



POSITION CLASSIFICATION IN THE TURKISH PUBLIC SERVICE: PRACTICES AND PROBLEMS

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ABSTRACT

This study has two interrelated objectives. The first objective is to present an overview of how job classification/norm cadre studies have been developed on a legal basis and in practice in the Turkish Public Administration. The second is to examine the problems arising with the norm cadre practices in Turkey by surveying whether they are compatible with the original job classification practices. The study first touches upon the history of norm cadre studies that have been on the policy agenda for nearly half a century. Then norm cadre practices and problems related to these in the Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Health, municipalities and universities were analyzed. As a result of analysis, it is concluded that the job classification practice is differentiated and misapplied in Turkey, where the main aim is to limit the number of personnel classified after standardization.

Keywords: Position classification, norm cadre, public personnel, Turkish public administration, Taylorism.

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TÜRK KAMU HİZMETİNDE POZİSYON SINIFLANDIRMA: UYGULAMALAR VE SORUNLAR

ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın iki ilişkili amacı bulunmaktadır. İlk amacı, Türk Kamu İdaresi'nde iş sınıflandırması/norm kadro çalışmalarının yasal temellere dayalı olarak nasıl geliştirildiğini ve uygulandığını genel bir bakış açısıyla sunmaktır. İkinci amacı ise, bu genel bakışın yanı sıra, Türkiye'de norm kadro uygulamalarından kaynaklanan sorunları, bunların orijinal iş sınıflandırma uygulamalarıyla uyumlu olup olmadığını araştırarak incelemektir. Çalışma öncelikle neredeyse yarım yüzyıldır gündemde olan norm kadro çalışmalarının tarihine değinmektedir. Ardından, norm kadro uygulamaları ile bu uygulamalara ilişkin sorunlar Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı, Sağlık Bakanlığı, belediyeler ve üniversiteler özelinde analiz edilmiştir. Araştırmanın sonucunda, Türkiye'de iş sınıflandırma uygulamasının standartlaştırmadan sonra sınıflandırılan personel sayısını sınırlamak olduğu bir ortamda, iş sınıflandırma uygulamasının farklılaştığı ve yanlış uygulandığı sonucuna varılmıştır. .

Anahtar Kelimeler: Pozisyon sınıflandırma, norm kadro, kamu personeli, Türk kamu yönetimi, Taylorizm.

INTRODUCTION

The system and the process of position classification is called by an unusual name, norm cadre, in Turkish public administration. In fact, position classification efforts were first introduced in Turkish civil service practices during the 1950s under its original name, however, the name somehow transformed to “norm cadre”. Yet a standard classification of civil service jobs has never been completed until today. In fact, the Turkish public administration handles the issue more with a strict limitation on jobs, rather than a standard classification, and has been reducing the number of jobs in certain areas of the public sector according to some *pseudo-classification* criteria since the 2000s, under the name of norm cadre classification.

Aiming to describe, analyze and present the current status of this Turkish-style of job classification, i.e. norm cadre practices, in this study first a brief definition and comparison are made between the scientific job classification of western literature and Turkish norm cadre understanding. Then legal efforts on the job classification concept in Turkey since the 1950s is mentioned historically, and regulations and practices in some public sector organizations especially after the late 1990s are explained. In the final step of the study, the problems brought by norm cadre implications are covered, and the failures are analyzed in order to present a general outline of position classification efforts in Turkey.

I. POSITION CLASSIFICATION/ NORM CADRE CLASSIFICATION

Scientific management techniques were first introduced in the public administration in the USA, and public administration science was launched with the famous article by Woodrow Wilson¹, especially at the beginning of the 20th century, in parallel to the improvements in business management. Efficiency was the main concern at the time, and was the vital element in the analysis of governmental jobs in order to run administration through a ‘scientific’ frame. Duties involved and qualifications necessary to execute governmental jobs were then systematically differentiated from one to the other, and standardized into classes having similar requirements (Mosher, 1968). This differentiation became the basis of position classification and the process was expanded to all kinds and levels of public personnel administration. However, this expansion was mostly incremental and position classification was virtually unknown in the older career systems until World War II (Mosher, 1968). According to Mosher (1968), starting from the latter part of the 20th Century, position classification in the general service became the pivot of virtually all personnel activities. Today in the USA and most of the EU countries, many tools of public personnel administration like job examinations, merit system and proper training are still mostly built on position classification scheme.

