

## Expansion of secondary education in Turkey after the Second World War (1945-1964)

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### Abstract

This article aims to reveal the expansion of secondary education in Turkey between 1945 and 1964. The development of secondary education in Turkey up to 1945 has been studied using Müller's concept of systematisation. The expansion of secondary education between 1945 and 1964 has been analysed by considering the characteristics of education systems conceptualised by Ringer as inclusiveness, progressivism, and segmentation. The development of secondary education between 1945 and 1964 was studied by focusing on the Turkish-US interaction. The research came to the following conclusions: Although efforts were made to expand it until 1965, secondary education was not inclusive in terms of gender and geographical region. In Turkish secondary education, the schools that students attend are largely determined by the social strata of their families. In this respect, it should be said that progressivism was weak in the process of expanding high schools until 1965. From their emergence until 1965, high schools were divided into schools or programmes that differed both in their curricula and in the social strata of their students. Segmentation is quite evident in high schools. Until the 1940s, general high schools were accessible to the wealthy and urban professionals. After the 1940s, Vocational Institutes were established, attended mainly by peasants and workers.

### Keywords:

*Secondary education; High school; Expansion of education; General high school; Vocational high school*

### Expansión de la educación secundaria en Turquía después de la Segunda Guerra Mundial (1945-1964)

A partir de conceptos como el de sistematización (Muller), inclusión, progresividad y segmentación (Ringer), este artículo tiene como objetivo indagar sobre la expansión y el desarrollo de la educación secundaria en Turquía entre 1945 y 1964, análisis que se realiza teniendo especialmente en cuenta el vínculo entre Turquía y Estados Unidos. La investigación arribó a las siguientes conclusiones: si bien, hasta 1965, se realizaron esfuerzos para expandir la educación secundaria, ésta no fue inclusiva en términos de género y de regiones geográficas. En la educación secundaria turca, las escuelas a las que asisten los estudiantes están fuertemente determinadas por el sector social o la procedencia familiar de los mismos. En este sentido, debemos afirmar que la progresividad ha sido débil en el proceso de expansión de las escuelas secundarias hasta 1965. Desde sus inicios hasta ese año, las escuelas secundarias fueron divididas en escuelas o programas diferenciados tanto en su currículum como en el sector social de sus estudiantes. La segmentación es evidente en estas escuelas. Hasta la década de 1940, las escuelas secundarias fueron accesibles solamente para los sectores ricos y urbanos. Después de los 40, cuando surgieron los Institutos Vocacionales, éstos atendieron principalmente a los campesinos y trabajadores.

### Palabras clave:

*Educación secundaria; Escuela secundaria; Expansión de la educación; Educación secundaria general; Educación secundaria vocacional*

## Introduction

From the end of World War II until 1964, when the planned development period began, there were significant changes in secondary education in Turkey. This article aims to reveal the expansion of secondary education in the period 1945-1964. To achieve this aim, the development of secondary education in Turkey will be analyzed first. Then, the expansion of secondary education 1945 to 1964 will be discussed. The development of secondary education in Turkey until 1945 will be analyzed with Müller's conception of systematisation. Müller's approach focuses on the conditions under which the education system emerged and developed and the impact of changes in this system on the structure of society. Müller's (1987, p.17) systematisation process includes three stages: The emergence of the system refers to the development of individual school types that are not related to each other. The constitution of the system refers to the integrated organisation of all parts of the system, their functional articulation, and classification. The complementation of the system refers to the completion of the system through the modification of existing structures and the creation or integration of new institutions in line with objectives not yet predicted at the time the system was created.

Relations between Turkey and the United States of America were very intense between 1945 and 1964. During this period, Turkey adopted a multi-party political system, signed many agreements with Europe, and embarked on a planned development process. This period of significant developments in secondary education is analysed by taking into account the three statistical characteristics of education systems conceptualised by Ringer (1979, 1987) as inclusiveness, progressiveness, and segmentation. Ringer (1979, 1987) conceptualised inclusiveness as enrolment rates, progressiveness as the degree to which students are drawn from the lower middle and lower social strata, and segmentation as the division of education systems into schools or programmes that differ both in their curricula and in the social origins of their students. To carry out analyses based on Ringer's concepts, the sources used were statistics from the Turkish State Statistical Institute, statistics, and reports published by the Ministry of National Education, school histories, parliamentary speeches, Education Council speeches, and expert reports.

Social stratification in Turkey after the Second World War is analysed in terms of 5 social groups, according to the Turkish economist Boratav (1963). These groups are as follows: (1) urban rich (merchants, industrialists, manufacturers), (2) land owners, urban elites, (3) urban middle class (self-employed, white-collar workers such as doctors, engineers, civil servants, medium-small merchants, wealthy shopkeepers), (4) urban poor (laborers, artisans, shopkeepers), (5) small farmers, landless peasants.

## Expansion of secondary education until the end of the Second World War

The emergence of the secondary education system began in the Ottoman period with schools opened by foreign states and missionary organisations (Benedictine in 1583 and Jesuit in 1607 in Istanbul, Protestant in 1824 in Beirut, and Jewish in 1854). The number of foreign secondary schools increased rapidly in the second half of the 19th century.

These schools, which were initially attended by non-Muslims (Levantine, Bulgarian, Armenian, and Greek), came to be preferred by Muslims after the second half of the 1880s because of the quality of the education they provided, the new teaching techniques they used and their success in teaching foreign languages (Tekeli & İlkin, 1993). In addition to non-Muslim schools, there were also private secondary schools. All these schools, which served fewer students, focused on improving their educational processes and tried to excel in areas such as foreign language teaching, where the state was not yet adequate. Non-Muslim and other private schools had no common curriculum or standards for teacher qualifications. These schools had no links with the Ottoman State or with each other, except to obtain permission from the Sultan to open.

