

EXPERIENCES OF EDUCATION POLICY ACTORS IN RELATION TO THE
ROLE OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION COUNCIL IN THE PROCESS OF
POLICY-MAKING

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ABSTRACT

EXPERIENCES OF EDUCATION POLICY ACTORS IN RELATION TO THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION COUNCIL IN THE PROCESS OF POLICY-MAKING

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The purpose of this study is to examine how the National Education Council's (NEC) participants experience the role of the NEC in the process of educational policy-making by considering the last three councils under the same political party. For this purpose, qualitative research design is applied. The sample of the study involves 15 participants including people from Ministry of National Education, academicians, principals, teachers, unions and policy analyst organizations who have attended more than one of the three councils, namely the 17th, 18th and the 19th NEC. The data were collected through the semi-structured interviews developed by the researcher. Furthermore, documents; regulation of the NEC, the 17th and the 18th NECs' reports and the reports published by the unions on the NECs were also analyzed. The qualitative data were analyzed through descriptive and content analysis by using

NVivo 10. The results indicated that NECs did not have an efficient role in the policy-making process and the role of these NECs evolved from the policy formulation to issue definition and agenda-setting tool which was used by the MoNE in order to strengthen and legitimize their agenda. Moreover, the results of the research demonstrated that MoNE chose the participants of these councils from an ideological perspective. To conclude, although NECs provide a participatory environment for the policy-making process, they were not used with the aim of policy-making.

Keywords: Education policy, Policy-making, National Education Council

ÖZ

ŞURALARIN EĞİTİM POLİTİKASI GELİŞTİRME SÜRECİNDEKİ ROLÜ ÜZERİNE EĞİTİM POLİTİKASI AKTÖRLERİNİN DENEYİMLERİ

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Bu çalışmanın amacı, aynı parti döneminde gerçekleştirilmiş olan son üç şurayı göz önüne alarak katılımcıların şuraların eğitim politikası geliştirme sürecindeki rolünü nasıl deneyimlediklerini araştırmaktır. Bu amaçla, bu çalışmada genel nitel çalışma metodu uygulanmıştır. Araştırmanın örneklemini Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı çalışanları, akademisyenler, müdürler, öğretmenler, sendikalar ve politika analizi yapan sivil toplum örgütlerini kapsayan 17., 18., ve 19. şura katılımcıları oluşturmaktadır. Çalışma kapsamında görüşleri alınan katılımcılar, son üç şuradan en az birine katılmış bulunmaktadır. Veriler araştırmacı tarafından geliştirilen açık uçlu görüşme yöntemiyle toplanmıştır. Bunun yanı sıra şura yönetmeliği, 17. ve 18. Şuranın raporları ve sendikalar tarafından yayınlanan dökümanlar da analiz edilmiştir. Nitel veriler; betimsel ve içerik analizi yöntemi ile NVivo 10 programı kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Söz konusu çalışmanın sonuçları Milli Eğitim Şuralarının eğitim politikası geliştirme sürecinde rolünün etkili olmadığını ve şuraların rolünün bakanlık tarafından

ajendayı güçlendirmek ve meşruiyet sağlamak amacıyla kullanılarak politika oluřturma aracı olmaktan sorun tanımlama ve ajanda belirleme aracı olmaya evrildiđini göstermektedir. Bu nedenle, Milli Eđitim Bakanlıđı bu Őuraları oluřturan katılımcıları ideolojik olarak belirlemektedir. Sonu olarak, Őuralar politika geliřtirme srecinde katılımcı bir ortam sađlamasına rađmen gerek anlamda bir ynetiřim aracı olarak kullanılmamaktadır.

Anahtar Szckler: Eđitim politikası, Politika yapımı, Milli Eđitim Őuraları

To the peace...

&

To my beloved family and husband

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BoED	Board of Education and Discipline
DES	Democrat Educators Union
DP	Development Plan
ERG	Education Reform Initiative
HEC	Higher Education Council
JDP	Justice and Development Party
MoLSS	Ministry of Labor and Social Security
MoNE	Ministry of National Education
NEC	National Education Council
SETA	Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research
SPO	State Planning Organization
TES	Turkish Education System
TGNA	Turkish Grand National Assembly

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This section presents information about background to the study including purpose of the study, significance of the study and the definitions of the terms.

1.1. Background to the Study

Education is a social field on which various dynamics have a direct or indirect impact. The most influential but hidden relation exists between education and the government, which is identified by İnal (2004) as inseparable parts. Cevizci (2012) specifies the value of education by defining it as having the power to affect society and as the tool for practicing the ideas of this society in order to shape the future. Having such an importance, according to Freire (2003) education cannot be value-free since governments take advantage of education through education policy. For this reason, education and education policy are favorite tools for government (Fowler, 2009).

In addition to the relation between the government and the education, there is a strong connection between ideology and education. Ideology is defined as values and beliefs related to the world (Adams, 2014). This relation has been put forward by Gutek(1988, as cited in İnal, 2004) from three perspectives; ideology tries to shape the education policies, expectations, outcomes and aims. Ideology transfers and reinforces some manners and values by means of social environment. Ideology highlights the skill and knowledge that is chosen by formal curriculum. Furthermore, Deem and Brehony (2000) state that ideology as well as culture play key role in policy-making and implementation; in a sense, the government reflects their ideologies on education. This illustrates that the relationship among government, ideology and education has

an impact on education policy since policy-making process does not happen in a vacuum (Kraft & Furlong, 2010) or “on a desert island” (Hill, 2005, p. 8).

Educational policy, as a sub branch of public policy, is practiced by the policymakers with the aim of solving social and educational problems of the nation (Heck, 2004). Educational policy as in the other policies is a dynamic state activity and keeps its vagueness. Since it is a means for solving problems, educational policies are formulated by government by involving various stakeholders. Trowler (2003) defines policy-making process as a political one during which various groups with different ideologies compete with each other with the aim of directing the education policies. Similarly, Olssen, Codd and O’Neil (2004) remark the political side of educational policy-making as well.

There are various theories such as elite theory, rational choice theory, institutional theory, group theory and many other theories which explain the policy-making process from different perspectives. Since these theories do not describe the process of policy-making, policy-cycle approach was developed as a policy-making guide which separates policy-making process into discrete parts which are issue definition and agenda setting, policy formulation, policy implementation, policy evaluation and policy change. The policy-cycle approach explains policy-making process from beginning to the end. In each steps of the approach, how a specific policy is developed and which policy actors are being influential in these steps are also specified.

Considering the Turkish context, there are different tools for identifying educational policy: National Education Council (NEC), Government Program, State Planning Organization (SPO) and Development Plan (DP) (Şişman, 2011). Among these, NEC is the only platform which includes various stakeholders in the process of policy-making. NEC is the advisory council of Ministry of National Education (MoNE) in which issues related to education are discussed in order to form education policies.

Recently, involvement in education; in other words, involvement in both decision-making and policy-making process has become a globally important issue in

response to which various countries include different stakeholders in the process of educational policy-making by distributing the power of the government. From this perspective, NEC has a distinctive position in the Turkish Education System (TES) since it responds to the demand of participatory environment. Yılmaz (2004) indicates that NEC is an effective structure in educational policy-making due to its broad participation structure. However, MoNE does not effectively benefit from these councils (Tedmem, 2014).

Various studies conducted in order to investigate which decisions of NEC are implemented and their impact on education policy and they found that there is no consistency in implementing decisions. Throughout the history of NEC, while MoNE implemented some of the decisions taken in the NEC (Aslaner, 2008; Büyükkarcı, 2012; Eriş, 2006), most of the decisions remained untouched (Akay, 2010; Dağ, 2013; Deniz, 2001; Üçler, 2006). Namely, while the decisions in the early years of NEC were practiced, the degree of practice decreased in recent times or the decisions were practiced differently from its origin.

Some of the studies highlight the impact of government on implementing the decisions since the government is the main authority of the policy-making process (Akay, 2010; Deniz, 2001; Üçler, 2006) on the other hand, other studies in the literature remark the position of these councils as an advisory board although it was formed as a policy formulation tool (Akay, 2010; Ayaz, 2009, Göktürk; 2006).

NECs have a prominent position in the TES since it has historical background and it was the first council in which decisions to shape the education system were taken and implemented (Akyüz, 2008). NECs were highly influential in educational policy-making although the results of the recent studies that examine the influence of decisions on the actual policies indicated inconsistent and minimal impact of these decisions on policy-making process (Aslaner, 2008; Büyükkarcı, 2012; Dağ, 2013; Eriş, 2006; Uysal, 2008; Üçler, 2006)

Additionally, NECs are elaborate and a good amount of money is spent on them that show it was valued by the government. However, there is a lack of research considering the role of NEC in the process of policy making (Education Reform

Initiative- ERG, 2014). Regarding this, Tedmem (2014) emphasizes that there isn't any research on NEC which examines the function of these councils. At this point, the main purpose of this study is to shed light on NEC's participants' experiences in order to explore the role NEC plays in the process of educational policy-making that contributes to the limited literature and provides a perception to both researchers and policy makers in order to enhance or reorganize the structure of NEC as a policy-making tool.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

NEC ensures a participatory platform for various stakeholders to discuss the issues in education. As having the feature of being the unique participatory council, functioning of this structure is substantial for the sake of democratic involvement of these stakeholders in educational policy-making process. Thereby, considering its impact and outcomes on education, evaluation of this structure constitutes a significant place for policy agenda of the country.

Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to find out what role National Education Council plays in the educational policy-making process in Turkey and how participants evaluate the experience of being a part of the last three NECs under the same political party. To put it another way, this study tries to understand the role and the function and the place of the NEC in the process of education policy-making, whether ideologies have a role in this process and what makes the decisions practicable by the MoNE (Ministry of National Education).

17th, 18th and 19th NECs will be the main concern of this study. From that point, this study aims to answer the following research questions;

1. How do participants perceive and describe the process of National Education Council?
2. What role does National Education Council play in the process of policy-making?
3. How does MoNE benefit from the decisions taken at NEC?

4. How do ideologies play role in the policy-making process, specifically 17th, 18th and 19th NECs?
 - a. What role do policy actors play in the NECs?

1.3. Significance of the Study

As it is indicated before, NEC serves as the advisory board of MoNE during the process of policy making although the decisions taken at NEC are not imperative for practice. However, National Education Council has the unique place in Turkish Education system since it is the only formal platform in which different stakeholders including MoNE, other ministries, Higher Education Council (HEC), universities, academicians, administrators, teachers, parents, students, unions, employers, think tanks, media and non-governmental organizations in general, briefly all relevant stakeholders of education called policy actors, come together to discuss the issue of education from different perspectives. These actors play key roles in policy-making, adoption and implementation (Fowler, 2009). Moreover, having such a participative environment positively affects the outcomes of education resulting from the policies formed by the MoNE through the agency of NEC. From this sense, NEC has the potential to improve education.

17th, 18th and 19th NECs will be the main target of this study. There are three main reasons of choosing these NECs. Firstly, these are the most recent NECs which were conducted in 2006, 2010 and 2014 respectively and there are not many studies in relation to 17th and 18th councils and there is no study related to 19th council. Secondly, these NECs coincide with the same political party regime so that it may provide the opportunity to examine whether particular ideologies have an impact on NEC. Lastly, an important change, 4+4+4 policy, was made in the education system of Turkey related to which these NECs may provide an opportunity to examine what role NEC plays in the formulation of the education policies.

To examine NECs in the educational policy-making process, this study is designed as a qualitative research. The reason for conducting qualitative research is to have a deep understanding of the particular setting and how people interpret the

experiences in this setting (Merriam, 2002). As Moustakas (1994) indicates these experiences cannot be attained with quantitative research. Moreover, this study will provide to highlight “the structure of an experience” (Merriam, 2002) which is the role of the NEC in the process of policy-making. Furthermore, as it is stated by Ritchie and Spencer (1994, as cited in Keser- Aschenberger, 2012) in social and public policies qualitative research is the preferred approach as it allows a room for examining the process. By this way, this study will bring out the perceptions of the participants related to the efficiency and the role of the NECs in the policy-making process that provide an insight to understand the structure of the NEC.

Ritchie and Spencer’s point is supported in the literature related to which there are many qualitative studies related to policy, educational policy and NEC and they mostly used screening model and document analysis (Ben-Peretz, 1995; Deniz, 2001; Ersoy, 2007; Göktürk, 2006). Moreover, the main point of these studies is to find out to what extent the decisions taken at the NEC are implemented in practice; in other words, their focus was implementation of the decisions rather than policy-making process. Furthermore, the studies related to NEC did not evaluate its role, structure and function in policy-making. At this juncture, this study may take the studies related to NEC in the literature one step further by providing the perceptions of the participants with regard to the efficiency of these councils in policy-making process.

There is a lot of money spent on the NECs and 20th NEC will be organized in 2018. For this reason, before this council, it is essential to identify the problems of the councils and the challenges that hinder the implementation process of the decisions made in these councils. This study puts forward these problems and challenges derived from the organization, structure and the role of the NECs in policy-making.

Considering policy-making process in the Turkish setting, Arslan (2003) and Keser-Aschenberger (2012) remarked that policy-making process both in public policy and education policy is based on elite theory in which elites governed the process. However, NEC provided a participatory platform that includes not only elites but also other stakeholders from the society. At this point, this study investigates how NEC’s participants examined the councils from the aspect of policy-making theories.

Furthermore, this study searches the role of NEC in relation to policy-cycle approach since it was states as ambiguous (ERG, 2014; Tedmem, 2014).

The limited literature inhibits the improvement of the NECs as well as having influential councils because of the fact that the problems in relation to the structure, function and the role of the NEC have not been revealed. Accordingly, the results propose implications that may provide to fill the gap in the literature by enabling improvement in the structure of NEC and identifying its role in the policy-making process.

1.4. Definition of Terms

Policy: is a formal decision or an action in order to achieve a certain goal (Richards & Smith, 2002).

Public Policy: is a formal decision or an action that involves a state organization or taken by a state organization (Richards & Smith, 2002).

Education Policy: is macro, meso or micro level reforms in education (Deem and Brehony, 2000) which are consisting of decisions “stretching from statehouse to the classroom” (Firestone, 1989; as cited in Heck, 2009; p.7).

Policy-making: is the crux of the government process (Fowler, 2009) that is goal-oriented.

Policy Actors: are those who play major and minor roles in the process of policy development, adoption and implementation (Fowler, 2009).

Ideology: is the set of beliefs accepted by the group of people since it is appropriate for their idea about the nature of the society and their situation in it (Dijk, 1998, p. 15).

National Education Council: is the advisory body of the National Education Council (NEC) gathered in order to shape the Turkish education system by depending on opinion and suggestions discussed (Akyüz, 2008)

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study explores the Turkish National Education Council as an education policy-making tool. As such, it is essential to clarify both theoretical issues and steps of policy-making tools being effective in those councils. Due to the complex structure of policy-making in which various actors and factors are in the action, first the policy concept in general, public policy and education policy are firstly identified. By this way, the relationship of education policy with public policy and policy in general as well as what education policy involves is described. Afterwards, policy-making term as a process is defined with the help of theories such as elite theory, rational choice theory, institutional theory, group theory and advocacy coalition framework and policy-cycle model which illustrates the various stages of the policy-making process. Next, National Education Council is described as a tool for education policy-making in Turkey. Following this, policy actors and the relationship among government, policy and ideology as influential factors in policy-making process are put forward and policy actors as influential actors in policy-making process are discussed. Lastly, research related to education policy and national education council are summarized.

2.1. Policy

In order to understand education policy and the process, it is essential to start with the main part, “policy”. Policy is such a broad term related to which there are various definitions in the literature. Although these definitions change in terms of words and meaning, they have commonalities as well. Many scholars describe the term policy as ambiguous and elusive (Colebatch, 2009; Deem & Brehony, 2000; Hill, 2005). Colebatch (2009) suggests that policy means different things to different people. However, this does not discourage researchers from defining the term “policy”.

Dye (1992) defines policy as “whatever governments choose to do or not to do” (p.18). Colebatch (2009) indicates “policy is not a distinct and unambiguous thing but a way of labeling the action which makes sense to the participants and that there are other ways of labeling that are also in use” (p.3). In addition to these, Ball (1994) presents a broad definition in which he states

Policy is both text and action, words and deeds, it is what is enacted as well as what is intended. Policies are always incomplete in so far as they relate to or map on to the ‘wild profusion’ of local practice. Policies are crude and simple. Practice is sophisticated, contingent, complex and unstable (Ball, 1994, p.10).

Each definition above highlights different points of the term. Namely, while Dye defines it in the most simplistic way, Ball and Colebatch choose a complicated approach which includes various dynamics. Yet, these definitions commonly emphasize the actions, the participants’ practice of policies and vagueness of policy.

Instead of defining the term with one sentence or with complex units, there are other definitions in which the meaning of policy is summarized with patterns. Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard and Henry (1997) define policy in four patterns in which they indicate that policies are “more than a text, multi-dimensional, value-laden and they exist in context” (p. 17). On the other hand, Hill (2005) highlights that policy is “*web of decisions*” which cannot be stated in one decision. Moreover, he specifies that policy can change by time.

Since it is a broad term, defining policy is not an easy task. Regarding this, Cunningham (1963, as cited in Taylor et al., 1997) uses an analogy of elephant to define policy and he states that elephant resembles policy; it is recognizable but difficult to define. From another perspective, although it seems that it is only related to social sciences, it is not the property of this field (Colebatch, 2009). There are other parts of policy including experts, scientists, journalists and officials; moreover, there are several branches of social sciences which involves political science and public administration, sociology and education (Taylor et al., 1997; Colebatch, 2009) in which different branch of policy is studied such as public policy, social policy and educational policy respectively. Policy is like a mother that is feeding the term from

various branches so that it is a precondition to understand policy before going into detail.

2.1.1. Public policy

As being one branch of policy, public policy is vague but valuable for analyzing. There are various definitions of public policy so that it is essential to specify them in order to conceptualize the term. Fowler (2009) describes the term public policy as “the dynamic and value laden process through which a political system handles a public problem” (p.3). By means of this definition, Fowler emphasizes the dynamism and value of public policy by which the public problems are solved. Colebatch (2005) describes public policy as a way of accomplishing objectives and the way of politicians to make difference. On the other hand, Cairney (2011) states that public policy is actions of government which has outcomes. Similarly, Kraft and Furlong (2010) regard public policy as action and inaction of government in terms of public problems and he emphasizes that these public policies are the outcomes of values and conflicts of the society.

From general perspective, public policy is a complex and broad term which includes various stakeholders and these stakeholders share distinct perceptions and ideas (Çelik & Çorbacıoğlu; 2008). Although there are different definitions of public policy, some concepts are conspicuous. Public policy is costly and dynamic process in which the problems related to the society are accomplished by means of government actions.

To summarize, having such a broad nature, public policy includes the whole government actions, basically economic policy which has a direct contact with social policy. Like a chain, public policy and social policy enclose other government actions such as education, health and welfare fields (Taylor et al., 1997). In order to have holistic view, it is a necessity to understand the relation among public policy and education policy.

2.1.2. Education policy

Public policy is related to the government actions towards problems in the society. The actions of the government are related to many areas one of which is education which is defined as social arena of public policy (Taylor et al., 1997). In this sense, education policy is a sub-group of public policy. In addition to this, education research includes many disciplines, especially from social sciences (Deem, 1996) and interact with these disciplines (Taylor et al., 1997). In educational policy research, two main disciplines; political sciences and educational sciences merge with the aim of forming a new discipline.

Education and policy became inseparably dependent on one another from the late half of the 19th century (Adams, 2014). Education policy is fairly new area of research for education researchers compared to the other branch of policy (Deem & Brehony; 2000), for this reason, the definition of education policy is vague and still not clear. However, in order to understand the term “education policy” it is essential to discuss the various definitions provided in the literature.

Deem and Brehony (2000) define education policy as “any analysis of changes, reforms or developments in education, whether these occur at the macro (national or supra-national), meso (middle) or micro (local) level, and irrespective of whether the focus is on contemporary or historical events and processes”. In addition to this, they highlight that education policy is dynamic, multi-dimensional and biased; moreover, it is for both public and private benefit (Berkhout & Wielemas, 1999). Moreover, education policy is “chain of decisions stretching from statehouse to the classroom” (Firestone, 1989; as cited in Heck, 2004) which indicates the policy-making process from policy formulation to policy implementation. On the other hand, Özen and Gülaçtı (2007) describe education policy as actions and principles related to education which is formed by considering four themes of education: economic, cultural, ideological and social perspective. Şişman (2011) identifies educational policy as a junction point in which education as a knowledge and skill gaining process and policy as a way come together in order to reach objectives.

In general, educational policy is defined as a way to reach or accomplish the objectives formed by the ministry in order to provide education for everyone. Yılmaz (2004) classifies two targets, general ones such as transmission, maintenance and renewal of culture, creating personality and enabling job opportunities, and individual ones such as providing the ability of research, collaboration, learning and production. Then, he states that educational policy is a road map to follow with the aim of reaching these targets.

Education policies are not made in a vacuum that is against to the nature of policy. There are various issues such as bargaining, negotiating and competing happening in terms of education policy that makes the definition of this term complex since it is not easy to confirm these dynamics. Although there is no consensus in the definition of the education policy, it is mostly highlighted that the term, education policy includes the state or government which was stated by the Ozga (1990) as it is not possible to analyze education policy without considering the government. In a similar vein, Deem and Brehony (2000) remark the importance of the role of the government in educational policy-making process including formulation, implementation and analysis parts. Regarding this, Enders (2010) defines the role of education policy as “a national entity shielded from external interest by the state” (p. 207).

Furthermore, education policy is a public arena in which not only the government but also various groups compete their interests in order to influence the education policies. There is a shift from the influence of the government to the groups related to which Taylor et al. (1997) specify that the efforts of interest groups to persuade the government overreach what governments want to realize; for this reason, education policy becomes more political reconciliation among interest groups and it is settled in a political context (Fowler, 2009).

Regarding the various process in education policy-making and actors being involved, studies in education policy are based on either education policy process or the evaluation of the policy (Berkhout & Wielemans, 1999) which is stated as analysis for policy and analysis of policy. Analysis for policy means the process of policy

formulation while the analysis of policy refers to the examination of the existing policy. At this point, this study stands in the analysis for policy position since the main focus is to analyze the role of one of the policy-making tools in policy for the analysis process.

Considering the definitions and the context of education policy, educational policy is derived from public and social policy by combining its nature with education. As in public policy, it is a dynamic process; moreover, it is actions and a way to reach the objectives. Since it is a relatively new area, it does not exist in wider context unlike social and public policy which includes education in their field (Hill; 1996; Deem & Brehony; 2000). Furthermore, defining education policy as a term is quite difficult since it is too broad and there are many parts in action such as policy-making process, policy-making tools, policy actors and the relationship with government and ideology. All of these patterns make contribution to the definition of education policy and make it more concrete. For this reason, each of these parts is identified below.

2.2. Policy-making

Policy making process is mostly described by public policy in order to conceptualize the steps in policy making process. Since various scholars identify policy making from the aspect of theories, there are various definitions (Heck, 2004). Taylor et al. (1997) define policy making as dynamic and proceeding process and a state activity whereas Cairney (2012) indicates that it is a messy and unpredictable one. By using metaphor, Raab (1994, as cited in Taylor et al., 1997) associates policy making process with pudding far from the recipe that also resembles the Cairney point, “unpredictable policy making process”.

Trowler (2003) defines policy-making process as political process in which groups’ interests and ideologies conflict in order to shape the educational policy. Moreover, he emphasizes that regardless of the place of where educational policy is formed, there are three main steps in policy making; identification of the problem, beginning the policy process and putting policy into practice. Considering the

definition, policy making is clearly a process which needs preliminary preparation and afterwards implementation or change rather than being a static one.

Indeed, Heck (2004) indicates that policymaking is a “dynamic and value laden process” which has formal and informal actions; moreover, he claims that it is a complex process due to various stakeholders who take place in this process. There is a war of interests and ideologies in policy making in which the dominant part changes and that result in distinct theories in terms of policy making. Related to this, Kraft and Furlong (2010) highlight that social scientists use theories with the aim of understanding the real world and how things work. So, policy-making theories are a way to make sense of educational policy-making. Therefore, the most common theories are explained which are elite theory, rational choice theory, institutional theory, group theory and advocacy coalition framework (Anderson, 2006; McCool, 1995 as cited in Kraft & Furlong, 2004).

2.3. Theoretical Approaches of Policy-making

There have been various theories which explain the policy-making from various aspects. Each theory presents different approach and it is hard to claim one theory as the best since each of them benefits from others’ weaknesses and strengths. There are many theories that shed lights on the process of policy-making; yet, elite theory, rational choice theory, institutional theory, group theory and advocacy coalition framework will be mainly explained since they are the most common ones (Kraft & Furlong, 2010).

2.3.1. Elite theory

Elite theory was developed in the nineteenth century by an Italian named Gaetano Mosca. It mainly refers to the top of the society and it differentiates the society as the governing elites such as economic elites, cultural elites, policy actors and, the public whose values and preferences differ from the governing elites (Kraft & Furlong, 2010). According to Mosca (1939; as cited in Hill, 2005), society is divided into two; the ones who rule and they are the minority group and they are the one who control

and the ones who are ruled and they are the majority group and are controlled by the minority elite.

Kapani (2001) stated that the elite group is also divided into two as director group who has an impact on political power and non-director group; yet, the elites and the public do not distinctly draw apart from another. This small elite group holds the power (Cairney, 2012; Hill, 2005) and uses this power by considering their values (Taylor et al., 1997). Elite theory aims to explain the structure of the government and power relations in the society in order to put forward the differentiation between elites and the masses (Arslan, 2003).

In elitist theory, policy-making happens among elite group as a closed activity (Heck, 2004). Anderson (2015) remarks that considering policymaking from the aspect of elitist theory, the theory mainly reflects the values of governing elites who control the decision-making process rather than the actions of the “masses”. Schubert, Dye and Zeigler (2014) state that elites are the few who have power whereas the masses are the majority who do not have so. On the other hand, in modern elites, Hill (2005) claims that power does not only belong to one group, in a sense, to the governing elites because of the fact that they are political elites including bureaucratic, military, aristocratic and business elites, and political class composed of elites from other social areas such as trade union leaders, intellectuals and businessmen identified by Bottomore and the power is shifting among these groups.

Similarly, Kraft and Furlong (2010) identify economic elites, cultural elites and elected officials as elites, and they highlight that power is not a fixed form; instead, different elites may hold power in different settings. According to Kraft and Furlong (2010), policymaking happens in the narrow circle which involves elites and few sub-governments and people outside the narrow circle have little chance to participate in the decision-making process.

Schubert, Dye and Zeigler (2014) explain elite theory by dividing the society into two groups; those who have power and they are only a few and those who do not have power and they are the majority. Elites shape most of the things by using the power they have and they control the systems such as education, economy, policy and

many others. Moreover, elites can be in any type of political regime such as democracy, dictatorship and monarchy as stated by Schubert, Dye and Zeigler. According to their perspective, the communication between the elites and the masses move downward so that there is little possibility of masses to be influential in decision-making. Based on these notions, Schubert, Dye and Zeigler (2014) summarize elite theory with six items in which they indicate that;

There are two groups in the society; the elites and the mass; those who have power and do not respectively.

- Elites are not the ones from the mass but the ones from upper class of the society.
- The moving of non-elites to elite group is possible but a slow one. Elites have common interests and values.
- Public policy depends on the values of elites rather than masses.
- The values and interests of elites affect the masses and they have little interaction with the masses.
- Elites need to preserve their place by ensuring the stability in the system.

In addition to classical elite theory, social theorists came up with a new perspective which analyzes the role of the elites in modern society, and among these scholars, Etzioni-Halevy named the theory as democratic elite theory or demo-elite perspective in which she highlights the autonomy of the elites (Etzioni-Halevy, 1997). Arslan (2003) emphasizes that elite theory has four parts; pluralist elite theory, elitist elite theory, democratic elite theory and demo-elite perspective. Elitist elite theory is the classical understanding of elite theory in which the power is in the hands of elites and these elites represent the minority. Pluralist elite theory claims that social and political power is distributed and shared among various groups who are influential in the decision-making process. The main perspective of pluralist shows opposite of elites that the power of executives can be controlled by these groups. Democratic elite theory highlights the independence of elites from the government and from other elitist group in order to ensure democratic democracy. The theory basically indicates that society should be involved in decision-making process, specifically non-governmental

organizations. By this way, the power of government could be restricted. Lastly, demo-elite perspective indicates that the power of the government controls by other elites like pluralist elite perspective. However, it differentiates from this perspective from the aspect of analyzing elites as elites, sub-elites and public. While the elites are found in top of the structure such as the member of government, leaders of political parties, sub-elites have moderate power listed under elites. The public is at the bottom of the pyramid who do not have power. The demo-elite perspective states that there is circulation between elites and the public provided by sub-elites (Arslan, 2003; Arslan, 2006).

There are also critics about the elite theory. Heck (2004) lists the constraints of elitist theory as its being inadequate in explaining the effect of multiple and conflicting beliefs on policy outcomes. Furthermore, the theory underestimates the values and interests of the masses. On the other hand, Arslan (2003) identify elitist theory as the base of inequality and he indicates that demo-elitist perspective is most applicable to the Turkish setting since there is not only one power center. There are two power centers; internal power centers and external power centers being influential in Turkish context and power is distributed among these different groups.

2.3.2. Rational choice theory

Rational choice theory is mostly popular in the field of economics and sociology since it aims to predict the outcomes of the decisions as in the economy and it is also renamed as public choice theory (Cairney, 2012; Hill, 2005; Lindenberg, 1992; Kraft & Furlong, 2010; Moll & Hoque, 2006; Scott, 2000). This theory identifies people as “rational actors” in the process of policy-making in which they manage this process by taking into account their own choices and desires (Hill, 2005; Kraft & Furlong, 2010). In other words, social scientists identify people as the rational ones who think about the costs and benefits of the actions as economists do and this is applied into policy making as rational choice theory (Scott, 2000).

On the other hand, Moll and Hoque (2006) explain rational choice theory with the term “optimization” which means the actors have rational actions, if they provide

maximum utility from the decisions they make. Furthermore, rational choice theory is not only used as a “tool” to explain the impact of government but also it is related to the ideologies “favoring market solutions and small government” (Cairney, 2012; p.136).

Similarly, Kraft and Furlong (2010) indicate that rational choice theory identifies public policy from the aspect of interest of individuals. According to their perspective, there may be many situations that affect people’s actions such as the values they have, the uncertainties, rules or norms they will be influenced by, their background knowledge and their perceptions in relation to certain situations. For this reason, the main aim is to understand people’s reactions to these various conditions. On the other hand, Cairney (2012) states these rational actors are self- focused; therefore, people have preferences related to their own values and make choices from this perspective.

Although, rational choice theory explains political behavior which affects the design of the public policies, there are also critics about its definition in relation to people since they are not “single-minded pursuers (Kraft & Furlong, 2010). Scott (2000) indicates the problems from three perspectives; collective actions, social norms and social structure and the theory falls behind explaining these patterns. From collective actions perspective, it is not explicit why individuals make a choice that is more appropriate for the benefits of others rather than themselves. For the social norms, scholars ask why people follow social norms although these norms hinder their self-interest and make them obligate rules. Lastly, Scott indicates that individualistic theory could not fully explain larger structure as in the social structure. Additionally, Moll and Hoque (2006) highlight the simplistic nature of the theory and it ignores the emotional side of taking actions as well as ignoring social norms and values.

2.3.3. Institutional theory

The main focus of institutional theory is mostly groups rather than individuals since the theory explains things from the aspect of institutions or organizations. Before explaining the institutional theory, it is essential to shed light on what institution is,

although there is not one adopted definition. Ostrom (1999) defines institution as rules, norms and strategies adopted by the people in and among the organizations. Similarly, Kraft and Furlong (2010) highlight that the term includes the relations between and among both individuals and organizations arranged by the rules. From another perspective, Cairney (2012) highlights that institutions refer to more than buildings in which there are rules being effective in policy-making process since there are people with various beliefs and norms in the institutions. These institutions defined previously influence public policies from where institutional theory came out in order to explain how rules, norms and structures are being effective in the policy-making process.

Heck (2004) defines institutional theory as “arguments about the influence of broader sets of societal values, cultural theories, ideologies, perceptions on organizational structures and practices” (p.150). To clarify, this theory provides a two-side lens; through one you can see the actors’ behaviors in policy situations and with other you can view organizations’ behavior in implementing policy changes, according to Heck. With these features, Heck states that this theory can be seen in the school setting. On the other hand, Evans (2007) indicates that institutions are being effective in the behaviors of the actors in the process of policy-making; therefore, the policies can be better understood by considering institutional framework. Namely, institutions shape the behavior and the values of the actors and policymakers.

Most of the scholars emphasize the structures, rules and norms in relation to institutional theory. In a similar way, Kraft and Furlong (2010) indicate that rules and structures are quite important since they influence the effective actors in policy process. Rules make some of the actors being influential and prominent while hurting others. On the other hand, rules and norms provide people to explain behaviors, the relationships among actors and their common understanding (Cairney, 2012).

2.3.4. Group theory

Unlike elitist theory, the group theory identifies itself as pluralist since how they perceive power differentiates from elites in which group theory claims that power is not in the hands of few elites but it is pluralistic (Kraft & Furlong, 2010). Moreover,

there is a balance in the use of power during policy process in order to prevent one group dominating the process.

Anderson (2015) states that public policy is “the product of group struggle” from the aspect of group theory (p.21). Group means individuals who come together around shared interests and values and have interaction and conflict with other groups who have different interests. According to Anderson (2015), the main construct in group theory is access. Namely, in order to be influential in policy making process, groups need access to governmental decision-makers which can be provided by organizing or social lobbying. At that point, dominant groups who have more access will be effective in the process with their interests or ideas while excluding the other groups.

As in the other theories, group theory has also some constraints. Firstly, it gives more importance and power to the groups while it rules out the role of the public officials in the process of policy making (Anderson, 2015). Secondly, not all groups and interests of them are represented in the process due to the dominance of one group (Kraft & Furlong, 2010). Thirdly, it remains weak in explaining policy-making process (Anderson, 2015).

Advocacy coalition framework

Advocacy coalition framework (ACF) is identified as the modern form of group theory (Kraft & Furlong, 2010). This framework is developed by Sabatier and his colleague Jenkins-Smith in 1988 by based on the US political system. The main aims of the framework are listed as; (1) trying to find an alternative to stages heuristic (Jones, 1977; as cited in Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999), (2) uniting the advantageous sides of top-down and bottom-up approaches to policy implementation and (3) searching for ways to combine technical information in order to understand policy process (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999).

This approach focuses on the importance of policy communities and networks from policy inception to policy implementation (Hill, 2005). The main focus of the approach is the advocacy coalitions formed by policy actors who have similar values

and these coalitions are the key in understanding political behavior (Heck, 2004). Cairney (2012) remarks that beliefs are like a glue that they hold actors together in advocacy coalition; therefore, policy actors, coalitions, conflict with each other in order to affect the policy outcome and they try to form long-term coalitions.

The framework has five parts; relatively stable parameters, external events, consensus for policy change, constraints and resources of subsystem actors and policy subsystem (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999). In relation to first variables, the former one including values and social structure is stable while the latter one including socioeconomic changes and social movements is more dynamic. Throughout the policy making process, actors are being involved in “advocacy coalitions” including both governmental actors and nongovernmental ones (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999). Beliefs are rather important in these coalitions.

Although ACF provides a reasonable assessment (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999), there also criticism. Heck (2004) states that socioeconomic conditions, public opinion, coalition and policy output are not enough for policy change although they are significant. Furthermore, it does not emphasize when to start policy change.

2.4. Policy-cycle Process Model

The theories discussed above try to explain the policy-making process from different perspectives; however, these theories could not fully identify the process due to discrepancy among the institutions of government (Bridgman & Davis, 2003). From this perspective, policy cycle model is a holistic as it excludes the government issue from the process and as it draws the general lines of policy –making process.

The policy-cycle model explains the policy-making process by including the policy actors who are being effective during this process. The model is not top-down but cyclical in order to illustrate that policy-making process is on-going. The policy-cycle model can be easily understood by the policy-makers since it divides the process into discrete stages and helps them to grasp the complex policy-making process as a simple practice (Cairney, 2012; Everett, 2003; Sabatier, 1999). Colebatch (2005) states

that it is a construct model and identifies policy-cycle model as a map followed by the practitioners in the process of policy-making at any government institutions.

On the other hand, Cairney (2012) highlights the advantageous sides of the policy-cycle process model in four parts. Firstly, the model is easy to understand. Secondly, the stages enable to pursue the essence of policy-making. Thirdly, it is possible to identify the sequence of policy-making stages. Lastly, key points for stages can be analyzed. However, there are also disadvantages of the model; it does not provide the description of how policy is made, the stages do not function in order and it is “top-down bias” according to Cairney (p. 41).

