



# PRIMARY EDUCATION IN POLITICAL PARTIES' PROGRAMS<sup>1</sup>

(SİYASİ PARTİ PROGRAMLARINDA İLKÖĞRETİM)

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to analyze the regulations of the political parties, represented in Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM), which aim to realize goals regarding primary education. The political parties whose party programs are analyzed are Justice and Development Party (AKP), Republican People's Party (CHP), Nationalist Action Party (MHP), Democratic Society Party (DTP). The study is limited to four political parties, represented in TBMM. Data were collected via document analysis. AKP, MHP, and CHP's party programs were acquired through the net, whereas DTP's was gathered by the party center via mail. Content analysis was utilized. Three dimensions of the regulations were grouped for the political parties. These were, budget for education, essential systems of education and human work force. The results indicate that the parties commit to do various things for primary education. These were; human rights course, budget for the basic education, foreign language education, guidance services, religious culture course. The regulations vary from one party to another. These were, AKP focuses more on the physical structure of the schools, MHP on environmental issues, DTP on education in mother tongue.

**Key words:** Political party, political party programs, primary education

## ÖZ

Çalışmanın amacı, 2008 yılında TBMM'de grubu bulunan dört siyasi partinin, parti programında ilköğretim kademesinde gerçekleştirmeyi hedefledikleri düzenlemeleri analiz etmektir. Programı incelenen partiler; Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP), Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (CHP), Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (MHP) ve Demokratik Toplum Partisi (DTP)'dir. Çalışma TBMM'de grubu bulunan dört siyasi parti ile sınırlıdır. Çalışmanın verileri nitel veri toplama yöntemlerinden biri olan doküman analizi yöntemi doğrultusunda elde edilmiştir. AKP, MHP ve CHP'nin parti programları internet üzerinden, DTP'nin parti programı ise parti merkezinden elektronik posta yoluyla gönderilmiştir. Çalışmanın verileri içerik analizine tabi tutulmuştur. Analiz sonucunda siyasi partilerin ilköğretimde gerçekleştirmeyi hedefledikleri düzenlemeler üç boyutta toplanmıştır. Bunlar; eğitimin bütçe boyutu, eğitimin temel sistemleri boyutu ve eğitimin insan gücü boyutlarıdır. Araştırma sonunda siyasi partilerin ortak olan bazı konularda düzenlemeler yapmayı taahhüt ettikleri görülmektedir. Bu konular; bütçe, zorunlu eğitim, insan hakları eğitimi, yabancı dil eğitimi, rehberlik hizmeti, din kültürü ve ahlak bilgisi dersiyle ilgili düzenlemelerdir. Siyasi partilerin ilköğretim kademesinde gerçekleştirmeyi hedefledikleri farklı uygulamalar da vardır. Bunlardan bazıları; AKP'nin okulların fiziki yapı ve donanımları, MHP'nin çevre eğitimi ve DTP'nin anadilde eğitim ve sağlık dersi konularındaki söylemleridir.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** Siyasi parti, siyasi parti programları, ilköğretim

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## INTRODUCTION

By examining the party programs of four parties represented in Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM), this study aims at identifying the regulations they claim to materialize there.

### **Political Parties and Education**

Political parties are simply reflections of social will into social arena. The concept of political party is defined as “a group that participates in political life to partially or completely take over the power to fulfill Gougel’s pledges and objectives” (Teziç, 2005:312). According to Kapani (1998), political parties are “the institutions which have a continuous organization to take over or share the power. Ware (1996), defines a political party “as an organized group of people with at least roughly similar political aims and opinions that seeks to influence public policy by getting its candidates elected to public office”. Duverger (1974:51-52) defines a political party as “a union, not a community, which is organized by small groups (smaller organizations, committees, local associations, etc.) with the guidance of coordinator institutions that spread out across the country”. Çaha (2005) asserts that political parties are the actors who dominate nearly every aspect of the system by encouraging the relationship between the nation and the society, the involvement of the society in the management, and checking the power continuously. Kapani (1998) and Kışlalı (1996) claim that political parties are primarily important in almost every modern society no matter what the political system is.

Political parties are the products of long-termed attempts. Daver (1993), in a modern sense, mentions that political parties were first formed in the UK, and political parties have a role in France and American revolutions, and the number of political parties have increased in connection with French, American and British political parties.