The first middle school (*idadi*) of the Ottoman State was opened in 1945. The first high school of the Ottoman State, Galatasaray Mekteb-i Sultanisi (later Galatasaray High School), was opened in 1869 after a joint endeavour with France. This school was considered equivalent to French high schools by the French state. Graduates of the Sultanate who would enroll in the university (*Darülfunun*) were required to take the Baccalaureate exam. This school had a mission to unite all subjects (Muslims, Christians, Jews) under the Ottoman identity with its Western and modern education system. The school was fee-based, but some students studied for free. One-third of its students were Turks, the children of high-ranking soldiers, pashas, and bureaucrats. The aim of this school, as stated in its legislation, was to prepare students for higher education and to train high-level bureaucrats. Therefore, its curriculum included courses such as economics, politics, law, and Latin. Galatasaray High School served as a prototype/model for all high schools that opened later on (Ergin, 1977; Cicioğlu, 1985).

Each of these schools, which grew out of different centres, had established its educational system, had no links with each other, and was indifferent to other schools. They were independent of each other in terms of objectives, programmes, and diplomas. Most of them were structured as vertical organisations. Most of them had their own primary and middle schools. Some schools could be called high schools even though they consist of primary and middle schools. This led to confusion in the names of secondary schools. Their programmes included courses in religion, history, geography, mathematics and science. Depending on the language of the pupils, Armenian, Greek, French, Arabic or Turkish courses were added. Special emphasis was placed on the teaching of foreign languages (English, French, German) and classical languages (mostly Latin, sometimes Greek) (Akyüz, 2021, 241-247). Depending on the needs of the school's location and the environment from which the students came, subjects such as telegraphy, basketry, commerce, mythology, and law could be included in the curriculum. The establishment of the *Maarif-i Umumiye Nezareti* (Ministry of Education) (1857) provided an authority to oversee schools. *Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi* (The General Education Regulation) (1869) defined and graded modern schools. However, from a financial, administrative, systemic, and pedagogical point of view, secondary education at the beginning of the 20th century was centralised.

The constitution of the system of secondary education in Turkey took place after the proclamation of the Republic (1923) with the modernisation reforms pioneered by Atatürk. In 1923, the name *Sultani*, which reminded the Sultanate, was changed to *Lise* (1923).

With the Law on *Tevhid-i Tedrisat* (Unification of Education) (1924), all science and education institutions in the country were connected to the *Maarif Vekaleti* [Ministry of National Education (MoNE)]. Vocational schools affiliated to local authorities were excluded from this system. This law brought together independent secondary schools under the same administrative unity. With the Law on the *Maarif Teşkilatına Dair Kanun* (Organisation of Education) (1926), the General Directorate of Secondary Education was established. Middle school, high school, primary teacher school, and village teacher school were defined as secondary education schools. With these laws, the fragmented structure consisting of foreign, minority, traditional, and modern schools was organised and classified in an integrated manner. The objectives of all levels of education were defined and the grades of education were functionally articulated with each other. Thus, the uncertainty created by vertically structured schools was largely resolved. Career paths became more systematically trackable.

In 1927, vocational schools (industrial and commercial) under local administrations such as municipalities or provinces were transferred to the MoNE. In 1933, the General Directorate of Vocational and Technical Education was established (*Maarif Vekâleti merkez teşkilâtı ve vazifeleri hakkında kanun*, 1933). The level of education, admission, diploma, and employment opportunities of these schools, which had previously been completely independent of each other and of the centralised system, were determined. The secondary education system was thus largely complemented.

Until 1972-1973 secondary education in Turkey continued at two levels: middle school and high school (or 2-year vocational institute). Middle schools were independent or part of high schools/institutes and provided 3 years of education for primary school graduates, preparing students for life, profession, and further education. High schools were 3-year schools based on middle schools and prepared students for life, profession, and higher education. Vocational institutes were established in 1943-44 and provided two years of vocational education for vocational middle school graduates. From 1957 (the process was completed in 1966), middle vocational and technical schools were closed and all middle schools took over the task of preparing students for all types of high schools

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### **Schooling and inclusiveness in secondary education**

In the first years of the Republic, 81.30% of the population was illiterate. The primary school enrolment rate was 20% and the secondary school enrolment rate was around 1%. In the early years of the Republic, therefore, the focus of education policy was on expanding primary education. Ninety percent of the population lived in villages and was employed in agriculture (*Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu*, 2010). In Turkey, as an agricultural country, non-agricultural employment was quite low. The civil servants and intellectuals to be trained through secondary education were important in creating a modern society that embraced the republican revolutions. Since secondary education provided employment opportunities in the bureaucracy, it was highly respected in the eyes of society. However, most secondary schools were concentrated in a few centres, especially in Istanbul. Istanbul was the province with the highest number of both public and private secondary schools.

