

Decline of Meritocracy: Neo-Feudal Segregation in Turkey

Ş. Erhan Bağcı, Ankara University, Turkey

Abstract

This paper claims that neo-liberalism is a period that capitalism calls and brings back some archaic forms of class domination depending on the results of marketisation policies in education. Marketisation policies in education are accompanied by specific shifts in ideological discourses, such as meritocracy that were valid only under the welfare state.

Meritocracy, as an ideology at the heart of capitalist society, claims that allocation of social status in modern societies depends on merit which is obtained through educational success, unlike in feudalism that depends on family background. In fact, family background, through its effect on educational success, had continued to be an important factor in the allocation of status in modern societies. This effect was only compensated for to a certain extent by the idea of welfare state. The welfare state is a relatively equalitarian agent for it provides widespread educational opportunities and for it intervenes in the education-market relationship on behalf of public interest. However, the liquidation of the welfare state in the neo-liberal era with the help of marketisation policies in education, caused the family background to step forward on the allocation of the status.

That the family background is again the one and only determinant of social status, meritocratic ideology totally declines. The only difference in terms of the allocation of social status between feudalism and neo-liberal capitalism is that the family background takes effect thanks to the education system in capitalism. This is a distinctive kind of social segregation mechanism in the neo-liberal era that could be named as "neo-feudalism". Under neo-feudalism, family background does not affect the process directly but it

does indirectly through its effect on education. The neo-feudal segregation is a distinctive kind of reproduction of social inequalities through education.

Keywords: Meritocracy, welfare state, family, neo-feudalism, segregation

Introduction

Neo-liberalism is a period that capitalism calls and brings back some archaic forms of class domination depending on the results of marketisation policies in education. Marketisation policies in education are accompanied by specific shifts in ideological discourses, such as meritocracy that were valid only under the welfare state.

The policies of marketisation in education have formed new circumstances in the society (Apple, 2006; Giroux, 2008; Hill, 2014) in which the economic capital of parents have become more effective on educational strategies. The increasing importance of the economic capital of the families on children's educational choices has formed new dimensions of educational inequalities.

Neo-liberal circumstances are in a contradiction to the meritocratic claims. Considering that under the new circumstances the family background determines the educational success and therefore the social status of the children more than before, it can be said that the feudal and the neo-liberal societies resemble each other in terms of the distribution of social status. Liquidation of the welfare state transforms the relationship between education and the society considerably.

Meritocracy as an Ideology

Meritocracy implies that the distribution of social status in modern societies is different from feudalism as it depends on merit rather than family background (Young, 1994). Due to meritocratic claims, modern societies are open in terms of social mobility and if the

individual is intelligent enough and he exerts sufficient effort, education will provide him with the opportunity to move upwards (Olssen, 2004: 2-4). It is claimed that everyone has equal opportunity to succeed since the education systems are open and provide equal chances to everyone. Thus, the function of the education systems in modern societies is to secure equality in the distribution of social status. That the education system is fair, it is claimed that the hierarchy that comes after should also be considered as fair (Torun, 2009: 90). No matter which social status the individual occupies in the society due to his family background, education gives him the opportunity to move to a position according to his intelligence and effort.

Briefly and to the point, meritocratic ideology includes two assumptions. First is that modern society provides fairness thanks to the education system. The main premise of meritocracy is the assumption that children are trained, selected, eliminated and prepared to their social roles by education and all these procedures depend on their inner capacities and intelligence. Children might come from unequal social backgrounds but they face equal opportunities at school which is considered as an institution of fair selection and elimination. Since everyone has the same opportunity to succeed, no one should object to the results (Olssen, 2004: 2-4). The current division of social status is said to be the best possible.

Second assumption of meritocracy is about modernity. Modern societies differ from feudal ones because social status in modern societies is distributed fairly according to the level educational attainment, not to the family background (Young, 1994). This is what makes the modern societies better than the feudal societies as they provide equal chances for everyone, no matter what kind of family background they come from.

As the main production unit, family is at the very heart of feudalism. The status of the child is strictly tied to the family background. The child acquires the sufficient knowledge and skills in the family and the social status of the family doesn't change through generations. There is no way for a child to move up to a higher social status in a closed feudal society. Social mobility became possible as capitalism emerged and division of labor

diversified when the factory replaced the family as the new main unit of production (Tan, 1987: 246).

Similarly, when capitalist mode of production emerged, old types of knowledge and skills became obsolete and thus, a need for institutions of education outside the family came up, introducing the mass and widespread institutions of education, called public schools. From then on growing up the children has been a responsibility shared by the family and the society. The society participates in the process through schools and implements a complicated system of training similar to the complicated division of labor in modern times (Worsley, 1987: 146). Consequently, the distribution of social status is tied to the education system in modern societies different from feudalism in which status is bound directly and strictly to the family. Meritocracy is a concept that underlines the aforementioned difference between capitalist and feudal societies in terms of the way that rewards in the society are distributed.

