

Evolutions of Relations Between Turkish Universities and the Government

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Abstract

This thesis points out that the relations' evolutions between Turkish universities and the government has gone through four periods from the Ottoman Empire (1290-1922) to now, including the initiation period, the overall taking over period, and the overall control period from the government to the universities, as well as the development period of universities under centralization. This thesis discusses at length that universities were mainly controlled by three national regulations in the development period of universities under centralization, including the legislation, the management system and the expenditure; however, the universities' own appeals for profound knowledge also bring the university system that conducts under centralization ceaseless impacts and adjustments, for example, the Turkish Higher Learning Commission and *Higher Education Legislation* are voices from Turkish universities for university's autonomy under the background of centralization.

Key words: University; Government; Centralization; The Higher Learning Commission

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INTRODUCTION

In the early and medium stage of Ottoman Empire, the religious authority and majesty were highly integrated, and the university education at that time mainly referred to theology education in Medrese. The late Ottoman Empire had witnessed Turkish Youth Era, Turkish Republic Era and Modern Turkish Era, and Turkey had gone through the process from religion to earthliness, moreover, Turkish higher learning had also emerged from the womb of the religious education, developed step by step and finally replaced the traditional higher religious education. Since Turkey was founded in 1923, the higher education organizations there had gained a rapid development, and they had increased from one institution in 1923 to one hundred and ninety-three institutions in 2010 (Özcan, 2011; Bologna Process, 2012), furthermore, the relations between Turkey and its universities had also been constantly evolved as the increasingly important functions of universities in the national development.

1. LATE OTTOMAN EMPIRE—GOVERNMENT LEAD THE INITIATION OF THE UNIVERSITIES

Higher Islam learning in Ottoman Empire referred to Medrese theology education, and this kind of schools were mostly built by the emperors, bureaucracy and nobles in history. These schools were mosques-centered, and in each mosque, they set up a seminary, the Empire would allocate some of its annual revenue for that. Qualified graduates of Medrese (including the inferior students) could all get jobs, mainly consisting judges at all levels, Mufti, teachers in Islam schools, officers in religious business administrations and Imams in the mosques, they were the so-called “Ulema”, a special social rank.

Medrese Seminary had always been a higher learning institution that ever occupied in the monopoly in Ottoman

Empire. However, when it came to the late 18th century and the early 19th century, because of its donnish teaching methods, impractical religious content and students' Islam thinking models that were shaped for a long time, Medrese Seminary had not the ability to cultivate the westernization and modernization talents on urgent demands, which was increasingly impossible for it to adapt to the needs of the social development. Started from Sudan MuHeMatti II, the reforms of educational secularization had been carried out vigorously. The Empire established a new and secular educational system beyond the traditional Islam education system (Sun, 2001). In that way, it not only met the social demands for westernization and modernization talents, but also ensured Islam religion had enough talents to continue its formal existence and development. It is worthy to mention that in 1870, reform pioneers had also tried to create a common university, Dar-ul-funûn, the predecessor of Istanbul University now, which was not successful but of great importance. In addition, in the educational system of the Empire, there were also schools created by various religions (non-Islam) Millets, schools of foreign missionaries and former military and civil vocational-technical schools that recovered and developed in this stage, etc. (Huang, 2007). When Sudan Abdul Khamenei took office from 1876 to 1909, the Empire continued to input the educational fund and improve the teaching facilities, so the secular education in 19th century had obtained another great development. He had issued the reform order in 1879 to promise to continue education and law reforms, and finally on August 12, 1900 created the first university, Dar-ül-fünun-u Osmani, and there was secular law school: Mekteb-i Hukuk u Şahane (Huang, 2007).

In such a historical environment full of internal and external problems, Turkish universities at this stage were mainly responsible for the functions of national renaissance and social development, therefore, the state was the creator and promoter of universities, and feudal lords, such as Sudan MuHeMatti II, had ever played important roles during the process of universities' creation and development, moreover, universities mainly focused on military technical colleges (Lewis, 1982). However, the university education at this stage had not removed the interventions from the religion and also because they were Sudan and Ulema who made the decisions in the sovereign state, moreover, they had never established a social regime that adapted to the universities, the development of universities showed a visible sway.