The first step of any classification study is the analysis of the job to be classified. Job analysis is the collection and evaluation of information about a job (Prien et al, 2009), or the collection of data relating to “job-oriented” behavior, such as job tasks and work procedures (Harvey, 1991). In this step, authorization and responsibilities of the work to be done and duties involved are strictly determined. In other words, the job is analyzed in order to discover tasks and processes that the job composes of, and the responsibilities and authority needed to perform it. At the end of the analysis, skills, expertise, knowledge and the main responsibilities required by the job are determined. During this phase, a database concerned with the job is developed by observations, surveys and interviews (Özdüzgün, 1992). Then, a report consisting of the scope of the position, its relation to other positions and the basic requirements for the employee appointed to that position is made for every position in the workplace. This report is called job definition or position definition. Finally, the similar positions among these defined positions/cadres are classified under the same heading, regardless of their previous titles, salaries or positions. This classification process formed the basis of the civil service structure in American Public administration and called “job classification or position classification”.

However, the term “norm cadre” in Turkish public administration

describes the resultant number of personnel for the classified positions after a position classification process, rather than the process itself. The word “norm” here has no lexical meaning in English or no equivalent term in the public administration literature², while cadre means frame or position in French. Norm cadre practices in Turkey, refers to position or job classification practices in American and European public personnel administration literature. However, it is completely different, and positions are set up and classified without job analysis. Instead, it is aimed at restricting the number of public sector employees or to distribute them in an even manner among the organizations or regions of the country. Efficiency and scientific class determination is of less concern when compared to standard position classification. The main concern in norm cadre classification, peculiar to Turkey, is the number of positions and its distribution, rather than classification, as it will be further described in the following sections of this study.

II. EARLY POSITION CLASSIFICATION (NORM CADRE) EFFORTS IN TURKEY

Job classifications were firstly put on the agenda in Turkey by the reports of American public administration experts and scholars during and as a part of the public administration reform efforts during the 1950s. These reports were ordered by the government of the time and comprised of the structural problems of the Turkish public administration and outlined possible solutions. According to the first report, public personnel policies were not rational, and too many titles and positions were unreasonably created. Moreover, these positions were distributed unfairly among and within the organizations. It is suggested that the number of civil service employees be reduced, while their skills should be improved (DPB, 1963: pp. 28-34). Later reports described the position classification practices of the USA in detail and proposed a new Position Classification Law to be used instead of the current seniority system (DPB, 1963: pp. 74-79).

As a result of reform efforts of the 1950s a draft bill was prepared under the name of State Personnel Law of the Turkish Republic and it covered the planned reforms in public personnel administration including position classification. The draft was heavily influenced by the reports of foreign experts in 1956. According to Mihçioğlu, the style and content of the draft bill were by all means adopting the American view of position classification. (1957, p. 99) Nevertheless, many issues like supplementary payments and compensation, salary steps unconnected to the classification and seniority based promotion included in the bill, were designed outside and contrary to the principles of position classification. The draft was suspended and in fact these principal discrepancies would never allow the bill to pass into law (Mihçioğlu, 1957, pp.106-108).

Position classification efforts may also be observed in the development plans of Turkey. The country had adopted a planned development concept since the 1930s, in parallel to statism policies of the time (Övgün, 2010, p. 198). During the early periods of the planned development era, public personnel reform including the position classification plans had always been on the agenda. In the First Five-Year Development Plan³, it emphasized the need to ‘establish a flexible personnel regime enabling the use of the manpower within the state at full capacity’ (DPT, 1963, p. 457). Thereafter, the State Servants Law 657, which is still in force although amended countless times, was drafted and put into effect. In the transcript of this famous law, the term classification (*not the position classification*) was defined as ‘to divide the public services and servants of the state into classes according to their qualities, professions and their values to the state (DMK No:657, 1963: Art. 3).

