intergenerational transmission of educational culture through sociopolitical supervision and reproduction (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970). A learner who is considered as an "inheritor and developer of sociopolitical values" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1964), is thus placed at the center of this sociopolitical supervision and reproduction. Particularly in the context of political communication, education policy aims to shape individuals with a dominant ideology and to supervise them with political power (Çetin, 2001; Sönmez, 2011; Wolton, 1989).

In the present study, "political communication" and "education policy" are examined in the same problem to reveal the cause-effect relationship between these two notions. Even if the determination and application process of education policies are part of State Development Plans (Presidency of Strategy and Budget, 1963-2019) and Ministry of Education (2019) in Turkey, political party's ideology is determinative in this process (Wolton, 1989). Political party shapes education policy ideologically in its party program and its election manifesto (Althusser, 2010; Boudon, 1986). It should be noted that the party program and election manifesto reflect directly the determination and application process of education policies. While party program is a text related to ideology, an election manifesto is a text related to promises about ideological practices that the political party will follow if it will be elected (Wolton, 1995). Party program and election manifesto are different by nature: While party program is always present as a basic text, election manifesto is only prepared during the political communication process.

As a result of political communication, education policies differ in line with political parties the ideologies (Wolton, 1995). The goals of the research are to answer to these problems: How do political communication shape education policies in Turkey? What are the education policy topics that bear ideological traces of political parties? It should be noted that we are not the first to examine the present subject; other researchers have already analyzed this subject but according to only one research axe (Korkmaz, 2018; Turkish Education Association Non-Governmental Organization, 2018). Contrary to these researches, the present study is not limited to election manifestos related to the General Election held on June 24, 2018 in Turkey. The study is completed by party programs in Turkey because it seems important to us to understand the impact of political communication on education policies' determination and application process: What is the impact of political communication on education policies? How does political communication make education policies a political product in Turkey? What are the ideological differences between education policies in Turkey?

Methodology

Sample and Data Collection

The present study is a qualitative research (Seale, 1999; Klenke, 2016) in which "criterion sampling method" is used to identify the situations that meet a certain criterion (Guba & Linoln, 1994; Baxter & Jack, 2008). In this study, the sample includes not only party programs, but also election manifestos related to the General Election held on June 24, 2018 in Turkey. The sample criteria of political parties in the research are those which participated in the General Election and which exceeded the threshold. Their (a) political programs and (b) election manifestos are listed alphabetically:

I. Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party) [AK Parti, official abbreviation]: (a) "Party Program"

(b) "The Presidential Elections and General Elections, Election Manifesto (Assembly Powerful, Strong Government, Strong Turkey)", 2018

II. <u>Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People's Party) [CHP, official abbreviation]:</u> (a) "Change to Contemporary Turkey, Republican Party Program"

(b) "Election Manifesto 2018 (Coming for the Nation!)", 2018

III. <u>Halkların Demokratik Partisi (Peoples' Democratic Party) [HDP, official abbreviation]:</u> (a) "Peoples' Democratic Party Program (for Labor, Equality, Freedom, Peace and Justice...)"

(b) "HDP 2018 Election Manifesto, (Citizen, Comrade, Friend Demirtaş, Change with You)", 2018

IV. <u>İYİ Parti (GOOD Party):</u> (a) "Party Program"

(b) "Convention with Our Nation (Oneness in Society, Trust in Economics, Management Merit. Return to Sun Your Face Turkey!)", 2018

V. <u>Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (Nationalist Movement Party) [MHP, official abbreviation]:</u> (a) "Party Program (Towards the Future)", 2009

(b) "People's Alliance, Nation's Mind, Our Commitments to Our Nation, General Election Manifesto, June 24, 2018 Parliamentary", 2018

In accordance with the research goal and sample, the problem of education policies is evaluated in terms of two different texts prepared by political parties in Turkey. As for data collection, party programs and election manifestos are both analyzed with content analysis method. Party programs and election manifestos reveal the role of political parties in the determination and application process of education policies (Wolton, 1995). In other words, political parties' ideologies constitute the focus of education policies. What are the education policy topics that bear ideological traces of political parties? In this way, the data are collected according to education policy topics that reflect explicitly political parties' ideologies (Wiborg, 2000): (1) "goal of quality in education"; (2) "educational planning and economy"; (3) "basic and special education"; (4) "language of instruction and language education"; (5) "religious education" and (6) "vocational education and higher education" (Beacco et al., 2005). These education policy topics are indispensable for the planning, management, supervision and financial provision of an educational system and finally an education policy (Cicurel, 2011).

