

# **LIBERALIZING EDUCATION IN TURKEY: SOCIAL DISPARITIES AND THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY**

**Ellen Roskam Adjunct Professor, University of Massachusetts,  
Lowell, Work Environment Dept., USA**

## **ABSTRACT**

*Insufficient research has been conducted on the extent of the impacts of neo-liberal policies on education in Turkey, examining in particular whether such policies have affected social cohesion, contributed to an increase or decrease in social disparities, whether the broad changes accompanied by these policies are risk factors for social unrest, and whether such policies have had an impact on what is, or what may only appear to be an increase in Islamist identity in Turkey. These are areas of inquiry that are of concern to foreign policy makers. This research has attempted to examine what is known about efforts to reform educational services in Turkey by liberalizing the sector through privatization and commercialization, linkages with Islam, the future of democracy, and the implications for foreign policy.*

**Keywords:** Turkey, education, liberalization, social disparities, democracy.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Liberalization**

The present era of globalization has brought with it the international movement of commodities, money, information, and people, as well as the development of technology, organizations, legal systems, and infrastructures to allow this movement. Within the global context, the era of liberalization<sup>1</sup> reared its head, creating now-known negative - even devastating - impacts on many countries and population groups, particularly over the past 25 years. (Impacts from the “shock therapy” introduced by World Bank and IMF policies in Central and Eastern Europe after the 1990 fall of Communism, for example, led some of the architects and proponents of such social experimentation to become eventual apologists for their misguided policies. Notwithstanding the present crisis of collapse due, in large part, to neo-liberal policies, those same policies that facilitate and enable widespread liberalization in public services, including secondary and higher education, continue to flourish in middle income and developing countries around the world. Turkey is one of the countries significantly impacted by the widespread liberalization of educational services.

Key policy elements embedded in liberalization include the privatization of State-owned industries with education, health, and welfare moving from government-provided services to the private sector where they become marketized, commodified, and commercialized; de-regulation leading to reduced State control and reduced barriers to the mobility of capital, goods, and services; reduced State control over the labor market including reduced social protections such as minimum wage, work hours, and employment security; introduction of a “social safety net” approach to social protection characterized by reduced social welfare benefits and more targeting, selectivity and conditionality; the elimination of subsidies; limited access to quality education for all as well as to social security, pensions, health insurance, and unemployment insurance; less progressive taxation; and the privatization and liberalization of social policy. The era of

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<sup>1</sup> We use the term “liberalization” to refer to the doctrine of disengagement of the State in social policies and massive reduction in income tax. The term “neo-liberalism” refers to the next step forward - largely an outcome of structural adjustment programs started in the 1980s. Policies based on this doctrine facilitate the de-localization of production, the globalization of unrestricted trade in the free movement of capital, labor and goods, and strong corporate involvement in social policy-making. Important outcomes include the loss of democratic control and eroded democracy.

liberalization has ushered economic and financial crises, which have grown in number and worsened in scope, as well as significant increases in global migration, largely a result of increased social and economic insecurity [Benach, Muntaner and Santana (2008); Johnson (2009: 62-102)].

Both public policy and the education system in Turkey have been deeply affected by such policies. Access to educational services often is hampered by location, cost, and eligibility. A large coverage gap in education services persists while the quality of educational services varies widely between geographic regions and between the private and public sectors.

Drivers for liberalizing the educational system in Turkey include: public sector and education sector reforms; the World Bank; the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) (members of the World Bank Group); the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) which has facilitated the opening of State services markets – including education - to international companies; the Coalition of Service Industries (a group of U.S. multinational corporations that aim to reduce barriers to export of U.S. service industries and to enhance their members' competitiveness

Global trends indicate the development of a two-tiered, class-based system of education in developing, transitional, and middle-income countries, including Turkey [Rosskam, 2006; Public Services International, 2006]. These trends indicate that those who can pay for services obtain what were, pre-1980s, essential government services, and which now are often private services. Those who cannot pay for private services either do not obtain any service or get less quality services than those who can pay for private educational services. Paradoxically, in Turkey, only a few private universities meet international standards. The rest - most of which have emerged relatively recently - do not. And while private educational institutions may offer higher wages to attract the best teachers and professors, often conditions of work are worse than in the public sector. As described by Rosskam (2009:3-4):

