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From Minority to Immigrant: The Education and Cross-Country Teaching Experiences of Turks of Bulgaria

Abstract: *Through the testimonies of those who have experienced teaching in two countries with different political and economic systems, the study aims to provide a portrayal of issues such as minority education, the transfer of origin capital, and the similarities and differences in the educational practices of the countries. This study delves into the experiences of four teachers who worked in two distinct countries, the communist People's Republic of Bulgaria, and the post-1980s Republic of Turkey where neo-liberal policies were implemented. The research was conducted through oral history interviews with four Turkish teachers who had studied and worked in Bulgaria and worked in Turkey after migration. Using the oral history method, teachers' experiences were collected, and each country's educational history and practices were followed through individual narratives. The study reveals that while traditional education models had similarities, there were differences in the prevalence of vocational and preschool education, the connection between education and daily life, and applied education in both countries. As in this study the comparison between Bulgaria and Turkey with their shared history and overlapping educational goals under the nation-state model, through firsthand accounts of individuals, can create a more accurate representation of the past.*

Keywords: *Education; teaching experience; migration from Bulgaria to Turkey.*

Introduction

The education systems are strategically developed to cater to society's political and economic interests. The objectives, approaches, and activities involved in education, along with the training of both teachers and students, are tailored to align with these interests. Education, in turn, imparts values to society through symbols and rituals that individuals assimilate and practice in their daily routines. The primary focus

of this study is centered on the unique experiences of four teachers who have worked in two distinct countries, each with differing forms of governance and modes of production. These countries were the communist People's Republic of Bulgaria, and the post-1980s Republic of Turkey where neo-liberal policies began taking hold.

To provide a comprehensive context for this study, literature on the history of education systems in both countries are included briefly. It was deemed necessary to dedicate a separate sub-heading to the education of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria due to the historically problematic relationship between minority groups and education. Feroze A. K. Yasamee (1997, p. 74) notes that "Assimilation of a community is not easy [...] once it has literacy, education and its own social and cultural leaders", highlighting the government's desire to control minority groups through education.

The research was conducted through oral history interviews with four Turkish teachers who had studied and worked in Bulgaria and worked in Turkey after migration. The study aims to present a narrative of both countries' educational history and practices through individual accounts and testimonies obtained from the interviews. Utilizing a narrative design alongside the oral history method, the study establishes connections between personal stories and the political and economic structures behind the education.

Methodology

The study seeks to gain insight through firsthand accounts of individuals who have experienced historical events, focusing on creating a more accurate and equitable representation of the past (Thompson, 1997/2003). To this end, the study consulted with four teachers who had been educated and taught in Bulgaria before migrating to Turkey. These participants were selected through a purposive sampling method, and their reflections were analyzed using descriptive analysis. The study utilized in-depth interviews to gather data and examine the topic in great detail through the perspectives of a select few participants (Leavy, 2011, p. 10; Creswell, 2013, p. 283). All participants were members of the Turkish minority in the Bulgarian education system during the communist era and could continue their teaching profession after immigrating to Turkey.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, there were periods of mass migration from Bulgaria to Turkey. According to Turhan Çetin (2011), using data from the State Planning Organization, Bursa was the second most

popular destination for migrants to Turkey in 1989, following Istanbul. We selected four teachers who migrated to Bursa in 1989 during the process of "vızroditelen protses" (revival), which can also be defined as "forced Bulgarization." These teachers, two women, and two men, could have transferred initially to different provinces but are/were teaching and residing in Bursa. Their birth years range from 1953 to 1961. Interviews began in 2021 and continued in 2022. Ethical rules were followed in the study; participants were adequately informed, their voluntary consent was obtained, and their identities were anonymized without distorting the scholarly meaning. The final version of the study was shared with them, and written informed consent for publication of their details was obtained.