In 1926-27, there were 791 teachers and 15,263 pupils in 68 public middle schools in Turkey. In the same year, 65.3% of all high schools (52), 76.5% of all high school teachers (857), and 73.5% of all high school students (3,159) were located in Istanbul (Gündüz & Öztürk, 2020). Thus, Istanbul high schools were flooded with students from other provinces. In 1924, the duration of high school education was reduced to three years. It was required to study for 11 years (5+3+3) to graduate from high school. However, minority and foreign high schools, which focused on language education, remained at four years. The most popular public school, Galatasaray High School, also remained at 12 years (5+3+4). Despite the longer duration of education, student demand for this school has always been high. The main reason for this was that it was a well-established public high school that taught foreign languages, especially French (Yücel, 1994, p. 184). A list of the names, surnames and occupations of the graduates of Galatasaray High School between 1871 and 1967 may explain the reason for the high demand for this high school. The list shows that the majority of the graduates became urban rich people, such as merchants, industrialists, and fabricators, and urban middle-class white-collar workers, such as ambassadors, ministers, governors, professors, lawyers, doctors, engineers, teachers, and high-ranking civil servants (Galatasaray Lisesi 100. yıl Kutlama Derneği, 1974).

In the early years of the Republic, the number of foreign and minority high schools was higher than the number of Turkish high schools, and the majority of these schools were located in Istanbul. In the 1926-1927 academic year, 28 (82.3%) of the 34 high schools in Istanbul were private schools where minorities (Armenians, Greeks, Jews) and foreigners (French, Germans, Americans, Italians) were the majority. Students in these schools (1564) constituted 67.3 percent of all high school students in Istanbul (2322) and 49.5 percent of all high school students in the country. Private high schools in Istanbul also had a significant weight at the national level. 28 out of 33 private high schools in Turkey were located in Istanbul and their students constituted 97.5 percent of all private high school students in the country (Gündüz & Öztürk, 2020). These private schools provided academically qualified education and taught one or more foreign languages at a good level. As they provided language preparation classes, their teaching periods were one to two years longer than those of state high schools. Since the Tanzimat period (1839), foreign schools have provided education for the children of the country's modernised, educated, and wealthy families. For instance, between 1863 and 1971, the majority of Turkish students who studied at Robert College, which opened in 1863 as an American Protestant missionary school, came from large cities. The occupations of their fathers were predominantly upper and middle civil servants (24.65 per cent) and merchants (22.49 percent). It should be noted that the 50 percent discount offered by the school to the children of civil servants was an important determinant. Thus, both school and state were harmonised, and the urban rich and middle classes reproduced themselves through education (Şencan Gürtunca, 2018, 2019).

The MoNE aimed to increase the number of Turkish public high schools throughout Turkey. Two important steps were taken to expand public high schools. The first was to make day high schools and middle schools free of charge starting from the 1926-1927 school year. The second was that, from the 1926-1927 school year, boarding schools began to accept free boarding students through examinations. According to the law, the number

of free boarding students was determined in such a way that it did not exceed half of the general number of paid boarding students. Orphans and children of martyrs were given priority in the case of equality in the examination (Meşeci-Giorgetti, 2020). Although these laws were the most effective steps to ensure social mobility and equality in education in Turkey, their inclusiveness in providing education to girls and boys from all segments of society was low due to the shortage of schools and free boarding students.

As the number of students attending primary schools increased each year and secondary education became free, the number of students attending secondary schools increased rapidly from the mid-1930s. To meet the demand for secondary education, the MoNE implemented a policy of opening large boarding high schools in all provincial centres with up to 4,000 students. The MoNE moved high schools to larger buildings, built new high schools, and encouraged the opening of private boarding pensions and dormitories. It introduced solutions such as increasing the number of students per class and switching to double-shift schooling. These large high schools played an important role in increasing secondary school enrolment. Although the number of high schools did not increase much, the number of students increased rapidly (Cicioğlu, 1985; Meşeci-Giorgetti, 2020). The number of general high school students, which was 13,622 in 1935-36, increased to 24,862 in 1940-41 (Milli Eğitim Gençlik ve Spor Bakanlığı, 1988).

The first girls' high school was opened in Istanbul in 1913. The number of state girls' high schools, most of which were opened in Istanbul, reached only 6 in 1934. For girls to have access to high school education, coeducation was introduced in some high schools in the 1934-1935 academic year. For girls to have access to secondary education outside Istanbul, 19 secondary schools in cities with only one high school were made co-educational (Yücel, 1994).

Although Turkey stayed out of the Second World War, it experienced the entire burden of the war economy (Boratav, 2010, p.81). The increase in military expenditures reduced the share allocated to other areas. However, the decrease in education expenditures was limited compared to other areas (Tekeli & İlkin, 2021, p. 34). By 1945, the problems of primary school enrolment and attendance were still unresolved.

In 1944, only 75,000 of the 247,000 pupils enrolled in first grade had completed primary school. The main reasons for this situation were that the importance of school was not sufficiently explained, girls were not sent to school, and peasant and poor children left school to work or due to financial difficulties (Akyüz, 2021, p.346). At the secondary level, the number of schools and pupils tended to increase, but the level of schooling was still quite low. In 1945-46, there were 65,608 students in 252 general middle schools and 21,151 students in 96 vocational middle schools. There were 25,515 pupils in 83 general high schools and 29,717 pupils in 123 vocational high schools. The enrolment rate in high schools was only 4.5 percent (Milli Eğitim Gençlik ve Spor Bakanlığı, 1988).

