

Authoritarian Scripts in Teacher Education: Türkiye's National Education Academy and the Dismantling of University-Based Teacher Training

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Abstract

Framed by critical policy analysis, this study investigates the potential risks associated with recent changes in teacher education policy in Türkiye. This study examines how placing teacher development under direct government control may reshape the ideological and professional foundations of teacher education. Drawing on official policy papers, legislative texts, governmental declarations, public statements, and ongoing public debates, the study deconstructs the policy path leading to the National Education Academy (NEA) model. The present study contributes to the insufficient studies on the NEA by situating Türkiye within global trends, giving a critical look at its structural and ideological implications and suggesting guiding principles for countries undergoing the same or similar struggle between the strict centralized government control and academic freedom in teacher education.

Keywords: *national education academy, teacher education reform, academic autonomy, politicization of education, centralized teacher training, education policy.*

Introduction

Considering Türkiye's extensive higher education system with more than 200 universities and nearly 90 teacher education faculties, demand for a new approach to teacher training is a pressing and paradoxical question. While teacher preparation was under the responsibility of universities for almost half a century, today the intention is to remove teacher preparation from the heterogeneous intellectual environment of universities and be placed directly under government control. Even more critically, this intention may turn teacher education into an instrument of politics, subordinating its pedagogical aims for the sake of fostering values and narratives that are aligned with the current regime.

Across the temporal and spatial dispersion of ideas, political ideologies and shifts in power have profoundly influenced educational policies, spanning from the philosophical foundations of teacher education to the practicalities of their implementation (Aziabah, 2018; Whitty, 2016; Levy, 2022). Changes to educational policies are fundamentally political and are based on a society's values, sense of cultural identity, and potential future (Dunn, 2018; Horsford et al., 2018). All systemic changes have an impact on education, regardless of whether they result from electoral turnover, regime change, or unstable political coalitions (Galey, 2015). However, these shifts typically reflect the prevailing narratives of the governing governments, which use education to associate themselves with power and legitimize it by altering political elites, replicating preferred social norms, and influencing public allegiance (Levy, 2022).

The proposed National Education Academy (NEA) model signifies a fundamental ideological change in university-state relations representing far more than an innocent reorganizational process of teacher education. Similar to the state-directed teacher education models in some parts of East Asia, Southeast Asia, and in some

other countries, the Turkish NEA reform poses fundamental questions regarding the trade-off between centralized efficiency, institutional autonomy, and academic freedom. Trow's (1973) classic account of the transition that marked the large-scale changes in higher education emphasized how expansion inevitably opens up new state intervention in the internal affairs of institutions. Altbach (2005) sees a similar picture, in which globalization interlaces frequently with political forces that hinder universities' knowledge capacity; that is, their ability to innovate and contribute to scholarship in the long run. Teichler (2004) also observes this as a difficult challenge for higher education systems under the impact of strong political forces, which must reconcile the immediate demands of society with their institutional autonomy.

The Turkish Context

Since the year 2002, a *conservative-nationalist* party has been ruling the government. Their policies on education are based on a postcolonial vision of resistance to *Western-centric modernity* (Ataay, 2015; Bedirhanoglu, 2010; Kiraz & Yilmaz-Yildiz, 2025). This orientation has been operationalized by frequent change of school curricula and teacher training so that they are more in line and secure with the ruling party's ideological agenda.

Education minister Yusuf Tekin explicitly manifests a pivotal articulation of this recent teacher education policy change. His statement: "*Let faculties of education train scientists, and let us [Ministry] train teachers*", which indicates the deliberate separation of teacher training from academic institutions and its reorganization under state-led mechanisms (Demirören Haber Ajansı, 2025). Minister continued his speech:

At my school, I want the person [teacher] trained to teach to be fully familiar with the program [government-developed curricula]... When they [graduates of the NEA] come to the school, I want them to teach it...but they [universities] say, '*you can't tell us this.*' *We are autonomous; we have academic and scientific autonomy.*' Fine, but I also want this [his] taught. I mean, I want to raise a student profile [religious-nationalist] in my schools like this. They [universities] say, '*that's your opinion; we raise teacher, and you have to appoint them.*' Now, friends, this won't work. If this is the case, our education system has no chance of success. So now, I am saying, you train scientists academically...*The first thing we must do is create a mechanism to align teacher candidates with ministry policies.* That is, we should take the scientists [not from teacher education institutes but from all undergraduate programs] trained by universities, the people who are experts in their field [subject matter], and prepare teacher candidates who can teach our program—in other words, who can do what *we expect from teaching.* Then we send them as teachers to our classrooms. This is our primary goal (Demirören Haber Ajansı, 2025).