Some examples of worse employment conditions in the private educational sector in low and middle-income countries include a lack of employment security, lack of severance pay requirement in the case of job loss, lack of pension contribution requirement by employers, lack of the employer requirement to provide notice in the case of laying off workers, longer working hours, weekend work, more teaching hours required per week or per month than in the public sector, lack of access to skills development and further training, and worse conditions of work in terms of occupational health and safety for workers.

Typically, public sector schools provided and still provide employment security, a limit on working and teaching hours, pension accrual, and the requirement for the State to give notice, legally sound reason, and severance pay in the event that an educational worker was to be laid off.

State governance is the only means of ensuring regulation and enforcement, more equitable provision of schools across country populations, and more equitable conditions and terms of work for education providers, preventing the creaming off of the best teachers and administrators to the private sector, leaving those who cannot pay for private educational services either without access or with access to poorer quality education than students attending private institutions.

It does not take much time before such inequalities reveal the inevitable social repercussions of reform-catalyzed transitions. By marketizing educational services, population shifts occur in access to labor market opportunities and quality of jobs for the poor or lower-income groups who were not able to pay for private educational services prior to young people entering the labor market. This translates into increased class differentials and increased income inequality in countries that often cannot absorb the shocks that accompany the rapid growth in social disparities...the growth of social disparity and of income inequality must be seen as a risk factor for social instability. This is the case even for middle-income countries.

In an important work, Ercan and Uzunyayla (2009:109-124) provide an analysis of changes taking place in Turkey's educational system, uncovering the class dimensions of these changes. Their study attempts to understand changes in Turkey's education system not through the State but through the agency of class, reflected in State action. The authors have examined the employment and income [in]security experienced by education workers in Turkey, and the consequentially diminished quality of publicly-funded higher education.

The on-going research discussed in the present article attempts to examine linkages between the privatization and commodification of education in Turkey with class-based, gender-based, and geographically-based differentials in access to education, and in quality of education received, and whether changes in this arena have led to an increase in social disparities in Turkey. The study also explores the relation between increased social disparity and threats to social cohesion, whether policies in Turkey facilitating the liberalization of education also have led - directly or indirectly - to a growth in Islamist

identity in Turkey, and whether any such real growth presents a threat to secularism and the future of democracy in the country. These are issues of concern to foreign policy-makers.

This work has been approached based on the premise that in order for a country to achieve economic security and social stability, universal basic social protection is a fundamental requirement. Universal social protection must include access to basic needs, including education, income security, health, dwelling, information, and pensions, among other basic needs.

## METHODS

The material informing this research has been collected through a review of a wide body of literature, together with interviews and discussions with more than 50 key informants. These included policy experts, analysts, academics, experts in various think tanks, Turkish business representatives, a diverse plethora of NGOs working on issues related to Turkey including the head of a Turkish women's leadership development NGO, legal representatives specializing in Turkish affairs, Fellows, Scholars, Program Directors and Program Associates at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington, D.C., the Deputy Director of the European Commission Delegation to the United States, Turkish journalists, experts at The World Bank, Washington, D.C.-based lobbyists for Turkey, and senior level American government representatives and diplomats in Washington, D.C., U.S.A. Key informants in Turkey included Turkish Parliamentarians and senior government advisors in Ankara, Turkey (discussions held in Ankara in May 2008). The interviews and discussions with key informants also included diplomats from other countries' Embassies in Washington, D.C.

Further material was collected by attending, participating in, speaking at more than 25 events related to Turkey that took place in Washington, D.C. between November 2007 and September 2008. These events included roundtable discussions, panel discussions, invitation-only lunches for known experts on Turkey, seminars, discussion fora, conferences, and other types of events related to contemporary issues in Turkey.