Political parties are the representatives of democratization movement in the society. Political parties have many functions. Aliefendioğlu claims that (1999:105)

“The basic function of political parties is to lead disorganized political views in the society, to concretize problems in the country, and to ask for votes from public with their programs showing ways and solutions to those problems”.

That is why political parties’ programs are very important. Party programs are written statements of services and problems that parties identify in various fields. Parties pledge to make changes in their programs once they come to power.

Education is one of the emerging issues in party programs. Yılmaz (2000) states that the ultimate function of education is to improve individuals’ skills

and reveal their tendencies and characteristics, and to make them functional in a more active way. There has always been a connection between politics and education. “Date back to Aristo; the connection between politics and education is universal as well” (Varış et al, 1998:144). Educational institutions are heavily affected by several organizations. “Groups in political arena pay much attention to educational institutions in terms of training both necessary human force for economic development and offer national integration” (Fidan and Erden, 1998:77). All parties account for the problems they identify, the regulations and changes they need to make in their programs.

Varış et al (1998:144) makes a strong emphasis on the undeniable connection by saying that,

“Universally and historically, it has been complained, from time to time, that politicians interfere with education. Hence, educational periods have been excluded from politics. It has been highly criticized that politics is involved in education for the sake of individuals and parties. On the other hand, school, which shapes future, is always considered to be a strategic tool for politics

Pektaş (1997) explains the relationship between political parties and education in the following way.

“Political parties have various targets including increasing people’s welfare, enabling the country to go into a stable developmental period, assuring and protecting social peace and ease as well as educational and cultural ones that have a closer connection with these targets”

The primary education is the first step of the whole education. Ertuğrul (2000: 120) claims that

“From the personal viewpoint, the primary education aims at educating individuals who use their various skills, abilities to meet the social, physical, and emotional needs, at having them understand that they are valuable creatures and at training them like well-behaved and social citizens.

Kaya (1981: 93) states that the primary education influences not only the educational system of the society but also others, then the leaders of underdeveloped countries stipulate the existence of primary education for the economic and social development. Başaran (1996:75) affirms, “The primary education is the basic of the whole system in nearly all of the countries and primary education should be transparent to the individuals, and one of the state’s functions is to make it compulsory for its all citizens”.

The primary education is one of the political parties’ agenda. Tonguç (2004:112) states that political parties’ concerns over primary education assists us to understand how learning is carried out in democratic systems. It bears a lot of importance to know what political parties think about primary education in terms of the value they give importance and the innovations they

need to bring about. For this purpose, this study aims to identify regulations of the political parties, represented in Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM), which aim to realize goals regarding primary education.

### **The purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study is to identify regulations the political parties in terms of their goals regarding primary education. In light of this purpose, the following research questions can be posed.

1) In Justice and Development Party (AKP)'s program concerning primary education,

- a. What are the regulations on the budget AKP seeks to build?
- b. What are the regulations on the basic system of education AKP seeks to build?
- c. What are the regulations on human workforce AKP seeks to build?

2) In Republican People's Party (CHP)'s program concerning primary education

- a. What are the regulations on the budget CHP seeks to build?
- b. What are the regulations on the basic system of education CHP seeks to build?
- c. What are the regulations on human workforce CHP seeks to build?

3) In Nationalist Action Party (MHP)'s program concerning primary education

- a. What are the regulations on the budget MHP seeks to build?
- b. What are the regulations on the basic system of education MHP seeks to build?
- c. What are the regulations on human workforce MHP seeks to build?

4) In Democratic Society Party (DTP)'s program concerning primary education

- a. What are the regulations on the budget DTP seeks to build?
- b. What are the regulations on the basic system of education DTP seeks to build?
- c. What are the regulations on human workforce DTP seeks to build?

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

In order to identify the regulations of political parties represented in TBMM concerning primary education, "qualitative research method" was used. Qualitative research method is "a kind of research where observation, interviews, document analysis are utilized, and a process focusing on identifying perceptions and events in a natural and integrated setting" (Yıldırım ve Şimşek, 2005: 39). Survey model was used in this research. "Survey model" is a kind of research that seeks to describe a situation, which

existed in the past or still exists, as it is (Karasar, 2004:77). Building the statements in party programmes (AKP, CHP, MHP, DTP), the regulations concerning primary education aimed are examined in this study.