2. YOUTH TURKISH PERIOD—THE UNIVERSITIES WERE FULLY TAKEN OVER BY GOVERNMENT (1913-1918)

Especially from 1913 to 1918, the new characteristic of secular process in Youth Turkish Period is stopping

the binary structure between earthliness and religion and realizing the unity on the secular basis in the fields of national social life, such politics, law, education, etc. (Ha & Zhou, 2009) In September, 1914, Medrese Islahi Medaris Nizamnamesi had been issued. All of the Medreses in Istanbul had been readjusted through this law and divided into two levels after this readjustment, including medium education and higher education. The former had been divided into lower and higher, and the latter had been divided into undergraduates and graduates. In 1916, Şeyhul-Islâm had been evacuated out from the cabinet, whose organization had been degraded from ministry to a branch of the ministry, whose religious court had been transferred to the Justice Department (1915) and whose religious school, Medrese, had been handed over to the Ministry of Education, moreover, the management rights of Waqf, a religious fund, had also been replaced by EVkaf. Şeyhul-Islâm only kept the traditional religious control. The Islam Theology Synthesis after the reforms was called Darül-Hilafetil Aliyye Medressesi (Huang, 2007).

Youth Turkish Period was a significant turning point in the history of Turkey, and the higher education had become an important battle field for the state to propaganda ideology, furthermore, universities had been handed over to the state.

3. THE TIME OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY—THE OVERALL CONTROL PERIOD FROM THE GOVERNMENT TO THE UNIVERSITIES (1919-1981)

After the found of Republic in 1923, it had issued *The Law of Education* (Tevhid-i Tedrisat) in 1924. They established their own educational system and principles in *The Law of Education* and fully readjusted the traditional education, abolishing the multiple educational system that consisted of national minority education, church education, foreign education, meanwhile, they also abolished Medrese, a traditional Islam educational form with a long history, and all of the educations in the Republic had been handed over to the Ministry of Education. Turkish National Congress had passed No.2253 law in 1933, which decided to turn Darulfünun into Istanbul University, therefore, Istanbul University, the true first university in the Republic had been founded on November 18, 1933. The council of Istanbul University had declared that Istanbul University would be a westernized higher education organization and make contributions for turning Turkey into a secular country and for the social and economic development (Doğramacı, 2007).

Behind the found of Istanbul University, there was Kemalist ideology or Atatürkcülük, including “republicanism, nationalism, populism, evolutionism, statist, secularism”, and these six principles had been

written into the Republic People’s Party platform in 1931 (Liu, 2001). Istanbul University is a product of the found of Turkish nation-state, which will have corresponding changes with future developments. And as the first secular university in Turkey, Istanbul University’ secular type had also been modeled by the following new universities in Turkey (Mizikaci, 2006). In addition, affected by World War Second, many Jewish professors came from German to Istanbul University for getting away from the Nazi prosecutions, which also greatly promoted its development. Therefore, Istanbul University quickly became the research and education center of Turkey. As the first higher education organization in Turkey, Istanbul University also cultivated teaching faculty for the following universities.

Except for promoting Turkish reforms in the fields of economy, politics, culture, thoughts, education and scientific development, according to the relevant laws,

higher education organizations in Turkey would be responsible for the management and broadcast of Kemal ideology. Up to now, in the field of education that plays the role of ideology safeguard, except the primary and medium education, Turkish higher education needs a two-year curriculum of *The Thoughts and Reforms of Atatürk*. Turkish secularism, in addition to the college models from British, America and European continent had formed the basis of modern Turkish university system.

Until 1981, there were totally four kinds of higher education institutions: university, academic college, professional school and teachers’ education college. University had the autonomy of organization, but its fund was controlled by the state, and other three kinds of higher education institutions were controlled strictly by the Ministry of Education all around.