However, education does not provide equal opportunities for all (Apple, 2006: 52). Children from disadvantaged social groups are also disadvantaged at school in terms of educational attainment because the dominant meanings and values disseminated at schools belong to the advantaged social groups (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000: 9). In other words, the legitimate cultural capital at schools is the cultural capital of the dominant culture and since this type of capital is closely linked to social class, it is almost impossible for lower class children to be successful at school (Sullivan, 2002: 145).

Standards of success at schools are configured in accordance with the dominant culture. All the students bring along their own patterns of value, attitude, aptitude and behaviour to the school. In fact, success at education implies that the school system selects some of these patterns while eliminating the others according to its criteria of legitimacy which depends on the dominant culture in the larger society. This can be followed even through OECD reports (OECD, 2012a: 52):

Through school marks, teachers can reward different sets of student habits, attitudes and behaviours. These include, first and foremost, achievement, or the mastery of the skills and knowledge that students are expected to acquire by the time they reach agreed developmental and academic milestones. In the context of language courses, this includes abilities measured by the PISA reading assessment (e.g. the ability to extract relevant information from texts) as well as the ability to write extended texts, respond to poetry, and interpret different media, among others. Yet teachers may also reward students' engagement and the use of particular types of learning strategies that may be beneficial for students' future learning and overall well-being. Teachers may also reward behaviours and attitudes that are not directly related to learning per se, but that may determine the pace of instruction and classroom dynamics, or may be unrelated to what happens in school altogether.

Evidence from PISA indicates that a 15-year-old student from a relatively disadvantaged home is 2.37 times more likely to score below Level 2 in the PISA reading proficiency scale than a student from an affluent family (OECD, 2012b: 16-17). Marks predict the future educational expectations of the students directly (OECD, 2012a: 62). Educational expectations are almost the primary determinants of the students' attendance at school and their future career choice. Students in the bottom third of the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status are less likely to expect to obtain a university degree than students in the top third of this scale (OECD, 2012a: 35). Students' educational expectations also signal their expectations of social mobility when compared with their parents' level of educational attainment. Students who expect to attain a higher level of education than their parents expect upward mobility; students who expect to attain a lower level of education than their parents expect downward mobility (OECD, 2012a: 39). Thus, standards of success at school and educational expectations of the students explain why the students from lower classes have lower academic performance at school¹.

One can argue that while the socio-economic status of the family of a student affects his performance at school significantly, it is unreasonable to claim, just as meritocracy does, that academic performance at school depends on intelligence and effort. Whatever there is in the world of social and cultural values of a society in terms of contradictions, conflicts and negotiations can be found at schools in their own. Schools can provide equality to children as

much as the larger society can. Those who are exposed to exclusion outside the school are also excluded inside.

Welfare State as a Compensating Agent

Welfare state is accepted as a more equalitarian agent as it intervenes in the society by extending the opportunities for education enabling the access of more people and by opening the ways for social mobility. Welfare state helps social mobility by decreasing income inequality and by widening the social security system (Bulutay, 2006; s.38). Although vertical social mobility does not put the inequalities away as a whole, it is accepted that it decreases them. Şengönül (2008) argues that capitalist societies always include inequalities but welfare state decreases the extent of them by developing social security systems and by conducting social reforms that make a more engaged form of citizenship. Decreasing the extent of inequalities implies the increase in social mobility rates and the standards of living. Else, high rates of public investment in education keep the private sector out of the education market helping the supply of educational services to be more equalitarian.

Welfare state has been the most concrete form in history of the idea of being a community (Bauman, 2013: 22). The idea of being a community depending on common interests inevitably requires an organization that works towards realizing that idea. Thus, the existence of welfare state supports the idea through practices that target the whole society's benefit. When the welfare state is liquidated, the responsibility for finding solutions to social problems is incurred to the individual and the idea of being a community fails (Bauman, 2013: 26). This makes the role of individuals' social status more important in the allocation of rewards in the society. By decreasing the responsibility of the state in solving the social problems, neo-liberal transformation helps social inequalities to be reproduced (Yazıcı, 2012: 129). Those who are already advantaged are able to find more and easier ways to keep their advantages while the disadvantaged ones have no way out under neo-liberalism. Therefore people are forced to form smaller scaled solidarity networks under the circumstances in which there are no welfare state policies on employment, health, education and social

security (İnsel, 1996: 7). As a result, familial relations become more effective and important in the society.

One can argue that there is a strong but negative relationship between the welfare state and the family. Because the liquidation of the welfare state inevitably creates a social and economic gap in the society and the family becomes more important in solving the problems resulting from that gap. For neo-liberalism, decreasing the social expenditures of the state means burdening the family with the responsibility of those social expenditures (Yazıcı, 2012: 113). Thus it could be easily claimed that the welfare state and the family set a zero-sum game: The family steps forward when the welfare state steps back.