Background about the education history of Bulgaria

During the 1920s, Bulgaria's education system consisted of a three-tiered structure that included a four-year primary school, a three-year *progymnasium*, and a *gymnasium* for high school. Though compulsory education was extended from four to seven years for all children, this was only sometimes enforced in practice (Daskalova, 2017, p. 23). In fact, until 1944, many villages lacked schools, and secondary education opportunities were limited primarily to the middle class (Grant, 1970). Private schools, unsupported by the Bulgarian state, were established during the Farmers' Party era, with a significant number of minority (Turkish, Greek, Jewish, Armenian, etc.) and missionary schools (Daskalova, 2017, p. 22).

After 1908, although there were technical schools for industry and agriculture, the focus was still mainly on general education. The Farmers' Party administration (1919-23) tried to shift the Bulgarian education system from general to vocational education. However, there were debates on this issue (Daskalova, 2017, pp. 20-1). The history of preschool education in Bulgaria can also be traced back a long way. The importance of preschool education continued during the communist government, which came into power in 1944 (Grant, 1970). Under socialist rule, children were drawn into the public sphere rather than the family and private sphere through collective activities, camps, kindergartens, and nurseries. The ultimate goal was achieving the "communist future" through "tireless work" (Lyubenova, 2017, pp. 129-30).

During Bulgaria's communist government, the education system underwent a significant transformation to adopt a secular and Marxist-Leninist structure (Daskalova, 2017). Private schools were banned in

1946, and primary education became mandatory for seven years in 1950, which was extended to eight years in 1959. Only four percent of students did not pursue further education. One-third of students enrolled in general high schools, known as *gymnasiums*, while the remaining two-thirds attended vocational-technical colleges *(tehnikumi*) or vocational schools (*profesionalno-tehničeski učulišta*). These institutions provided education in agriculture, commerce, medicine, and veterinary medicine (Grant, 1970, pp. 180-4).

Students were obligated to join *Komsomol* organizations. These groups emphasized Communist ideology through activities like reciting poems and organizing trips to significant locations for the regime. The educational system prioritized practical learning, including laboratory experiments and field trips, from kindergarten to university (Georgeoff, 1968). Education was reinforced through various media like radio programs, television, films, slides, and recordings. Students were required to work in industrial enterprises or on collective farms for two weeks each semester between 5^{th} and 8^{th} grade, as well as in 10^{th} and 11^{th} grade, to provide labor for industries or the agricultural sector (Georgeoff, 1968).

In the era of Bulgarian higher education, through the 1959 education law, the objective was to cultivate a group of highly skilled elites in scientific fields, particularly mathematics, with a sound grasp of communist political theory (Georgeoff, 1968, pp. 34-5). Although tertiary education was open to all high school graduates, political beliefs were also considered for admission (Georgeoff, 1968, p. 35). To apply for university, one had to either join a short-term labor battalion of students or possess three years of work experience in a factory (Lyubenova, 2017). University students also joined *brigades* and worked on road construction, construction projects, or collective farms at certain times of the year. Moreover ministries, public organizations, and people's councils were responsible for providing positions to students who completed their studies.

Education of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria in the communist era

During Bulgarian Principality era Law on Public and Private Schools of 1884 acknowledged Turkish schools as unique and entrusted their management and supervision to the Turkish community (Ersoy-Hacısalihoğlu, 2019). From 1933 to 1944, multiple efforts were made to impede Turkish education (Şimşir, 1986; Iliycheva, 2010; Gülmen,

2011). With the establishment of the People's Republic in 1946, a resolution was passed to nationalize Turkish minority schools (İnce-Erdoğan, 2017). Despite being nationalized in the early years of the communist regime, the number of Turkish minority schools increased to 1200, and Turkish books were published. Other courses were taught in Turkish except for Bulgarian language and civics classes. In 1958, a decision was made to merge Turkish schools with Bulgarian schools. As a result, in 1958, high schools began teaching in Bulgarian, and in 1959, all primary and secondary schools followed suit, as outlined by Şimşir (1986).

