



Şenol Deniz

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2553-1070>

Dr. Lecturer, School of Foreign Languages, Ankara University, Ankara, Turkey

sdeniz@ankara.edu.tr

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**The Conceptualization and Progression of University Education in Turkey
Within the Scope of the Turkish American Relations***

Abstract

The primary objective of this article is to examine the developmental process of university education within the scope of the Turkish American relations, which originate from commercial partnerships between the Ottoman Empire and the United States in the 18th century. These relations later evolved through trade agreements and developed a distinct dimension grounded in mutual connections, particularly in the context of university education in Turkey. So as to serve such an aim, the current article employs a review of the literature as a research method to gather the necessary data. The essential data are assessed and interpreted based on the existing body of the literature systematically. It is an undeniable fact that the Turkish American relations play a significant role in transforming the Turkish education system and, consequently, have a profound impact on university education and its conceptualization and progression. The Western European educational tradition, which has persisted in the Republic of Turkey, has transitioned into an Anglo-Saxon

* This research article is derived from the author's doctoral dissertation titled "The Transformations in the Turkish Educational System in the Context of the Turkish-American Relations after 1950".



educational paradigm influenced by the American practices. In this regard, this article analyses the universities established in Turkey through the American connections, their founding purposes, their contributions to Turkish society, and the evolution of the Turkish American relations within the realm of education. In light of the findings derived from the research data, the study briefly touches upon the factors that have profoundly influenced the understanding of university education in Turkey, with a particular focus on the impact and transformative power of the Turkish American relations on the Turkish higher education and its development. Ultimately, the founding histories of the universities established within the context of the Turkish American relations are examined through a cause-and-effect perspective.

Keywords: Turkish American Relations, University Education, Education System, Anglo-Saxon Educational Paradigm

Türk-Amerikan İlişkileri Bağlamında Türkiye'deki Üniversite Eğitiminin Kavramsallaştırılması ve Gelişimi

Öz

Bu araştırma makalenin amacı, Türkiye'deki üniversite eğitimi anlayışını ve gelişimini 18. yüzyılda ticarete dayalı ortaklıklarla başlayan ve zamanla farklı bir boyut kazanan Türk-Amerikan ilişkileri bağlamında incelemektir. Türk-Amerikan ilişkilerinin, Türk eğitim sistemi programlarının dönüşümünde önemli bir rol oynadığı, bu dönüşüme paralel olarak üniversite eğitimini ve anlayışını derinlemesine etkilediği kaçınılmaz bir gerçektir. Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde varlığını sürdüren Batı Avrupa eğitim geleneği, Amerikan etkisiyle Anglosakson eğitim paradigmasına evrilmiştir. Bu bağlamda, Türkiye'de Amerikan ilişkilerine dayalı olarak kurulan üniversiteler, bu üniversitelerin kuruluş amaçları, Türk toplumuna katkıları ve Türk-Amerikan ilişkilerinin eğitim alanındaki gelişimi bu çalışma kapsamında ele alınmaktadır. Çalışmada verilerin toplanması ve analiz edilmesi için literatür taraması-dokümantasyon analizi araştırma yöntemi olarak kullanılmıştır. Bu yöntem dahilinde elde edilen veriler sistematik bir şekilde değerlendirilmiş ve yorumlanmıştır. Araştırmanın verilerinden elde edilen bulgular ışığında Türkiye'deki üniversite eğitim anlayışını derinden etkileyen faktörlere çalışmada kısaca değinilmiş ve Türk-Amerikan ilişkilerinin Türk üniversite eğitimi ve gelişimi üzerindeki etkisi ve dönüştürücü gücü üzerinde durulmuştur. Sonuç olarak da Türk-Amerikan ilişkileri bağlamında kurulan üniversitelerin kuruluş serüvenleri sebep sonuç ilişkisi bağlamında ele alınmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türk-Amerikan İlişkileri, Üniversite Eğitimi, Eğitim Sistemi, Anglosakson Eğitim Paradigması

Introduction

As elucidated in the scholarly work carried out by Saqep (1983), it is obvious that the continuous development of the Turkish American relations significantly influenced the evolution of university traditions in Turkish society. As these relations strengthened, the Anglo-Saxon

university tradition began to replace the Continental European model, characterized by a strict hierarchical academic structure focused on German and French research methodologies. New universities were established in line with this Anglo-Saxon tradition, which emphasizes the interconnection between the university and society, exemplified by the Landgrant model in the US that advocates for universities addressing societal issues. Notably, Atatürk University was founded in Ankara, and METU was established to provide education in English. The establishment of these institutions was greatly supported by American entities, such as the University of Nebraska for Atatürk University and US aid organizations for METU. These universities played a crucial role in the advancement of higher education in Turkey, which had historically dated back to ancient times but saw the emergence of modern institutions more recently. Prior to this, educational establishments like mosque schools, the Fatih Madrasa, palace schools, and the Süleymaniye Complex produced significant scholars. The Darülfünun, as the first stage of modern higher education, experienced numerous transformations during the transition to the Republic and was restructured as Istanbul University in 1933. The following pages of this research article will provide a detailed analysis of the universities after outlining their historical context.

The faculties, institutes, and colleges established in Ankara and Istanbul after the foundation of the Republic eventually unified under one roof, taking their current form. In the development of Istanbul University, Turkey's first modern university, experts and faculty members, particularly from Germany, who fled the political turmoil in Europe during the 1930s, made significant contributions. Following Istanbul University, Istanbul Technical University was established in 1944, and Ankara University in 1946. After the Democrat Party came to power in 1950, Turkey entered a period of rapid growth that also impacted higher education institutions. By the early 1950s, there was a widespread belief that universities should be established outside Istanbul and Ankara, marking the initial step in the development of universities in Turkey. Consequently, Ege University and Karadeniz Technical University were founded in 1955, with Ege University commencing education in 1956 and Karadeniz Technical University in 1963. The second step involved the establishment of a university in eastern Turkey to train qualified personnel to address the region's socio-economic needs, as advocated by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. This initiative aimed to implement the regional university model from the USA. Although the university was initially planned for Van, it was ultimately established in Erzurum as Atatürk University. While the idea for Atatürk University predated Ege University, it began its educational programs later.

Conversely, despite the proposal for Karadeniz Technical University coming significantly after Atatürk University, it also did not commence education until 1963.

As discussed by Reed (1975), the third step in the evolution of higher education in Turkey involved establishing institutes designed to train skilled professionals in city planning, technology, and health. These institutions evolved into educational entities with the authority to select their personnel based on their specific needs. This led to the founding of Middle East Technical University. Although the universities established between 1950 and 1960 during the Democratic Party's administration had varying objectives, their overarching goal was to expand higher education in the Republic of Turkey and enhance its presence in international academic circles. The prolonged establishment of Atatürk University and Middle East Technical University can be attributed to the substantial budgets required and the government's need for assistance from international organizations. At this juncture, American support became crucial, with American foundations providing aid during the foundational phases of these universities and other significant projects. The USA facilitated this support through the FOA until July 1955, and subsequently through the ICA, which emerged from the restructuring of the FOA. In addition to significant financial assistance, the USA also offered consultancy services through its universities, helping shape these institutions according to the American educational system.

Güven (2022) points out that the 1961 Constitution drew inspiration from the social state concept of Western Europe and played a crucial role in granting autonomy to universities. However, the changes implemented in 1971 and the subsequent 1982 Constitution effectively undermined this autonomy, marking a significant shift in the history of Turkish higher education. The 1982 Law on Universities No. 1750 can be viewed as a preliminary project that encapsulated these changes. The innovations introduced by this law included maintaining a balance between higher education and its relationship with secondary education, aligning higher education with societal needs, ensuring equality of opportunity, prioritizing the effective use of resources, and promoting safe planning and organization of higher education alongside freedom in teaching and learning.