Marketisation in Education in Turkey

There has never been a welfare state in Turkey similar to the central capitalist countries². During the establishment period of the Turkish Republic in which modern social classes had not yet emerged, the ideological preferences of the founders were the only determinants to shape the education system and thus, the modern education system in Turkey was to train modern citizens more than to reproduce the social differences (Sayılan ve Yıldız, 2009) since the priority of the founders was a political project so called nation-building. So it was the level of the capitalist development and the public education arrangements accordingly which enabled vertical social mobility. However as capitalism developed in time, the relationship between education and social mobility changed negatively, and it almost hit the bottom after the neo-liberal integration of the 1980's when the idea of the welfare state started to lose power. Education since then has been an important matter of debate as being one of the most destructed social institutions. Neo-liberal financial policies in education can be analyzed through the practices of commercialization in public education and the policies promoting private educational institutions, depending on discourses about the sufficiency of public resources allocated for education and the need for effective utilization of these resources (Soydan & Abalı, 2014: 376).

Marketisation of education in Turkey could be defined as the decline of the idea of common good related to education, promoting the private sector to invest in the educational market and reducing public education expenditures (Keskin ve Demirci, 2003). Thus, afterwards came the rise in the household expenditures in education.

One can argue that the most concrete indicator of marketisation in education in a country is the decrease of public educational expenditures. Likewise in Turkey, the starting point of the neo-feudal segregation is the limitation of the public resources and the reduction of investment in education. Table 1 demonstrates the change in the expenditures of MoNE (Ministry of National Education) per student in years.

Table 1- Expenditures of MoNE per Student (in 2011 constant prices)

Year	Total Expenditures	Investment Expenditures	Number of Students *	Expenditure per Student	
				Total	Investment Expenditures
1995	11.863.800.165	1.259.693.134	13.697.914	866,10	91,96
2000	21.111.916.915	3.483.426.480	15.688.053	1345,73	222,04
2005	22.229.171.133	2.122.080.330	18.438.753	1205,57	115,09
2010	31.713.574.418	2.395.177.780	24.254.237	1307,55	98,75

* Formal + Nonformal

Source: DİE (1997a; 1997b; 2002a; 2002b); MEB (1996; 2001; 2006; 2007; 2011; 2012); TÜİK (2007; 2013)

As it is seen in Table 1, total expenditures of MoNE between the years 1995 and 2010 increased whereas the investment expenditures didn't increase as much. This means that MoNE expends more on personnel costs (recurring expenditures) but not on investment expenditures. And when the case is the expenditures per student, the neo-liberal public policy becomes more obvious. The relationship between the increase in the number of students

and the investment expenditures is very weak ($r = 0,18$). In other words, the educational public investment expenditures in Turkey don't increase as much as the increase in the number of students and thus the investment expenditures per student decrease every year.

Since the public doesn't spend enough on education, there becomes a financial gap which puts the responsibility on the households to spend more. This gap is tried to be filled by the money collected from the parents (Keskin ve Demirci, 2003). Although it is forbidden by the Constitution in Turkey, public schools charge fees from the parents under different names depending on some regulations set by the neo-liberal governments since 1980 (Soydan & Abalı, 2014: 381-384). Consequently the distribution of the educational expenditures according to the source of finance in Turkey shows that the share of the government had decreased from 67% to 55%, whereas the share of the households had increased from 31% to 39%, between 2001 and 2006 (Aksoy, 2012: 15). When the public spends less on education, the share of the households is forced to increase accordingly.

Another aspect of the marketisation of education is the rise in the number of private schools. Excluding the nonformal, higher and open education institutions, the rate of the private schools had increased from 0,8% to 9,6% and the rate of the students in private schools had increased from 1% to 4%, between 1986 and 2012 (DİE, 1988; MEB, 2013). This means that the number of private schools in Turkey had increased 12 times and the number of students had increased 4 times in these years.

When the political power intends to increase the number of the private schools, the difference in terms of educational attainment between the students attending the public and the private institutions becomes inevitable. Results of PISA 2012 (Programme for International Student Assessment 2012) shows that the students from private schools have better academic performance than the ones from the public schools. The results also demonstrate that the total quality of an education system depends on the fair allocation of the resources between advantaged and the disadvantaged schools. The countries whose total performance is

over the average are the ones in which the correlation between the socio-economic status and the level of success of the students is weak (OECD, 2013: 14). When the public expenditures as an equalitarian agent over schools are cut off, the differences of success between the advantaged and the disadvantaged students become more obvious.

Table 2 demonstrates the number of students per teacher and classroom in public and private schools in Turkey in the year 2011-2012.

Table 2- The Number of Students per Teacher and Classroom in Turkey (2011-2012)

	Students per Teacher		Students per Classroom	
	Public	Private	Public	Private
Preschool	25,87	7,39	27,71	10,45
Primary	20,82	9,08	31,00	14,75
Secondary	17,05	6,88	32,90	13,65

Source: (MEB, 2013a)

Table 2 shows how significant the differences are between private and public schools in terms of student numbers per teacher and classroom. There are significantly fewer students per teacher and per classroom in private schools and this provides the students with more advantages. According to a report of ERI (Education Reform Initiative), the significant variables that represent the effect of the school resources on student success are the access to education, the rate of computers and the rate of the students per teacher; the students at the schools that seek academic success at the acceptance phase are more successful; and the ones who live in the districts with population less than 15.000 are less successful (Dinçer ve Kolaşın, 2009: 12-13). Considering the research demonstrating the strong relationship between scholastic achievement and student teacher ratio, the students in private schools have an advantage over those in public schools. And else, considering that the private school students are also more advantaged in terms of social and cultural capital, it can easily be thought that increasing number of private schools are deepening

and reproducing the already existing inequalities between different social groups.