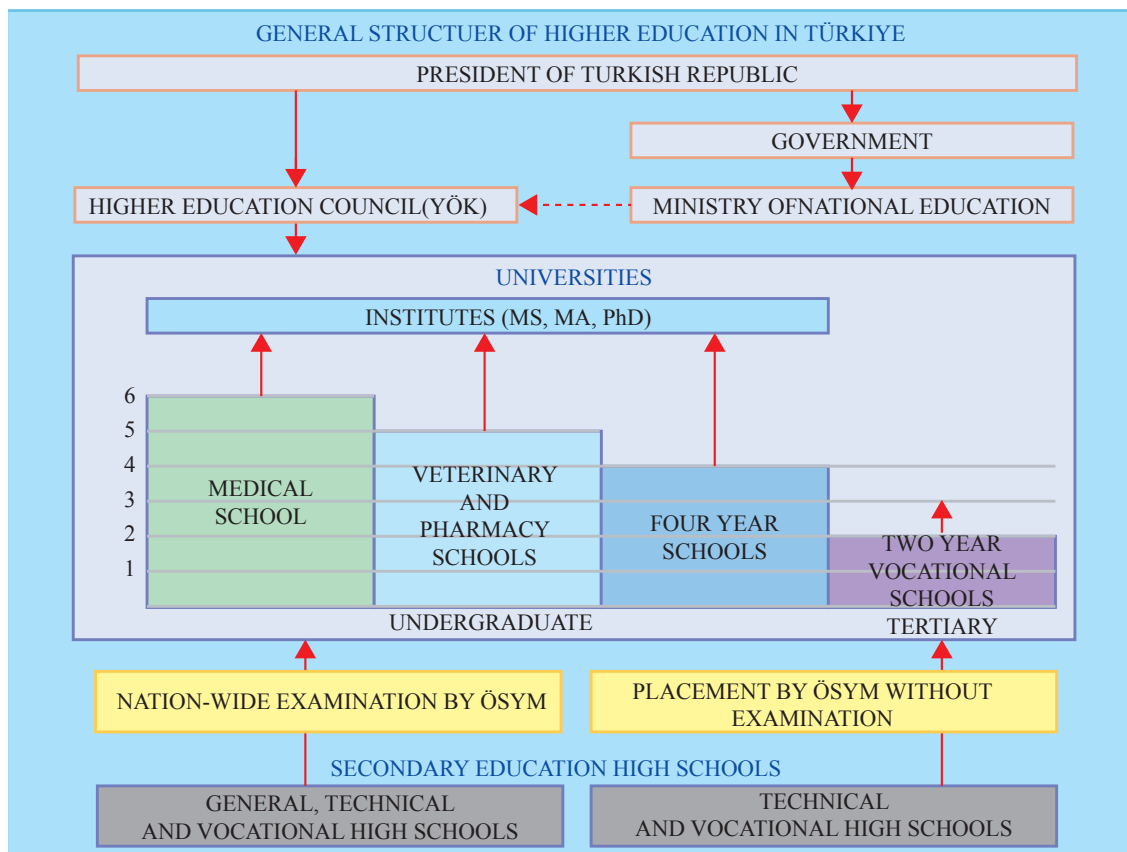


Figure 1
The National Educational System (Özcan, 2011)

4. NEW PERIOD OF TURKEY—THE DEVELOPMENT PERIOD OF UNIVERSITIES UNDER HIGHLY CENTRALIZED CONTROL (1981 UNTIL NOW)

In 1981, Turkey had been through higher education management system reforms that were of great importance

and historical significance. Before 1981, higher education institutions in Turkey mainly consisted of university, educational college (or teachers’ training college) and professional college (such as science college, engineering college), whose academy and management were both directly controlled by the Ministry of Education. However, as for the Turkish political turmoil and frequent political parties’ changes in 1970s, the policy of higher education

had been affected by the politics heavily, which lacked of knowledge about education and subject principles and the thoughts of strategies, long-term and sustainability, therefore, the educational situation was rather confused. After military government took office in 1980, they issued *Law on Higher Education* in 1980 to strengthen the management of higher education and eradicate many weaknesses existed in higher education. *Law on Higher Education* focused on three major reforms: 1. the establishment of an autonomy organization equips with an independent legal person—"Higher Education Council, YÖK), who was responsible for the management of national higher education and higher education institutions, and the Ministry of Education would never intervene their managements; 2. Non-profit fund associations were allowed to establish private universities; 3. Higher learning institutions, for example, various independently specialized colleges (such as Science and Technology College) and teachers' colleges would be combined and integrated with universities, so that they could establish a unified system of higher education. In such a background, all of the higher learning institutions would switch towards the direction of "multiversity", and the enrollment had also been managed by Higher Learning Commission, so Turkey had formed a university management system of centralization. (You can refer to Figure 1 for the basic structure of Turkish higher learning.)