### **Data Sources**

Data sources emerge from the programs of four political parties, represented in Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM). These political parties are Justice and Development Party (AKP), Justice and Development Party (AKP), Nationalist Action Party (MHP), Democratic Society Party (DTP). Data were gathered through document analysis. Document analysis, a qualitative research method, contains an analysis of written materials that include information regarding events or phenomena that need to be researched (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005:187).

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis was conducted via “content analysis”, one of the qualitative data analyses. Content analysis was used in data analysis. Content analysis is described as a systematic technique, where a text or words are memorized as small content categories through the codes based on specific rules (Büyüköztürk, Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, Demirel, 2008:253). As for categorical analysis, it represents dividing the message into the units, then, and grouping them as categories according to certain groups (Bilgin, 2006: 19). Above all, data collected were coded by the researchers. Coding categories were allowed to emerge from the data so that similar responses were grouped together.

## **FINDINGS AND RESULTS**

In the study, party programs were analyzed via content analysis method. In light of this analysis, the targets’ that the parties aims in primary education were under three dimensions including budget for education, essential systems of education and human work force of education.

### **Primary Education in Justice and Development Party (AKP)**

The concept of education is mentioned in AKP’s party program with a title of “The Program of Development and Democratization through Social Policies”. This two-page section deals mainly with educational problems and targets in a general sense. What seems striking here is that the views are given arbitrarily rather than a systematic order. Justice and Development Party (AKP) consecutively list the dimensions. 1) curriculum of the basic education 2) restructuring the local and central educational system 3) education in deprived regions 4) the duration of compulsory education 5) the quality and equipments of the state schools 6) understanding of education 7) teacher

training institutions and current teachers 8) optional classes in the basic education 9) the students with lower economic backgrounds 10) building structure of the schools 11) school parents-teachers associations and guidance services 12) foreign language education 13) religious culture course. In addition, it also mentions budget and human rights in its program in relation to primary education.

### **Dimensions of the Budget Allocated for Education**

#### **Budget Allocated for Education:**

Power of an institution and a system is compatible with its budget. Claiming that the most of the budget is allocated for the education and that the budget for education will increase, they state that the quality of education will be enhanced. "Within the amounts of the budget, shares of social spending items such as education and health especially, shall be increased and the quality of these services will be raised to international standards (Justice and Development Party- AKP Party Program, 2001:14). In the education section, there is a statement indicating "Societies, which do not utilize their social capital in the most effective manner, are doomed to lose their chances of competition. Therefore, our party believes that the first priority shall be allocated for the resources to education.

According to Varış et al (1998), the use of existing resources mostly depends on the quality of the education. As it is easily understand from this statement, Justice and Development Party (AKP) emphasizes the use of the capital and takes the investment in education as the most important belief. Justice and Development Party (AKP) states that the first priority will be allocation of the resources to education. It is emphasized that allocation of the resources to education will raise the total education quality. It is also mentioned under the sub-title of public finance that "Within the amounts of the budget, shares of social spending items such as education and health especially, will be increased and the quality of these services will be raised to international standards" (AKP Party Program, 2001:14).

### **Essential Dimensions of Education**

#### **Understanding of Education:**

The main function of the education is to transmit the individuals the national values as well as modern developments, to change the behaviors, to provide opportunities for people to self-actualize, and to train individuals who are likely to contribute to the economic development of the nation. Justice and Development Party (AKP) also mention the understanding of education in connection with the aims of the basic education. Understanding of education is regarded as one of the regulations for primary education.

In its program, Justice and Development Party (AKP) states that

“An educational concept shall be adopted to impart participatory habits, developing the processes of decision making and analysis, promoting the freedom of minds and productivity, offering pluralistic values, raising the awareness of citizenship, teaching latest developments and Technologies” (Justice and Development Party- AKP Party Program, 2001: 14 Justice and Development Party- AKP Party Program, 2001:28).

From this statement, it would be reasonable to assume that there is an aim of leading the individuals in a variety of ways including national and international perspectives as well as equipping them with the various skills and abilities.

### **Regulations Concerning Curriculum:**

Education is not an inert process. Educational programs should be revised in accordance with conditions and needs of our age. Many countries make necessary modifications in their own curriculums in line with the requirements of our age. AKP in its party program states that adjustments should be made in educational programs in terms of both current needs and students' need. Making the adjustments on educational programs in 2005, AKP fulfilled its pledge. The statement is as follows: “The curriculum of basic education will be revised in accordance with the requirements of our age, our needs, and the skills to be gained by the students” (AKP Party Program, 2001:28).