The stages of the model are differently identified by various researchers. Yet, they have emphasized similar points more or less. Barkenbus (1998) indicates these stages as agenda setting, policy formulation, policy implementation and policy evaluation, whereas Rist (2000, as cited in Keser-Aschenberger, 2010) lists three stages; policy formulation, policy implementation and policy accountability. On the other hand, Cairney (2012) and Kraft and Furlong (2010) specify six steps; problem definition and agenda setting, policy formation, policy legitimation, policy implementation, policy evaluation and policy change.

2.4.1. Problem definition and agenda setting

This stage is identified as the most important and critical stage since it affects the other stages of policy-cycle and mainly clarifies what is going to be a policy (Kraft & Furlong, 2010). It requires to identify the problems that also remark the attention of the government (Cairney, 2012; Heck, 2004; Kraft & Furlong, 2010). The first step starts with identifying the issues or the problems, which is a political process. This step is mostly important because of the fact that the identified issues could reach the government and to the larger community so that it could be included in the agenda and be a policy at the end (Fowler, 2009). Heck (2004) also emphasizes that the prerequisite for issues to be included in the agenda is their visibility for the government.

Fowler (2009) lists two types of agenda; systematic agenda including professional, media and public agenda, and governmental agenda. Systematic agenda includes the ones from outside the government discussing issues related to education. In professional agenda various groups such as interest groups, educational specialist and associations discuss the educational issues. While the media agenda means the issues highlighted by the media organizations, in public agenda these issues are the ones that draw the attention of the public. The governmental agenda highlights the issues discussed by the government at any time.

There are many factors affecting the process of identifying the issue and there is an interaction between people inside and outside the government. Heck (2004) explains this process and interaction from six various groups; outside the government, insiders, near circle, far circle, sometimes players and forgotten players. For the outsiders, there are things visible in the media and there are also other things in the community. Insiders are listed as governor, legislative committees and individual legislator. On the other hand, Fowler (2009) identifies insiders as powerful politicians such as presidents, governors and legislators. This group actively participates in problem definition and agenda setting. Near circle includes the ones who have power to influence the insiders in the process of agenda setting and policy –making in general. Furthermore, they provide information to the policymakers and apply pressure to the near circle. Far circles are not effective in the first stages whereas they have an influence on implementation process such as practitioners. Sometimes players are not effective in this process; yet, their impact is based on the type of issue. The last group is the forgotten players who are not actively involved in the agenda-setting process.

Considering these, Heck claims that defining issues are the result of this interaction among these groups. Cobb and Elder (1972, as cited in Heck, 2004) emphasizes that these actors stated above are not equally effective in the process; yet, their influence depends on the power they have. On the other hand, Fowler (2009) indicates that although politicians identify the policy agenda, the grassroots have an influence on the agenda of these leaders.

2.4.2. Policy formulation and policy legitimation

Identifying the issue and setting the agenda are the first steps of the policy-cycle and it is just a beginning of the policy-making process. The second step is policy formulation and it is not easy to differentiate this stage from agenda setting (Hill, 2005).

Policy formulation is defined as “written form of a policy” by Fowler (2009; p. 16). In this stage, the policy is produced with the help of governmental and non-governmental actors by negotiating, bargaining, trading or lobbying. Cairney (2012) provides an extensive description for policy formulation. According to him, policy formulation has four parts; (1) setting goals, (2) estimating the cost, (3) predicting to what extent the solutions would be effective and (4) choosing the policy instruments to use (p.32). On the other hand, Kraft and Furlong (2010) states that policy formulation is developing movements or actions in order to solve the problems in the society during which various actors such as appointed and careers officials and interest groups are involved in with their technical information and political skills. Furthermore, interest groups could propose well-off suggestions

The main actors of policy formulation stage is not only governmental ones but also non-governmental organizations; although it is understood as the job of governmental actors. Considering this, Colebatch (2009) emphasizes that non-governmental actors also have influential role in this process. On the other hand, he explains this from three perspectives; the formulation is the job of governmental actors; yet, they need the information and proposals offered by other actors, specifically non-governmental ones, while they also require the ones while implementing the formulated policy.

Considering policy legitimation, this stage is mostly identified as political unlike policy formulation that has both technical and political sides (Kraft & Furlong, 2010). Policy legitimation means that the formulated policy has support (Cairney, 2012) so that this policy action can be justified unless; it is inevitable that this policy action may have problems defined as “serious hurdles” by Kraft and Furlong (2010, p.83).

2.4.3. Policy implementation

Policy implementation could not take the influential and pioneer position as the policy formation has due to the fact that the main war and game were played in defining policies (Barkenbus, 1998). The simplistic definition of the policy implementation is made by Cohen and Mofitt (2011) as “the effort to turn policy into practice” (p.73) and by Fowler (2009) as “getting people to carry out a policy” (p.16). Regarding these two definitions, the policy implementation means the practice of the formulated policy by the practitioners; these could be teachers or principals from the educational setting.

Educational leaders are the key parts of the policy implementation since policies are not “self-implementing” (Barkenbus, 1998). Furthermore, it is impossible to think an implementation process without these practitioners whereas their inbeing is not that point critical in issue definition and agenda setting, according to Fowler (2009). From another perspective Scharpf (1978, as cited in Colebatch, 2005) states that policy formulation and policy implementation is related to the relations among the different groups which have different goals, values and strategies. Therefore, their willingness and commitment as well as their skills and knowledge are crucial in policy implementation process.

Policy implementation is among the most studied stage (Heck, 2004; Russel & Bray, 2013). It is mostly value and culture depended rather than pursuing a rational process (Heck, 2004). For this reason, problems may occur after implementing the policies. According to McLaughlin (1987, as cited in Jackson, Bouffard and Fox, 2013) policy implementation is an unstable process in which the problems are emerging over time.

2.4.4. Policy evaluation

Considering policy formulation, policy implementation and policy evaluation, policy evaluation is considered as the most disregarded stage of all (Barkenbus, 1998). Policy evaluation is the assessment of the implemented policy. Fowler (2009) defines

policy evaluation as a process for deciding whether the policy works well or not and to what extent this policy carries out the goals. Furthermore, he indicates that ideally policies should be evaluated after they were implemented; whereas most policies are not evaluated or improperly evaluated.

2.4.5. Policy change

Policy change means the substitution of the policy or some parts of it due to the fact that the policy could not accomplish the goals identified before. The policy change could be done by terminating the policy or incrementally that means changing deficient parts of the policy after analyzing the shortfalls. (Lindblom, 1959; Kraft & Furlong, 2010). Terminating the policy involves, practitioners quitting to implement the policy whereas in the incremental approach small changes are made in order to implement the policy in an effective way by preventing unexpected outcomes (Lindblom, 1959). Policy change stage is key since it leads to improvement in education and its outcomes; yet, it is mostly out of the agenda (Education Grantmakers Institute, 2011).

To summarize, policy-cycle model is a tool for policy-makers and practitioners in order to simplify the complex structure of the policy process and make the policy-making process more concrete that is not so much visible in the theories. Furthermore, it is a modest and non-rigid framework (Bridgman & Davis, 2003). It is better to realize that this is not a theory but a model to make the steps clear for the policy-makers. However, there are also drawbacks of the policy-cycle model as well. Cairney (2012) lists these drawbacks in three parts. Firstly, the model did not implicitly present how policy is made. Secondly, it is not easy to differentiate among the stages since they run in different order. Lastly, it is top-down bias (Cairney, 2012).

2.5. Policy, Government, Ideology and Education

Talking about policy and education, it is inevitable to feel the existence of government during policy-making process. As Mitchell, Crowson and Shipps (2011) indicate education is such an important field that it cannot be left to educators as policy

actors. For this reason, as a form of the state, the government affects the education policy (Adams, 2014) and pursues its crown as the main actor. Regarding this, Machiavelli defines education as a tool used by managers to carry the benefits of the state one step further (cited in İnal, 2008).

Education has a crucial role in political experimentation (Enders, 2010), nation building, transforming the society and development of both the individual and the society (Jakobi, Martesn & Wolf, 2010). The government forms policies to regulate the activities in the society and solve the problems including the education policies through which the government gets involved in the process. Kraft and Furlong (2010) list three reasons of government involvement in policies; political reasons, moral and ethical reasons and economics and market failure. As a result of these, there is a strong connection between government and education.

In this relation, the government has been the main actor and it has the main power; yet, there is a demand for multi-level governance (Enders, 2010) due to the complexity of education and the recent developments. Therefore, there has been a recent change in the relationship between government and education in which there is a shift from government to governance of education although that is not a willing one from the aspect of the government (Hudson, 2007).

Governance means including various sectors into action in order to find solutions to the problems (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992, as cited in Ball, 2010). Multi-level governance requires the distribution of power to other actors because of the fact that top-down practice lost its effectiveness and there is a need for more democratic practice by including other actors in play (Enders, 2010). As a result of this shift, government takes the back seat and leaves its place to the other interest groups whereas the government looks for other ways to influence education stated by Hudson (2007). However, this does not mean the disappearance of the government since it looks for other ways to be effective; besides, the government could not abandon its crown owing to importance of education (Hudson, 2010). This points Meyer and Rowan's (1977) idea about the organizations' legitimacy versus efficiency dilemma. According to Meyer and Rowan (1977) every organization has to reflect the institutional myths

around its environment; on the other hand adopting these myths undermines organizations' efficiency. For this reason, in order to resolve this dilemma, organizations form loosely coupled structures.

In addition to this, the same relation exists among educational policy, government and ideology. To understand this relation, it is essential to know the definition of ideology. At this point, Isaak (1987, as cited in Heck, 2004) defines ideology as ideology is "a fairly coherent set of values and beliefs about the way the social economic and politic systems should be organized and operated and recommendations about how these values and beliefs should be put into effect" (p.82).

Moreover, Adams (2014) defines ideology as the values and beliefs people construct related to the world whereas Kaplan (1999) identifies ideology as the means for shaping individuals in accordance with specific views, beliefs or values. Trowler (2003) explains ideology as two sets due to the fact that it is important to be explicit about ideology in policy-making and these are political ideology and educational ideology. Furthermore, while Taylor et al. (1997) state the close relation between education policy and ideologies, Anderson (1968, cited in İnal, 2004) emphasizes ideological reflections in education system of nearly all societies.

Ideology plays a crucial role in shaping education system and, education is an arena in which various ideologies are conflicted, according to İnal (2004). Regarding education, government and ideology, İnal (2008) identifies education as a tool used by nearly all of the governments to practice their ideologies (Deem & Brehony, 2000) and it is a guide for the government's plan (Fowler, 2009). Heck (2004) indicates that change of the government also results in the change in educational policy-making. Therefore, the government needs policies to practice the ideologies they want through education and this makes policy-making process a political one owing to various groups with different interests competing for influencing the education (Trowler, 2003). Furthermore, these ideologies are being influential in the steps of policy cycle such as issue definition, agenda setting and policy formulation (Fowler, 2009).

On the other hand, İnal (2004) examines the relationship between the government and education in the Turkish context. He indicates the need for

legitimization provided by education. Legitimization and ideology are intertwined and the thing legitimized is the ideology, according to İnal. On the other hand, Kaplan (1999) analyzed the ideology of national education in Turkey and he remarked that religion, Kemalism and nationalism were the ideological issues in Turkish education system and national education is mostly authoritative.

To summarize, there is a consistent relationship among government, ideology, education and policy. Policies are the legal tools for the government to shape the education system based on ideologies. These ideologies take part as a base for policy actions (Cairney, 2012). For this reason, while analyzing the education policies, it is essential to take into account the beliefs, which include the ideologies, of policymakers or policy actors during the process of policy-making.

2.6. Policy Actors

Policy actors are those who are active in the policy process and when they form a collective group, they become “dramatis personae (Fowler, 2009). Kingdon (1984, as cited in Cairney, 2012) describes policy actors as those who influence the policy-making process by using their knowledge. On the other hand, Taylor et al. (1997) define policy actors as the community that includes academicians, interest groups and consultants. These actors may have different roles and play major and minor roles. There are various types of policy actors being influential during the process of policy-making. Fowler highlights two types of actors; governmental and nongovernmental actors.

2.6.1. Governmental actors

Governmental actors are identified in three parts; executive, legislative and judicial branch (Fowler; 2009; Kraft & Furlong; 2010).

Legislative branch

The legislative branch is the most effective one in the process of policy-making and it is responsible from the budget of the government, according to Fowler (2009).

The legislative function is carried out by Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) in Turkey. This unit includes 550 parliamentarians chosen at general election who are the most influential actors in the policy-making process. TGNA has two main responsibilities; legislation and examining the government from political perspective (MEB Strateji Geliştirme Başkanlığı, 2011).

In addition to these 550 influential parliamentarians in legislation process; there are other groups identified as clerical staff, professional staff and centralized staff agency by Fowler (2009). The first group is doing the secretarial job; the second one provides professional service such as information and consultation to the parliamentarians; the third one is the general staff of the assembly that is similar in the Turkish context as well. Fowler emphasizes the power of these invisible actors due to being close to these parliamentarians and having direct relationship with them.

Executive branch

The main goal of the executive branch is to carry out the laws authorized by the legislative branch (Kraft & Furlong, 2010). According to Fowler (2009), they do not have so much influence in policymaking process compared to the legislative branch.

The executive branch in Turkey consists of the President and the Councils of Ministers and the executive function and power are arranged by the constitution. The governing structure of Turkish government has two groups: executive level institutions; central and field organization and decentralized institutions including law for provincial special administration, municipality and villages (MoNE, 2011)

MoNE is among the executive agencies of the Council of Ministers. MoNE includes three main parts; central organization, provincial organization and overseas organization. As a policy-making tool for education, NEC, which is the main focus of this study, is in the central organization under the branch of the Board of Education and Discipline (BoED).

Judicial branch

The judicial branch includes judges who have an impact on policy. The judicial branch is the reactive one due to its power on saying the last word on policy decision compared to the other two proactive branches (Kraft & Furlong, 2010; Fowler, 2009). Considering the Turkish constitution item 9, the judicial authority is used by independent courts.

2.6.2. Non-governmental actors

Not only governmental actors but also nongovernmental actors influence policy-making process. Although, government is the main actor of the policy-making process, it cannot act alone during all these stages of policy-making so that it needs some support of these actors (Adams, 2014). According to Taylor et al. (1997) these actors look for the ways to influence the government. Colebatch (2009) remarks that policy-making is a collectivist process including various actors from executives to interest groups (Heck, 2004) which is shaped by the conflicts and dynamics among these various actors (Ben-Peretz, 2009) rather than individualistic concerns. Şahin (2014) states that governmental and nongovernmental actors try to influence the process of policy-making.

Fowler (2009) defines non-governmental actors as interest groups, non-education interest groups, policy networks and the media. Considering the Turkish context, interest groups, teacher unions and media are among the non-governmental organization. These non-governmental actors as well as governmental actors, take part in the NECs such as some of the teachers' unions, Eğitim-Bir-Sen, Türk- Eğitim-Sen and Eğitim- Sen to name a few, policy-analyst groups, the representatives from the media and the employers from the big companies. The most influential non-governmental organizations are discussed below.

Interest groups

Thomas and Hrebentar (2004, as cited in Fowler 2009) define interest groups as “an association of individuals or organizations that on the basis of one or more

shared concerns attempts to influence public policy in its favor” (p.152). The government is not only key actor in policy-making process due the fact that it is essential for the government to respond to the needs and the demands of the interest groups (Taylor et al., 1997). As a result, mutual dependence emerges as they both have an influence on practice and policy (Mitchell, Crowson and Shipps, 2011). There are various interest groups being effective in this process such as the teachers' unions, media, think tanks and policy networks and among these teachers' unions are the most influential one (Fowler, 2009).

Teachers' unions

Unions are the collective groups formed in order to carry out common goals (Eraslan, 2012). In the literature, teachers are not defined as influential actors in policy-making process; specifically in agenda-setting and policy formulation. However, regarding their position as practitioners, they can have an impact on policy implementation. On the other hand, teacher organizations may influence this policy-making process by showing resistance to implementation (Fowler, 2009).

Eraslan (2012) conducted a study that puts forward the historical background of the unionism in Turkey, which dates back to Ottoman Empire. However, organization in education took the name unionism at the beginning of 1960s. Currently, there are 34 unions in Turkey that have different numbers of members.

Considering the members of unions between 2006 and 2015, it can be observed that there is a huge fluctuation in the numbers. According to the statistics of Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MoLSS) published in 2006, the first three unions were Türk Eğitim-Sen (Turkish Education Union) with 139.282 members, Eğitim-Sen (Education Union) with 122.260 members and Eğitim-Bir-Sen (Union of Educators Association) with 78.300 members. In 2010, that ranking and the number of members changed as Türk Eğitim-Sen with 155.738, Eğitim-Bir-Sen with 148.950 and Eğitim-Sen with 109.833 (MoLSS, 2010). Currently, Eğitim-Bir-Sen has the highest number of members with 340.365 people compared to others; Türk Eğitim-Sen and Eğitim-Sen which have 220.041 and 127.214 members respectively (MoLSS, 2015).

Most of the studies in the literature highlight the relation between unions and the government, in a sense they emphasize the dependence of the unions to the government (Eraslan, 2012; Fidan & Öztürk, 2015; Kayıkçı, 2013; Taşdan, 2013; Top, 1999; Yıldırım, 2007). Eraslan (2012) states that the government benefits from the unions, specifically the ones close to their views. For this reason, these unions have both political and ideological tone, according to Eraslan. Fidan and Öztürk (2015) investigate teachers unions from the aspect of teachers' views and found out that the main reason of teachers being involved in unions is the political ideology whereas some of the teacher found this relation disturbing and they are not involved in unions (Fidan & Öztürk, 2015; Taşdan, 2013).

On the other hand, Yıldırım (2007) conducted a research related to the relation between unions and politics and found that this relation even dates back to the foundation of the unions which makes unions drift with the tide of political opinion and move away from striking a balance with other unions. Moreover, the effectiveness of the unions has a strong relation with the parties having same political opinion being in power. Kayıkçı (2013) indicates that being close to the political power positively influences the number of members registered in the unions.

Lastly, Top (1999) investigated whether unions participated in decisions taken at MoNE from the aspect of both managers in the ministry and 5 unions in Ankara. She found that unions generally were not involved in the decisions taken at MoNE. Furthermore, there is a mismatch between what unions wanted in the decision-making process and what the ministry required from the unions. Namely, unions demanded for voting and offering decisions and being involved in the process whereas the ministry just demanded for information and proposals from the unions.

2.7. National Education Council

Considering education policy and policymaking process in Turkey, there are four policy-making tools. In each of these tools there are different process on-going and various actors are involved in the policy-making process. Among these, NEC was identified as a policy-formulation tool through which many education policies were

developed. Being in the center of this research, in this part NEC, beginning from its history will be discussed as a policy-making tool.

National Education Council (NEC) has a long history that dates back to the foundation of Turkish Republic. As an initial step to the NEC, the first attempts came in the form of Educational Congress (Maarif Kongresi) organized by Atatürk on 15 July 1921 in which more than 250 teachers, including male and female teachers, participated (Akyüz, 2008). Due to independence war, congress was finished without reaching to a conclusion; yet, they discussed the issues of program of primary and secondary schools and teacher training for village schools.

After Educational Congress, Education Board (Heyeti İlmiye) as a similar form of Educational Congress, was aggregated in 1923 in order to discuss the issues related to education. There were three Education boards conducted in 1923, 1924 and 1925 respectively till the foundation of the Board of Education and Discipline (Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Dairesi- TTK). In each of the Education Board, various issues were discussed.

The first Education Board has been the first systematic work in Turkish Education System (TES) (MEB, 2012) that enabled various stakeholders' participation (ministers, academicians and teachers) from Minister of National Education, Board of Higher Education and schools. In that board, national issues, program of primary and secondary schools and religion issues were discussed. Related to the importance and necessity of such an institution, İsmail Safa Özler, the education minister of the period, states in the opening ceremony that:

There have been many honorable people who work in order to give real direction to education that it needs until today, especially after the 324 (1098) revolution. Yet, after them, all of these attempts start to dry and lose like a little water; each newcomer wants to work in distinct field and in a different way. The biggest reason of today's sorrowful and dry scene is the education institutions becoming dependent to individual work, unsettled and unbacked. When I became the president of national education, I realized the sickness and danger at that point. For this reason, there is a need for scientific and constructive decision for all problems of country taken by a group including experts,

scientists, educators and sociologist. It is not possible to do right and permanent thing without such decisions. Besides, minister of education cannot have such an authority. According to me, Minister of Education is nothing more than practicing the decisions and ideas of scholars and thinkers...Ministries may change yet the decision and the program you have made should not be changed and should be practiced unless you have new decisions (as cited in Akyüz; 2008; p.402).

Deniz (2001) listed six necessities that revealed why TES had a need for such an organization. According to the researcher, education had a significant role of creating a new nation; there was a need for an institution to form education policies; universities became insufficient in creating the nation; there was a necessity of developing as a country with low cost and equity capital; the studies of foreign specialists were not adequate and there was a need for a platform to bring together the specialists of the country. All of these necessities remarked for a new organization to overcome the problems of the country. For this reason, after the first Education Board, the second and the third one were conducted. In the third Education Board, there was a decision to establish Board of Education and Discipline. Depending on this decision, BoED (Board of Education) was founded in 1926 and afterwards NEC was gathered which is the responsibility of that BoED.

NEC was founded in 1939 with the aim of shaping Turkish Education System in which ideas and suggestions were discussed and its function is regulated by law (Akyüz, 2008). NEC is the highest advisory committee (board) of MoNE that provides the opportunity to identify actions or issues in a holistic way (MEB, 2008). Additionally, Şişman (2008) lists NEC among four policy-making tools; NEC, government programs, State Planning Organization and, Development Plan. Similarly, Yılmaz (2004) indicates that NEC is the most effective tool in identifying and making policy.

The principles of NEC are arranged by National Education Council Regulation and it is published in the journal in July 8, 2014 numbered as 29054. The law in 1933 was the first legal base of NEC. After this, there have been several changes in the regulation till the last one in 2014. The first one was done in 1946 numbered as 4926

law, in 1970 with 1261 numbered law, in 1983 with 21461 numbered law, 1993 with 2375 numbered law 1995 with 22398 numbered law and lastly in 2014. Changes were made related to the function and the structure of NEC.

In the regulation, the purpose and the functioning of the NEC was identified (National Education council Regulation, 2014). Considering this, NEC is the advisory board of the MoNE which aims to develop the ministry and the education system by taking advisory jurisdiction. Minister of National Education is the ordinary member and the head of the council. Councils are organized by the BoED. Having such an importance in TES, NEC has reassembled in each four years although there are exceptions (Akyüz, 2008). From 1939 to today, there have been 19 NECs held in all of which various issues were discussed. Regarding its importance in TES, there have been many studies conducted in relation to each of the NECs organized until now (Akay, 2010; Aslaner, 2008; Ayaz, 2009; Aydın, 1998; Aydın, 1996; Büyükkarcı, 2012; Carpenter-Kılınç, 2007; Dağ, 2013; Deniz, 2001; Eriş, 2006; Ersoy, 2007; Göktürk, 2006; Uysal, 2008; Üçler, 2006).

In addition to these studies related to the councils, there are various research conducted both in the world (Ball; 2010; Ben-Peretz, 2009; Bridgman & Davis, 2003; Grindle, 2004; Hudson; 2007) and in Turkish setting (Aksoy, 2012; Çelik & Gür, 2013; Dinçer, 2012, Doğan, Uğurlu & Demir, 2014; İnal, 2012) in relation to education policy-making process including policy formulation, implementation and evaluation.

2.8. Research on Education Policy

The educational policy field is a popular research area especially in the United States. The historical background of educational policy dates back to 1950s when there were three dramatic issues that affected the education system of the United States: the Brown v board of Education desegregation decisions, the Sputnik launching and unionization of teachers followed by 1960 strike (Mitchell et al., 2011). Afterwards, there were major education policy changes and new acts regulated with the aim of fixing the schools and following that educational policy has become the part of the education system.

Although the main source of the educational policy comes from the United States, it is an international topic. There are various studies in the literature in terms of educational policy such as educational policy-making, policy formulation, implementation and evaluation, educational policy and practice, school effectiveness and educational policy, No Child Left behind Act and many others. Briefly, there are many studies conducted related to the each field of policy cycle (Bridgman & Davis, 2003). Bridgman and Davis (2003) conducted a study to identify the effect of policy cycle approach in policy-making process and they highlighted finding a one policy approach is far from the reality since each policy is made in its own environment.

Since educational policy is a dynamic and ongoing process, there are studies conducted in relation to educational policy-making process. The study of Grindle (2004) and Ben-Peretz (2009) serves as good examples of studies on how policies are made in the context of Latin America and Israel respectively. The study of Grindle (2004, as cited in Ben-Peretz, 2009) reveals the relationship between policy-making process and politics, economy, timing and power. According to this study, policies are made in accordance with the policy cycle steps such as agenda setting, progressing the design, adaptation and implementation in which various stakeholders including political parties, bureaucracies, municipalities and interest groups such as teacher unions and media are being involved in the process. Furthermore, economic and political factors as well as conflicts among the stakeholders influence the policy-making process in Latin America.

On the other hand, the process in Israel is similar to the one in Latin America. In Israel context, there are agenda-setting, design and implementation phases in which central and local authorities, non-governmental organizations and parties are being influential (Ben-Peretz, 1995 as cited in Ben-Peretz, 2009). In both contexts, ideologies and the power are the most influential ones in policy-making process so that power of government determine the policy in a sense (Ben-Peretz, 2009). In conclusion, after examining policy-making process of different countries; Latin America, Israel, New Zealand and Britain, Ben-Peretz (2009) classifies four factors

that are influential in policy-making process; studies, organizations, people and information sources.

Since policy-making process are intertwined with power and government, there are also studies related to power, policy and governing of education (Hudson, 2007). In the article, Hudson (2007) indicated that there is shift from governance to government through which government control the education by using the other stakeholders. On the other hand, Ball (2010) remarks the shift from centralized government to governance in which new policy actors including non-governmental agencies get into play; yet, this is not for “hollowing out” the state but for controlling networks.

Considering the literature on education policy in the world, as it was stated above, there are many studies which were conducted in relation to different policy-making theories and each step of the policy-cycle approach such as agenda-setting, formulation, implementation and evaluation of the education policies. Additionally, there are also similar studies in Turkish context that touch on policy-making tools and steps of the policy-cycle.

2.8.1. Research on education policy in Turkey

Considering the educational policy term, there are different studies conducted in different areas of educational policy such as policy implementation, evaluation and analysis whereas there is not adequate research in the literature in relation to agenda-setting and policy formulation process. There are few studies conducted and these mostly focus on either education policy of Turkey during the single-party and multi-party era or reforms related to agenda setting and the policy formulation process.

The study of Keser-Aschenberger (2012) shows different structure comparing to other studies in the literature since it was related to the policy formulation process rather than political analysis of a period. As an example of qualitative methodology, specifically comparative case study, two different reforms; Career Ladders for Teachers and Wisconsin from Turkey and the United States respectively were examined by taking into account dynamics of policy formulation such as agenda

setting, context, conditions and agents. She found out that while the policy process in Turkey is top-down, bureaucratic and elitist without policy games and conflicts among actors; the process in the United States is complex in which various government levels and actors are conflicting with each other. Furthermore, she indicated that in each state the policy context is embraced by political, social, international and economical factors.

From different perspective, there have been studies regarding the relation between the political parties and the education (Çelik & Gür, 2013). Çelik and Gür (2013) identified the education policy in Turkey practiced in AKP era (2002-2013) from the perspective of access, quality, governance, finance and democratization of education. They highlighted the period of this political party as a reform period which increased the outcome of education in many sides by enabling civil participation and providing equal opportunities.

In addition to this, currently there have been policy studies conducted after the system was changed as 4+4+4 (Aksoy, 2012; Çelik & Gür, 2013; Dinçer, 2012, Doğan, Uğurlu & Demir, 2014; İnal, 2012). 4+4+4 is the new education system of Turkey in which the school periods were divided into three periods as primary, secondary and high school and 12-year compulsory education is still valid but it can be intermittent after each four years. While there is backlash for the new system because of the fact that it resulted in many problems such as child labor and lack of access and it had an ideological tone (Aksoy, 2012; Dinçer, 2012; İnal, 2012), there are also support for this practice since there was a need for this system since it divides the buildings of each school system which positively affect children and diminishes the security problems (Demirtaş, 2011; Şekerci; 2011; Töremen, 2011).

There are also other education policy studies related to the evaluation of certain policies such as 4+4+4 education system (Aybek & Aslan, 2015; Bavlı & Aydın, 2015; Boz, 2013; Doğan, Uğurlu & Demir 2014; Güven, 2012; Kılıç, 2014; Memişoğlu & İsmetoğlu, 2013; Örs, Erdoğan & Kipici, 2013; Toprak & Külekçi, 2013; Uzun & Alat, 2014) and most of these studies evaluated the current policy practice from the aspect of teachers or principles. The results of the studies indicate that 4+4+4 education

system was negatively evaluated by both teachers and principals due to lack of infrastructure (Aybek & Aslan, 2015), low schooling age, supernumerary primary school teachers (Bavlı & Aydın, 2015; Boz, 2013; Doğan, Uğurlu & Demir, 2014; Örs, Erdoğan & Kipici, 2013). On the other hand, some of the practitioners positively evaluate this system since it separates the buildings of primary and secondary education which improves the physical and psychological development of students in the same age group and diminishes the discipline problems (Doğan, Uğurlu & Demir, 2014; Kılıç, 2014).

From another perspective, there are also language policy studies. For instance; Şahin (2013) conducted his doctorate thesis in foreign language education policy from the aspect of English language teachers in Turkey. He stated that most of the teachers do not appreciate the foreign language policy of Turkey since it does not fulfill the needs of students. Furthermore, the problems of this foreign language policy are multifaceted resulting from teachers, students, course books, administrators and parents.

To summarize, there have been studies on education policy in Turkey yet most of which either examined whether the policies were implemented or they were focused on how certain policies were evaluated. However, studies on the process of policy-making are rare.

2.8.2. Research on national education council

There are 20 masters and doctorate studies conducted related to National Education Council that show difference since they belong to various fields. For instance, five studies are conducted in the field of history, policy and public administration (Aslaner, 2008; Ayaz, 2009; Carpenter-Kılınç, 2007; Deniz, 2001; Ersoy, 2007). While one study includes the analysis of NEC during single party era (Göktürk, 2006) in which it was indicated that NECs held during that period served the purpose of forming certain ideology, modernization and nation-building process, by using education, the other one is related to the evaluation of 17th NEC's decisions from the aspect of school administrators and superintendents (Uysal, 2008). Among

these, quantitative method is applied only in this study in which the researcher analyzed the decisions of 17th NEC from the perspective of inspectors and principles. She found out that the decisions of the 17th council were mostly academic and pedagogic whereas there had been problems in implementing those decisions.

Out of 20 studies, most of the studies are related to decisions taken at NEC and the implementation of these decisions. While Eriş (2006) investigated the NEC during 1961 and 1987, Üçler (2006) examined the period of 1988 to 2005. They both analyzed the decisions taken at NEC and their practice as an education policy. Eriş stated that the most successful period was between 1931 and 1961 since primary education decisions were mostly implemented. On the other hand, Üçler specified that the decisions of NEC were not implemented due to the view of current government's education policy.

Similarly, Aslaner (2008) examined practicability of the decisions taken in the NECs held in 1939-1946 period and she found out that MoNE and government implemented most of the decisions; however, NEC could not have an effective position in Turkish education system. Aydın (1998) conducted a quantitative study in which he examined the quality of decisions from democratic and scientific perspective in which he found out that the decisions were negatively evaluated by the participants of 15th NEC from the scientific and the democratic perspective. According to their views, the decisions and national education policies did not depend on scientific data.

On the other hand, Büyükkarcı (2012) also conducted a similar study but from different viewpoint; she analyzed the pre-school decisions of NECs from 1939 to 2012 and concluded that the decisions related to pre-school education were mostly implemented and pre-school education in Turkey gained importance, yet it needs more work and practice. Similar to Büyükkarcı's (2012) study, Dağ (2013) analyzed the decisions of NECs related to primary education, from first one to the 18th NEC, and he similarly indicated that the decisions of NECs had the quality of solving the problems of primary education whereas the MoNE did not implement those decisions. Furthermore, he highlighted the need for more participative council process and for enabling power of sanction to councils.

In addition to these, Deniz (2001) conducted a qualitative study in which he investigated the NEC from the aspect of its impact on education policy. He divided all NECs into periods, from first one to 16th council: single party regime, multi-party system and planned period. In single party regime period, most of the decisions were implemented since there was coherence between the council and the government. In multi-party system NECs were mostly affected by the politics and there was conflict of ideologies between the council and the government. In the planned period, during 1960, the implementation was against the decisions of the councils. Lastly, he listed three deficiencies of NEC; the lack of power for implementation, the dominance of current government and undemocratic structure. Furthermore, the researcher indicated that these councils were effective because they provided a platform to discuss issues related to education with various participants. On the other hand, Ayaz (2009) conducted a study related to history education in NEC in which it was stated that NECs were the advisory board (Akay, 2010); yet, all of the NECs reflected the cultural and educational policy of the time they were organized. In addition to this, Akay (2010) indicated that the practicability of the NECs' decisions based on the authority of the political power. Lastly, Aydın (1996, as cited in Çakıcı, 2014) conducted a quantitative study in relation to the impacts of NEC's decision on education policy and programs with 15th NEC participants. Most of the participants indicated that the impact of these decisions on education policy was limited and the place of NEC need to be strengthening in the ministry structure.

To summarize, there are several studies related to NEC most of which focus on the implementation of the decisions accepted in the council as education policy. While some of the results indicate that the practicability of the decisions by MoNE and government is remarkably high, other research findings assert the contrary regardless of the school type and NECs. In most of these studies, qualitative design is applied and screening model is used.

In this chapter, general definitions of policy, public policy and education policy are clarified. Afterwards, theoretical approaches for policy-making are listed in order to understand how policy-making is defined by different perspectives. Furthermore,

policy-cycle approach as a policy-making tool is described in terms of each step of the policy-making process. The various dynamics being influential during policy-making process, the relationship between government, ideology and education as well as the policy actors are highlighted. Then, NEC as a policy-making tool is described and various research from literature are summarized from this perspective.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

This section mainly includes the design of the study, description of the setting, participants, data collection instruments, data collection procedure, data analysis, trustworthiness and describing the researcher's role.

3.1. Design of the Study

Trowler (2003) indicates the distinction between qualitative and quantitative method in education policy by presenting two models; engineering and enlightenment model. Engineering model represents quantitative method, which states that academicians and practitioners as well as politicians cannot understand each other. Moreover, since politicians have suspicious feelings about researchers, they mostly prefer the quantitative approach instead of the qualitative approach that has a considerable impact on educational policy. However, quantitative method is restricted in reaching the truth so that enlightenment model, qualitative approach, can be used which ensures policymakers to grasp the theory. Yet, this model is ignored by policymakers since they think that it is biased. For this reason, Trowler (2003) concludes his discussion by suggesting combining the enlightenment and engineering model. Contrary to this, Ritchie and Spencer (1994) state that qualitative research is mostly used in policy issues since it is proper for studying process rather than outcomes (Patton, 2002). Fowler (2009) supports this by stating qualitative method can touch upon the parts which quantitative method misses.

In addition to the discussion of choosing among quantitative or qualitative methods, Denzin and Lincoln (2000) present a general description of qualitative method and define qualitative method as;

...a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices transform the world visible. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (p.3).

Briefly, qualitative method is to understand how people construct their lives and experiences “at a point in time and in a particular context”(Merriam, 2002; p.5). Patton (1985; as cited in Merriam; 2002) also highlights that this understanding is not for future prediction but for general understanding of the current time.

Since the features in the definitions are appropriate for the current study, the qualitative method is applied. The main purpose of the current study as in most qualitative explorations is to understand how people experience the natural setting of NECs and how they make sense of the structure of NEC in general and, role of the government during policy-making process. As such it is deemed appropriate to conduct phenomenological study which is described in detail in the following section.

3.1.1. Qualitative research

General characteristics of a qualitative research is the construction of the world. Creswell (2013) specifies that qualitative method starts with assumptions and analyzing the meaning of people related to a social problem. Furthermore, Moustakas (1994) indicates that qualitative method is a means to understand human experiences that cannot be reached by quantitative method. Furthermore, Patton (2002) defines the core of qualitative method as a deep understanding of participant’s feelings about the issue by considering the interactions in a particular context.

Additionally, Merriam (2002) lists three main characteristics of a qualitative research as (1) “how people interpret their experiences” (2) “how they construct their worlds” and (3) “what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (p.38) which

highlight how people make and interpret the meaning of their experiences. All definitions on qualitative method emphasize the common features such as understanding the context from the view of participants.

The qualitative research requires more than one data collection with the aim of increasing the validity (Merriam, 2002). The best way of data collection in order to understand the experiences is face-to-face interaction with co-researchers. Secondly, this process is supported by another data collection method that is generally document analysis.