Data Analysis

In this research as a method of data analysis, content analysis is applied to deduct the "similarities or differences" between the education policies of the political parties in Turkey (Budge et al., 2001). This is a scientific research methodology that requires a systematic description of education policies (Bardin, 2011; Weber, 1989). In other words, content analysis is the extraction of key features from the sample (content); that is education policy topics in this study. These features refer to political parties as a "message sender", education policy as a "message" and the electorate as a "message recipient" (Robert, 1989).

In this perspective, the political programs and election manifestos (2018) are recorded for each political party selected for the sample. Both of these political party' texts are analyzed and classified according to education policy topics mentioned above. There is an ongoing debate about whether content analysis should be (a) quantitative or (b) qualitative (Laswell et al., 1952). Is it necessary (a) to encode the content by numbering in order to generalize a situation or (b) to classify the content by describing in order to understand a case study (Bengtsson, 2016)? The aim of this research is not to compare quantitatively education policy topics of political parties. Nevertheless, the political parties that have given the most importance to education policies in their election manifesto (2018) are respectively (Korkmaz, 2018): CHP (0.57%); HDP (0.44%) GOOD Party (0.52%); AK Parti (0.37%) and MHP (0.19%). Within the framework of political communication in Turkey, education policy is an important problem that should be described in terms of party programs and election manifestos in this qualitative research.

The validity and the reliability of the data analyzing technique ("content analysis") refer not only to the close correspondence of the content classification to the conclusions, but also to the generalizability of these conclusions to a theorical framework (Gottschalk, 1995). In this study, the political programs and the election manifestos are classified and are generalized to the education policy theory (its main topics as follow):

(1) "goal of quality in education"

(2) "educational planning and economy"

(3) "basic and special education"

(4) "language of instruction and language education"

(5) "religious education".

(6) "vocational education and higher education".

Content analysis supports completely the purpose and the theorical framework of the present study ("impact of political communication on education policies"). This data analyzing technique is taken as a guarantee of its validity and its reliability because the foreign literature shows explicitly that similar researches (similarly problematized and contextualized) have been carried out with this technique. Its validity and its reliability are thus confirmed by the classification of the similar sample by the same technique (Budge & Pennings, 2007; Pennings, 2011; Volkens et al., 2009).

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Findings / Results

What are the education policy topics that bear ideological traces of political parties? For each political party selected for the sample (listed below alphabetically), the findings are classified according to their education policy topics:

I. Education Policies in AK Parti's Program and Election Manifesto

AK Parti's education policy topics are listed in the table below:

Table 1. Education Policy Topics in AK Parti's Program and Election Manifesto

	Party Program	Election Manifesto
(1) Goal of Quality in Education	2.1., 5.2., 5.7., 5.9., 7.	p. 12-93
(2) Educational Planning and Economy	2.1., 3.2.1., 5.2.	p. 53-135
(3) Basic and Special Education	4.1., 5.2.	. 54-62
(4) Language of Instruction and Language Education	2.6., 5.2.	p. 27-135
(5) Religious Education	5.2.	p. 53-94
(6) Vocational Education and Higher Education	3.8., 5.2.	p. 40-91

(1) Goal of Quality in Education

The basic condition for a country's development and thus the priority of public resources refer to education: *"The field of education will increase the overall quality of all other areas"* (AK Parti, 2014). However, AK Parti states that there will be a transformation in education policies due to the education which is *"ideological and far from realistic educational culture"* (AK Parti, 2018, p. 52).

According to AK Parti, the fundamental right, freedom and justice are put into practice in education in Turkey in line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights and the Paris Charter (AK Parti Program). In this context, *"the student textbooks are offered free of charge"* for example (AK Parti, 2018, p. 57).

According to AK Parti's goal of quality in education, all levels of the education system need to be placed on a democratic ground (AK Parti, 2014): AK Parti argues that *"all citizens are first-class citizens without a distinction of religion, language, sect, ethnicity and gender"* (AK Parti, 2018, p. 89).

For example, AK Parti mentions that "*Turkish citizens living in rural areas/suburbs or Turkish citizens of Roman origin*" have education problems that should be solved in education policies (AK Parti, 2018). Within the scope of gender equality in education, AK Parti states that all principles of "Prevention Convention Against Women all Forms of Discrimination" should be applied to benefit from quality education in Turkey (AK Parti, 2018). The country should be developed by the increase in women's enrollment rate (AK Parti, 2014).

