

## Remembering Mahmut Hoca in a Neoliberal Age “I am not a trader but a teacher!”

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### Abstract

*In this study we are going to analyze the reflections of neoliberal policies in Turkey, which have occupied the education system since 1980s, within the context of popular Turkish cinema films that focus on teachers. As it has been emphasized by critical educators, during the last 30 years, neoliberal policies and practices, affect all education process fundamentally. Under these new global competitive economical conditions, the content of education is limited and it has begun to be defined according to the demands of the market and it has been shaped more individually. Parallel to these transformations, the teaching profession has been changed significantly. As a matter of fact, teachers have been forced to do extra work after school because of low salaries, teaching has turned out to be technical work without social responsibilities and at the end of this process the teaching profession’s social mission has been eroded and it is not a job which guaranties social status nowadays as it was in previous years.*

*These transformations can be observed clearly in the popular Turkish films which present changing plot of teaching profession. Mahmut Hoca who shows successfully that teaching is not only technical work or just content telling but a profession that has social responsibility, such as in the film series called Hababam Sınıfı in 1970s, in which the teacher figures sell lemon in order to survive economically, or the films after 1980s in which they question their ideals. Because of the damages created by neoliberal policies after 1980s, in the films of the last decades teacher figures have turned into tragic characters who experience economical hardships or who are in difficulty because of their ideals. In some other films, there is a teacher type who is trivialized or whose relationship with her/his students is shown just in exaggerated tension. In this context, it is important to remember Mahmut Hoca because his words can guide the teachers who struggle against neoliberalism: “ we are not traders but teachers!”*

**Key Words:** neoliberalism, teachers, transformation of teachers, Turkish films on teachers

In this study the reflections of neoliberal transformations that have been applied to education after the 1980 military coup in Turkey are analysed through the popular Turkish cinema films which are about teachers and schools. Neoliberal policies and practices, in which we have been drawn gradually globally in 30 years, affected all public places and processes deeply with their attempts that aim to merchandise and trade the services in society. Within this climate in which society has been reduced totally to the market, policies that gave dominance to the competitive understanding in education area became dominant globally. Under these conditions the education arena, which has been rearranged and its content limited, has been defined with functions that are both more appropriate to the needs of the market and within a more individual plane (Yıldız, 2012). When the documents that shape the education arena in Turkey are examined, the neoliberal education perspective that evaluates education according to the wills of economy and market can be identified clearly. For instance, the law 3797 dating 1992 which determines the construction of National Education have been changed with the legislative decree in 2011 and Ministry's basic duty is defined as: *designing, applying and updating education and schoolteaching programmes that invest in students the competitive capacity, information and abilities in the global level which are required by the economical system; carrying out education services of teachers and students within this frame*. As is also understood from this statement, teachers are among the occupation groups who are being affected mostly and directly from the neoliberal structural transformations.

In neoliberal period practices that are related to the profession of teaching started to resemble each other all around the world and the problem of quality of the teacher started to be questioned in the international level. Likewise, Moore's (2004) competent craftperson in Britain; Weber's (2007) compliant technician in South Africa; Connell's (2009) competent teacher in Australia, all these different concepts actually refer to the same fact, a teacher model which is becoming similar all around the world. In this sense, while analysing the transformations of teachers in Turkey within the axis of popular Turkish cinema films in this study, although national originalities have been minded, we have considered the fact that we are face to face with a phenomenon's local reflections which is actually happening in global level. In this context we have to stress that a new type of teacher that came into being in neoliberal age appeared together with the competition environment discourse which is presented as the must of a qualified education (Apple, 2004; Townsend & Bates, 2007; Connell, 2009). Within this tendency in which the definition and qualities of teacher have been redetermined globally, and teacher has been envisaged as a technician without social

responsibilities. From now on, instead of caring for the whole progress of a student, a teacher is going to spare more time to fulfill the performance goals that are going to affect her salary more directly (Stevenson, 2007). Within this mechanical period, teacher has to have the skill and competences that are required to reach determined standards and has to apply them during education period. Thus the danger of experiencing their work as a disconnected and alienating process comes forth for the teachers (Stevenson, 2007). Correspondingly teachers have found themselves within an intensified work load and increasing supervision climate (Apple, 1986; Ball, 1988; Cole, 1997; Smyt, 2000; Giroux, 2010). Moreover teaching, respected job of the past, has become one of the victims of “flexible labor market” with the case of unemployment, with the teachers who work as taxi drivers, street traders (Üstün, 2011).