The first plan directly addressing ‘position classification’ was, on the other hand, the Fifth Plan. In the plan, the norm cadre practices

² As a matter of fact, the terms norm stuff or norm personnel referring the original norm cadre term are used only in English abstracts of administrative studies produced in Turkey. It has a partial synonymy in French, where “the norme cadre” term corresponds to standard layout of personnel which is very close to its use in Turkish and is confronted in some WHO reports like (1994: pp 2-3) and (1995: pp 11).

³ Although called the First Five-Year Development Plan, the Plan covering the period 1963-67 was not the first attempt at planned economic development in the history of the Turkish Republic. Two five-year plans had been drawn up in the 1930s, the second being abandoned at the beginning of the Second World War, and another was started in 1946. (Maxwell, 1971, p. 306-326). Although not strictly regular, Turkey has followed 5 year periods of development plans since 1963 and the current 2014-2018 plan is its 10th plan

were listed on the to-do list, by stating that ‘human resource planning convenient with public institutions would be conducted and the standardization of cadres (positions) and titles would be put into practice accordingly’ (DPT, 1985, p.173). Long after the fifth plan, the very first norm cadre works were surprisingly re-involved in 1998 Program and a start was given by the prime ministry. These practices were through due diligence and run by a commission under the supervision of the State Development Organization (SDO) and Ministry of Finance. In the report of the SDO, it clearly concluded that ‘most of norm cadre practices in our country are unscientific and are not the works conducted through the stages which we know as position classification processes’ (Benli et., 1999, p.220).

In brief, although the position classification practices or at least the efforts for them started with the reports of foreign experts in 50s and had considerable effects on the agenda of public authorities and development plans. These effects were to be limited only to a conceptual and principal emphasis on the position classification in the legislative documents and the classification plans were left in the area of “to be done”, and never put into practice. Four decades after its first appearance, de facto realization of position classification studies, under the name of “norm cadre” practices finally came to the legal and technical agenda of the Turkish public administration at the end of the 1990s. However, these practices would be clearly different from the ontological meaning of position classification.

III. NORM CADRE PRACTICES IN TURKISH PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The preparation and planning process of norm cadre practices in Turkey lasted about half a century, starting from the 1950s, but neither could they be introduced nor could a proper legal framework be designed. This long process, however, started to blossom at the end of the 1990s. Preliminary studies were conducted in many public institutions and the first practices in the field were introduced under the name of ‘fixed position’ in The Ministry of Health, where the distribution of personnel is uneven among the geographical regions. Norm cadre practices were subsequently run by the Ministry of National Education and finally by universities. The current distribution of public personnel is shown below in Table 1.

TABLE 1 | Numbers and Percentages of Public Personnel(1) Subjected To Position/Norm Cadre Classification in Turkey

Municipalities and SPA's	Universities(2)	MoNE	MoH	Total
194.931	154.981	1.033.848	851.252	2.235.012
4,02%	4,46%	29,73%	24,48%	62,69%

Sources: Presidency of Turkey, 2024, *Strategy and Budget Department, Civil Service Statistics 2024*; Ministry of National Education (2024;33) *as of Dec 2023*; Ministry of Health (2024;16) *as of Oct 2023*; Council of Higher Education (2024) *as of April 2023*.

(1) *The number of total non-contracted public personnel in Turkey is 3,477,259 as of December 2023 (of 5,175,771 grand total with contracted employees)*

(2) *Academics subjected to norm cadre practices*

As it is shown in the table the two ministries employ 62,69 per cent of the total civil service employees in Turkey, and all classified according to norm cadre regulations.

A. MINISTRY OF HEALTH (MoH)

Norm Cadre practices in the Ministry of Health began with the enactment of The Regulation of Bed and Cadre Standards Concerning Provincial Organization of the Ministry of Health in 1994 (MoH, 1994). This regulation, in fact, was introduced through legislation, and included the previously completed classification of institutions of the ministry and the standardization of the positions (cadres) within them. According to the 4th article of the regulation, the maximum number of positions are standardized, fixed and limited as follows: ‘no change or rise can be made above or outside these standards [numbers] nor can a personnel be appointed therewith. In the case of a resignation, death or

transferring to another post of personnel, the standard cadre [position] remains fixed and cannot be transferred.’