### **Localization in Education and Position of Ministry of Education (MEB):**

Başaran (1996) defines central management as the actualization of all educational issues by the Ministry of Education, and local management as the actualization by local authorities including the system input, process, and output. In Turkey, education is carried out centrally. It is declared in AKP's party program local administration will be adopted rather than centralized administration in education. It is also mentioned that this local administration will be adopted progressively and that the organization concerning the position Ministry of Education holds is explained as follows. “Provision of the basic educational services will be transferred through pilot applications to local administrations and to provincial branches of the central administration. The National Ministry of Education will be placed into a position of controlling, regulating, and imposing standards (AKP Party Program, 2001:28).

### **Compulsory Education Period:**

Aydın (2006:5) defines compulsory education as a kind of education that each child, at a specific age, has to receive and the state has to provide. Each country has different period. It is stated in AKP's party program that compulsory education will increase from 8 to 11 years in line with students' interests and abilities with the statement “Compulsory education, which is

currently eight years, will be reorganized so as to allow options and orientation in stages, and it will be increased to 11 years within a reasonable time by accelerating infrastructure studies” (AKP party program, 2001:28).

### **Increasing Quality in Public Schools:**

AKP, in its party program, states that basic education, which is already free, shall be free of charge and the quality of education will increase in state schools. The statement in question is as follows:

The government shall offer elementary education free of charge. The educational quality of public schools shall be increased; their technological capabilities shall be developed (AKP Party Program, 2001:28). In addition, the statement about the equipment of the schools shows that there will be a new structure of the schools.

The premises of schools shall be improved from the standpoint of, architectural styles, physical equipment, and educational capabilities. The physical structure of the premises shall be designed in a manner to lose the education on courses rather than classes. (AKP Party Program, 2001:29).

It is mentioned in AKP's party program that the government will offer basic education free of charge. The educational quality in public schools and their technological advances will be developed.

### **School Parents-Teachers Associations and Guidance Services:**

Education materializes among school, family, and society. Educational aims actualize only when school, family, and society act accordingly. Guidance services in schools are one of the most important issues. AKP in its party program states that guidance services in School Parents-Teachers Associations will be supported and reinforced with projects to be prepared by social scientists. The statement is like this. “School Parents-Teachers Associations, advisors' systems shall be supported with projects to be prepared by social scientists and (AKP Party Program, 2001:29)

### **Foreign Language Education:**

Çelebi (2006: 286) claims that foreign language education is an issue to be considered more seriously in Turkey where one has to be able to understand the current technology, knowledge of the world and to be a member of European Union. Thus, foreign language education is frequently mentioned in party programs. AKP emphasizes the knowledge of foreign language education and it should be carried out with recent technological innovations. In the statement, it is mentioned

“Since foreign languages are of great importance in the dialogue between individuals, societies and international communities; the quality in the instruction of foreign languages will be enriched with modern means and equipment. While our

Party encourages the instruction of foreign languages, it shall stimulate the use of Turkish as the language of science” (AKP Party Program, 2001: 29)

Foreign language Education occupies a key role currently nowadays when globalization is increasing. It is mentioned in AKP’s party program that foreign language education is very important and that foreign language education will be carried out by means of modern equipment. While the party program encourages foreign language education, it will stimulate the use of Turkish as the language of science, which can be considered a national approach.

### **Human Rights Course:**

Respect for human rights is an essential principle in democratic societies. It is mentioned in the section entitled “Fundamental Rights and Political Principles Development and Democratization” of the party program that there have been human rights violations and the education will be a key to eliminate those violations. Furthermore, educational programs will be organized in elementary schools to transform human rights and freedom into a behavior. The statement is as follows:

In order to make human rights and freedoms as a manner of behavior and thus to eliminate human rights violations, educational programs shall be organized, starting with elementary schools and public establishments”(AKP Party Program, 2001:6)

### **Regulations Concerning Religious Culture Course:**

Education of Religion and Ethics is one of the most controversial issues. AKP in its party program states that education of religion, ethics is included in “secularism”, and that citizens will be encouraged to learn their own religions. In addition, the provision of elective religion lessons will be made optional based on the wishes of the parents. The statement is as follows.

