

Secularization Process in the History of Turkish Education

Suleyman Celenk

Abant Izzet Baysal University, Faculty of Education, 14280 Bolu, Turkey

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ABSTRACT The education based upon the mores in the Turkish communities of the Middle Asia started to become institutionalized –so to speak schools were established- with the adoption of Islam in the times of Karahanlilar. At this time the basic mission of the education was perceived as preparing the individual to the other World. Although there occasionally were astronomy, philosophy, mathematics and other worldly courses in the Turkish history, no significant development took place with regards to the secularization of the education. In the renovation period started with Tanzimat Act, reason for the Empire’s regression against the West by continuously losing land was considered to be the insufficient education. Accordingly, courses like history, geography and mathematics were added to curriculum in the so-called modern schools despite all resistance. Schools giving education with modern teaching methods and techniques were bound to Maarif Vekaleti (Ministry of Education); while others that gave religious education were bound to Efkaf veseriye Vekaleti (Ministry of Islamic Law and Pious Foundations), which led to a duality in the education system. Dual practice based on the rules of two different worlds resulted in ongoing disputes between ministries as well as quarrels with occasional winners. This unpleasant situation came to an end with Unification of Education in the republican period, ensuring that the Ministry of Education had all the administration and inspection authority. However; 1982 Constitution’s impositions obliging religious courses in schools for every citizen, increasing number of Imam-Hatip (Imam-Preacher) schools more than imam needs of the country and occasional attempts of giving the inspection of Quran courses to the Department of Religious Affairs indicate that the secularization process of education has not been completed yet.