Additional material for this study came from the "Liberalization of Public Services" research project, which the author headed for the International Labour Office (ILO, Geneva, Switzerland) together with Public Services International (PSI is the international trade union federation that represents public sector workers globally), and with affiliated collaboration from Education International (EI is the international trade union federation that represents education workers globally). This study was conducted world wide using five different questionnaires, each translated into four languages, which were sent to trade union affiliates in all regions, addressing seven different areas of public services, including the education sector. The findings were used to examine the changes that occurred between 1993 and 2003 caused by the introduction of neo-liberal policies and analyze the ways in which such policy changes, where they occurred, impacted the social and economic security of workers in the various areas of public services, as well as changes in workers' abilities to deliver quality services to the public.<sup>2</sup> An important limitation in data and analysis for this study is due to the fact that the Turkish education and health trade unions did not respond to the questionnaires, thus data are unavailable for the education sector in Turkey from this particular investigation. This investigation included a state of the art review of what is known to date about changes in these seven areas of public services in countries around the world, an area which has enjoyed little attention, little study.<sup>3</sup>

This work-in-progress also has been informed by the results of a five-year research project developed and carried out from 2000-2005 by the International Labour Office's InFocus Programme on Socio-Economic Security. The project designed and developed indicators used to create eight indexes measuring how well governments protect the social and economic security of their workforces. Data were collected for

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<sup>2</sup> The seven areas of public services investigated through this study included: education services (for both secondary and higher education), health services, social care services for the elderly and children, labor market training services, public employment services, prisons, and pensions. The collection of time series data spanning a ten-year period allowed for an in-depth analysis of changes that have taken place in individual countries, the impacts of those changes on workers' social and economic security in the different public services, and the impacts on service delivery to the populations meant to be the recipients of those public services. The study aimed to identify regional trends, however limitations in the response rate to five questionnaires sent out worldwide in four languages meant that only results for individual countries could be discussed.

<sup>3</sup> A second and simultaneous arm of this investigation was production of a state of the art review on what is known about changes around the world in these seven areas of public services. For published results see *Winners or Losers: Liberalizing Public Services*, Edited by E. Roskam, International Labour Office, Geneva 2006. (This book is available for free upon request to the International Labour Office, Social Security Department, Geneva, Switzerland, and in PDF format.)

some 95-110 countries around the world.<sup>4</sup> The results of Turkey's performance in the various indexes have been used to inform the present study.

Finally, this study also was nourished by the author's work editing book chapters for an examination of the impacts of neo-liberal policies on education in developing countries.<sup>5</sup> This work took place concurrently with the author's research on education liberalization in Turkey described in this article.

## **Measuring Social Disparities**

For the purposes of this investigation, social disparities have been assessed in terms of:

- equality of access to essential services,
- differences in power-sharing between different groups within a society,
- access to and degree of participation in decision-making in public institutions compared with groups which are better off economically,
- measuring access to all citizenship rights based on one's position on the social class ladder,
- differences in morbidity and mortality, with those at the lower rungs of the social class ladder suffering worse health outcomes and lower life expectancy (the higher one is on the social class ladder, the better are educational, health services, employment opportunities, income generating opportunities, and chances for skills development).

## **RESULTS**

### **Impacts of the commercialization of education in Turkey**

In Turkey, since the 1980s, an increase in students and universities has caused education quality to decrease due to a reduction of public investments. This has led to a number of outcomes including:

- severe financial problems for public universities reduced resources for research and development
- many universities have become market-oriented institutions
- tuitions have been introduced as income generation for universities
- policies that transformed income distribution have led to the impoverishment of some segments of the population
- despite increased private investments in education, expansion has been limited due to deteriorated income distribution
- academics' incomes have substantially decreased compared with all wage and salary earners, and many of the best academics have moved to private schools for higher wages
- education commercialization and privatization have transformed the meaning of education from knowledge generation and critical and analytical thinking to a tool for maximizing interests in the market
- curricula has changed according to market expectations
- an increase in private universities is attributable to a low proportion of students (some 30%) being up to university level standards. Financially well-off students who are not up to university level standards can go to private universities if their families are able to pay the high tuitions (US\$8,000-10,000/year)

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<sup>4</sup> For published results, see *Economic Security for a Better World*, P. Annycke, F. Bonnet, A. Khan, J. Figueiredo, E. Roskam, G. Standing, L. Zsoldos, International Labor Office, Geneva, 2004.