In 1964, the Bulgarian government implemented measures to prevent migration and tap into the Turkish population's labor potential. The focus was on economically developing the Turkish regions, with initiatives such as establishing schools, kindergartens, and workshops (Işık, 2016). Technical and vocational schools at the high school level were also expanded to train Turks for intermediate positions (Gülmen, 2011). Toğrol (1989, pp. 27-76) noted that Bulgaria tackled the issue of technical personnel by creating technical colleges and two-year vocational schools, particularly for Turks, and he conveyed that everyone was required to work in Bulgaria except for those who were in school, ill, or elderly.

In the 1960s, primary education institutions in areas with a significant Turkish minority population could provide two to four hours of Turkish classes each week. However, this practice was terminated entirely in the 1970s (Şimşir, 1986). The Department of Turkish Language and Literature at Sofia University also stopped accepting students in 1970 (Gülmen, 2011). By 1975, it became increasingly challenging to speak Turkish due to mounting pressure (Toğrol, 1989). Between 1984 and 1989, assimilation policies peaked during the "Rebirth" process. The Migration of 1989 saw over four thousand Turkish teachers from Bulgaria coming to Turkey, all recruited as teachers (Süleymanoğlu-Yenisoy, 2007; 2017).

Background about the education history of Turkey

Turkey's education system faced challenges after its establishment, including limited public education and a divide between schools and madrasas. The aim was to create a modern, national, secular, and mixed system (Kenan, 2013).

During the 1930s, vocational and technical education saw progress, opening new schools and art institutes for both genders (Başgöz,

2016). Looking at the next landscape of vocational education The Perspective Plan spanning 1973 to 1995 intended for 65% of high school students to enroll in vocational and technical education, with the remaining 35% opting for general education in the 1995-1996 academic year. This objective must still be met (State Planning Organization, 2001). However, the 2013-2014 academic year rates still favored general education, with 53.62% of students studying in general and 46.38% in vocational high schools (Kılıç et al., 2015, p. 96).

Compulsory education was extended to 8 years in 1997 and 12 years as of the 2012-2013 academic year. In the 2000s, some innovations were introduced under the constructivist approach. These innovations, however were mainly limited to the curriculum level, with critical and creative thinking, research, and entrepreneurship cited as skills to develop (Çelik, 2006).

Witnessing education as a teacher in two countries with different political and economic systems

Teacher Ayşe was born in 1953 in *Dedeler (Dyadovtsi)* village of Kardzhali. Her parents were born in 1928 and were illiterate. In those years, her parents and most village people had no education. Ayşe attended primary school in the town of *Karamusallar (Chernigovo).* The inhabitants of these villages were all Turks, except for a few civil servants. All her school-age students went to primary school during her student days, except in exceptional cases. The language of instruction was Bulgarian from primary school onwards. However, she had never spoken Bulgarian until she went to school. From 4th to 8th grade, she studied in a larger village. In 1964, when she started secondary school, all the students were Turkish again, but this time, there were Bulgarian teachers because “the number of Turk teachers were not enough." Turkish Language and Literature classes were continued. According to Ayşe, in the mid-1960s, high school graduates taught secondary school classes in this region and were "not teachers." Nevertheless, the secondary schools had a sport hall, laboratories, and equipment such as maps. The school in the village was no different from the school in the town in terms of equipment.

According to Ayşe, students should be able to go to and from school themselves, like they did. Moreover in Bulgaria, students were also assigned tasks such as picking rose hips and oregano. Teachers were active outside the classroom, too. She was angry with her younger siblings when they left their beds unmade because teachers could go to

their homes to observe their working environment. Ayşe was made a member of the *Komsomol*, a youth organization of the Communist Party, like all young people who finished 7th grade (see Image 1). This organization organized competitions and trips between schools.