Similar to the minister, President Erdoğan's insistence on producing "*young people equipped with religious and national values*" (Reuters, 2024) represents rhetoric that has accompanied sweeping curricular reforms favoring religious and nationalistic content over secular, scientific education, curriculum and instruction as well as teacher education. Concerns are raised by the recent changes in policies that teacher education in Türkiye has been shifted from universities to centrally managed structures with increasing ideological supervision. Even though Article 43 of the Turkish National Education Law No. 1739 legally recognizes teaching as a profession that requires "*the necessary academic credentials and professional certifications,*" recently, this legal framework has been accompanied by a political discourse that questions the suitability of universities for teacher formation sites. The ministerial statements that indicate teachers have to be trained in accordance with "*national values*" and "*moral principles*" imply a transition to considering

teacher education as a tool for ideological alignment rather than a process of academic freedom.

This policy orientation is not confined to the rhetoric of individual ministers or president's public; it is, instead, a constantly articulated, ideologically based objective that has been legitimized through the legislation process, mainly through the Turkish Grand National Assembly's Education Commission's discussions and reports. The establishment of the *“National Education Academy through the Law changes the teacher recruitment by making it a process that is based on the successful accomplishment of the Professional Preparation Training program for three or four terms given by the Academy”* (Turkish Grand National Assembly, Education Commission, 2024), thus moving teacher employment to a centralized and state-controlled preparatory structure.

In polarized contexts worldwide, education increasingly becomes an ideological battleground, where curriculum, teacher preparation models, and school governance reforms are often pursued as political acts rather than responses to evidence-based educational needs (Brezicha et al., 2023). The NEA model ought to be interpreted primarily as a transformation in the power of teaching methods, however, it is still a systematic endeavor to make teacher labor proletarian by taking away from teachers the character of 'public intellectuals.' From a Marxist point of view this is the state's intention to convert teacher-training into a reproductive ideological apparatus, where the future teachers will just serve as technicians of the state, guiding the delivery of a pre-packaged, conservative-nationalist curriculum that is meant to strengthen the hegemony.

Theoretical Framework

The Politics and Education

The political stand on education reveals that reforms in the educational policies and curricula are mere administrative changes but rather a covert or open demonstration of ideological agendas of the state. According to Apple (2006) and Ball (2012), practically, policy in education is increasingly based on the neoliberal and conservative tendencies which favor control, efficiency and performance before democratic participation and intellectual autonomy. In this light, following Apple's (2006) assertion, the NEA can be categorized as "*educational re-politicization*" that is, through educational establishments, ideology's legitimacy is being fortified. At the same time, according to Verger et al. (2016), this is part of a broader "Global Education Reform Movement" (GERM) comprising centralization, standardization, and high managerial governance. The NEA's insistence on moral and national values reflects the state's neo-conservative ideology; as such, it represents the resistance against pluralistic and critical pedagogical traditions, thereby facilitating the process of political strengthening. The NEA model epitomizes a neo-conservative shift in educational governance, where centralized authority is utilized to enforce a singular national moral framework.

State-University Relations and Academic Autonomy

The "*triangle of coordination*" model introduced by Clark (1983) displays higher education as the interplay of three significant forces, namely, the state, the market, and the academic elite. The model suggests that when one of the forces is in control, it creates an unbalanced environment within the institutions. In line with the neo-conservative thought, the NEA's model aims to depoliticize the teacher education process at the university level while re-politicizing it under the

centralized control of the state, effectively turning teacher education into a mechanism for ideological conformity. This reform is primarily power related shift and taking the formation of teacher education, quality control, and practicum coordination from well-experienced university-based education to the unpredictable MoNE-based model. Barnett (2000) affirms that this transformation uncovers the "*fragility of universities*," given that external political aims increasingly determine academic priorities. In addition, Becher and Trowler (2001) emphasize that when the university community lacks the authority to govern itself, it will aggravate the erosion of culture of knowledge, and result in less innovation with declining professional ethics. This is also in line with Marginson's (2011) view that current universities are confronting a dichotomy between national policy requirements and international academic challenge.