“As a requirement of the principle of secularism all facilities will be provided for our citizens to learn their religion. In addition to the Ethics and *Religious Culture Course*, the provision of elective Religion Lessons will be made optional based on the wishes of the parents (AKP Party Program, 2001:28).

As the statement suggest, the emphasis is only made on religion education not moral education in the religious culture course.

### **Human Force of Education**

#### **Restructuring Teacher Education Schools:**

Teacher education is one of the most significant issues in educational policies. It is teachers who have a real burden on their shoulders. No matter how excellent schools and programs are, the aim cannot be reached unless teachers have sufficient knowledge, skills, and equipment. That is why teacher

education is one of the most significant issues. It is mentioned in AKP's party program that rearrangement in teacher education institutions should be made. "Teacher education schools will be rearranged taking in line with aforementioned points" (AKP Party Program, 2001:28). The teacher is not taken so seriously in the program, it is only declared that new developments will be made, yet they are not given in detail

### **In-service Teacher Training:**

It is indispensable that teacher is given in-service training in order to be able to keep up with recent changing conditions and development. In-service education is a kind of process where the individuals are made aware of current developments. Teachers, then, need to be given in-service training from time to time, to be made aware of current developments. AKP, in its program, declares that teachers need to be given in-service training constantly. The statement is "teachers will be provided with in-service training in conjunction with recent changing system". (AKP Party Program, 2001:28).

### **Primary Education in Republican People's Party (CHP)**

In its party program, CHP taps into issues concerning education under the title "Social Welfare State". In this section, the kinds of educational problems and solutions for these are explained. CHP's statements on primary education are as follows. Besides this, CHP has different statements concerning education under various titles.

The statements are as follows: Education of Conscious Consumer, Budget for Education, Reform for Education, Workforce Planning, Democracy Course, Guidance Services, Religious Culture Course, Foreign Language Education, and Compulsory Education Period.

### **Dimensions of Budget allocated for Education**

#### **Budget allocated for Education:**

Having sufficient budget allocated for education is the most important power in reaching aims. Like in each party program, it is mentioned in CHP's party program that education will be a priority to reach the targeted aims and that private resources will be used in accordance with national educational policies. The statement is as follows.

"In order to reach the targeted aims in primary education, necessary support including economic, technological, and educational will be allocated by the state, and this support will be employed in line with National Educational Policies the most effectively (CHP Party Program, 2008:298).

## **Essential Dimensions of Education**

### **Understanding of Education:**

CHP sets the educational targets in its program. It sets the profile of education mainly by focusing on the dimensions including open to development, self-confident, motivating, and analytic and synthetic, free thinking, scientific, creative, participatory, the consciousness of being a citizen, adoption of national and international values. The regulation in the party program is as follows.

“A generation with the characteristics including being far away from racism, being democratic, sincere, and rational and respecting for human rights will grow. Youth will be prepared for life more actively, and participatory, they will benefit from art, culture, science, and civilization, which form the aim of the education”. (CHP Party Program, 2008:2)

In addition to that, as the statement suggests, individuals who are aware of global values will be raised.

### **Compulsory Education Period:**

CHP states in its party program that compulsory education will increase from eight to ten years and that this shall be done at once. CHP’s statement is as follows. “In order for our students to experience ideal education, uninterrupted and compulsory basic education will increase from 8 to 10 years...” (CHP Party Program, 2008:298).

### **Parents’ Associations:**

Education is neither one-dimensional nor one-way. Environment, along with family, is very significant in educational process. CHP emphasizes a regulation where educational processes function simultaneously. National Ministry of Education, local administration, schools, environment, parents, and teachers function cooperatively. CHP’s statement is as follows. “Parents’ associations will be activated: During educational processes, the relations among National Ministry of Education and local administration and school, environment, parents and teachers will be stronger, and authorities and responsibilities will be shared (CHP Party Program, 2008:296).

### **Democracy Course:**

Referring to the importance democracy culture, CHP states that a course on awareness of democracy culture will be given in an applied way. The statement is as follows. “Democracy will be taught in schools in an applied way with a view to providing students with the basic concepts including human rights, tolerance culture during their education (CHP Party Program, 2008:300).

### **Guidance Services:**

Guidance services in schools are very important. CHP in its party program states that regulations concerning not only guidance experts but also technical equipment will be provided. The statement is as follows. "Guidance expert support towards students: Insufficient staff and technical equipment will be reinforced" (CHP Party Program, 2008:300).