Image 1. Ayşe's *Komsomol* membership card

In 1968, Ayşe graduated from secondary school and became the first girl from her village to attend high school. At that time, Turkish villages were opening kindergartens, but there weren't enough teachers. So, the Pedagogical Institute began accepting high school students to be trained as kindergarten teachers. Ayşe took painting, music, and physical education exams because these skills were expected of a kindergarten teacher. Her priority was to have a profession after high school. Most of her middle school friends also went to vocational high schools. She studied with Bulgarian students in high school, but her Bulgarian was insufficient. In high school, Turkish language and literature classes were also offered, while Bulgarian students attended French courses. Excursions were an essential part of their education, and they also had "military courses" (see Image 2), which lasted for 15 days, as she remembers. During these courses, they received training in first aid, shooting, and gas masks. According to Ayşe, the training contributed to discipline.

In 1971, Ayşe graduated from high school and was appointed kindergarten director in her village of *Chernigovo*. The kindergarten employed five staff: the director, a teacher, a cook, a janitor, and a buyer and seller. Bulgarian language education starts in kindergarten. Ayşe

said, "They made kindergarten compulsory to teach the language." A year later, she enrolled in university but completed her education by taking exams from outside while working. She received a mathematics-science teaching diploma with a minor in physical education from the three-year Pedagogical Institute of Kardzhali. In 1975, while working as a kindergarten teacher, Ayşe married her classroom teacher husband. 1978, they were dismissed from their jobs due to her brother-in-law's emigration to Turkey. Ayşe was later transferred to a remote village while her husband was assigned to a preschool. After 1984, the teachers were tasked with supervising and reporting those who spoke Turkish, but Ayşe and most of her colleagues never embraced this task. Later, Ayşe was appointed as a physical education teacher at a secondary school in *Mleçino*.

Image 2. Ayşe "at the military service course" which was Given in high school during the communist period

She immigrated to Turkey in 1990, and in 1991, her husband was transferred to Bursa as a physical education teacher, which was also his sub-branch, and started to work. However, it took until 1994 for her to begin working despite applying for several years. Ayşe was assigned as a classroom teacher in *Mirahmet* Village in *Kovancılar, Elazığ,* where she worked for ten months. After having taught in Bulgaria for several years, it was not easy for her to adapt to teaching in Turkey. However, she learned the rules of the Turkish language, Turkish history, and Atatürk. Ayşe's well-rounded education allowed her to teach various subjects, from music to physical education to science. Bulgaria's national education policy is to "raise well-rounded people," and according to her, she realized it.

When she arrived in Turkey in 1990, she found that the schools lacked the equipment available in Bulgaria where even in the 1970s, equipment was considered essential for education and was provided.

However, the village school in *Mirahmet* needed better physical facilities, with no janitor or toilet. Teachers had to light the stove. Ayşe describes her first teaching experience in Turkey as a success despite their challenges. She credits the "internship seminars" she attended after migrating for this success, also.

After ten months, Ayşe moved to Bursa. She went to her children's high school, which had old desks and poor physical facilities. However, Ayşe believed that "everything a student sees should be in good condition." She spent 20 years teaching in Turkey before retiring in 2014. Thinking of Bulgaria, she describes education in Turkey as having "a multiplicity of goals that cannot be put into practice." She believes that too many goals are written down but not implemented in practice. In Bulgaria, on the other hand, education was delivered in practical ways.

Teacher Ahmet was born in 1959 in the town center of *Eğridere* (Ardino) in Kardzhali province. He comes from a family of educators; his grandfather taught at a madrasah. Ahmet began his primary education in 1966, attending a village school and staying with his grandmother in *Çandır* (Svetulka) for the first two years. The instruction was in Bulgarian, but his teacher, Salih, taught folk songs in Turkish on his accordion. Turkish lessons were introduced from the second grade onwards, with two hours per week. Despite not knowing Bulgarian initially, Ahmet completed his primary and secondary education in the district center, where he was placed in branch A due to his academic performance. There were four branch of each grade in the district school. Bulgarian students were placed in A, while Turkish students were placed in B, C, and D: "The urban kids were in branch A, B, the slum or village kids were in C, D," he says. The classes were taught by teachers who graduated from the Turkish Pedagogical School, including Teacher Meliha and Teacher Şevket Abdi. In the 1970s, audio and visual materials were emphasized in lessons, and the natural science lesson was taught in nature in the spring. The teacher used real-life examples to teach landforms, soil and plant species, and erosion.