When the protecting umbrella of the welfare state is removed from the schools, parents become the only resource to afford the costs of education. That school expenditures heavily covered by the parents' (ERG; 2012: 54) means that the quality of schools become more dependent on the households' socio-economic profile. This is not only true for private schools but also true for the public ones. Segregation can also be observed across public schools: The public schools in districts which more socio-economically advantaged people live in, have more opportunities to be more successful. And one can see that there are differences in terms of educational opportunities between different classrooms in the same public school (Ünal vd., 2010: 32).

In brief, with the ascent of neo-liberal policies in education in Turkey after the 1980s, public expenditures have started to decrease. To fill the financial gap due to that decrease, the schools have started to collect money from the parents. Besides, a public policy to increase the number of private schools has been pursued. And as a result, there are obvious differences between the private and the public schools. There are even differences between public schools and between the classrooms in public schools due to the socio-economic background of the parents. The aforesaid differences depend on the socio-economic backgrounds of the students, not on their intelligence and effort, as a contradiction to the meritocratic ideology. In this case, the neo-liberal education causes the disadvantages of the low socio-economic group students to increase. The neo-feudal segregation seems to multiply the inequalities that the lower class students face.

Neo-Feudalism in Turkey

When the welfare state as a mechanism that decreases the severity of the inequalities is liquidated, there is nothing left to provide opportunities for the lower class students to help with educational success. Thus, the relationship between the so-called meritocratic society and the status allocation becomes weaker. The schools are segregated according to the students' socio-economic background by leaving no chance for the lower class. The significance of the

concept, neo-feudalism, is that the aforementioned segregation has effects on the whole society, not only in the field of education. Neo-feudalism can be considered as a metaphor to underline the difference between the welfare and the neo-liberal state in terms of the effects of the policies of education on the social structure. It helps to comprehend that the capitalist society is always of a segregated kind but the patterns, aspects and the severity of that segregation can be different according to the political, social, cultural and economic implementations, namely to the capital accumulation regime.

It should not be missed that capitalist education has never provided equality and the inequalities derive from the unequal classed form of the society, not the education system. However, education may function as a mean of "relative" social mobility due to welfare policies. Relative social mobility is based on a positional competition that determines one's standing in a hierarchy of academic performance or hierarchy of labour-market entrants. So if the welfare state is there to "help" the lower class student financially with his education, he has the opportunity to reach some positional goods, such as credentials, incomes and higher-status jobs (Brown, 2013: 682).

One can claim that when the financial "help" of the welfare state for the ones with lower cultural capital is over, the economic capital of the families becomes more significant to survive in the capitalist society. That can be argued as a shift between the types of capital of a family in terms of educational success: Economic capital steps forward when the welfare state fades from the scene.

It is known that the effect of family background on educational success is more significant in societies that are historically more industrialized (Köse, 2007: 46-77). Well-known examples are *grandes écoles* in France (Bourdieu, 1996) and the *Ivy League* (Katari, 2013) in the USA. These institutions function as selection/elimination agents that help the attenders to take place in elite positions in their countries. The other way is also possible: There are special schools in France that most of the students (65-70%) are selected officially from low socio-economic status and immigrant families (Ünal vd, 2010: 35). Education reproduces

these inequalities depending on the family background, namely the cultural capital of the students (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000). As the welfare state as a compensating agent on the effect of family background on educational achievement, providing social mobility to a certain extent as a chance for the lower classes to move upwards, has been liquidated in the neo-liberal era, this kind of a segregation in the education system is legitimized and spread over the whole body. That kind of a segregation is not conducted officially yet in Turkey but there are schools that are known to address lower class students, such as vocational highschools (Aksoy, 2011: 91-100; Kandemir ve Kaya, 2010: 557-566). There are also schools that families from elite groups prefer and pay a lot to train their children for their own social class formation, such as TED, Galatasaray Eğitim Vakfı and so on (Ünal vd, 2010: 45).

Turkey already ranks high among the OECD countries in terms of inequalities between schools (Dinçer ve Kolaşın, 2009: 3). The level of education of the 66% of the youth in Turkey is the same as their parents; and 91% of the youth that hold the same educational level with their parents come from the lowest educational level (Aslankurt, 2013). That means the education system in Turkey provides very few opportunities to the youth in terms of social mobility. And else, the lower classes almost never take the advantage of that opportunity. In neo-feudal Turkey, the education system works almost like a caste system that helps the upper classes to maintain their advantages while holding the lower ones at their disadvantaged positions.

Educational opportunities in the society have spread as it never did before. However getting education is no longer enough to hold a better status unless the school is one of an elite group. The password is now and again the status of the family after the welfare state is liquidated. This is how it works in neo-feudal Turkey.