According to AK Parti's election manifesto, an educational culture is innovative as much as it is based on religious and national values. AK Parti aims at an *"educational culture that carries our past values directly to the future"* (AK Parti, 2018, p. 12). One of AK Parti's goal of quality in education is supposed as "secular education", but independently of its

definition (AK Parti, 2014). "Secular education" is discussed in detail in the subtitle *"(5) Religious Education"* of this study.

(2) Educational Planning and Economy

An important pillar of education policies is educational planning and economy. AK Parti aims at *"religious, national and socialist education"* and *"new educational planning and economy"* (AK Parti, 2018). In this education management process, educational planning and economy require a *"qualitative/quantitative determination of educational objectives and outcomes"*. AK Parti explains that education programs should be rearranged to improve the quality of education.

AK Parti reports that the purpose of educational planning is to increase the quality of education and to bring it to an international criterion: In this sense, *"a large part of the public budget should be devoted to education"* (AK Parti, 2014) and *"education investments should continue to focus on quality"* (AK Parti, 2018, p. 60). For AK Parti, the education budget is significant: *"We increased our education budget from TL 9.3 billion in 2002 to TL 134,7 billion in 2018"* (AK Parti, 2018, p. 53).

AK Parti explains that it is necessary to apply an educational planning based on education technologies. In this context, *"students should study entrepreneurship, financial literacy and coding courses from primary education"* (AK Parti, 2018, p. 59) and *"education programs should be revised according to needs of students"* (AK Parti, 2018, p. 135).

(3) Basic and Special Education

AK Parti defines the basic education as the responsibility of the state (AK Parti, 2014): *"The first point of intervention to provide equality of opportunity and to eliminate inequalities is the education"* (AK Parti, 2018, p. 59). AK Parti states that necessary measures should be taken to ensure students' development and to increase girls' enrollment rates. According to the examples given in the election manifesto, "*the number of 10 million students increased to 10.4 million between 2002-2003 and 2017-2018 and thus the enrollment rate increased from 96 percent to 99.7 percent*" (AK Parti, 2018, p. 54).

AK Parti explains that the educational system is organized according to special education necessity. As stated in AK Parti's election manifesto, for example, *"the textbooks which are prepared specifically for visually impaired, mentally handicapped and hearing-impaired students are distributed to them free of charge and their access to schools is also provided free of charge"*.

(4) Language of Instruction and Language Education

According to the Turkish Constitution of 1924, the official language (the language of instruction) is Turkish. Since the 1980s, language and education policies have been determinate particularly to join the European Union (Eren, 2018a). In this way, the right to education and to broadcasting in a language other than Turkish is mentioned in the European Union Harmonization Packs. Turkish Constitution is developed parallelly.

During the *"democratic opening process"*, foreign language became an elective course in secondary education. Private schools provided education in these foreign languages (AK Parti, 2018). For AK Parti, Turkish should be taught not only to refugees (AK Parti, p. 135) in the country, but also to Turkish citizens living abroad. The number of Yunus Emre Institutes providing Turkish education abroad is expected to be increased from 54 to 100 in 2023.

(5) Religious Education

Even if AK Parti advocates secular education, *"all conditions are provided for citizens to learn Islamic religion from right resources"* (AK Parti, 2014). In this perspective:

- Religious Culture and Ethics Course is compulsory in the primary.

- Qur'an and Siyer Course is an elective in the secondary education.

- *"Coefficient applied to Imam Hatip High Schools is removed"* (AK Parti, 2018, p. 53).

- *"Wearing of a headscarf is permitted in the educational system"* (AK Parti, 2018, p. 94).

(6) Vocational Education and Higher Education

Vocational education is mentioned in the framework of AK Parti's education policies. Elective courses are offered from the fifth grade to orient to vocational education according to student's interests and talents. Vocational education should be initiated in industrial zones and private sector support should be increased for this education: *"The major difference between students in vocational high schools should be decreased through education"* (AK Parti, 2018, p. 61).

AK Parti gives importance to archeology and art history education in order to develop Seljuk, Ottoman and Central Asian archeology. Although *"great progress"* is stated by AK Parti, higher education requires a fundamental change in Turkey: *"AK Parti will support private universities and industry cooperation"* (AK Parti, 2018, p. 66).