4.1 Legislation—The First Intervention to the Universities from Turkish Government

Law on Higher Education of 1981 is both the first and the most profound legislation about higher education; Turkish public higher education institutions are governmental organizations that need to obey the management of relevant law. According to the regulation of *Law on Higher Education* of 1981, the major functions of higher education institutions rested on providing after-middle school education at various levels, carrying out academic researches and publications and undertaking the corresponding consultation (YÖK, 1981, Art. 12). The *Law on Public Servant* (No.657, the Ministry of Justice, 1965) ever made a clear regulation to the rights and responsibilities of faculty in the republic universities, therefore, as long as there were records officially, staff who were no matter worked in teaching, management or other relevant jobs would obey this law. Private universities shall obey relevant regulations of *Law on Higher Education*, and they could also make some rules for the revenue and management of the universities without against this regulation. Under the university system of Turkish highly centralization, both the scientific researches and teaching of public higher institutions shall obey the arrangements of central plan, especially in the restrictions of the following regulations, there was no space of free academy in the public higher institutions.

➤ Public higher institutions belong to national organizations.

➤ All of the property of public higher institutions belongs to the state, and teachers in the public higher institutions are employees of the state.

➤ The internal management structure, department set, number of staff, salary, and the enrollment and tuition of the students in the public universities have to be conducted under the guidance of the legislation and governmental budget.

➤ The responsibility main body who is in charge of conducting the governmental legislation is Turkish Higher Learning Commission.

➤ Public universities only have the right of use but not property to the teaching and research locations and relevant experimental equipment.

➤ Public universities have no independent economic resources.

➤ The principle structure and curriculum setting of public universities are limited: all of these shall get the permission of Higher Learning Commission and obey the present institutional framework.

➤ Public universities only have part rights of employing and firing the staff. *Law on National Public Servant* (The Ministry of Justice, 1965) ever made specific regulations on the behaviors of staff in public higher institutions. For example, there was definite regulation in the law that staff's salaries in public higher institutions are decided by the government.

➤ Public universities only have part rights of its enrollment scale: before the national college entrance examination each year, public universities need to report their total enrollment to the government. If they need the adjustment, they shall firstly apply to YÖK and then adjust it after permission.

➤ Students' tuitions in public universities are also decided by the government, and public universities shall not regulate the tuitions themselves (OECD, 2003).

Law on National Public Servant (The Ministry of Justice, 1965) had also formed the dependence to the government in terms of higher institutions' personnel. *Law on Public Finance* (It had made very specific regulations to annual budget and the procedure of expenditure auditing) had formed the indirect management from government to higher institutions, which led to public higher institutions' inevitable dependence to the government.

4.2 Managerial System—The Second Intervention to the Universities from Turkish Government

Structure of YÖK

In YÖK, major functions of the Higher Education Supervisory Board (YDK), Student Selection and Placement Centre (ÖSYM), Inter-University Board (ÜAK) are showed in Table 1.

Table 1
YÖK and its Referred Function (Mizikaci, 2006)

Function of each organization			
The Council of Higher Education, YÖK	The Higher Education Supervisory Board, YDK	Inter-University Board, ÜAK	Student Selection and Placement Centre, ÖSYM
To manage and guide to branches and national higher education organizations.	To supervise and control the higher education organizations and relevant departments, carrying out investigations.	To construct and maintain the cooperation and exchange of each higher education institutions.	To design relevant regulations of national college entrance exam and prepare, manage and evacuate the exam.

It is worth mentioning that no matter the president of Higher Learning Commission or the president of each university all need the president to appoint from the candidates, and please refer to the structure map of Figure 2.