The innovations introduced by Law No. 1750 aimed to integrate higher education with science, technology, and development goals. Key developments included the establishment of YÖK to guide higher education, delegating decisions about education and programs to faculty boards, and implementing a full-time working principle. The law addressed manpower planning,

university capacity, the supply-demand balance, and structured education into various levels, while also placing limitations on teaching periods and enhancing government oversight of university administration. As noted by Güven (2022), another significant development in higher education with Law No. 1739, which mandated the closure of primary teacher schools as teacher training institutions and required a minimum of two years of university education for the teaching profession. This was implemented through educational institutes established in 1974. Due to ideological and political influences in student selection, ÖSYM was created in 1971 to facilitate centralized examinations for university admissions. The most comprehensive reform came with Law No. 2547, enacted after the 1980 military coup. This law unified all higher education institutions under one umbrella, excluding those affiliated with the Armed Forces and Security Organization, and restored YÖK with expanded powers, including the abolition of university administrative autonomy. Under this law, university rectors were appointed by the President, and other academic administrators were selected by YÖK, transferring decision-making authority from boards to YÖK. The law also detailed the purpose and functioning of universities, asserting that the extensive powers granted to rectors adversely affected higher education institutions.

Additionally, one of the most notable changes introduced by Law No. 2547 was the requirement for compulsory courses in Atatürk's Principles and History of Revolution, Turkish Language, and Foreign Language across all higher education institutions. Furthermore, it mandated the inclusion of Physical Education or Fine Arts as compulsory subjects. These curricular additions, influenced by military perspectives, persist to this day. To enhance quality in higher education, a national qualifications framework was established in alignment with the Bologna process and Lisbon goals. Consequently, universities made significant efforts to adapt to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), issue Diploma Supplements, and promote student and academic staff mobility. Another development in higher education was the FARABI exchange program, introduced in February 2009, aimed at facilitating student and faculty exchanges between institutions (Yök, 2006). Within the scope of the expanding Turkish American relations, a significant number of changes have occurred in the understanding of universities in Turkey. The establishment of new universities, influenced by the American model, aimed not only to meet the educational needs of the growing youth population but also to contribute to the development of the cities where these universities were located. The intention was to address regional inequalities through the establishment of these institutions. However, despite these efforts, universities have predominantly concentrated in larger cities, particularly those known for high student enrolment.

Research indicates that universities have a substantial impact on the socio-economic fabric of their host cities, invigorating commercial activities and accelerating urbanization. The management of this process has largely followed the American university model. Consequently, cities in Turkey are actively lobbying for the establishment of universities, with those already hosting one university seeking to expand their educational offerings by requesting additional institutions. The underlying motivations and historical context for the establishment of these universities reflect this ongoing trend. In this regard, in this current research article based on a doctoral dissertation, answers are sought for the two pivotal research questions as follows:

1.1. Research Questions

- What roles do the Turkish American relations play in shaping the understanding and development of university education in Turkey?
- What educational changes in university education have occurred due to the Turkish American relations in Turkey?

2. Methodology, Data Collection and Analysis of the Study

This study employs qualitative data collection methods, specifically historical research management and document analysis, positioning itself as basic research grounded in its underlying philosophy. The aim of qualitative research is to describe, interpret, and understand the perspectives of the actors involved, along with the phenomena and experiences they seek to convey. The primary objective is to explore the subject matter in depth, uncovering underlying factors (Kuş, 2009). Given the multifaceted nature of the topic, a scanning model was adopted. The research involves the document analysis of foreign schools established in the Ottoman Empire during the 19th and 20th centuries, focusing on both educational and socio-cultural dimensions. It seeks to illuminate the historical trajectory of these programs within a cultural and sociological framework, while also examining the transformations in the Turkish education system and its structure in the context of the Turkish American relations post-1950. As for the analysis of data, this research study based on a doctoral dissertation employs document analysis, a qualitative research method, to analyse its data. As elaborated by Yıldırım & Şimşek (2008), document analysis involves examining written materials that provide information about the case or cases under investigation. Historically, this method has been effectively utilized by historians, anthropologists, and linguists. Krippendorff (2013) accentuates that document analysis is a research technique that yields reproducible and valid conclusions from the data. Thus, this dissertation will utilize document

analysis not only to explore predetermined themes but also to uncover new themes during the research process. The data collected will be organized in alignment with sub-problems, ensuring it meets the established goals and objectives of the study.

3. A Review of the Literature

3.1. The Evolution of Universities in Turkey with a Focus on Universities Before the Republican Era

Erdoğan (2004) emphasizes that in order to understand the emergence of universities, it is essential to examine their historical development both in Turkey and within the educational framework of the Ottoman Empire. There are varying accounts regarding the establishment of the first Western-style university in Turkey. Erdoğan states that the foundations of Darülfünun were laid with public lectures on subjects like physics, chemistry, astronomy, geography, and geology in 1863. The university's structure and operational model were outlined in the 1869 Maarif-i Umumiyesi, leading to its official opening in 1870 with a ceremonial event. Darülfünun gained "scientific autonomy" through the October 1919 Regulation and was recognized as a "legal entity" in 1924.

The first Western-style higher education institution in Turkey was Mühendislikhane-i Berr-i Hümayun, established in 1773 following the Ottoman Navy's defeat at Çeşme, which later became operational. This was followed by Mühendislikhane-i Bahr Hümayun, the precursor to Istanbul Technical University. Other notable examples include the establishment of Medicine (1827) and Harbiye (1834) as early Western-type institutions. By the early twentieth century, several institutions akin to France's "Grands Écoles" were founded, including Mekteb-i Mülkiye (1876), Law School (1878), Trade Mekteb-i Alisi (1882), Mekteb-i Sanayi-i Nefise-i Şahane (1882), and Mühendislik Mekteb-i Alisi (1909).

Tekeli (1995) articulates those innovations in higher education during the Ottoman period began in the military sector and later expanded into medicine, culminating in the establishment of Darülfünun. Although the Temporary Education Council decided to found Darülfünun in 1846, it did not officially open until 1863, only to be completely destroyed by fire in 1865. Additionally, the impact of foreign schools on Turkish higher education can be observed in the late Ottoman period, particularly through institutions like the American University in Beirut and French St. Joseph University.

As highlighted, Western-style higher education institutions began to emerge in the 19th century and continued to develop after the proclamation of the Republic. However, it is essential

to evaluate the evolution of Turkish higher education post-republic under several key headings, considering significant decisions and changes that occurred. These topics will be addressed in this section of the research study.

3.2. University Education in the Republican Era

With the declaration of the Republic and the educational revolutions that followed, radical changes occurred at all levels of education. Notably, the Arabic alphabet was replaced with the Latin alphabet, and a comprehensive educational campaign was launched to reach all segments of society. These developments naturally extended to higher education, although their impact varied over time. While educators and intellectuals who study the history of education approach these changes from different perspectives, the periods of 1923-1946 are generally recognized as significant for structural transformations in Turkish higher education. The periods from 1946-1981 and post-1981 are also categorized as distinct phases in higher education. These will be elaborated upon in the following sections.

3.3. Higher Education Institutions from 1923 to 1950

As pointed out by Öncü (2007), Turkey's foreign policy orientation after World War II necessitated a revision of the 1933 University Law, which had classified universities and faculties as high schools under the Ministry of National Education. A delegation from the Faculties of Law, Language-History-Geography, Science, Medicine, the School of Civil Sciences, and the Higher Agricultural Institute in Ankara visited Prof. Dr. Hirsch at the Ankara Faculty of Law to prepare a report based on his work titled *University*. The recommendations from this report informed the new university law, enacted on June 13, 1946. This law granted autonomy to universities and led to the establishment of Ankara University as Turkey's second university. The 1946 Universities Law was seen as a reflection of the Republican People's Party's efforts to align with Western political thought in higher education. As previously noted, the government aimed to leverage opportunities from the Marshall Plan and appease the liberal opposition. This period also saw the dismissal of leftist academics from Ankara University, including Muzaffer Şerif, Behice Boran, Petrev Naili Boratav, and Niyazi Berkes. Even before the end of CHP rule, Turkey's evolving international relations and U.S. aid significantly altered the power structure.