Family as a Neo-Feudal Agent

While neo-feudal segregation happens as a top-down process, families are forced to develop strategies to survive and the struggle that they take part helps the neo-feudal structure to be reproduced. All the behavioral patterns of daily life, expectations for

the future and decisions given as the children grow of the families are shaped under neo-liberal world of values and attitudes and the main point of this world is "competition". Neo-liberalism should not only be considered as an economic policy but also a specific set of norms that effects people's types of living, feeling and thinking (Dardot ve Laval, 2012: 1). The neo-liberal rationality forces "the self" to act for self-empowerment to survive (Dardot ve Laval, 2012: 370). Thereby, the neo-feudal family emerges as an agent to struggle to make room for itself in the society that has been segregated by neo-liberal policies.

This kind of an emergence determines the rules of the "game" in Bourdieuan terms: The "player" is the neo-feudal family; the name of the game is "the neo-feudal survival" and "the field" is the neo-liberal education (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 98):

Players are taken in by the game, they oppose one another, sometimes with ferocity, only to the extent that they concur in their belief (*doxa*) in the game and its stakes; they grant these a recognition that escapes questioning. Players agree, by the mere fact of playing, and not by way of a "contract", that the game is worth playing, that it is "worth the candle", and this *collusion* is the very basis of their competition. We also have *trump cards*, that is, master cards whose force varies depending on the game: just as the relative value of cards changes with each game, the hierarchy of the different species of capital (economic, social, cultural, symbolic) varies across the various fields.

Neo-feudal families compete with each other in terms of the educational success of their children because they believe that education provides advantages for the ones who deserve. They all believe that investing in education worths the candle because their children might occupy a better status than they have in the society. Thus, they do whatever they can for their children to be successful in education. However, the power of the trump cards of each player strictly depends on his position in the capitalist hierarchy. Table 3 demonstrates the share of educational expenditures by quintiles in total expenditures and the share of the quintiles in total educational expenditures. The quintiles are ordered from the first to the fifth, namely from the bottom to the top.

Table 3- Educational Expenditures of Households By Quintiles Ordered By Income (1994-2011, %)

	Total		1. 20%		2. 20%		3. 20%		4. 20%		5. 20%	
	'94	'11	'94	'11	'94	'11	'94	'11	'94	'11	'94	'11
Share of Educational Expenditure in Total Expenditures	1.6	2.0	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.8	1	1.3	1.6	1.6	2.3	3.4
Share of Quintile in Total Educational Expenditure	100	100	2.6	3.3	4.5	5.2	9.5	11.0	21.3	18.2	62.1	62.3

Source: TÜİK (1994; 2011; 2013b)

Table 3 illustrates that when the income of a family increases the rate of the educational expenditures also increases. The share of the educational expenditures of the bottom group was 0.6% in 1994 and 0.7 in 2011 while that of the top group was 2.3% and 3.4% respectively. This means that the share of the educational expenditures of the top group is significantly more than the bottom one. The significance of this finding can be better understood when it is paired with the findings of the share of the quintiles in total educational expenditures: The share of the bottom group was 2.6% in 1994 and 3.3 in% in 2011 while that of the top group was 62.1% and 62.3% respectively. Else it is obvious that the share of the quintiles increases at low levels in the first four groups while it increases dramatically in the top one.

Table 3 also shows that the share of the educational expenditures in total expenditures increased as a whole between 1994 and 2011 and the difference between the attitudes towards educational expenditures of the quintiles did not change in these years. Depending on the findings in Table 3, it is obvious that each social group increases its educational expenditures in time by increasing their share of the educational expenditures in total expenditures. Else it is clear that the top quintile has the most significant tendency to keep its social status by investing in education. In brief, Table 3 tells that education is a contested terrain that real class war is working to keep the below ones down and the above ones up (Holland, 2011). Families consider that their children should be educated at least as much as they had been (Tamer, 2013). Those below are trying to move up but they obviously have

no chance since those above have more opportunities to invest in education more.

Özsan (2015) states that from the very beginning of modern education in Turkey, the administrative elite of the country has come from the eshraf families (the local notables) and education plays an important role for them to move to the central administrative positions of the country. She claims that by investing in the education of the members of the family, they try to shape their social class formation that differs them from the other families of the local communities and they try to take part at the central economic, bureaucratic and political elite of the country. Thus the education of a member of these families is not only considered as an individual process but also as a part of a strategical project to form and reproduce the social position of the family.

From the point of the lower class families, the play goes in a different way. Families could not easily refuse the possibility imposed by the dominating educational discourse repeating perpetually that their children could occupy a better position than they have thanks to the education system. They act under a sui generis sociological logic that cannot be directly related with the laws of supply and demand of the employment market (Faure vd. 1972: 25-26) and although they have learned that there is no direct relationship between education and employment by the help of their own experiences, they cannot give up investing in their children's education (Bağcı, 2014).