This article suggests that this regulation merely establishes a fixed number of positions and lacks a technical and proper classification of work. Interestingly, after the introduction of this norm cadre regulation in 2000, which notably omits the term ‘norm,’ a new law providing additional vacant positions for the Ministry now includes the phrase ‘norm cadre’: ‘Except for changes in the number of norm cadres, this distribution of personnel cannot be altered. Personnel appointed to these positions cannot be employed in other roles’ (Law No: 4576, 2000: art. 2).

It is clearly shown by this article that all positions within the Ministry were strictly fixed and proposed to be regulated by and under the name of norm cadre methods and principles. Interestingly in the complementary regulation made after the law the ‘fixed standard cadre’ phrase is preferred, i.e. the word norm cadre is not used although it is referred in the law (MoH, 2004). Later this duality of terms was eliminated by the repeal of the articles comprising the word ‘norm’ in 2006, thus the senseless use of different terms of norm cadre and fixed standard cadre ‘for the same practices ended (Law No.5528, 2006). This strange conflict in the terminology, in fact, shows that there was a lack of communication or no consensus between the lawmakers and the bureaucrats. Another conflict, this time of a more fundamental character, occurred in implementation of norm cadre practices in the Ministry and a regulation about the implementation was litigated in the court and appealed. According to the statement of Council of the State⁴ concerning a norm position regulation of the ministry, the ministry violated its own position classification standards in the regulation and exceeded the maximum number of positions, which was determined to be ‘considering the needs of the next 50 years’ in the previous regulation (Council of State, 2007: Dec. No:2007/4027).

In the same statement, the article of the regulation stating “when the number of personnel is insufficient, nurses and midwives can be substituted for each other” was found to be contradictory to the Ministry’s own norm position principles and standards. Indeed the statement of the council is really declaratory about this contradiction, and shows that the council is more familiar and clear with the norm position classification principles than the ministry: ‘it is not possible for the Ministry to constitute a principle employing the personnel in substitution with each other or in any other position instead of their own fixed positions. In this sentence, The Council of State seems to understand the position classification described in the first regulation technically and principally very well, and evaluates the second regulation based on the knowledge given in the former one.

B. MINISTRY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION (MoNE)

The Ministry of National Education (MoNE) was the first public area where the norm cadre studies were initiated and put into practice. Foundation of the classification studies were implemented by a bill, which also intended to regulate the organization MoNE entirely (Law No: 4359, 1998) During the debate on the draft in the parliament, the proposing party suggested that the norm cadre practices would prevent favoritism, therefore that the public interest would be protected as follows: ‘As a result of norm cadre applications the needs of service and public interest will be realized in the most effective and efficient way. Thus, the misuse of the position and privileges of public officers, which would shadow the principle of objectivity due to their political opinion and preferences would be averted. Partisan attitudes and favoritism in the appointments will then be no longer be a topic of discussion (Çalık, 1998)

In this first law regulating and involving the concept of norm cadre, Article 62 of the Law About the Organization and Duties of MoNE is amended by adding the norm cadre regulations: ‘The vacant positions allocated for MoNE, ...are distributed among the central and regional units of the ministry, and those of teachers among the schools and institutions by their branches according to the norm cadre regulation where the number of norm cadres are determined’ (Law 4359, 1998)

⁴ Council of the State is authorized for judicial review over all kinds of acts and actions of the administration according to the Constitution of Turkey

This provision gave way to the studies on the determination and calculation of norm cadres, and after a year the norm cadre regulation of MNE was issued. In the regulation, the schools were classified according to their areas of education and the number of norm cadres of principals and vice-principals were determined by considering the type of the school, and the number of students per class (MEB, 1999). The regulation also determined the number of norm cadres of teachers and form teachers in primary schools and pre-school institutions. In the determination of number of cadres for other schools and institutions, the variables like number of classes and workload were applied.⁵

The regulation, thus, had to describe an ideal class size for primary schools and pre-school institutions by considering the current number of personnel. However, it is remarkable that for other schools and institutions, specifically for high schools, the determination was based on the number of classes and workload, instead of the number of students. Such that the article 23 of the regulation was suggesting that, 'the teachers not fulfilling their monthly lecture hours may be assigned to work also for other schools'. This was very unusual and probably the first time in the long tradition of MoNE that a teacher is permitted to work for more than one school at the same time.