Critical Pedagogy and Democratic Education

Critical pedagogy views education as a form of freedom and a means to initiate social transformation. According to Freire (1970) education is a facilitator through which learners may question the source of their own oppression and therefore, get involved in socio-political dialogue that has an impact on their lives. Giroux (2020) who refers to teachers as "public intellectuals" supports this. He affirms their duty of increasing the public's sense of democratic values and the common good. Nevertheless, the techno-centric teacher certification model proposed by the NEA represents for a potential setback for democracy, as it treats teaching as unavoidably a technical matter rather than a platform for critical social interaction (Caliskan & Buyukgoze, 2025; Karakus-Ozdemirci & Akar, 2022). Thus, the NEA reform discussed here not only contributes to the erosion of academic freedom in teacher education (John, 2025), but also an identification of the educational system as being less democratic and less pluralistic.

Significance

This study focuses on an ideological offense behind the restructuring of teacher education in Türkiye. It focuses on how state-led centralization and politicization lead to the systematic marginalization of teacher education faculties. The main points can be addressed in three areas. First, the study shows how changes in teacher education policy effect teacher candidates' professional identity and their engagement with democratic values. Second, this study contributes to the governance of teacher education under centralization and adds to global discussions by placing Türkiye's situation within international trends driven by political and ideological beliefs. Third, it provides critical evidence for policymakers, scholars, and teacher educators about the risks of ignoring institutional scientific memory.