<sup>5</sup> See D. Hill and E. Roskam (Eds.), *The Developing World and State Education: Neoliberal Depredation and Egalitarian Alternatives*, Routledge, New York, 2009.

- private schools are perceived to be better quality, often an incorrect perception. Few private universities have reached international standards, the rest being rather low in quality. The goal for most private universities is not to attract students who are “university eligible,” but simply those who can pay the fees.

## Gender-based and urban vs. rural education differences

In Turkey, significant differences persist in primary and secondary education, by urban and rural areas (Figure 1). Sharp contrasts exist between the numbers of students attending pre-school, primary and secondary school in cities and in villages, between the number and quality of schools, and the number and quality of teachers. For example, poor girl children in Eastern Anatolia remain those most often deprived of basic education, and female illiteracy in Southeast Turkey still hovers around 70 per cent.

**Figure 1**

Contrast by location and level of education: 2006-2007 school year						
Education Level	No. of Schools		No. of Students		No. of Teachers	
	Cities	Villages	Cities	Villages	Cities	Villages
Pre-School	12,283	8,392	476,912	163,937	24,775	2,421
Primary	11,120	23,536	8,145,756	2,701,174	300,222	102,607
Secondary	7,082	852	3,230,258	156,459	176,869	10,796

No. Turkish students attending <i>private</i> secondary schools: 2006-2007		
Sex	Boys	Girls
No. attending <i>private</i> secondary school	47,180	39,278

Turkish Ministry of National Education, National Education Statistics, 2006-2007

State-provided cash benefit schemes exist for poor families, favoring girl-children. The cash education benefit provided to families is as follows [Social Risk Mitigation Project (2007)]:

Primary School/Male	~ USD 13.00/month
Secondary School/Male	~ USD 21.00/month
Primary School/Female	~ USD 16.00/month
<b>Secondary School/Female</b>	<b>~ USD 29.00/month</b>

## Whither education trade unions’ voice in Turkey?

There are two major public employee unions in Turkey’s education sector (Türk Eğitim Sen and Eğitim Sen). Türk-İş is the national confederation of workers’ unions. The demands made by these organizations are not homogenous. Türk-İş and Türk Eğitim Sen focus their demands on qualified labor power in parallel to business groups. Eğitim Sen focuses on the right to education and criticizes the privatization of education, but it does not address the new policies of labor power training in detail. Given

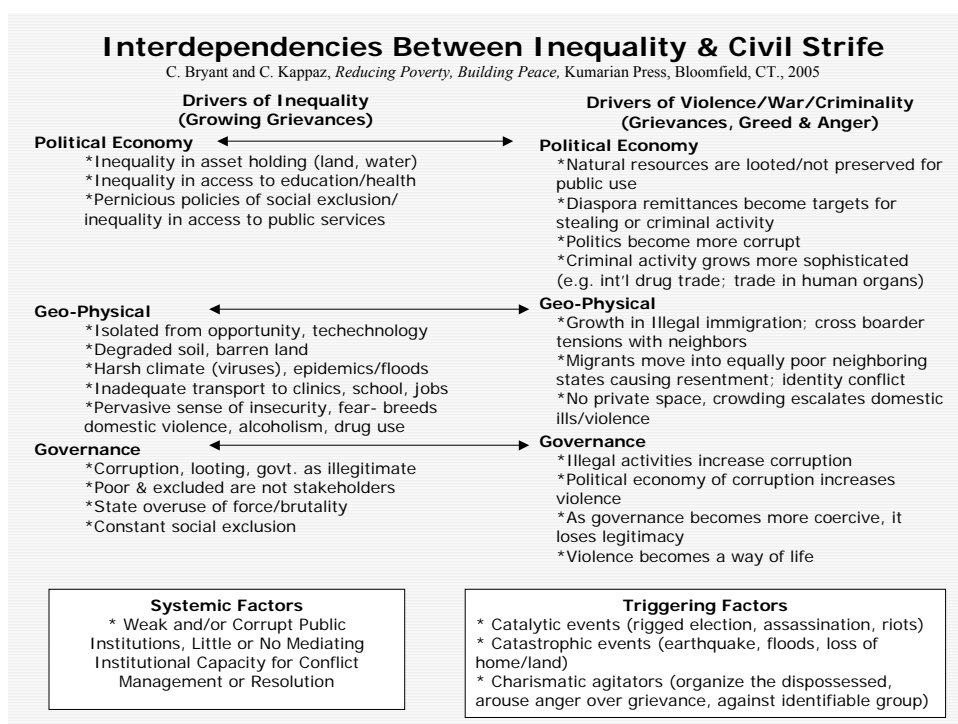
these different orientations, redressing inequalities and inequities has not been accomplished through trade union-based collective voice.