### **Foreign Language Education:**

Foreign Language Education is one of the issues that emerge from CHP's party program. In its program, it is mentioned as "Modern Foreign Language Education will be given importance, and qualified education, giving an opportunity to students with a degree an academic or vocational high school to speak at least one language, will be provided (CHP Party Program, 2008:300). This statement simply indicates that foreign language education will be given more attention and students will be provided with qualified education, which allows them to learn, at least, one foreign language by the time they graduate.

### **Regulations Concerning Religious Culture Course:**

Religious Culture Course is one of the emerging issues that CHP taps into, like other political parties. It is also underlined that "the content of Religious Culture Course will be designed in a way that develops faith world, allows modern development to occur, reinforces humanistic and ethical values, and, lastly, inhibits political abuse. Course of Religious Culture, taught in primary education, will be given in accordance with the curriculum approved by constitution" (CHP Party Program, 2008, p.300). As well as this, the statement signifies this by saying,

"Religious Culture and Ethic Science Course shall be provided for our citizens to learn their religion in accordance with the appropriate curriculum" (CHP Party Program, 2008:300)

### **Human Force of Education**

#### **Planning Workforce in Education:**

Planning Workforce in Education managing resource and staff properly is important. It is staff distribution that CHP in its party program mentions. In the party program "Educational Planning will be activated, labor force will be benefited at a reasonable manner, the demand of vice staff and teachers across the country will be met and State Planning Organization will be reactivated in light of these dimensions (CHP Party Program, 2008:298). This statement suggests that staff distribution be done properly and that these studies be conducted in cooperation with State Planning Organization (DPT).

### **Regulations Concerning Teachers:**

Various titles regarding teachers are mentioned in CHP's party program. These are organization, life standards and in service training. CHP mentions that teacher associations will be involved in education. Teacher associations will be involved in myriad dimensions of education. The statement is as follows.

“Teacher associations will be involved in the design and implementation of educational methods, and in the preparation of educational aims via democratic participation (CHP Party Program, 2008:301).

It is mentioned in the party program that life standards will be improved and regulations will be made for teachers whose spouses live in different settings.

“Rights and conditions of teachers will be improved, employee rights for an honorable life will be provided. Teachers shall be living with their spouses (CHP Party Program, 2008: 300).

It is also highlighted in the party program that teachers will be given in-service training, that there will be cooperation with universities, and teachers speaking a foreign language will be sent abroad.

### **Primary Education in Nationalist Action Party (MHP)**

MHP views primary education under the title of “Social Target and Policies” and “A Public Management Close to the citizens”. The regulations are budget, infrastructure, international standards of education, basic education, regulations concerning curriculum, guidance service, the abolishment of education in a foreign language, and environmental issues.

### **Dimensions of Budget allocated for Education**

#### **Budget allocated for Education:**

MHP pledges that families will have lighter financial load and that the government will have more responsibilities for expenses educational services require. Moreover, it is emphasized that educational services will be available to those who need them. However, how those who need such services will be identified and those will take advantage of these services is not mentioned in the party program.

### **Essential Dimensions of Education**

#### **Restructuring Educational System:**

MHP views educational system as an important component to repair with the dimensions such as infrastructure in education and human force opportunities. Besides, it is highly emphasized that restructuring education

system will lead the human profile to change in a variety of ways, which causes the knowledge age to occur and technological innovations to emerge. Nonetheless, nothing has been reported as to how to fulfill these changes in the program.

“Education system shall be equipped with necessary skills and abilities for the age of knowledge, and shall be restructured to lead the individuals to train in a more technological way. Also, the infrastructure of the education and human force shall be increased to international standards”

### **Compulsory Education Period:**

MHP, like other political parties, seeks to increase compulsory education both in the short and in long run. MHP, in the long run, it aims at increasing compulsory education to 12 years. “Preschool education will be widespread, in the first step, compulsory education will be increased to 9 years with an addition of kindergarten, and in the long run, compulsory education will be increased to 12 years with necessary infrastructure.

### **Regulations concerning curriculum:**

MHP states in the party program that there will be some modifications over the curriculum content. These modifications contain more citizen-based issues. This issue is declared in the statement.