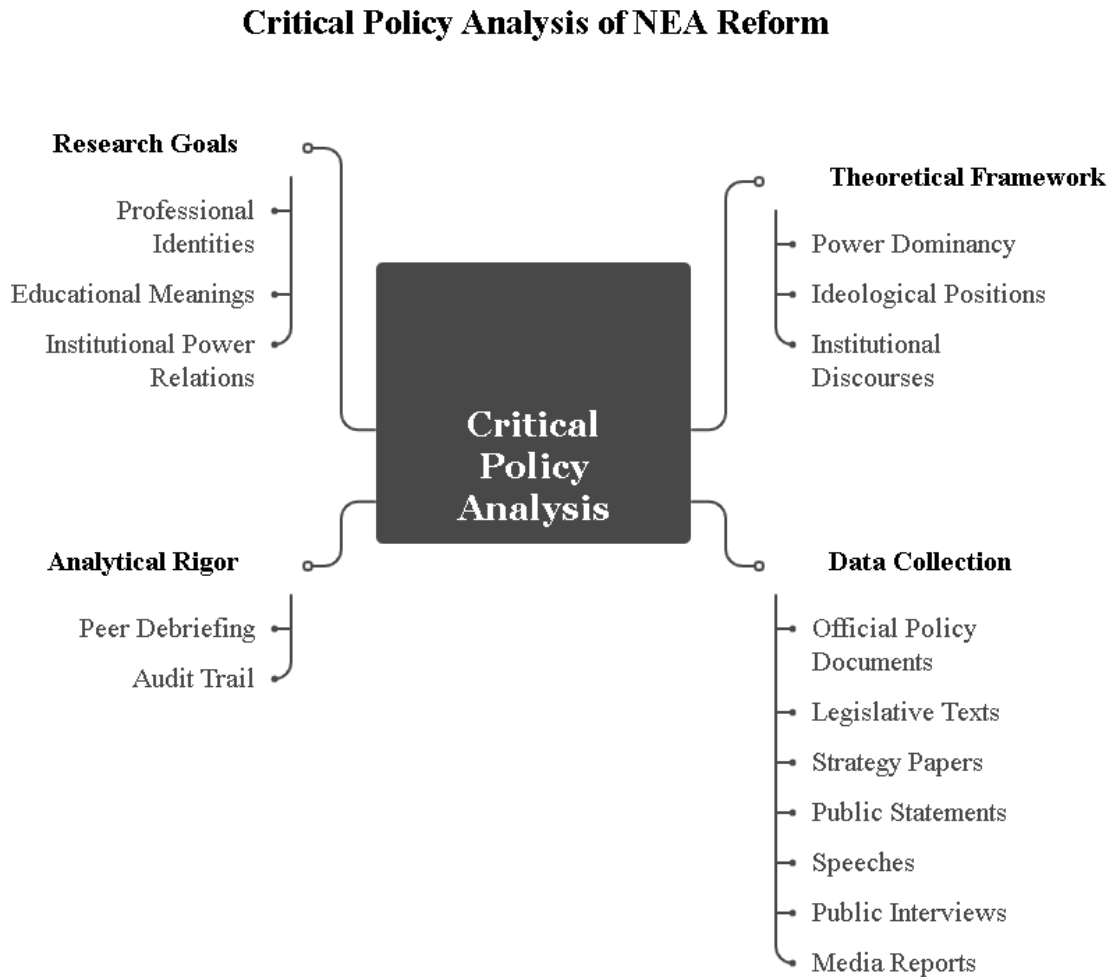
Method

Based on the premise that policy is a manifestation of power dominance (Ball, 2012), this research enables a critical deconstruction of rationales and power dynamics. The CPA approach allows for an in-depth exploration of how education policies are shaped by power relations, ideological positions, and institutional discourses within the state-university relationship. The primary data consist of official policy documents, legislative texts, strategy papers, and public statements issued by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) and the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye. These materials were collected from institutional websites, press archives, and government bulletins published recently—a period that marks the conceptualization, announcement, and political justification of the NEA reform (2023-2025). Supplementary materials included speeches by policymakers, public interviews, and media reports discussing teacher education reform.

The data corpus consists of a purposively selected set of policy-related documents produced between 2023 and 2025, corresponding to the emergence and institutional articulation of the National Education Academy (NEA). These include: (a) official policy documents and strategy papers published by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), (b) legislative texts and reform proposals, (c) public speeches and official statements by high-level policymakers (e.g., the Minister of Education and the President), and (d) media reports that directly reproduce or document policy discourse. Documents were selected based on three criteria: (1) direct relevance to the NEA reform and teacher education restructuring, (2) their role in articulating or legitimizing policy discourse, and (3) their publication within the defined reform period (2023–2025). This purposive selection strategy aimed to capture the dominant narratives shaping the reform.

Themes were continuously compared between documents and reexamined in light of pertinent theoretical frameworks derived from critical policy scholarship in order to improve analytical rigor. Peer debriefing with academics knowledgeable about Turkish education policy and critical qualitative inquiry, as well as keeping an audit trail recording coding choices and theme refinement helped to support analytical trustworthiness. In keeping with CPA traditions, the analysis places more emphasis on interpretive depth than prediction, with the goal of illuminating how policy discourse shapes professional identities, educational meanings, and institutional power relations rather than proving causation. Figure 1 summarizes the methodological process.

Figure 1. Methodological process (CPA and NEA Reform).



The analytical orientation of this study is grounded in critical policy analysis and is theoretically informed by perspectives on the politics of education, state–university relations, and critical pedagogy. These frameworks guide the interpretation of policy texts and discursive constructions examined in the analysis. While these perspectives are elaborated in detail in the following section, they inform the selection of analytical categories and the interpretation of findings throughout the study.

Analysis

A qualitative content and discourse analysis process was used to identify the dominant narratives, discursive strategies, and ideological assumptions embedded in the collected documents. Three key analytical dimensions guided the process: *Centralization and Governance*, how state power is consolidated through institutional restructuring of teacher education; *Ideological Framing of Teacher Professionalism*, how teaching is redefined in political terms; *Reconfiguration of Academic Autonomy*, how universities' traditional academic functions are being reclassified under government control. The interpretive framework draws upon Fairclough's (2013) critical discourse approach, which examines how linguistic and textual structures reflect and reproduce power relations. The analytical process followed a multi-stage qualitative coding procedure. First, an initial round of open coding was conducted to identify recurring concepts and discursive patterns across the documents. Second, these codes were grouped into broader thematic categories through axial coding. Finally, these themes were interpreted in relation to the theoretical framework, resulting in three overarching analytical dimensions: centralization and governance, ideological construction of teacher professionalism, and reconfiguration of academic autonomy. While these dimensions were informed by theoretical considerations, they were also grounded in patterns emerging from the data.