Data analysis process is simultaneous with data collection in qualitative research. The researcher is searching for the responses in the way of finding the phenomenon. This process has certain steps such as horizontalization, clustering, thematizing and final identification. Generally, the researcher, herself, gets into this process. However, there are computer programs that facilitate the data analysis process such as NVivo, MAXQDA, ATLAS.ti and HyperRESEARCH.

Since the role of the national education council in the process of policy-making from the experiences of people who participate in NECs are investigated, the qualitative design study is applied in the current study. The main purpose of this study is to examine how participants who attended the last three NECs experienced these councils in relation to its structure, function and role in education policy-making process. Regarding this, the main focus of this study is to understand the experience of being a part of the last three NECs under the same political party. In order to reach this aim, the researcher interviewed with some of the participants of the last three NECs. The flow of the research is illustrated in the Figure 3.1.

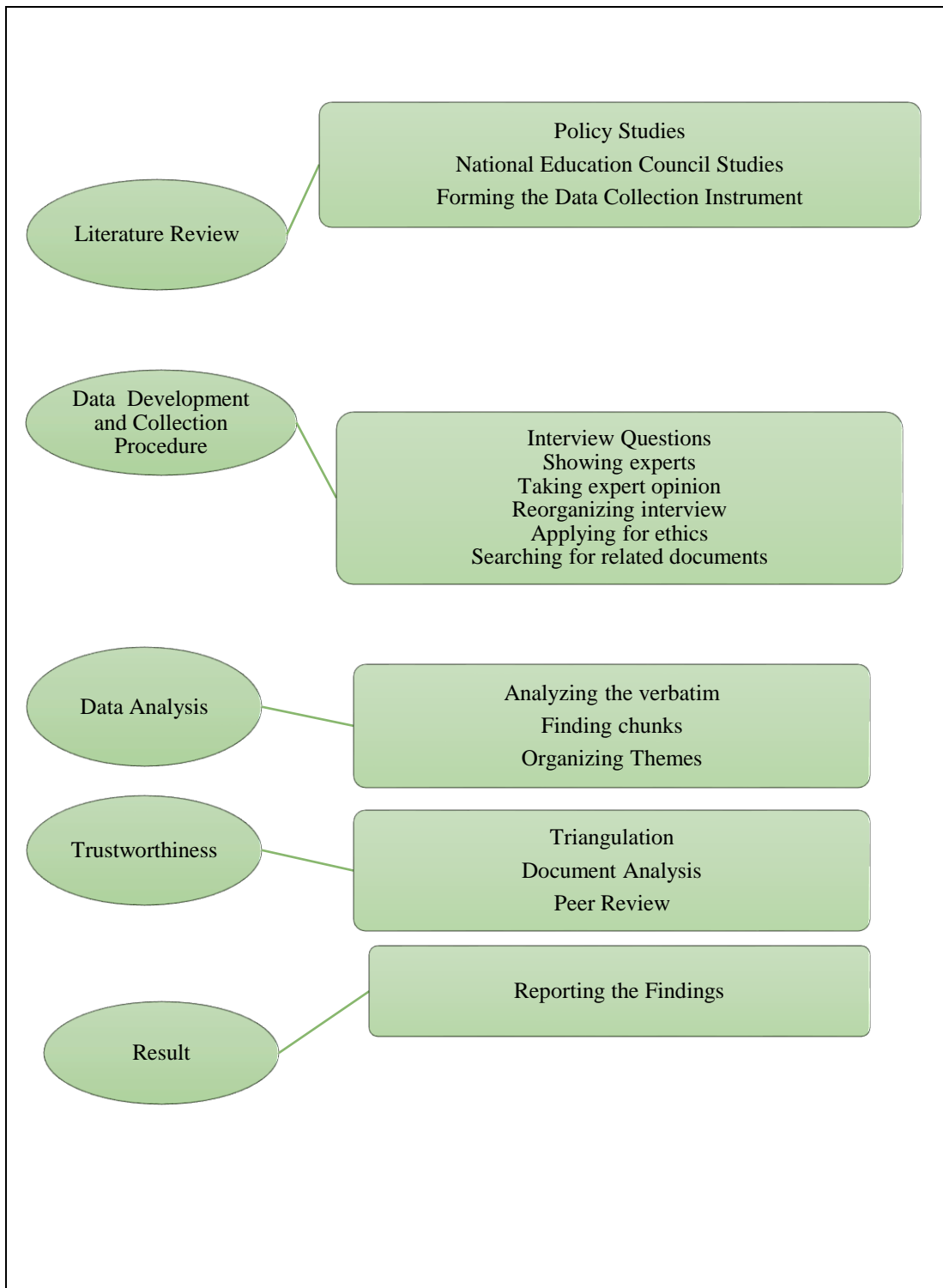


Figure 3. 1: Flow of the research

As it is seen in figure 3.1, policy studies and National Education Council studies were searched in the literature and looked through how related studies were conducted. The researcher developed the interview questions based on the literature. After taking the reflections from four different experts, the researcher analyzed the documents and wrote the results by supporting it with triangulation. Each step in figure 3.1 will be explained in detail in the related headings.

3.2. Research Questions

The main purpose of this study is to examine how participants of the NECs experienced the being a part of the last three NECs under the same political party. Regarding this, this study investigates the general structure of NEC and the role of the NECs in the process of policy making. Additionally, which ideologies affect this process and what makes the decisions practicable by the MoNE is analyzed as well. In order to reach the outcome, the research questions are:

1. How do participants perceive and describe the process of National Education Council?
2. What role does National Education Council play in the process of policy-making?
3. How does MoNE benefit from the decisions taken at NEC?
4. How do ideologies play role in the policy-making process, specifically 17th, 18th and 19th NECs?
 - a. What role do policy actors play in the NECs?

3.3. Setting of the Study

NEC is the advisory board in the structure of MoNE in which many stakeholders including MoNE, HEC, academicians, principals, teachers, parents and non-governmental organization come together to discuss the issues in relation to education. In this section, the context of 17th, 18th and 19th NECs will be explained. To give the context, how many people attended the organization, who the minister of national education was and education and discipline organization, what the headings of each NEC were and how many decisions were taken will be summarized.

3.3.1. 17th National education council

17th National Education Council was organized in 2006 after seven years had passed from the last one in which two main subjects were discussed: switching among grades, guiding and testing system, and globalization and Turkish Education System in the process of European Union (EU). The NEC was held in Ankara at NEC conference center. NEC conference center was constructed for the councils held in every four years.

773 people participated in the 17th NEC of which 14.55% were ordinary members, 36.49% were official and private representatives from MoNE, 17.09% were academicians, 10.97 % were representatives of non-governmental organizations, 10.97 % were other public institutes, 6.24 % were from local governments and 3.70 % were representatives from abroad (Erdoğan, 2006). Considering the numbers, there were 25 congressman, 409 people from MoNE, 130 from HEC, 40 participants from civil society, 53 from local government, 68 from other institutes, 12 from media and 36 representative from other education units and abroad (MEB, 2006).

At this time, the Justice and Development Party (JDP) was ruling the country and the prime minister of national education was Hüseyin Çelik. It was the first NEC organized in the time of JDP. The board of the Education and Discipline (BoED) was Prof. Dr. İrfan Erdoğan who is an academician in Educational Sciences and was the executive of the organization.

The regulation of the NEC was reorganized before the council. There were changes made in the part of NEC's organization and functioning, especially in the part of participants. Various stakeholders were included in the new regulation such as the head of strategic development, counselor from State Planning Organization, ten ministry inspectors, teachers and principals from special education, twenty university rector five of whom are from private university, five representative from military academy and many others (See in Appendix A). Furthermore, they included one item in relation to preparing documents of initial councils.

There were 66 decisions taken related to special education, preschool, primary education and, switching grades, guiding and testing system in secondary education while 97 decisions were taken in terms of lifelong learning, mobility and quality in education under the head of globalization and Turkish Education System (TES) in the process of EU.

3.3.2. 18th National education council

18th National Education Council was organized in 2010. As a different aspect from all of the other NECs, 18th NEC was organized in Kızılcahamam, the district of Ankara at a hotel. 579 people from various parts of the country attended the 18th NEC. Of these participants, 380 were from MoNE, 59 of the participants were from HEC, 29 of them were from local government, 19 of them were non-governmental organizations, 28 of them were from other organizations, 5 of the participants were advisor to the minister and one of them were from media.

At this time, JDP was ruling the country and the minister of MoNE was Nimet Çubukcu. The BoED was Merdan Tufan. There were five main topics discussed in that council; teacher training, employment and career development; educational environment, organizational culture and school leadership; strengthening primary and secondary education, providing access to secondary education; sport, art, skill and values education; psychological counseling and guidance. There were 34, 50, 38, 42 and 33 decisions taken respectively.

3.3.3. 19th National education council

19th National education Council was held in 2014 after 4 years had passed from the last one. This council was held in Antalya and it was the first council, which was organized in a different city. 600 people participated in the council from various stakeholders including ministers, academicians, administrators, teachers and students (MEB, 2014).

The ruling party of this time was JDP and it was the third NEC held during their rule. The minister of NEC was Prof. Dr. Nabi Avcı and the BoED was Prof. Dr. Emin Garip. The regulation of NEC was reorganized before the 19th NEC.

There were four agenda topics discussed: instruction programs and weekly course schedule, enhancing teacher quality, enhancing the quality of training directors and school security and 179 decisions were taken in the last council. As it was in the others, the regulation was changed before this council as well. In the last regulation, the stakeholders to invite NECs are more restricted comparing to 17th regulation. The agenda of NEC was specified by board; however, with the last regulation it was stated by the minister. While the reports for NEC was sent before thirty days; in the last regulation it was stated as 10 days. They also included one item in the last regulation in which it was stated that there could not be any discussion topics out of the agenda of NEC. Furthermore, in relation to implementation of the NEC's decisions they highlighted these decisions as advisory ones unlike the 17th regulation. The last regulation and the changes could be seen in Appendix A & B.

To summarize, 17th, 18th and 19th NEC was organized after four years respectively. Each had different agenda discussed by various stakeholders. In the Table 3.1, the summary of the three NECs is illustrated.

Table 3.1: *The Summary of National Education Councils*

NECs	The time of the NEC	Minister of National Education	The number of decisions taken	Total number of participants	The ruling party
17 th NEC	2006	Hüseyin Çelik	163	773	JDP
18 th NEC	2010	Nimet Çubukcu	197	579	JDP
19 th NEC	2014	Nabi Avcı	179	600	JDP

3.4. Participants of the Study

This study includes various participants who participated in the last three NECs; 17th, 18th and 19th councils. There are two types of participants in the NECs, ordinary members and invited members which include various ministries, academicians, media, think tanks, non-governmental organizations, administrators, teachers, students and parents. As being main, dominant and effective stakeholders of the NECs, participants from ministry, academicians, administrators and teachers and non-governmental organizations are specified as the participants of this study.

15 participants attended the study as various stakeholders of the 17th, 18th and 19th NEC. Polkinghorne (1989, as cited in Creswell, 2013) suggests interview from 5 to 25 participants who experience the same phenomenon while Creswell (2013), himself indicates interview with minimum 10 individuals for the phenomenological study.

Purposive sampling is used while choosing the participants since the random sampling is not feasible when participants need to fit into the aim of the study (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). Merriam (2002) highlights that since the main focus is not how much or how often as in the random sampling, it is logical to use purposive sampling in which most knowledgeable participants should be selected. The researcher used this sampling method by including various stakeholders in order to provide representation of NEC context.

Moustakas (1994) emphasizes two points in the process of choosing participants: experiencing the phenomena and willingness to take part in a long interview. In this study, there are four criteria identified while choosing the participants: (a) experiencing the structure; (b) including various stakeholders; (c) willingness and (d) accessibility. As being qualitative study, it is a necessity to select participants who have experienced the structure and have made sense of it. Moreover, providing different stakeholders increase the representativeness of the councils. Since there are three councils, the participants are selected from each council by ensuring the equality. Lastly but most importantly, the willingness and accessibility is taken into

account. As a result, 15 participants are interviewed which represent various stakeholders.

The researcher chose the participants from the 17th and 18th NEC participant list. Since the participant list of 19th NEC was not published, the researcher used snowball technique and asked MoNE and other participants for the names of 19th NEC participants who are most knowledgeable about the subject. Firstly, the names were listed by considering their study of field and how many times they have attended the councils and I sent e-mail to these participants. With the participants replied to the e-mail, the date for interview was arranged and I visited them in their office. Among these, 7 of them attended 17th council, 9 of them participated in 18th council and 9 of them had been in the 19th council. The researcher conducted interview with 16 participants; yet, since one of them was done through telephone, it was not included in the current study.

Of 15 participants, 7 of them were from Board of Education and Discipline, Ministry of National Education, principles and teachers; 5 of them were from non-governmental organizations including unions such as EđitimBir-Sen, TürkEđitim-Sen, Eđitim-Sen and DES (Democrat Educators Union) and two of them were from civil society; ERG (Education Reform Initiative) and SETA (Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research) and 3 of them were academicians from HEC. Profile of the participants is listed in the Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: *Demographics of the Participants*

Participant	Gender	Professional Affiliation	The Number of Councils Attended
P ₁	Male	Union Leader	17, 18, 19
P ₂	Male	Academician – media writer	18
P ₃	Male	Academician- SETA writer- former president of education policy department	19
P ₄	Male	Union Member- Teacher	19
P ₅	Male	Academician – Former Minister of National Education	18
P ₆	Male	Union member – Expert in Political Sciences and Education	17, 18, 19
P ₇	Female	Academician	17
P ₈	Male	Member of MoNE - Teacher	17, 18, 19
P ₉	Female	Member of MoNE - Teacher	17, 18
P ₁₀	Male	Union member - Teacher	18, 19
P ₁₁	Male	ERG Coordinator	19
P ₁₂	Male	Academician- Former President of Education and Discipline	17, 19
P ₁₃	Male	Academician	17, 19
P ₁₄	Female	Teacher- Principle	18
P ₁₅	Male	Teacher	18

As it can be seen in the table, the participants are actually representative of the ratio of males and females in the councils. While there are 13 male participants, there are only 3 female participants. The participants of the study have worked in various positions throughout their career. 6 of them are academicians in Educational Sciences; 5 of them worked in MoNE; 6 of them were teachers while 2 of them continue their teaching career, 4 of them are working in the unions. 2 of them have positions in SETA while only one of them has a position in ERG and two of these non-governmental organizations conduct policy analysis studies in education.

Considering the number of councils attended, 7 of the participants experienced the context of the councils more than once. 7 of the participants attended 17th NEC; 9

of them took part in 18th NEC and 8 of them participated in 19th NEC. Furthermore, some of the participants had also attended other NECs like 16th council that are not in the scope of the research. To summarize, all of the participants have attended at least one council from 17th, 18th and 19th NECs.

Through purposive sampling, 15 participants from different professions who had attended at least one of the councils and experienced the structure were interviewed and they provided their experiences related to the process of NEC.

3.5. Data Sources

In this study, qualitative data collection instruments were used. For the qualitative method, interview, observation and documents are the key instruments (Moustakas, 1994) in order to reach the main data. The main data collection instruments of this study is semi-structured interviews and document analysis in order to explore the experience of being a part of the last three NECs under the same political party.

3.5.1. Interview

Face-to-face interview is applied as data collection instrument, which is commonly, used one in qualitative research (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 1999). Interview is means to reach the ideas of participants who experience the specific issue. According to Moustakas (1994), there are two main features for interview that it should be interactive and open-ended. On the other hand, Donalek (2004) emphasizes “*engagement and sensitivity*” in an interview.

Creswell (2013) explains interview as a process and he lists nine steps to be followed from forming interview questions to conducting the interview. Moreover, he indicates that the questions in the interview need to be “open-ended, general and focused on understanding the phenomenon” (p.163). In this study, the researcher interviewed with 15 participants who attended the last three NECs in order to get information related to the role and function of NECs in the process of policy-making.

Semi-structured interview developed by the researcher was used for this study. Throughout forming the interview questions, nine principles of Yıldırım and Şimşek (1999) related to how to prepare the interview form were taken into consideration. Before writing the questions, the researcher considered related studies in the literature as well as the principles of Yıldırım and Şimşek (1999).

Afterwards, the researcher wrote easily understandable, open-ended and specific questions based on participants' experiences. Moreover, alternative and sub-questions were added under the main questions. After forming the draft, the researcher revised the questions in order to make sure that the questions are not leading or multidimensional which would prevent reaching the data. Considering these, researcher prepared open-ended questions based on the literature, specifically the report of ERG (2014) and the principles listed by Yıldırım and Şimşek.

The final version of the interview form that includes 14 questions and research questions of the study were sent to four experts in educational sciences including my advisor with the aim of developing questions. Three of the experts have conducted qualitative research and two of the experts have studies in education policy. The experts stated that some of the questions might lead the participants. Moreover, one of the experts asked for adding more demographic questions while one of them criticized the flow of the questions.

I restructured the interview form based on the feedback provided by the experts. The final version of the interview form includes five parts with 21 questions (See Appendix C). In the first part named as stakeholders, there are 7 questions related to demographic information of stakeholders and experiences of stakeholders related to the participant profile of the NEC. In the second part, education policy and NECs, there are 6 main and 4 sub-questions associated with the context and process of NEC. In the third part, NECs and practice, four questions are included which evaluate the decisions taken in the NECs. In the fourth part, evaluation, there are three questions based on participants' evaluation. Finally, before the interview ends, participants are asked for any information they want to share.

The final version of interview form was sent to Human Subjects Ethics Committee in METU in order to check for ethical considerations. The Committee stated that the research does not include any violation, deception or ethical problem so that it can be conducted (See Appendix D).

Taking the permission from the Ethics Committee, the researcher started her interviews. 15 interviews were conducted with the participants who have attended at least one of the last three NECs. All of the interviews were recorded by the researcher after taking permission from the participants. The shortest interview was 20 minutes and the longest interview was 1 hour 10 minutes.

3.5.2. Document analysis

Interviews, observations and documents are three mostly used data collection instruments in qualitative research (Merriam, 2002; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 1999). Researchers mostly use more than one data collection instruments; in other words, they support what they have by using other data collection instruments which increase the validity of the research as well (Merriam, 2002). Furthermore, Yıldırım and Şimşek (1999) emphasize that documents can be the single data collection instrument or they can be used with other instruments. Based on this, as a second data collection instruments; documents, specifically written ones, such as regulations, talks (NECs' reports) and decisions of the NECs and reports of the non-governmental organizations are analyzed. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) states that "words get us closer to minds" (p.704) so; in order to make sense of the interviews the written documents are chosen as second data source.

Documents are written texts which give information about the searched phenomenon (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 1999). The documents or text in a sense have an importance since they provide various advantages such as being accessible, having low-cost and historical side and ensuring different information that cannot be found in an interview (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). There is a huge list of documents. According to Merriam (2002), documents can be grouped in four headings; written, oral, visual

or cultural artifacts under which public records, personal documents, web pages or physical material can be found.

In order to increase the validity and triangulate the data, documents are used as a second data collection instruments. I benefit from various documents. As a first document, the regulation of NECs were used and the last three NECs of which some items were reorganized and analyzed as well. As a second document, the report of 17th and 18th NECs published by MoNE and that included the talks of the participants during the council, the decisions held in the council and the list of participants were used as well. The report of 19th council could not be used since it was not published. However, the pre-report prepared by MoNE were included as a document. Moreover, the documents prepared by non-governmental organizations or unions as readiness for NEC were also used. I took these documents from the three unions when I went to their office for interview.

To summarize, these documents; regulations, reports and union reports were used in order to enhance deep insight to understand the NECs and triangulate the data taken from participants.

3.6. Data Collection Procedure

After forming the interview and receiving feedbacks from the experts, data collection instruments were sent to the Ethics Committee. During the time of waiting for approval from the Ethics Committee, the researcher searched for the list of participants in order to identify the participants. While choosing the participants I considered including various stakeholders such as MoNE, academicians, teachers, principles and unions and having participants from 17th, 18th and 19th NECs in order to reach maximum variation sampling. However, since the list of 19th NEC's participants was not published, the researcher did not find out participants from 19th NEC in the first stage. For this reason, I visited the BoED and the organizer of the NEC and asked for the participant list. Yet, they stated that they made a decision not to publish the list of participants. Therefore, I started from what was available to me and reviewed the participant list of 17th and 18th NECs.

While choosing the participants, I asked, “Who can give rich information?”. From this point of view, I identified the names who attended the NECs more than once and searched the curriculum vitae of academicians. The academicians in the Educational Sciences or those who conducted research in education policy and sociology were specified. After identifying the participants, I wrote an invitation letter for participants to be involved in the research by considering the guidelines of Moustakas (See Appendix D). This letter was sent by e-mail to the participants, specifically participants who had worked in MoNE and academicians. Most of the stakeholders did not reply to the e-mail. With those participants who replied I arranged a day and visited them in their office.

For unions, I found key people who could arrange a day for meeting and waited for an answer from them. I called the secretary of general president from one of the unions. They recalled and arranged a day for the interview. Furthermore, I organized three other meetings thanks to the key person who knew the people in the unions.

With SETA and ERG, I wrote e-mail and waited for an answer from them. When I took the approval from the committee, meetings were arranged with the participants who replied. While I was organizing the meetings, the most difficult stakeholders to organize were teachers and principals. 9 years have passed since the 17th NEC and 5 years have passed since the 18th NEC so that it was not possible to find teachers and principals since they were assigned to different schools. For this reason, I asked help from one of the principals and sent him the two lists of participants. He located one teacher and organized a meeting and the other teacher who participated in the study was located by my own efforts.

After receiving the approval from the Ethics Committee and arranging the interviews, I started the interviews in March 25 and the last interview was conducted in June 3. Generally, data collection lasted two months.

Most of the interviews were conducted in Ankara. Out of fifteen, two of the interviews were conducted in İstanbul and one of them was conducted in Eskişehir. In addition to these, one of the interviews was conducted online since the participant was abroad. On the other hand, three of the participant cancelled the interviews due to their

program. In addition to these, one interview with an academician expert in Turkish Education System and NEC was conducted via phone; yet, that interview was not included due to limitation of the interview. So, 15 interviews were conducted with various stakeholders.

While conducting the interviews, I asked for the participants who attended 19th council. By this way, I could reach the participants of the 19th NEC. Before starting the interview, I created a positive atmosphere. All of the participants were given information about the research and it was stated that anonymity and confidentiality would be assured in all parts of the study and they have right to withdraw from the research whenever they want. All of the participants were given consent form (See Appendix E) and one of the consent form was sent by e-mail due to distance and the participant sent back the scanned form. All of the interviews were recorded with the permission of participants. I transcribed these records verbatim. Moreover, three of the participants asked for transcribed version of records and these texts were sent to them via e-mail.

At the end of this process, there were 15 interviews that lasted from at least 20 minutes to 1 hour 10 minutes and there were 119 pages of transcription.

3.7. Trustworthiness

Since quantitative and qualitative research depend on different philosophical assumptions, there are differences between them, which reflects to validity, and reliability as well. Qualitative research is always open to researcher bias since it is dependent on the researcher during the process of collecting and interpreting the data (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2009). Therefore, in order to avoid the possible bias and to form a holistic picture of the phenomenon, the researcher needs to use various techniques (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 1999). This ensures the validity and reliability of the study.

Merriam (2002) states that the main question for internal validity (credibility) in qualitative method is “Are we observing or measuring what we think we are observing or measuring?” (p.25). So, the researcher needs to clarify each step of the research and make sure that it is free from bias. There are various ways for providing

validity, in other words credibility such as triangulation, member check, peer check, prolonged engagement and in-depth data collection. In this study, triangulation, peer check and member check were implemented in order to ensure validity.

Triangulation: Collecting more than one type of data and comparing them is called triangulation. However, triangulation generally includes using multiple theories, multiple data collection methods and multiple investigators. Among them, using multiple data collection methods is mostly preferred one. Triangulation provides researchers to see things from different aspects. This way, they can compare or support what participants state with what they observe or read.

Furthermore, Merriam (2002) highlights that using more than one data collection sources, interview and documents increase the validity of the findings. In this study, multiple data collection tools were used. The researcher interviewed with participants and collected documents. Afterwards, what participants told was compared with the documents; regulations, reports and news and the similarities and differences were identified.

Peer check: In this method, researcher asks others to evaluate his/her data and this provides a different perspective for the researcher. Yıldırım and Şimşek (1999) offers choosing experts who know the study in general. For this reason, the researcher asked four assistants to evaluate the three different data by considering the codes and themes. All four are conducting qualitative research and three of them are in educational sciences while one of them is in political science. Most importantly, all of the members are acquainted with the study and the process.

Member check: The qualitative research enables rich information yet this rich information is always open to misunderstanding and bias. For this reason, in order to avoid the researcher's bias, member check was used. In member check, the participants are asked to analyze their data by considering the findings of the researcher and make comments and tell whether these findings "ring true" (Merriam, 2002; p.26.). With this purpose, the researcher asked two of the participants to read and make comments about the themes. One of them was an academician who works in SETA and the other participant was from MoNE.

For the qualitative research, transferability for external validity can be achieved by thick description, purposive sampling and reflexive journal. In this study, the researcher used three of these. The context of the NEC and the process of the research described in detail and the participants were chosen purposefully. Moreover, the researcher kept a diary and wrote her thoughts and ideas during the research in order to provide dependability.

Reliability is related to the replication of the findings; however, it is troublesome in social sciences due to unstable human behavior (Merriam, 2002). In qualitative research, dependability corresponding to reliability can be provided by audit trail in which the researcher uses his/her own ideas and reflections.

3.8. Data Analysis

Data analysis is a procedure which simultaneously takes place with data collection (Merriam, 2002). In other words, the researcher starts to shape the categories in his/her mind during the process of data collection. Data analysis in qualitative research is a challenging one. It is not only “analyzing the text and image data” but also organizing the data, reading and coding the data, presenting the themes and interpreting them (Creswell, 2013). This is the spiral process in which each step supports another one. According to Creswell (2013), the first thing is to organize the data for analysis. Following this, themes need to be formed based on the codes and presenting the data with visuals or with a discussion.

On the other hand, the steps in the book of Moustakas (1994) are different although the context resembles the one in Creswell. He lists main steps as epoche, horizontalization which means each statement has equal significance, forming meaning units and common themes, using textual descriptions and presenting the essence of the phenomenon.

In this study, the data was collected through the interviews and documents. In order to analyze these data, both descriptive analysis and content analysis in which human behavior was analyzed through their communications (Fraenkel and Wallen,

2009) was used. In the content analysis method, the main aim is to explain the data by finding the concepts and relations (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 1999).

Furthermore, both steps from Creswell and Moustakas were followed since they proposed a broad perspective. Firstly, the interviews were organized and transcribed verbatim. These interviews lasted from 20 minutes to 1 hour and 10 minutes and each of them was listened to again in order to check the transcription. Moreover, the documents were organized in categories; documents as regulations, the reports of the 17th and 18th NECs and reports of unions. Furthermore, the researcher kept a journal during the data collection process with the aim of avoiding bias and prejudgments called as *epoche*. After organizing the data, the researcher read the interviews and specified the constant horizons. At the same time, codes were constituted by using horizons that can be observed in Table 3. Considering the codes, the researcher formed themes and promoted these themes by using statements from the interview called as *textural description*. Depending on the codes and the themes, the researcher revised each interview and reread them in order to find other relevant issues and checked the themes and codes. After having the thirteen themes, the researcher matched the themes with the research questions.

In addition to these, the researcher used NVivo 10 in order to benefit from the advantages of the program. This program provides many opportunities such as organizing the files, easily getting the codes, seeing the statements under the themes and providing concept-mapping among the themes (Creswell, 2013). At the end, there were thirteen main themes with sub-themes emerged as it can be seen in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: *Themes that Emerged from the Data Analysis*

Themes
Structural Issues
Historical Perspective
Functional Issues
Issues related to the Setting of the NECs
Different Practices among NECs and Commissions
Actors of NEC
The Role of NEC as a Tool
The Role of NEC as a Platform
Policy-making and NECs Decisions
The Criteria for Choosing Participants
The Features of the Decisions
Ideological Formation of NEC
Dynamics of NEC

3.9. Researcher's Role

Conducting a qualitative research is a devious one throughout which the researcher may have difficulty in finding a fixed position for herself. For this reason, the researcher questions herself as being biased or not. In qualitative research, it is quite hard for the researcher to have her feet on the ground since it feels like slippery. At this point, I can confess by heart that it is seriously a hard job since qualitative researcher needs the skills of a tightrope walker. Namely, you are certainly surrounded by your bias and it is essential to walk thorough this rope in order not to be besieged by these ideas.

As a researcher, I start this research by accepting biased nature of qualitative research that makes my job harder. I can say that I wrote this thesis with the cooperation of two people; myself and detective of my mind. Thus, I always questioned what I wrote, I read the interviews many times in order to understand what

my participants actually implied and last but not least I stood face to face with my biased assumptions.

Before getting into the fieldwork, I decided to keep a journal and I wrote my feelings and ideas, which indicated that I really did not know much about NECs' role in, TES and I thought that it had a historical significance. Furthermore, considering the participants, I thought that the ones from the minister and teachers as well as the unions would not be open and propose critical perspective. Knowing my biases, I encouraged myself to be freed from these ideas that helped me a lot. Moreover, what I found in the fieldwork was different from what I thought. Namely, nearly all participants had a critical perspective and provided various perspectives of NEC that was beyond what we knew from the literature.

Additionally, I asked four experts to analyze the interviews and I compared their analysis with my analysis and then I realized that I restricted myself in order not to be biased. For this reason, I reanalyzed all interviews again and included other codes that were not noticed at first or untouched. Afterwards, I asked two of these experts to analyze the data from which I took positive feedback.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

In this study, the data collected through interviews were analyzed by using two types of analysis; descriptive analysis and content analysis. Firstly, descriptive analysis of each interview was presented with the purpose of ensuring originality and providing the atmosphere of the interviews. Then, content analysis was used to reach the themes and provide deeper analysis. Yıldırım and Şimşek (1999) indicate that descriptive analysis is superficial yet preserves originality while content analysis needs deeper look in order to reach the concepts and themes. Through the result section, the descriptions, the quotes and professions of the particular participants will be clarified in parenthesis with numbers. For instance; for the first participant who was the head of the one of the unions, s/he will be identified as “P1-union”. Moreover, the demographics of the each participant were listed in table 3.2 in detail.

4.1. Descriptive Analysis of the Interviews

In this part, the data were presented descriptively. Each interview was described by illustrating the atmosphere of the interview and the general situation of the interviewee. The themes in each data were not explained; instead of this, each interview was described clearly by considering the research questions.

Descriptive analysis of the first interview (P1-union)

The first interviewee is the founding president of one of the unions, which has influential activities in education sector. The interviewee has been in education unionism sector for eighteen years and had also been in activities in parliament before unionism. S/he participated in four NECs, 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th and has deep knowledge about NEC and its process since s/he is the official member of this council.

The interview lasted 40 minutes and the researcher kept record in addition to her notes. The atmosphere of the interview was comfortable and hospitable and the interviewee was transparent and open to give information about the process; yet, in some parts of the interview s/he kept the information restricted.

The participant perceived the NEC as a powerful structure which has its roots in history; however, it needs some arrangements in order to ensure democratic, modern and transparent environment. On the other hand, the participant indicated that the NEC includes the whole stakeholders of education and the criteria of choosing these participants is quite objective. In the process of NEC, unions were the influential actors.

Describing the process of NEC, the interviewee emphasized that there had been political struggle as well as ideological discourse and all of those things had an impact on decisions of NEC. S/he also mentioned that as an ordinary situation since all the participants of NEC had a political choice and they made suggestions related to education policy in terms of party's ideological views.

In the following question the interviewee was asked his/ her ideas related to the decisions of NEC, their impact on education policy and the factors made them practicable. The participant highlighted that these decisions were made with various stakeholders of education and reflected the needs of society. For this reason, practicing that decisions means fulfilling the suggestions of society. Moreover, s/he stated that these were scientific and pedagogic decisions taken by majority; on the other hand, those decisions had ideological and political tone as well. The practicing decisions of NEC depended on some criteria. Participant 1 listed those criteria as being suitable for government program and bureaucracy and being perceived as necessity by the ministry.

Considering the role of the NEC in the process of policy-making, the interviewee stated that NEC is in the position of giving advice and need to have more power in that process. Furthermore, s/he mentioned NEC as a democratic oppression tool since they used the decisions as leverage in order to make decisions practiced.

In conclusion, the interviewee summarized the positive and negative aspects of NEC by adding suggestions. According to the interviewee, NEC is essential for pedagogic, scientific and modern education system and it is a historically powerful process. However, there needs to be some arrangements in order to have more democratic, modern and transparent NEC. Moreover, s/he stated that participants should be qualified and the percentage of practicing decisions should be increased. Briefly, the interviewee experienced the NEC as a powerful tool to influence the agenda of the government.

Descriptive analysis of the second interview (P2-MoNE)

The second interviewee has been in various positions in the education sector. Firstly, S/he had been a teacher more than one year. Secondly, s/he had been in many projects conducted by MoNE. Currently, the interviewee is an academician in educational sciences department. At the same time, s/he is in the SETA foundation and has conducted academic research related to education. The interviewee participated in 18th NEC. The interview lasted one hour and the interviewee was quite open and willing to give information. The interview took place in a peaceful and comfortable atmosphere. Additionally, s/he suggested some important names who had responsibilities in NEC process or attended those councils.

The interviewee evaluated NEC as a nostalgic structure, which enable various stakeholders to come together, to manage common mind and to make decisions by reflecting that common mind. However, there are many sides of NEC that cannot run this process properly. As an example of these aspects, the interviewee emphasized the ambiguous process of choosing participants despite including various stakeholders in order to provide participation. S/he stated that many groups had to stay out due to the limit in participation or other reasons. S/he highlighted the lack of participants' motivation and inefficiency of NEC since the structure of NEC was formed intentionally by the minister.

In addition to this, the interviewee identified two types of problems; ideological and organizational obstacles. S/he indicated that the ministry wanted to take some

specific decisions from those councils and that was an ideological obstacle. From the organizational side, NEC is not functional since this structure needs change. On the other hand, the interviewee identified academicians and unions as the influential group. According to the interviewee, academicians use scientific jargon and have power over others. Beside, unions reflected ideological views and took positions and discussed issues based on these views. Except from these, other participants were not effective and academically qualified as well.

Considering the decisions, the interviewee specifically highlighted that the decisions were made by the majority; they were not based on agreement. Furthermore, there was a lack of scientific knowledge and discussions. The interviewee criticized the decisions as being unrealistic, general and can only be classified as wishes rather than decisions. On the other hand, practicing these decisions depend on the agenda of both government and ministry.

The interviewee evaluated the role of the NEC in the process of policy-making as not meaningful since it is a weak structure from the aspect of decision-making and policy-making. However, this structure provides strong justification for the government to practice their agenda.

To summarize, the interviewee perceived NEC positively since it had a nostalgic structure that enabled stakeholders to come together and discussed the issues. However, s/he insistently highlighted the parts needs to be changed and indicated that NEC could not activate common mind and it needed to be more professional and innovative. Additionally, it should be more scientific and based on data.

Descriptive analysis of the third interview (P3-Academician)

The third interviewee has been in various positions related to education. He had been research assistant for three years and wrote his/her master thesis. Then, the interviewee worked as a teacher in MoNE for more than four years. Following this, he had a position in MoNE as head of one of the departments and conducted this position for two years. Currently, the interviewee is an academician and conducted studies related to sociology of education and s/he also has a position in SETA in which they

make policy analysis. The interview lasted one hour and the interviewee presented detail information for each question. The interviewee participated in 19th council, for this reason, s/he could remember the process of the NEC. The interviewee was helpful and transparent. Furthermore, s/he offered some names that could be beneficial for this study.

The interviewee described the NEC as a platform in which participants expressed their ideas about the issues, discussed with others and found out solutions. According to him/her, NEC included various stakeholders from the society and the interviewee stated that all of those participants from various stakeholders of the society aimed to protect their positions so that what they discussed or defended issues from their ideological positions. The interviewee clarified what happened in NEC as the imposition of the majority. Moreover, the interviewee indicated NEC as a platform, which brings together different participants and enables them to voice themselves. In this platform, each participant had equal chance of expressing himself or herself; yet, there had been some others who were more influential. The interviewee stated unions as more influential participants; however, s/he stated that influential participants showed difference in terms of commissions. Nevertheless, unions were the first of this chain. S/he also insisted that unions had more power than the ministry in the NEC. On the other hand, the participant highlighted the differences among the NECs, specifically 18th and 19th.

Considering education and policy, the interviewee indicated that education is a political, economical and cultural issue. According to interviewee, in the last phase, education is a pedagogical matter. S/he highlighted two main questions “How can we make people socialized” and “Which culture will we transfer to our kids” that are political things. Furthermore, ideology fits into this concept from the aspect of the second question. From that point, the interviewee specified participants’ aim to protect their position which reflects political conflict observed in discussions taken at NEC related to religion course or Ottoman language. On the other hand, the interviewee supposed that conservative formation dominated the setting of the 19th NEC, which reflected on the discussions as well.