As indicated by Erdoğan (2004), it is crucial to highlight the events that transpired during the educational mobilization period that followed the proclamation of the Republic. Notably, the Law School was established in Ankara in 1925, the Gazi Education Institute in 1926, and the

Agricultural Institute in 1930. In 1932, A. Malche from the University of Geneva prepared a report that set the stage for the restructuring of Istanbul University in 1933. Gürüz (2001) accentuates that following this report, the Grand National Assembly enacted Law No. 2253, leading to the establishment of Istanbul University on November 18, 1933, which replaced the Darülfunun. The reforms of 1933 also introduced academic titles still in use today. In 1944, Istanbul Technical University was established, marking further advancements during this period. With the strengthening Turkish American relations, significant developments occurred in Ankara, including the establishment of additional faculties: the Faculty of Languages, History, and Geography (1937), the Faculty of Science (1943), and the Faculty of Medicine (1945). Moreover, in 1935, the Civil School in Istanbul was relocated to Ankara and renamed the Faculty of Political Sciences. These advancements culminated in the establishment of Ankara University as Turkey's third university under Universities Law No. 4936 on June 12, 1946. This period is characterized by significant reforms in Turkish higher education.

3.3. Higher Education Institutions from 1950 to 1980

Until 1950, Turkey had only three universities: Istanbul University, Istanbul Technical University, and Ankara University. However, from 1955 to 1957, a significant expansion of higher education took place, supported by American universities. This initiative led to the establishment of several new universities outside Istanbul and Ankara, introducing the Anglo-Saxon educational approach. Notably, Black Sea Technical University was founded in Trabzon on May 20, 1955, and Aegean University was established in Izmir the same year, both under specific laws enacted on May 25, 1955. Two years later, on May 31, 1957, Atatürk University was established in Erzurum, an important centre in Eastern Anatolia, through Law No. 6990. This initiative, which aimed to create a university in eastern Turkey, had been discussed during Atatürk's lifetime but remained unfulfilled until the Democratic Party's (DP) era. National Education Minister Celal Yardımcı initiated the establishment process on August 6, 1954, and travelled to Washington later that month to gather information. He visited the University of Nebraska, securing a \$1.5 million loan and an academic support agreement for Atatürk University. This period saw significant population growth and urban migration in Turkey, leading to an increased demand for higher education. The newly established universities attracted students and families seeking educational opportunities. They also aimed to provide a qualified workforce for the emerging industrial sector, adopting the American education model. Graduates often remained in these urban centres due to job prospects, further contributing to urbanization. After 1950, during the Democratic Party's rule, U.S. interest and aid

for Turkish universities increased significantly. On August 17, 1955, the Ford Foundation provided educational support to Ankara University's Faculty of Language, History, and Geography. This included a joint program with Istanbul University, incorporating business administration curricula from Harvard, Columbia, and the University of Chicago. Additionally, plans were made to establish a faculty at Ankara University where foreign experts would develop a curriculum to train qualified managers in Turkey. In 1954, a three-year cooperation protocol was signed between the State University of New York and Ankara University to train civil servants for the Turkish government, with New York University assisting in curriculum development, educational materials, methods, and research tools (Erken, 2020).

In the scholarly work conducted by Öncü (2007), as stated, it is important to note that the Middle East Technical University (METU) was established in 1956, following a direct American model, with English as the language of instruction. Daily operations at METU were overseen by a board of trustees appointed by the government, and the university was initially managed by an American rector. After 1960, METU appointed a Turkish citizen as rector, but it distinguished itself from state universities due to its American faculty, project financing, and exchange programs. Following the establishment of METU in 1959, no new universities were founded for eight years. The opening of METU and the American influence on its educational model are discussed separately in the following pages of the current study.

Erken (2020) discusses that the only university established in Turkey between 1959 and 1970 was Hacettepe University, opened in Ankara in 1967. Subsequently, Boğaziçi University was founded in Istanbul in 1971, followed by Dicle University in Diyarbakır, Çukurova University in Adana, and Anadolu University in Eskişehir in 1973. By that year, Turkey had a total of 12 universities, with regional distribution reflecting four in Central Anatolia, three in Marmara, and one in each of the other regions. These universities aimed to strengthen their cities' centralization, enhance regional identity, and provide local access to higher education, largely supported by faculty from Istanbul and Ankara. From 1973 to 1980, new universities continued to emerge in various city centres to promote regional development. During the implementation of the Third and Fourth Five-Year Plans, several universities were established, including Cumhuriyet University in Sivas in 1974 and five more in 1975: İnönü University in Malatya, Fırat University in Elazığ, 19 Mayıs University in Samsun, Selçuk University in Konya, and Uludağ University in Bursa. Later, Erciyes University was established in Kayseri in 1978.

The establishment of new universities aimed to achieve a balanced distribution of higher education across Turkey, as universities are significant public investments that can foster socio-economic development in their regions. The goal was to address regional imbalances and enhance the centralization power of university cities. However, these new universities faced a more challenging development process than those in Ankara, Istanbul, and Izmir due to insufficient faculty and technical resources, especially in their early years. By 1981, the total student enrolment in ten universities outside of Ankara, Istanbul, and Izmir accounted for only 7% of the total university student population in Turkey. Similarly, only 1,806 (14%) of the 12,573 academic staff in Turkey were employed at these universities during that period (Kaplan, 2002).

4. A Brief Examination of Higher Education Between 1950 and 1960

The Democratic Party (DP) government made significant efforts to enhance both the quantity and quality of higher education. It focused on increasing the number of higher education institutions, starting with regulations in high schools, which evolved into a broader educational campaign covering all levels of primary education. This shift transformed high schools from elite institutions to centres of mass education, increasing the number of graduates. A key project during this period was the establishment of an Eastern University, ultimately decided to be located in Erzurum rather than Van, to foster regional development. The DP also aimed to align educational systems with public needs, leading to the opening of four new universities and numerous colleges. However, the focus on quantity over quality resulted in a surplus of high school graduates that outstripped university capacities in the following decades. Until 1960, every high school graduate had a chance to pursue higher education, and by the 1950-1951 academic year, only 1.5% of youth aged 19-22 were enrolled in higher education institutions. A notable observation regarding university enrolment is that while there has been a significant increase in students pursuing basic sciences, the growth in technical education departments is relatively low. This suggests that the Democratic Party (DP) aimed to primarily source its technical workforce from technical colleges. Analysing student distribution by field reveals a strong emphasis on social sciences, followed by applied disciplines, while enrolment in health sciences declined during the DP period. The accompanying data indicates that the expansion of social fields has occurred at the expense of other areas of study. Following the 1950 government change, the new administration recognized that the existing university management system could not effectively train the manpower required for a rapidly developing free-market economy. Consequently, four new universities modelled after American campuses were established, with only the Middle East Technical University (METU)

fully implementing the American management model. Although the expansion of universities outside major cities was prioritized, these institutions largely failed to innovate in their aims and functions, often adopting models from established "big city" universities. Faculty arrangements during the Democratic Party (DP) period fell short of expectations, with low salaries compared to the German model and challenges in promotion to professorship. Many lower-level faculty members faced long waits for advancement, and retirement policies resulted in significant wage drops. Initially, universities admitted students without examinations, but increased enrolment led to exam-based selection, especially after 1950, influenced by the establishment of the "Test Preparation Centre" at Gazi Education Institute. The 1946 reforms granted universities autonomy, but this resulted in fragmentation and hindered cooperation, particularly in older institutions in Ankara and Istanbul. The establishment of METU in 1957 marked the beginning of private legal universities in Turkey, supported by special laws and U.S. backing to counter the threat of communism and promote American cultural influence. Ultimately, the DP government's alignment with the U.S. transformed the understanding of university education in Turkey, adopting an American model within the context of a free-market economy. Another significant development was that Turkish universities, which had begun to gain respectability on the global stage with the arrival of German scientists, started to decline as these scientists returned to Germany. Their presence not only enhanced education but also initiated research activities, leading to increased publications in various fields. However, the 1946 Universities Law barred German scientists from becoming associate professors, and between 1946 and 1950, several German academics left Turkey for various reasons, including personal requests and issues with salary approvals. Despite this, many students of foreign professors who had worked in Turkey from 1933 to 1953 began their academic careers as professors, associate professors, and assistants in Turkish universities starting in 1953 (Hirsch, 2000). Following the brief overview of the reasons behind and structural transformations in Turkish university education, it becomes clearer how and why subsequent universities were established. This context will also illuminate the characteristics of the individuals targeted for education under the influence of the American education system.