Compensating effect of the welfare state used to help the lower class families to remain in the game to a certain extent. Liquidation of the welfare state has changed the rules of the game. The players sometimes work to change the exchange rate between various species of capital, through strategies aimed at discrediting the form of capital upon which the force of their opponents rests and to valorize the species of capital they preferentially possess (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 99). Now that the only trump card in the game is the income of the family, namely the economic capital, the lower class families have no chance to remain.

In neo-feudal Turkey, while there are private schools working on the high rates of fees and government promotions in one hand, there are also public schools trying to save the day by collecting money from the lower class families to fill the gap caused by the cuts in the budget appropriations on the other. Segregation of the schools inevitably effects the families' educational decisions. Each family from each social class and group attempts to develop an educational strategy in order to take the best possible position under the segregated school system and this effort causes the families to reproduce neo-feudalism.

In this context, the middle class families are forced to play an important role in reproducing neo-feudalism. They are expected to act with significant educational strategies in the neo-liberal era. Education is of great importance for the middle class families to acquire economic, social and cultural capital (Çimen, 2013: 10-11). Neo-liberal education policies provoke them to mobilize all their resources to reach the best possible in order to compete (Sabırlı, 2013: 15). The desire of "creating the most special child" is the basic motivation to determine their educational strategies (Çimen, 2013: 12).

Concluding Remarks

As result, the neo-feudalism emerges by segregating the school system and provoking the families to spend more on education increasing the significance of the economic capital for educational success. The shift in the exchange rate of cultural capital to economic capital seems to depend on the liquidation of the welfare state. The compensating effect of the welfare state used to decrease the share of the economic capital of the family in terms of the children's educational success but now the rules have changed.

Meritocratic ideology which implies that status in modern societies is allocated according to merit obtained through educational success unlike feudal societies where status depends solely on one's family background, were close to reality mostly in welfare state times. Since the welfare state was liquidated, the family background has become more crucial for educational success and

therefore for the allocation of the status. Liquidation of the welfare state has given rise to a neo-feudal social formation.

One can argue that neo-liberalism reveals and calls back some pre-capitalist social features that could be related with the notion "neo-feudalism". For example, some authors suggest that there are some similarities between the labor regime of neo-liberalism and of the late Medieval or the eve of trade capitalism in terms of the extent of the mass left out of production process and of the expanding size of the informal sector (Bora ve Erdoğan, 2011: 26-31). Hobsbawm (1969: 31-50) uses the term "neo-feudalism" to define the unique social structure in which capitalist and feudal modes of production work together in Peru in the first half of the 20th century. Minc (1995) mentions that the decline of the Soviet Union led humanity into a new Medieval with the help of the crises of the modern structure and the modern imagination. Işıklı (2009: 117-130) demonstrates the similarities between the US' intervention in the Middle East after the Soviet Union and the Crusades by making an analogy with the feudal era. İnel (1996: 7-14; 2007: 2013) states that "neo-feudal state" in Turkey depends on the struggles between the different apparatus of the state since these struggles loosen the central structure of the modern state.

All of these discussions show that capitalism calls and brings back some archaic forms of class domination at certain times. In today's neo-liberal world, some forms of feudal society emerge due to the liquidation of the welfare state. So neo-feudalism should not be considered as an alternative term for neo-liberalism, but a derivative of it. Under neo-feudalism, the family background is the main determinant of acquiring status but it works through the education system. Neo-feudalism is a form of social segregation that stems from the liquidation of the welfare state and the marketisation of education.

¹ PISA has been criticized from various aspects, such as it is a highly standardized international test ignoring the cultural and national differences, as it stems from a market-based perspective etc. Although these critics seem meaningful, one can claim that the test results are able to provide a pretty huge amount of data to be interpreted better than OECD does.

² In fact, the distinctive implementations of social policies in Turkey could not easily be considered as "the welfare state". However, the "idea" of welfare state was obviously hegemonic in the ideological climate before the neo-liberal era. Thus, "welfare state in Turkey" in this text implies "the hegemonic idea of welfare state in Turkey".