During the communist era, teachers controlled students' lives during school hours and outside of them. For example, a student in the town center would come to school at two o'clock and study until four, and could only go to the cinema once a week at two. During middle and high school, teachers on duty would check on the situation by going around the town, while other teachers would work with struggling students. Anyone who broke the rules would face disciplinary punishment

or be transferred to another school, as stated by Ahmet. This was not practiced in villages because students there had to help with fieldwork and herd animals. Students from the surrounding settlements would stay in rented houses in the center of *Eğridere* during high school. The teachers on duty would visit and check these houses between eight and ten in the evening. Class teachers would see the students' homes once a semester, and report on information, such as whether they had a room and a desk.

Compulsory education in Bulgaria was eight years. However, few students opted out of further studies after the 8th grade. Students could attended high, technical, or vocational schools. Technical schools took four years to complete, whereas vocational schools took two or three years. Turkish students in the region often chose technical high schools in construction, cartography, agriculture, mining, and nursing. Vocational schools were also popular among Turkish students with driving, turning, furniture making, and construction craftsmanship departments. These schools were chosen according to the region's needs and the Turkish population. Only the most successful Turkish students went to high schools (*gymnasium*) with the idea of attending university. Ahmet mentions that vocational schools were also more preferred among Turkish students than high schools for another reason:

This was particularly beneficial for those students who were required to complete military service, which was 24 months long, for Turkish citizens it was extended to 27 months. These Turkish soldiers were not given a gun; instead, they were tasked with working in construction, building infrastructure, and railways without pay. It was important for parents to ensure that their child had a vocational certificate, which would allow them to continue working in their chosen field during their military service.

He didn’t receive Turkish lessons in high school because they were banned and Bulgarian teachers were in the majority. He graduated high school in 1977 and served in the military for 27 months. After high school, half of his friends pursued three or four year programs, the other half opted for two year vocational education. Between 1980 and 1983, after completing military service, he studied at the Pedagogical Institute for three more years and graduated with a bachelor's degree in history-geography teaching. Being a teacher was a respected career in Bulgaria, with a salary and status equal to that of a doctor in those years.

Trips and camps played a crucial role in his education, as they helped students "prepare to make decisions on their own." In high

school, all students were required to go out for a month to pick grapes or tobacco, and in the evenings, they enjoyed music and guitars. He experienced these "*brigade*" periods as a student and a teacher. The same practice existed at the university, where students worked in canning factories when there were not enough workers. They earned a little money, but the primary purpose was to "contribute to the state." From primary school onwards, students had to clean the environment on Saturdays. In high school, they played sports for half a day at the stadium once a week. From primary school to high school, 15-20 minutes of warm-up and gymnastic exercises were done in the morning before classes, accompanied by music, to promote "discipline."

Teacher Ahmet came to Turkey during the 1989 Migration, and his wife is also a classroom teacher. In 1991, there were no kindergartens around *Gaziantep* and *Urfa* where they worked. However, kindergarten education became widespread in Bulgaria in the 1960s and was soon made compulsory (in practice). In 1993, migrant teachers were allowed to return to their places of residence, but they remained in Southeastern Anatolia for five years. Despite being a history-geography teacher, Ahmet was assigned to teach primary school during this period.

In the 2000s, he started working as a high school teacher in Bursa. As a geography teacher, he wants to instill environmental awareness in his students, but one day the school principal informed him that there were complaints from parents and he should not take the students outside. According to the principal, the school janitor is available if there is a need to hoe the bottom of the trees, pick up garbage, or plant something. Also,he doesn't believe that high school education in Turkey adequately prepares students to make decisions and act independently.