5.The Consequences of American Foreign Policy for Higher Education Institutions and Educational Frameworks in Turkey

5.1. The Founding of Atatürk University

The rapidly evolving Turkish American relations have significantly influenced Turkey's university education system. Prior to 1950, the higher education structure was primarily shaped by French and German traditions. However, post-1950, there was a notable shift towards the American model of university education, reflecting the Anglo-Saxon tradition. This transition is exemplified by the Land-grant university education approach, which serves as a fundamental source for the establishment of Atatürk University.

As highlighted in the developmental process of universities, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk proposed establishing a university in the east during his speech at the Turkish Grand National Assembly on November 1, 1937, suggesting Lake Van as a suitable location. This idea was revived by President Celal Bayar in 1950, prompting the Ministry of National Education to take action. The initial objective was to determine the university's location. On June 11, 1951, a science commission was established to create a higher education and cultural center in the Eastern Provinces, consisting of faculty members from three existing universities. The commission held its first meeting on July 27, 1951, with Minister of National Education Tevfik İleri and included a study tour with President Bayar. After assessing the provinces of Van, Elazığ, Erzurum, and Diyarbakır, it was decided to establish university units in these cities. Nearly two years later, the commission submitted a report, leading to the acceptance of a draft law by the Budget Committee on February 24, 1953.

According to the draft law:

1. The Ministry of National Education is empowered to establish a university in the Eastern provinces.

2. The Ministry is authorized to compensate university members, civil servants, and experts involved in the establishment preparations of the Eastern University for their overtime, as determined by the Deputies Committee.

3. Necessary state-owned real estate will be transferred to the Eastern University at no cost, exempt from all taxes, duties, and fees, with the Ministry authorized to accept donations and bequests on its behalf.

4. This law takes effect upon publication and will be executed by the Board of Deputies.

After the draft was approved, a Consultation Board was established, chaired by Rıfıkı Salim Burçak, the Minister of National Education at the time, to initiate the necessary preparations for the university's establishment. Additionally, a General Secretariat was formed to oversee these efforts, with Abdullah Türkmen appointed as its head. An Executive Committee was created to

implement the Board's decisions, responsible for preparing activity plans for approval by the Advisory Board before execution. A budget of 1,000,000 lira was allocated from the 1953 budget for these activities. In July 1953, under the leadership of Undersecretary of National Education Reşat Tardu, the Science Commission conducted another study tour of the eastern provinces to prioritize which units to establish and their locations. Cities visited during this investigation included Elazığ, Muş, Ağrı, Kars, Erzurum, Erzincan, Tunceli, Diyarbakır, and Bitlis, specifically the Tatvan district. At the opening of the Turkish Grand National Assembly in November 1953, President Celal Bayar announced plans for the Faculty of Veterinary and Fine Arts in Erzurum, the Faculty of Letters in Van, and the Faculties of Engineering, Geology, Biology, Agriculture, and Forestry in Diyarbakır, naming the institution Atatürk University. Atatürk University was officially established on March 10, 1954, with Law No. 6373, and its budget was set at 1,000,000 lira (Kaya, 2007). Following the 1954 law establishing Atatürk University, the Turkish government sought technical and financial support. During a visit to the USA, President Celal Bayar met with FOA President Harold Stassen to discuss cooperation, resulting in a delegation from the University of Nebraska visiting Turkey to explore regional university models for Eastern Anatolia. This delegation, which included faculty members and Abdullah Türkmen, returned to the USA in August 1954, signing an aid agreement worth \$1,079,000 with the FOA. Prominent professors from the University of Nebraska were set to arrive in Turkey in autumn 1954 to assist in the university's establishment. Upon returning, the delegation conducted further investigations in several eastern provinces alongside the Minister of National Education. By March 12, 1955, it was announced that Atatürk University would be located in Erzurum, and the aid agreement was revised to increase support to \$1,378,000. The American delegation, led by Marvel L. Baker, collaborated with Turkish experts on the university's establishment, focusing on education, research, and community outreach in agriculture and animal husbandry. The university was designed to address the educational and social needs of students, initially establishing faculties of Science, Letters, and Agriculture, with plans for future expansions. Faculty would be a mix of Turkish and American educators, with Turkish assistants receiving training at the University of Nebraska. Governance would be managed by a Board of Trustees, initially appointed by the Ministry of National Education, with a focus on enhancing agricultural capacity and geological research in the region. Despite criticisms regarding autonomy and other aspects of the draft law, it was approved on May 29, 1957, and published in the Official Gazette on June 7, 1957 (Kaya, 2007). Following the

enactment of the Atatürk University law, the university's foundation was laid on July 23, 1957, on a 40,000-decare site designed to accommodate educational, administrative, and social needs for both students and faculty. Upon completion, the university aimed to enroll 10,000 students. Starting in 1958, faculty members began training at the University of Nebraska, with their seniority increased by one degree. In October 1958, the then-Minister of National Education visited the University of Nebraska to negotiate the provision of American faculty and course materials for Atatürk University.

Atatürk University was inaugurated on November 17, 1958, in a ceremony attended by President Celal Bayar, Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, and other dignitaries. Built on the site of the former Erzurum High School, the university included the Faculties of Science, Letters, and Agriculture, along with the rectorate. Initially, 200 students enrolled, with programs in Zoo Technical Studies, Agricultural Economics, and languages. Due to Erzurum's climate, its academic schedule differed from those of universities in Ankara and Istanbul. The faculty comprised 14 Turkish professors, 2 American professors, 1 associate professor, and 12 assistants studying in the USA, led by Acting Rector Prof. Dr. İsfendiyar Kadastar. This establishment realized the vision of an eastern university proposed by Mustafa Kemal in 1937, aiming to address the region's socio-economic needs through agricultural and animal husbandry education. Investigations by the Democrat Party Government indicated that the conditions at the University of Nebraska were suitable for this initiative (Reed, 1975).

5.2. The Founding of Middle East Technical University

As previously highlighted, the founding purpose of Middle East Technical University (METU) extends beyond merely promoting English or attracting foreign students from the Middle East. Similar to Atatürk University, METU was established with an American Anglo-Saxon educational framework, but it notably differed from earlier institutions by fully integrating this system. Rather than the traditional chair system used in Turkish universities, METU adopted a departmental structure, with English designated as the primary language of instruction and study materials. This marked METU as the first university in Turkey to teach entirely in English, aiming to enhance the prominence of the language nationally and attract international students. The Board of Trustees wielded extensive management and oversight powers, including the appointment of the rector and faculty heads, as well as handling financial matters. Initially, 10% of the student body came from countries like Iraq, Jordan, Cyprus, Iran, and Pakistan, which rose to 12% by 1960, with aspirations to reach 20%—a target ultimately unattained due to subsequent political developments.

Additionally, 20% of the university staff comprised UN experts. Shortly after its establishment, METU expanded by adding new engineering departments, shifting focus away from its original intent to prioritize Architecture and Urbanism education (Çalışkan, 2002).