REFERENCES

- Aksoy, H.H. (2011). "Yoksullar İçin Mesleki Ortaöğretimin Çatışmacı Bir Yorumu". *Tes-İş Dergisi*, Haziran 2011, s. 91-100
- Aksoy, H.H. (2012). "Piyasa Memnuniyetinin Yeni Aracı: Kesintili, Dini, Mesleki ve Okul Dışında Eğitim". *Eğitim Bilim Toplum Dergisi*, Cilt: 10, Sayı: 40, ss.9-24
- Apple, M. (2006). *Eğitim ve İktidar*. Kalkedon Yayınları, İstanbul
- Aslankurt, B. (2013). "Eğitimde Kuşaklararası Hareketlilik – Fırsat Eşitliğinde Türkiye Nerede?". TEPAV. www.tepav.org.tr (20.02.2013)
- Bağcı, Ş.E. (2014). *Yetişkin Eğitimi ve Eşitlik*. Kalkedon Yayınları, İstanbul
- Bauman, Z. (2013). *Modernite, Kapitalizm, Sosyalizm: Küresel Çağda Sosyal Eşitsizlik*. Say Yayınları, İstanbul
- Bora, T. ve Erdoğan, N. (2011). "Cüppenin, Kılıcın ve Kalemin Mahcup Yoksulları – Yeni Kapitalizm, Yeni İşsizlik ve Beyaz Yakalılar". Bora, T., Bora, A., Erdoğan, N., Üstün, İ. (Der), *Boşuna Mı Okuduk? Türkiye'de Beyaz Yakalı İşsizliği*. İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul
- Bourdieu, P. (1996). *The State Nobility: Elite Schools in the Field of Power*. Polity Press, Cambridge
- Bourdieu, P. & Passeron, J-C. (2000). *Reproduction In Education, Society And Culture, Second Edition*. Sage Pub. London
- Bourdieu, P. & Wacquant, L.J.D. (1992). *An Invitation To Reflexive Sociology*. Polity Press, Cambridge
- Brown, P. (2013). "Education, Opportunity and the Prospects For Social Mobility". *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 34: 5-6, 678-700, DOI: 10.1080/01425692.2013.816036
- Bulutay, T. (2006). "İktisat Kuramı, Eğitim ve Gelir Bölüşümü". *İktisat İşletme ve Finans Dergisi*, Cilt 21, Sayı: 241, s. 5-69
- Çimen, C.A. (2013). "Orta Sınıf ve Eğitimde Neoliberal Yeniden Yapılanma". *Eleştirel Pedagoji Dergisi*, Yıl 5, Sayı 30, ss.10-13
- DİE (1988). *1986-1987 Milli Eğitim İstatistikleri: Örgün Eğitim*. Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü Matbaası, Ankara
- DİE (2002a). *Milli Eğitim İstatistikleri Örgün Eğitim 2000-2001*. Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü Matbaası, Ankara

- DİE (2002b). *Milli Eğitim İstatistikleri Yaygın Eğitim 2000-2001*. Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü Matbaası, Ankara
- DİE (1997a). *Milli Eğitim İstatistikleri Örgün Eğitim 1995-1996*. Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü Matbaası, Ankara
- DİE (1997b). *Milli Eğitim İstatistikleri Yaygın Eğitim 1995-1996*. Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü Matbaası, Ankara
- Dinçer, M.A. ve Kolaşın, G.U. (2009). "Türkiye'de Öğrenci Başarısında Eşitsizliğin Belirleyicileri". Eğitim Reformu Girişimi, <http://erg.sabanciuniv.edu> (14.01.2013)
- ERG (2012). Eğitimi İzleme Raporu 2011. <http://erg.sabanciuniv.edu/sites/erg.sabanciuniv.edu/files/EIR2011.19.12.12.WEB.pdf> (20.02.2013)
- Faure, E., Herrera, F., Kaddoura, A.R., Lopes, H., Petrovsky, A.V., Rahnema, M., Ward, F.C. (1972). *Learning To Be - The World of Education Today and Tomorrow*. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0000/000018/001801e.pdf> (18.08.2010)
- Giroux, A.H. (2008). *Eleştirel Pedagojinin Vaadi*. Kalkedon Yayınları, İstanbul
- Hill, D. (2014). Sınıf Mücadelesi ve Eğitim: Neoliberalizm, (Neo) Muhafazakarlık ve Kamusal Eğitime Kapitalist Saldırı. (Ed: Uysal, M. & Yıldız, A.) *Eleştirel Eğitim Yazıları*. Siyasal Kitabevi, Ankara
- Hobsbawm, E. (1969). "A Case of Neo-Feudalism: La Convencion, Peru". *Journal of Latin American Studies, Vol 1, No 1, pp.31-50*
- Holland, J. (2011). "Real Class War Is Working To Keep Those Below You Down". www.truth-out.org (20.02.2013)
- Işıklı, A. (2009). *Yeni Ortaçağ*. İmge Yayınevi, Ankara
- İnsel, A. (2013). "Suçluların Telaşı İçindesiniz". *Radikal 2*. 22.12.2013
- İnsel, A. (2007). "Neofeodal Devlette İlerlerken". *Radikal 2*. 04.03.2007
- İnsel, A. (1996). "Çözülme Devrinde Cemaat Kimlikleri ve Neo-Feodal Devlet". *Birikim Dergisi*. Sayı: 89. s. 7-14
- Kandemir, O. ve Kaya, F. (2010). "Gelir Dağılımının Yüksek Öğrenimde Fırsat Eşitliğine Etkisi: Türkiye'de Özel Üniversite Gerçeği". *Kastamonu Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, Cilt 18, No: 2, s. 557-566*