### **Method**

1980 can be accepted as a milestone in many ways in Turkey because Turkey began to meet the neoliberal policies with 1980s. Within this age idealist<sup>2</sup> teacher representations such as *Mahmut hoca*<sup>3</sup> have disappeared; new teacher representations took their place. In this sense the radical changes that took place within teaching from 1970s to recent years are extremely striking. Studying this change process through the changes in the films( *Hababam Sınıfı* films<sup>4</sup> and the film *Öğretmen*) presents a productive ground. Within this context we have compared teacher representations in the films that have been shot in recent years in which neoliberal policies have been applied and use teachers and schools as their subjects, with the old teacher films (table 1). The periodical changes in teacher representations that have been discovered are discussed within related literature and analysed. Hence basic parameters that display the transformation of teachers in neoliberal age, in other words deskilling of teachers, impoverishment, underestimation of the teaching profession and changing student and teacher relations display themselves in these films clearly.

Table 1.

<i>Film Adı</i>	<i>Yapım yılı</i>
Hababam Sınıfı	1974
Habam Sınıfı Sınıfta Kaldı	1975
Hababam Sınıfı Uyanıyor	1976
Hababam Sınıfı Tatilde	1977
Öğretmen	1988
Hababam Sınıfı Merhaba	2003
Hababam Sınıfı Üç Buçuk	2005

Hababam Sınıfı films have been studied under two groups: first four films that are shot before 1980s; and secondly two Hababam Sınıfı films shot in 2000s. In the article the first group is called old films and recent films are called as new films. Apart from Hababam Sınıfı films only one of films is studied and it is *Öğretmen* (Teacher) which has Kemal Sunal as the leading role actor. The reason of this choice is successful description of teacher impoverishment<sup>5</sup> in the film that took place with the application of neoliberal policies after the military coup.

## Findings

### **Zeitgeist and Changing Characters: from Mahmut Hoca to Deli Bedri**

In the new films the connections with the first group of Hababam Sınıfı films are mostly shaped according to the neoliberal policies' representation traditions. In this sense the changes about Mahmut Hoca – Fatoş Hoca, Deli Bedri – Muharrem Gür, Hafize Ana- Boz Ali characters are very important. In the first serial of Hababam films, Mahmut Hoca is the most effective character. But Mahmut Hoca does not exist in the new Hababam films. In the new films the dominant teacher figure disappears. Fatoş Hoca is the new teacher model. She accepts the control and dominance of the school owner. Each protest coming from Fatoş Hoca, the director and also motherlike teacher figure of the new films, hits the wall of the

market and is torn in the new film. As Fatoş Hoca mutters ‘we should be acceptable, please!’, Deli Bedri rises to the top. Muharrem Gür’s condemned features have almost been normalised with Deli Bedri.

Hafize Ana (Mother Hafize) is another important character in the first films. She is the one who shows her complimentary love in every occasion and is always beside the students during their struggle against teachers. She loses her place to Boz Ali in the new Hababam films. Yet Boz Ali displays that he is collaborating with the school directors in the first cigarette collection scene. When the students expect his support while escaping the school, Boz Ali takes a bribe from them and then he reports the smoking event to Deli Bedri immediately. In brief, one of the foremost features of the new Hababam films is, in accordance with the zeitgeist, the characters who behave within the logic of the market are being shown as lovely ones but the characters who act within the limits of humanitarian feelings are being negated.

Then who is Muharrem Gür? Owner of the school Muharrem Gür, is seen in a number of scenes in the films, he is rather a supplementary secondary character. His rapacity and continuous talk of money are things to be condemned. But this stance has changed considering the equivalent characters in the newly shot Hababam films. Moneygrubber Deli Bedri who is played by Mehmet Ali Erbil, popular figure of the Turkish media, has been set as the engrossing character of the new films.