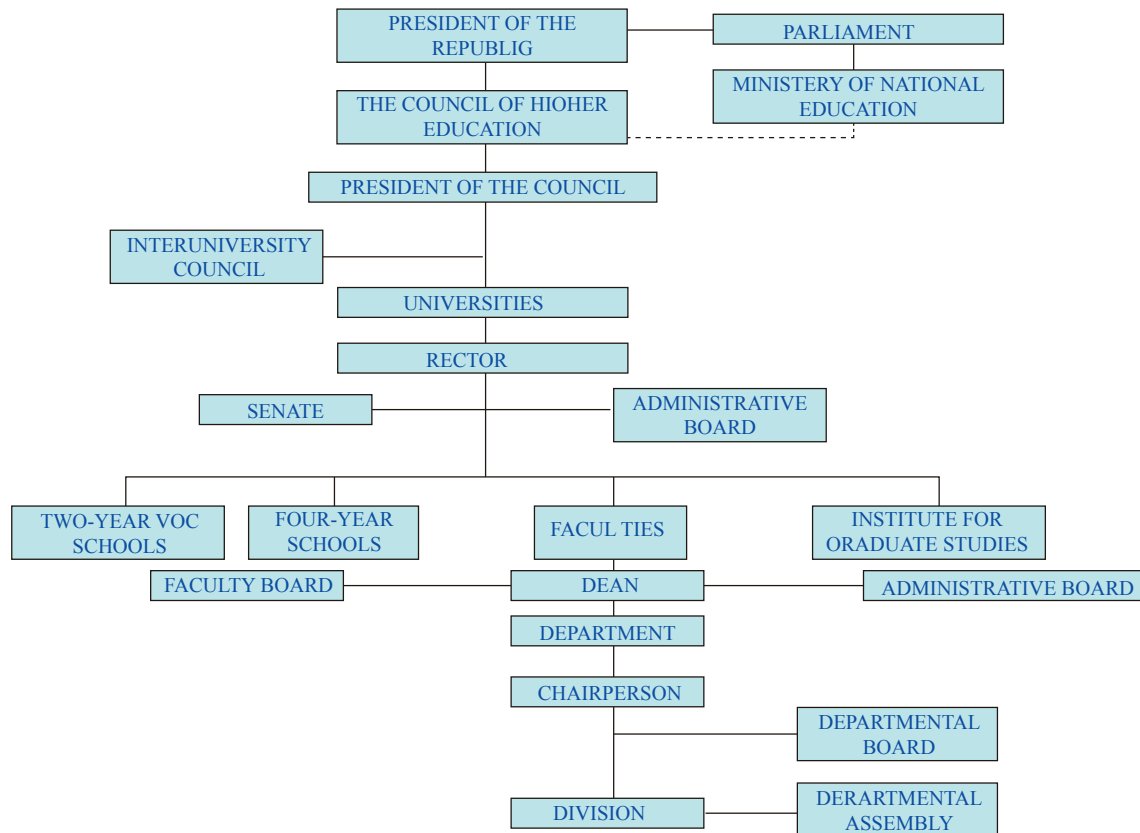


Figure 2
Organizational Chart of the Turkish Higher Education System (Özcan, 2011)

4.3 The Third Intervention to the Universities from Turkish Government—Management of Expenditure

Law on Higher Education (YÖK, 1981) had very definite regulations to the resources and channels of universities' expenditure. No matter the expenditure or the internal management of public higher education organizations were controlled by the central competent department, and both their organization and administrative framework needed to obey the regulations of the law.

4.3.1 The Expenditure Resource of Turkish Public Higher Institutions

Totally speaking, the expenditure resource of Turkish public higher institutions came from three prospects: a. national administrative allocation; b. their own revenue

(such as the expenditure of research institution), for example, when the university provides social service, they would gain revenue from the patients' nursing provided by the hospital, or the research fee from the national one-time transfer, or from working capital fund of National Planning Agency. c. Students' tuition. (Each student's annual tuition shall be not over 25% of their annual cost, and averagely speaking, each student shall cost about 100-200\$ each year.) The proportion of expenditures can be referred by the following table. Just as the following table, the proportion of national expenditure is reducing, while the proportion of higher universities' own revenue is creasing, even though, the national public finance are still the most important one among public higher institutions.