To enhance trustworthiness, triangulation was achieved by cross-referencing data from multiple document types and validating interpretations through peer debriefing among independent researchers familiar with Turkish education policy. Reflective notes were maintained throughout the analytical process to ensure transparency and to account for researchers' positionality.

Results

The analysis revealed three interrelated dimensions through which the NEA reform restructures teacher education in Türkiye: (1) centralization and politicization, (2) delegitimization of university-based teacher education, and (3) regime-specific restructuring in global comparison.

Centralization and Politicization of Teacher Education

Policy discourse explicitly emphasizes alignment between teacher training and ministry-defined expectations. For instance, the Minister of Education stated that teacher candidates should be trained to “teach the program *we* define” (Demirören Haber Ajansı, 2025). This statement reflects a shift from university-based autonomy toward centralized curricular control. The NEA reform represents a structurally disruptive shift in the governance of teacher education. A centralization of power within the political structure, namely the *ministry*, is what most significantly restricts access to various knowledge sources in universities. The model of new teacher preparation signifies the ideological bases for professional identity and development of teachers. In addition, this change has been the result of a rather comprehensive political project whose major objective is to link teachers up with the political and ideological goals of the state. In this context, the reform aligns closely with a global trend where various authorities employ education systems not only to reinforce their dominance but also to forcibly encourage the acceptance of specific citizenship ideals and determine what knowledge should be taught.

Recently, in the US, the Trump administration offered to “*federal funding*” universities to protect “*pro-conservative voices*” that restrict “*freedom of expression*” of higher education as scientific institutions (Quinn, 2025). Political

leaders impose their dominant positions by perpetuating authority principles. Similarly, the educational policies of Türkiye have been means of imposing ruling party's dogmas and consolidating the regime, particularly during the current competitive authoritarian regime (Esen & Gümüşçü, 2016). Starting from the 2000s, Türkiye's education system has increasingly imposed *conservative-nationalist* agendas and moved away from Western-world (Kaplan, 2006). Besides that, the analysis of Türkiye's political transformation reveals that the education is the most potent tool used by the ruling political party to alter the character of the state (Adar, 2022). In some countries, like Hungary, Poland, Brazil, North Korea, Venezuela, and Iran, the governments have taken education as a tool for political consolidation, ideological steering, and social engineering (Verger et al., 2016; Dardot & Laval, 2013).

Delegitimization of University-Based Teacher Education

Policy discourse and legislative changes increasingly position universities as insufficient sites for teacher preparation. For example, recent reforms introduce a centralized training model under the National Education Academy, effectively shifting teacher preparation away from university-based structures (Turkish Grand National Assembly, Education Commission, 2024). Since the 1920s, when Türkiye's modern education system was founded, teacher education functioned as central to civic education and has evolved many times. Models such as Darülmüallimin and Village Institutes, where teachers were trained as social transformation agents. These institutions played key roles in rural development, cultural dissemination, and village-society integration (Ezer, 2020). In the 1960s, higher teacher colleges were established to provide the teaching professionals with greater academic subject expertise and pedagogical skills. Following the 1980 military coup, the 1982 Higher Education Council (HEC) reform integrated

education colleges into the university system as *education faculties* (Yüksel, 2008). In 2025, the NEA is shifting teacher education from a university-based to an ideologically centralized ministry-led model.