## Cold War and educational relations between Turkey and the United States

After World War II, secondary education in Turkey took an important turn, especially in terms of segmentation. Turkey-US relations continued until World War II as economic and political low-intensity relations centred on American schools in Turkey. Following World War II (1939-1945), Turkey became concerned about its security against Soviet imperialism. The US implemented the Truman Doctrine to prevent Soviet expansion. Turkey received US support in 1947 as a reflection of the Truman Doctrine. In 1952, it allied with the West and joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) (Karpas, 2020, p. 79). Thus, Turkey-US cooperation began in many areas such as military aid, economy, and education. 1947-1964 is the period of full alliance in Turkey-US relations. After 1964, due to reasons such as the 1964 Cyprus crisis and the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, the US military presence in Turkey began to be criticised. However, educational and cultural relations maintained continuity (Armaoğlu, 2012, p. 625; Armaoğlu, 2017, pp. 14, 17). Since 1923, Turkey had been governed by a single party dominated by military bureaucrats. In 1945, the multi-party era began. In 1950, the coming to power of Adnan Menderes, a rich landowner educated at the American Collegiate Institute, was of great importance in the development of Turkish-US relations (Karpas, 2020).

To bring Turkey closer to Western democracies and to protect it from the threat of communism, educational and cultural cooperation, conceptualised as soft power, was established, US-based scholarship programmes were opened and foundations provided support. The International Compliance Association (ICA), established in 1947 as part of Marshall Plan, financed the professional development of Turkish teachers in the USA. In 1949, the Commission for Educational Exchange (Fulbright Programme) between the USA and Turkey was established. Through the Fulbright Scholarship Programme, many students and teachers were educated in the USA, and US academics taught in Turkish universities or worked as experts in ministries. Fulbright scholars were mostly assigned to educational institutions in Turkey. The Eisenhower Foundation Scholarship Programme, which started in 1952, offered many Turkish young people the opportunity to study in the US (Çelik, 2023, pp.40-41).

The Turkish National Committee of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) was established on June 10, 1948. After this date, UNESCO assigned foreign experts to the National Education Councils, universities, and ministries in Turkey, supported educational projects, and played a role in the development of educational policies.

After 1945, many educational experts were assigned to the MoNE by the above-mentioned organisations. Between 1923 and 1950, 78.68 percent of the education experts invited to Turkey came from European countries, mostly from Germany. Between 1950 and 1960, 41 (93.18 percent) of the 44 education experts invited to Turkey came from the USA. The US experts conducted observations and surveys on general education, public education, primary schools, school guidance, teacher training, technical and vocational education,

and secondary schools, and reported on their research findings. They gave seminars to educators and participated as experts in national education councils (Şahin, 1996: 73-78).

This interaction brought new concepts and projects such as ‘measurement and evaluation’, ‘curriculum development’, ‘vocational guidance’, and ‘homogeneous talent groups’ into Turkish education. In 1953 the Test and Research Bureau was established under the MoNE and extensive statistical research was started. The measurement tools developed through the work of the Test and Research Bureau were used in the entrance examinations of some schools, in public recruitment, and in the guidance activities of schools (Meşeci-Giorgetti, 2017, p. 30).

## **Progressivism and segmentation in secondary education**

The Republic of Turkey continued the aim of secondary education to create an elite, as defined in the Ottoman Empire. In the legislation on secondary education and the speeches of the Ministers of Education, the purpose of secondary education was emphasised as “preparing students for higher education and/or life, equipping them with general culture and creating an elite/intellectual class”. Training civil servants to build the new state was also an important function of secondary education. From the 1940-1941 academic year, a practice was introduced that would distinguish some official secondary schools from others and make them even more elitist. Classical departments were opened in four high schools in Istanbul and the capital Ankara (Ankara Boys’ High School, Vefa Boys’ High School, Ankara Girls’ High School, and Galatasaray High School). Latin was included in the classical sections. The Minister of Education at the time, Hasan Ali Yücel (1934-1938 General Director of Secondary Education, 1938-1946 Minister of National Education), was remembered for his humanist cultural policies. It was considered necessary to teach Latin in high schools (Yıldırım, 2013) to digest Western ideas such as rationalism and democracy and to read the products of this culture (Gezer, 2020). This practice, which was undoubtedly initiated under the influence of elitist European high schools, ended in 1949. The classical branches were abolished, and Latin was included for a while among the optional courses in the following years.

The educational interaction with the United States initiated the process of creating different types of schools (segmentation) in secondary education. In the IV Education Council (1949), Minister of National Education Tahsin Banguoğlu stated that the function of high schools to train civil servants in Turkey had ended, the state had been established and there was no need for civil servants. He said that the main function of general high schools from now on would be to prepare students for higher education and life, that students’ entrepreneurial skills should be increased, and stressed the importance of vocational and technical education. He also mentioned the opening of middle schools in towns. The Minister stressed that merchants and craftsmen in the towns want to send their children to middle schools, and therefore the number of middle schools in towns should be increased (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 1949, p.41).

In the 1956-57 academic year, Bahçelievler Experimental High School was opened in Ankara. The school aimed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary for life and to implement a curriculum programme by the students’ abilities and the



demands of a changing and developing society. In 1953-54, the MoNE assigned teachers to the school who had made observations and analyses in secondary schools abroad. These teachers would put their observations and studies into practice at the Experimental High School and later the practices here would be generalised to other schools. The school had its first graduates in 1960-61. In the 1974-75 academic year, the curriculum of the middle school was merged with that of other middle schools.