C. EFFORTS TO GENERALIZE THE NORM CADRE PRACTICES: CABINET DECISION (CAD) NO: 2000/1658

After the first implementations in MoNE generalization efforts of norm cadre practices were given a start by the decision of the cabinet on 'The Bases and Ways of Norm Cadre Studies in Public Institutions and Establishments' in 2000 (CaD No.1658, 2000 and CaD No:6532, 2003). According to this decision, the aim of the norm cadre studies was put forward as 'to use public resources efficiently and to ensure the public sector employment with sufficient number, quality and position of public servants in harmony with the requirements of such efficiency. The route of norm cadre studies was determined in the regulation so that an organizational analysis was conducted, in order to draw a detailed picture of work/job classes. Then it was projected that job analysis and measures of positions required for each work class would be done and the job descriptions, job requirements, and finally the number of staff required for these units would be determined.⁶ The task of determination of the norm cadres were assigned to the experts from universities, TODAİE (Public Administration Institute for Turkey and Middle East), and to the National Productivity Center or to the public institution itself under the supervision of these organizations.

This cabinet decision also suggested that the norm cadre practices for almost every public institution be completed between 2001-2003. However, in a later decision amending the previous, the eighth article is changed and the new article stipulated that the work of the norm staff would be finalized in the institutions and organizations determined by the SPO and the Ministry of Finance. In addition, that the work in the other institutions will be carried out in the 8th Five-Year Development Plan, according to the results of the study. Until this amendment, especially in TODAİE, many norm cadre studies were carried out for various public institutions.⁷ Providing consultancy to public institutions on norm cadre studies was one of the strategic sub-objectives of the Institute (TODAİE, 2008, p.46).

D. MUNICIPALITIES

Cabinet Decision 1658 subjected the task of norm cadre practices in municipalities, to a separate regulation in 2000. According to the regulation for metropolitan municipalities' norm cadre practices were left to themselves, while for other municipalities the SPO and Ministry of Internal Affairs jointly, and for Special Provincial Administrations

⁵ It is interesting that, although the 5th article of the regulation suggests that it is the main principle to keep the numbers of classes, students and branches within the international standards for primary schools, it remains silent about the number of students' variable for high school standard

⁶ According to the decision all central public institutions and most of the local administrative units and state enterprises were involved in the scope of norm cadre studies. However public banks are excluded later in 2003 by a corrective decision.

⁷ Refik Saydam Health Protection Center, General Directorate of National Lottery, General Directorate of Forestry, Ministry of Forestry, Development Bank of Turkey, The Presidency Administration on Disabled People, Student Selection and Placement Centre, retirement Fund of Republic of Turkey were among the institutions on which TODAİE had conducted norm cadre researches between 2000-2003.

[local administrative units in provinces in Turkey] to the Interior Ministry only. However, the running of the practices were left entirely to the local administrations themselves, while the Ministry and SPO were only charged with the designation of principles and standards.⁸ A commission, set up for this purpose, issued a comprehensive guide in 2006. In the guide the provinces were classified into some main groups and then into sub-groups with regard to some specific classifications/ criteria of their populations, and principles of norm cadre distributions were then defined accordingly (Güneş et., 2006, p.27-28). In spite of some later amendments, this regulation is still generally valid.

It is possible that the results of the norm cadre work started in local administrations, in terms of employees, are more severe than other institutions. Law No. 6111 enacted in 2011, paved the way for the surplus workers to be sent from their institutions to another and even to be dismissed. The law foresees that the surplus workers of local administrations were then appointed to General Directorate of Highways, MoNE, General Directorate, or Security. It also ruled that workers whose appointment has been confirmed are obliged to start their new duties within five working days following the notification of the assignment orders stating that otherwise their employment contracts are to be terminated (2011, Art. 164). This clearly shows that the final probable outcome of norm cadre practices becomes a tragic job loss for public servants.