The centralized teacher training model's reliance, as seen with the NEA declaration, raises concerns about loss of diverse pedagogical approaches and ideological indoctrination of the state. Nohl and Somel (2020) clearly explicate this ideological indoctrination:

Since its foundation, centrally organized education in Türkiye has been an important instrument for the ideological formation and social promotion of its citizens, so it has stood in the middle of political and social debates. The ideological direction of education in Türkiye stands at the crossroads of *nationalism versus minority rights, and secularism versus Islam*. ... Since the Justice and Development Party, under R.T. Erdoğan, took power after the 2002 general elections, upper-secondary and tertiary education has grown, but the quality problem remains. Similarly, social inequalities were still a highly critical problem in education, reciprocally fueled by an ever-growing competition into which private schools and universities were forced. After the ruling party succeeded in getting the state apparatus under its control and announced a "New Türkiye," the government turned its back on the ideological foundations of the republic and promoted additional religious education in general schools, as well as in the imam and preacher schools, whose graduates were again permitted to follow nonclerical career paths (p, 1).

This new model risks sidelining and eventually eroding the valuable human resources and research potential of education faculties. This could undermine their ability to develop long-term programs since education faculties, in addition to training teachers, have important roles in designing educational goals of the future through research. This disruption poses a serious threat to the historical legacy and preservation of institutional knowledge within Turkish education faculties (Nohl and Somel, 2020).

Global Comparison and Regime-Specific Patterns

The comparative reading of policy discourse suggests that the NEA differs from models in democratically governed systems not merely in structure but in the political function assigned to teacher education, where institutional location is closely tied to regime type and governance structures. In systems where universities retain a central role, teacher education tends to maintain stronger links to research, academic autonomy, and professional standards. Compared internationally, Türkiye's teacher education model is far from weak; on the contrary, it is both up-to-date and consistent with international norms. The political regimes in which these models operate have a significant impact on their practical outcomes, even though they may seem structurally similar in terms of centralized standards, certification processes, and institutional oversight. Teacher education is ingrained in a governance tradition that is marked by high levels of academic autonomy, professional self-regulation, and institutional trust in social-democratic settings like Finland. Similar dynamics are seen in nations like Norway and Germany, where robust safeguards for disciplinary expertise, pedagogical judgment, and university independence coexist with national frameworks. Increased central regulation has mostly operated through accountability mechanisms rather than overt ideological alignment, even in more market-oriented systems like England. Reforms in teacher education, on the other hand, follow a very different logic in competitive authoritarian environments. Competitive authoritarian regimes uphold formal institutional structures while methodically subjugating them to centralized political control and ideological conformity, according to the literature on authoritarianism. In these situations, centralization serves as a mechanism for ideological standardization and loyalty enforcement rather than professional coherence or quality assurance.

Table 1 briefly summarizes various countries' teacher education models and the role of the universities in teacher education:

Table 1. International Teacher Education Models and Institutional Structures

| Country | Teacher Education Model | Key Features | University Role |
|------------------|---|--|-----------------|
| United States | University-based colleges with Alternative Certification Programmes (ACPs) | Pedagogical theory and research methodology instruction; university partnership ACPs | Central |
| United Kingdom | Traditional university programmes and School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) | Local schools as direct partners; faculty accreditation | Collaborative |
| Germany | Lehramt framework with Referendariat phase | 4-5-year programmes; university-state collaboration | Integrated |
| Finland | Master's-level integrated programmes | University-operated Teaching Schools; research-practice integration | Dominant |
| Japan | Undergraduate programmes with Clinical Practice | School internships; Shido-in assistantship programme | Central |
| Singapore | Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) | Ministry-Faculty coordination; school mentorship | Partnership |
| South Korea | Master's and PGCE programmes with Clinical Teacher Education | Faculty-supervised field internships | Central |
| New Zealand | Faculty collaboration with Teach First NZ | Simultaneous coursework and internships | Shared |
| Canada (Ontario) | Concurrent Education model | Dual degrees; cross-faculty registration | Integrated |
| Brazil | PARFOR framework with distance programmes | Faculty-coordinated pedagogical content | Coordinating |
| South Africa | Funza Lushaka scholarship programmes | Faculty-provided diversity and theory | Academic |
| Sweden | Läraryftet programme with campus seminars | Faculty-designed online modules | Oversight |
| Poland | Teacher Qualification Courses (TQC) | Faculty-accredited cert | Accrediting |