Teacher Mehmet was born in 1960 in the village of *Kademler* (Balgaranovo) in *Osmanpazarı* (Omurtag). He attended eight years of compulsory education in the village, where the language of instruction was Bulgarian. His mother had no education other than Koranic education, while his father did not finish primary school. Turkish lessons continued in his village until 1974. There were no Turkish lessons in primary school, only in the 5th and 6th grades. These classes, which lasted two hours a week, were later banned. Mehmet thinks that he mastered Bulgarian only after high school, but after university he became "inseparable from Bulgarians."

Even in the villages, schools had staff to light the stoves. The physical facilities were good, and there were projectors and other equipment, as he says. Before classes started, students lined up in the

schoolyard for 15 minutes and did warm-up exercises. The school also had a field where agriculture classes were taught. Outside school hours, students were supervised by teachers. There were also many activities in schools. In the early 1970s, a teacher staged plays in Turkish but was later persecuted.

In the 1960s, there was a kindergarten in the middle of two Turkish villages, and he attended this kindergarten. There were both Turkish and Bulgarian teachers in the town. There were no problems between them and the Bulgarian people. Still, the Bulgarian teachers discriminated against them because they spoke Turkish in primary school, and even kindergarten. "You are a perfect child, but you are a Turk" in Bulgarian heard from his teachers. During middle school, there was a shortage of teachers as Bulgarian teachers wanted to avoid going to Turkish villages. When he graduated from high school, he worked as a teacher for two years before entering university.

In 1975, he completed eight years of schooling and was encouraged by his teachers to continue his education in high school. He chose the *gymnasium* because of his high score while many of his friends went to vocational schools. In the last branch of the *gymnasium*, there were 32 Turks, two Gypsies, and one Pomak. The Mehmet teacher was also in this branch, while the others were for Bulgarians. Despite being told by his math teacher, Petkov, that he was a "very good boy, but Turkish," he received a good education, he thinks.

He aspired to study at the Faculty of Medicine at Sofia University, but the quotas reserved for Turkish students were too few, and he was not admitted. He believes that the idea among Bulgarians that "they should not enter important places because they will leave anyway" played a role in his failure. Additionally, he thinks that not being found "predisposed to the communist system" in the philosophy exam also contributed to his inability to get in. In 1980, "many students were admitted to the institute to train Turkish teachers for Turkish villages." During his period, 40-50 Turkish students were in the institute. After graduating from the Pedagogical Institute, he continued at Sofia University in 1985 "after the names were changed."

He met his wife at the institute, and they later moved to Turkey during the 1989 Migration. They were asked at Kapıkule why they were coming, although they owned everything, and they replied that they were coming because they were Turkish. They were first assigned to the *Keles* district of *Bursa*, where he worked as a biology teacher in various schools.

Teacher Neşe was born in 1961 in the village of *Sırtköy (Gırbişte)* in *Eğridere* (Ardino). Born in 1923, her father was a miner and only went to school for a few years. Her mother learned Arabic prayers from a hodja. Neşe's older sister, born in 1951, studied kindergarten teaching in Kardzhali and became a kindergarten teacher in 1966. Neşe began primary school in her village, in 1967. The first four grades were taught together, and the teacher was Turkish, but the language of instruction was Bulgarian. Neşe did not attend kindergarten in her village, and until she started school, she spoke no Bulgarian either. In "those good years," teachers could still explain what the students did not understand in Turkish. In the fifth grade, because her father was a miner and sick, she was admitted as boarding to a school for children with respiratory diseases (Klimatichna Gymnasium) in *Eğridere*, and made Bulgarian friends. During the summers, the *Komsomol* planned vacations that included education, and Neşe participated in them. These trips "opened her horizons" she says.