“Our children will be involved in their curriculum with the dimensions like basic right and freedom, responsibilities over the laws, behaviors that do not harm individuals and society, humanistic relationships”.

### **Guidance Services:**

In today's world, computer and Internet, obviously, are the tools that enable people to reach the information in a fast way. Computer technology is used at every field. MHP pledges that computer technology will be employed in guidance services. What is more, focusing on the issue of occupational guidance, the party program emphasizes that the number of elective courses will be increased as of secondary education in conjunction with students' interests and abilities.

### **Foreign Language Education:**

The most effective way of destroying a society is to manipulate its cultural issues, the most important of which is language. Turkish is heavily dominated by English. MHP is against education in English, yet it supports foreign language education. It is highlighted in the party program that students will be taught at least one foreign language and that education in English will end.

### **Environmental Education:**

All kinds of resources, including above and underground, wear out so fast and nature is getting dirty day by day, which requires that individuals have very well developed environmental awareness. It is possible to observe that MHP aims at educating individuals on environmental issues

### **Human Force of Education**

There is no focus on human force of education in the program of MHP.

### **Primary Education in Democratic Society Party (DTP)**

Their statements about primary education are grouped into several dimensions such as the quality of education, human rights course, curriculum programs, education in mother tongue, compulsory primary education, foreign language education, guidance, and religious culture.

### **Dimensions of Budget allocated for Education**

#### **Privatization Resources:**

Pledging that all physical resources to be gained through privatization will be used in improving education and health fields, DTP gives a special emphasis on education budget with the statement “Resources from the privatization will be used in improving education, health, and other social services”.

### **Essential Dimensions of Education**

#### **Quality in Education:**

Different from other political parties, the point DTP emphasizes the most is educational policies based on ethnical roots and language differences. Focusing on the statement “Each citizen will take advantage of education, far from recitation, and which encourages individuals to be creative in line with individuals’ interests and abilities on the basis of ethnical roots and language differences”, DTP, in its party program, defends a regulation on education with its focus on ethical issues and language differences. In addition, by changing education system, it specifies a system, which, accordingly, guides individuals by taking into accounts individuals’ abilities.

### **Compulsory Human Rights Course:**

DTP in its party program gives place to human rights and declares that human rights course should be compulsory. Moreover, it is highlighted that education system should be separated from discrimination. Education system should be separated from patriotic, chauvinistic, and discriminatory components. In order to reach this aim, human rights should be a compulsory course in basic education.

“Education will get rid of the components of nationalist, chauvinistic, and discriminatory. In order to do so, human rights course will be compulsory and added to the curriculum”.

### **Components in Syllabus and Textbooks:**

By being completely against discrimination, DTP claims that such discrimination exists in syllabus and textbooks and that these should be omitted. “By separating militarist, patriotic and discriminatory components from syllabus and textbooks...” Moreover, the statement “textbooks should be free and designed in a way that attracts students’ interests” is in the party program.

### **Mother-Tongue Education:**

Mother-Tongue Education is one of the primary issues on which DTP elaborates the most in its party program. DTP sees Mother-Tongue Education as a fundamental human right and pledges that programs should be prepared in accordance with this principle by specifying that Kurdish has so much potential as an educational language. “Kurdish will be used as an educational language. Mother-Tongue Education, a basic human right, will be provided for each individual”.

### **Compulsory Education Period:**

Like other political parties, DTP focuses on the issues of compulsory education and aims at increasing compulsory basic education to 12 years with an addition of pre-school education. Additionally, DTP emphasizes the fact that education will be free with the statement “basic education will be free and compulsory from 1 to 12 grades”.

### **Guidance Services:**

DTP, like other parties, in its party program pledges that each student in each phase of education will be given guidance with the statement “Guidance and psychological services will be provided at every single phase of education”. However, due to the conditions of the teachers who currently work, this service is not given as properly as it should.

### **Regulations Concerning Religious Culture Courses:**

DTP underlines, with similar statements in its party program, that compulsory religious culture courses should be abolished and that everyone should have the right to choose their religious culture based on their faith. “All faith should be preserved and developed so everyone can fulfill their own religion requirements. Religious courses will be excluded from educational curriculum and will be optional”. This statement reflects their ideas on this

issue. DTP, like other parties, seems to have disregarded the dimension of moral education, and it only focuses on religious education.