Actually teachers being in the first place, students, directors, servants and parents have all seem to take their share from neoliberal destruction. In accordance with the zeitgeist, naturalisation of market logic in education and presenting education actors/characters who act with market mind as lovable figures, are outstanding features of new Hababam Sınıfı films.

Shortly, Yeşilçam’s idealist, votress to society, resisting all severity and obstacle, socialist, devoted teacher figure started to lose her/his effect after 1980. In this way the idealist teacher has been imprisoned in a past which is remembered with nostalgia and has no connection with now. In the new films teacher is shown as a poor one, whose financial difficulties are underlined and so he becomes underestimated, loses her/his social respectability. This teacher is presented as someone who experienced several difficulties and still feels them because of his/ her ideals in the past, is puckery, sad and alone. The other prominent teacher figure of the

new films is someone whose clumsiness, miserliness and sordidness have been an object of derision.

Another striking difference between old and new films is, in the new films teacher and students seem to have no problem with poverty, at least both of these groups never say anything about this problem. The teachers of the old films who reached the age of retirement but had to work because of financial difficulties or the ones who underlined their poor family backgrounds gave their places to the smart teachers in the new films whose main and only problem is to stand powerful against Hababam.

### **From idealist teacher to technician teacher**

First with *Hababam Sinifi Merhaba* in the new films a profile of a teacher, who is even unable to set an exam, comes to the fore. This inability with an exam is shown without any reason. It may be just opposition between teacher and students or may display an inefficacy/deficiency of teacher. There are teachers who have been fooled because of exams in the old films but in those films all the faults are not addressed to the teacher as the criticism is towards all the education system. The teacher is also criticised but takes his/her share from the criticism of the whole system. Teachers in the old films did not lose respect despite their absurdities. They are characters who are liked by the audience.

On the other hand we can not observe teachers' relationship with their branches, their discussions or opinions in the new films. But in the old films –when we consider discussions about those years in the teachers' room, such as the laboratory lesson insistence of chemistry teacher, physical education teacher's interest in every branch of sport and his sorrow about Turkey's failure in the Olympic games- the teacher is reflected as a subject who thinks about his/her job.. Moreover the teacher's role is not limited to the school and students. For example Mahmut Hoca gives lesson to the families as well as students:

What have you done to raise them as human beings who are to the good of their teachers, their mother and fathers and even to their country?

(Hababam Sinifi Sinifta Kaldı: 1.15.19)

One of the common themes in old and new films is the selling of the school. The stances of the teachers against this problem display the neoliberal transformation clearly. For instance Mahmut Hoca reacts to the selling of the school:

- You have made millions on these children, what have you given in return for it? And now you kick them out!
- I mind my own business, they are not my father's sons!
- All of them are my own sons, my offsprings. Although they are slouch and irresponsible, nobody can touch them, I won't let anyone! Did you understand me Mr.director, you are going to educate them, you must! ( Hababam Sınıfı)

We can not observe any attitude like Mahmut Hoca's idealist attitude including standing against selling of the school and commercialising of education in the new films. FatoşHoca does not argue with Deli Bedri about commercialising of education but she situates herself as a director who does not question school boss- education relationship and she accepts commercialising of education as a data. She tries to convince Deli Bedri not to sell the school.

- Is it easy to sell the school?
- Yes, is he selling his father's property?
- Of course, he is selling his father's property. And he has found a customer!( Hababam Sınıfı Merhaba: 26.21)

This problem caused severe conflict in the first Hababam films but that conflict gave its place to a reconciliation pursuit in the new films. Bedri Bey wants to sell the school, the school belongs to Bedri and this can not be questioned. Obedient technicians are unable to realize a stance about this issue. They can just provide their students' success in the exams that are the mere bench marks of success, this is the only thing expected from them.

One of the destructions created by neoliberalism is that, it transformed teachers to submissive technicians doing whatever is expected from them, giving up all their initiative to the central authority, narrating the curricula just appropriate to the guidebooks. The transformations in the films are closely related to the transformations realized in the teaching job. As a matter of fact teachers are face to face with the dangers of de-skilling, losing autonomy, distancing from intellectual identity or from the possibility of creating such an identity. In other words teachers are being transformed from learned and ethically powerful persons to classroom technicians who present and evaluate a curriculum that has been developed in another place (Carlgren and Klette, 2008). In this sense today's valid teacher model is a technician teacher. First symptom of becoming a technician is de-skilling.