In 1954, the Menderes Government sought expertise from the UN Technical Assistance Organization to assess housing and settlement planning in Turkey. American urban planner Charles Abrams visited Turkey, presenting a report to the UN and highlighting Turkey's need for technical education. Collaborating with Architect Celal Uzer and Senior Civil Engineer Vecdi Diker, they envisioned establishing a higher technical education institution in Ankara. Despite differing views—Abrams advocating for a School of Architecture and Urbanism while Diker favored a university—a meeting with Minister Fatin Rüştü Zorlu led to a proposal for support from the University of Pennsylvania and the UN. Abrams outlined the need for the institution, the lack of existing urbanism programs in Turkey, and the financial support required, proposing a budget of \$87,500. Discussions on the project's committee structure and support from the UN were held, with Celal Yardımcı appointed as chair (Payaslıoğlu, 1996; Reed, 1975). On October 6, 1954, another meeting took place with the participation of Charles Abrams, Olle Sturen, Vecdi Diker, and Fatin Rüştü Zorlu. On October 7, 1954, Olle Sturen announced the target plan in a letter to the Ministry of Education.

According to this letter:

1. Assistance will be requested from the UN to bring a three-person delegation to Turkey, composed of US experts, who will provide advice on the program, structure, and financing of the school.

2. A Turkish delegation consisting of five people will be formed to meet with the UN delegation.

3. It will be recommended that the Turkish Government abandon certain projects under the UN Technical Assistance Program to allow for greater support for the establishment of the school.

The American expert delegation visited Turkey in April 1955 and stayed until June 1955 to assess the establishment of a technical university. A primary concern was funding, as the UN Technical Assistance Organization's limited budget led Turkey to seek additional resources from organizations like FOA and UNESCO. Their findings were compiled in a report submitted to the UN Technical Assistance Organization on August 23, 1954, which highlighted the following key points:

1. There is a clear need for a university-level school of Architecture and Community Planning in Turkey.
2. This institution should operate independently from existing universities.
3. Initially, a Faculty of Architecture and a Faculty of City and Regional Planning should be established, alongside research institutes for building methods, housing, and regional planning, with the Faculty of Engineering added later.
4. Management should be by an independent Board of Trustees appointed by the Government, with specific representation from various stakeholders.
5. The institution should be named Middle East Technical University.
6. The first units should be completed by 1957, including a school building, a 120-person dormitory, and staff accommodations, all reflecting modern architecture.
7. The United Nations should allocate six scholarships for training Turkish academic staff at the University of Pennsylvania.
8. The University of Pennsylvania should evaluate the school's performance over five years.
9. The new school should have the authority to confer various advanced degrees.
10. Faculty appointments should be approved by the Minister of National Education and recommended by the Rector, with conditions set by the Board of Trustees.
11. Faculty members should be permitted to undertake limited private employment and advise government or private organizations (Çalışkan, 2002).

The report's subsequent sections included recommendations for the curriculum of the Faculties of Architecture and Planning, along with student selection criteria. Students were expected to be high school graduates with a strong command of a foreign language, preferably English, and to pass an aptitude test devised by the university. To support those lacking sufficient English skills, intensive language courses were suggested for the summer term prior to the academic year, with similar selection criteria for foreign students. The report also outlined the necessary buildings and facilities for the proposed research institutes, including estimated costs for the first decade, emphasizing tuition fees, scholarships, and employment opportunities for students. The final chapters focused on essential provisions to be incorporated into the Middle East Technical University Establishment Law and its organizational structure (Payashoğlu, 1996). The delegation submitted a report to Minister of National Education Celal Yardımcı, outlining priority issues for the Turkish Government to address in order to secure adequate financial support from the FOA. This report highlighted the necessary budget allocation for the university's establishment, its

naming, campus status, faculty determination, and student selection procedures. On June 1, a letter was sent to Holmes Perkins at FOA headquarters detailing conditions the Turkish Government needed to fulfil prior to receiving assistance (Payaslıoğlu, 1996). These conditions included:

1. An authorized Turkish Government institution must be prepared to contract with the University of Pennsylvania for the services outlined in the expert committee's report, with the FOA joining as a third party to cover expenses.

2. If the dollar allocation is limited to one year, the Turkish Government should commit to funding services for three years.

3. The Turkish Government must agree to allocate approximately 300,000 TL for the first year, which should be included in the contract.

4. An institution must be appointed by the Turkish Government to implement the project, provide necessary buildings and equipment, issue temporary regulations, and support the TGNA in enacting a law for the university (METU) that incorporates the committee's principles.

The establishment of the Middle East Technical University (METU) involved complex negotiations between the Turkish Government, the UN, and various American institutions. Initially discussed in 1954, the Turkish Government's insistence on creating a university rather than an institute complicated funding negotiations with the International Cooperation Administration (ICA), which eventually withdrew its support in November 1955. However, the UN Technical Assistance Organization continued to provide assistance, focusing on faculty training and scholarships. In 1956, the Middle East Institute of Technology began operations, later becoming METU, with its official establishment law approved by the Turkish Parliament in 1959. Designed to serve both Turkey and the broader Middle East, METU aimed to produce a qualified workforce educated in English, thereby strengthening ties with the USA. The contributions of various organizations and individuals, particularly the UN and the University of Pennsylvania, were crucial in shaping METU's foundation and objectives (Payaslıoğlu, 1996).

5.3. The Programme of New York University

The program initiated by New York University in collaboration with Ankara University's Faculty of Political Sciences and Faculty of Law aimed to enhance public administration education in Turkey, employing an Anglo-Saxon educational approach. Commencing in 1954 and running until 1959, the program received funding of \$475,000 from the FOA for the 1957-1958 fiscal year. The initiative addressed significant challenges faced by the central government, including an

overload of responsibilities that weakened its effectiveness. Issues such as bureaucratic sluggishness, the need for ministerial approval on decisions, and misalignments between central and provincial organizations led to inefficiencies in governance. By implementing innovations in public administration, the program sought to strengthen governmental structures and streamline processes. The insights provided by New York University experts laid the foundation for a program at Ankara University focused on public administration. These experts guided the development of curricula, materials, and research methods for the Faculty of Political Sciences, enhancing training for public administration specialists. An Accounting Education program was also established within this faculty, alongside a research office linked to the Faculty of Law, which collaborated with the Ministry of National Education to create a training program for accounting and secretarial teachers. During the 1957-1958 academic year, the initiative involved 13 trainers across various faculties, with additional lecturers sent to the USA for further study (Adams and Garraty, 1960).

5.4. The Programme of Georgia University

The influence of the American education system, particularly the Anglo-Saxon model, is evident in a collaborative program between Georgetown University and the FOA aimed at enhancing English skills among technical personnel training in the USA. This four-month program consisted of 40 hours of lessons and practical exercises weekly and was offered three times a year. Georgetown provided one experienced trainer fluent in Turkish and four qualified assistants, resulting in the successful training of approximately 350 technical personnel over four years. Following this success, the ICA requested Georgetown to adapt the program for the Gazi Teachers Institute, focusing on modern language teaching techniques to improve English education in secondary schools. In 1958, 45 teachers participated in this initiative, learning methods like mimicry-memorization, and brought back relevant teaching materials. The program's third phase included appointing a native English professor to Ankara University's Faculty of Political Sciences. In 1957, Georgetown University allocated \$175,000 annually for these initiatives (Adams and Garraty, 1960).

5.5. The Programme of Spring Garden University

The Spring Garden Institute Program, established in May 1955, exemplifies the evolving Turkish American relations in higher education by addressing Turkey's technical maintenance and training needs. Funded by the ICA, the program had an annual budget of \$200,000 as of 1957. It aimed to tackle the challenges related to the maintenance of American products, such as automobiles and tractors, which gained popularity in Turkey during the 1950s. Starting in the 1957-

1958 academic year, Spring Garden Institute experts were assigned to Motor Art Institutes and Technical Teacher Schools in Izmir, Adana, and Ankara. They provided consultancy for curriculum development and delivered training in automotive, electrical, and electronic fields, with a strong focus on practical studies to enhance teacher competencies. The program was active until the 1960-1961 academic year (Adams and Garraty, 1960).