### **Regulations Concerning Sports Courses and Facilities:**

DTP, in its party program, states “Sports courses will be arranged in a way that encourages students to discover their abilities at a very early age and to love doing sports starting from primary education”. This statement simply indicates that sports environments will be prepared and that students will be encouraged to do sports in accordance with their abilities at a very early age in sports as well as in occupational guidance.

### **Health Course in Basic Education:**

DTP, as opposed to other political parties, points out that health courses should be redesigned. “In 12-year compulsory education, health courses will be redesigned”.

### **Human Work Force**

#### **Amendment to Teachers:**

DTP claims that it will make regulations for teachers in research, organization, life conditions, and economic issues with the statement “Education laborers will be provided with the opportunities to organize, to do scientific research studies, and to live in a humanistic way”.

## **CONCLUSION**

Political parties pledge to make certain changes, regulations, and implementation in many fields. When four parties’ programs, represented in Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM), are examined in terms of the targeted regulations in primary education, it can be easily seen that these four parties have certain common aspects they pledge to do. These aspects are regulations concerning Compulsory Education, Pre-school Education, Boarding Primary Region Schools, Human Rights Education, Foreign Language Education, Guidance Services, Education for the Handicapped, Religious Culture Courses, Occupational Guidance, and Education for Children of Citizens Living Abroad. All party programs examined stipulate that budget is the first priority.

All political parties whose programs are examined aim at increasing compulsory education. MHP, CHP, and DTP propose that pre-school education should be included in compulsory education.

Parties, AKP, CHP, MHP, DTP, mentioning regulations concerning curriculum, pledge that curriculum will be revised in line with needs and trends of our age. AKP has made educational changes proposed earlier. DTP, against any kind of discrimination, believes that discrimination exists in

textbooks and claims that they should be abolished at once. CHP aims at training individuals, Kemalist, democratic, participatory, productive, actively engaged in art and science in their social lives, in conjunction with the needs and trends of our age.

Human Rights Education is one of the emerging issues AKP, CHP, and DTP emphasize in their programs. While AKP focuses more on educational programs about Human Rights Education starting from primary education, CHP pledges that human rights should be taught in a practical manner. As for DTP, it gives place to human rights and states that human rights course should be compulsory.

Parties have expressed different opinions about foreign language education. Whereas AKP encourages foreign language education and reinforces Turkish as a language of science, CHP pledges education that enables each individual with a high school degree to know a foreign language properly. MHP encourages foreign language education and rejects education in a foreign language. DTP states that foreign language education will be compulsory.

Guidance services are one of the issues four parties, represented in Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM), discuss in their party programs. MHP pledges to offer computer-based guidance services. CHP states that there will be technical improvements while AKP emphasizes that guidance services will be improved. As for DTP, it pledges to offer guidance to student at every single phase of education.

While AKP states that students will be able to take other classes as well as Religious Culture Course with the approval of their parents, CHP underlines that Religious Education will be designed in a way that not only hinders political abuse but also encourages ethical and humanistic aspects as well as modern innovations focusing heavily on their faith worlds. DTP, on the other hand, states, in two very similar statements, that compulsory Religious Courses will be abolished and that, instead, Religious Courses will be formed in accordance with their beliefs.

When regulations concerning teachers are examined, AKP's actions can be categorized under the title "restructuring teacher education schools and in-service training" while CHP categorizes them under the title "teacher organization, improvement of life standards, and in-service training". No regulation concerning teacher education is mentioned in MHP's party program. DTP mentions certain regulations regarding teachers with a regard to economic issues, life conditions, research studies and organizations.

In terms of occupational guidance, MHP underlines that elective courses will be emphasized starting from 6th grade for students to reveal their abilities. In addition to MHP, represented in Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM), AKP, too, focuses on occupational guidance and students'

abilities and interests, elective courses will be given more weight starting from 5th grade, which makes occupational guidance very possible.

Whereas AKP lays emphasis on the fact that Children of Citizens Living Abroad will be given their education in accordance with their own environments, CHP and MHP focuses more on development of cultural values of those children.

Aside from common aspects that each party mentions, they have various statements regarding primary education. Some of these are, for AKP, physical structure and equipment of schools, for CHP, compulsory donation and consumer education, for MHP, environmental education, and, for DTP, mother tongue education, and health services.

To conclude, it can be alleged that political parties whose party programs are examined have so many regulations they need to make, and that how they are carried out is far from coherent.

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