II. Education Policies in CHP's Party Program and Election Manifesto

CHP's education policy topics are listed in the table below:

Table 2. Education Policy Topics in CHP's Program and Election Manifesto

	Party Program	**Election Manifesto**
(1) Goal of Quality in Education	p. 15-296	p. 12-112
(2) Educational Planning and Economy	p. 55-296	p. 94-103
(3) Basic and Special Education	p. 211-326	p. 99-189
(4) Language of Instruction and Language Education	p. 48-296	p. 124
(5) Religious Education	p. 51-298	p. 23-101
(6) Vocational Education and Higher Education	p. 37-329	p. 94-196

(1) Goal of Quality in Education

According to CHP's party program, education is a fundamental value of republic, democracy, national unity and inner peace: *"The education is the way of light"* (CHP, 2018a, p. 15). Basic education aims to *"raise a generation which has free ideas and follow in footsteps of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk"* (CHP, 2018a, p. 295). However, CHP explains that the political impact such as *"one-man regime", "OHAL"* and *"KHK"* should be reduced from the current educational system: Education should be turned into a non-ideological state policy with a radical revolution (CHP, 2018b, p. 50).

Financially disadvantaged children are deprived of the most basic right, whereas financially advantaged children are privileged in the current educational system. This inequality leads to a decline of the educational system in the world ranking. However, CHP explains that the *"socialist education is the guarantee of education quality; a fundamental right that must be regardless of payment power and so free of charge"* (CHP, Party Program, p. 274). The state should ensure the equality of opportunity in education as *"child falls into the mother's womb"* (CHP, Party Program, p. 145).

CHP emphasizes that everyone should have equal access to education, regardless of any ethnic origin, income or gender differences in Turkey. Education should focus on rural areas. For example, *"Turkish citizens of Roman origin have education problems that should be sought"*. CHP aims to minimize the quantitative and qualitative differences between schools and regions.

For CHP, socialist education requires an educational system based on gender equality and thus equal participation of girls in all levels of education. Diversity should be supported in education. CHP explains that women should have equal rights and opportunities with men in education as in other areas. They should live without *"any social and physical pressure"* (CHP, Party Program, p. 23).

In CHP's party program, the necessity of secular education is reported as a *"fundamental principle that will never be compromised"* (CHP, Party Program, p. 16). All schools and all dormitories and especially, the Ministry of National Education (MEB) and the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) should be rescued from political Islamism for a secular and a democratic educational system. In this perspective, the principles of merit should be applied at all levels of the educational system. "Secular education" is discussed in detail in the subtitle *"(5) Religious Education"* of this study.

(2) Educational Planning and Economy

Among CHP's goal of education, there is *"Kemalist, socialist, democratic and secular education"*. Education policies should be developed in this way: State Planning Organization (DPT) should prepare a new educational planning and economy.

CHP explains the unqualified educational system by the fact that current education policies which changed frequently in line with ideologies, are deprived of any effective educational planning. For CHP, the educational system should be restructured with the *"1+8+4 Model"*: The compulsory basic education will be increased to 13 years, including 1 year of pre-school and 8 years of primary education (9 years of uninterrupted basic education) and 4 years of secondary education (CHP, 2018b). CHP mentions that education programs should be revised and planned according to Atatürk, republic, equality, democracy and laicism.

For CHP, economic development is as a precondition for an effective educational planning: *"Economic power should be raised rapidly to improve and to consolidate national education"* (CHP, Party Program, p. 121). In CHP's election manifesto, the education economy is explained as a necessity for education policies to provide an educational opportunity for everyone. Within the scope of educational planning and economy, CHP aims at doubling resources allocated to education in accordance with the level of European Union countries.

(3) Basic and Special Education

CHP emphasizes that the way of increasing awareness is basic education. CHP aims to increase the duration of compulsory basic education from 8 to 13 years, following European Union criteria (CHP, 2018b, p. 99).

CHP explains that special education should be applied in accordance with the "United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" (CHP, Party Program, p. 324). In this context, special education should be the under social state's responsibility and should ensure the right to education to disabled students (CHP, 2018b).

(4) Language of Instruction and Language Education

In CHP's education policies, education in the mother tongue is mentioned as a fundamental right and freedom in democracy. For CHP, the right to education in mother tongue should be granted by providing that Turkish is the language of instruction (CHP, Party Program): *"Turkish language and culture should be developed with Central Asian Republics' cooperation and projects"* (CHP, 2018b, p. 124). CHP gives also importance to *"at least one"* foreign language education (CHP, Party Program).

(5) Religious Education

By the definition of secular education, CHP aims at a modern educational system in which *"religion is no longer politicized and politics are not no longer a religious behavior"* (CHP, 2018b, p. 51). For CHP, *"financially disadvantaged should not have to go to Imam Hatip High School but to educate in more qualified conditions"* (CHP, 2018b). Within the framework of Education Unification Law adopted in 1924 ("Tevhidi Tedrisat Kanunu" or "Öğretim Birliği Yasası"), the aim was to ensure secular education by affiliating all institutions to the Ministry of National Education and by closing down madrasas in the country (CHP, Party Program).