### **Increasing Control Culture: From autonomous teacher to obedient technician**

In the new films Deli Bedri's manager identity comes to the fore, his authority and control over teachers is felt all through the films. Teachers accept him as the controller, regulator and the enactor reference. We see the clear examples of this position in the scenes of Fatoş Hoca and Deli Bedri. Vis a vis to Mahmut Hoca, Fatoş Hoca gives a director profile whose power, determination and bellicosity have been worn out. She is very incapable and obedient against Deli Bedri. Moreover she is not a teacher but a soother between the students and Deli Bedri. For instance she wants students to put out the cigarettes they have in the first scene of the first new film. When the students refuse to do what she wants she says: "let's say I believe. Well, what about Bedri Bey?" This answer displays that teacher internalized her secondary position (Hababam Sınıfı Merhaba). Fatoş Hoca's inactive position shows itself with her such sentences to Deli Bedri: "please Mr. Bedri, don't act as a crazy one!" or "please Mr. Bedri do something!". This dialogue is another example for her situation:

"They are huge men, am I going to ask you who is to punish?" (Deli Bedri)

"Please, as you appreciate I am the director of the school" (Fatoş öğretmen)

Well as you will also appreciate, I am the owner of the school" (Deli Bedri)

Through the film we see Deli Bedri as the symbol of outer control, interfering with the teachers. He goes into the classrooms easily, he even interferes to the lessons. Bedri continues his interferences towards teachers not only in classes but everywhere. Besides this, after an exam he enters teachers' room angrily saying 'are you maniac, all of them have cheated', in another scene he warns Fatoş teacher saying 'don't be so bumpkin', he interferes in a quiz harshly and his dialogue with the teacher during that exam, all of these set a scene that says someone has to teach teachers how to deal with their jobs. These scenes reflect neoliberal distrust to teachers. In the film *Hababam Sınıfı Üç Buçuk* (*üç buçuk* refers to being frightened) the control becomes more dominant and occupies all the film. Deli Bedri takes the control and watches everything from the monitor. The teachers carry out the roles in a scenario which is written in detail by Deli Bedri. And they are watched by him all through the act. Moreover, a mathematics teacher acts his role and then goes beside Deli Bedri, asks him in an excited manner how he acted waiting for approval. In this neoliberal age absolute dominance has been taken by the capital so teachers have to recommend themselves in the market and prove their competence. Thus this is the common teacher image which came into being as a result of global neoliberal policies. The teacher that waits for the shun command and approval in the presence of the capital:



“How was my performance Mr. Bedri?(Mathematics teacher)  
Well, you were great. (Deli Bedri)  
Really? Did you really like my performance?”  
(Hababam Sınıf Üç Buçuk: 16.15)

These scenes are almost *reflections* of Carpenter’s (2012) identification that in a neoliberal age the autonomy of teachers has been decreased and they have been sentenced to work in education foundations in which fear culture became dominant. For neoliberal ideology teacher is a technician who has to be under control continuously and has no autonomy over his job.

In order to understand the extent of the change, going back to old Hababam films can be useful. In *Hababam Sınıfı Sınıfta Kaldı* Mahmut Hoca declares that he can not give decisions about students alone and provides the formation of a discipline commission. Thus he shares his authority and responsibilities with the other teachers. Also in *Hababam Sınıfı Tatilde* there is an autonomous teacher character who objects his lesson’s interference by a director(Mahmut Hoca):

- I thought you are the literature teacher(Mahmut Hoca)
- I am, do you have an objection?(Literature teacher)
- Yes. It is noisy here.
- What happens here does not concern you.
- If there is noise, it does.
- When I am in the lesson, the responsibility of the class belongs to me.
- And the discipline of the school belongs to me.
- Possible. But I don’t like to be interfered in the lesson. Now leave me alone with my students, please.
- Ok.”