The interviewee criticized the discussions made in the process of NEC since they are not qualified and not based on scientific results that are also reflected on the decisions. According to the interviewee, the decisions were based on the pluralistic perspective and they were too general and too far from being a decision. Furthermore, the interviewee clarified that the practicability of those decisions was simply based on the ministry and their agenda.

Considering the policy formation and NECs, by depending on his experience in MoNE the interviewee confidently asserted that the NEC did not have influential role in this process. The role of NEC was to give people a chance to speak and to voice their opinions. Besides, the interviewee indicated that NECs are the tools, specifically for legitimization. According to the interviewee, NECs are not effective in policy formulation; additionally, they have not served as foundation for any policy except 4+4+4. S/he indicated that NEC was used as a base for this policy not because it is NEC's decision but because they did not find any other source to support the idea of 4+4+4. To conclude, the interviewee highlighted that NEC is just a platform that enables people to discuss issues related to education and cannot go beyond this since each participant aim to protect their position and since they make the same decisions, which are not scientific in each NEC.

Descriptive analysis of fourth interview (P4-Union)

The fourth interviewee has a prominent position in one of the influential unions. He is quite experience in education since he had been in many positions in the union and conducted studies related to education, specifically teacher rights. The interviewee attended the 19th NEC and the interview lasted half an hour. S/he was willing to participate in the study; yet, in some parts s/he answered some questions by not going into details since s/he did not keen on talking. However, s/he shared some documents related to the NEC and the works of unions. Moreover, s/he was also transparent and helpful from that aspect.

The interviewee described NEC as a platform in which people interested in education discussed the issues and evaluated the situation. More importantly, NEC

enabled them to make this discussion with the ministry. However, those NECs could not be conducted in a structured way, which resulted in certain problems in the formation of NECs and those problems reflected onto the process of NEC and onto their role in the policy-making process. According to the interviewee, the participants were not specified objectively but ideologically and politically. The interviewee highlighted that the majority of the NEC's participants had the same vision. On the other hand, s/he listed unions as the influential actors in the process of NEC and s/he highlighted that teachers were not effective and they did not actively get involved in the process while unions defended their rights.

Considering the education and policy, the interviewee criticized the power of policy over education and he indicated that most of the changes related to education was made through the power of government and policy which turns the education system into a jigsaw board. According to the interviewee, each government in power and even different ministers of the same government made different changes in the education system. Instead of this, s/he proposed using NECs in making changes since NEC provides a platform of receiving different ideas. However, s/he stated that NECs were not formed objectively and they were formed on purpose in order to ensure the political base.

The interviewee indicated that the decisions were taken on purpose by forming the NEC with people who had the same vision. Moreover, the interviewee indicated that the participants reflected their ideological views to the NECs. According to the interviewee, the practicability of decisions depended on two things, the agenda of ministry or the government. However, s/he stated that the unions also formed pressure to ensure the practicability of the decisions.

Considering the role and effect of the NECs in the process of policy formation, the interviewee stated NEC as not being influential. The role of the NEC stayed in the consultant position; yet, NEC provided the government a structure for carrying out their agenda.

To summarize, the interviewee evaluated NEC as an ineffective process due to structural problems and s/he highlighted the intentional formation of NEC in order to take decisions, which supported the agenda of both the ministry and the government.

Descriptive analysis of the fifth interview (P5-MoNE)

The fifth interviewee was from the Ministry of National Education and s/he had been a politician in addition to her/his academician side. S/he was former minister. The interviewee took part in the 18th NEC and he was more knowledgeable about the post process of NEC and its structure. The interview lasted about 45 minutes and the interviewee was quite transparent and critical related to the NEC and its structure in the MoNE in general.

The interviewee described NEC as a conference in which participants discussed the issues from the aspect of ideological views not from the rational side. The interviewee criticized the NECs in terms of its function and s/he indicated that NECs were not functional since it did not ensure identifying the problems. Furthermore, the interviewee indicated that the structure and the environment of NEC is political. According to the interviewee, ministry and the unions were the influential actors in the NEC process. In addition to these, NEC included various actors from different fields related to education.

The interviewee stated the ideological structure of the government and indicated that education has been an ideological field so that any government tries to form a society considering their views, which can also be observed in the NECs. Additionally, the interviewee highlighted that NEC was used as a political tool by the government.

Considering the decisions, the interviewee stated that NEC did not provide participative decision-making and those decisions were not based on scientific data. Instead, those decisions were made in the political environment. On the other hand, the interviewee specified that the practicability of the decisions basically were based on the government, and the government chose the decisions that were close to their agenda.

The interviewee remarked that NECs and the decisions were not being effective in the process of policy formulation since they were not functional but based on the political structure. According to the interviewee, education is a complete system so that the policy should support the integrity of education. However, the decisions of NEC could not provide this.

On the other hand, NECs provide a platform for policy by receiving information related to people's views about certain issues. Furthermore, s/he highlighted NECs as a tool for legitimization by giving 4+4+4 as an example. He questions issues by stating whether NECs determined a policy or whether they were used by the politicians in order to legitimize their policy; whether participants thought hard over the issue or they practiced the ideologies of their political view.

In conclusion, the interviewee criticized the methodology and the structure of the NEC since it was formed politically and did not ensure participative decision-making. He certainly emphasized the role of the NEC as a tool for government in the process of policy formulation when they were in the need of legitimization.

Descriptive analysis of the sixth interview (P6-Union)

The sixth interviewee is from one of the unions involved in the NEC process and he is an expert in education. The interviewee has also master and PhD degree in political sciences; however, he mostly has been in unionism for 13 years. The interviewee was quite critical and willing to describe the process in depth. S/he conducted studies related to 17th, 18th and 19th NEC, but s/he was only involved in 19th NEC.

The interviewee described NEC as a platform that includes all parts of the society and enables seemingly democratic environment. In other words, the formation of NEC did not support the democratic environment presented by the NEC. According to the interviewee, the NECs were formed ideologically and politically which resulted in homogenous structure. Moreover, s/he stated that the criteria of choosing participants were not transparent. On the other hand, the interviewee emphasized the distinction among the 17th, 18th and 19th NECs and stated that NECs started to be

ideological platform respectively. According to the interviewee, the unions, specifically one of them, were the most influential participants of all since they were prearranged for the process. Furthermore, s/he highlighted the relation between the union and the ministry and indicated that they sometimes conflicted but they supported each other most of the time. Additionally, the interviewee observed that government used the unions in order to shape the education system in accordance with their ideological views. Considering the commissions, the interviewee specified the differences and emphasized that while their commission had the democratic running, others had chaos that was also in relation with the head of the commission.

The interviewee indicated the direct relation between policy and education since the government is the decision-making authority. According to the interviewee, the government should form education policies by considering the needs of the society. Instead of this, the religion course was the focus during this process. He claimed that NEC was used as a tool for legitimization during this process in which the government highlighted the participative environment of the NEC.

The interviewee implied that the decisions taken at NEC were free from science and pedagogy and they had the tone of ideology. Moreover, those decisions did not focus on solving the issues. The practicability of the decisions was based on the purpose of the government. Considering the NEC and its role in policy formulation, the interviewee evaluated NECs as being a policy-making tool and gave the example of 4+4+4. Furthermore, s/he indicated that although the role of the NEC was to ensure consultancy, the government used it in order to provide a political base for their agenda.

To conclude, the interviewee evaluated the NECs positively from the aspect of its structure, which provides a platform to discuss peoples' opinions about an issue, on the other hand, he criticized NECs due to the difference between its structure and practice. S/he implied that the NEC was ideologically formed and ideological decisions were made. The interviewee proposed a NEC separated from the shade of the government.

Descriptive analysis of the seventh interview (P7- Academician)

The seventh interviewee is an academician and conducted studies in educational sciences. S/he is quite experienced in that field. The interviewee participated in two councils, 16 and 17. Considering the extent of that study the interviewee participated in the 17th NEC. S/he was willing to give information about the process; yet, it had been restricted because 10 years have passed since the 17th council, the interviewee could not remember all the details. The interview lasted half an hour.

The interviewee defined NEC as an important platform to enable participants to make himself or herself heard by the minister. However, those councils were formed with political concerns. Additionally, the interviewee reported that there were not any specified criteria for choosing participants. According to the interview, those participants were identified based only being close or partisan to the government. The interviewee also perceived that the environment of NEC was formed on purpose. On the other hand, the interviewee listed two influential participants; ministry and the unions. S/he stated that most of the participants were from the minister and the unions were quite effective on the decisions. Furthermore, the interviewee criticized NEC's as being too crowded in which participants did not express themselves although the structure of NEC provided democratic participation. At this point, the interviewee highlighted that the head of the commissions were not fair in giving words to the participants.

According to the interviewee, NECs did not have an effect on policy formulation process. However, NEC had high authority and that was used as legitimization. Moreover, the decisions taken at NEC provide power for the decisions of the ministry.

Considering the decisions, the interviewee emphasized that they did not have scientific and academic sides; they had the pluralist side and s/he criticized the NEC from this aspect. According to the interviewee, the practicability of the decisions was based on the government and s/he indicated that if the decisions had the political side, it was highly probable to implement those decisions.

Considering the education and policy, the interviewee perceived political power in the NEC and indicated that s/he felt herself/himself as minority. According to the interviewee, most of the policies or reforms in education were made by taking into account the populist concerns and political power.

The interviewee evaluated NEC positively since it enabled a platform for society to mention their needs and views to the minister. However, the interviewee highlighted that the minister conveniently benefitted from the NECs by changing the structure in relation to their beliefs and values.

Descriptive analysis of the eight interview (P8- MoNE)

The interviewee had been in different positions. S/he was teacher and had worked in various areas of MoNE. The interviewee was assigned in the field which conducted studies related to the planning and organization of NEC. The interviewee participated in 17th, 18th and 19th councils; yet, he actively took part in 18th NEC and he organized the process of 17th and 19th councils. The interviewee worked in MoNE for 35 years and he had deep knowledge about the structure and process of NEC. The interview lasted 22 minutes and the interviewee was relaxed. However, s/he kept the information somehow restricted and did not go into deeper.

The interviewee indicated that NEC provided an effective environment for consultation; however, the interviewee highlighted the political structure of NEC. According to the interviewee, NECs were used for the benefit of politics. On the other hand, the interviewee criticized the NECs due to excessive expense, which was 2 million Turkish liras for the 19th NEC. The interviewee specified that they chose the participants by considering the regulation of NEC in which the criteria was listed in a clear way. Moreover, the minister of education examined all the preparation process of NEC, including the participants. The interviewee stated that head of the commissions were effective in NECs; yet, the unions had also dominant position.

Considering the education and policy, the interviewee indicated that policy had an effect on education. By depending on her/his experience in MoNE, the interviewee explained that each minister of education regardless of political view came with her or

his team and changed the entire system. Additionally, the interviewee remarked that political issues also reflected onto the NECs.

According to the interviewee, NECs were not influential in the process of policy formation although they were highly effective in previous years. The interviewee asserted that as stated in the regulation, NECs had the role of consultation. However, they had the political structure so that decisions matched with the agenda of the government.

The interviewee considered that the decisions at NEC were connected with the government policy since there were participants who supported that. However, that could be changeable in reference to the head of the commissions. In addition to this, the interviewee evaluated 4+4+4 as ineffective practice since it did not provide solutions.

To sum up, the interviewee did not perceive NEC as an effective structure since it was not used in the process of policy formation. Instead of this, there were other factors being influential in that process. Furthermore, the interviewee highly criticized the expense of NEC since it did not have correspondence.

Descriptive analysis of the ninth interview (P9-MoNE)

The ninth interviewee was from MoNE and s/he had also been a teacher. The interviewee had been in various positions in MoNE for 13 years and s/he participated in 17th and 18th councils. The interviewee was one of the members of the committee who planned and organized the 17th and 18th councils. The interviewee was helpful and gave information although it was sometimes restricted. Moreover, the interviewee proposed other names that were the members of that process. The interview lasted twenty minutes in a comfortable environment. The interviewee stated that s/he could only be in the organization process and told that s/he could not present her/his notification since the organization committee did not allow that in the 19th council.

The interviewee described NEC as an effective platform for discussing the issues by gathering the people interested in these issues. However, the interviewee perceived that NEC was intentionally formed. Furthermore, s/he criticized the situation in which the NECs were not organized by using the available resources. According to

the interviewee, the participants were chosen by considering the topics. The interviewee specified that unions were one of the effective participants since they were actively involved in the discussions.

The interviewee identified the relation between education and policy as political and s/he stated that this relation reflected the councils since the topics were specified by considering this aspect. The interviewee emphasized that the decisions of NEC could shape education; yet, they were just advisory ones. However, these decisions were used for legitimization. The interviewee added that NECs did not serve for policy formation.

Considering the decisions, the interviewee highlighted that the decisions were not scientific but they just reflected the values of the interest groups. Moreover, the interviewee remarked that the practicability of the decisions depended on the ministry.

To conclude, the interviewee did not positively perceive NECs both from the aspect of its structure and its position in the process of policy formation although it had the potential for having effect on that process.

Descriptive analysis of the tenth interview (P10-Union)

The tenth interviewee was from one of the unions and had the position in the board of management. He actively conducted studies in the union since 2002. Before that position, he had been a teacher. The interviewee participated in 18th and 19th councils and the interview lasted twenty minutes. The interviewee was serious in general and s/he did not feel comfortable with some of the questions so that the interviewee non-exhaustively replied to those questions. On the other hand, the interviewee thoroughly explained some parts of the NEC.

The interviewee evaluated the NEC as a democratic structure and platform in which various participants discuss the issues from different perspectives. S/he indicated that the interviewee did not know the criteria of choosing participants; yet, he proposed to have democratic method in which non-governmental organizations and the unions should take part. On the other hand, the interviewee emphasized that most of the participants of both NECs were qualified. Furthermore, the interviewee listed

unions as the most dominant and influential actors in the process of NECs and asserted that unions specifically got ready for those NECs.

Considering the education and the policy, the interviewee marked the importance of education for any government and stated that field would not be left but shaped by the government which was not only valid for today but also for previous years. However, the interviewee highlighted that the effect of policy was not felt in the NECs.

According to the interviewee, NECs and the decisions could be affected in the process of policy formation if only there were followers of that process. To exemplify, the interviewee indicated the 4+4+4 since one of the unions pursued that process until it became legislation. Without those followers and the pressure, the decisions and NECs would only be advisory board.

The interviewee identified decisions as being scientific as well as being reunification decisions. Furthermore, s/he stated that majority of the participants approved the decisions taken at NECs. According to the interviewee, the practicability of the decisions simply depended on the needs of the society which was defined by the government.

To summarize, the interviewee positively perceived the process and the environment of NEC since it provided democratic platform for discussion which involves various views and actors. Additionally, the interviewee highlighted that the position and the role of the NEC could be strengthened by followers, namely actors.

Descriptive analysis of the eleventh interview (P11-Policy Analyst)

The eleventh interview was from a non-governmental organization, which conduct education policy analysis studies. The interviewee had a PhD from the field of economy of education and had studies related to education policy for seven years. Moreover, the interviewee and her/his organization carry out education studies with both MoNE and unions. The interviewee participated in 19th council yet s/he wrote reports related to the 17th and 18th councils so that s/he had knowledge about other

councils as well. The interviewee was quite critical and transparent and s/he deeply analyzed the process of NEC, moreover, the interview lasted forty-five minutes.

The interviewee defined NEC as a significant platform, which enabled MoNE to listen to other views except from the perspective of ministry. However, the interviewee indicated that although there was an effective environment for discussion, there were not any innovative and rationalist decisions taken. According to the interviewee, NECs ensured this platform for one of the unions to announce their agenda. For this reason, the interviewee asserted that NEC was intentionally formed in order to back up the conservative being. In that point, the interviewee highlighted the homogeneous structure of NEC, which mostly included men and conservatives that also match with the structure of the union. Furthermore, the interviewee considered that the criteria of choosing participants were not clear although the minister took into account the regulation of NEC. Additionally, the interviewee listed the unions and academicians as the influential participants and s/he indicated that unions mostly dominated the NEC.

Considering the education and policy, the interviewee remarked that policy has an influence on education so that it can shape the education so quickly by using the political will. Moreover, he added that education could not be separated from the political will since politicians are highly interested in education. Also, the interviewee observed this in NEC in which s/he perceived that the NEC was used as a tool for ideological purposes.

From the aspect of NECs and its decisions and policy formation, the interviewee emphasized that those were definitely not effective during this process. However, s/he mentioned that NECs were not for policy formation but for empowering the current agenda. In addition to this, the interviewee stated that NECs were used for legitimization and it also served as a tool for the unions. The interviewee also gave the example of 4+4+4 and stated that the practicability of the 4+4+4 did not only depend on the decision of NEC; there were also other factors.

According to the interviewee, the decisions of NEC simply had the quality of pluralist perspective and s/he specified those decisions based on the impression of the

participants and the agenda of the one of the unions. Furthermore, the interviewee asserted that practicing those decisions depended on the agenda of both the ministry and the union.

To summarize, the interviewee perceived NEC as an effective structure; however, he observed that those NECs were used as a tool for strengthening the agenda of minister and the union. For this reason, NECs were formed intentionally with homogeneous structure and the decisions were not affective during the process of policy formation in general.

Descriptive analysis of the twelve interview (P12-MoNE)

The twelfth interviewee had a prominent position in one of the branches of MoNE. The interviewee was responsible from the organization of the 17th NEC. S/he worked in MoNE for 2 years. Currently; the interviewee is a professor in one of the universities and conducts studies related to education administration and planning. The interviewee attended 17th and 19th councils and s/he also knew the process of the 18th council since s/he followed the process. The interviewee was quite knowledgeable about the process of NECs so that s/he could make comparisons among the three NECs. The interview lasted one hour and the environment where the interviewee was made was comfortable. The interviewee was transparent and critical during the interview.

The interviewee described NEC as a place for discussing issues related to the education and listening to views of people from the society. The interviewee indicated that NECs created a public opinion that provided MoNE to reshape their agenda. Furthermore, the interviewee highlighted the nostalgic structure of NECs and emphasized to preserve the modest structure of NEC by using the state resources. The interviewee remarked that participants were chosen by considering the regulation of NEC. However, ministry had the opportunity of shaping the NEC since most of the participants were from the ministry. Yet, the interviewee indicated that the environment of NEC was so various that it was hard to form the dominance of ministry. On the other hand, the interviewee observed that the environment of the 19th NEC

ensured that dominance. From the aspect of influential participants, the interviewee considered that ministry was influential in 17th NEC while unions as well as the ministry were mostly dominant during the process. Furthermore, the interviewee specified that the environment of NEC was democratic in which each participant could be involved in the discussion.

According to the interviewee, education and policy are quite related and political power has an impact on education. Furthermore, the interviewee claimed that this relation was not one-sided; education also affects the policy. Considering the impact of political power in NECs, the interviewee stated this could be observed over unions or any rapports in NEC.

The interviewee asserted that NECs had an influence of evaluating the views during the policy-making process. According to the interviewee, NECs had the role of presenting advisory decisions and those decisions were sent to relevant departments to practice them.

The interviewee stated that the decisions of NEC were mostly related to tendency of ministry and s/he indicated that the practicability of those decisions mostly depended on the quality of decisions. The interviewee claimed that if the decisions were realistic and national, it was highly probable to implement them as it was in the 17th decisions.

In conclusion, the interviewee highlighted that NECs were effective structure since it provided a platform to hear from the public regardless of whether those decisions were implemented or not. Even the platform of NEC was used by the ministry in the policy-making process.

Descriptive analysis of the thirteenth interview (P12-Academician)

The thirteenth interviewee is a professor in the field of educational sciences and s/he conducts studies related to educational administration and educational policy. The interviewee attended in 17th and 19th council and had an active task in the last council. The interview lasted 45 minutes in a comfortable environment. The

interviewee knew the process of NECs and gave transparent information during the interview.

The interviewee evaluated NECs as a political arena since most of the actors aimed to dominate NEC by having approved the decisions they wanted. The interviewee indicated that NEC provided a platform to listen to people and enable them to express themselves. According to the interviewee, the participants of NEC was identified in accordance with the regulation in which various actors of education got included. However, ministry were such a dominant actor that they could issue a decision they wanted. During the process of NEC, the interviewee highlighted the unions as the influential actors and indicated that since they were organized, they had an impact on the decisions. Additionally, the interviewee indicated that although there was a democratic environment during NEC, it had the homogeneous structure. From other perspective, the interviewee remarked the distinction among the NECs and claimed that 19th NEC had much more tense atmosphere than the 17th NEC.

Considering the education and policy, the interviewee stated that policy is effective in education and unions are effective as well. The interviewee criticized unions since they do not work as non-governmental organizations and they have political sides. Furthermore, these groups became politically effective in NECs by being dominant in the process or by shaping the decisions with their agenda.

According to the interviewee, the NECs have an impact on the policy-making process when it is examined in the long term. On the other hand, the NECs are not influential in this process. Furthermore, the interviewee highlighted that there is not a clear policy-making process. The interviewee exemplified this with 4+4+4 and stated that most of the people even minister was not aware of how it happened.

Considering the decisions, the interviewee stated that which were the pluralist decisions since they did not have the feature of conciliation. Furthermore, they were not scientific based as well. The interviewee emphasized that the practicability of decisions depended on the appropriate time from the aspect of policy and economical issues.

To summarize, the interviewee stated that NECs ensured a platform for people to discuss the issues related to education. However, the decisions were not effective in the policy-making process. Furthermore, the interviewee highlighted that although NEC provided a democratic environment for discussion, it could not ensure a heterogeneous structure.

Descriptive analysis of the fourteenth interview (P14-Teacher/Principal)

The fourteenth interviewee was a teacher in MoNE for 24 years and currently s/he is a principal in a private high school. The interviewee participated in the 18th NEC and the interview lasted 15 minutes. The atmosphere of the interview was comfortable but the interviewee could not remember all the details due to elapsed time.

The interviewee described the NEC as a platform in which participants had a chance to directly reflect their views to the minister. The interviewee indicated that unions were the most influential actors during the NEC process. On the other hand, the interviewee highlighted the homogenous structure of NEC and claimed that NEC was intentionally formed. Moreover, the interviewee criticized the NECs from an economical perspective since the organization committee spent too much money for those organizations. Moreover, the interviewee indicated that s/he did not know the criteria of choosing participants.

From the aspect of education and policy, the interviewee specified that these two were interrelated and the decisions based on policy negatively influenced the practitioners. Furthermore, policy also took place in NECs by forming them intentionally. According to the interviewee, NECs do not have an effective influence during the process of policy-making. The interviewee stated that the role of NECs could not go beyond an advisory committee.

Considering the decisions, the interviewee evaluated those decisions as a reflection of specific groups or the decisions based on the regulation. The interviewee stated that the practicability of decisions depended on the policy of MoNE.

To summarize, the interviewee evaluated NECs as not an effective tool in the process of policy-making since it is basically based on the will of MoNE. Furthermore, the NEC did not provide an efficient discussion platform as well.

Descriptive analysis of the fifteenth interview (P15-Teacher)

The fifteenth interviewee was a teacher in MoNE for 13 years. The interviewee participated in the 18th council and the interview lasted 20 minutes. The interviewee was willing to give information; yet, s/he felt uncomfortable for some questions. In that part, s/he did not allow the record.

The interviewee described NECs as a platform in which various actors of education came together and had a chance of listening to each other. However, the interviewee criticized NECs since the participants were not chosen objectively and NECs were formed intentionally as well. The interviewee stated that unions were quite effective during the process of the NECs and one of the unions dominated the NEC.

Considering the education and the policy, the interviewee specified that policy had a direct effect on education and stated that most of the implementations were done by considering political issues. Furthermore, the interviewee stated this situation was also valid in NECs since they implemented the decisions by considering political issues such as 4+4+4 one of the NECs decisions.

According to the interviewee, NECs were effective during policy-making process by depending on the policy issues. The interviewee claimed that if the decisions were appropriate for their agenda, they used them during policy-making process. Otherwise, the interviewee stated that NECs were not influential in policy-making as in the past. The interviewee claimed that the decisions were based on the facts of the country and those were political decisions as well. The practicability of those decisions basically depended on the agenda of government. To conclude, the interviewee highlighted the political aspect of the NECs and indicated that NECs were not influential unless they matched with the agenda of the government.

4.2. Content Analysis

In the previous part, descriptive analyses of the data were presented. In this section, the data will be reported by using an inductive method. Furthermore, these inductive findings will be supported with the data from the regulations and NEC's handbook.

The themes were removed from the raw data in terms of the research questions. There are four main questions to understand how participants perceive the process of NEC and the role of the NEC during policy-making process, how they define the factors in practicing the decisions and how they comprehend the role of the ideologies during this process. In light of these questions, thirteen themes emerged with sub-themes.

For the first research question "How do participants perceive and describe the process of the National Education Council considering 17th, 18th and 19th NECs?", six themes emerged: (1) structural issues, (2) historical perspective, (3) functional issues, (4) issues related to the setting of the NECs, (5) different practices among NECs and commissions; (6) actors of NEC.

Considering the second research question, "What role does NEC play in the process of policy-making?" two themes; (1) the role of NEC as a tool and (2) the role of NEC as a platform.

The third research question "How does MoNE benefit from the decisions taken at NEC?" had three themes which are (1) policy-making and NECs decisions, (2) the criteria for practicing the decisions and (3) the features of the decisions.

In relation to the last research question which was "How ideologies play role in the policy formulation process, specifically 17th, 18th and 19th NECs?" and "What role do policy actors play in the NEC?", two themes emerged; and (1) ideological formation of NEC (2) dynamics of NEC.

These themes and sub-themes are illustrated in Figure 4.1.

Research Question	Themes	Subthemes
RQ 1	Structural Issues	Political Perspective
		Pluralist Perspective
		Homogenous Structure
		Seemingly Democratic Environment
	Historical Perspective	
	Functional Issues	
	Issues Relating to the Setting of the NEC	
Different Practice Among NECs and Commissions		
	Actors of NEC	Lack of Transparent Criteria for Choosing Participants
		The Profile of Participants
		Types of Actors
RQ 2	The Role of NEC as a Tool	Tool for Testing the Matters
		Tool for Legitimation
		Tool for Receiving Information
	The Role of NEC as a Platform	Platform for Discussion
		Platform for Agenda Formation
RQ 3	Policy-Making of NEC Decision	4+4+4
	The Criteria for Practicing Decisions	Suitability for Government or Ministry
		Suitability for Agenda
Features of the Decisions		
RQ 4	Ideological Formation of NEC	Process of Choosing the Participant
		Decisions Taken in the Council
		Decisions Implemented By the Ministry
	Dynamics of NEC	Dramatis Personae
		Power of Participant
		Power of Unions
		Power of Ministry
	Relationship among Participants	

Figure 4.1: Figure related to the themes and sub-themes

Findings for Research Question 1

In order to give answer to the first research question “How do participants perceive and describe the process of NEC by considering the 17th, 18th and 19th NECs?”, it is essential to understand the structure of the NEC and its process and, actors of NEC as they have emerged from the data. In this section, themes, sub-themes and codes related to the first research question were discussed. The themes and codes were elicited by identifying the repeated issues.

4.2.1. Structure and nature of NEC

There were five themes that emerged related to this category; structural issues, historical perspective, functional issues, issues related to the setting, different practices among NECs and commissions.

Structural issues

Starting from the theme “structural issues”, all of the participants expressed their opinion about how they perceive the structure of the NEC based on their active observation during the NEC. Considering the structure of the NEC in general, all of the participants drew attention to the content of these councils that include in various participants interested in education. The participants highlighted that:

NECs are quite significant from the aspect of opening previously specified subjects up for discussion by all parts of the society and evaluating this by discussing it. (P10)

The positive side of NEC is that the views of various stakeholders can be reflected there. Normally, no matter how many times I, individually, tell, it would not reach there. Yet, here it could reach the minister from the first hand. (P14)

The participants of the NEC appreciated the general structure of NEC since it is the only platform that gathers various actors to discuss the issues in education. In the documents published by MoNE (2007), the same situation was highlighted in which NEC was described as a place to discuss the issues in education in a broad sense with the participation of various stakeholders.

In addition to this general description of NEC, how participants perceived the structure of NEC had other specific layers as well. These are political perspective, pluralist perspective, homogeneous structure and seemingly democratic environment. The sub-themes in relation to structural issues are illustrated in Table 4.1 with the frequency of each sub-themes.

Table 4.1: *Sub-themes related to the structural issues theme*

Structural Issues	Frequency
Political perspective	11
Pluralist perspective	10
Homogeneous structure	9
Seemingly democratic environment	8

Political perspective

As it can be seen in the table 4, 11 out of 15 participants drew attention to the political structure of NEC and they also associated this political perspective with ideology. Participants, perceived political influence and accordingly ideological orientation situation in the structure of the NEC. Furthermore, the political perspective revealed itself as actors, power or decisions. As it is highlighted in the quotes below, participants evaluated the structure of NEC as a “political arena” (P13).

The weakest side of the NEC is that the issues are mostly discussed on a political basis. (P5).

The people in the NECs have political preference and when there is an election, they vote. This is their democratic rights. For this reason, it is totally normal that they propose suggestions with regard to education policies, ideologically supported by their parties”. (P1)

Considering the 17th Council Report of MoNE (2007), political influence of the council was highlighted by some of the participants and there was a perception that MoNE organized the councils as they wanted and they would use the decisions made in the NEC as a political base (MoNE 17th Council Report, 2007, p. 130). As a result, participants of the research experienced the nature of the councils as a political arena.

Pluralist perspective

Another sub-theme is the pluralist perspective of the NECs from the aspect of decisions. 10 of the participants indicated that the decision-making in NECs depend on this pluralist perspective rather than reconciliation. An interviewee remarked, “*If the decisions are approved by the majority, these could be NEC decisions*” (P8). On the other hand, participants criticized this pluralist perspective regardless of its democratic side since the decisions depending on the majority did not reflect the reality or exclude the other views. On the other hand, ERG in its report (2015) claimed that

the decision-making process was not transparent. Related to this, one of the participants specified that:

We witness the peer pressure forming by the majority in the NEC environment and they suppressed the different or minority voice.” (P4)

The participants indicated that although the decisions were made with democratic choice, they were disturbed by the power of majority since various ideas were getting lost or are not valued in that platform. Analyzing the documents, the pluralistic perspective of the council was also highlighted in the regulation of the NEC in which the item 17 specified that decisions were reached by majority of votes (MoNE, 2014).

Homogeneous structure

Another sub-theme that emerged related to the structure of the NEC is the homogeneous structure. Nine of the participants described NEC’s process as a homogeneous structure, although NEC included various stakeholders interested in education. Considering this, one of the participants specified that by saying “*There is no problem related to representation. I do not know the percentage of the participants but there have been participants from different parts of the society*” (P3). Participants explained this homogeneity from different perspectives. While some of them highlighted the dominance of ministry or unions, others evaluated this as ideologically homogeneous structure. The sub-theme of homogeneous structure was comprised of three codes; ministry, ideological factor and gender factor.

Six of the participants remarked the impact of ministry in the structure of the NEC. According to the participants, the structure of NEC was formed by the ministry with those who had mutual acquaintance with the ministry. One of the participants emphasized the dominance of ministry by stating;

In all NECs, if the discussion topics digress out of the ministry, the ministry will activate its whole organizational structure and look; there is a natural structure of NEC. What I mean as the ministry is that if there is a decision that

the ministry want to be approved as policy, there is a composition which ensures the approval of that decision since all of the members of NEC such as all general directors, head of departments and members of board of education and discipline are the regular member of the NEC and from wherever you look this forms the majority of the NEC. (P12)

This situation is also confirmed by the other participants one of whom indicated that:

The majority of the participants were chosen by the ministry, namely, although there were various occupational fields such as administrator, academicians, these groups were directed by the ministry. For instance; the people who had acquaintance in the ministry were among that group. This was evaluated by the selected group in the ministry. (P15).

In addition to that, the participants highlighted that the ministry purposefully includes one of the specific unions rather than other non-governmental organizations.

From them they invited six people yet provincial director of national education and teachers were the member of this union. Apart from that, the rest of the participants were from this union. From another union, they invited four people. (P11)

Analyzing the documents published by the non-governmental organizations, it was indicated that the majority was formed by one of the unions especially in the last council, although there had been various stakeholders (Eğitim-Sen, 2015) and this was also emphasized by the participants. On the other hand, ERG (2015) stated that the participants did not represent all sides because in the teacher education commission of the 19th council, there were not many teachers and not any students from faculty of education.

Another code highlighted by the participants is the ideological side of the NECs process. What makes this issue a code of the homogeneous structure is the description

made by the participants according to whom it was indicated that the NEC reflected one typical ideology, conservatism, described by one of the participants as;

The government is conservative so that the whole ministry forms with conservative ones. Accordingly, they chose conservative people and all of the participants there were conservative. I would suppose it and it is like that. (P3). There is a conservative group; for this reason, there was no point in the pros and cons talks. (P11)

Lastly, only 2 of the participants, (P11) and (P6), highlighted the uneven distribution among the participants in which the participation rate of men exceeded the number of women in each council. The analysis of the 17th NEC's report showed that only 79 of the participants were women while there were 635 men (MoNE Council Reports, 2007) and this number was 51 women out of 579 participants in 18th council (MEB Şura Raporları, 2011). Since the report of the 19th council was not published yet, this distribution was not known for the last council. In the document of the 18th council report (2011), some of the participants complained about the number of women and the students in the council to the minister and they proposed changing the structure of NEC from this perspective and it was decided that such a change would be made in future NECs (p, 581 and 34th item of 18th NEC).

Seemingly democratic environment

The last sub-theme of the structural issue is the seemingly democratic environment. According to the participants, NEC formally provided an equal relation among the participants regardless of the title and each participant of the NEC had the same rights. Furthermore, each participant had equal chance of expressing themselves. However, what participants perceived was the misuse of this democratic structure in an antidemocratic way. Most of the participants indicated that they felt as if who is going to be selected for the head of the commissions was predetermined as the issues to be discussed in NEC was pre-organized. Related to this, one of the participants indicated that *"It seemed that the head of the commission was predetermined"* (P7).

Furthermore, this situation was confirmed by one of the participants from the MoNE and he highlighted that they proposed the names for the head of the commission since they thought that names were the right ones for this position. However, those people were chosen by election which was also written in the regulation (MoNE, 2014). Yet, one of the participants specified that other participants could not get that chance of being head of the commissions since they felt as outsiders and he added that it was tough for teachers to say that they want this due to titles of other participants.

Considering the reports of the NECs in which the process and the dialogue of each of the participants were written (2007 & 2011), it was seen that these people were proposed by the minister of MoNE or by the ministry; yet, all of the participants voted for these proposed people and this process was same in the 17th and 18th councils. Mostly, these people were academicians, for this reason, they were chosen as head of the commissions as it was highlighted by the participants. Furthermore, depending on the report of the 18th council, it was seen that there was not an institutionalized process in choosing the head of the commissions. Namely, while this process was explicitly written in some commissions such as teacher education (p.33), it was not so for others such as the commissions of values education (MoNE Council Report, 2011, p.204. On the other hand, the participants emphasized that there was no problem from the aspect of representation; yet, the head of the commissions could not make equal distribution in giving opportunity to all participants to speak which was also analyzed in the documents of the 18th council. (MoNE 18yh Council Report, 2011). For this reason, most of the participants could not use the right of speech since one of the unions dominated this process. Considering this, one of the participants specified that;

There has been representation in the NEC but the percentage is important. I mean to what extent the people make themselves heard is important. (P13)

Contrary to what happened in 18th and 19th council, most of the participants were given an equal chance to speak during the 17th council (MoNE 17th Council Report, 2007).

Historical perspective

Another theme related to the main category of the structure and nature of NEC is the historical perspective. Four of the participants emphasized the history of the councils and they described NECs as a “*nostalgic, folksy and well-established*” institution (P1, P2, P11, and P12). Furthermore, those participants highlighted that the first council was organized when the country was in war which indicated the importance of the councils. Furthermore, since there were 19 councils organized, it proposes inclusive knowledge about education. One of the participants remarked that:

NEC is an enormous institution, 19th NEC was lastly organized; there is a seriously huge fund of knowledge there. We cannot abandon the NEC. (K11).

Considering the background of the NECs, the historical side of it drew attention since there were 19 NECs that have been organized and it became a tradition of Turkish education system being repeated in every four years (MoNE, 2011). Furthermore, Akyüz (2008) highlighted that the root of the NECs dates back to 1921 in which education meeting was organized under the name of “Education Congress” (Maarif Kongresi). After this, the first NEC took place in 1939. Moreover, ERG (2015) indicated that NEC is one of the most rooted institutions in Turkish education system. Lastly, in the reports of the 17th and 18th council, MoNE emphasized the historical side of the NEC as well.

Functional issues

In addition to structure and historical side of the NECs, 3 of the participants who had the position in the MoNE highlighted the functional side of these councils as another theme. According to them, the NECs do not have an effective function since it was organized as a conference where people voiced their ideas depending on the ideology so that it needs some changes. One of the participants explained the lack of functional side by stating:

The NEC do not have the function of providing an active participation, it has weak side of deciding together. (P5)

However, one of the participants from the MoNE claimed the opposite and the participants stated that:

NEC has a magnificent function on creating a public opinion related to education. (P12).