In parallel with the introduction of testing and research, students with high academic achievement gathered in certain schools. In the 1955-1956 academic year, the MoNE established 7-year (4+3) Maarif Colleges (Anatolian High Schools after 1973) in six different provinces to raise English-speaking, high-level politicians, scientists, artists, and civil servants who could be assigned to NATO. The language of instruction in these schools was English. The school was free of charge, but boarding was compulsory. Except for a small number of free boarders, other students paid boarding fees. As of the 1964-1965 academic year, daytime male students and daytime female students who passed the selection exam but could not afford boarding were accepted (Gündüz, 2017). Maarif Colleges graduated a total of 1,253 students in 10 years, including 1964-1965 (Milli Eğitim Gençlik ve Spor Bakanlığı, 1988).

The Maarif Colleges were much more advantaged than other public high schools in terms of buildings, materials, number and qualifications of teachers. In addition, the economic level of the parents of the students in these schools allowed them to support their children academically outside of school. When analysing the occupations of the parents of Maarif Colleges: The occupations of the parents of the students who attended Samsun Maarif College between 1955 and 1975 were urban rich and urban middle class (64%). About 10 percent were urban poor and about 3 percent were farmers. Of the 79 students enrolled in Izmir Maarif College in 1955, 51 (40.29%) were from the urban rich and urban middle class, 22 (17.38%) were small tradesmen and craftsmen, and 6 (4.74%) were farmers. Approximately 15% of the students in the Maarif Colleges were free boarders. These students came from low and middle-income families and were placed in these schools by the MoNE after showing high success in the free boarding examination. Graduates of Maarif Colleges were easily placed in universities. Graduates of these high schools were as advantageous as graduates of Galatasaray High School, French colleges and American colleges in foreign language exams for university faculty positions or civil service promotions (Gündüz, 2017, p.244-250).

Once opened, the Maarif Colleges became a model of quality high schools and can be said to have played the role of 'defining institutions' in Steedman's (1987) conceptualisation. Renamed Anatolian High Schools in 1973, the number of these schools increased rapidly after the 1980s. High schools with language and achievement qualifications were renamed Anatolian High Schools, and in 2013 all general high schools were transformed into Anatolian High Schools.

Since the beginning of the Republic, poor and successful students were selected through exams and given free boarding education in order to ensure equal opportunities in education in Turkey. However, bringing students with similar achievement levels together in the same school was a new experience for Turkey. It should be noted that although

158 these selected students were successful, Maarif Colleges were not schools for the gifted. Planning for the education of the gifted was carried out individually until the 1960s. The space race that started after the Russian success of Sputnik I in 1957 also affected Turkey. Gifted education in secondary education began with the opening of Ankara Science High School. Ankara Science High School was opened in 1964 as a school for gifted students in science and mathematics. This school remained as the only science high school until 1982. In 1964, 96 students (male and female) were selected from among 5,191 middle school graduates through a two-stage exam. The opening process of Ankara Science High School was carried out in cooperation with the Ford Foundation, Bronx Science High School, Agency for International Development (AID), MoNE, and the Middle East Technical University (METU). The AID provided financial support, while the Ford Foundation took on the responsibility of teacher training, textbook writing, and material provision. The Ford Foundation representative of the period, Prof. Dr. Eugene Northrop, stated that the support given to the Science High School was the largest donation the Foundation had made in the fourteen years it had been in the Middle East (Northrop, 1965: 10-12; Bal, 2020, Çelik, 2023, 41-43). In general, the Science High School achieved its goals of developing Turkey's students with superior abilities in science, strengthening the research scientist resource, and creating a pioneering research and development centre in science education, at least in the first years of its establishment (Bal, 2020). The support of the Ford Foundation lasted for 4 years, and when the Ford Foundation withdrew its support, individual and group differentiated education practices ended and the school lost its gifted school characteristic and became a science and mathematics-oriented high school.

All pupils were boarders at the Science High School. Boarding at the school was fee-paying. But there were also free boarders. The school's selection system was criticised in parliament as being unequal. A member of parliament said that it was not equal to select pupils with an examination for pupils who had never seen an examination in their lives and that the inequality could be understood by looking at where the pupils came from and the professions of their parents. In 1966, all 100 middle school graduates admitted to the Science High School came from western Turkey [Istanbul (32), Ankara (30), Izmir (6), Bursa (6), Kocaeli (3), Balıkesir (2), Kayseri (2), Kırklareli (2)]. In 48 provinces of Turkey, not a single student passed this high school entrance exam. According to the deputy, all the students, especially from Ankara and Istanbul, came from private middle schools or schools in wealthy neighbourhoods. The professions of students' fathers were rich urban or middle-class professionals such as merchants, doctors, veterinarians, professors, and judges. There were no children whose fathers were labourers or farmers (TBMM Tutanak Dergisi, 1966, pp.555-559).

The Maarif Colleges and Science High Schools students were very successful in university placement exams. However, the success of a few hundred students in these schools was not reflective of secondary education in Turkey as a whole. In the 1950s, there was an increase in the number of students attending secondary schools in Turkey, but public high schools in particular were in a difficult situation due to a lack of resources after the war. Compared to the previous decade, the increase in the number of students was 84 percent,

while the increase in investments was 35 percent. As a result, class sizes increased rapidly, educational standards declined, and the number of teachers was insufficient (Güven, 2010).

In 1949, Istanbul University faculty members wrote a report stating that high school graduates came to universities with a very low level of preparation and that high schools should be extended to 4 years (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 1949). In the 4th Education Council held in the same year, it was decided to extend high schools to 4 years. High schools were extended to 4 years in 1952 to overcome failure. The aim was to increase the success of students by spreading the same academic content over 4 years with minor differences and additions. However, this practice only lasted for 3 years and in 1955 the high schools were reduced to 3 years (Cicioğlu, 1985, s.143).