From an international comparative perspective, the NEA can be understood as a refurbished version of teacher training. Observations from overseas sources show that such implications generally fail to sustain a uniform quality of teachers, reduce the depth of the subject matter taught, and lead to a loss of professional control (Bourassa, 2024; Ingersoll, 2025). Cases are evident. The United States Alternative Certification Programs (ACPs) caused the rate of new teachers leaving the job to be as high as 50%, and also created large disparities in the pedagogical capabilities of the teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2006). England's School-Centered Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) statement means a shift of the control of a larger part of teacher training to schools from universities and mostly as a result, restricting the universities' influence on assessments and thus reducing academic rigor (Tillin, 2023). In comparison, Finland's and Singapore's teachers are trained at their universities while running their laboratories or schools and being part of a larger institution with a global reputation due to the strong research-practice integration and teacher training within higher education (Sahlberg, 2015).

On the contrary, Türkiye's NEA is an example of a hierarchical restructuring. This top-down ideological approach not only segregates the teacher education from higher education institutions, but also puts restraints on collaboration. When the teacher education is centralized under the Ministry of National Education, this may lead to the elimination of teacher education diversity and the reduction of the number of different pedagogical and critical views. Centralization may lead to a decrease in the democracy of education as both Giroux (2020) and Apple (2006) refer to *democratic citizenship and social justice*. Research testifies to the fact that the decline in teacher quality has a heavy burden on communities in many ways (Ingersoll, 2007; Ingersoll & Tran, 2023; Yıldırım-Taştı, 2023). In Türkiye, ideologically imposed premature teacher education attempts like NEA is likely to

cause an increase in the socio-economic gaps and teaching standards. This course of action also diminishes cultural diversity, imposes authoritative narratives, and prevents education from functioning as a transformative force (Freire, 1970; Kiraz & Yılmaz Yıldız, 2025).

Educational institutions are not mere centers for pedagogical activities but at the same time they are the main contributors to the social networking and bonds in the community (Diriye, 2019). Print (2010) indicates that the stronger a relation between the university and the local community, the higher the trust level is. In addition, Kilpatrick et al. (2010) and Fuller (2014) claim that university-school-community partnership is one of the primary factors that keeps society together.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study identifies three interrelated dynamics through which the NEA restructures teacher education: the centralization and politicization of teacher preparation, the delegitimization of university-based teacher education, and a regime-specific pattern of restructuring that becomes visible in global comparison. The NEA model, apart from its administrative consequences, reveals a radical transition to authoritarian neoliberalism in the management of teacher labor. From the Marxist viewpoint, the separation of teacher education from the free and independent intellectual domain of universities is not just a change but a consistent move toward the *proletarianization* of the teaching profession. The NEA's mediating role between stripping teachers of their positions as 'public intellectuals' and redesignating them as 'state technicians' is that of issuing an ideological state apparatus. The entire reorganization aims at capturing and ruling the dispersion of thought in the teaching by making it impossible for the critical consciousness of the educators to come through. The educators are to be used merely as compliant

channels through whom the state's singular narrative is transmitted, and not as the facilitators of critical consciousness. Therefore, the shift to the NEA can be seen as a tactical enclosure of the educational commons, where the democratic potential of pluralistic teacher training is sacrificed to provide the state with disciplined, ideologically captured workers. This process of 'ideological capture' basically cuts teachers off from their own pedagogical power, thus, turning the classroom from a place of social change into a workshop for the production of the ruling regime's norms in society and politics.

This transformation in ideology is the state practicing what Antonio Gramsci (1971) called 'cultural hegemony' where the state tries to win over the people by creating a 'common sense' that benefits the ruling class. The state through the NEA, centralizes teacher education, thereby effectively bypassing the scholarly critique of the university and creating 'organic intellectuals' of the regime—teachers who do not only teach but rather actively work on the moral and intellectual leadership belonging to the dominant socio-political order. This Bourdieu-type step initiates the process of what is 'symbolic violence'; it dictates a particular 'cultural arbitrary' (in this case, a conservative-nationalist curriculum) as the only valid knowledge, while pushing aside the pluralistic and critical habitus developed in the education faculties (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990).