For CHP, Religious Affairs Office and religious education (schools, Qur'an courses) should be revised in education policies. This is not a restriction on religious education but an "education supervision" to ensure freedom of religion and conscience as a fundamental right for students who thus will not to be discriminated against their religious beliefs (Eren, 2018b). It is aimed to revise the number of Imam Hatip and theology faculties to improve the quality of religious education programs in Turkey (CHP, 2018b).

(6) Vocational Education and Higher Education

Vocational education has an important part of CHP's education policies. For CHP, labor should be increased in education following the needs of the private sector (CHP, Party Program). *"Ministry of Human Resources" and "National Occupational Standards Institution"* should be opened in cooperation with the Ministry of National Education (CHP, 2018b). Vocational education programs based on *"supply-demand balance"* should be applied with the private sector and İŞKUR cooperation to qualify the labor force in Turkey.

As stated in the party program, CHP aims to ensure certified programs related to software and information technologies, tourism, mining and especially in accordance with *"the needs of rural areas as agriculture, animal husbandry and forestry and greenhouse and beekeeping"*. For CHP, the most important is to provide social security support in vocational education (CHP, 2018b).

CHP defends a *"student-centered educational system"* and vocational education as one of the main goals of the educational system. In the 9th and 10th grades of high school, students are required to participate in *"Vocational Orientation Program"* for two years. They are expected to be directed to a profession in line with their own interests and their own abilities (CHP, Party Program). For CHP, the educational system should be transitive between vocational and higher education (CHP, 2018b). All educational institutions (MEB, YÖK, TÜBA, TÜBİTAK, etc.) must be free of political impacts. For example, YÖK must be removed and universities must be independent.

III. Education Policies in HDP's Party Program and Election Manifesto

HDP's education policy topics are listed in the table below:

Table 3. Education Policy Topics in HDP's Program and Election Manifesto

	Party Program	Election Manifesto
(1) Goal of Quality in Education	online	p. 12-13
(2) Educational Planning	online	p. 13
(3) Special Education	online	-
(4) Language of Instruction and Language Education	online	p. 12 and p. 17
(5) Higher Education	online	-

(1) Goal of Quality in Education

Education is a "public service and right that everyone should benefit from" (HDP, 2018, p. 13). HDP aims at an educational system qualified as *"democratic", "egalitarian"* and *"libertarian"* (HDP, 2019). For HDP, in Turkey, the current educational system is *"centralized", "nationalist", "monist" "authoritarian", "bureaucratic", "alienating peoples", "discriminating", "sexist"* and *"unqualified"* (HDP, 2018, p. 13).

As in the framework of CHP's education policies, HDP argues that the educational system should be free from all political impact and socialist (HDP, Party Program). HDP aims at an *"educational system based on human rights"* in its election manifesto. For HDP, everyone should have the right to education regardless of any ethnicity, income, gender, sexual orientation and disability.

(2) Educational Planning

The education economy is not mentioned. As for HDP's educational planning based on the right to education in mother tongue (HDP, 2018), the purpose is to establish an *"Education Council"* in which all recommendations should be taken into consideration as well as the experts, educators, students, etc.

(3) Special Education

HDP notes that educational culture must *"remove all discrimination against the disabilities"* (HDP, 2018, p. 16).

(4) Language of Instruction

HDP does not make any statement regarding language education. Since HDP's education policies focus is on right to education in the mother tongue, HDP advocates an educational system based on *"education in mother tongue for each ethnic origin"* (HDP, 2018, p. 12). HDP explains that the education goal in the mother tongue is to grant equal rights to everyone.

(5) Higher Education

As seen above in the case of CHP, HDP aims at a qualified educational system by *"removing the repressive YÖK and examination system"* (HDP, 2018, p. 12).

IV. Education Policies in GOOD Party's Program and Election Manifesto

GOOD Party's education policy topics are listed in the table below:

Table 4. Education Policy Topics in GOOD Party's Program and Election Manifesto

	Party Program	**Election Manifesto**
(1) Goal of Quality in Education	p. 9-41	p. 4, p. 9 and p. 116
(2) Educational Planning and Economy	p. 9-15	p. 55 and p. 101
(3) Basic and Special Education	p. 9-13	ı. 102, p. 105 and p. 123
(4) Language of Instruction and Language Education	p. 11, p. 13 and p. 74	p. 103
(5) Religious Education	p. 15 and p. 30	-
(6) Vocational Education and Higher Education	p. 15-16	p. 63 and p. 108

(1) Goal of Quality in Education

For GOOD Party, *"current educational system is in the same situation with underdeveloped countries"* (GOOD Party, 2018, p. 4). GOOD Party's goals of quality in education are described as nationalism (Turkism) and Kemalism: The party aims to raise a *"good person"* who respects the values of Republic, nation and human rights (GOOD Party, 2019).