## Social disparities and civil strife

Social disparities have been linked to civil strife [Bryant and Kappaz (2005)] - from local protests to large-scale violence, or worse (Figure 2). This is an area well researched where global evidence demonstrates that no country is immune from the potential of civil strife and instability as long as social disparities persist.

Civil strife is evoked by the outrage among those viewed as society’s “losers” through increased awareness of differences in living standards, observing the greater wealth of other communities, seeing what other groups have access to which they cannot obtain. Social disparities also lead to migration, create social tension and as the wealth gap increases the risk of tension and conflict also increases. Usually an event or an agitator is required to catalyze social instability.

Figure 2



Social disparities have contributed significantly to the migration of Turks. As of the end of 2006, nearly 4 million Turks were residing overseas – 80 per cent in West European countries [Turkish Labor and Social Security Ministry (2008)]. The majority of Turks migrating to Western Europe are low educated and low skilled, at the lowest end of the socio-economic ladder, often clinging to Islamist values that are reproduced within established, often non-integrated Muslim communities. Taxpayers in Western Europe pay for legal migrants through their social protection systems while unemployment is high and job creation is low. It is not surprising that taxpayers object to paying for this increased social burden, which likely conflates with negative sentiments toward Muslims.

## DISCUSSION

Nearly 45 per cent of Turkey’s population is between age 0-25, a young population needing education as the basis for employment and income security. Yet neo-liberal policies have diminished access to educational services for the poor and other vulnerable groups in Turkey, even though education is furthered the more it is shared. A 2-tiered, class-based system of access to secondary and higher education has taken

root, even though a pillar of democracy is that government-provided education is a public good needed to ensure social equity, democracy and social cohesion, based on principles of human rights. Neo-liberal reforms have led to a creeping process of privatization and market-driven competition throughout the educational system, with more of the costs passed onto citizens and marginalizing many youth who cannot pay the costs.

Marketizing educational services creates population shifts in access to labor market opportunities and quality of jobs for the poor or lower income groups who are unable to pay for private educational services before young people enter the labor market. This translates into increased class differentials and increased income inequality in a country that may not be able to absorb well the shocks that accompany a rapid growth in social disparities.<sup>6</sup> The introduction of tuition fees in public universities has created severe obstacles for lower income families, often driving households into debt just to send one child to school. In families struggling to pay tuition fees for secondary and university education boys tend to be the preferred recipients of schooling.

Education in Turkey has increasingly commodified, turned into a profit-making activity where students have started to be conceived of as “clients” and education seen as a service to be purchased. An implicit risk is that the market suppresses critical thought and education itself. Some aspects of the market wish to promote learning - but the learning of skills considered appropriate to different strata in the labor market. The work of educators calls for education based on critical thinking, which requires developing teachers as critical transformative intellectuals. Education oriented to the market has replaced critical thinking as the focus of education in Turkey, and increasingly Turkish youth are not being educated to learn, to develop creative thinking abilities, to generate the analytical skills needed in today’s information- and knowledge-based economy. Indeed, the language of management has superseded the language of intellectual freedom in classrooms.