This dialogue is striking to show the gulf between the relations of directors in the old films and Deli Bedri’s manners towards teachers. Shortly, in the old films the idealist teacher who “decides about professional manners, does not accept outer control” (Ünal, 2005) that belongs to the ages before neoliberalism is being represented.

### **Alienated Subjects: Teachers and Students**

Relationships of students and teachers is another important side of the transformations caused by neoliberal policies. Naughty students and teachers who try to handle them compose one of the common themes of old and new Hababam Sınıfı films. But these relationships are

discussed with very different stances in the films. In the old films the conflicts between students and teachers are shaped around a criticism of the education system. The audience understands the context of the conflicts, they are partly against education system based on rote learning and authority. But in the new films there is not any critical attitude, the problems between students and teachers are mainly based on simple oppositions and rivalries. In these films both sides folded zeitgeist and they became alienated towards each other. In old films there are teachers who own their students under all conditions and students who know how to say sorry after their insensitive manners. But however in the new films, instead of trying to overcome ill deeds of students and transform them, teachers easily accept to form a front against the students. We can understand this difference best with this story: In *Hababam Sınıfı Üç Buçuk Deli Bedri* says that he has a plan that will save all the school from Hababam, teachers dance when they hear the news about this plan. The same theme exists in the old films too. In *Hababam Sınıfı Sınıfta Kaldı* all the students write love letters to Semra, the young woman teacher, and as a punishment they are to be expelled from the school. Opposite to the new films, in this film, the teacher thinks about the issue with an occupational responsibility. She considers in an intellectual way, develops a wider viewpoint and decides not to punish the students. When Semra declines to punish the students, Mahmut Hoca supports her with these words: “You behaved like an elder teacher, my dear daughter.” In this sentence we feel that there is a faith in teaching occupation. Being a teacher is far more than being a technician that performs according to predetermined abilities which are presented without context. A “good teacher” is being evaluated by her critical stance, her social responsibility sensitivity, and her free decisions instead of measurable competences or some standards.(*Hababam Sınıfı Sınıfta Kaldı*: 1.20.05).

### **Underestimation of teachers**

The teaching profession is purified from social responsibilities and teachers are transformed to technicians. As a result of this, teachers lose their reputations and autonomies. Old films always remind us of the value of teachers. Akil Hoca’s dismissal from the school because of students’ joke, then students’ regret and efforts for his return is a good example for this. We laugh at the joke done to Akil Hoca; but at the same time we respect him and feel sorry for him because he has to work because of his financial difficulties. We also hear that National Education Minister visits the school to see his teacher Akil Hoca. He tells how he feels gratitude for Akil Hoca:

“As I came to İstanbul, I wanted to visit some schools here. But I have a special reason for coming here. I came here for Akil hoca. I heard that he works here as a teacher. Do you know that I was a teacher? The person who made me love this sacred job is my philosophy teacher, Akil hoca. He is a very talented and precious teacher.”

Another example of the prestige of a teacher can be seen with the Mahmut Hoca character. Mahmut Hoca is a powerful teacher figure, who stands against the boss who wants to sell the school. He protects his students. He brings the boss of the company who buys the school into line:

Mahmut hoca: Because someone who has forgotten his past, who studied in financial difficulties and came to these days, who is greedy for money took their school from their hands in order to earn more money, and what is worse he has done this risking to leave these students in the streets in the middle of the winter. The person who has done all is unfortunately one of my students: 317 Şeref!

Şeref: I didn't know anything about it. My God, what have I done? Forgive me my teacher, you can go back to your school. (Hababam Sınıfı Tatilde: 01:35:06)

With such scenes the prestige of Mahmut Hoca is underlined as he encounters or is visited by his previous students that have become respected men in the society. Via these scenes he is displayed as a teacher that prepares the future of the country. He continues this role with his manners towards the families of the students and so with the audience. Mahmut Hoca not only gives lessons to the families of the students but he also teaches all the society.