Defending national education in its education policies (GOOD Party, 2019), GOOD Party emphasizes that military schools should be *"kept outside of any political considerations and interventions"* (GOOD Party, 2019, p. 9). Education should provide equality of opportunity (GOOD Party, 2019): Everyone should have the right to education without any difference such as income, gender or obstacle.

(2) Educational Planning and Economy

For GOOD Party, education policies should be defined as a *"principle of good governance"* (GOOD Party, 2018, p. 101) and with a *"supra-political perspective"* (GOOD Party, 2019m, p. 9). GOOD Party aims at an *"Educational Planning and Coordination Board"* with the participation of representatives such as teachers, universities, trade unions.

The education economy is important for educational planning. For GOOD Party, the resources should be in accordance with *"Turkish national education policies"* (GOOD Party, 2018). GOOD Party mentions that education programs and

textbooks should be prepared in line with national education in Turkey.

(3) Basic and Special Education

For GOOD Party, the Turkish educational level should be raised to the educational level in developed countries with the "1+5+3+4" basic education model in Turkey (GOOD Party, 2018). GOOD Party gives also importance to mental/visually impaired, autistic or gifted students in its special education policies.

(4) Language of Instruction and Language Education

GOOD Party aims to turn Turkish into a language of instruction that will be expanded in the world (GOOD Party, 2019).

(5) Religious Education

GOOD Party does not mention "secular education" in its goal of quality in education. However, GOOD Party describes religious education as an *"indispensable element of national education"* (GOOD Party, 2019, p. 30). The political party states that the Presidency of Religious Affairs should serve Muslim citizens without sectarian discrimination. In this perspective, *"Alevism should take place in the textbooks and Imam Hatip High Schools should be considered within the scope of vocational high school"*.

(6) Vocational Education and Higher Education

GOOD Party reports that students should be encouraged to pursue vocational education in the context of *"National Labor Force Decision Support System and Vocational Needs, Demand, Tracking System"* (GOOD Party, 2018, p. 63).

According to GOOD Party, *"all kinds of influence, pressure and restriction should be removed in higher education and consequently, universities which are divided for ideological reasons should be reunited"*.

V. Education Policies in MHP's Party Program and Election Manifesto

MHP's education policy topics are listed in the table below:

Table 5. Education Policy Topics in MHP's Program and Election Manifesto

	Party Program	**Election Manifesto**
(1) Goal of Quality in Education	p. 24-134	p. 4
(2) Educational Planning and Economy	p. 59 and p. 98	-
(3) Basic and Special Education	p. 94, p. 99 and p. 113	
(4) Language of Instruction and Language Education	p. 30, p. 98 and p. 101	-
(5) Vocational Education and Higher Education	p. 90-100	-

(1) Goal of Quality in Education

For MHP, everyone has the right to education which *"cannot be prevented in any way"* and everyone could benefit from education (MHP, 2009, p. 30). As MHP points out, the role of the state is to improve education quality and to ensure equality of opportunity. MHP emphasizes a *"generation equipped with national values against all elements that aim to eliminate indivisible integrity of state"* (MHP, 2009, p. 107). National education is confirmed by the emphasize on military schools (MHP, 2018. Although MHP does not address religious education topics in its education policies, the importance of religious education is implicitly mentioned there (*"raise a faithful generation"*).

(2) Educational Planning

Education economy is not mentioned in MHP's party program and election manifesto. For MHP, the determination and application of education programs should be in accordance with *"national contemporary requirements"* to create a *"national consciousness"* in the society (MHP, 2009, p. 98).

(3) Basic and Special Education

MHP states that the main goal of education is to promote pre-primary education, to increase compulsory basic education duration and to orient students in line with their abilities. Within the scope of special education, MHP explains that education programs should be revised for disabled students' participation in the labor market.

(4) Language of Instruction and Language Education

MHP emphasizes that Turkish is the language of instruction in Turkey and thus *"only Turkish be taught as a mother tongue"* (MHP, 2009, p. 30). MHP refuses explicitly the *"right to education in the mother tongue"* which is advocated by HDP (MHP, 2009, p. 98).

For MHP, Turkish Language and Culture should be taught to Turkish citizens living abroad in order to protect their identity. In this regard, the education policies of MHP and GOOD Party are similar.