Year	State budget	University revenue	Students' fee
1995	69	27	4
1996	65	28	7
1997	57	38	5
1998	61	34	5
1999	60	35	5
2000	57	38	5
2001	52	44	4
2002	58	37	5
2003	55	41	4
2004	N/a	N/a	N/a

4.3.2 Governmental Controls to the Expenditure of the Universities

In the report of YÖK (2004b) *Turkish Higher Educational System Situation*, it defines the finance budget system of higher education like this:

The annual finance budget of public universities shall be negotiated with the Higher Education Commission, National Finance Ministry; in addition, National Planning Agency also needs to take into the discussion if the budget also involves the investment budget. The Higher Education Commission will hand over each university's budget and its own budget over the National Education Ministry, and the minister of Education Department would discuss these budgets in the conference. And the director general of Higher Education Council will make a speech at the beginning and end of the discussion. Finally, the conference' results would be a very specific budget map, which makes definite regulations for this expenditure.

The channels for higher institutions to obtain the expenditure are all in the framework of the regulations of national law system, which lack of corresponding leeway for the operation of universities. Therefore, in order to offer each higher learning institution more feasibility, National Finance Ministry had issued corresponding policies in 2003 (the state applied the analysis budget classification method), in which different expenditure resources were all considered into the total budget setting and also gained a nice effect. In the early 2006, law on public universities' performance finance budget had been passed and took on. According to this law, on the basis of agreement from YÖK, Finance Ministry and National Planning Department (in charge of investment and budget), and after the permission of the conference, the budget allocation of universities was once a quarter. According to this law, public universities will hand over annual strategy plans in accordance with the relevant goals and the implements of these plans will be supervised and credited by the former index.

The state asks the universities to enroll more students; however, the expenditure does not increase. Universities who have strong research abilities can gain more channels to obtain bonus internally and externally, however, many

universities who major in teaching lack such kind of resource. Universities also have their own expenditure resources, and this part of expenditure is called working capital fund, which mainly comes from "donation, students' tuition, research expenditure, income from the universities' lands, income from community service, such as expenditure from further education and college hospital." How much money the university collected shall be reported to the Finance Ministry, and the Finance Ministry can deal with the budget expenditure according to the university plan. The report of 2005 Bologna process points out: "all universities are not content with the law of finance budget, because the Finance Department would take off the corresponding fee from the universities' finance output when they know that the universities have other expenditure resources."

4.3.3 Finance Supervision

No matter the comprehensive budget in public higher learning institutions, or the budget of certain department among them, they all have to be supervised by Ita Amiri (consisted by president of Higher Learning Council and presidents from each university) according to the regulations. Then they assign the supervision responsibilities to the vice-council chairman, department director, college president, and principals of each department in the management system, secretaries of each higher institution and management system.

CONCLUSION

It was a consistent wish of pursuing national unity in the survival crisis that drives the collapse of Ottoman Empire and the formation of Turkish Republic. During this process, an important meaning was to cast the political and cultural unity of a new emerging ethnic nation, and to form a national sense of identity. Turkish universities were in charge of broadcasting mainstream culture, popularizing the dominant thoughts, cultivating universal national ideology and other important functions in this process. National education of cultivating a sense of national identity had become Turkish tools to consolidate its own existence and development, in which process the higher education tended to nationalization. In modern society, when it has become an inevitable fashion that the "globalization" is full of "westernization", while higher education is the carrier for weak countries to become strong countries and develop their politics, economy and culture, the state monopolizes the establishment and development of higher education. However, national over-intervene to the higher education would in certain extent hinder the universities' internal pursuit to the profound knowledge and affect the performance of universities' functions. University autonomy became an important topic in the development of Turkish universities, and Higher Learning Commission was invented in such process. Since

the state cannot allow the universities to fully autonomy, Turkey controlled the development of universities through legislation, management and expenditure. The history of university's development is originally a history of tie and anti-tie, and the future Turkish universities will step into a new prospect in the changing relations with the nation.

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