E. THE LAST SURPRISE: NORM CADRE FOR ACADEMICIANS

Turkey had been through a very radical change in its administrative structure after leaving the parliamentary system, for a Turkish type of presidency. Following a referendum in 2017, almost the entire executive power has been given to the presidency and some legislative powers i.e. issuing law decrees on executive matters has also been delivered to the president. Moreover, among the very first decrees issued by the president is a decree that fully authorized the presidency concerning the number of appointments in universities (P.D. No:2, 2018, Art.11 30474). However this decree, which violated the partial autonomy of universities, has been altered 2 months later, and the authority to determinate the number of academicians has been left to CoHE (*Council of Higher Education*) conditionally (P.D. No: 17, 2018, Art.2 30534). This condition was, of course, to frame a norm cadre regulation by CoHE for universities within 60 days and to describe/ to limit the number of all the academicians accordingly. Finally, the Council designed a blizzard framework by classifying universities according to some unclear criteria, and while giving some universities partial freedom to determine their number of positions, restricting the number of academicians for other institutions and universities according to some chaotic criteria concerned with the number of major fields of study, titles of academicians etc. (CoHE, 2018). The main criterion is so called, "*minimum cadre number*", which corresponds to the minimum number of academicians required to open a department in any faculty.

While in many areas of the civil service there is no trace of position classification, it is difficult to justify and explain the practices that have been introduced into the education sector, including universities.

IV. EFFECT OF TAYLORISM AND THE PROBLEMS IN NORM CADRE PRACTICES

Although suspended and not generalized, the most comprehensive regulation about norm cadre studies in Turkey had been the Premierships' circular in 2001. The most important issue covered in the Circular was the method of determining the number of cadres. In the annex of the circular, it was suggested to utilize work measurement studies, where applicable and possible, for the determination of the number of cadres (Prime Ministry Circular 2001/39, Art. 3a). The Cabinet Decision forming the legal basis of the mentioned circular, the Norm Cadre Handbook was addressed as a guide for the studies about the organization (CaD 1658, 2000). According to the handbook the work framed with

⁸ The Law No: 5272 in 2004 and Law no: 5302 in 2005 for municipalities and SPA's respectively were put into effect. However, the law No: 5272 was abolished by a new law no:5393 in 2005. Conversely, the provisions concerned with norm cadre regulations were kept in the law and even further extended to the affiliates of municipalities.

a standardized time at the end of work measurements, will minimize the time losses, which arise from the personnel and management, and thus will increase efficiency (DPB, 1998, p.69). One of the work measurement techniques suggested and described in details by various examples in this book is the division of the work and motion-time studies of Taylor (DPB, 1998, p. 71-74). In fact, in Taylor's approach every job is divided into its components and basic motions/tasks (task allocation) and time needed for these tasks are calculated separately. Then by eliminating unnecessary motions a unique and most suitable method is defined and a standard time is calculated (Sayan, 2011, p.86). This method was clearly described and explained with examples in The Norm Cadre Handbook. Timur, who is also frequently referenced in the Handbook, mentions the necessity to use the techniques of Taylor in the norm cadre studies and deeply defends reorganization and says '*Following (the reorganization studies) method studies insisted on by F.W. Taylor and his colleagues have to be performed. The reason for this is to prevent the wastage of resources arising from awkward methods*' (Timur, 2004, p. 218-219).

Timur, who portrays Taylor as the pioneer of norm cadre studies, conducts the norm cadre studies in some institutions in person.⁹ The question arises then how appropriate is it to use the techniques of Taylor, who has been credited with destroying the soul of work and of dehumanizing the work place, in norm cadre studies after nearly a century. Another questionable point is the fact that the principles of scientific management of Taylor was developed for, as its name implies, private/factory management, not for the public administration. According to Taylor, the inventor of the work-study, the goal in an organization should be: (a) that each worker should be given, as far as possible, the highest grade of work for which their ability and physique fit. (b) that each worker should be called upon to turn out the maximum amount of work which a first-rate employee of their class can do and thrive.¹⁰ Likewise, contrary to the contemporary personnel management approaches such as flexible production and intellectual capital, it is problematic that how healthy an organizational structure, which is based on standardization and treats people with quantitative quantities, only as a means of production, might be.

Despite this, in Turkey where it is complicated to do work measurement such as education services, norm cadre studies are performed with Taylorist techniques. One of the main criteria of the Ministry of National Education's norm cadre practice is the number of weekly courses. For example, a teacher is expected to have 40 hours per week in workshop and laboratory classes. In other words, it is considered to be efficient for the institution when a teacher works for at least 8 hours a day (MEB, 1998, Art 12). In fact, by the classification process there occurs a break between the cadre – and the civil servant. The cadre i.e. position becomes the priority. Hence, the actual concept becomes the position and minimum requirements, while the personality and real/potential skills of personnel is ignored (Canman, 1995, pp 25-26).