(5) Vocational Education and Higher Education

According to MHP, vocational education (*"Apprenticeship Education Centers"*) should improve labor force quality. MHP makes a brief explication about higher education that is qualified as "more democratic and productive" (MHP, 2009, p. 99).

VI. Results: Education Policies in Party Programs and Election Manifestos in Turkey?

The above-mentioned political parties give importance not only to education policies in their party program and in their election manifesto, but also make these policies a tool/product of their ideology. In these texts, the most important indicator of education policies is the ideological difference of political parties. So, what are the education policies that bear traces of the ideology of political parties? At this point, it is necessary to recapitulative education policy topics on a smaller scale. Turkish education policy (sub)topics that are highlighted ideologically by political parties are as follow:

Table 6. The Most Mentioned Education Policies (Sub)Topics by Political Parties in Turkey

		AK P.	CHP	HDP	İYİ P.	MHP
(1) Goal of Quality in Education	*(1.1.) Equality of Opportunity in Education*		✓	✓		
	(1.2.) Gender Equality in Education		✓			
(2) Language of Instruction and Language Education	*(2.1) Turkish as Language of Instruction*				✓	✓
	(2.2.) Right to Education in Mother Tongue					
	(2.3.) Turkish Language and Culture Teaching Abroad			✓	✓	✓
(3) Religious Education	*(3.1.) İmam Hatip High Schools*	✓				
	(3.2.) Religion and Ethics Course	✓				
	(3.3.) "Freedom" of Headscarf in Education	✓				
	(3.4.) Secular Education		✓			

Education policy is an important problem to be evaluated within the framework of political communication in Turkey. So, how are education policies shaped? We could argue that political parties have a say in the determination ("basic policies") and application process ("policies application") of education policies (Eren, 2018b). In the table above, we can consider that education policies differ with a certain political variable: Ideology is placed directly in the focus of education policy, in the sense that each political party determinates its own education policy in line with its own ideology. The main reason for highlighting some education policy (sub)topics is political parties' ideology.

Discussion

The cause-effect relationship between education and politics is confirmed by the findings / results of this study. As an "ideological apparatus" of state (Althusser, 2010), education policy becomes a direct product of political communication in the sense that political parties shape these policies according to their ideology (Boudon, 1986). It is necessary now to discuss ideology-based education policies in the context of political communication (Budge et al., 2001).

I. <u>AK Parti:</u> The focus of AK Parti's education policies are on (3.1.) Imam Hatip High Schools, (3.2.) Religion and Ethics Course and (3.3.) *"freedom"* of the headscarf in education. Due to the *"religious conservatism"* ideology of AK Parti, its education policies are also based on political Islamism.

II. <u>CHP:</u> The focus of CHP's education policies is on (1.1.) equality of opportunity, (1.2.) gender equality in education and (3.4.) secular education. Its policies are based on socialism (*"Kemalist and social-democratic"* ideology).

III. <u>HDP:</u> The focus of HDP's education policies is on (1.1.) equality of opportunity in education and (2.2.) right to education in the mother tongue. Because HDP defines its ideology as *"political pluralism"* and its education policies are also based on socialism.

IV. <u>GOOD Party</u>: As in the case of MHP, *infra*, the focus of GOOD Party's education policies is on (2.1.) Turkish as the language of instruction and (2.3.) Turkish Language and Culture teaching abroad. According to the *"national conservatism"* ideology of GOOD Party, its education policies are also based on nationalism (Turkism).

V. <u>MHP</u>: As in the case of GOOD Party, the focus of MHP's education policies is on (2.1.) Turkish as language of instruction and (2.3.) Turkish Language and Culture teaching abroad. MHP defines its ideology as *"national and religious conservatism"* (*"Turkism and Islamism"* ideology). Its education policies have particular traces of nationalism ideology. There is not any topic on "religious education" but the goal of MHP's education policies is explained as *"raising a faithful generation"* (MHP, 2009, p. 98).

As opposed to its nationalist ideology, MHP refuses absolutely the right to education in mother tongue which is advocated by HDP. As for CHP, the political party recognizes this right as long as the national education policies are not endangered by the fact of replacing the language of instruction to a language other than Turkish. Consequently, all of these education policies (sub)topics confirm largely that education policies are based on ideology.