5.6. The Programme of Nebraska University

The University of Nebraska Program significantly influenced Turkish higher education by integrating American educational practices and innovations. Initiated following President Celal Bayar's meeting with FOA President Harold Stassen in 1954, the program aimed to establish a new university in Turkey modelled after the Land-Grant system, specifically aspiring to create a "Purdue of the Middle East." The program unfolded in two phases: the first, starting in March 1955, focused on enhancing the educational programs and research methods at Ankara University's Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine, leading to the establishment of new departments. The second phase provided consultancy for the planned Atatürk University as a regional institution. Experts from Nebraska were deployed to Turkey, and in the 1957-1958 academic year, faculty specialized in field research and artificial insemination joined Ankara University. Additionally, 22 Turkish lecturers received training in the USA to support both universities. The program's budget totalled \$825,000, with \$500,000 from the ICA and \$325,000 from the Turkish Government (Adams and Garraty, 1960).

In summary, the evolution of university structures and educational policies in Turkey has been significantly influenced by various factors, particularly the development of the Turkish American relations. Initially shaped by the Western European Continental education model, Turkish higher education has increasingly aligned with the American education system and its Anglo-Saxon principles. The establishment of universities aimed to cultivate qualified professionals, starting with institutions focused on regional planning and later expanding into fields like science, technology, and engineering, reflecting the influence of American educational initiatives. American foundations played a crucial role in establishing institutions that promote technological and scientific advancement, fostering a sympathetic dissemination of American ideology through English-language education. This transformation underscores the impact of international relations on Turkey's higher education landscape.

6. Higher Education Institutions during the 1980s to 1990s

Following 1960, Turkey witnessed a significant rise in the number of universities. However, this quantitative growth did not correlate with an enhancement in quality. The autonomy of state-funded universities became a contentious issue, particularly after the Military Coup on September 12, 1980. In response to communication challenges among universities and to ensure better coordination, the Higher Education Council (YÖK) was established. Rather than fostering university autonomy, YÖK functioned similarly to a ministry of higher education, overseeing inspections and registrations (Öncü, 2007). The rapid proliferation of universities post-1980 was not accompanied by a serious governmental commitment to address the potential issues of diploma commercialization or to reconcile educational outputs with societal needs (Mardin, 2018). A critical aspect to consider is the role of German refugee scientists integrated into Turkish universities post-1933 reform; despite their commitment to the German language, their political identities and cultural perspectives were notably influenced by American ideas (Widmann, 2000). The 1946 Universities Law led to a restructuring of higher education institutions, supported by American universities through academic consultancy and financial aid, despite nationalistic objections regarding new establishments. Turkish educators largely welcomed this assistance, aspiring for their universities to emulate American models. The year 1981 represents a pivotal moment in Turkish higher education reform, focusing on the newly established universities and their locations. On July 20, 1982, eight universities were formed across six cities, primarily merging existing academies and colleges, which resulted in a concentration in major urban centres, particularly Istanbul. This merger exacerbated the already uneven distribution of higher education resources, with five of the new universities located in large cities. Although existing institutions were consolidated, this led to significant growth in faculties and departments, increasing student enrolment and reinforcing the dominance of urban centres in higher education services. The universities in medium-sized cities like Van, Edirne, and Antalya are particularly noteworthy in this context. Additionally, the emergence of "foundation universities," beginning with Bilkent University in 1984, reflects changes in the educational landscape, influenced by the neoliberal policies of the 1980s that shifted economic strategies towards liberalization and transformed the perception of university establishment in Turkey.

7. Higher Education Institutions After 1990

The year 1992 marked a significant milestone in Turkish higher education, with the establishment of 24 universities—23 state universities and one foundation university—on a single

day, primarily in medium-sized cities, predominantly west of the Samsun-Iskenderun line. Notably, Koç University in Istanbul and Izmir Institute of Technology were exceptions, with the majority of new institutions enhancing educational access in these urban centres. Following this rapid expansion, the landscape of Turkish higher education evolved further, particularly from 1994 onwards, as foundation universities increasingly dominated the establishment of new institutions, with a pronounced concentration in Istanbul and Ankara. By 2006, another pivotal year, the Law No. 5467 facilitated the establishment of 15 additional universities, bringing the total to 93. These new institutions were also predominantly located in medium-sized cities, many with populations ranging from 50,000 to 120,000, with a notable concentration of eight universities in the Black Sea region. This pattern of establishment reflects a strategic focus on enhancing regional educational infrastructure, while also underscoring the continued prevalence of urban centres in shaping Turkey's higher education landscape.

In examining the evolution of universities in Turkey through quantitative metrics, it is evident that a substantial increase in their numbers predominantly occurred post-1950, significantly influenced by the burgeoning Turkish American relations. The prevailing governmental ethos, particularly under the Democratic Party's tenure, fostered educational reforms that were vital in shaping the educational landscape of the period. This era coincided with rapid demographic growth and urbanization, which precipitated a significant migratory shift from the eastern to the western regions of the country. Consequently, developed regions experienced accelerated population growth, necessitating the establishment of new universities to accommodate this influx. The Middle East Technical University, modelled after the American educational system, was explicitly designed to attract students from the broader Middle East, reflecting a strategic educational initiative detailed in subsequent sections of the thesis. However, this expansion has exacerbated regional disparities, prompting the establishment of new universities in strategically selected cities across various regions, particularly medium-sized urban centres in Anatolia. This initiative aims to mitigate the developmental divide, stimulate economic progress, and facilitate the regional economic benefits associated with higher education institutions.

8. The Role of the Fulbright Program in Shaping Turkish Higher Education

An essential aspect of understanding the transformative educational shifts within Turkish universities is the substantial influence of the Fulbright Program, which has significantly impacted the higher education landscape in Turkey. This initiative, driven by the United States, seeks to

cultivate mutual understanding between Turkish and American societies through educational and cultural exchange, thereby promoting bilateral cooperation. Turkish students who have pursued higher education in the United States have not only benefited from its advanced educational framework but have also played a crucial role in enhancing Turkey's visibility in American discourse. The program has effectively enabled the United States to develop a robust human resource base, instrumental for shaping its foreign policy and advancing international economic interests. By facilitating the exposure of young individuals to various global contexts, the Fulbright Program fosters a deeper comprehension of diverse cultures and systems. As highlighted by Prof. Lowry, these participants, upon returning home or integrating into American society, frequently assume positions as academicians or contribute to multinational corporations, thereby driving the growth of these entities. This dynamic illustrates the program's significance as a strategic investment by the United States to strengthen its human capital, with profound implications for Turkish higher education and broader geopolitical and economic landscapes.

9.The Paradigm Shift Post-1980 and Its Influence on Educational Policies

The preceding discussion elucidates the foundational factors prompting the establishment of universities influenced by the American education system. Moving forward, it becomes imperative to examine how paradigm shifts have influenced university education. Paradigms, as scientific reflections of ideologies, are rooted in ideological frameworks that often intertwine belief systems and power dynamics. Ideology can serve both as a guiding doctrine for individuals and as a governmental tool for reinforcing sovereignty (Eagleton, 1996). Consequently, education cannot be viewed as ideologically neutral; it is fundamentally shaped by the prevailing ideological context, which significantly influences educational design and policy. When new political leadership emerges, revising the education system frequently becomes a priority, underscoring the ideological underpinnings of educational frameworks. The interplay of various actors—structural, cultural, ideological, and economic—plays a crucial role in shaping educational policies, which are inextricably linked to the prevailing power relations within society. These policies, governed by state mechanisms and influenced by global entities, dictate educational objectives, content, assessment methods, and institutional regulations (Russell, 2020). Thus, the formulation of educational policies hinges on critical inquiries regarding educational approaches, curriculum values, and the implications of these policies, highlighting the dual focus on both outcomes and processes dictated by power structures.