After finishing high school, she failed her exam and got married. She worked as a temporary teacher in her village for six months (see Image 3) and was involved with the *Komsomol*. Seven years later, in 1986, she enrolled in the Pedagogical Institute. She graduated in 1989 with six friends from her department, which started with 78 students. Her majors were history, geography, and physical education. She said this provided them with a well-rounded education and helped them avoid finding a job.

Image 1. In the village Teacher Neşe, and her students with red scarves (vrızka) – a communism symbol- around their necks

Neşe and her family migrated to Turkey in 1989. She wanted to become a history teacher. However, an officer in charge suggested that the country needed more female physical education teachers, so she accepted her minor field instead. Neşe found that her Bulgarian was better than her Turkish. She thinks that her teachers were the most influential people in her education. She said, "Education in Turkey depends on parents, but in Bulgaria on the state and teachers." In her words, in Bulgaria, "every citizen should study and work. Everyone should be useful to society [...] even if you are rich, the state forces you to work."

Conclusion and discussion

The research analyzes the experiences of four teachers who worked in two countries with different forms of governance and modes of production: the communist People's Republic of Bulgaria and the post-1980s Republic of Turkey, where neo-liberal policies were being implemented.

In the 1920s, vocational education became a priority in both countries. Nonetheless, in 1946, the Communist Party came to power in Bulgaria, and the high school education rates shifted in favor of vocational education. In the 1950s, two-thirds of those attending high school in Bulgaria received vocational education which helped provide the labor force and train Turks as intermediate staff. Witnesses drew attention to the relationship between vocational education and the Turkish minority, emphasizing that this was a state strategy beyond some disadvantages, including the language barrier and poverty. In Turkey, similar rates were targeted for 1995, but even in the 2010s, these rates could not be achieved. Preschool education was widely practiced in Bulgaria, including in Turkish villages, as early as the 1970s, while it became widespread in Turkey only in the 2000s. In communist Bulgaria, the expansion of preschool education was related to the ability to draw children into the public sphere and introduce them to the state's ideology at a very early age. However, this practice also had another purpose, such as teaching the country's language in Turkish settlements. Although the language of education has been Bulgarian since 1959, Turks, who mostly live with their ethnic group, could only learn Bulgarian partly in high school education.

After the closure of private schools and the acceptance of Bulgarian as the sole language of education, the Communist regime increased schooling rates. It is understood from oral history interviews that the eight-year education that became compulsory in Bulgaria in 1959 was

implemented successfully in Turkish villages as well, albeit with a delay of a few years. Turks born in Bulgaria in the 1950s and 1960s experienced significant vertical mobility compared to their parents in terms of education. There was no strong resistance from the Turkish minority to providing education in Bulgarian. It is seen that only until the 1980s did Turkish teachers use micro-resistance tactics such as explaining the subject in Turkish to students who needed help understanding, singing Turkish songs, and performing theater in Turkish.

Bulgaria and Turkey have implemented traditional education models that prioritize society over the individual and center the teacher and discipline. However, there are some differences in some matters. Bulgarian schools, including those in Turkish villages, had advanced physical and technological facilities during the 1970s. The regime also instilled the ideal of "tireless work," discipline, productivity, partly Marxist ideology, and the idea that the student belongs to the state rather than the family. Moreover, Bulgaria is seen achieved more goals on student responsibility, decision-making, and applied education in the communist period. At the same time, these themes were common characteristics recalled about the Bulgarian education system in oral history interviews.

When teachers migrated to Turkey in 1989, their appointment was made easier due to their versatile training in major and minor branches, which reflected Bulgaria's goal of "raising versatile people." Similarly Turkey's "Pre-Service Teacher Training Project," initiated in 1997, aimed to train teachers who would provide applied education in multiple fields. However, the success in these areas remained limited (Şişman, 2000, p. 28; Abazaoğlu, Yıldırım and Yıldızhan, 2016, pp. 150-151). Migrant teachers expressed in oral history interviews that it is challenging to implement Bulgaria's applied and daily life-oriented educational model in Turkey due to the differences in the two countries' approaches.

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