Three major restraining forces appear to have bearing on the activities of neo-liberalism in education. The first, infrastructural, is the need for infrastructure in education, transport, welfare, housing, etc., infrastructure to enable teachers and students to get to school, to be trained for different levels of the workforce, and to be relatively healthy. The second restraint is consumer dissatisfaction and consumer protection in the form of regulations. The third, and most powerful restraint is legitimation, whereby those dominating the market (and the political parties they fund and influence) need to persuade the people that competition, privatization, poorer standards of public services, greater inequalities between rich and poor -is legitimate. If they cannot convince the public of this, then there is risk for a de-legitimation crisis where government and the existing system are viewed as grossly unfair and inhumane.

For Turkey to remain economically strong and competitive in the global market, education must be oriented to learning based on critical thinking -the skills most needed to face the challenges of the future. Interviews conducted in this study revealed that increasingly employers in Turkey find that secondary school and university graduates do not have the thinking, problem-solving, and analytical skills that are needed to perform their jobs. In spite of their relatively low level of intellectual education, private schools are in demand largely for the networks they provide, networks used to springboard graduates to jobs, creating many of Turkish society’s so-called “winners.” These networks, however, are not accessible to lower income families, contributing to an increase in social disparities. With less learning achievement and no access to private tutoring, poor children have a much lower likelihood of passing into secondary school, and very little chance of passing the State university entrance examination.

## **Islam and Secularism**

Western societies primarily use 2 terms in relation to Islam today: “Islamic fundamentalism” and “Islamic extremism”, often incorrectly considering all Muslim countries as the same. Countries and cultures need to be examined individually, according to their own differences. What appears to be more accurate with regard to Turkey is a visible existence of “religiosity,” not “fundamentalism” or “extremism.” Whether there is a real growth in religiosity or whether this is simply a perception is, however, not known. Notwithstanding a great deal of speculation about this question and numerous analyses, few have been based on a body of empirical evidence.

According to the Turkish government, 70 per cent of women in Turkey cover their heads, a significant growth over the past 25 years. Some academics interviewed in this study stated that most women wearing a

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<sup>6</sup> Even the U.S.A. has experienced severe difficulties absorbing the shocks associated with increased income inequality, with repercussions including both violence and social unrest.

headscarf do so out of personal religious conviction, not out of convenience to appease males in their households, however, this issue needs more examination in order for substantiated conclusions to be drawn.

Some surveys have reported that nearly half of Turks self-identify as adherents to Islam. Yet overlooked is that if asked, over half of Europeans would say they adhere to some denomination of Christianity, which does not generate fears of threats to democracy and secularism. Determining what exactly explains Western and Turkish fears of Turkish Islamist identity is not well understood, begging further investigation. Migration driven by economic need resulting from increased social disparities and a lack of social protection has played a significant role in the increased visibility of covered women in Western Turkey and in Europe. The headscarf - the most visible symbol conveying adherence to Islam – is a likely causal factor leading to Western perceptions that Turkey is undergoing significant “Islamification.”

One Turkish academic interviewed for this study concluded that growth in religiosity in Turkey over the past 25 years reflects a manifestation of Turks coming back to their roots in Islam, the “soul” of the Turkish people, who were always Muslims, but long repressed by military regimes. Her analysis concluded that what appears to be an increase in religiosity is in fact the “re-Islamisation” of the Turkish people, and this does not present a threat to democracy or secularism, nor does this represent a growth in Islamic fundamentalism or extremism in Turkey. Other scholars who were interviewed felt that the growth in Islamic religiosity outside Turkey may influence such growth in Turkey. If this is indeed the case, then potential related threats to democracy and secularism in Turkey should be given priority attention, but this needs more research before conclusions can be drawn.

To date, there do not seem to be indications of a growth in fundamentalism, a threat to secularism, or a threat to Turkey’s commitment to democracy. The large majority of Turks strongly support both a secular State and democracy. Notwithstanding, real democracy includes a number of basic freedoms, including freedom of speech, of the press, and of expression, areas yet to be fully achieved in Turkey’s on-going process of democratization.