It is crucial to recognize that the paradigms of neoliberalism and economic globalization exert significant influence over the educational policies of nation-states. These frameworks introduce concepts such as human capital, marketization, professionalization, standardization, accountability, and performance evaluation, which are often imposed by neoliberal global actors. Human capital theory epitomizes the neoliberal approach to education, positing that the primary objective is to cultivate individuals capable of contributing productively to the economy, thereby prioritizing wealth generation over human development. In nations where human capital theory is embraced—often under the auspices of global stakeholders—educational policies are strategically designed to foster the creation of human capital and a skilled workforce, simultaneously promoting competition. This focus on economic utility frequently overlooks the intellectual, ethical, and cultural dimensions of student development, relegating education to a mere instrument of investment and signalling its commodification. Furthermore, alongside globalization and neoliberalism, the new right paradigm has also intervened in national educational policies. This paradigm, while aligned with neoliberal economic principles, emphasizes conservative values, incorporating themes of nationalism, national culture, and religiosity. The new right seeks to cultivate not only entrepreneurial and consumer-oriented individuals but also to nurture religious and nationalist citizens who uphold traditional values within a neoconservative framework.

The prevailing paradigms shaping educational policies globally have significantly influenced the transformation of education policies in the Republic of Turkey. Throughout various historical periods, educational policies have been formulated and enacted under the sway of differing paradigms, profoundly impacting the education system. To summarize succinctly, from the early Republican era to the Democratic Party (DP) period, Turkish educational policies were guided by a positivist and pragmatic paradigm characterized by populist, nationalist, secular, and scientific elements. However, the advent of the DP in the 1950s marked a shift towards neo-conservative educational policies, which diverged from this previous framework and embraced an American educational model. By the 1980s, while neo-conservative policies persisted, they were increasingly accompanied by neoliberal approaches. This period witnessed a transition from the positivist and populist educational philosophy to a market-oriented, new right education paradigm that incorporated the Turkish-Islamic synthesis. During this transformative process, neo-conservative discourses shaped the content of education, whereas neoliberal practices influenced its implementation. The paradigm shift in education was articulated through postmodern linguistic

frameworks, leading to the introduction of reforms that transformed the educational landscape. After 1980, themes such as religion, conservatism, and fundamentalist nationalism played a pivotal role in reshaping education within the neo-conservative context. Notably, religious education, previously abolished, was reintroduced into the curriculum, and religious and neo-conservative discourses became increasingly prominent in textbooks and educational programs across all levels and practices (Kartal, 2020).

The transformation of education in Turkey following 1980 was significantly shaped by neoliberal and globalizing influences, characterized by themes such as marketization, privatization, entrepreneurship, vocational training, development, lifelong learning, and globalization. In the marketization context, the government incentivized private schools through tax exemptions and loans. Global entities like the World Bank, IMF, European Union, and OECD promoted neoliberal concepts including entrepreneurship, the knowledge economy, flexibility, performance metrics, quality assurance, standardization, and accountability, aiming to forge a nexus between education and workforce demands. This collaboration led to Turkish students' participation in EU initiatives like Erasmus, Socrates, and Tempus, reinforcing the globalization paradigm and facilitating global mobility. Consequently, local values diminished in importance, yielding to the exigencies of a networked society, wherein global influences increasingly dictated educational frameworks. By 1980, education was reconfigured as a vocational enterprise aligned with human capital theory. The establishment of the Higher Education Council (YÖK) in 1981 resulted in a loss of university autonomy and promoted the proliferation of profit-driven foundation universities. This period also saw the commercialization of higher education manifest in certification programs, evening courses, pedagogical training, distance education, and tuition fees, culminating in a marked increase in private schools and tutoring institutions (Güllüpmar, 2015).

The neoliberal paradigm, which emerged as a dominant global trend in the 1980s, significantly influenced education policies during this period, aligning educational objectives with the global economy. The 10th National Education Council articulated goals for establishing educational policies grounded in national, economic, and global contexts. An analysis of the terminology employed reveals an inclination to perceive education as a mechanism for producing a workforce tailored to market demands. By framing education as an investment—language typically associated with the financial sector—there is an implicit indication that educational endeavours were transitioning into a neoliberal enterprise. Concurrently, the rise of the new right paradigm, particularly in the United States and the United Kingdom during the early 1980s, began

to manifest in Turkey as well. The European Union's accession process, which gained momentum towards the end of the 1980s, further catalysed transformations within the Turkish education system, reflecting broader social and political changes. This evolution appears to align with the goal of cultivating a student profile equipped with the skills and competencies requisite for success in a globalized, networked society. Additionally, the neoconservative paradigm emerged as a significant influence in the late 1980s, shaping course content and educational frameworks within this context.

In the context of the 1990s, it can be asserted that education policies in Turkey were increasingly shaped by the dual influences of the accelerating European Union (EU) integration process and the emergence of the information society, both of which are integral to globalization. The government program articulated in 1990 underscored the ambition to construct a new educational framework that aligns with global innovations. This objective of cultivating individual's adept for the information society echoes the goals delineated in the Sixth Development Plan, which emphasized the necessity of adapting to advancements in science and technology and the evolving labour market requirements engendered by the information society (Kartal, 2020). The trajectory of education policy development in Turkey remained influenced by globalization and its aspirations for EU candidacy, a status pursued since 1996. Notably, key areas such as educational mobility, tourism, and trade gained prominence during this period. The government program asserted that the primary aim of education was to produce individuals capable of meeting the demands of the information age, with a notable encouragement for the establishment of foundation universities. This was further supported by the XV National Education Council, which adopted educational policies geared towards the 21st century, highlighting the criticality of knowledge acquisition within the context of globalization and the imperative to remain competitive in the knowledge economy. Correspondingly, the Seventh Development Plan articulated the goal of fostering a well-educated generation to compete on an international scale. These educational reforms can thus be understood as occurring under the significant influence of the globalization paradigm prevalent in Turkey during its EU accession process. Moreover, it becomes evident that by 1996, the neoliberal paradigm also facilitated transformative shifts within the educational landscape, laying the groundwork for the sectorization and marketization of education.

In the mid-2000s, Turkish education policies increasingly reflected neo-liberal and globalization paradigms, characterized by a notable rise in private schools and the adoption of

lifelong learning concepts. The 9th Development Plan emphasized the need for a workforce adaptable to lifelong education and aligned with labour market demands, paralleling discussions from the National Education Council in 2006. Additionally, the Bologna Process was highlighted for facilitating international exchanges and credit transfer systems in the context of EU harmonization, while themes such as standardization, transparency, accountability, and performance evaluation gained prominence in higher education. By the early 2010s, the government aimed to increase the proportion of private schools nationwide to 25%, and the number of universities rose to 165, with policies facilitating the establishment of private institutions. The influence of neo-liberalism, alongside neoconservative education policies, intensified during this decade, emphasizing competition, quality, and human capital. By 2017, the convergence of neo-liberal, global, and neoconservative elements defined education policy, with the 2020 Presidential Program reflecting these trends. Overall, themes of religion, nationality, market-school relations, privatization, and lifelong learning emerged prominently post-1980, leading to a departure from the founding values of the Republic and its secular, positivist paradigm (Kartal, 2020).

The emergence of entrepreneurial universities globally, driven by the influences of globalization and the knowledge economy, signifies a shift towards institutions that prioritize the systematic production and transfer of knowledge within a market-oriented framework. This restructuring encompasses institutional development, human resource management, and organizational dynamics, fostering an entrepreneurial culture reflective of neo-liberal ideologies. In Turkey, higher education has increasingly aligned with globalization paradigms since the early 2000s, emphasizing concepts such as privatization, quality, performance, and accountability. The impacts of the EU integration process remained salient in 2007, highlighting the importance of international exchanges, accreditation, and standardized quality systems within higher education. The 2007 development plan underscored the necessity of ongoing reforms related to the Bologna Process, emphasizing the goal of enhancing the number of doctoral graduates in Turkey as a strategy to enhance competitiveness in the information society and global markets. Thus, the interplay of neo-liberalism, globalization, and network society significantly influenced the formation of Turkish higher education policies.