In his report, Prof. John J. Rufi of the University of Missouri, who examined secondary education in Turkey in 1951-52, found that the majority of schools were poor in terms of physical conditions, laboratories, libraries, and teaching materials; that classrooms were overcrowded; that the theoretical programmes of classical high schools did not satisfy the masses; and that the overloaded curriculum and difficult examinations alienated students from school (Rufi, 1956, pp. 26-27). A study conducted by the Test and Research Bureau of the MoNE showed that Rufi's findings on grade failure were indeed valid for all levels of education. According to the data from this research, over the ten years from the academic year 1949-1950 to the academic year 1958-59, the average number of students failing at all levels of education was quite high. The failure rate was 38.6 percent in grade 1, 35.0 percent in grade 6, 34.4 percent in grade 9, 23 percent in grade 10, and 5.4 percent in grade 11. The rate of failure tended to decrease towards the final grades (Özgülven and Özgentaş, 1961).

Until 1955, a two-step system consisting of the High School Graduation Examination and the High School Maturity Examination was applied for high school graduation. However, 35% of the students who took the High School Graduation Examination were able to receive a diploma (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 1949, p.422). In 1955, with the Regulation on High School and Middle School Examinations, the high school graduation and maturity examinations were abolished and a new examination system called the State High School Examination was established in their place. The State Middle School Graduation Examination (oral and written) and the High School Graduation Examination (oral only) were introduced. Until 1965, colleges and science high school administered their entrance examinations, whereas the state sent the free boarders to these schools through centralised examinations. In other high schools, the choice of school was left to the families. The first centralised high school entrance exam was implemented in 1965. The first centralised university and higher education examinations were held in 1964.

Vocational schools were recognised as equivalent to high schools at a later time. General secondary education consisted of a first cycle of secondary school (3 years) and a second cycle of general high school (3 years). Except commerce schools for urban children and teacher schools, vocational schools were 3-year middle schools. Commerce high schools were extended to three years in 1941. In the 1952-53 academic year, the 6-year teacher schools and the 5-year Village Institutes opened in 1937 were merged and transformed into 6-year Primary Teacher Schools and were considered equivalent to high schools.

Vocational middle schools (boys' craft schools) were educating orphaned children during the Ottoman State period. Most of them were boarding schools. In the Republican period, their number increased rapidly to train qualified workers. In the 1943-44 academic year, vocational institutes, which provide two-year education were established over vocational middle schools. After middle school, students could attend vocational institutes for two years. Those who graduated from vocational middle schools could continue to general high schools if they wished. However, transferring to a general high school was a very difficult option due to the differences in middle school education. After choosing a middle school, it was very difficult to change the type of school in high school. To eliminate the problems of vocational orientation at a young age, Multi-Purpose Secondary Schools with different programmes were opened in the 1953-54 academic year. These experimental schools were closed in a short time. From 1957 onwards, vocational middle schools were transformed into general middle schools, and vocational education was postponed to later ages (Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, 1973).

2-year vocational institutes were not equivalent to general high schools. Therefore, their students couldn't be accepted to universities. Firstly, in the 1963-64 academic year, the Girls' Institutes and in the 1966-67 academic year, the Boys' Craft Institutes were extended to 3 years and became equivalent to high schools. Thus, vocational high school graduates were able to attend higher education (Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, 1973, p. 19).

In the first decade of the Republic, no significant breakthrough could be made in formal vocational education due to the small number of enterprises and low production. In the 1930s, policies towards industrialisation by the state brought the necessity of vocational and technical education to the agenda. As of the 1930s, factories were opened and the number of enterprises increased. In the 1940s, a vocational school policy was adopted in every province. There was a great interest in vocational schools and institutes as graduates could easily find a job. In the 1950s, the number of vocational schools increased rapidly. In 1945-46, there were 29,717 students in 123 vocational schools (high schools and institutes). The schooling in vocational high schools and institutes was 2.4 percent. By 1965-66, the number of schools had increased to 394, the number of students to 109,856, and the schooling in vocational high schools to 5.8% Vocational secondary schools are not included in these numbers (Milli Eğitim Gençlik ve Spor Bakanlığı, 1988). For the distribution of students in vocational high schools and institutes, see table 2 and graphic 1.

While vocational and technical schools were training Turkey's working class, it was difficult for peasants to access even primary school education. Important work had been done in industry, but the same progress had not been made in agriculture and the development of farmers. From the mid-1930s onwards, the nationalist-revolutionary cadre in Turkey had envisaged radical revolutions in agriculture, including the elimination of the landlords. However, these radical revolutions could not be realised due to the resistance of the landowners in alliance with the conservative wing of the bureaucracy. Between 1935 and 1945, many projects, draft laws, and initiatives were made to develop the village and to carry out a land reform that would provide land to the peasants, nearly half of whom were landless. The most important pillar of these projects, which did not succeed due to the resistance of landlords and the conditions of the Second World War, was the Village Institutes, which provided education between 1937 and 1952 (Avcıoğlu, 1973, p.317-326).