## CONCLUSIONS

Although Turkish domestic and international policies recognize the need to provide services to the poor, current policies in reality serve to undermine principles of universalism. International financial institutions play a key role in promoting education liberalization, deregulation and privatization in Turkey through fiscal, public, and education sector reform. Their links with multinational corporations strengthen marketization policies and the interests of the private sector over the public sector. Evidence indicates that education privatization and commercialization in Turkey have led to negative impacts on education workers’ social and economic security, and for the quality of educational services. Increases in private, fee-for-service education in Turkey would appear to lead to a more class-based system of access to educational services.

Will the future regulatory role of the Turkish government in the education sector be an approach to regulation through mechanisms to oversee standards and practice? A collaborative regulatory intervention that addresses both regulation and re-distribution? Perhaps an approach to justice and socio-economic security based on a commitment to respect the following three policy decision principles?

1. The Security Difference Principle whereby a policy or institutional change is just only if it improves the situation of the most insecure groups in society.
2. The Paternalism Test Principle whereby a policy or institutional change is just only if it does not impose controls on some groups that are not imposed on the most free groups in society.
3. The Rights-not-Charity Principle.

### Addressing current trends in education in Turkey

Market-driven reforms in education in Turkey have decreased the quality and access to education, germane to Turkey’s future economic growth. The Turkish government can do much to foster greater understanding and acceptance in the West by creating transparency in State institutions, citizen participation in institutional decision-making and priority-setting, eliminating institutional corruption, committing to more equal development and to a more formalized equitable economy. These are major challenges and achievable reforms, but of the type that require years to integrate into a social fabric.



This investigation has generated a number of additional questions. Conclusions cannot be drawn on a number of issues explored in this study in relation to Turkey as it is not clear:

- a. whether over the past 25 years there has been an innocuous real growth in religiosity
- b. whether there has been a growth in a more extreme expression of adherence to Islam
- c. whether the appearance of or real growth in religiosity is an outcome of a growth in democracy
- d. whether mere perceptions and unfounded fears have grown in Turkey, Europe, and the U.S. in large part perpetuated by the media
- e. whether the appearance of or real growth in religiosity is an expression of the need for community, identity, or something to hold onto out of frustration due to increased social disparities and social marginalization, or
- f. whether other phenomena are at play.

The answers do not appear to be clear-cut. What is known is that social disparities contribute to domestic and international migration of Turkey's least advantaged, often from more religiously conservative areas, seeking sustainability of livelihood. It is also clear that there is a need for comparative research on questions of religiosity, adherence to Islam, and why this is viewed as a problem. There is a need to better understand the risk of social instability in Turkey that could result from growing social disparities, the mechanisms by which inequality unravels social cohesion and triggers instability, and the contribution of unequal access to quality educational services. In the immediate, a research initiative would be useful to collect the missing education sector data from Turkish education unions as originally requested through the ILO/PSI/EI "Liberalization of Public Services" project. Such data could contribute to the present study on the impacts of education liberalization in Turkey and be used to inform both domestic and international policy-making.

Western foreign policy makers express disquietude over the need for Turkey to remain stable, democratic and secular. This concern focuses almost exclusively on militaristic approaches, concentrating primarily on the PKK in Southeast Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and energy independence for Europe. But this foreign policy approach appears to be a tunnel vision of how to ensure stability in a geo-politically strategic country, when history has demonstrated that focusing on one direction leaves one vulnerable to being blindsided. Notably, foreign policy makers often overlook the extreme social disparities in Southeast Turkey as a factor contributing to unrest and instability in that region.<sup>7</sup>

While extreme social disparities in Turkey bear the potential contribute to unrest and instability - from any region, for now, there are no convincing indicators that social unrest is forthcoming in Turkey. Notwithstanding vigilance and awareness should not be underrated.

The body of evidence points to the need to broaden the foreign and domestic policy focus to ensure stability in Turkey by reducing the severe and growing social disparities, from which instability and insecurity have the potential to emerge. Universal access to quality education is important if such goals are to be achieved.

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<sup>7</sup> Turkish policy-makers appear to be equally myopic, suggested by the *non-implementation* of three major Turkish government-approved aid packages earmarked for Southeast Turkey.

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