Considering the interviewees, most of the participants indicated that NEC provided a participatory platform for various stakeholders without directly referring to the word “*function*”. On the other hand, some of the participants as indicated above directly stated that although NEC provided a platform for the involvement of various stakeholders, it was not used functionally. In relation to this, Tedmem (2014) stated that NEC was outdated and not functional and it needed innovation by including modern governance practices.

Issues related to the setting of the NECs

Issues related to the setting of the NECs is another theme mentioned under the structure and nature of NEC theme by all of the participants. Regardless of which councils and commissions the participants were in, the participants evaluated the running of the NEC as similar. All of the participants indicated that they decided how they would run the process after they chose the head of the commissions recommended by the ministry during the NEC. Mostly, they discussed the issues with regard to the text published by the ministry and then they voted each item one by one. When the documents are examined, this process is clearly identified in the regulation of the NECs and it does not show any difference in 17th, 18th or 19th councils (MoNE, 2007, 2011, 2014). It is stated that participants chose the head of the commissions by voting and they decided how to run each commission altogether which was also observed in the reports of the councils (2007 & 2011). Participants specified that each member had an equal chance of stating their opinions, however, in some of the commissions participants were given varied amounts of time for speaking as it could be seen in the report of the councils. Some of the unions were interrupted while some of them had more time. For instance, in the report of the 18th council, considering four different

unions in the process of voting on the decisions, the representative of one of the union's talks lasted 8 pages, the second one was 7 pages, the third one was 5 pages and lastly another union representative talked 2 pages (MoNE, 2011; pp. 527-675). Considering the first and last one, there were 6 pages duration difference. In that process, participants draw attention to the importance of the head of the commissions since they were the moderator. One of the participant stated "*The moderators could not successfully carry out that duty*" (P2). Furthermore, another participant described the setting of the NEC as:

Everyone could equally express themselves and what they say was written as an offer. That was very nice, yet, when it came to the turning these offers to written proposal, only some of the academicians' statements or the statements of people from MoNE could be identified as proposals and voted. The statement of just one person or different views proposed by them become weak and were not valued. (P15)

Another code that emerged related to the setting of the NEC is the participants and their distribution in the commissions. There was a contradiction that while some of the participants indicated that they had the report of the NEC before they came to the council, others stated that they did not have this report; besides, they did not know which commissions they would be assigned to. For this reason, the participants highlighted that the discussion became simple and ordinary. However, considering the 17th National Education Council regulations of the MoNE which is based on the 3797 numbered regulation, it was stated that the reports needed to be sent to each participant within 30 days (MoNE, 2006). Moreover, this item was changed in the 19th NEC regulation and this was indicated as within 10 days (MoNE, 2011). On the other hand, participants claimed that ministry could not control whether participants used their votes in their commission or not.

MoNE could not inspect the people and their commissions. Normally, the member of the commission need to vote. Therefore, ministry could not properly check whether the people in that room are the members of that commission or

not. I realized the problems related to that issue since I saw the people voting who are not in that commission. (P11)

In addition to these, participants emphasized the impact of unions during this process regardless of the equal chance of participation.

Different practices among NECs and commissions

The last theme of the structure and nature of NEC is different practices among commissions and NECs. Starting from the difference among the councils, participants highlighted various practices such as variety of the participants, different regulations, the impact of the unions, voting, and implementation of the decisions, budget and the place of the organization. According to the participants, all of NECs did not reflect the variety in the society; yet, some of the participants made a distinction among the NECs. Some of the participants, especially those who attended all of the last three councils and who organized these councils indicated that the 17th NEC was more technical while NECs started to be much more ideological and monotype from the 17th council to the 19th councils.

I could easily say that the range of participation for 16th, 15th, 14th and 9th NECs was quite extensive which drew attention of the public opinion. I can say that 17th was also like that. If you look at the participants, you could also see that. In the 19th NEC, the range of participants changed. The 19th NEC was not successful in being representative of Turkey. (P12)

There was also a difference in relation to the setting of the councils, one of the participants stated that “*There was much more tension in the 19th NEC than the others*” (P13). Generally, the participants mostly indicated that 19th NEC was less successful in reflecting the variety. On the other hand, two of the participants stated that 19th NEC was much more on agenda since the decisions of the 18th NEC were implemented. Furthermore, participants emphasized the fact there was a regulation change in each council, mostly in relation to the participants. Considering the regulations, it was seen

that there were changes in some parts, particularly the regulations related to selection of participants in which the number of participants were reduced (MoNE, 2006, 2011). On the other hand, some of the participants remarked the unions as the dominant force during all the NECs. Moreover, one of the participants highlighted that while students and parents could not vote in the 17th and the 18th NEC, they could use their votes in the 19th NEC; in a sense, they were involved in the decision-making process.

Considering the different practice among NECs related to the implementation of the decisions, one of the participants specified that *“Most of the 17th council decisions were not implemented. Most of the decisions of the 18th councils were implemented by changing the decisions which were taken in the council.”* (P6). Another different practice is the budget and the place of the councils. Some of the participants stated that the place of the councils was changed in each council and the councils started to be organized in other cities instead of Ankara. Furthermore, the participants criticized the budget for the NECs and they remarked that since the NECs were organized outside Ankara, the budget required for the NECs increased.

Millions of Turkish lira were spent for the NECs. In 18th NEC, 1 million 200 thousand Turkish liras were spent. Normally, 800 thousand budget was formed for the 19th NEC and that was not sufficient. There was a general meeting in the National Education Foundation and we took 400 thousand from them. (P8)

From that point, participants supported NECs to be organized in Ankara by using the state resources. Due to excessive and luxury expenses such as organizing the NECs in different cities and in expensive hotels, the budget of the NECs is too high. Considering this, the outcomes and efficiency of the NECs is not adequate, according to participants.

In addition to the different practice among the three councils, the participants highlighted the different practice among the commissions in which some of the commissions were much more contradictive than the others. According to the participants, the commissions related to the instructional program always had more

heated debate compared to other commissions as is confirmed by the participant: *“The commission related to the curriculum was the most contradictive one; school security and teacher quality commissions were not so much hot”*(P11). Moreover, one of the participants confirmed this by stating: *I would specifically say that in the most discussed commission; instructional program, what I observe is that the unions were too dominant in that commission. (P3)*

To summarized, there were five themes that emerged related to the structure and nature of NEC; structural issues, functional issues, historical perspective, issues related to the setting and different practice among commission and NECs; some of these themes include sub-themes as well. Participants positively evaluated the structure of NEC that enabled a discussion platform to decide with various stakeholders. Furthermore, NEC has a historical value for all participants. However, they claimed that the positive structure of the NECs could not be used functionally since this platform was formed homogeneously which caused NECs having a seemingly democratic environment. Additionally, participants indicated the setting of the NECs as similar whereas some of them emphasized the change from 17th council to 19th NEC. Namely, 17th NEC was perceived as more technical; 18th and 19th NECs were ideological and political.

4.2.2. Actors of NEC

Another theme, which gave an explanation for the first research question to describe the process of NEC, is the actors of NEC. NEC includes various stakeholders with various capabilities. As a result of this, participants mentioned many things related to the participants by distinguishing them as governmental and non-governmental actors. There are three sub- themes elicited in terms of actors of NEC; the profile of participants, types of actors and lack of transparent criteria for choosing participants as can be seen in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: *Sub-themes emerged related to the actors of NEC*

Actors of NEC	Frequency
Lack of transparent criteria for choosing participants	14
The profile of participants	13
Types of actors	11

Types of actors

As it is stated below, participants identified two types of actors; governmental and non-governmental actors and the rate of participation of these two types of actors changes in each NEC depending on the regulations of that particular NEC.

NEC involved all the participants from education sector. When we say education sector, what we mean is; MoNE and bureaucrats, teachers and the institutions that train teachers, the unions that aggregate teachers, associations related to the education, non-governmental organizations, education researchers, other researchers, columnist and so on. (P5)

There is an expectation of the participation of the specific groups: academicians, non-governmental organizations, experts in MoNE, teachers, various unions, and delegates of these unions who represent the entire country. (P7)

MoNE, members of HEC, academicians and teachers emerged as the governmental actors while unions, civil society organization appeared as non-governmental actors. Furthermore, 11 of the participants specified the same actors in the three NECs; however, they indicated that they did not know the rate of these participants in the NECs. In the regulation, all of these actors were mentioned in all regulations. However, in the 17th council report, it was indicated there was 17.8% of the participants were academicians, 36.49% were members of MoNE and 10.97% were from other institutions (MoNE 17th Council Report, 2007; p.279). Considering the 18th

NEC, those numbers were listed as 48.8% were members of MoNE, 8.9% were academicians, and 5.6% were non-governmental organizations (ERG, 2010; p.37).

The profile of participants

Another sub-theme is the profile of participants mentioned by 13 of the participants. Most of the participants criticized the people in the three NECs since they were not qualified and prepared.

NEC was too crowded; yet, the people in that crowd were not the ones who were sensitive to that issue, who had studied it or expressed their opinions. (P7)

Those people were not the right ones so that we reacted. They were only the ones who raised their hands in the voting since the opinions of the experts were not valued. (P7)

The participants in the NEC were weak.....There was no preparation and the people (participants of the NEC) there were not ready either. (P2)

On the other hand, one of the participants specified that all of the participants in the NECs were quite qualified (P10). Moreover, most of the participants stated that teachers were not active in this process all of whom gave their place to the unions. For this reason, participants highlighted that unions were previously prepared for the councils by holding meetings and preparing reports. Analyzing the documents, it is seen that nearly all of the unions who participated in the NEC prepared documents and held meetings. Türk-Eğitim-Sen (2010) and İGEDER (2011) prepared a document for 18th council while Eğitim-Bir-Sen (2014) prepared a document related to the topics of the 19th council and they also organized a conference by including various stakeholders. On the other hand, other participants generally did not read the documents prepared by the MoNE that influenced the quality of discussion as well (ERG, 2014). This may be due to the change in the regulation. While in the 17th

regulation, the document was sent 30 days before the organization, in the last regulation it was stated that it was electronically sent 10 days before the councils. Furthermore, some of the participants in the council did not get the document. Additionally, participants remarked the individual efforts in the process of NEC.

You know how there are groups of people who generally attend commissions with the thought: Well, I was asked to attend the council, so I did and beyond that I don't have to state my opinions. There were people who did not share any opinions. As I have told you, individual efforts showed itself. Those who attended as a matter of form just raise their hands in the voting. (P14)

Regarding these different profiles of the participants, one of the participants interrogated the qualification of the NECs' participants by stating:

Do the people attended in the NECs come to the councils really having pondered the issues or do they strengthen the place of their political views and ideology in the field of education? (P5)

Lastly, most of the participants described the profile of the participants as close to the one side.

While choosing the participants of the NECs, most of the people that were selected were chosen from those that have the same one-sided mindset. (P4)

Lack of transparent criteria for choosing participants

The last theme is the lack of transparent criteria for choosing participants mentioned by 14 out of 15 participants. Of these 14 participants, 2 of them (P1, P10) stated that the criteria for selecting participants were quite objective while others had different views. Participants from MoNE highlighted the impact of the regulation of NEC in the process of choosing participants

One secretariat is chosen for this, they make announcements by considering the topics identified in the secretariat. They take information related to the announcements, selecting among them and invite people. (P8)

Mostly, participants did not know the criteria of choosing participants and even they did not know how they were chosen for the NEC. They listed the groups; teachers, principals, unions, academicians, to name a few as an answer to the criteria. However, they criticized that process since it was not transparent and the criterion was not definite. Furthermore, participants indicated that the setting of NEC perceived as monotony showed how participants were chosen.

No matter from which occupational group participants are, it can remain constant; yet, they should be chosen more objectively. The sample over there does not reflect the reality. It is not random. That is to say, the men in the MoNE who organized this made the selection thinking, "I need a barber, where can I find him, I should ask the principal I know. I should choose among the barbers that I know who think like me instead of doing a random drawing (P15).

Analyzing the regulation, there is a section related to stakeholders to invite to NECs in the regulation of 17th and 18th and 19th councils. In the 17th council regulation, most of the participants were listed by stating the types of stakeholders that should be included and the numbers (MoNE, 2006). On the other hand, in the last regulation, that list was removed and there were two groups listed including governmental and non-governmental actors (MoNE, 2014). Furthermore, ERG (2014) and Toprak and Külekçi (2015) highlighted this issue by stating this was not organized in a transparent way.

Participants criticized this process since they did not choose people in a pluralist way so that the setting of NEC was perceived as homogeneous, men, union and MoNE dominant. On the other hand, considering the regulation regarding selecting participants, there were not clear specifications.

To conclude, there were three themes in relation to actors of NEC; the profile of participants, types of actors and lack of transparent criteria for choosing participants. According to participants and the regulations, there are two types of actors in NECs; governmental actors and non-governmental actors and NEC has various ranges of

participants. Yet, most of these participants were not qualified and experienced in the field of education. Moreover, the criteria of choosing these participants were not explicit both in the regulation and for the ministry.

Findings for Research Question 2

In this section, findings related to the second research question “What role does National Educational Council play in the process of policy-making?” will be discussed. The themes that emerged from the data for this research questions are the role of the NECs as a tool which was mentioned by 13 of the participants and the role of the NEC as a platform which was remarked by 9 of the participants.

4.2.3. The Role of NEC as a Tool

As it can be seen in the table 4.3, sub-themes emerged in order to describe the role of the NEC as a tool in the process of policy-making, which has three sub-themes; tool for testing the waters, tool for legitimization and tool for receiving information respectively. Considering the role of the NEC as a tool, most of the interviewees highlighted NEC as an advisory board as it is written in the regulation of NEC and in the other documents (ERG, 2014; MoNE, 2014; Tedmem, 2014). Furthermore, most of those participants, including the ones from MoNE stated that NEC was not effective in policy-making, however, this effectiveness depends on various factors; the will of ministry, the power of unions, to name a few. On that point, one of the interviewees emphasized that;

Rather than developing a policy, the NECs serve for policies. Our policy is that; for this reason, we need to take these decisions in NEC. This is what I feel. (P9)

Table 4.3: *Sub-themes emerged related to the role of the NEC as a tool*

Sub-themes	Frequency
Tool for testing the waters	10
Tool for legitimization	8
Tool for receiving information	5

Tool for testing the waters

NECs were used as a tool for testing the waters, in a sense, for checking the public opinion. Regarding this, one of the interviewees remarked, “*According to me, the main role of the NEC is to identify the views of the society regarding the determined issues*” (P5). Furthermore, this also makes NECs a test tool.

The impact of the NEC on education policy seems like a tool for testing. When some ideas come to the fore from time to time and are discussed beyond the NEC, NEC serves as a public opinion poll. (P12)

Additionally, nearly half of the interviewees emphasized the NEC as an opportunity for outpouring of feelings and ideas. Participants indicated that MoNE organized NEC with the purpose of getting reactions, making people talk, shouting slogans and making themselves heard. As a result of this, participants, the society, feel relief and interviewees called this “*the act of venting*”.

There is a versatile venting in NEC. We can talk about the type of venting in which people voice their opinions. (P3)

On the other hand, some of the participants indicated that NEC gives them a chance to vent to the union by enabling them to voice its agenda.

Tool for legitimization

Another sub-theme is the *tool for legitimization* mentioned by 8 of the interviewees. In addition to this, other interviewees also remarked that point but indirectly. According to interviewees, the ministry used NEC when they felt the lack of

legitimacy. In that sense, they used NEC as a basis for their policies because of the fact that NEC provided a platform with various stakeholders.

MoNE used the decisions of NEC as a basis by organizing broad participation meetings which have high authority. The decisions of NEC are in the quality of advisory, yet they have the high authority. For this reason, they use these decisions by depending on the NEC, they feel powerful. So, NECs should be shows as the source for the decisions of the ministry. (P7)

Furthermore, participants remarked that MoNE assigned a technical identity to the NECs and they benefited from them for simplifying what they want to do or strengthening their policies (P4). The interviewees, especially the ones from MoNE, pointed out that NEC was not effective in the process of policy-making, it just had an impact when the ministry felt the lack of legitimacy. As an example of using NECs for legitimization, interviewees highlighted the 4+4+4 decision.

When you are developing a policy and when your lack of legitimacy arise, you make a decision to provide legitimacy and what you do is to legitimize it. At that point, the thing you notice is 4+4+4 and the NEC. (P3)

On the other hand, participants indicated MoNE remarked the participatory structure of NEC while using them as a legitimization tool. One of the interviewees stated that “*Since the NECs bring together various sides, it provides different justification for the government which means “look! We bring together different parts; that is the decision; let’s implement this”.* (P2)

Considering the role of the NEC as a tool for legitimization, one of the interviewee questioned the role of the NEC by stating;

Do NECs really perform the role of identifying the policies and do they lead the way for the politicians or are they used by the politicians with intent to legitimize their policies. (P5)

Tool for receiving information

The last sub-theme is the tool for receiving information. Participants perceived NEC as a setting to give information to the MoNE about the current issues. They emphasized this as a mutual relationship in which participants of the NEC enabled information for the MoNE while the ideas of MoNE are partially lightened by these ideas.

4.2.4. The role of NEC as a platform

Considering the role of NEC as a platform, there are two sub-themes; platform for discussion and platform for agenda formation.

Table 4.4: *Sub-themes emerged related to the role of the NEC as a platform*

Sub-themes	Frequency
Platform for discussion	7
Platform for agenda formation	5

Platform for discussion

Seven interviewees indicated that NEC enabled a platform for discussing the current issues related to education. Participants positively evaluated the role of NEC as a discussion platform because NEC ensured this discussion platform not only with various stakeholders but also with ministry. Through NECs, people had chance of expressing their ideas and having relief as well. Furthermore, one of the interviewees evaluated its role as a conference. While other participants indicated that the decisions of this NEC would shape the education policies.

The NEC provided a significant platform for MoNE so as to listen to the other stakeholders of education besides ministry, to understand them, to see their problems and again hear suggestions out of ministry, to evaluate this and discuss explicitly. (P11)

Furthermore, the role of the NEC as a platform for discussion was mentioned by various participants who were involved in the NECs and whose dialogues were included in the report of the 17th and 18th council excluding the interviewees of this research (MoNE 17th and 18th Council Report, 2007 & 2011).

Platform for agenda formation

Related to the platform for agenda formation, some of the participants indicated that NEC was intentionally used by the ministry in order to form an agenda, form a basis for policies or strengthen their agenda as well. For his reason, some of the interviewees thought that NEC was organized and formed to serve this purpose.

They formed a NEC with their followers, they give a set of ordered decisions to that NEC and those decisions are made in that NEC. (P4)

Analyzing the documents, it was found that the same criticism was also made by the participants of 17th council and the minister of education claimed the opposite by saying that the ministry would not organize NEC if it directed the decisions beforehand (MoNE 17th Council Report, 2007, p.146).

Moreover, some of the interviewees highlighted the role of the NEC as a platform for giving support for the identified agenda of the ministry or else NECs are not effective in identifying the policies. *NEC provides a policy identifier platform yet they do not identify policies. (P5)* Additionally, other participant stated: *NECs serve for policy rather than identify policies. We have that policy so that these decisions needed to be taken at NEC. (P9)*

Analyzing the documents of NEC, the role of the NEC was also defined from the similar perspective. In the report of the 17th and 18th council, leading people such as the minister of MoNE, president, prime minister and the head of board of education and discipline highlighted that NEC shape the education policies organized as scientific meetings in which common mind is operated. Moreover, the previous prime minister stated that NEC is a platform in which identifier; indicative and forming decisions are taken. They identified those decisions as the backbone of the action plan

(MoNE Council Report, 2011). Similarly, minister of MoNE during 17th council defined the role of the NEC as the upmost advisory to the national education policies. On the other hand, ERG (2014) indicated in the report related to the function of NEC that the role of the NEC in policy-making process is not clearly identified.

To conclude, there were two themes identified for the role of NEC in policy-making; role as a tool which has sub-themes; tool for testing the waters, tool for legitimization and tool for receiving information and role as a platform which has two sub-themes; platform for discussion and platform for agenda formation. Nearly all of the participants indicated that NECs do not have an active role in the process of policy-making. At first hand, interviewees remarked its role as an advisory board. However, they specified that there are times that the NEC is being more than advisory board. At this point, interviewees identified its role both as a tool for learning the reactions of the society and tool for legitimization, and platform for discussing the issues as well as a platform for forming the agenda.

Findings for Research Question 3

Regarding the third research question “What are the factors that make the decisions taken at NEC applicable by MoNE? How does MoNE benefit from the decisions taken at NEC?”, there were three themes that emerged; policy-making and NECs decisions mentioned by 14 participants, the criteria for practicing decisions highlighted by 9 participants and the features of the decisions stated by 14 participants.

Table 4.5: *Themes and sub-themes emerged related to the research question 3*

Themes and Subtemes*	Frequency
Policymaking and Necs’ decisions	14
4+4+4	11
The criteria for practicing decisions	9
Features of the decisions	14

*The themes and sub-themes do not aggregate codes from the child nodes.

4.2.5. Policy-making and NECs' decisions

Fourteen of the interviewees mentioned about the relation between policy-making and the decisions of NEC. Nearly all of the interviewees, including the ones from ministry indicated that the decisions of NECs were not effective in policy-making because there are many factors that influence this process. However, when it is considered in the long term, some of those decisions were implemented in the policy-making process, according to the interviewees. Although interviewees indicated that NECs do not have an impact in the policy-making process, they highlighted that in some circumstances where there was a political component, the decisions taken at the NEC were influential in policy-making and they were implemented by the ministry. According to the interviewees, policies were politically developed in general. For this reason, some of the decisions of NEC were implemented, while others were excluded.

There was a discussion in plenary session related to which holy birth week, muharram ul haram and day of ashure should be taken into special days (belirli gün ve haftalar). When there was a discussion in the general assembly, they removed muharram ul haram due to its length and accepted day of ashure. In the beginning of this year, they published the calendar; they included holy birth week not the day of ashure. So, they implemented the ones that served their purpose. (P6)

On the other hand, one of the interviewee from ministry indicated that they sent the decisions made at the NEC to the relevant departments which used them when they formed the policies. However, other participants from the ministry emphasized that they did not benefit from the NEC's decisions if not needed.

While we made decisions in the ministry, there was no such thing as let's examine the NEC's decisions and then make policy. (P3)

As I have told you, NECs do not have an impact. There were decisions related to teacher training and staffing in the 18th NEC; but in the 19th NEC one of the topics of the commission is related to teacher training. Furthermore, after the 18th NEC, general directorate for teacher training organized another meeting

in Antalya. We put those decisions in the performance plan, if there are failing sides, they can see it in the performance plan and fix it. (P8)

Additionally, some of the interviewees highlighted that most of the decisions that were made in the 18th NEC and decisions most of which were implemented by the ministry and the government.

In addition to the general discussion of the policy-making and NECs decisions theme, there is one sub-theme that emerged which can be seen in table 4.5.

4+4+4

Talking about the policy-making and decisions of NEC in the same pot, nearly all of the interviewees indicated the decision of 4+4+4 from the 18th NEC. According to the participants, 4+4+4 policy was adopted from the 18 NEC and education system was reorganized within the framework of 4+4+4. Furthermore, they associated this with the ministry's wish to implement decisions of NEC.

They issue a decision; if it suits themselves, they immediately implement it, if not, they show the policy as a reason. For instance, 4+4+4. It was a decision made in the 18th NEC, it had an advisory nature yet it was implemented at once. The decisions related to teachers rights and salary are decisions that came out of the NEC as well but they left it to the finance department. (P15)

Moreover, interviewees initiated 4+4+4 as the only policy that benefitted from the decision of NEC due to lack of legitimacy during the policy-making process. For this reason, participants questioned whether 4+4+4 was applied as a result of being NEC decision or the decision of NEC was used to legitimize the 4+4+4 policy.

NEC was not given as reference in the process of policy development. There is only one thing related to the NEC throughout 15 or 20 years that we directly attribute to an active policy and that was 4+4+4. The possible reason of this is: I'm telling this as a person directly involved in the process, you made a decision in the grooming process, yet you do not have anything to directly

legitimate this. If Germany, France or Japan had a practice as 4+4+4, it is highly probable that you won't try to legitimize through the NEC. (P3)

4+4+4 is not a solution; there is something else behind this. (P8)

Analyzing the documents, it was seen that this system was offered as 1+4+4+4 including the early childhood education (MoNE 18th Council Report, 2011). However, this was practiced as 4+4+4 by based on the NEC decision which did not occur in a participatory environment (ERG, 2011) and it did not have a scientific base either (ERG, 2012).

4.2.6. The criteria for practicing decisions

Considering another theme related to the third research question “What are the factors that make the decisions taken at NEC applicable by MoNE? How does MoNE benefit from the decisions taken at NEC?”, two sub-themes emerged; suitability for government or ministry and suitability for agenda which was indicated in table 4.6.

Table 4.6: *Sub-theme emerged related to the criteria for practicing decisions*

Sub-themes	Frequency
Suitability for government or ministry	13
Suitability for agenda	7

Suitability for government or ministry

Thirteen of the interviewees indicated that the decisions of NEC were implemented if they were suitable for government or ministry or it depends on the desire of ministry; “*It is tendency of ministry. They are the issues that MoNE is inclined to support that MoNE feels they are the right current issues that they would like to see implemented*”. Furthermore, participants indicated that this tendency or desire of the ministry is shaped by the political issues because “political will” shape the education policies.

It seems like the practice of decisions depends rather on the choice of ministry and that choice is made politically because these are the advisory decisions they do not have to implement them, If they want to, they implement it; if not, they don't; or they implement them regarding political concerns. (P7)

The same situation is also indicated in the regulation of the 17th NEC in the item 19. According to that document, practicability of the decisions were determined by the ministry considering the efficacy and the priority of the decisions made in the NEC (MoNE, 2006). However, that item was removed in the last regulation and it was highlighted that the decisions of NEC was advisory (MoNE, 2014).

Suitability for agenda

The impact of government on practicing the decisions is related to the agenda of the ministry. 7 of the interviewees emphasized the suitability for agenda as another code of the criteria of practicing decisions. According to interviewees, being appropriate for the agenda of government, ministry or one of the specific union are the basic criteria for practicing the decisions.

Governments are being more receptive to the ones close to their agenda or to the thing they would like to implement and they use these decisions as justification. (P2).

In addition to these, interviewees emphasized other criteria to practice decisions such as meeting the needs of the society, finding solutions to the problems of ministry, being suitable for politics and economy and being realistic. Apart from these, some of the interviewees claimed that the decisions were not implemented as they were in the NEC; they were changed, adapted or reorganized. Analyzing the speech during the 18th NEC, it was seen that some of the participants complained about the issue that the text did not reflect what they talked about during the council (MoNE Council Report, 2011; p.203, 211). On the other hand, it was seen that the resolution proposed by the dominant union related to the teaching of religion and ethics course

from majority perspective was not accepted in the council (MoNE Council Report, 2011, p.661). Although, that resolution was not approved, it was published among the decisions of the 18th council (18th Council Decisions, item 39, 2010). Lastly, it was seen that the minister wanted authorization for redaction in the 18th council by claiming that the decisions contradicted with the regulations approved by the participants (MoNE 18th Council Report, 2011; p. 694).

4.2.7. The features of the decisions

Another theme is the features of the decisions mentioned by the 14 interviewees in which various features are emerged such as scientific, pedagogic, political, ideological pluralistic and general type of decisions. More than half of the interviewees indicated that the decisions of the NEC were far from the pedagogy and science mostly based on the desire of interest groups rather than scientific knowledge or data which was also mentioned in the documents (Eğitim-Sen, 2015; ERG, 2010). Additionally, ERG (2015) indicated that the decisions and discussions in the 19th council were based on neither data nor the report of MoNE. Furthermore, interviewees remarked that the decisions reflected the idea of majority so that they were not reconciliation decisions but pluralistic ones. For this reason, interviewees criticized the decisions because they believed the setting of the NEC did not represent the reality. As a result of this, decisions were impressed by the interest groups. Furthermore, some of the interviewees claimed that all of the decisions of the specific union was almost approved by the majority.

While choosing the participants, mainly selecting from a particular section of the society and including bureaucrats who are close to the government influences the decisions towards that direction. (P14)

Additionally, interviewees specified that the decisions could not be effective in solving the problems because they did not reflect the reality of the society. On the other hand, 2 out of 14 interviewees claimed that the decisions were pedagogic, scientific and based on consensus.

I believe they have scientific extent; and they are consensus decision since majority of the participants voted in general assembly. In general assembly 80% or 90% said yes to the decisions. (P10)

To summarize, there were three themes specified in relation to third research question; policy-making and NECs' decisions, the criteria for practicing the decisions and the quality of the decisions. According to the participants of this study, the decisions of the NEC had the quality of being ideological, political and pluralistic rather than being scientific and pedagogic regardless of which NEC they were made. Furthermore, interviewees emphasized the suitability for government or ministry and to the agenda as the criteria of practicing the decisions. They also specified the impact of decisions on the policy-making process by exemplifying it through the policy of 4+4+4.

Findings for Research Question 4

The theme that emerged related to the research question 4 How do ideologies play role in the policy-making process, specifically 17th, 18th and 19th NECs? was ideological formation of NEC. This theme has three sub-themes: process of choosing the participants, decisions taken in the councils and the decisions implemented by the ministry.

Furthermore, the fourth research question has one sub-questions which is “What role do policy actors play in the NEC?”. Regarding this sub-question, there is one theme that emerged; dynamics of NEC. Firstly, the main fourth question will be discussed. Afterwards, the sub-theme that emerged for the fourth research question will be put forward.

4.2.8. Ideological formation of NEC

Eight of the interviewees directly referred to the ideological formation of NEC by using the word “ideology”. As it can be seen in table, there are three sub-themes related to ideological formation of NEC; process of choosing the participants,

decisions taken in the councils and decisions implemented by the ministry. In addition to those 8 interviewees, there were also other participants who indirectly mentioned the effect of ideology.

Table 4.7: *Sub-themes that emerged related to the ideological formation of NEC*

Sub-themes	Frequency
Process of choosing the participants	10
Decisions taken in the councils	12
Decisions implemented by the ministry	13

According to the interviewees, ideology mostly showed itself in the formation of NEC which also included the idea of shaping education, participants and the decisions. Interviewees evaluated the education as a field through which any government wants to shape the society in light of their ideology and NEC served an ideological structure to carry out their ideology.

On the ideological nature of state, each side that wants to come to power has different ideological definition. More importantly, education's being on the focus for this, accepting the pivotal role of education in shaping the society are being rather distinctive. For this reason, education field in Turkey stays as ideological and it is not a rational field. Considering from this perspective, each political power defines education as central role to form society they want and they try to shape the society by way of education. This is extremely authoritarian manner and you can see this in the NECs as well.

Process of choosing the participants

As indicated in the table 4.7, 10 of the participants highlighted the process of choosing the participants in response to the question related to ideology. This sub-theme is also related to two sub-themes of this research which are “lack of transparent

criteria of choosing the participants” and “ideological perspective”. Namely, since there were no criteria in relation to how to choose the participants, the ministry selected the stakeholders who are close to their ideology. In relation to this, one of the participants indicated:

The participants were eligible people. Although there were various stakeholders such as academicians and principles, these people were governed by the ministry. These were the ones who got close relationship with the ministry. That is why they were chosen. (P15)

Additionally, another participant remarked the similar point with different words in which he stated:

In NECs, 80% of the participants had the similar point of view. (P4)

To summarize, the participants experienced the general structure of the NECs as ideological and they indicated there were no criteria of choosing the participants which also reflected onto the process of choosing the participants.

Decisions taken in the councils

As it can be seen in the table 4.7, 12 of the participants experienced the decisions taken in the councils as ideological. NECs were ideologically designed, according to the participants. Having an ideological structure has reflected in the process and the decisions as well. Furthermore, this sub-theme is also related to the theme “features of the decisions” in which the participants experienced the decisions of the NECs as ideological, political and unpedagogical. Considering this, the participants stated:

There are ideological objectives so that ministry would like to issue a decision in specific issues. (P2)

Motions that have ideological and political tone were issued from the NECs. (P1)

Furthermore, some of the participants analyzed that all issues related to the religion were accepted as a decision. Since the participants indicated how the formation of the councils were ideological and the participants were selected ideologically, this was also reflected into the decisions made by these participants.

Decisions implemented by the ministry

The last theme in relation to the ideological nature of the NEC is the decisions implemented by the ministry which was stated by 13 participants. This sub-theme is also related to two other themes “suitability for government or ministry” and “suitability for agenda”. Participants stated that the ministry implemented the decisions which were close to their ideology. In relation to this, one of the participants highlighted:

The governments selected among the decisions that were close to their ideological or political position. (P5).

Furthermore, ideological practice could also be identified from the aspect of decisions. According to interviewees, religious education, 4+4+4 and coeducation were reflections of conservative ideology that was mostly voiced by the dominant union. Analyzing the documents of Eđitim-Sen (2015), they specified that the dominant union is the subcontractor of the government and they proposed issues mostly related to the religious education. Dinçer (2012) and İnal (2012) identified 4+4+4 practice as ideological based on conservative- neoliberalism. On the other hand, Aksoy (2012) stated that 4+4+4 practice is a tool for satisfying the expectations of the market and having conservative society.

Briefly, there was one theme, ideological formation of NEC with three sub-themes; process of choosing the participants, decisions taken in the councils and decisions implemented by the ministry. Ideology mostly has an impact on the formation part, which directly influences the structure and the decisions of NEC, according to participants. One of the participant summarized how ideology took part in the NEC by stating:

There is a dominant ideology represented by the ruling political power. There are NEC participants chosen with the effect of this ideology and the offers of these participants, which are suitable to this ideology, manifest itself. (P4)

4.2.9. Dynamics of NEC

There is also one sub-research question of the fourth research question related to the ideology that query the “the roles of the policy actors at the process of at 17th, 18th and 19th NECs”. One theme, dynamics of NEC illustrated the actors during the NEC’s process with two sub-themes; *dramatis personae* and power by participants.

Table 4.8: *Sub-themes emerged related to the dynamics of NEC*

Dynamics of NEC	Frequency
Dramatis personae	14
Power of participants	13
Power of unions	13
Power of ministry	12
Relationship among participants	9

Dramatis Personae

As it can be seen in the table, 14 out of 15 interviewees listed the influential participants of the NEC. All of the interviewees excluding one participant stated unions as the first and most influential actor during the councils regardless of the 17th, 18th and 19th NEC or the commissions. According to interviewees including academicians, ministry, unions and teachers, unions dominated the setting of NEC and they were quite effective in making decisions and during the process in general which could also be observed in the report of the 18th council (MoNE 18th Council Report, 2011). Furthermore, they prepared documents before the council in order to have an impact on both the participants and the decisions.

Unions were the influential actors because they are organized and came providently. Inside the NEC they also have at least one delegate. On the other

hand, dominant union has lots of delegates so that it reflects its opinions there. Therefore, I think unions were the most influential ones and no decision that is not approved by the union was accepted there. (P13)

Considering the documents prepared by the unions, it is seen that the decisions taken by one of the unions were the much-debated issue in the 19th council; coeducation, religious education, optional courses and alcohol preparation course of vocational high school and those decisions were made as they were written in the documents (Eğitim-Bir-Sen, 2014, p.18-21) In addition to these, some of the interviewees indicated academicians and ministry as the effective participants after the unions in which while academicians dominated the setting by using scientific jargon, ministry used its experience in bureaucracy.

Power by Participants

Interviewees stated that they felt pressure, in other words, political power which manifested itself over various participants; ministry and the union, in the council. 13 of the interviewee emphasized the power of the unions according to whom the unions dominated the process and affected the decisions in each council, specifically the 18th and 19th councils. The unions emphasized that they wrote documents and organized meetings in order to have an impact on the decisions which was also observed by the other interviewees and they highlighted that unions rearranged the delegates of the NECs with the aim of behaving in a collective manner. Moreover, unions emphasized that they became the followers of the NEC's decisions to make them implemented and they formed pressure on the ministry by using those decisions as a trump. For instance; the dominant union stated that they gave the offer for the policy 4+4+4 and it was approved in the NEC which was also observed in the report of the 18th council that it was proposed as 1+4+4+4 by the dominant union and taken as a decision in the 18th council, item 2 (MoNE council Report, 2011). Afterwards, they held several meetings with the ministry and got it approved although the minister objected to it. On the other hand, interviewees specified that the decisions

of the NEC mostly match with the agenda of the dominant union. According to interviewees, nearly all of the offers of the dominant union was easily accepted in the NEC that was associated with the political aspect of the unions.

We think that this is an open organization in which the unions under the sway of the government mainly expressed themselves. (P6)

Since the dominant union felt itself close to the government, their decisions were more easily accepted. (P14)

Additionally, most of the participants indicated that the union also dominated the setting with its own delegates which resulted in acceptance of their decisions.