The teacher of those years was a respectable figure whose voice was heard in the society. In the films shot before 1980, the teacher had a respected image. He was the frontier of active social change. After 1980, with neoliberal policies he lost his economical power, started to do extra works. He became a figure purified from his social responsibilities. So in the new Hababam Sınıfı films we are face to face with underestimated, disrespected teacher models. The teacher who had the aim of transforming his naughty students to responsible citizens has disappeared. Instead of him there is a teacher who is unable to cope with his students. Because of his students, this teacher even decides to commit suicide but he can not even do that. He takes the wrong pill and becomes green because Hababam students have changed the pills. Teacher has become a clown with his awkwardness. At this point the owner of the school who makes plans to get rid of these students in collaboration with the teachers has the

right to do everything. That includes even to slap the teacher. That slap is the clearest scene of underestimation of teachers.

### **Impoverishment of teachers**

In the film *Öğretmen* (director Kartal Tibet- leading role Kemal Sunal) Hüsnü who teaches in a small village school has been rewarded because of his successes. He has been assigned to İstanbul. But this reward has become a punishment, because of his financial difficulties in the big city. Hüsnü loses his mind. The film focuses on the financial difficulties of teachers. After the military coup, with 24 Ocak 1980<sup>6</sup> implements and under the effects of high inflation, public workers' salaries began to devalue. In order to overcome these problems, the prime minister of the period offered public officers a bribe and to do extra works. Turgut Özal<sup>7</sup> said "my officers have an eye to the main change". He tried to surpass public workers' problems and cover everything with his discourses. When Hüsnü tries to adapt himself to the changing conditions of the new system, he begins to lose his teacher features. We listen to the servant's monologue just after Hüsnü leaves him in his first visit to the school:

"Their position is worse than mine. I am a servant in this school. I work wherever I find. But they can't. They are called teachers. All through their lives they work for a pittance."

The teacher encounters the same expression of mercy in the region where he rents a house. While the estate agent and Hüsnü are going to the house, they come across Ahmet Efendi who sells fruit and vegetables on his horse drawn vehicle. The dialogue between the estate agent and Ahmet Efendi is interesting because it clearly shows how teacher has lost prestige because of his impoverishment:

- (Estate agent to Ahmet Efendi) "You have him as your new neighbour. He is a teacher.

"Ya Vah! Vah! ( signals of mercy)(after estate agent's warnings) Welcome."

The impoverishment of teachers and most of the society after 1980 was not coincidental. With 12 Mart 1972 military coup, real wages began to decrease and after 1980 they bottomed out. 1960-1970 were the golden age for teacher salaries in Turkey but after 1970 they started to show a falling tendency.<sup>8</sup> (Aydın,2005). Table 2 is important for showing the situations.

Table 2.

Year	Price of 1 Republic Gold	Teacher Salary (TL)	Amount of the Gold that can be bought with a teacher's salary
1946	33.1 liras	400	12
1960	107.8 liras	2000	18,5
1965	94.4 liras	2700	28,6
1975	59.7 liras	5500	9,2
1980	10.533 liras	16.000	1,5
1990	217.764 liras	969.894	4,4
1993	892.021 liras	5.292.000	5,9
1995	3.908.146 liras	20.291.000	5,1
1997	11.736.666 liras	61.619.000	5,2
1998	17.330.000 liras	122.000.000	7
1999	23.700.000 liras	160.000.000	6,7
2003	110.000.000 liras	550.000.000	5
2005 *	132 TL	707.70	5.3
2007 *	195 TL	928 TL	4.7
2009 *	317 TL	1200 TL	3.7
2010*	428 TL	1659 TL	3.8
2011*	474 TL	1725 TL	3.6

(source: Sağlam and Sağlam, 2005: 321)

In the film *Öğretmen*, Hüsnü's each act underlines impoverishment. The house he rents, his school way adventures, all details emphasize teachers' poverty. His house's electricity is illegally free and the house is really small with respect to his village house. While the family is moving to the new house his son says: "What kind of İstanbul is this? Our village was more beautiful". Hüsnü's journey to school is told by long scenes. He changes three vehicles, he runs from minibus to other buses. After a journey in a crowded bus, he arrives to school a bit late. In his first lesson in the new school he creates a maths problem out of his own experiences and he asks his students to solve the problem:

"How much does an officer spend for the full month if he pays 1200 liras for carfares in one day?" (21st minute 30th second)

The chosen student can not solve the problem. One of the other students answers: "36 thousand liras, sir!" and the question continues: now add the rental. "86 thousand liras, sir!" The rest of the question comes: "How much is left for food, dressing, child care and other expenses if the salary of this officer is 141 thousand liras?" All class shout: "55 thousand liras, sir!". Hüsnü says well done. And his monologue starts:

“55 thousand liras? If we eat one loaf of bread each, that makes 800 liras for the bread in one month. 31 thousand liras left for the rest. Spend as you like.”