- Katari, R. (2013). "Unifying American Education: Prospects for the Best and Brightest". www.truth-out.org (20.10.2013)
- Keskin, N.E. ve Demirci, A.G. (2003). *Eğitimde Çürüyüş*. KİGEM, Ankara
- Köse, R. (2007). "Aile Sosyo-Ekonomik ve Demografik Özellikleri ile Okul ve Özel Dershanenin Liselere Giriş Sınavına Katılan Öğrencilerin Akademik Başarıları Üzerindeki Etkileri". *Eğitim Bilim Toplum Dergisi, Cilt: 5, Sayı: 17, Kış, s. 46-77*
- MEB (2012). *Milli Eğitim İstatistikleri Örgün Eğitim 2010-2011*. MEB Yayınları, Ankara
- MEB (2011). *Kesin Hesap Kitapçığı 2010*. MEB Yayınları, Ankara
- MEB (2007). *Milli Eğitim İstatistikleri Örgün Eğitim 2005-2006*. MEB Yayınları, Ankara
- MEB (2006). *Kesin Hesap Kitapçığı 2005*. MEB Yayınları, Ankara
- MEB (2001). *Kesin Hesap Kitapçığı 2000*. MEB Yayınları, Ankara
- MEB (1996). *Kesin Hesap Kitapçığı 1995*. MEB Yayınları, Ankara
- MEB (2013). *Örgün Eğitim İstatistikleri 2011-2012*. MEB Yayınları, Ankara
- Minc, A. (1995). *Yeni Ortaçağ*. İmge Yayınevi, Ankara
- OECD (2013). *PISA 2012 Results In Focus: What 15-year-olds know and what they can do with what they know*. <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/keyfindings/pisa-2012-results-overview.pdf> (24.12.2013)
- OECD. (2012a). "Grade Expectations: How Marks and Education Policies Shape Students' Ambitions, PISA", *OECD Publishing*. www.oecd.org (14.01.2013)
- OECD (2012b). "Equity and Quality in Education – Supporting Disadvantaged Students and Schools", *OECD Publishing*. www.oecd.org (14.01.2013)
- Olssen, M. (2004). "Introduction". Olssen, M. (Der.), *Culture and Learning: Access and Opportunity In The Classroom*, Information Age Publishing Inc, USA, s. 1-28
- Özsan, G. (2015). "Türkiye'nin Sosyal Dokusunda Değişen ve Değişmeyen Unsurlar: Eşraf Aileleri ve Eğitim". *Eğitim Bilim Toplum Dergisi, Cilt 13, Sayı 50, pp. 96-133*

- Sabırlı, I. (2013). "Orta Sınıf Ailelerin Eğitim Algısı ve İlkokul Seçme Dinamikleri". *Eleştirel Pedagoji Dergisi*, Yıl 5, Sayı 30, ss.13-16
- Sayılan, F., Yıldız, A. (2009). "The Historical and Political Context of Adult Literacy in Turkey". *The International Journal of Lifelong Education*. Volume 28, Issue 6, pp.735-749
- Soydan, T., Abalı, H.G. (2014). "Changes in the Field of Finance of Education in Turkey within the Context of Neoliberal Policies". *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, Volume 12, Number 1, pp. 361-390
- Sullivan, A. (2002). "Bourdieu And Education: How Useful is Bourdieu's Theory For Researchers". *The Netherland's Journal of Social Sciences*, Volume 38, No: 2, s. 144-166
- Şengönül, T. (2008). "Sosyal Sınıf Kökeni, Eğitimsel Kazanım ve Dikey Sosyal Hareketlilik İlişkisi". *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyolojik Araştırmalar E-Dergisi*
- Tamer, M.G. (2013). *Okulu Terk Deneyimi Üzerine Sosyolojik Bir Araştırma: Ankara Kent Merkezi Genel Liselerde Okulu Terk Nedenleri*. Siyasal Kitabevi, Ankara
- Tan, M. (1987). "Eğitsel Fırsat Eşitliği". *Ankara Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Fakültesi Dergisi*, Cilt 20, Sayı 1, s.245-259
- Torun, Y. (2009). "Meritokrasi: Adaletin Terazisi Mi Yoksa Bir Adalet İllüzyonu Mu?". *Eğitim Bilim Toplum Dergisi*, Cilt: 7, Sayı: 26, Bahar, s. 89-99
- TÜİK (2007). *Milli Eğitim İstatistikleri Yaygın Eğitim 2005-2006*. TÜİK Yayınları, Ankara
- TÜİK (2013). *Milli Eğitim İstatistikleri Yaygın Eğitim 2010-2011*. TÜİK Yayınları, Ankara
- Ünal, I., Özsoy, S., Yıldız, A., Güngör, A., Aylar, E., Çankaya, D. (2010). *Eğitimde Toplumsal Ayrışma*. Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, Ankara
- Worsley, P. (1987). *The New Introducing Sociology*. Penguin Books, UK
- Yazıcı, B. (2012). "The Return to the Family: Welfare, State and Politics of the Family in Turkey". *Anthropological Quarterly*, Volume 85, Number 1, Winter 2012, pp.103-140
- Young, M. (1994). *The Rise Of The Meritocracy*. Transaction Publishers, London

Author's Details

Dr. Ş. Erhan Bağcı, school counselor in MoNE, also guest lecturer in the Department of Lifelong Learning and Adult Education in Ankara University - Turkey, erhanbagci@yahoo.com