For villagers, becoming a village teacher by attending the Village Institutes, was the most possible way to reach secondary education. Village Institutes were co-ed, free boarding schools that provided 5 years of education after primary school (5+5) and accepted only peasant children. However, those who attended these schools were obliged to teach in the village for 20 years. The number of institutes reached 21 in a short time (Meşeci-Giorgetti, 2009). İsmail Hakkı Tonguç (1939), the founder of the Village Institutes and the general director of primary education at the time, expressed the mission of the Village Institutes as follows: “The people of the village should be so revitalised and made conscious that no force should abuse them only for its own sake and ruthlessly. They cannot treat the peasant as a slave and servant.” The Village Institutes, which functioned well until 1945, became one of the most important topics of discussion when the multi-party era began. In 1950, when the right-wing party supported by the landlords came to power, a landlord would express his opposition to the Village Institutes and the education of the peasants in the parliament as follows “I would never want the horse I am riding to drop me one day and try to tell me its desires” (Başgöz and Wilson, 1968, p.87). This understanding brought an end to the Village Institutes and they were merged with Primary Teacher Training Schools in the 1952-53 academic year.

In the following years, teaching remained the most feasible option for a poor and peasant student who wanted to continue his/her education. The vast majority of the free boarding students were placed in teacher schools. For example, in the 1963-64 academic year, out of a total of 27,595 scholarship and free boarding students, 24,617 were placed in teacher schools, 2,322 in vocational and technical high schools, and only 656 in general high schools. Although the number of scholarship and free boarding students increased in the following decade, this composition did not change much (MEB Planlama-Araştırma ve Koordinasyon Dairesi, 1973, Table 22-4).

Teaching was often a forced option after graduation, even for free boarding students of general high schools. For those who could not find financial support for university education after high school, the best option was the Education Institutes, which trained teachers for middle schools (Meşeci-Giorgetti, 2020). Those who completed their education as free boarders were obliged by law to perform compulsory service. By completing the primary teacher training course, they were accepted to teach in primary schools. Students were obliged to perform compulsory service for the duration of their boarding education. However, this period was extended by one and a half times if the student also attended higher education as a free boarder. As part of their compulsory service, boarding students met Turkey’s need for teachers at various levels for a long period of time.

Teachers trained at the Village Institutes were sent to many villages. Between 1923 and 1997, only five years of primary education was compulsory, and most village primary schools had three grades until the 1960s (Akyüz, 2021). In the 1963-64 academic year, the schooling in primary school (7-12 years) was 73%, in middle school (13-15 years) was 20.5% and in high school (16-18 years) was 6.1% in general high schools and 4.4% in vocational high schools. In 1965-66 there were 114.902 pupils in 240 general high schools and 109,856 pupils in 394 vocational high schools. The overall schooling in Turkey had risen to 11.9% (Milli Eğitim Gençlik ve Spor Bakanlığı, 1988). In 1965-66, 67 out of 240 general high schools and 23,179 (20.84%) out of 114.902 students were in Istanbul. Of the total

high school students, 81,497 were boys and 29,684 were girls. 17.57% of male students and 29.83% of female students were studying in Istanbul. The number of private high schools in Turkey increased to 76, of which 44 (57.89%) were located in Istanbul. The pupil-teacher ratio in high schools was 19 in Turkey as a whole and 13 in Istanbul (İ.B.B., 1998).

**Table 1.** High school and student data in Turkey 1927-1965

Year	Population of the age (16-18)	Student		School/Schooling %		Student Total	Total School/ Total Schooling % (Age 16-18)
		General High School	Voc. High School-Institute	General High School/ Schooling %	Voc. High School-Institute/ Schooling %		
1926-27	N/A	3.159	1.244	52/NA	14/NA	4.403	66/NA
1932-33	N/A	5.875	1.198	58/NA	15/NA	7.073	73/NA
1935-36	600.953	13.622	2.258	66/2.3	19/0.3	15.880	85/2.6
1940-41	N/A	24.862	16.321	82/NA	53/NA	41.183	135/NA
1945-46	1.195.981	25.515	29.717	83/2.1	123/2.4	55.232	206/4.5
1950-51	1.528.814	22.169	34.104	88/1.5	169/2.2	56.273	257/3.7
1955-56	1.535.351	33.412	38.598	123/2.2	218/2.5	72.010	341/4.7
1960-61	1.432.544	75.632	71.659	194/5.3	298/5.0	147.291	492/10.3
1963-64	1.675.000	102.384	73.862	217/6.1	NA/4.4	176.246	NA/10.6
1965-66	1.870.000	114.902	109.856	240/6.1	394/5.8	221.037	634/11.9

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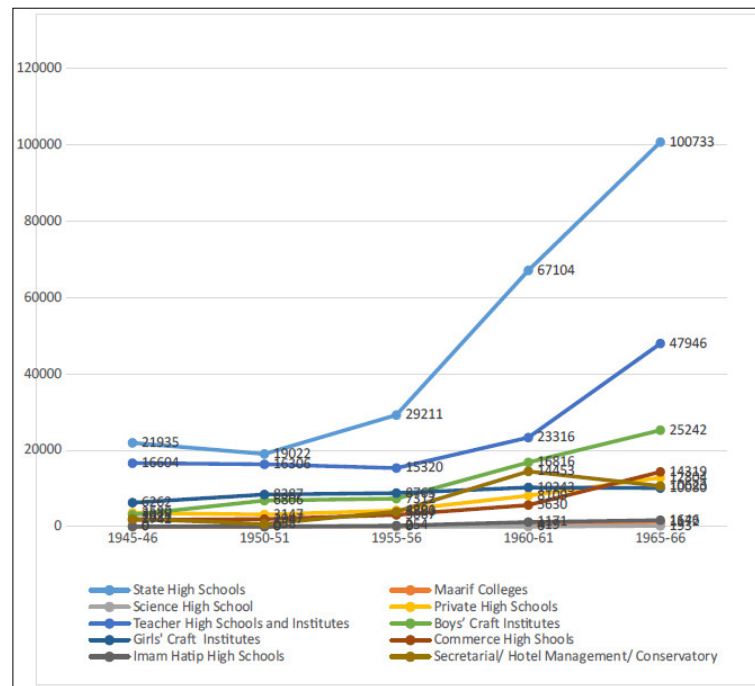
In the 1927 census, the 13-19 age group was given, and in the 1940 census, the 15-19 age group was given. Information about the 16-18 age group could not be found. Therefore, schooling rates could not be calculated for these years.