In addition to the unions, 12 of the interviewees drew attention to the power of the ministry during the process of the council. Interviewees mostly highlighted the power of ministry during the organization process of the NEC and the implementation of the decisions. Ministry used its power specifically on choosing the participants and they included the ones close to them, according to the interviewees. Related to this, ERG (2010) indicated that MoNE reorganized the regulation of the NEC in which the dominance of the ministry increased to 75% from 60% (p.19). Depending on this, the NECs had the structure, which supported ministry to issue a decision they want.

It is not a big mistake that those in power take the initiative over who will be included in the participant's list as long as they don't overdo it. (P12)

Whatever decision they want, the ministry can issue it in the NEC. (P13)

On the other hand, interviewees criticized that the ministry used its power during implementing the decisions of the NECs and they associated this with the code suitability for agenda in which the ministry implemented the decision in accordance with their agenda. Furthermore, some of the decisions specified that the ministry also specified the topics to discuss another indicator of their power.

Relationship among the Participants

Lastly, 9 interviewees described the relationship among the participants during the process of the NECs illustrated in the figure 4.1 depending on the data of the interviewees. As it is stated before, the interviewees highlighted the impact of the union and the unions during the process. According to them, the dominated union and the other unions mostly came across during this process such as in the decisions of 4+4+4 or Ottoman Turkish; however, there were times that all of the unions supported the same thing such as decisions related to teacher rights and put pressure on the NEC in order to have the decision approved.

Analyzing the documents of 18th council, in the part of general meeting, it is seen that there was a heated debate between the dominant union and the other unions related to 4+4+4 and other issues (p.544- 625). Furthermore, it was stated by one of the other union that the resolution of their union was not approved by the participants by giving the example of increasing the number of dorms for students which was rejected while he claimed that each decision of the dominant union was accepted. Additionally, unions proposed a discussion on 4+4+4, yet, that was also rejected by the participants (MoNE 18th Council Report, 2011, p.694).

As it can be seen in the figure 4.1, Union 1, MONE, Union 2, Union 3 and 4 were effective during that process respectively and they had a close relationship while academicians, teachers, principals and other participants stayed out and could not have intimate relationship with the unions or MoNE to influence the decisions.

Additionally, most of the participants emphasized the relation between Union 1 and MoNE described by one of the interviewees (P6) as an “*organic link*”. Furthermore, they specified that union was mostly more effective than the MoNE which had a negative impact on MoNE while others perceived this as “*collusion*”.

In 19th NEC, I felt that some of the non-governmental organizations came into prominence that is beyond the initiative of the MoNE. From time to time, I witnessed that they became dominant; they came across with the ministry or the representatives of the ministry. (P12)

As it can be seen in the figure 4.1 MoNE and the Union 1 had close relationship which influenced the NEC process as well.

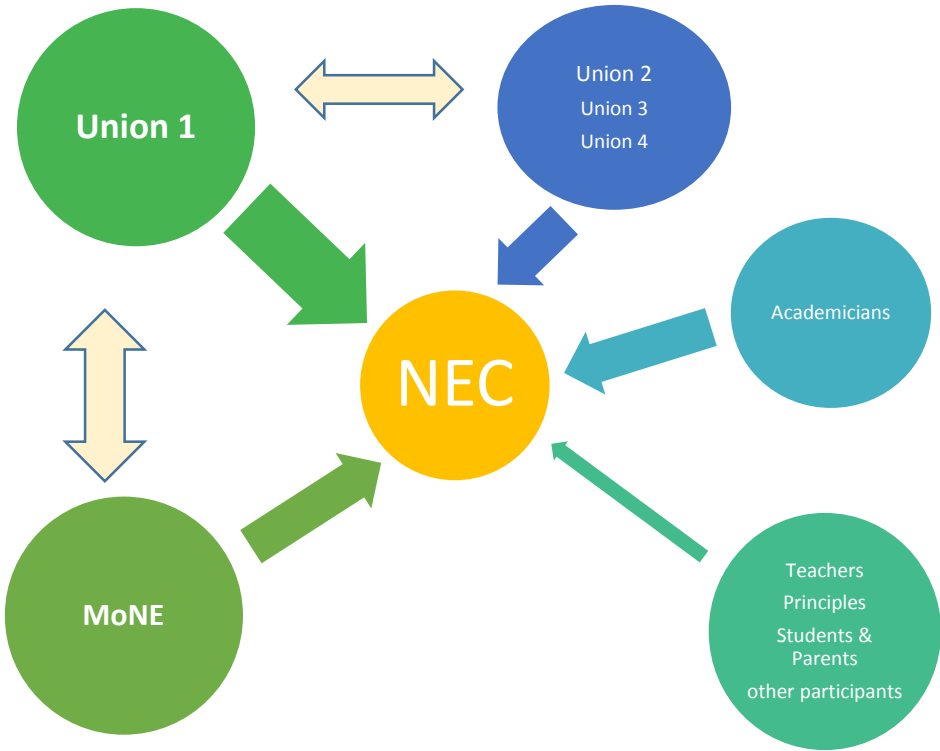


Figure 4.2: Relationship among the various participants of the NEC

To sum up, dramatis persona and power by participants were the themes emerged from the data. Participants listed unions, ministry and academicians as the influential actors. Among these, they perceived a strong relationship between unions and the ministry

4.2.10. Summary of the results

In this section, the overall results of the study obtained from the data will be discussed which is mainly based on the experiences of the participants in relation to the councils. There were a total of thirteen themes emerged from the data; structural issues, historical perspective, functional issues, issues related to the setting of the NECs, different practices among NECs and commissions; actors of NEC; the role of NEC as a tool, the role of NEC as a platform; policy-making and NECs decisions, the criteria for practicing the decisions, the features of the decisions; ideological formation

of NEC and dynamics of NEC respectively. For the first theme, NEC was evaluated as the participatory platform, which included various stakeholders and these participants were in direct contact with the ministry. However, NECs were not as functional as its structure. Namely, participants perceived that the minister purposefully formed NECs. As a result, NECs had homogenous and seemingly democratic environment.

For the second theme, there were governmental and non-governmental actors with various participants that enabled NECs having a participatory platform. However, the key findings of the study remarked that there were not any transparent criteria of choosing the participants of the council; moreover, most of these participants were not the right ones for these councils.

Regarding the third theme of the study, findings showed that NECs had the role as a tool and as a platform. This platform was used as a legitimization tool by the government or the ministry in order to support the policies they have made. On the other hand, NEC provided a platform for the ministry through which they received the information of the various actors and formed their agenda from this perspective.

For the fourth theme of the study, findings indicated that NECs were not effective in the policy-making process; whereas the ministry used the decisions when they felt lack of legitimacy. At this point, they benefitted from the decisions of the NECs since they were taken in a participatory platform. Moreover, there was no criterion in implementing the decisions of the NECs as it was in the choosing the participants of the councils.

Regarding the ideology and councils, participants indicated that NECs were ideologically formed by the ministry which could be observed in the process of choosing the participants, decisions taken in the councils and the decisions implemented by the ministry.

Lastly, findings remarked unions, ministry and academicians as the influential actors during the councils' process. Among these, unions dominated the proses since they were prepared for the issues and they had their own agenda. Participants stated that teachers could not be effective although those decisions would influence their

practices. Furthermore, there was a relationship between the ministry and the unions and for some decisions ministry supported the ideas of the unions, especially the ones closed to their ideology.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS

In this chapter, the results of the study will be discussed from the perspective of each research questions. Afterwards, the limitations of the study will be mentioned by the researcher. Lastly, the implications of the study considering the practice and future research will be listed.

5.1. Discussion

The main purpose of this study is to analyze how the participants experienced the role of National Education Council during the process of educational policy-making from the aspect of 17th, 18th and 19th NECs' participants.

The present study was designed as a qualitative research since the main concern is to put forward how participants of NEC experience the process these of councils and how they make sense of the last three NECs under the same governments rule. In order to answer the research questions, the data were retrieved from semi-structured interviews conducted with 15 participants that attended at least one of the last three NECs and documents including the regulations, the report of the 17th and 18th councils and the documents of the non-governmental organizations particularly for the 19th NEC. I coded and thematized the interviews after reading the transcriptions several times. Having the draft of several codes and themes, the researcher used NVivo in order to gather related codes together under related themes. As a result, there were thirteen main themes with several sub-themes; structural issues, historical perspective, functional issues, issues related to the setting of the NECs, different practices among NECs and commissions; actors of NEC; the role of NEC as a tool, the role of NEC as a platform; policy-making and NECs decisions, the criteria for practicing the decisions, the features of the decisions; ideological formation of NEC and dynamics

of NEC respectively. The elicited findings, in other words themes aligned with the four research questions.

5.1.1. The general structure of national educational council

In this part, the general structure of NEC will be discussed by based on the findings, documents and related studies. By this way, the first question that investigates the participants' description of the process of NEC will be answered.

Participants described National Educational Council from both positive and negative perspectives by considering its general structure. They highlighted the participatory structure of National Education Council including various stakeholders that cannot be observed in any structure of MoNE branches due to centralized education system of Turkey. At that point, National Education Council stands in a distinct position. Namely, any actor of education has a chance to get involved in the decision-making and policy-making process by proposing their ideas or by voting for the decisions (Regulation of NEC, 2014). For this reason, NEC is the most dynamic structure of MoNE. Similar to this finding, ERG (2010) states NEC as the most important mechanism in policy-making process since it provides participation of various actors. Furthermore, Karataş (2012) proposed NEC as a model in order to provide community involvement in education in the process of decentralization.

The historical perspective of NEC was another positive side identified by the participants. NECs were organized since 1923 that makes them historically powerful. According to Akyüz (2008), NEC is a tradition of Turkish education system, which enabled various decisions being implemented in order to ensure high quality education (Aslaner, 2008; Eriş, 2006).

However, the negative sides of the NEC outnumbered its positive aspects according to the participants' experiences of the NEC. Although participants evaluated NEC's structure as powerful and participatory, they listed several negative factors such as having political, pluralist, homogeneous and seemingly democratic environment. According to the regulation of MoNE (2014), BoED is responsible from organizing each NEC by inviting various actors in relation to education. At that point, they formed

homogeneous NEC platform in which male participants, MoNE and ideologically close union form the majority that negatively influences the participatory structure of NEC. In order to remark the homogeneous structure, Tedmem (2014) states that there are no principals or educators in school security commission of the NEC, although they are the main actors of the school setting. On the other hand, ERG (2010) criticized the number of participants from ministry since it was more than other participants. This shows the fact that NEC could not function as an advisory board to ministry as most of the participants were from its own body. Furthermore, Eğitim Bir-Sen (2014) criticized the structure of NEC since it could not ensure the parameters of participatory democracy such as the organization process of NEC and the identification of topics or issues which were centrally stated by the MoNE.

On the other hand, although NEC was not designed in this way in the regulation, currently they have political and ideological tone that is also found in other studies (Carpenter-Kılınc, 2007; Göktürk, 2006). Having ideological, political and homogeneous formation, the structure of NEC moves away from participative and democratic environment. Dağ (2013) also stated a need for more participative environment in the councils.

Another debated issue of the NEC is the profile of the participants related to which the results indicated that most of these participants were not qualified and prepared for the NEC; in a sense, they did not comprehend the importance of such a dynamic environment. This mostly arises from the lack of transparent criteria of choosing these participants. Although the list of stakeholders is identified in the regulation (MoNE, 2014), the criteria of choosing among these participants are not clearly classified that gives a power to ministry to shape the structure of NEC. This finding is similar to the other findings in the literature (ERG, 2014; ERG; 2015; Karataş, 2014; Toprak & Külekçi, 2014). ERG (2014) indicated in its reports that NEC did not represent the society since there was not equal distribution among the participants that causes problems in representation, transparency and participation (ERG, 2015). Furthermore, Karataş (2014) highlighted the problems related to

transparency that the list of participants and how these participants chosen were chosen was not shared by the ministry.

Additionally, the homogeneous environment and transparency issue negatively influences both structure and the decisions of NEC since the decisions were made in a pluralistic way. As a result, the dominant group had the power of influencing both the process and the decisions, which is a natural outcome of homogeneous and ideological formation of the councils.

5.1.2. The role of NEC in policy-making process

Policy-making is a dynamic (Taylor et al., 1997) and unpredictable process (Cairney, 2012) in which various stakeholders are in conflict with each other in order to influence the educational policy-making process based on their interests (Trowler, 2003). There are many theories that explain the policy-making process from their own perspective. However, these theories of policy-making fall short in identifying policy-making as a process so that there is a policy-cycle tool, which explains the process of policy-making by excluding the government issue.

NEC is listed among the tools of educational policy-making in addition to government programs, SPO and DP (Şişman, 2008). Although it was stated as policy-making tool, the role of these councils could not be clarified in the literature (ERG, 2014). The results of the data indicated two prominent roles of NEC; as a tool and as a platform. Regarding these findings, it is seen that NEC functioned as an agenda formation rather than policy formulation tool that could be aligned with the issue definition and agenda setting step of the policy-cycle approach. Firstly, MoNE proposed the main topics for discussion in this platform whereas the participants from various stakeholders shaped the decision that may result in reaching to agenda and formulation of a policy as it was happened in the 4+4+4 policy. However, in the regulation of NEC and in the literature, it was defined as a consulting body to the MoNE (Akay, 2010; Ayaz, 2009; Deniz; 2001; ERG, 2014; MoNE, 2014; Tedmem, 2014). On the other hand, there also other studies which indicated that NEC does not have a clear position in this process and it is not effective in the policy-making process

(Aydın, 1996; Aslaner, 2008; ERG; 2014). Aslaner (2008) found out that NEC was not effective in the Turkish education system while Aydın (1996) evaluated the impact of NEC in policy-making process as limited. Furthermore, ERG (2014) emphasized that the role of the NEC during this process is not clear.

In addition to those findings, this study specified the role of the NEC as an issue definition and agenda formation tool by indicating NEC is both effective and ineffective in policy-making process compared to other studies conducted from the aspect of the participants. Namely, NEC is not a platform for formulating policies; rather than this, it functions as an issue definition and agenda setting tool in the policy-making process. At that point, the government and MoNE tried to shape their agenda by using the platform of NEC. Furthermore, NEC is a platform for discussing the issues related to the education. Additionally, NEC provided flow of information between MoNE and other stakeholders; by this way, MoNE could know their ideas about certain situations.

Most importantly, the results indicated that the role of the NEC transformed from policy formation tool to legitimization tool used by the government and MoNE. Although the initial conducted councils highlighted the policies formulated by the NECs (Aslaner, 2008; Deniz, 2001), the current study showed that the councils lost their efficiency in formulating new policies; as a result, they are not influential in the policy-making process (Aydın, 1996; Dağ, 2013; ERG; 2014; Tedmem, 2014). Similar to this, nearly all of the participants evaluated NECs as inefficient in the policy-making process; however, NECs and the decisions that were made in that participatory environment are used for ensuring legitimization by the government.

Regarding the participants' description, NEC does not properly function as a policy-making tool. Although it was designed as a policy formulation tool through which policies were made in the first years of the republic when there was a need for such a structure (Deniz, 2001), it evolves into issue definition and agenda setting tool under the name of advisory board. This situation makes councils become more complex and debated structure because all of the decisions or issues defined in the process of these councils could not make it to the agenda and the main reason is the

government factor. Namely, the issues and those decisions should draw the government's attention in order to be a policy (Cariney, 2012; Heck, 2003; Kraft & Furlong, 2010) and at this point the ideological and political factors come into play.

Additionally, the reason of NEC's being ineffective as a policy-making tool can be explained by the policy-making process in Turkey defined as elitist by using the elitist theory. Keser-Aschenberger (2012) conducted a study in order to understand the policy formulation process of the policy, Career Ladders for Teachers, in which she found out that the educational policy-making process is elitist and top-down. On the other hand, Arslan (2006) proposed a broad perspective and he stated that in Turkey elitist theory but specifically demo-elitist perspective is highly dominant since some groups including the government and other influential groups hold the power. From this perspective, it is seen that although NEC's platform provides decentralized structure and participatory environment, some of the decisions could be policy that could be explained by various factors such as the power of these elites and the government agenda. Unlike what Keser-Aschenberger (2012) indicated in her study in which she highlighted the government as the elitist group and MoNE formulated the policy with a bureaucratic manner, this study found out that still elites are influential as well as sub-elites such as non-governmental organizations and academicians as Arslan (2006) explained from the perspective of demo-elite. Regarding the process in the councils, unions had the power of affecting the decisions as well as the ministry. Especially one of the unions used its power to make participants accept the 4+4+4 decisions and afterwards they used their power to implement this decision as a policy. This indicates the demo-elitist perspective in which not only elites but also sub-elites are being influential. To conclude, this study also highlights the demo-elitist perspective in policy-making process, which eliminates the role of the NEC as a policy-making tool.

5.1.3. The decisions and their applicability as a policy

Here, the third research question will be discussed related to the applicability of the decisions as well as the quality of the decisions. NEC provides a discussion

platform by including various actors and there are lots of decisions taken during these councils. However, the results indicated that a few of these decisions are implemented by MoNE as a policy. This result is coherent with other studies in the literature (Akay, 2010; Dağ, 2013; Deniz, 2001; Uysal, 2008; Üçler, 2006). Uysal (2008) remarked that the decisions of 17th councils were not implemented while Deniz (2001) highlighted that the decisions of NEC in the multi-party system were not implemented as well.

Contrary to the current research, there are also other studies in the literature, which remark that the decisions of the councils were mostly implemented by the government (Aslaner, 2008; Büyükkıracı, 2012; Deniz, 2001; Eriş, 2006). Büyükkıracı (2012) stated that the decisions related to pre-school education were mostly practiced by the government. On the other hand, Deniz (2001) listed single party regime period as the period where the most implementation of decisions was seen. Similarly, Aslaner (2008) highlighted that the decisions of MoNE made during 1939-1946 were implemented. Regarding these, it is seen that there is a contradiction in the literature in relation to the applicability of the NECs' decisions. This contradiction may arise from the organizing time of the councils. Namely, the decisions of the firstly organized councils were implemented; however, the decisions of the recent councils were mostly not turned into policy. This situation can also be explained by the transformation of NEC from policy formulation tool to issue definition and agenda setting tool.

In relation to, the current study revealed that the applicability of these decisions depends on two factors; being suitable for the government or ministry and being suitable for agenda. Most of the participants highlighted that the government implemented the decisions applicable to their agenda. Furthermore, they perceived that the government and ministry used its power in implementation of these decisions. Considering this, Üçler (2006) found that MoNE did not implement those decisions due to the mismatch between the decisions and the government's education policy. Moreover, Akay (2010) stated that their applicability is based on the authority of the political power. Similarly, this may derive from the elitist perspective of policy-making in the Turkish context. Namely, although NEC provides a democratic and participatory model for involving all stakeholders in the decision-making process as a

one demand of the global world, the government and MoNE still control the process of decision-making and policy-making process with their impact on the implementation of these decisions.

Considering this finding, Hudson (2007) discusses the evolution of the state from government to governance by distributing its power to other stakeholders and by involving these participants in decision-making process. What happens in the NEC resembles the idea of Hudson in which the ministry tries to implement the model of governance through NECs; however, the ministry and the government control the process by choosing the participants and by influencing the decisions made during the councils. Hudson (2007) claims that this is not the abdication of the government; rather it is a way for the government to keep the stakeholders under control by including them in the decision-making process and pretending as if they include them in the policy-making process.

Considering the last three NECs and their implementation as a policy, 4+4+4 education system was the only implemented decision as a policy derived from the 18th council that was proposed by one of the unions. The document analysis in this study reveals that this decision was taken as 1+4+4+4 including pre-school education, yet, the implementation of this decision was 4+4+4. This education system, 4+4+4, is the embodiment of how the decisions of NEC are implemented as a policy based on the government's and MoNE's agenda. Participants of this study perceived this policy as not a result of 18th NEC but 18th NEC as a tool of this policy. Implementation of this decision as a policy makes them ask themselves if implementing the decisions of the NEC is so easy, then why does not the government implement other decisions as well. Furthermore, none of the participants except the specific union believe that this decision would be a policy since it is not based on scientific data. For this reason, they perceive this policy as an ideological and a political practice (Aksoy, 2012; Dinçer, 2012; İnal, 2012).

Another debated issue of councils is the quality of the decisions made during this process. Nearly most of the participants of this study evaluated NEC's decisions as non-scientific, non-pedagogic, political, ideological and pluralistic, which is

consistent with other studies in the literature (Aydın, 1998; Eğitim-Sen, 2015; ERG, 2010; ERG, 2015). On the other hand, Uysal (2008) conducted a study related to the decisions of 17th NEC from the aspect of inspectors and principles in which she found out that these decisions were evaluated as academic and pedagogic by the participants. Regarding this research, two of the participants from the unions evaluated the decisions as qualified, academic and pedagogic as well.

5.1.4. Ideological impact in NECs

This study showed that ideology mostly plays role in the process of formation of these councils from the aspect of participants and decisions. Participants of this study perceive NEC as an ideological structure since they analyzed majority of the participants of these councils reflected one ideological view and this was also reflected in the decisions made during the councils due to their pluralistic approach to decision-making. Furthermore, most of the participants emphasized the conservative ideology voiced by the participants, especially by one of the unions. Considering the literature, there are not many studies related to the ideological structure of NEC; yet, there are studies highlighting the undemocratic council environment that was dominated by some groups (Dağ, 2013; Eğitim-Sen, 2015).

Regarding the relation between education and ideology, many scholars identify ideology as a means for practicing the values through education (İnal, 2004; Kaplan, 1999; Taylor et al., 1997; Trowler, 2003). İnal (2008) highlighted that the government use education as a tool in order to practice ideologies and Heck (2004) remarked the change in government would result in the change in educational policies. At this point, Göktürk (2006) found out in her study about NEC during the single-party era that the councils served for forming certain ideology and nation-building process through education. Furthermore, the participants of this study remarked the conservative ideologies in the councils.

Participants of this study evaluated NEC's as a tool in which various participants fortify their ideologies and they aim to influence the decisions based on their values. Furthermore, participants indicated that NEC is used as a legitimization

tool during policy-making process when policy makers feel the absence of legitimization. Considering this, İnal (2004) highlighted that the government provides the need of legitimization by using education and the thing legitimized is the ideology itself. From this perspective, 4+4+4 could be discussed as an ideological practice as participants (including the former minister) highlighted that, they used the decision of NEC in order to legitimize this policy.

5.1.5. Dynamics of NEC and power

NECs are formed by various groups including governmental and non-governmental actors and these groups have different impact and voice during the councils. Participants highlighted teachers' unions, ministry and academicians as the most influential actors during the process of each council. This result is also supported in the literature in which Fowler (2009) indicated that teachers are not effective in the steps of policy-making process such as agenda-setting and policy formulation; yet, having an organizations make them more powerful and effective. Similarly, teachers during the councils could not voice themselves as unions did. Furthermore, they associated being influential with being powerful.

As they listed ministry and one of the unions as the most influential ones, they indicated that they had the power and dominated the process of the council by influencing the decisions. Namely, the suggestion of one of the unions became a policy as 4+4+4 that was supported by the ministry as well. This is supported by Fowler (2009) as she identified policy actors as the collective groups. They had the power as they formed the majority of the councils.

Furthermore, participants highlighted the relationship among the participants. Mostly, the union and the MoNE had such a close relationship that they mostly dominated the council and supported each decision during the councils. Additionally, MoNE implemented 4+4+4 as a policy, which was proposed by the specific union, and they applied pressure in order to make the government implement this decision as a policy. At this point, most of the participants question whether this decision was implemented since it was a NEC's decisions or since it was what government and the

MoNE really wanted. There are many studies in the literature indicating the relation between the government and the unions (Eraslan; 2012; Taşdan, 2013; Top; 1999; Yıldırım, 2007). Eraslan (2012) highlighted the impact of government on education and he stated that the government used unions close to their views and ideology. On the other hand, Top (1999) found out different result unlike this study in which he concluded that MoNE did not include unions in the decision-making process.

5.2. Implications

This study put forward how participants experienced the role of the NECs during education policy-making process. The findings revealed that NECs could not be effective during this process except one policy derived from the decision of the 18th council and the role of NECs transformed from policy formulation tool to agenda-setting tool and used as a legitimization means during policy-making. In this part, the implications of the results of this study will be discussed from the aspect of theory and practice.

5.2.1. Implications for theory

There are various theories, which explain the process of policy-making such as elite theory, institutional theory, group theory and many others. In addition to these theories, there is a policy cycle approach that illustrates the policy-making process by dividing the policy-making into steps. Considering Turkish context in the field of education, there are four policy-making tools; NEC, government programs, State Planning Organization and, Development Plan. Among these, NEC provides participatory environment. This research presented results related to both theories and policy-cycle approach.

The results of the study showed that NEC provided a seemingly democratic environment and put forward the collective decision-making process which is the highly recommended governance of the modern society. However, these practices provided by the NEC are superficial. This is the result of the elitist perspective of the policy-making process in Turkey which is also indicated by Arslan (2006; 2003) and

Keser-Aschenberger (2012). Namely, although NEC provided a participatory platform for both decision-making and policy-making process, the government and the ministry shaped the structure of the councils by using their political power which shows that the government is unwilling to share or to delegate its authority and power to other participants. As Meyer and Rowan (1977) indicates, in order to ensure its legitimacy organizations “ceremonially” adopt the institutional myths. On the other hand, these organizations abandon these myths in their daily practices with the aim of being efficient. Considering the context of NEC, the government provides a democratic structure in these councils which also legitimizes its existence; however, the criteria of choosing participants and the decisions implemented by the government remarked NEC’s seemingly democratic structure.

Furthermore, the results of the research indicated that the role of the NEC evolved from policy formulation tool to agenda-setting tool which also means that the power of the NEC diminishes. Regarding the elite theory, elites, ministry, do not want to give so much power to the councils; yet, they also would like to use it as a tool in order to benefit from the decisions and support their agenda.

From this perspective, the elites needed other sub-elites as in the demo-elite perspective in order to regulate the decisions and influence the process. The results stated that the unions (sub-elites) which are ideologically close to the government are more influential in the process of the councils. This mainly demonstrates that the government searches for other ways to be influential in the process of the councils so that they supported the decisions proposed by the ideologically close unions.

Considering theoretical perspective, the results of this research imply that education policy-making process in Turkey is elitist although NEC provided a participatory platform during this process which is also under the authority of the government.

5.2.2. Implications for practice

NECs included many stakeholders of education such as MoNE, academicians, policy makers, principles, teachers, policy analyst and non-governmental

organizations and, they have many aspects related to the structure of NEC, its position and effectiveness in policy-making process, its relation with ideology, government and power and the profile of these participants which was indicated by this research. By regarding this, this research answers the question of why NECs could not be effective as a policy-making tool.

In line with the results, there is a need for explicit, transparent and coherent structure of NEC and NEC should become more functional as a policy-making tool. NEC is a meaningful structure with its historical background that includes various stakeholders in the decision-making process; yet, it has become non-functional and outdated over time. However, it could be a good example of governance by including various actors (ERG, 2011); yet, its efficiency needs to be reviewed (Tedmem, 2014).

Moreover, another finding of this study revealed that the role of NEC during policy-making process evolved from policy formulation tool to issue definition and agenda setting one. However, in the literature NEC is still defined among the education policy-making tools (Şişman, 2011) and ERG (2014), as a policy analysis institution, indicated that the role of the NEC is not clear in the process of policy-making. At this point, it is essential to clarify the role and position of the NEC during this process by MoNE in order to benefit from such a powerful, historical and participatory environment.

Additionally, the results showed that the criteria of choosing participants should be transparent and MoNE needs to specify how it is going to include the participants as well. Further; the profile of participants, their experiences and how they are going to contribute to this process is an important issue. Therefore, MoNE should invite the ones who are specialist in their own field.

To continue with the decisions made at NECs, I found out that they are not based on data; most of the decisions had an ideological and political tone. Moreover, MoNE mostly did not implement the decisions or the implementation of these decisions depended on the agenda of the government and MoNE. This situation decreases the efficiency of the councils. Therefore, MoNE should take into consideration these decisions while they are formulating new policies or it needs to

restructure these councils in order to efficiently benefit from them. Otherwise, MoNE continues to spend money on this inefficient structure.

Furthermore, one of the major findings of the study is the homogeneous structure of NEC although it involves various stakeholders from different fields. Since these participants reflected certain values and ideologies, the decisions were also becoming monotype. Additionally, they dominated both the councils and the process of decision-making and teachers, students or other participants from the field could not have a chance to talk. For this reason, MoNE should preserve the democratic structure of the councils by including various stakeholders and by supporting the participants from the field as their experiences reflects the needs and problems of the education system.

The results of the study indicated historical and valuable aspect of NEC and participants highlighted its participatory structure. Namely, there is not any other discussion platform that includes various stakeholders in the decision-making process; yet, it could not be used efficiently. Therefore, NEC should be designed as an important governance platform, which is a need of the Turkish Education System since the stakeholders do not have other chances to voice themselves.

5.3. Limitations of the Study

This qualitative study aims to understand how NECs' participants perceive the role of these councils during the education policy-making process. This study has some constraints like any research has. In this part, these limitations will be discussed.

The first limitation of this study arises from the structure of the qualitative research. At this point, researcher bias is among the limitations of this study derived from the qualitative research. As an undergraduate student in Faculty of Education and as a current researcher in Educational Sciences, I had taken many courses in relation to the history of Turkish Education System in which NEC is the most highlighted structure. Moreover, in each four years, I came across with the news and hot debates related to these councils and sometimes we, as a society, are influenced by the decisions made at these NECs as in the 4+4+4 policy. All of these developments make

me create an image of NEC that becomes somehow fuzzy since I could not understand what the exact role of these councils is and what makes them such a debated issue in education. In the field, while collecting data I reached many layers of the NEC, which was not something I expected.

Further; I also had concerns about collecting data, especially from the members of MoNE, since I, personally, believed that they could not be objective in giving information about these councils that they were previously in. Moreover, I was thinking that they might not want to talk about educational policy-making due to its politic structure. Unlike my concerns, they were so objective and open in giving information about the process that I was surprised.

Another limitation results from the elapsed time from the 17th and 18th NECs that is roughly nine and five years respectively. This elapsed time caused certain limitations as well, for instance; it was difficult to reach participants or the participants had difficulty in remembering what happened during these councils. Although 19th NEC was the most recent council, I had difficulty in reaching participants of the 19th council since MoNE did not publish the reports and participants list of the last council. Moreover, this caused a limitation in document analysis as well. In order to overcome these limitations, I tried to include the participants who got involved in more than one NEC and I asked for the names of the 19th council's participant. Additionally, the most difficult groups were teachers and principals since they do not have a certain place.

Also there may be interviewer effect threat during the interviews resulting from the communication skills of the interviewees. In order to overcome this problem and stabilize the interview process, I conducted each interview and started from the most experienced participant related to the councils. I lastly interviewed the teachers since they are more withdrawn compared to other participants. This strategy enabled me to get more information from the participants since I was more experienced in interviewing at the end of the process.

Lastly, this study is restricted to the last three councils and the results could not be generalized to other settings. Moreover, I could not observe the process of NEC

since the last council was organized before I conducted this research. Additionally, this research is restricted to the experiences of 15 participants of the last three councils.

5.4. Recommendations for Further Research

The findings of this research indicate some recommendations for further research on educational policy making and NECs.

Considering the literature in relation to education policy and NEC, the research stayed restricted in each field of study. There is not a clear answer of both how education policies are made in Turkish context and which role NEC plays in this process. This study aims to answer these questions from the aspect of participants involved in the 17th, 18th and 19th NECs and investigates the efficiency of these councils as a policy-making tool in the process. In order to have a holistic picture of how education policies are made in Turkish context, this study can be conducted with other policy-making tools.

The findings of the qualitative research could not be generalized to other setting, which is also one limitation of this research. To increase the generalizability of the results, further research can be carried out with other councils. Furthermore, the results indicated the difference among the commissions in the same council. By considering this, another comparative research can be conducted with different commissions of the same council. Additionally, descriptive study based on document analysis can be conducted from the first NEC to the last organized councils which may also indicate the change in the councils from a historical and holistic perspective.

This research was designed as a qualitative research that examines how participants experienced the role of NECs during the process of policy-making. Since the time of this research was not in the same period with the time of the councils, I did not have an opportunity to observe these councils. Therefore, this study is restricted to the personal experiences of the participants and the documents. For this reason, another research can be designed as a case study through which 20th NEC can be observed from beginning to the end.

Additionally, this research included various stakeholders of the NEC; however, I did not make any comparison between these groups. Another research can be conducted by including more participants from each of the stakeholder groups so that the researcher can compare their views about the NECs.

Lastly, this study puts forward 4+4+4 policy, which was taken at the 18th council as a decision. From this aspect, study can be done related to how 4+4+4 policy was formulated starting from its being an agenda in the 18th NEC to being an implemented policy.

5.5. Conclusion

The main purpose of this study is to investigate how participants of the councils experienced the role of the 17th, 18th and 19th NECs during the process of educational policy-making. In order to understand the participants' experiences, this study was designed as a qualitative research that explores the experience of being a part of the last three NECs under the same political party.

The data were collected through interviews with 15 participants and the documents such as regulation, 17th and 18th council report and the reports published by the non-governmental organizations. Descriptive and content analysis were used in order to analyze the data. Firstly, each interview was described in detail, which ensured how each participant experienced being a part of these councils. Afterwards, the codes were elicited from the interviews by identifying the repeated and highlighted issues. Thirteen themes emerged from the data; structural issues, historical perspective, functional issues, issues related to the setting of the NECs, different practices among NECs and commissions; actors of NEC; the role of NEC as a tool, the role of NEC as a platform; policy-making and NECs decisions, the criteria for practicing the decisions, the features of the decisions; ideological formation of NEC and dynamics of NEC respectively.

The results indicated that NEC enabled a participatory platform by including various stakeholders related to education in which the idea was to formulate policies by making decisions together. Participants cared for the structure of NEC and they

highlighted the historical value of these councils although they thought that NECs were not functional. They believed MoNE intentionally formed the structure of NEC; as a result, there was a homogeneous, political and ideological environment in these councils that was also reflected in the decisions.

The findings remarked that NECs lost their efficiency as a tool of policy formulation and transformed into issue definition and agenda setting tool which was used by the government to form their own agenda or to support their agenda when they need legitimization. For this reason, participants criticized the ideological position of the councils and they highlighted that the practicability of the decisions depended on the government and their agenda. Namely, the decisions should match with the agenda of the current party as it was in 4+4+4.

The decisions of the councils were evaluated as not scientific and pedagogic but ideological and participants stated the criteria for implementing these decisions were explicit as well. Furthermore, the unions, ministry and the academicians were listed as the influential actors whereas unions dominated the process of these councils and one of the unions were mostly supported by the ministry.

To conclude, although participants positively perceived the structure of the councils, they indicated that NEC is not currently functional in policy-making process. MoNE dominated the environment of the councils by choosing the participants close to their ideology in order to make decisions from this perspective and benefit from the NEC as a tool for legitimizing and supporting their agenda.

Overall, as the previous minister of MoNE had indicated, NECs provided a platform for identifying the policies; yet, they did not formulate education policies.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: 17th National Education Council Regulation

MİLLÎ EĞİTİM ŞÛRASI YÖNETMELİĞİ

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Resmi Gazete

995/22398

Tebliğler Dergisi : 25.9.1995/2439

Ek ve Değişiklikler:

1) 15.10.1998/23494 RG (EKİM 1998/2493 TD)

2) 3.8.2006/26248 RG (EYLÜL 2006/2588 TD)

BİRİNCİ BÖLÜM

Amaç, Kapsam, Dayanak ve Tanımlar

Amaç

Madde 1 — Bu Yönetmeliğin amacı; Millî Eğitim Şûrası'nın teşkili, işleyişiyle ilgili çalışma esas ve usullerini düzenlemektir.

Kapsam

Madde 2 — Bu Yönetmelik; Millî Eğitim Şûrası'nın teşkili, çalışması, işleyişiyle ilgili iş ve işlemleri kapsar.

Dayanak

Madde 3 — Bu Yönetmelik, 14/6/1973 tarih ve 1739 sayılı Millî Eğitim Temel Kanunu ile 30/4/1992 tarih ve 3797 sayılı Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı'nın Teşkilât ve Görevleri Hakkında Kanun hükümlerine dayanılarak hazırlanmıştır.

Tanımlar

Madde 4 — Bu Yönetmelikte geçen;

"Bakanlık" Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı'nı,

"Bakan" Millî Eğitim Bakanı'nı,

"Şûra" Millî Eğitim Şûrası'nı,

"Kurul" Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu'nu,

"Gündem" Şûra'da ele alınacak konu başlıklarını,

"Genel Kurul" Tabiî üyeler, seçimle gelen üyeler ile davetli üyelerden oluşan Kurulu,

"Genel Sekreterlik" Millî Eğitim Şûrası Genel Sekreterliği'ni ifade eder.