Being a teacher in a big city means doing extra work. Similar films shot after 1980 are full of officer types who do extra works, and because of their awkwardnesses, they turn out to be comedy elements. This situation is also underlined in *Öğretmen*: If Hüsnü wants to be a teacher in the big city, he has to make use of his time when he is not in school. Hence in 1988, the year *Öğretmen* was shot, a search was carried out in Ankara. According to the search results, nearly half of the teachers did a second job. This percentage is over 90 percent among men, and 20 percent among women. Second jobs of the teachers are trade (53%), private teaching (22%) and driving (11%) (Sönmez 1989: 80-82).

In the teachers' room scene, we learn extra works of the other teachers with Hüsnü: Music teacher works in a night club, another one who snores during the scene works as a driver every night. Then we see a teacher who gives private lessons. The teacher with an inlance in her hand does subproduction with her four workers:

“Should I do extra work?” says Hüsnü.

“If you do not, that will be a shame my friend. We teachers should be an example in every case for the society”(24th minute 50th second).

Hüsnü observes one of his students in the lessons, the student mostly sleeps. He follows the students out of school. The boy sells walnut in restaurants after school. Hüsnü sits and talks to him in a restaurant. The boy's father is a door keeper in an apartment. “My salary is not enough for my family. Can you teach this job to me?” says Hüsnü to his student(39th minute 20th second). But he can not succeed in selling walnut. Hasan, the student says, “you'd better sell bagels teacher”. Hüsnü buys bagels from a baker Hasan knows well. But he falls into a hole in the road while he is escaping from city police.

After the announcement of 24 Ocak 1980 implements, budget for education fell. One of the state's solutions for schooling problem was “ Build your own school yourself” campaign. Teachers' day scene of the film satirizes this campaign. Students decide to buy food for their teacher as present after long discussions. Then they persuade or cheat their parents. One of the parents take photos of the children and their teacher while they present the food they bought for their teacher. Then the event becomes interesting news for the media and the

public. Newspapers present the event with the headline “Beloved teacher”. First, National Education Ministry opens an investigation about the event, then the authorities decide to reward Hüsni. The speech made during the reward ceremony is meaningful: “We thank to 4- A class for starting a feed your own teacher campaign in the name of our ministry and also celebrate Hüsni teacher”.

After all his experiences we see the teacher and his family doing extra work, his wife sews, his little son starts to work in a car repair shop. Hüsni tries to earn money selling postcards, pullovers, stain removers. But he works so much that he sees his students as policemen running after him in his dreams. Hüsni’s collapse period starts to quicken. Parents report him to the authorities when he screams like a pedlar in his classroom. In the last scene Hüsni runs and comes closer to his students in physical education lesson. He asks to his students: “Did the policemen leave?” as if he is escaping from the police in the streets. When Hüsni directly looks into the audiences’ eyes in the asylum car, the film finishes.

In 2000s teachers’ poverty became a usual situation and told as a normal case in the films. For example Nazım, the teacher of Gönül Yarası, returns to İstanbul after his retirement and starts to work as a taxi driver. The problem of “teacher working in extra works” which are not related to his professional formation was a serious matter in the film, Öğretmen. But this problem functions as an element to complete the dramatic plot in the new films.

## **Conclusion**

In Turkey education reforms implemented after 1980 were realized in order to comply with changing work conditions and ideological construction that came into being in parallel with them. These reforms caused loosening of public education understanding and by making regulations that allowed markets’ total occupation of the education arena, provided internalisation of consumerism as a lifestyle, educated a new type of labour force and as a result of these, eroded the meaning of education. This erosion caused radical changes concerning teachers’ working lives.