Sources used for the table: (MEB Planlama-Araştırma ve Koordinasyon Dairesi, 1973; Milli Eğitim Gençlik ve Spor Bakanlığı, 1988; İ.B.B. İstanbul Araştırmaları Merkezi, 1998; Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, 2010)

**Table 2.** Number of students according to high schools (1945-1965)

	State (General) High Schools	Maarif Colleges	Science High School	Private High Schools	Teacher High Schools and Institutes	Boys' Craft Institutes	Girls' Craft Institutes	Commerce High Schools	Imam Hatip High Schools	Secretarial/ Hotel Management/ Conservatory and Others
1945-46	21935	-		3580	16604	3078	6262	1742	-	2031
1950-51	19022	-	-	3147	16306	6806	8387	1947	-	658
1955-56	29211	-	-	4201	15320	7312	8765	3067	254	3880
1960-61	67104	419	-	8109	23316	16816	10243	5630	1171	14453
1965-66	100733	1172	193	12804	47946	25242	10080	14319	1646	10623

Sources used for the table: Milli Eğitim Gençlik ve Spor Bakanlığı, 1988

**Graphic 1.** Number of students according to high schools (1945-1965)

## Conclusion

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The purpose of secondary education in Turkey was to train the country's civil servants and intellectuals. In the early years of the Republic, most high schools were concentrated in a few centres, especially in Istanbul, and male students predominated. In 1934, some high schools were made coeducational so that girls could have access to high school education. But in 1965 the schooling of girls was still quite low. Villages, towns, and many provinces had no high school. The number of general high schools was increased, the number of students was increased by providing double-shift education, classes became overcrowded, and attempts were made to meet the demand for high schools. However, this situation revealed quality problems. The dropout rate increased. This problem was tried to be solved by changing the examination system and extending the school year to 4 years between 1952-55. The dropout problem continued into the 1960s. Although efforts were made to expand high schools until 1965, it can be said that high school education was not inclusive in terms of gender and geographical region.

In 1926, public middle and high schools became free, but most of the high schools were paid foreign schools. Children of the rich and urban professionals were educated in these schools. During the Republic period, when nationalism policy was at the forefront in education, it was aimed to open state high schools teaching advanced foreign languages to reduce the demand for foreign schools, but this goal was not achieved until Maarif Colleges (Anatolian High Schools) were opened. In other general high schools, foreign language teaching has remained weak until today. Boarding fees were charged from those who wanted to attend a public boarding high school. It was very unlikely for a peasant and poor child to receive a high school education if he could not be among the few children who passed the free boarding exam. The majority of free boarding students were placed in teachers' high schools. Free boarders studying in general

high schools were also performing their compulsory service as teachers. For higher education, they mostly preferred educational institutes that provided free boarding education. Therefore, teaching was the most possible way for poor and peasant children to study.

After World War II, educational relations between the United States and Türkiye intensified. This process introduced new concepts such as measurement and evaluation, vocational guidance, and homogeneous ability groups to Turkish education. Successful children admitted to Maarif Colleges and Science High Schools, which were opened in cooperation with the United States and provided more qualified education. These children, selected through very difficult exams, came from cities. Their families were wealthy and urban professionals. Therefore, even though selection systems were implemented, preparation for these exams remained an obstacle for peasant and poor children. The rate of free boarding students in this school was around 10%-15%. Therefore, it should be said that the schools that students will attend in Turkish higher schools are largely determined by the social strata of their families, and in this respect, the progressiveness of Turkish higher education was weak until 1965.

High schools have been segmented into schools or programmes that differ both in their curricula and in the social origins of their students. The segmentation was quite obvious in the high schools. Paid foreign schools lasted 4 or 5 years. The first year was a preparatory course in a foreign language. The majority of students were wealthy urbanites, high-ranking civil servants, and merchants. Galatasaray High School, the first high school, was also 4 years. Its curriculum was always different from other high schools and its diploma was more prestigious. The Maarif Colleges opened after the war were also 4-year schools, with the first year being English preparatory. Although other general high schools were made 4-year schools in 1952 due to quality concerns, this practice was discontinued a few years later and other general high schools remained 3-year schools. All these high schools were equal. However, knowledge of a foreign language gave graduates a great advantage in moving up to higher civil service positions and jobs. Therefore, there were significant differences in job placement after graduation between those who attended schools with 4 years of foreign language study and those who did not.

In 1941, the commercial high school became 3 years and considered equal to other high schools. These schools were mainly opened at urban areas. However, the development of vocational schools at high school level was slower. Although there was no legal obstacle, those who attended vocational middle schools could not enter general high schools because of their different curriculum. They mostly preferred 2-year institutes related to their profession. After 1960, vocational middle schools were transformed into general middle schools and the choice of profession was postponed to a later age. The duration of the institutes was extended from 2 to 3 years and made equivalent to high schools. No concrete information could be found on the social strata from which these students come. However, these schools, which train skilled workers, were perceived as schools attended by poor and unsuccessful children.

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