The quantitative expansion of higher education in Turkey, initiated in the 2000s, continued to be robustly supported throughout the 2010s. The 2011 government program proudly highlighted substantial increases in the number of universities since 2000, underscoring the purported balance between supply and demand in higher education. As the early 2010s unfolded, there was a

pronounced emphasis on establishing national and international standards, alongside the ascent of globalization and neo-liberal paradigms. By 2020, the objectives in higher education remained consistent with previous years, as the 2020 Presidential Program reiterated the significance of quality, competition, and marketization within the educational landscape. The enduring processes of globalization, privatization, and marketization, which commenced in the 1980s, continue to permeate higher education today. As of 2022, Turkey boasts a total of 209 universities, with 131 classified as state institutions, revealing an alarming trend where the number of foundation universities nears that of state universities. This shift emphasizes a troubling prioritization of quantity over quality, as private expenditure in education increasingly surpasses public funding, exacerbating inequalities in educational access. Consequently, education has increasingly been commodified, undermining its status as a fundamental right. Academic freedom within universities is constrained, with institutional structures increasingly designed to facilitate market profitability. Over the past four decades, higher education in Turkey has thus evolved under the influence of human capital-driven academic capitalism, manifesting themes of standardization, competitiveness, stratification, privatization, marketization, globalization, and national culture. This marks a significant departure from the previously embraced Humboldtian and public paradigms, steering Turkish higher education into the realms dictated by globalization, new right ideologies, and neo-liberalism (Kartal, 2020).

Conclusion

In the nineteenth century, missionaries operating within the Ottoman Empire strategically employed education as a means to propagate Protestantism, an endeavour that often transcended mere pedagogical efforts to acquire political dimensions. Conversely, the nascent Republic of Turkey, founded in the aftermath of the First World War, instituted legal frameworks that curtailed religious education within its educational institutions, thereby establishing a secular order. This republic was fundamentally anchored in principles of independence that permeated various sectors, including education, the economy, and foreign policy. Remarkably, these foundational dynamics persisted largely unchanged until the conclusion of the Second World War. Educational and cultural initiatives were strategically employed as effective vehicles for propaganda aimed at influencing public opinion in foreign nations. Turkey's geopolitical positioning subjected it to significant challenges during the Cold War, particularly following World War II. Despite its efforts to maintain neutrality throughout the conflict, Turkey faced considerable economic, military, and

social burdens, ultimately contending with Soviet ambitions regarding the Straits and Eastern Anatolian territories. In response, the United States extended substantial support to Turkey across economic, military, political, and social dimensions, fostering a complex and multifaceted partnership. As elaborated earlier in this doctoral study, the bilateral relations between Turkey and the USA during this period were characterized by a rich interplay of factors. Notably, educational and cultural activities originating from the United States constituted integral components of its broader propaganda strategy, executed both through state mechanisms and by various non-governmental organizations.

In examining American initiatives in Turkey, it becomes evident that organizations engaged across multiple sectors, particularly in education, have primarily manifested as higher education institutions. The International Cooperation Administration (ICA) played a pivotal role by providing essential financial support for renovation projects and the development of new academic programs at prominent institutions such as Istanbul University, Ankara University, and the Gazi Faculty of Education. Furthermore, the ICA facilitated partnerships that enabled these institutions to receive consultancy services from American universities, thereby enhancing their educational offerings and institutional frameworks.

Atatürk University and Middle East Technical University distinguish themselves from other higher education institutions in Turkey not only through their American support but also via their unique academic and administrative frameworks, governance structures, educational programs, and course progression criteria. For example, Atatürk University was inspired by the U.S. Land-Grant system, which functions as a district university aimed at delivering education tailored to the resources and specific needs of its region, with the University of Nebraska providing consultancy in this context. In contrast, Middle East Technical University was founded to meet Turkey's urgent demand for professionals in urban planning and architecture while addressing the U.S. need for qualified English-speaking personnel in the Middle East, educated within an American framework. This university received financial support from the United Nations Technical Assistance Agency rather than the ICA, which preferred to enhance existing institutions rather than establish new ones. The ICA's strategy involved supporting multiple educational entities simultaneously, avoiding commitment to a more extensive project during this period of concurrent initiatives.

A significant component of the Turkish American educational and cultural initiatives involved various non-governmental organizations, notably the Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, and Eisenhower Fellowship, which acted as civilian pillars of American foreign

policy. Each foundation operated within distinct domains aligned with U.S. interests, with the Ford Foundation focusing on social sciences, public administration, and teacher training, while the Rockefeller Foundation emphasized basic sciences and biomedicine. In Turkey, the Ford Foundation supported legal and educational reforms at universities, whereas the Rockefeller Foundation established American Language and Culture programs and funded research in medical education. The Rockefeller Foundation notably provided scholarships to Turkish academics, increasing their numbers significantly by the late 1950s, and extended opportunities beyond public institutions. The Eisenhower Fellowship, founded in 1953, offered individual programs to mid-career professionals, notably including prominent figures like Süleyman Demirel. Its goals included aligning teacher training with American models and fostering academic exchanges to enhance Turkish higher education. Furthermore, Turkish American faculty-led NGOs contributed to cultural exchange and English language promotion, reflecting a bilateral educational relationship influenced by mutual demands and societal expectations. Ultimately, American educational support facilitated the integration of U.S. cultural and commercial interests into Turkey, significantly shaping its modernization and educational landscape post-World War II.

During the Cold War, Turkey solidified its alliance with the United States, fostering deep ties that extended beyond political and military collaboration to include education and cultural exchanges. Educational initiatives, integral to U.S. Cold War propaganda, were meticulously implemented in Turkey, with significant support from American institutions for establishing new educational entities and renovating existing ones. As detailed in the sixth chapter of this doctoral study, foreign experts were invited to Turkey, and their reports on educational practices facilitated the adoption of the American education model, which became central to the country's educational reforms. This shift involved reconfiguring numerous institutions previously aligned with European—specifically German and French—educational paradigms towards an Anglo-Saxon framework. The educational institutions supported by the U.S. laid the foundation for key research centres in contemporary Turkey, resulting in a new cadre of specialists trained in innovative methodologies. Scholars who pursued studies in the U.S. and subsequently taught at newly established universities played a critical role in advancing Turkey's scientific community. Following the early 1950s, Turkey began to pivot away from its European-centric educational model, aligning more closely with American practices. This transformation was a deliberate

response to evolving geopolitical conditions, with U.S. Cold War propaganda serving as a significant catalyst for changes in the educational landscape.

The research identifies two primary factors underpinning American influence on Turkish education during this period. First, the United States' global policy, characterized by an ambition for multifaceted hegemony, played a crucial role. Second, the burgeoning political, military, and diplomatic rapprochement between Turkey and the U.S. significantly shaped educational dynamics. This American influence precipitated the erosion of numerous national and entrenched educational practices in Turkey, which were supplanted by novel paradigms. The governments in power sought to propel the nation forward by aligning closely with the U.S., yet such advancements were contingent upon the permissiveness of U.S. global politics. This era witnessed the importation of technological products, military equipment, motor vehicles, and various machinery from the United States, fostering a belief that Turkey's developmental trajectory hinged on financial and technical assistance from its American counterpart. Concurrently, there was a concerted effort to deepen ties with the American educational framework, alongside the promotion of popular cultural and artistic activities infused with American cultural elements. Notably, this phenomenon transcended the policy choices of the Democratic Party government in Turkey; rather, it was a trend that had commenced and persisted throughout the Single Party era during and after World War II. The Democratic Party endeavoured to elevate the Turkey-U.S. rapprochement to unprecedented levels across all sectors, perceiving this alignment as a source of national pride.

Ethical Text

On the grounds of the fact that the current research article is produced with the employment of a review of the literature and the document analysis as a research method to gather and interpret the necessary data, an approval from any ethics committee is not required. More importantly, it should be also known that this article is derived from a doctoral dissertation conducted in 2024 by the author.

Declaration of Interest

Conflict of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

The Author Contribution Rate: The author's contribution rate is 100% and he bears full accountabilities for all of the aspects of the article.

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