There are also problems in the transformation of public services into standard divisions, in order to determine the number of norm cadres. Perhaps the best example for problems was voiced in a meeting held by the Union of Turkish Municipalities to discuss norm cadre studies. A participant asserted that '...even the types and materials of buildings is an issue and needed to be given emphasis in norm cadre studies'. They pointed out that similar norm cadre numbers of firefighters was determined for Bodrum and Safranbolu municipalities due to their similar sizes of population, while nearly all the buildings in the latter municipality are of wooden construction (Union of Turkish Municipalities, 2002, p. 27-28). It was also voiced during the meeting, that it is a big mistake to determine the main criteria in the norm cadre practices used for municipalities as the population of the municipality. Participants gave the examples of municipalities in touristic areas where the size of population multiplies during the season. Even the topographic features of a province might affect the number of workers employed in sewage. After these interesting examples at the meeting, it was concluded that there were many points of consideration making

the number of cadres difficult to be compatible with the facts of public administration (Union of Turkish Municipalities, 2002, p. 70-72).

In Turkey, it seems unavoidable that the consequence of almost any norm position practice that there will surely be a reduction in the number of positions and there is a displacement in either working place or even the position for the personnel who cannot be fired or retired. According to Güler, norm position practices is a technical instrument of the policy of shrinking the government, and the real and hidden purpose of them is to leave the 'old' career system and introduce the human resources policies of private sector into the public civil service (2005, p. 268-269). Commenting on the Budget Law of Financial Year of 2002, Firat states that one of the most significant targets of the norm positions is the reduction in the number of positions (2003, p.22).

Another example of such doubts about job losses or displacement can be seen in reactions to the recently introduced regulation on norm cadre practices in universities. Eğitim-Bir-Sen¹¹, filed a lawsuit against this regulation in the administrative courts

The argument of the union was that since the criteria determining the number of norm cadres is uncertain and subjective; many academicians will be shown the door. Furthermore, most of them will be forced to leave their universities for other institutions or universities in opposition to their choices (Eğitim-Bir-Sen, 2018). Another strong argument was that they would not be promoted to higher academic titles, even if they deserve of fulfilled the necessary obligations, due to the norm cadre limitations in the number of positions/academic titles. Similarly as understood from the court or High Council decisions, the authorization given to municipalities to cancel some of the norm cadres, if these are not fulfilled or employed, have been used for already occupied cadres. Thus, some employees in municipalities are determined as surplus personnel and forced to transfer to some other institutions. (Council of State, 2nd Chamber, Decision no. 2017/7322). Another interesting example from MoNE may be added to such cases. MoNE historically use to accept transfer or displacement demands, also called excuse-transfers, of teachers whose spouse is working in other provinces or areas. Nevertheless, within the norm cadre applications, provinces where norm cadres are exceeded, are excluded from such demands. As a result, 71 provinces out of 81 provinces of Turkey were excluded from the range of excuse-transfers in provinces of Turkey were excluded from the range of excuse-transfers in 2012 (Haber7com, 2012). Which practically made it impossible for such families to live together in the same province.

What is disregarded in norm position practices in Turkey is not only the restraint of public personnel policies within the quantitative boundaries, which can only be expressed as numbers. It is also the fact that the problems experienced in the private sector due to such administrative and downsizing practices will henceforth probably be confronted in the public sector. In public institutions, organizational structures and cultures are now undergoing important and increasing changes like; target-oriented approaches in the public service, total quality management, performance evaluation brought by the waves of globalization and managerialism. These changes are now creating a multi-dimensional pressure on public service employees. According to Ciulla 'workers of the past were just overworked, today many workers are overworked and over managed' (2004, p. 2). It can be claimed that re-description of the positions, reduction in the number of positions, downsizing of the institution worked for, changes in the working places or similar side-effects of norm position practices are good examples of such an over management.