Transformed from idealist teacher to the compliant technician, teachers became poorer. Poor and technician teachers lost their reputations and started to feel hopeless both for their jobs and futures. Continuously changing education programs, systems, exam types caused

unstability in teachers' lives. Sennett's 'erosion of character' definition for flexible working life became valid for teaching profession:

Unstability is the normal situation. Schumpeter's entrepreneur figure is being presented as the normal human of today. Character's erosion is, maybe, the inevitable result. The understanding of 'no long run relations' leads away people's manners in the long run, loosens trust and fidelity bonds; breaks off will and manner. (Sennett, 2002: 30)

Correspondingly, cinema films that reflect teachers' positions in today's society both display the same erosion and fasten it. In the films after 1980 teachers are either shown as losers who fought for their ideals in the past but could not achieve anything or teacher's new position is transformed into a comedy element and so aimed to reflect the zeitgeist. Especially the cynical comedy understanding in the new *Hababam Sınıfı* films is important for us to understand the approach towards teachers. In the last years the formative effects of neoliberal policies over the teaching profession increased further. We are going to need more studies that focus on and analyse this transformations' reflections in popular culture productions such as novels, cinema films and TV serials.

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<sup>2</sup> We use the term "idealist/idealistic" not with its philosophical meaning as opposite to the realism. We attribute idealist teacher features as having certain ideals that are against to the ideals/values/ideologies of neoliberalism. By describing a teacher as idealist, we imply that this type of teacher feels social responsibility especially towards her/his poor students and people.

<sup>3</sup> Mahmut hoca, is the charismatic teacher of *Hababam Sınıfı* films. The first *Hababam Sınıfı* film is the criticism of deformities, deficiencies and troubles in education system. Greasy *Hababam Sınıfı* starts to shape up with the arrival of Mahmut Hoca to the school. Mahmut Hoca has worked in the schools in Anatolia for years. Mahmut Hoca starts to work at Çamlıca Private Collage because of financial difficulties and also because he feels that he can not survive within another life style. His back demand that came into being within long years and enlightened and progressive education he had, fated him to be an education soldier.

<sup>4</sup> The commercial success of the first *Hababam Sınıfı* film that was shot in 1975 caused six other sequel films shooting. Afterwards there have been some other *Hababam Sınıfı* films in which the main team fell apart totally. As the ecote of Arzu Film, crowded staff and role sharing that prevents creation of stars in a film, does not continue in these films, they are omitted in this study.

<sup>5</sup> Impoverishment of teachers and their inability in economical surviving in big cities are common themes of many teacher films. These films in which teachers' and in general public laborers' impoverishment have been entreated were mostly shot after 1980. For instance films such as *Çıplak Vatandaş* ( Naked Citizen), *Namuslu* (Modest), *Faize Hücum* (Rush to The Interest) tell the poverty and deadlocks experienced by officers and retired officers who were unable to keep up with the conditions of the period. But *Öğretmen* which was directed by Kartal Tibet was the most striking one and it is directly about teaching profession.



<sup>6</sup> These are the implements given according to an IMF style program. Besides firmness, convertibility of Turkish liras, privatisation and minimisation of public sector, improvement of financial market and thus implementations aimed building up capital markets.

<sup>7</sup> Turgut Özal was the prime minister between 1983- 1989. He was the president between 1989-1993. 24 January Implements which included a wide transformation towards neoliberal policies were introduced by him. These regulations aimed to weaken and avoid organisation of labour and also to articulate Turkish economy to international market. Özal has been the symbolic name for the period in which widest attacks were realized against all the labourers in the country.

<sup>8</sup> İsmail Aydın compares teacher salaries to meat purchase power: In 1965 a teacher could buy 262.5 kg meat with her salary and tuition pays but today she can buy only 70 kg meat. Aydın also shares data about salary rises: between 1975-1999 average rise of dollar was 163.5 percent, rise of teacher salaries was 91.25 percent. Between 1995- 1999 rise in essential consumable items was 900 percent, rise of salaries was 688 percent. Officers' salaries increased regularly from 1963 to 1977. Between 1980-1986 teacher salaries decreased 34 percent in contrast to dollar(Aydın, 2005).

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