İKİNCİ BÖLÜM

Şûra, Teşkili ve İşleyişi

Şûra

Madde 5 — Şûra; Bakanlığın en yüksek danışma kuruludur. Türk Millî Eğitim Sistemini geliştirmek, niteliğini yükseltmek için eğitim ve öğretimle ilgili konuları tetkik eder, gerekli kararları alır.

Şûra'nın Teşkili

Madde 6 — Bakan, Şûranın tabiî üyesi ve başkanıdır. Şûra; tabiî üyeler, seçimle gelen üyeler, davetli üyeler ve müşahitlerden teşekkül eder.

Tabiî Üyeler

Madde 7 — Tabiî üyeler şunlardır:

- a) Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi, Millî Eğitim Komisyonu Başkanı ve Üyeleri,
- b) Bakanlıktan;
 1. Müsteşar,
 2. Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Başkanı,
 3. Müsteşar Yardımcıları,
 4. Teftiş Kurulu Başkanı,
 5. (Değişik: 3.8.2006/26248 RG) Strateji Geliştirme Başkanı,
 6. Birinci Hukuk Müşaviri,
 7. Genel Müdürler ve Bağlı Kuruluşların birim amirleri
 8. Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Üyeleri,

9. Bağımsız Daire Başkanları,
10. Ankara, İstanbul, İzmir İl Millî Eğitim Müdürleri.
- c) Yükseköğretim Kurulu'ndan;
1. Kurul Başkanı,
2. Başkan Vekilleri,
3. Öğrenci Seçme ve Yerleştirme Merkezi Başkanı
- d) Radyo ve Televizyon Üst Kurulu Başkanı,
- e) Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu Başkanı,
1. Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Başkanı,
2. Türk Dil Kurumu Başkanı,
3. Türk Tarih Kurumu Başkanı,
4. Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Başkanı,
- f) Türkiye Radyo ve Televizyon Kurumu Genel Müdürü,
- g) (Değişik: 3.8.2006/26248 RG) Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı Müsteşarı ve Sosyal Sektörler ve Koordinasyon Genel Müdürü,
- h) Başbakanlık Mevzuatı Geliştirme ve Yayın Genel Müdürü,
- i) Millî Eğitim Vakfı Merkez Yönetim Kurulu Başkanı ve Genel Müdürü.

Seçimle Gelen Üyeler

Madde 8 — Seçimle gelen üyeler şunlardır:

- a) Bakanlıktan;
1. Bakanlık Makamınca seçilecek beş bakan müşaviri,
2. Bakanlık Makamınca her coğrafi bölgeden seçilecek dörder İl Millî Eğitim Müdürü ve birer ilçe Millî Eğitim Müdürü,
3. (Değişik : 3.8.2006/26248 RG) Teftiş Kurulu Başkanlığınca seçilecek on Bakanlık müfettişi,
4. İlköğretim Genel Müdürlüğü'nce her coğrafi bölgeden seçilecek birer ilköğretim müfettişi, birer yönetici veya branş öğretmenleriyle birer bağımsız sınıf Öğretmeni veya birer birleştirilmiş sınıf okutan öğretmen,
5. Ortaöğretim Genel Müdürlüğü'nce her coğrafi bölgeden seçilecek birer yönetici, branşları ve Şûra gündemi de dikkate alınarak seçilecek birer öğretmen,

6. Erkek Teknik Öğretim, Kız Teknik Öğretim. Din Öğretimi ile Ticaret ve Turizm Öğretimi Genel Müdürlükleri'nce her coğrafi bölgeden seçilecek birer yönetici veya öğretmen,
 7. (Değişik: 3.8.2006/26248 RG) Okulu bulunan diğer genel müdürlükler ile daire başkanlıklarınca seçilecek ikişer yönetici ve birer öğretmen,
 8. (Değişik: 3.8.2006/26248 RG) Özel Öğretim Kurumları Genel Müdürlüğünce özel okul öncesi, ilköğretim ve ortaöğretim kademelerinin her birinden seçilecek ikişer yönetici ve ikişer öğretmen,
 9. Çıraklık ve Yaygın Eğilim Genel Müdürlüğü'nce seçilecek; halk eğitimine bakan, iki milli eğitim müdür yardımcısı, iki halk eğitimi merkezi müdürü, iki çıraklık eğitimi merkezi müdürü ve iki öğretmen,
- (Ek paragraf :15.10.1998/23494 RG) Şûra gündemi dikkate alınmak suretiyle, Bakanlık birimlerinden seçimle gelen üyelerin ve Şûra konularıyla doğrudan ilgili birimlerin üye sayısı Şûra Genel Sekreterliğince iki katına kadar çıkarılabilir.
- b) Yükseköğretim Kurulu'nca Yükseköğretim Kurum ve Kuruluşlarından :
1. İki Yükseköğretim Kurulu Üyesi,
 2. (Değişik : 3.8.2006/26248 RG) Beşi özel üniversiteden olmak üzere yirmi üniversite rektörü,
 3. Eğitim, eğitim bilimleri, teknik eğitim ve mesleki eğitim fakültelerinden on dekan, yirmi öğretim üyesi veya görevlisi,
 4. Eğitim fakülteleri dışındaki fakültelerden seçilecek on öğretim üyesi veya görevlisi,
- c) Diğer Kurum ve Kuruluşlardan;
1. Bakanlık Makamınca: Şûra'nın gündemine göre belirlenecek, ilgili Bakanlıkların Müsteşarları ya da kurumların başkanlarından en çok on üye,
 2. Devlet Plânlama Teşkilâtı Sosyal Plânlama Genel Müdürlüğüne bağlı bir Daire Başkanı ile beş Eğitim Uzmanı,
 3. (Değişik: 3.8.2006/26248 RG) Okulu bulunan Bakanlıklarca görevlendirilecek eğitimle ilgili ikişer temsilci,
 4. (Değişik: 3.8.2006/26248 RG) Dördü kuvvet komutanlıkları, biri Harp Akademileri Komutanlığından olmak üzere Genelkurmay Başkanlığınca görevlendirilecek beş temsilci,
 5. Millî Güvenlik Kurulu Genel Sekreterliği'nce görevlendirilecek bir temsilci,

6. Türkiye Radyo ve Televizyon Kurumu Genel Müdürlüğü, Basın - Yayın Enformasyon Genel Müdürlüğü ve Anadolu Ajansı Genel Müdürlüklerinden birer temsilci,
7. (Değişik: 3.8.2006/26248 RG) Hazine Müsteşarlığı, Dış Ticaret Müsteşarlığı, Türkiye Bilimsel ve Teknolojik Araştırma Kurumu, Türkiye Bilimler Akademisi, Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu Başkanlığı, Türk Standardları Enstitüsü, Aile Araştırma Kurumu Başkanlığı, Türkiye Atom Enerjisi Kurumu, Sosyal Hizmetler ve Çocuk Esirgeme Kurumu Genel Müdürlüğü, Türkiye ve Ortadoğu Amme İdaresi Enstitüsü Genel Müdürlüğü, Millî Prodüktivite Merkezi, Türk Patent Enstitüsü ve Avrupa Birliği Genel Sekreterliği'nden en üst kademe yöneticileri veya görevlendirecekleri birer temsilci,
8. Basın Konseyi Başkanı, Ankara, İstanbul, İzmir Gazeteciler Cemiyeti Başkanları ve Anadolu Basın Birliği Genel Başkanı veya görevlendirecekleri birer temsilcileri,
- 9.(Değişik: 3.8.2006/26248 RG) Daha önceden asaleten kurul üyeliği yapanlardan Kurulca belirlenecek en çok yirmi üye,
10. (Değişik: 3.8.2006/26248 RG) Genel Sekreterlikçe belirlenen illerin Millî Eğitim Müdürlükleri tarafından seçilecek her coğrafi bölgeden ikişer okul aile birliği başkanı,
11. Genel Sekreterlikçe, Sûra konularına göre ilköğretim, ortaöğretim ve Yükseköğretim kademelerinden seçilecek en çok on öğrenci,
12. (Değişik: 3.8.2006/26248 RG) Bakanlıkça belirlenmek üzere her coğrafi bölgeden: bir vali, bir kaymakam, il, ilçe ve beldelerden iki belediye başkanı, bir il genel meclisi üyesi, bir il özel idaresi genel sekreteri; il, ilçe ve beldelerden bir belediye meclisi üyesi ve bir muhtar,
13. (Değişik : 15.10.1998/23494 RG) Şûra gündemi dikkate alınarak Genel Sekreterlikçe belirlenecek en çok elli üye.

Davetli Üyeler

Madde 9 — Bakan tarafından davet edilecek üyeler şunlardır:

- a) Millî Eğitim eski bakanları,
- b) Diyanet İşleri Başkanı,
- c) Devlet Personel Başkanı,
- d) Daha önce asaleten Bakanlık Müsteşarlığı ve Kurul Başkanlığı görevlerinde bulunanlar,

- e) (Değişik: 3.8.2006/26248 RG) Kamu kurum ve kuruluşu niteliğindeki meslek kuruluşları, sendikalar ve diğer kamu, özel kurum ve kuruluşlarından en çok yirmi üye.
- f) Eğitim Sendikaları Başkanları,
- g) Türkiye Eğitim Vakıfları Dayanışma Konseyi Başkanı,
- h) Ön hazırlık komisyonları ile il ve bölge çalışmalarında görev alanlardan otuz üye,
- i) Gündemdeki konularla ilgili alan uzmanlarından en çok yirmi üye,

Müşahitler

Madde 10 — (Değişik birinci fıkra: 3.8.2006/26248 RG) Şûraya yurt içinden, yurt dışından müşahitler davet edilebilir.

Müşahitler görüş bildirebilir, fakat oy kullanamazlar.

Şûra'nın Toplanması

Madde 11 — Şûra, Bakanın daveti Üzerine 4 yılda bir toplanır. Bakan, gerektiğinde Şûra'yı olağanüstü toplantıya çağırabilir.

Şûra, üye tam sayısının üçte ikisiyle toplanır.

Şûra Gündemi

Madde 12 — Şûra'nın gündemi, Kurulca tespit edilir. Gerekirse gündemin belirlenmesinde merkez ve taşra birimleriyle diğer kurum ve kuruluşların görüşleri alınır.

Şûra üyelerinin gündem dışı teklifleri, Genel Kurul tarafından kabul edildiği takdirde, gelecek Şûra gündemlerinde değerlendirilmek üzere Bakanlığa sunulur.

Şûra Ön Hazırlıkları

Madde 13 — (Değişik birinci fıkra: 3.8.2006/26248 RG) Şûra Genel Sekreterliğince ön komisyon çalışmaları yaptırılarak belirlenen tespit ve görüşler doküman hâline getirilir.

Uygun görülecek merkezlerde veya illerde şûra hazırlık çalışmaları düzenlenebilir. Bu çalışmaların esas ve usulleri Genel Sekreterlikçe belirlenir.

Genel Sekreterlik, Şûra gündemiyle ilgili olarak; gerektiğinde diğer Bakanlık, üniversite, şahıslar ile kurum ve kuruluşların da görüşlerini alarak ön hazırlık çalışmalarının boyutlarını genişletebilir.

Dokümanların gönderilmesi

Madde 14 — Şûra gündemiyle ilgili ön komisyon raporları ve gerekli diğer dokümanlar toplantıdan en geç 30 gün önce üyelere gönderilir.

Şûra'nın Çalışma Esas ve Usûlleri

Madde 15 — Şûra çalışmalarında aşağıdaki esas ve usuller uygulanır:

- a) Genel Kurul; ilk oturumunda, biri Bakanlık mensubu üyeler arasından olmak üzere, iki başkan vekili ve dört raportör seçer,
- b) (Değişik: 3.8.2006/26248 RG) Gündemdeki konularla ilgili olarak komisyonlar kurulur. Gerekliğinde üyeler de bilgilendirilecek komisyonlar arasında üye değişikliği yapılabilir. Bu değişiklik Genel Sekreterlikçe komisyon çalışmaları başlamadan önce sonuçlandırılır.
- c) Hazırlanan raporlar komisyon başkanlarınca veya seçilen bir sözcü tarafından Şûra Genel Kurulu'na sunulur Şûra Genel Kurulu bu raporları inceler, görüşür ve karara bağlar.

Şûra Komisyonlarının Çalışmaları

Madde 16 — Şûra Komisyonları, çalışmalarını aşağıdaki esaslara göre yapar:

- a) Her komisyon, ilk toplantısında kendi üyeleri arasından açık oyla bir başkan, bir başkan yardımcısı ve üç raportör seçer ve Şûra gündemi doğrultusunda bir çalışma plânı hazırlar,
- b) Komisyonlar çalışmalarını gerekirse alt komisyonlar da kurarak hazırlanan plan dahilinde yürütür.
- c) Kararlar oy çokluğu ile alınır ve alınan kararlar birer tutanağa bağlanır,
- d) Her komisyon, kendi konusu ile ilgili çalışmalar yapar ve raporunu hazırlar. Bu raporlar, komisyon üyeleri tarafından imzalanır.
- e) Komisyon başkanları, raporlarını zamanında Şûra Genel Sekreterliği'ne teslim eder,
- f) Genel Kurul'da görüşülen raporlar, alınan kararlar doğrultusunda varsa ilâve veya çıkarmayı gerektiren düzenlemelerin yapılabilmesi için komisyon başkanlarına verilir.

Komisyon başkanları ve raportörleri tarafından yeniden düzenlenen raporlar, toplantı tutanaklarıyla birlikte Genel Sekreterliğe teslim edilir.

Şûra Kararlarının Kabulü

Madde 17 — Kararlar, toplantıya katılan üyelerin oy çokluğu ile alınır. Oyların eşit olması halinde Başkanın uygun bulduğu görüş kabul edilir.

Şûra Kararlarının Yayımlanması

Madde 18 — Şûra Genel Kurulunda alınan kararlar 4 ay içinde Tebliğler Dergisi'nde yayımlanır.

Şûra Kararlarının Uygulanması

Madde 19 — Kararlardan hangilerinin yürürlüğe gireceği Bakan Onayı ile kesinleşir. Şura Kararları önem ve önceliğine göre Bakanlık icra plânlarında yer alır.

Şûranın Sekreteryası İşleri

Madde 20 — Şûra'nın sekreteryası işleri Kurul Başkanlığı'nca yürütülür.

Genel Sekreterin Görevlendirilmesi

Madde 21 — (Değişik: 3.8.2006/26248 RG) Kurulca üyeler arasından bir Genel Sekreter; Genel Sekreterin teklifi ile de biri kurul üyelerinden olmak üzere en çok üç genel sekreter yardımcısı görevlendirilir. Bu görevlendirmeler Kurul Başkanının teklifi ve Bakanın onayı ile kesinleşir.

Genel Sekreterin Görevleri

Madde 22 — Genel Sekreterin görevleri şunlardır:

- a) Daha önce yapılan Şûra'ların genel değerlendirmesini yapmak ve gerektiğinde Kurul'a bilgi vermek,
- b) Şûra'nın teşkili için gerekli çalışmaları yapmak,
- c) Kurul tarafından tespit edilen Şûra gündemini ve Şûra toplantı tarihini Bakan'ın Onayına sunmak,
- d) Şûra bütçesini hazırlamak, usulüne uygun harcamayı sağlamak. İta Amirliği görevini yerine getirmek,
- e) Davetlerin zamanında yapılmasını, Şûra gündemiyle dokümanların Şûra üyelerine gönderilmesini sağlamak,
- f) Açılış ve kapanış törenleriyle diğer sosyal ve kültürel faaliyetleri, karşılama, ağırlama ve ulaşım hizmetlerini plânlamak, Bakanlık birimleri arasında yardımlaşma, İşbirliği ve koordine sağlamak üzere Bakan Emirlerini hazırlatıp yayımlamak,
- g) Şûra konularıyla ilgili hazırlık komisyonları oluşturarak ön raporların hazırlanmasını sağlamak ve bu komisyonların çalışacağı uygun ortamları temin etmek,
- h) Üyelerin hangi komisyonda çalışacakları hususunda görüşlerini almak, komisyonlara dengeli şekilde dağıtımını sağlamak ve Makamın Onayına sunmak,
- i) Şûra'da kurulan komisyonlar arasında koordinasyonu sağlamak,
- j) Şûra'nın düzenli ve verimli bir şekilde çalışmasını sağlamak için gerekli tedbirleri almak,

k) Komisyonlar tarafından hazırlanan, raporları Genel Kurul'da görüşölmek üzere çoğaltarak komisyon başkan ve üyelerine sunmak,

l) Genel kurulda yapılan görüşmeler ve sunulan raporlar ile Bakan tarafından onaylanan Şûra kararlarını kitap haline getirmek. Şûra üyelerine ve ilgili yerlere göndermek, icraya yönelik kararların, Tebliğler Dergisi'nde yayımlanması için gerekli tedbirleri almak.

m) Şûra kararlarının uygulanmasında gerekli takibi yapmak ve koordineyi sağlamak.

ÜÇÜNCÜ BÖLÜM

Son Hükümler Yürürlük ve Yürütme

Kaldırılan Hükümler

Madde 23 — 10 Ocak 1993 tarih ve 21461 sayılı Resmi Gazete'de yayımlanan "Milli Eğitim Şûrası Yönetmeliği" yürürlükten kaldırılmıştır.

Yürürlük

Madde, 24 — Bu yönetmelik, yayımı tarihinde yürürlüğe girer.

Yürütme Madde 25 — Bu Yönetmelik hükümlerini Millî Eğitim Bakanı yürütür.

APPENDIX B: 19th National Education Council Regulation

08 Temmuz 2014 SALI **Resmî Gazete** Sayı : 29054 **YÖNETMELİK**

MİLLÎ EĞİTİM ŞÛRASI YÖNETMELİĞİ

BİRİNCİ BÖLÜM Amaç, Kapsam, Dayanak ve Tanımlar

Amaç MADDE 1 – (1) Bu Yönetmeliğin amacı, Millî Eğitim Şûrasının teşkili ile çalışma esas ve usullerini belirlemektir.

Kapsam MADDE 2 – (1) Bu Yönetmelik, Millî Eğitim Şûrasının teşkili ile çalışma esas ve usullerini kapsar.

Dayanak

MADDE 3 – (1) Bu Yönetmelik, 14/6/1973 tarihli ve 1739 sayılı Millî Eğitim Temel Kanunu ile 25/8/2011 tarihli ve 652 sayılı Millî Eğitim Bakanlığının Teşkilat ve Görevleri Hakkında Kanun Hükmünde Kararnameye dayanılarak hazırlanmıştır.

Tanımlar MADDE 4 – (1) Bu Yönetmelikte geçen; a) Bakan: Millî Eğitim Bakanını, b) Bakanlık: Millî Eğitim Bakanlığını, c) Genel Kurul: Tabii üyeler ve davetli üyelerden oluşan kurulu, ç) Genel Sekreterlik: Millî Eğitim Şûrası Genel Sekreterliğini, d) Gündem: Şûrada ele alınacak konu başlıklarını, e) Kurul: Talim ve Terbiye Kurulunu, f) Şûra: Millî Eğitim Şûrasını ifade eder.

İKİNCİ BÖLÜM

Şûranın Teşkili ve İşleyişi

Şûra

MADDE 5 – (1) Şûra; Bakanlığın en yüksek danışma kuruludur. Türk millî eğitim sistemini geliştirmek, niteliğini yükseltmek için eğitim ve öğretimle ilgili konuları tetkik eder; tavsiye kararları alır.

Şûranın teşkili MADDE 6 – (1) Bakan, Şûranın tabii üyesi ve başkanıdır. Şûra, tabii üyeler ile davetli üyelerden teşekkül eder.

Şûra genel kurulu üyeleri

MADDE 7 – (1) Tabii üyeler;

a) Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi Millî Eğitim, Kültür, Gençlik ve Spor Komisyonu Başkanı ve üyeleri,

b) Bakanlıktan; Bakan Yardımcısı, Müsteşar ve Bakanlık merkez teşkilatı birim amirleri.

(2) Davetli üyeler; Bakanlık, bakanlıklar, kamu kurum ve kuruluşları, yerel yönetimler, üniversiteler ile yurtiçi ve yurtdışından meslek odaları, sivil toplum kuruluşları, özel sektör, basın ve yayın kuruluşları, öğrenci ve veli temsilcileri ile eğitim alanında Şûra konusuyla ilgili çalışmalarıyla tanınmış uzmanlar arasından Genel Sekreterlikçe belirlenerek Bakan onayına sunulur.

Millî eğitim şûrası genel sekreterliği

MADDE 8 – (1) Şûra çalışmalarını yürütmek üzere Kurul üyeleri arasından belirlenen Genel Sekreterin yönetiminde, Kurul ve Şûra İşleri Daire Başkanlığı ve diğer birimlerden görevlendirilen personelin katılımıyla Genel Sekreterlik birimi oluşturulur.

Genel sekreterin görevlendirilmesi

MADDE 9 – (1) Kurulca üyeler arasından bir Genel Sekreter belirlenir. Genel Sekreterin teklifi ile biri Kurul üyesi olmak üzere en çok üç genel sekreter yardımcısı görevlendirilir. Bu görevlendirmeler, Kurul Başkanının teklifi ve Bakanın onayı ile kesinleşir.

Genel sekreter ve yardımcısının görevleri

MADDE 10 – (1) Genel Sekreterin görevleri şunlardır:

a) Şûra gündemini dikkate alarak ilgili birimlerden sağlanacak personel desteğiyle Şûra Genel Sekreterliğini Bakan onayı ile oluşturmak,

b) Şûranın herhangi bir aşamasına katılacak üyeleri belirleyerek Bakan onayına sunmak,

c) Daha önce yapılan şûraların genel değerlendirmesini yapmak ve gerektiğinde Kurula bilgi vermek,

ç) Şûranın teşkili için gerekli çalışmaları yapmak,

d) Şûra bütçesini hazırlamak, usulüne uygun harcamayı sağlamak ve harcama yetkililiği görevini yerine getirmek,

e) Şûranın düzenli ve verimli bir şekilde çalışmasını sağlamak için gerekli tedbirleri almak,

f) Genel Kurulda yapılan görüşmeler ve sunulan raporlar ile Şûra kararlarının basılı ve/veya elektronik ortamda kitap hâline getirilmesi, Şûra üyelerine ve ilgili yerlere elektronik ortamda veya CD ile gönderilmesi, Şûra kararlarının Tebliğler Dergisinde yayımlanması için gerekli tedbirleri almak,

g) Şûra kararlarını ilgili birimlere göndermek.

(2) Genel sekreter yardımcısının görevleri şunlardır:

a) Yazışmaları koordine etmek,

b) Davetlerin zamanında yapılmasını ve Şûra gündemiyle ilgili dokümanların elektronik ortamda Şûra üyelerine gönderilmesini sağlamak,

c) Açılış ve kapanış törenleriyle diğer sosyal ve kültürel faaliyetler ile karşılama, ağırlama ve ulaşım hizmetlerini planlamak,

ç) Şûra konularıyla ilgili hazırlık çalışmalarını koordine ederek hazırlık raporlarını Genel Sekretere sunmak,

d) Şûra konularıyla ilgili özel ihtisas komisyonlarının çalışmalarını koordine ederek raporlarını Genel Sekretere sunmak,

e) Çalışma gruplarını, Şûra üyelerinin görüşleri doğrultusunda dengeli bir şekilde oluşturmak,

f) Çalışma grupları tarafından hazırlanan raporları, Genel Kurulda görüşülmek üzere elektronik ortamda veya çoğaltarak Başkanlık divanına sunmak,

g) Genel Sekreterin vereceği diğer görevleri yerine getirmek.

Şûranın toplanması MADDE 11 – (1) Şûranın, Bakanın daveti üzerine 4 yılda bir toplanması esastır.

Bakan, gerektiğinde Şûrayı olağanüstü toplantıya çağırabilir.

Şûra gündemi

MADDE 12 – (1) Şûranın gündemi ve toplantı tarihi, doğrudan Bakan tarafından tespit edilebilir ya da Kurul tarafından belirlenerek Bakana sunulur. Gündemin belirlenmesinde merkez ve taşra birimleriyle diğer kurum ve kuruluşların görüşleri de alınabilir.

Şûra ön hazırlıkları

MADDE 13 – (1) Şûra Genel Sekreterliğince gündem konularıyla ilgili olarak,

a) Bakan tarafından uygun görülecek merkezlerde, illerde, bölgelerde ve/veya yurtdışı merkezlerinde Şûra hazırlık çalışmaları yapılarak Hazırlık Raporları düzenlenir.

b) Gerektiğinde diğer Bakanlık, üniversite, şahıslar ile kurum ve kuruluşların da görüşleri alınarak hazırlık çalışmalarının boyutları genişletilebilir.

c) Gündem konularıyla ilgili raporlar hazırlanması, hazırlık çalışmalarının değerlendirilmesi, belirlenen tespit ve görüşlerin Şûra için hazır hâle getirilmesi amacıyla özel ihtisas komisyonları oluşturularak Özel İhtisas Komisyonu Raporları düzenlenir.

(2) Bu çalışmaların esas ve usulleri Genel Sekreterlikçe belirlenir.

Dokümanların gönderilmesi MADDE 14 – (1) Şûra gündemiyle ilgili Özel İhtisas Komisyonu Raporları toplantıdan en az 10 gün önce üyelere elektronik ortamda gönderilir.

Şûranın çalışma esas ve usulleri

MADDE 15 – (1) Şûra çalışmalarında aşağıdaki esas ve usuller uygulanır:

a) Genel Kurul; ilk oturumunda Başkanlık Divanında görev yapacak, biri Bakanlık mensubu üyeler arasından olmak üzere, iki başkan vekili ve dört raportör seçer.

b) Gündem konularının her biri için üyelerin ilgi ve tercihleri doğrultusunda çalışma grupları oluşturulur.

c) Üye dağılımında denge sağlanması da dikkate alınarak ilgilileri bilgilendirmek kaydıyla çalışma grupları arasında Genel Sekreterlikçe üye değişikliği yapılabilir. Bu değişiklik, grup çalışmaları başlamadan önce sonuçlandırılır.

ç) Hazırlanan raporlar çalışma grubu başkanlarınca veya seçilen bir sözcü tarafından Şûra Genel Kuruluna sunulur. Şûra Genel Kurulu bu raporları inceler, görüşür ve karara bağlar.

d) Şûra gündeminde olmayan ve raporlarda belirtilmeyen konular Genel Kurulda görüşülmez.

Çalışma grupları

MADDE 16 – (1) Çalışma grupları, çalışmalarını aşağıdaki esaslara göre yapar:

- a) Her çalışma grubu, ilk toplantısında kendi üyeleri arasından açık oyla bir başkan, bir başkan yardımcısı ve üç raportör seçer. Şûra gündemi doğrultusunda bir çalışma planı hazırlar.
- b) Çalışma grupları çalışmalarını gerekirse alt gruplar da kurarak hazırlanan plan dâhilinde yürütür.
- c) Çalışma gruplarında kararlar oy çokluğu ile alınır ve alınan kararlar birer tutanağa bağlanır.
- ç) Her çalışma grubu, kendi konusu ile ilgili çalışmalar yapar ve raporunu hazırlar. Bu raporlar; çalışma grubu başkanı, başkan yardımcısı ve raportörler tarafından imzalanır.
- d) Çalışma grubu başkanları, raporlarını zamanında Şûra Genel Sekreterliğine teslim eder.
- e) Divan Başkanlığının sunumuyla Genel Kurulda görüşülen çalışma grubu raporları, alınan kararlar doğrultusunda varsa ilave veya çıkarmayı gerektiren düzenlemelerin yapılabilmesi için çalışma grubu başkanlarına verilir.
- (2) Çalışma grubu başkanları ve raportörleri tarafından yeniden düzenlenen raporlar, imzalanarak toplantı tutanaklarıyla birlikte Genel Sekreterliğe teslim edilir.

Şûra kararlarının kabulü

MADDE 17 – (1) Kararlar, toplantıya katılan üyelerin oy çokluğu ile alınır. Oylamalar açık tasnif usulüyle yapılır. Oyların eşit olması hâlinde Başkanın katıldığı görüş kabul edilir.

Şûra kararlarının yayımlanması MADDE 18 – (1) Şûra Genel Kurulunda alınan kararlar Bakan oluru ile Tebliğler Dergisinde yayımlanır.

Şûra kararlarının uygulanması MADDE 19 – (1) Şûra kararları tavsiye niteliğindedir. Genel Sekreterlik, Şûra kararlarını ilgili birimlere gönderir.

Şûranın sekreteryaya işleri MADDE 20 – (1) Şûranın sekreteryaya işleri Kurul Başkanlığınca yürütülür.

ÜÇÜNCÜ BÖLÜM Çeşitli ve Son Hükümler

Yürürlükten kaldırılan yönetmelik MADDE 21 – (1) 8/9/1995 tarihli ve 22398 sayılı Resmî Gazete’de yayımlanan Millî Eğitim Şûrası Yönetmeliği yürürlükten kaldırılmıştır.

Yürürlük MADDE 22 – (1) Bu Yönetmelik, yayımı tarihinde yürürlüğe girer.

Yürütme MADDE 23 – (1) Bu Yönetmelik hükümlerini Millî Eğitim Bakanı yürütür.

APPENDIX C: Interview Questions

Görüşme Formu

Araştırma Konusu:

Milli Eğitim Şuralarının Eğitim Politikası Geliştirme Sürecindeki Rolü

Sayın _____

Ben ODTÜ Eğitim Fakültesi'nde araştırma görevlisiyim ve aynı zamanda Eğitim Yönetimi ve Planlaması programında yüksek lisans yapmaktayım. Milli Eğitim Şuralarının eğitim politikası geliştirme sürecindeki rolü üzerine bir araştırma yapıyorum ve bu şuraların bir paydaşı olarak sizinle şuralarla ilgili görüşme yapmak istiyorum. Bu araştırma kapsamında şuralara katılmış olan Bakanlık mensupları, akademisyenler, sendikalar, müdürler ve öğretmenler ile, görüşüyorum. Bu paydaşların şuralara katılarak şuraların genel yapısını ve ortamını, alınan kararları yakından takip etme ve analiz etme fırsatını elde ettiğimi düşünüyorum. Bu araştırmada elde edilecek sonuçların şuraların eğitim politikası geliştirme sürecindeki rolünün daha iyi anlaşılmasına katkıda bulunacağını ümit ediyorum. Bu nedenle sizin bu konudaki görüşleriniz ile ilgili bilgi edinmek üzere soracağım sorulara vereceğiniz samimi yanıtların çok önemli olduğunu düşünüyorum. Görüşmeye başlamadan önce size bazı konularda hatırlatma yapmak istiyorum.

Görüşme süresince tüm söyledikleriniz gizli tutulacak ayrıca danışmanım ve tez izleme komitem dışında kimsenin görmesine izin verilmeyecektir.

Araştırmanın sonuçlarını raporlarken isimleriniz hiçbir şekilde kullanılmayacaktır.

Görüşme süresince izin verirsiniz görüşmeyi kaydetmek istiyorum.

Bu araştırma süresince size zarar verecek yada yanıtacak hiçbir unsur bulunmamaktadır. Fakat siz araştırma süresince kendinizi güvende hissetmezseniz araştırmadan istediğiniz zaman çekilebilirsiniz.

Görüşmenin yaklaşık bir sat süreceğini düşünüyorum. Görüşmeye başlamadan önce sormak istediğiniz bir şey var mı?

Tarih: _____

Paydaş: _____

Başlangıç Zamanı: _____

Görüşme Soruları

I Katılımcı / Paydaşlar

Doktoranızı ne zaman, hangi üniversitede ve hangi alanda tamamladınız?

Daha önceki iş deneyimleriniz nelerdir?

Kaç senedir akademisyen olarak çalışmaktasınız?

Şu ana kadar kaç tane Milli Eğitim Şurasına katıldınız?

Bu şuralarda hangi komisyonlarda yer aldınız?

Şuralarda katılımcılar hangi ölçütlere göre belirleniyor?

Şuralarda en önemli paydaşlar sizce kimlerdi?

Şuralara katılımı paydaşlar açısından düşününce nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?

II Eğitim Politikası ve Şuralar

Katıldığınız bu şuraları göz önünde bulundurduğunuzda bu şuralardaki genel ortam nasıldı? (Örneğin katılımcılar, tartışma ortamı ve gündem; katılımcı, özgür, baskıcı)

Bu ortamda belirli bir güç hissettiniz mi?

Bu gücün kaynağını nerden aldığını düşünüyorsunuz? (Politik, sosyal, eğitim, katılımcı)

Politik gücün eğitim politikası üzerindeki etkisi nedir?

Politik güç ve milli eğitim şuraları ilişkisini nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?

Şuraların ve bu şuralarda alınan kararların eğitim politikası üzerindeki etkisi nedir?

Şuraların eğitim politikası geliştirme sürecindeki rolünü nasıl değerlendirirsiniz?

(Rolünün ne olduğunu düşünüyorsunuz?)

III Şuralar ve Uygulama

Şuralarda alınana kararların temel dayanağı nedir? (Bilimsel, çeşitli çıkar grupları, uzlaşma)

Şura kararlarının ne kadarı sizce uygulamaya geçirilmiştir?

Şura kararları sizce ne şekilde uygulanıyor? (kararlar aynı şekilde mi yada değiştirilerek mi?).

Şura kararlarını uygulanabilir kılan faktör / faktörler nelerdir?

IV Değerlendirme

Şuraların sahip olduğu olumlu ve olumsuz yönleri nelerdir?

Şuraların bugünkü yapısında değişmesi gereken yönler olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz?

V Sonuç

Bahsettiğimiz konuların yanısıra eklemek istediğiniz şeyler var mı?

Paylaştığınız bilgiler çalışmamız için önem arz etmektedir. Hem katılımınız hem de vakit ayırdığınız için çok teşekkür ederim.

Bitiş Zamanı: _____

APPENDIX D: Letter of Invitation and The Consent of Ethics

Sayın Hocam,

Ben ODTÜ Eğitim Fakültesi Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü'nde araştırma görevlisi Sevgi Kaya Kaşıkçı.

Şu sıralar Milli Eğitim Şuralarının Eğitim Politikası geliştirme sürecindeki rolü üzerine yüksek lisans tezimi yürütmekteyim. Bu tez kapsamında 17., 18. ve 19. şuralara katılmış olan değerli paydaşlar ile iletişime geçiyorum.

Tezimi nitel çalışma olarak yapılandırmış bulunmaktayım ve bu kapsamda şurada yer almış olan katılımcılar ile (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı mensupları, akademisyenler, sendikalar, öğretmenler) bir görüşme yapmayı planlıyorum. Bu şuraların birer katılımcısı olarak sizin de bu teze şuralardaki süreci paylaşarak katkı sağlayacağınızı ümit ediyorum.

Değerli Hocam,

Bu çalışma kapsamında bilgilerinizi paylaşarak benimle görüşmeyi kabul ederseniz çalışmama önemli bir katkıda bulunmuş olacaksınız. Görüşmeyi kabul ettiğiniz takdirde sizi uygun olduğunuz bir zamanda ziyaret etmek isterim.

Saygılarımla,

Arş. Gör. Sevgi Kaya Kaşıkçı

ODTÜ Eğitim Fakültesi

İletişim: 0312 210 4042

The Consent of Ethics

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
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23.03.2015

Gönderilen : Y.Doç.Dr. Gökçe Gökcalp
Eğitim Bilimleri

Gönderen : Prof. Dr. Canan Sümer 
IAK Başkan Vekili

İlgi : Etik Onayı

Danışmanlığını yapmış olduğunuz Eğitim Yönetimi ve Planlaması Bölümü öğrencisi Sevgi Kaya Kaşıkçı'nın "Milli Eğitim Şuralarının Eğitim Politikası Geliştirme Sürecindeki Rolü" isimli araştırması "İnsan Araştırmaları Komitesi" tarafından uygun görülerek gerekli onay verilmiştir.

Bilgilerinize saygılarımla sunarım.

Etik Komite Onayı

Uygundur

23/03/2015


Prof.Dr. Canan Sümer
Uygulamalı Etik Araştırma Merkezi
(UEAM) Başkan Vekili
ODTÜ 06531 ANKARA

APPENDIX E: Voluntary Participation Form

Gönüllü Katılım Formu

Çalışmanın Başlığı: Milli Eğitim Şuralarının Eğitim Politikası Geliştirme Sürecindeki Rolü

Sayın Katılımcı,

Milli Eğitim Şuralarının eğitim politikası geliştirme sürecindeki rolünü analiz ederek belirlemeyi amaçlayan bu çalışmaya davet edilmektesiniz. Çalışmanın kapsamında üç temel hedef bulunmaktadır. Genel olarak şuraların eğitim politikası geliştirme sürecindeki rolü, bu şuralarda alınan kararların ne derecede ve hangi faktörler bağlamında uygulamaya geçirildiği, ideolojilerin politika geliştirme sürecinde nasıl rol oynadığı ve hangi aktörlerin bu süreçte etkili olduğu 17., 18. ve 19. şura kapsamında ele alınmaktadır.