In addition, the NEA, following the Frankfurt School's criticism of 'instrumental reason,' signifies the complete domination of technical efficiency over moral and ethical considerations. Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno (2002) had pointed out that educational institutions when viewed only through a pragmatic and technical lens are left with no liberating power and thus become mere instruments of social control. The policy of transformation of educators into government-

approved technicians unequivocally reveals the coexistence of such a simplistic education intended to produce individuals who can only respond to the system but are not aware of the critical skills necessary to question or go beyond it. In this perspective, the NEA is not only a teacher training reform but also a project that counteracts the revolution by erasing the school's place as a battleground for democratic struggle and implanting it with a mechanism for ideological reproduction of the capitalist authoritarian state (Marcuse, 1964).

Understanding change means placing it in the context of larger discussions on how education systems can protect academic integrity while addressing the real-world challenges of higher education governance (Marginson, 2011). In new and developing democracies, such reforms are particularly critical since the tension between centralized control and academic freedom has long-term effects on teacher quality and democratic strength (Giroux, 2020; Apple, 2006). Examining the NEA through critical policy analysis approach as both a policy object and a framework that redefines the goals of Turkish teacher education is necessary for teacher educators and policy makers. Critical policy analysis, as described by Ball (1994, 2012) and Rizvi and Lingard (2010), goes beyond simple descriptions of policy and reveals the ideological, cultural, and power-related aspects found in reform narratives. This perspective views education policy not as a neutral administrative move but as a battleground where different ideas about knowledge, authority, and citizenship are contested.

In this study, we looked at the policy documents, government officials' speeches, and legislative frameworks as key texts that reflect how the new teacher education is framed. These texts were interpreted in the context of debates about higher education policy, accountability, and institutional change. Additionally, the

analysis includes international research to position Türkiye's situation within the broader trends of centralization and global marketization in higher education (Marginson, 2011; Verger et al., 2016).

The faculties of education in Türkiye have a comprehensive pedagogical expertise, civic education experience, and educational research culture. Academia has been holding the institutional knowledge and the academic culture for quite some time (Akyüz, 2018; Yıldırım-Taştı, 2023). Notably, reports from other countries have shown that it would be risky when universities and states reduce collaborations in teacher education. When we consider comparative studies, strong cooperation between universities and states such as in Finland, where the model of Teaching Schools was applied (Sahlberg, 2015), the Canadian province of Ontario with its project of Concurrent Education and finally, Singapore with its PGDE schemes (Ng, 2014) are good examples. Conversely, when teacher education moves away from the non-university aspect, as is the case of the U. S., Alternative Certification Programmes (Darling-Hammond, 2006) and England's School-Centered Initial Teacher Training components, the results were fluctuating teacher qualities, lesser theoretical depth, and more teacher dropout. Türkiye's circumstances have been a warning for policymakers, teacher educators, and an experimental base for different policies. It is extremely uncertain what the future holds if the newly proposed teacher education reform would go on without ensuring the autonomy of academic institutions. If those who govern the country attempt to disseminate their worldview and ideologies through the teacher education, this could negatively affect social cohesion and societal harmony. Therefore, teacher education should not be considered as an *ideological tool* and *teachers are not political representatives of authority*. Instead, universities as pluralist societies should be responsible for teacher education.

Addressing these issues requires that policy design use governance that is collaborative rather than dominant. The NEA should be aborted from the education system of Türkiye. Universities are to be considered strategic partners and education faculties should be responsible for teacher education. This requires:

1. Mutual university-ministry decision-making structures in the curriculum design, practicum oversight, and quality assurance.
2. Legal and formal protections for academic liberty, to counteract politically motivated interferences in teacher training content and methods.
3. Allocation of financing based on research-based innovation, in order to have reforms of empirical evidence demonstrated and these being inspired by international standards.
4. Inclusion of worldwide teacher training networks, which will open the door for Türkiye to both be a learner from and a contributor to the establishment of the highest teaching quality.

Ultimately, Türkiye's teacher education system's sustainability as well as the ability of its educators to be multicultural and support democracy will be achieved through the equilibrium between the central government and the academic freedom of the teacher education faculties. If this equilibrium is not established, Türkiye is likely to lose one of its most precious educational resources, their education faculties, their academic cultures, institutional memory, and international respect.

Ethical Considerations

Not applicable

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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