Particularly the threat of job loss and the changes in the working position or place are the main causes of job insecurity and burnout, that is a prolonged response to chronic job stressors, among the employees (Schaueli et., 2001:501-510)). Although the name norm cadre is specific to Turkey only, this situation is also valid for organizations in other countries and sectors that have been shrunk after preliminary studies under other names such as job standardization and job classification. Schaueli et, claims that restructuring, downsizing and mergers have eliminated many jobs or positions. She states that 'these changes and their effects are widespread, occurring in many countries both in the public and private sectors, and thus affect millions of employees'

⁹ Timur has conducted norm cadre works for many public institutions and KİTs (State-owned Enterprises) including state mining companies and public industrial companies

¹⁰ Taylor, 1911, p. 10.

¹¹ Eğitim-Bir-Sen is one of the biggest education unions in Turkey.

(Schaueli et., 2001, p.504). According to the authors, the most commonly used methods to reduce costs in both the private and public sectors are downsizing, early retirement, attrition, long-term layoffs, deductions and termination practices. As a result of these practices, the trust and loyalty of the employees under threat to the organization is decreased and many studies have been published showing that they are open to the development of secondary effects such as helplessness, anger, loss of work ethics and hostility (Maslach et.,2001, Kleinfield, 1996).¹²

Similarly, the emotional situations of public personnel are not being taken into consideration in Turkey when rearranging the civil service system according to norm position classification. In other words, public personnel have been facing threats like job loss, obligatory displacement of the working place and living areas, the emotional reactions are unavoidable side effects. Problems confronted by civil servants of MoNE, where the norm cadre studies are most effectively run, frequently are reflected in the media and in some cases are brought to the courts.¹³ For example, in the regulation stipulating the norm cadre practices, and issued by the ministry in 1999, the provision suggesting 'when the number of personnel exceeds the number of norm cadres the last teacher appointed to the school is described as norm cadre surplus' is cancelled twice by the Council of State (5th Chamber, Decision No. 1999/5400 and 2000/ 2419). Indeed, this cancelled provision resembles LIFO (Last in First Out) method used in stock evaluation. It is dramatic that MoNE handles its teachers as inventory units of a cost accounting system.

DISCUSSION

Norm cadre practices in Turkey, began to be put into effect about half a century after their first appearance on the agenda of public administration. Two important problems arise in terms of methods and implications. The first problem is that norm cadre practices begin without a job description. Most of the norm cadre practices in Turkey are not based on proper and consistent scientific fundamentals as it was even emphasized in the court decisions.

Since the job description is non-existent and the work is not properly standardized, the norm cadre practice is limited only by restructuring the existing distribution and fixing it in numbers. Especially in the health and education sectors where the implementation was initiated, public personnel do not want to work in the backward regions of the country or in the remote provinces. Norm cadre practices have become a tool of oppression for staff who do not want to work in these regions, instead of or in combination with former tools such as compulsory service and obligatory qualification criteria.

The second problem related to the method is that norm cadre studies have been carried out with methods based on Taylorist techniques, especially in the practices in the Ministry of National Education. Furthermore, in the preparatory phase of the norm cadre practices for other public institutions, although not yet implemented, the drawbacks of using the Taylorist methods have been discussed and opposed for a long time. The problems have automatically arisen from the implementation of such dehumanized standardization focusing only on a rigid work-rationale for public servants in Turkey. These practices have created a certain pressure on them and they faced severe results like the replacement of their working places or cities they lived and even job losses. However more research about the perceptions of public personnel who have already been affected or will be affected by norm position practices may be useful in order to conduct further evaluations about this stress.

Consequently, norm position practices in Turkey are methodically false and problematic, due to the lack or misapplication of proper position and classification of work. Further, it may be claimed that whether by conducting job descriptions or by just distributing the personnel regionally through the organization without running a methodical position classification, norm position practices are problematic anyway for public personnel. The basic reason of the problem is that public personnel policies prefer to protect the interests of administrators,

rather than to eliminate the doubts of public personnel suffering from norm position practices.

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¹² These comments cover only the private organizations.

¹³ More information about the early (2000s) complaints of teachers may be found in:(Atasoy, 2000: p. 26; Bostan, 2000: p. 30.; Canerik, 2002: p.21-22).

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¹⁴ Titles of Cabinet Decisions and Regulations are translated by the author. Original manuscripts are only issued in Turkish at Official Gazette.