Consequently, this problem situation leads education policies to become directly a political communication product (Budge & Pennings, 2007; Pennings, 2011; Volkens et al., 2009):

I. <u>AK Parti</u>: a) It is clearly stated that the focus of AK Parti's education policies are religious education (both in basic and application policies). However, *"secular education"* that AK Parti defines as the goal of quality in education must be questioned absolutely. AK Parti explains the necessity of secular education in its basic policies. But, regardless of laicism definition, AK Parti explains also that *"all conditions should be provided for religious education"* and *"religious education should be given as a compulsory course"* in education.

b) Another example is that AK Parti claims to defend *"socialist education"* in its basic policies. Affected by multiple political reasons such as OHAL, KHK, YÖK, it is clear that current education policies are based on political Islamism instead of democratic principles in Turkey. As stated in AK Parti's election manifesto, it is not possible to state a democratic educational system in Turkey. Education policies are not based on AK Parti's ideology but turned into a political communication product completely.

c) As seen in both examples, AK Parti's basic and application policies in education are opposed to each other. These policies are turned into a political communication product because of election concern.

II. <u>CHP</u>: a) According to CHP's basic and application policies, education needs to be placed on a *"secular basis"*. CHP aims at a secular educational system in which *"religion is no longer politicized and politics are not no longer a religious behavior"*.

b) In this sense, we could not suppose that a restriction is imposed on religious education in terms of religion and conscience freedom. While having created a new nation-state as the Republic of Turkey from the Ottoman Empire which was based on Islamist ideology, education was changed radically by having taken under state supervision with the Education Law adopted in 1924. The purpose of this revolution was to provide opportunity and gender equality with secular education and thus religion and conscience freedom as a fundamental right. The nation-state building process is based on laicism, because this is the return and the guarantee of fundamental rights and freedoms in Turkey.

c) Inability of Turkish society to meet its requirements with its own "internal dynamics" had continued up to the founding years of the Republic of Turkey and had caused the introduction of a new political system from "outside" in 1923. The society's requirements were met with new political arrangements (radical revolutions) and consequently, the fundamental rights and freedoms were returned to citizens. Therefore, education supervision is not an intervention or restriction. This is a contextualization result of Turkey according to its own contextual features.

d) However, consider the achievements as "restriction" or "intervention" against fundamental rights and freedoms in the context of education policies, is to ignore that opportunity and gender equality is based on secular education in Turkey. Both concepts are the result of the Republic of Turkey foundation.

e) As for supporting basic policies with application policies in education, CHP's education policies correspond to each other. Since "secular education" will remain a debate topic in Turkey, the policies will stay always as political communication.

Conclusion

The findings and the results of this study confirm that education policies are a product of political communication in Turkey. While political parties argue that education policies should be more ideology-based, their policies contradict often their ideology with election concern. Political parties appeal to a wider public in order to make a difference in the number of electorate votes. These parties turn education policies into a political product and request the electorate vote for their parties in return. As such, political parties present their election promises that contain new ideological practices that they will follow if they will be elected. However, these promises do not reflect ideological practices that political parties are pursuing currently.

As a result, the basic policies ("ideology determination") are not supported by application policies ("ideological practices") in the context of education in Turkey: Education policies cannot result in any improvement due to lack of application in education (Eren, 2018b, p. 1076). As a matter of fact, even though program and election manifesto are updated, the content of these texts is full of basic policies that could not be applied in education. The deprivation of education policies from the application (solution) is due to election concern. That is the impact of political communication on education policy.

Suggestions

According to the present results, we could confirm that political communication is effective in the education policies determination/application process in Turkey. Although the Turkish educational system is determinate by the dominant ideology, an effective determination of these policies is necessary for the country development. We could propose some suggestions related to Turkish education policies in this study:

- In accordance with the Turkish educational system, education policies should be developed both in basic and application policies: A real cohesion and coherence should be ensured between them.

- Independently of any ideology, political parties should not turn education policies into a political communication product with election concern. They should develop their education policies for solving education problems.

In this perspective, we could propose an important research focus to develop in future researches, such as: "Gender equality according to education policies: analysis of political communication texts in Turkey" (Eren, 2020). We could finally propose each education policies (sub)topic that is analyzed in the present study as a future research focus.

Limitations

The research limitations stem from the description difficulties of the sample. According to the research problem, the sample size is thus expanded to overcome these difficulties and to identify a significant relationship between "education policy" and "political communication". In this perspective, the content analysis of election manifestos is completed by the description of party programs in Turkey (AK Parti, CHP, HDP, GOOD Party and MHP).

The validity and the reliability of this research are confirmed by the fact that political communication is an effective tool in the education policies determination and application process in Turkey (visible both in the analysis results of electoral manifestos and party programs). Therefore, the impact of political communication on education policy is defended as a political product in the present study.

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