Bu çalışma 17., 18. ve 19. şuraya katılmış olan kişilere kapsamaktadır. Sizler de bu şuraları ve bu şuralardaki genel ortamı deneyimlemiş ve bu konuda bilgi ve deneyim sahibi kişiler olarak bu çalışmanın kapsamında yer almaktasınız. Bu bağlamda söz konusu çalışma olgu-bilim çalışması olarak tasarlanmış olup yukarıda belirtilen araştırma sorularına ulaşmak amacıyla araştırmacı tarafından görüşme soruları hazırlanmıştır. Görüşme soruları; şuralardaki genel ortamı, bu ortamda oluşabilecek gücü, alınan kararları ve bu kararların temel dayanağını, şuralardaki katılımcıları ve bu katılımcıların şura üzerindeki etkisini kapsamaktadır.

Çalışmaya katılmayı kabul ettiğiniz takdirde sizinle yaklaşık 60 dakika sürecek bir görüşme yapılacaktır. Görüşmenin süresi sizin vereceğiniz cevaplara bağlı olup bu süre görüşmenin temposuna göre kısalabilir veya uzayabilir. Görüşme süresince izniniz dahilinde vereceğiniz bilgilerin doğru kaydedilmesini sağlamak amacıyla araştırmacı tarafından ses kaydı yapılacaktır.

Bu çalışma size zarar getirebilecek herhangi bir risk unsuru taşımamaktadır. Ayrıca vereceğiniz bilgiler ve adınız araştırmacı ve çalışmanın danışmanı tarafından gizli tutulacaktır ve sizin bilginiz dışında başka kişilerle paylaşılmayacaktır. Çalışmada isminiz geçmeyecek ve verdiğiniz bilgilerin gizliliğini korumak amacıyla araştırmacı tarafından her bir katılımcıya kodlar verilecektir. Çalışmaya katılımınız gönüllülük esasına dayalı olup kendinizi güvende hissetmediğinizde çalışmadan çekilme hakkınız bulunmaktadır.

Araştırma kapsamında aklınıza takılan soruları dilediğiniz zaman araştırmacıya(bana) sorabilirsiniz. Daha sonra oluşabilecek sorularınız için bu çalışmanın araştırmacısı olarak Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü araştırma görevlisi Sevgi Kaya Kaşıkçı'ya kasevgi@metu.edu.tr adresinden ve 03122104042 numaralı telefondan veya sayın danışmanım Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü öğretim üyesi Yard. Doç. Dr. Gökçe Gökalp'e ggokalp@metu.edu.tr adresinden ulaşabilirsiniz.

Bu formu imzalayarak bu çalışmaya gönüllü olarak katıldığınızı ve aynı zamanda istediğiniz zaman araştırma ile ilgili soru sorma imkanınız olduğunu belirtmiş olmaktadır. Araştırmaya katılarak bilgilerinizi paylaştığınız için çok teşekkür ederim.

Katılımcının Adı: _____

Tarih: _____

İmza: _____

APPENDIX F: Turkish Summary

TÜRKÇE ÖZET

ŞURALARIN EĞİTİM POLİTİKASI GELİŞTİRME SÜRECİNDEKİ ROLÜ ÜZERİNE EĞİTİM POLİTİKASI AKTÖRLERİNİN DENEYİMLERİ

GİRİŞ

Eğitim, çeşitli aktörlerin direkt olarak yada dolaylı yoldan etkilemeye çalıştıkları sosyal bir alandır. Bu alanda, en etkili fakat en gizli ilişki, İnal (2004) tarafından ayrılmaz parçalar olarak tanımlanan devlet ve eğitim arasında bulunmaktadır. Cevizci (2012) eğitimin değerini, toplumu etkileyen bir güç ve geleceği şekillendirmek amacıyla toplumun düşüncelerini uygulayan bir araç olarak tanımlayarak vurgulamıştır. Bu kadar önemli bir değere sahip olan ve hükümetlerin eğitim politikalarını kullanarak avantaj sağladıkları bir alan olan eğitim, Freire'nin (2003) de belirttiği gibi bir toplumun değer yargılarından bağımsız olamaz. Bu sebeple, eğitim ve eğitim politikaları hükümetlerin en sık kullandıkları araçlardır (Fowler, 2009).

Eğitim ve devlet arasındaki ilişkinin yanı sıra ideoloji ve eğitim arasında da güçlü bir bağ bulunmaktadır. Bu ilişkide, ideolojinin eğitim üzerindeki etkisi Gutek (1988) tarafından üç perspektiften anlatılmıştır: (1) ideoloji, eğitim politikasını, beklentilerini, çıktıları ve amaçlarını şekillendirmeye çalışır. (2) ideoloji, sosyal çevre aracılığı ile bazı değerleri aktarır ve pekiştirir. (3) ideoloji, formel müfredat tarafından belirlenen becerileri ve bilgileri vurgular. Tüm bu önermeler, devlet, ideoloji ve eğitim arasındaki ilişkinin eğitim politikası üzerindeki etkisini göstermektedir.

Eğitim politikası, bir toplumun sosyal ve eğitimsel problemlerini çözmek amacıyla politika yapıcılar tarafından uygulanan (Heck, 2004) dinamik bir devlet faaliyetidir. Eğitim politikaları hükümetler tarafından çeşitli aktörleri de sürece dahil ederek yapılandırılır. Bu noktada, Trowler (2003) politika yapım sürecini farklı

ideolojilere sahip çeşitli aktörlerin eğitim politikalarını şekillendirmek amacıyla çatıştıkları politik bir süreç olarak tanımlamıştır.

Literatürde politika yapım sürecini farklı bakış açılarından açıklayan çeşitli teoriler mevcuttur; elit teori, kurumsal teori, rasyonel seçim teorisi ve grup teori. Bu teoriler, politika yapım sürecini tam olarak açıklayamadıkları için bu süreci; problem tanımlama ve ajanda belirleme, politika oluşturma, politika uygulama, politika değerlendirme ve politikayı değiştirme/yok etme şeklinde basamaklara ayıran politik-döngü yaklaşımı geliştirilmiştir.

Politika-yapım sürecini Türkiye bağlamında düşündüğümüzde eğitim politikası yapma sürecini oluşturan 4 araç bulunmaktadır: Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, Hükümet Programı, Kalkınma Planı ve Milli Eğitim Şuraları (MEŞ). Bunlar arasında, MEŞ politika yapım sürecine farklı aktörleri politika yapım sürecine dahil eden tek platform olarak yer almaktadır. Yılmaz (2004) geniş katılımlı bir ortam sağlaması açısından şuraları etkili bir yapı olarak değerlendirmiştir. Diğer taraftan, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı (MEB) bu şuralardan etkili bir şekilde faydalanmamaktadır (Tedmem, 2014).

Şuralar ile ilgili şura kararlarının hangilerinin uygulandığı ve bu kararların eğitim politikası üzerindeki etkisi üzerine bir çok çalışma yürütülmüştür ve bu çalışmalar şura kararlarının uygulanmasına ilişkin bir tutarsızlık olduğu sonucuna ulaşmıştır. Tarih boyunca, MEB şura kararlarını uygularken (Aslaner, 2008; Büyükkarcı, 2012; Eriş, 2006), bir çok karara da dokunmamıştır (Akay, 2010; Dağ, 2013; Deniz, 2001; Üçler, 2006). Diğer bir ifadeyle, ilk yapılan şuralardaki kararlar uygulanırken, son zamanlarda bu kararların uygulanma oranı azalmıştır yada daha farklı şekilde uygulanmıştır.

Bazı çalışmalar, şura kararların uygulanma sürecinde ana aktör olarak yer alan hükümetlerin etkisini vurgularken (Akay, 2010; Deniz, 2001; Üçler, 2006), diğer taraftan literatürde yer alan başka çalışmalar ise her ne kadar şuralar politika oluşturma aracı olarak tasarlanmış olsa da şuraların bu süreçte tavsiye organı olarak tanımlamışlardır (Akay, 2010; Ayaz, 2009; Göktürk, 2006).

Şuralar, Türk Eğitim Sistemi içerisinde tarihi geçmişi ve eğitim sistemini şekillendiren ilk kurum olması dolayısı ile önemli bir yere sahiptir (Akyüz, 2008). Son zamanlarda yapılan çalışmalar şura kararlarının uygulanması ile ilgili bir tutarsızlık

olduğunu ve bu kararların politika yapım sürecinde çok az etkili olduklarını belirtmiş olsa da şuralar geçmişte politika yapma sürecinde oldukça etkili olmuşlardır (Aslaner, 2008; Büyükkarcı, 2012; Dağ, 2013; Uysal, 2008; Üçler, 2006).

Ayrıca, şuralar oldukça büyük ve detaylı düzenlenmiş organizasyonlardır ve bu nedenle organizasyonlara oldukça yüklü miktarda para harcanmaktadır. Buna rağmen, literatürde şuraların eğitim politikası geliştirme sürecindeki rolünü inceleyen araştırma bulunmamaktadır (ERG, 2014). Benzer şekilde, Tedmem (2014) şuraların fonksiyonelliğini araştıran çalışmaların olmadığını vurgulamıştır.

Buraya kadar, politika geliştirme sürecinde devlet, ideoloji ve aktör gibi çeşitli etmenlerin etkin olduğunu ve farklı politika geliştirme teorileri ve yaklaşımlarının olduğundan bahsedilmiştir. Türkiye bağlamında politika geliştirme sürecinin bir aracı olarak Milli Eğitim Şuralarının ne olduğundan ve bu şuraları ilişkin eksikliklere değinilmiştir. Literatürde şuraların rolünü ve fonksiyonelliğini inceleyen araştırmaların eksikliğine vurgu yapılmıştır. Be sebeple, şuraların eğitim sistemimizdeki rolünün ve fonksiyonelliğinin belirlenmesi gerekmektedir.

Araştırmanın Amacı: Milli Eğitim Şuraları eğitim ile ilgili konuları tartışmak amacıyla farklı aktörleri bir araya getiren katılımcı bir platform sağlamaktadır. Çok katılımlı özelliği nedeniyle şuraların işleyişi eğitim politikası yapma sürecinde farklı aktörlerin demokratik katılımı açısından önemlidir. Bu nedenle, şuraların eğitim üzerindeki etkisini ve sonuçlarını düşünerek bu yapının değerlendirilmesi ülkenin politika ajandası açısından önemli bir yere sahiptir.

Bu noktada, bu çalışma Milli Eğitim Şuralarının Türkiye’de eğitim politikası geliştirme sürecindeki rolünün ne olduğunu ve katılımcıların aynı parti döneminde gerçekleştirilmiş olan şuraları nasıl deneyimlediklerini araştırmaktadır. Diğer bir ifadeyle, bu çalışma şuraların eğitim politikası geliştirme sürecindeki rolünü ve fonksiyonelliğini, bu süreçte ideolojilerin rol alıp almadığını ve şura kararlarını Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı tarafından uygulanabilir kılan faktörleri incelemektedir.

17., 18., ve 19. Milli Eğitim Şuraları bu çalışma kapsamında ele alınacaktır. Çalışmada belirlenen amaçlar doğrultusunda aşağıdaki araştırma sorularına cevap aranmaktadır;

1. Milli Eğitim Şura’sı katılımcıları şuraların sürecini nasıl değerlendirmektedir?
2. Milli Eğitim Şuralarının eğitim politikası geliştirme sürecindeki rolü nedir?

3. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Milli Eğitim Şuralarında alınan kararlardan nasıl yararlanmaktadır?
4. İdeoloji eğitim politikası geliştirme sürecinde nasıl rol oynamaktadır?
 - a. Milli Eğitim Şuralarında şura katılımcılarının rolü nedir?

ALANYAZIN TARAMASI

Bu çalışma kapsamında alanyazın taramasında ele alınan konular şu şekildedir:

1. Politika, kamu politikası ve eğitim politikası kavramları
2. Politika yapım süreci
3. Politika yapım sürecine ilişkin teoriler
4. Politika basamakları modeli
5. Politika, devlet, ideoloji ve eğitim
6. Politika aktörleri
7. Milli eğitim şuraları
8. Politika oluşturma sürecine ilişkin ulusal ve uluslararası yürütülen çalışmalar.

YÖNTEM

Nitel araştırma yöntemi insanların belirli bir zaman ve durumda yaşadıkları olayları nasıl deneyimlediklerini anlamayı sağlar (Merriam, 2002). Benzer bir şekilde Patton (2002) nitel araştırma yöntemini katılımcıların bir konu ile ilgili düşüncelerini derinlemesine anlama olarak tanımlamıştır. Bu çalışma, aynı parti döneminde gerçekleştirilen Milli Eğitim Şuralarını katılımcıların nasıl deneyimlediklerini araştırdığı için bir nitel araştırma olarak yapılandırılmıştır.

Çalışma Grubu: Bu araştırmanın çalışma grubunu Milli Eğitim Şurasına katılan ve eğitim alanından farklı aktörler olan 15 katılımcı oluşturmaktadır. Katılımcılar seçilirken 17., 18. ve 19. şuralardan en az birini deneyimlemiş olan kişileri seçmek gerektiği için amaçlı örnekleme yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Katılımcıların 7'si 17. MEŞ'a, 9'u 18. MEŞ'a ve 9'u 19. MEŞ'a katılmışlardır. Bu örneklem içerisinde yer alan katılımcıların 3'ü kadın, 13'ü ise erkektir. Ayrıca, katılımcılardan 7'si Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı'nda görevli uzman, öğretmen, müdür, 5'i sivil toplum kuruluşlarında uzman, 2'si ERG ve SETA'da görevli uzman, diğer 3'ü ise akademisyenlerdir.

Veri Kaynakları: Bu çalışmada veri toplama aracı olarak 5 bölüm 21 sorudan oluşan yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme tekniği uygulanmıştır. Görüşme soruları araştırmacı tarafından alanyazın taramasından sonra oluşturulmuştur. Etik kurul izin alındıktan sonra ve katılımcıların gönüllülük esasına dayanarak görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Görüşme sırasında katılımcıların bilgisi dahilinde ses kaydı yapılmış ve not alınmıştır. İsteyen katılımcılar ile görüşmenin dökümü paylaşılmıştır. Ayrıca araştırmanın geçerlik ve güvenilirliğini artırmak amacıyla çeşitleme yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Bu amaçla, diğer bir veri kaynağı olarak Milli Eğitim Şurası yönetmeliği, raporları ve sendika raporları kullanılmıştır. Ayrıca; görüşmelerin analizi iki katılımcı ve 4 uzman ile paylaşılmış onların görüşleri alınmıştır.

Veri Analizi: Nitel araştırma yöntemlerinde veri analizi veri toplama ile eş zamanlı ilerleyen bir süreçtir (Merriam, 2002). Creswell (2013) veri analizini; verileri düzenlemek, okumak ve kodlama yapmak, temaları çıkarmak ve yorumlamak olarak 4 temel aşamaya ayırmıştır. Bu çalışma kapsamında betimsel analiz ve içerik analizi uygulanmıştır. Betimsel analizde her bir görüşme orijinal halinden yola çıkarak ve görüşme ortamını da betimleyerek okuyucular sunulmuştur. İçerik analizinde ise; ilk olarak görüşmeler yazılı ortama geçirilmiştir ve dökümanlarda şura raporları, yönetmelikler ve sendika raporları şeklinde organize edilmiştir. Ardından, temalara ulaşmak ve daha derin bir analiz sağlamak (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 1999) üzere içerik analizi yapılmıştır. İçerik analizinde önce kodlar tespit edilmiş ardından temalar oluşturulmuştur. Bu kapsamda 13 tema belirlenmiştir. Ayrıca, kodları ve temaları düzenlemek amacıyla NVivo 10 programı kullanılmıştır.

Araştırma kapsamında elde edilen bulgular Milli Eğitim Şurası yönetmeliği, 17. ve 18. Milli Eğitim Şurası raporları ve sendikalar tarafından yayınlanan raporlar araştırmada bulunan kodlar ve temalar dikkate alınarak desteklenmiştir.

BULGULAR

Bu çalışma, Milli Eğitim Şuralarının Türkiye’de eğitim politikası geliştirme sürecindeki rolünün ne olduğunu ve katılımcıların aynı parti döneminde gerçekleştirilmiş olan şuraları nasıl deneyimlediklerini araştırmaktadır. Aynı zamanda, şuraların genel yapısı, ideolojilerin bu süreçteki yeri ve Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı’nın şura kararlarını nasıl uyguladıkları da incelenmektedir.

Verilerin analizine dayanarak 13 tema ortaya çıkmıştır. İlk araştırma sorusu kapsamında “Milli Eğitim Şura’sı katılımcıları şura sürecini nasıl değerlendirmektedir?” 6 tema bulunmaktadır: (1) yapısal konular, (2) tarihsel perspektif, (3) işlevsel nedenler, (4) şuraların ortamına ilişkin nedenler, (5) şuralar ve komisyonlar arasındaki farklı uygulamalar ve (6) şura aktörleri.

İkinci araştırma sorusu ile ilgili olarak “Milli Eğitim Şuraları’nın eğitim politikası geliştirme sürecindeki rolü nedir?” iki ana tema bulunmaktadır: (1) bir araç olarak şuraların rolü ve (2) bir platform olarak şuraların rolü.

Üçüncü araştırma sorusu için “Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Milli Eğitim Şuraları’nda alınan kararlardan nasıl yararlanmaktadır?” üç tema ortaya çıkmıştır: (1) politika yapımı ve şura kararları, (2) şura kararlarını uygulama kriterleri ve (3) şura kararlarının özellikleri.

Son araştırma sorusuna ilişkin ise “İdeoloji eğitim politikası geliştirme sürecinde nasıl rol oynamaktadır?” ve “Milli Eğitim Şuraları’nda şura katılımcılarının rolü nedir?” iki tema bulunmaktadır: (1) şuraların ideolojik oluşumu ve (2) şura dinamikleri.

Şuraların yapısına ilişkin olarak 4 alt tema bulunmaktadır. Katılımcılar şuraları politik, çoğulcu, homojen ve görünürde demokratik bir ortam olarak nitelendirmişlerdir. Katılımcıların tümü şuraların eğitim ile ilgili bir çok aktörü bir araya getiren dinamik bir yapı olarak değerlendirmişlerdir. Ayrıca şuralar katılımcı bir platform sağlamaktadırlar. Diğer taraftan katılımcılardan 11’i şuraların politik yapısına dikkat çekmiş ve politik oluşumu ideoloji ile ilişkilendirmişlerdir. Benzer bir şekilde 17. Şura raporunda (2007) bazı katılımcılar şuraların MEB tarafından kendi istekleri doğrultusunda organize edildiğini ve buradan çıkan kararları politik bir dayanak olarak kullandıklarını vurgulamışlardır. Bir diğer alt tema ise şuraların çoğulcu bir yaklaşıma sahip olmasıdır. Katılımcılardan 10’u şuraların uzlaşma kavramından ziyade çoğulcu bir yaklaşıma sahip olmasını eleştirmiştir. Bunun bir nedeni ise şuraların homojen bir yapıya sahip olmasıdır. Katılımcılar şura katılımcılarının çoğunluğunun erkek, bakanlık çalışanları yada belirli bir sendika üyeleri olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Benzer şekilde ERG (2015) yayınladığı raporda şura katılımcılarının toplumu temsil etmediğine dikkat çekmiştir. Son olarak, şuralar biçimsel olarak katılımcılar arasında eşit bir ilişki sağlasa da bu durum şuranın homejen yapısı

nedeniyle bozulmaktadır. Araştırmanın bulgularına göre katılımcılar şuranın tarihi boyutuna dikkat çekmiş ve şuraları Türk Eğitim sisteminin ayrılmaz bir parçası olarak tanımlamışlardır. Şuraların tarihi 1921 yılında düzenlenen Maarif Kongresine dayanmaktadır (Akyüz, 2008).

Diğer taraftan katılımcılar şuraların yeterince işlevsel olmadığını ve bir konferans gibi düzenlendiğini vurgulamışlardır. Bu bulgu Tedmem (2014) şuralarının miladını doldurduğu ve yeni yönetim yaklaşımlarına göre yenilenmesi gerektiği şeklinde desteklenmektedir. Şuraların ortamı ile ilgili katılımcılar son üç şuranında işleyişinin benzer olduğunu ve sura başkanlarının kendileri tarafından oylama yöntemi ile seçildiğini belirtmişlerdir. Bu ortamda her bir katılımcı düşüncelerini ifade etmek için eşit derecede katılım hakkına sahiptir fakat katılımcıların çoğu bu ortamın sendikalar tarafından domine edildiğini ifade etmişlerdir.

Şuralar ve komisyonlar arasındaki farklı uygulamalar şuraların yapısına ilişkin bir diğer temadır. Araştırma bulguları 17. Milli Eğitim Şurası'nın son iki şuraya göre daha teknik olarak düzenlendiğini ve 17. Şuradan sonra son iki şuranın daha ideolojik ve tek tip bir yapıya sahip olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Bunun yanı sıra şuralardaki komisyonlar arasında da farklılıklar mevcuttur. Örneğin; öğretmen niteliği ilgili komisyonlar daha uzlaşmacı bir ortama sahip iken müfredat ile ilgili komisyonlarda daha çok gergin bir atmosfer mevcuttur. Ayrıca, katılımcılar hemen hemen her şurada yönetmeliğin değiştiğini ve özellikle katılımcılar ile ilgili kısmın revize edildiğini vurgulamışlardır. Bu durum 17. ve 18. Şura yönetmelikleri incelendiğinde de ortaya çıkmaktadır (MEB, 2006; 2011).

Şuraların yapısına ilişkin son tema ise şura aktörlerdir. Şura yönetmeliğinde de belirtildiği gibi şuralarda tabii üyeler ve davetli üyeler bulunmaktadır. Bu üyelerin bir kısmı devlet kurumlarında çalışan kişiler iken diğer kısmı ise sivil toplum kuruluşlarından oluşmaktadır. Şura katılımcıları toplumun çeşitli kesimlerinden eğitime etki edebilecek aktörlerden oluşmaktadır. Fakat araştırma bulgularına göre bu katılımcıların hangi kriterlere göre belirlendiği net ve şeffaf değildir. Şura yönetmeliği incelendiğinde de yönetmelikte hangi tür katılımcıların çağırılacağı mevcut iken bu katılımcıların hangi oranda şurada yer alacağı ve hangi kriterlere göre seçileceği belirtilmemiştir. Bu bulguyu benzer araştırma sonuçları da desteklemektedir (ERG, 2014; Toprak & Külekçi, 2015).

Şuraların eğitim politikası geliştirme sürecindeki rolü üzerine iki tema bulunmaktadır: (1) bir araç olarak şuraların rolü ve (2) bir platform olarak şuraların rolü. Çalışmanın sonuçları, şuraların eğitim ile ilgili belirli konularda toplumun ne düşündüğünü belirlemek ve katılımcılardan bu konularda bilgi edinme amacıyla kullanılan bir araç olduğunu ortaya çıkarmıştır. Ayrıca, hükümetin ve MEB'nin kendisini meşruiyet eksikliği hissettiği durumlarda şuraları bir meşruiyet aracı olarak kullandığı bulgusuna ulaşılmıştır. Bu duruma ilişkin katılımcıların sekizi 4+4+4 reform örneğini vermiş ve MEB'nin bu reformu şura kararlarının katılımcı ortamından destek alarak şura kararlarına dayandırdığını belirtmişlerdir. Şuraların aynı zamanda eğitim ile ilgili konuları ve sorunları tartışma amacıyla oluşturulan ve bu vesile ile toplumda bulunan bireylerin düşüncelerini dile getirmesini sağlayan bir platform olduğu katılımcılar tarafından belirtilmiştir. Aynı zamanda, araştırmanın bulguları şuraların hükümet ve MEB tarafından ajanda oluşturma amacıyla kullanılan bir platform olduğunu ortaya çıkarmıştır.

Şura kararları ile ilgili (1) politika yapımı ve şura kararları, (2) şura kararlarını uygulama kriterleri ve (3) şura kararlarının özellikleri temaları belirlenmiştir. Araştırma verilerine göre katılımcıların 14'ü şura kararlarının politika yapım sürecinde genellikle etkili olmadığını fakat bu durumun politik bir içerik söz konusu olduğunda katılımcılar kararların politika yapım sürecinde etkili olduğunu ve bakanlık tarafından uygulandığını belirtmişlerdir. Buna örnek olarak ise, 18. Şurada karar olarak alınan ve sonrasında 4+4+4 kesintili eğitim şeklinde uygulanan reform örnek göstermişlerdir.

Araştırmanın sonuçlarına göre şura kararlarının bakanlık tarafından uygulanması bu kararların hükümet yada bakanlık için ya da ajanda için uygun olmasına bağlıdır. Şura kararlarının özellikleri ile ilgili olarak katılımcılar bu kararların bilimsel ve pedagojik olmaktan ziyade daha çok belirli grupların isteklerine bağlı olarak alınan çoğulcu yapıda kararlar olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Bu durum Eğitim-Sen (2015) ve ERG (2010) raporlarında da belirtilmiştir.

İdeolojilerin şuralarda nasıl etkili olduğuna ilişkin bir tema (1) şuraların ideolojik oluşumu belirlenmiştir. Araştırmanın bulguları, katılımcıların seçilme sürecinin, şura kararlarının ve bakanlık tarafından uygulanan şura kararlarının ideolojik bir yapıda olduğunu ortaya çıkarmıştır. Ayrıca, şura sürecinde katılımcılar bakanlık, sendikalar ve akademisyenleri en etkili aktörler olarak sıralamış ve bakanlığın ve sendikaların

etkin bir güce sahip olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Şura sürecinde bakanlık ile kendi ideolojilerine yakın olan sendika yakın ilişkide bulunup bakanlık bu sendikanın getirdiği önerileri desteklemiştir.

TARTIŞMA

Bu çalışmanın amacı, 17., 18., ve 19. şura katılımcılarının Milli Eğitim Şuraları'nın eğitim politikası geliştirme sürecindeki rolünü nasıl deneyimlediklerini araştırmaktır. Bu noktada bu çalışma aynı parti döneminde gerçekleştirilen son üç şurayı katılımcıların nasıl deneyimlediklerini araştırdığı için nitel bir araştırma olarak desenlenmiştir. Araştırma verileri araştırmacı tarafından oluşturulan yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme ile toplanmıştır. Bu süreçte 15 şura katılımcısı ile görüşme yapılmıştır. Ayrıca, döküman olarak şura yönetmelikleri, 17. ve 18. Şura raporları ve sendika raporları incelenmiştir. Veriler betimsel analiz ve içerik analizi yöntemi ile NVivo 10 programı kullanılarak analiz edilmiş ve 13 tema belirlenmiştir.

Milli Eğitim Şuraları'nın genel yapısı katılımcılar tarafından hem olumlu hem de olumsuz olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Katılımcılar, şuraların MEB'nin merkezîyetçi yapısından dolayı herhangi bir bölümünde gözlenemeyen ve bir çok paydaşı politika yapım sürecine dahil eden katılımcı yapısına dikkat çekmiştir. Bu noktada Milli Eğitim Şuraları MEB'nin dinamik bir yapısı olarak farklı bir konumda yer almaktadır. Buna benzer olarak ERG (2010) MEŞ'i politika yapım sürecinde bir çok aktörü sürece dahil eden katılımcı yapısına dikkat çekmiş ve Karataş (2012) şuraları MEB'in yerelleştirilmesi açısından eğitimde toplumsal katılımı sağlayan bir model olarak tanımlamıştır.

Diğer taraftan, şuraların olumsuz yönleri olumlu taraflarını geçmiştir. Her ne kadar şuralar katılımcı ve güçlü bir yapı olsa da şuralar homojen ve politik çerçevede oluşturulmaktadır. Şura yönetmeliğinde de (2014) belirtildiği gibi katılımcılar bakanlık bünyesinde bulunan Talim Terbiye Kurulu tarafından seçilmektedir. Yönetmelikte katılımcı seçim kriterleri belirtilmediği için bakanlık katılımcıları istedikleri doğrultuda seçme gücüne sahiptir (ERG, 2014; ERG, 2015; Karataş, 2014; Toprak & Külekçi, 2014). Sonuç olarak, homojen bir yapı olarak oluşturulan şuralarda baskın gruplar hem şura sürecini hem de şuralarda alınan kararları etkileme gücüne sahiptirler.

Politika yapım süreci, farklı paydaşların eğitim politikasını kendi menfaatleri doğrultusunda etkileyebilmek için çatıştığı (Trowler, 2003) dinamik (Taylor et al., 1997) ve tahmin edilemeyen bir süreçtir (Cairney, 2012). Bu süreci açıklayan farklı teoriler ve modeller bulunmaktadır. Milli Eğitim Şuraları Türkiye’de bulunan dört eğitim politikası araçlarından biridir (Şişman, 2008). Her ne kadar şuralar politika oluşturma aracı olarak tanımlansa da literatürde şuraların rolü net değildir (ERG, 2014). Araştırmanın bulgularına ve yönetmeliğe dayanarak şuralar politika geliştirme sürecinde danışma kurulu olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Fakat, son zamanlarda düzenlenen şuralar politika oluşturma aracından ziyade politika yapım modelinin problem tanımlama ve ajanda oluşturma aşamaları ile uyumlu olan ajanda belirleme aracı olarak kullanılmaktadır. MEB şuralarda tartışılacak ana konuları öncelikle belirler sonrasında ise 4+4+4 reformunda olduğu gibi farklı paydaşlar ajandaya ulaşip politikaya dönüştürülebilecek kararları şekillendirirler. Buna rağmen, bazı çalışmalar şuraları danışma organı olarak tanımlarken (Akay, 2010; Ayaz, 2009; Deniz, 2001; ERG, 2014; MoNE, 2014; Tedmem, 2014). diğerleri de şuraların politika geliştirme sürecinde net bir rolünün olmadığını ve etkili olamadıklarını belirtmişlerdir (Aydın, 1996; Aslaner, 2008; ERG; 2014).

Ayrıca, bu çalışma şuraların bakanlık ve hükümet tarafından politika oluşturma aracından çok meşruiyet sağlama aracı olarak kullanıldığını göstermektedir. Her ne kadar ilk şuralarda ortaya çıkan kararlardan politika oluşturulmuş olsa da (Aslaner, 2008; Deniz, 2001), bu çalışma şuraların politika yapım sürecinde etkililiğini kaybettiğini göstermektedir (Aydın, 1996; Dağ, 2013; ERG, 2014; Tedmem, 2014). Fakat, şura kararları katılımcı bir ortamda alındığı için hükümet tarafından meşruiyet aracı olarak kullanılmaktadır.

Şuraların politika yapım sürecinde etkili olmamasının nedeni Türkiye’de politika yapım sürecinin elit bir yaklaşımla gerçekleşmesinden kaynaklanıyor olabilir. Keser-Aschenberger (2012) politika yapım sürecini araştırdığı çalışmada Türkiye’de bu sürecin elitist ve tepeden inme olduğu sonucuna ulaşmıştır. Ayıca, Arslan (2006) bu süreci güce sahip olan hükümeti ve etkili grupları içeren demo-elit yaklaşımı ile açıklamıştır. Bu açıdan, şuralar her ne kadar yetkilerin dağıtıldığı ve katılımcı bir platform sunmuş olsa da hükümet ajandasına yada bazı grupların (elitlerin) gücüne ve etkisine bağlı olarak bazı kararlar uygulanmaktadır.

Şura kararlarının bir kısmı politika olarak hükümet tarafından uygulanırken bir kısmı da hiçbir şekilde bu sürece dahil edilmemektedir. Literatürde de benzer şekilde şura kararlarının çoğunlukla uygulandığı (Aslaner, 2008; Büyükkarcı, 2012; Deniz, 2001; Eriş, 2006) yada bazı çalışmalarda uygulanmadığı belirtilmiştir (Akay, 2010; Dağ, 2013; Deniz, 2001; Uysal, 2008; Üçler, 2006). Bu çelişki şuraların düzenlendiği dönem ile ilgili olabilir. Şöyle ki ilk zamanlarda düzenlenen şuraların kararları politika olarak uygulanırken son zamanlardaki yapılan şuraların kararları bir politikaya dönüşmemektedir. Bu durum, şuraların rolünün politika oluşturma aracından ajanda belirleme aracına dönüşmesi ile açıklanabilir.

Bu kararların uygulanması çoğunlukla hükümet ve bakanlığın inisiyatifine ve ajanları ile olan uyumuna bağlı bulunmaktadır. Bu noktada Üçler (2006) bakanlığın şura kararlarını hükümet politikası ile örtüşmediği için uygulamadığını belirtmiştir. Ayrıca Akay'a göre (2010) kararların uygulanabilirliği politik gücün otoritesine bağlı bulunmaktadır. Şuralar her ne kadar farklı paydaşları içeren demokratik ve katılımcı bir ortam sağlasalar da hükümet ve bakanlık kararların uygulanması üzerine olan etkisi sayesinde karar alma ve politika yapım sürecini kontrol altında tutmaktadır ve bu da elitist politika yapım sürecinin bir sonucudur.

İdeoloji belirli değerlerin eğitim üzerinden uygulanmasında bir araç olarak tanımlanmıştır (İnal, 2004; Kaplan, 1999; Taylor et al., 1997; Trowler, 2003). Bu çalışma, şuralarda katılımcıların seçimi, karar alma süreci ve kararların uygulanmasında ideolojinin etkisini ortaya çıkarmıştır. Şuralara katılan paydaşlar belirli bir ideolojiye yakın olan kişilerden seçilmektedir ve bu kişiler benzer ideoloji çerçevesinde kararlar almaktadırlar. Bu noktada katılımcıların çoğu şuralarda katılımcılar tarafından özellikle belirli bir sendika tarafından dile getirilen muhafazakar ideolojiyi vurgulamışlardır. İnal'a göre (2008) hükümetler eğitimi ideolojilerin tahkim etmek için bir araç olarak kullanmaktadırlar ve Heck (2004) hükümetlerde yaşanan değişimlerin eğitim politikalarına da yansıdığına altını çizmiştir. Göktürk (2006) şuralar ile ilgili yürüttüğü çalışmada tek parti döneminde gerçekleştirilen şuraların eğitim yoluyla belirli bir ideoloji oluşturma ve uluslaşma üzerine amacına hizmet ettiği sonucuna ulaşmıştır.

Son olarak, şuralarda eğitim sendikaları en etkili gruplar arasında yer almaktadır. Fowler (2009) öğretmenlerin politika yapım sürecinde etkin olmadıklarını fakat

sendika gibi örgütlü bir yapı içerisinde yer almalarının onların politika yapım sürecinde daha etkili ve güçlü olmaları sağladığını belirtmiştir. Diğer taraftan belirli bir sendika ve bakanlık arasında yakın bir ilişki bulunmaktadır. Çoğunlukla, 4+4+4 reformunda olduğu gibi sendika ve bakanlık şura sürecini domine etmekte ve kararları istekleri doğrultusunda etkilemektedir. Literatürde de sendikalar ve hükümetler arasındaki ilişkiyi gösteren çalışmalar mevcuttur (Eraslan, 2012; Taşdan, 2013; Top, 1999; yıldırım, 2007). Eraslan (2012) hükümetlerin amacına ulaşmak için ideolojilerine yakın sendikaları kullandığını ifade etmiştir.

Bu çalışma kapsamında elde edilen bulgulara dayanarak şu önerilerde bulunulabilir:

1. Milli Eğitim Şuraları literatürde tanımlandığının aksine artık bir politika geliştirme aracı olarak işlev görmemektedir ve bunun yerine bu süreçte bir ajanda belirleme aracı olarak bulunmaktadır. Bu çerçevede şuraların eğitim politikası geliştirme sürecindeki rolü revize edilmelidir.
2. Şura yönetmeliğinde şura katılımcılarının nasıl seçileceği konusunda net bir bilgi bulunmamaktadır. Katılımcı seçme sürecinin daha şeffaf olması açısından bu kriterler yönetmelikte açıkça belirtilmelidir.
3. Şurada alınana kararlar bilimsel ve pedagojik olmaktan ziyade ideolojik ve politik olarak tanımlanmıştır. Bu noktada şura katılımcıları daha nitelikli seçilmeli ve kararlar belirli bir bilimsel veriye dayanarak alınmalıdır.
4. MEB'nın şura kararlarından nasıl yararlanacağı belirli değildir. Bakanlığın bu kararlardan nasıl faydalanacağı ve hangi kararlara uygulayacağı yönetmelikte açıkça ifade edilmemelidir.
5. Şuralar katılımcılar tarafından miladı dolmuş ve işlevsel olamayan bir yapı olarak tanımlanmıştır. Şuralar modern yönetim modelleri dikkate alınarak ve katılımcı yönünü destekler nitelikte yeniden yapılandırılmalıdır.

APPENDIX G: Tez Fotokopisi İzin Formu

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enformatik Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>

YAZARIN

Soyadı : Kaya- Kaşıkçı

Adı : Sevgi

Bölümü : Educational Administration and Planning

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) : EXPERIENCES OF EDUCATION POLICY ACTORS IN RELATION TO THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION COUNCIL IN THE PROCESS OF POLICY-MAKING

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans

Doktora

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
3. Tezimden bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz.

TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ: