

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF FIELD EDUCATION



The Collective Construction of Teacher Identity on X on November 24th, Teachers' Day, and the Meanings Attributed to Teaching

Serdar ERDEM¹

ORCID: 0000-0002-0085-1580

Akif PAMUK

Marmara University, Atatürk Faculty of Education, Department of History Education

ORCID: 0000-0002-8147-611X

ABSTRACT

ARTICLE INFO

The teaching profession in Türkiye has been assigned significant responsibilities, accompanied by a historical background. However, the profession's own challenges and its frequent presence in certain social debates create an ambiguous situation regarding its prestige. This study presents a perspective on this issue by examining the collective construction of the teaching identity on Twitter as a discursive tool and how it is positioned through political, religious, secular, and national identities. In parallel, the use of history as a tool for legitimization is evaluated in a separate section. To make the collective construction of the teaching profession more comprehensible, the metaphorical meanings attributed to teaching have been identified and analyzed. Designed as a "case study," this research employs the "document analysis" method as a data collection tool. In this context, 42,403 tweets posted on November 24th, Teachers' Day, in 2020 and 2021 were downloaded using Maxqda 12. The sub-problems of the study were determined based on the most frequently repeated meaningful words within the downloaded tweets. The data were analyzed using content and descriptive analysis methods. To identify the discourses subjected to content and descriptive analysis, a set of key terms was utilized. The findings indicate that the metaphorical meanings attributed to teaching are overwhelmingly positive. In the context of collective identities, teaching is primarily positioned through political identity as a claim for rights. It has been observed that religious and secular identities exist in a mild tension, while national identity maintains a balance between the two. Additionally, history has been used as a tool for legitimization, albeit in a limited manner, through historical periods and figures. Within this framework, it can be argued that the teaching profession in Türkiye has been significantly instrumentalized.

Key Words: Collective identity, teaching profession, teacher identity, social media analysis, case study

Received: 014.02.2025

Published online:

31.03.2025

¹ Corresponding author: Dr.
serdarerdem2019@gmail.com

24 Kasım Öğretmenler Günü'nde X' de Öğretmen Kimliğinin Kolektif İnşası ve Öğretmenliğe Yüklenen Anlam

Serdar ERDEM²

ORCID: 0000-0002-0085-1580

Akif PAMUK

Marmara Üniversitesi, Atatürk Eğitim Fakültesi, Tarih Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı

ORCID: 0000-0002-8147-611X

ÖZET

MAKALE BİLGİSİ

Öğretmenlik mesleğine Türkiye’de, tarihsel bir arka planla beraber, büyük sorumluluklar yüklenmiştir. Fakat mesleğin hem kendi sorunları hem de bazı toplumsal tartışmalarda gündeme gelmesi bu mesleğin saygınlığına dair belirsiz bir durum oluşturmaktadır. Bu araştırma da bir söylem aracı olarak X’ de öğretmenlik kimliğinin kolektif inşasını; politik, dini, seküler ve milli kimlikler üzerinden nasıl konumlandırıldığı ele alarak bu duruma dair bir perspektif sunmaktadır. Bununla paralel olarak tarihin bir meşrulaştırma aracı olarak nasıl kullanıldığı ayrı bir başlıkta değerlendirilmiştir. Öğretmenlik mesleğinin kolektif kimlikler üzerinden inşasını daha anlaşılabilir kılmak için de öğretmenliğe yüklenen metaforik anlamlar tespit edilip değerlendirilmiştir. Bir “durum çalışması” olarak tasarlanan bu çalışmada veri toplama aracı olan “doküman inceleme” yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Bu anlamda 2020 ve 2021 yıllarında 24 Kasım Öğretmenler Günü’nde atılan 42403 tweet Maxqda 12 ile indirilmiştir. Araştırmanın alt problemleri belirlenirken indirilen tweetler içinde en fazla tekrar eden anlamlı kelimelerden faydalanılmıştır. İndirilen veriler içerik ve betimsel analize yöntemiyle değerlendirilmiştir. İçerik ve betimsel analize tabi tutulan söylemler belirlenirken de bir takım anahtar kelimelerden faydalanılmıştır. Bu anlamda elde edilen verilerden öğretmenliğe yüklenen metaforik anlamların oldukça pozitif olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Kolektif kimlikler bağlamında ise, bir hak talebi olarak, öğretmenliğin en fazla politik kimlik üzerinden konumlandırıldığı görülmektedir. Dini ve seküler kimliğin yoğun olmayan bir gerilim halinde olduğu ve milli kimliğin ise bu ikisi arasında bir dengede olduğu saptanmıştır. Tarihin ise dönemler ve tarihi şahsiyetler üzerinden bir meşrulaştırma aracı olarak yoğun olmayan bir kullanım alanına sahip olduğu görülmüştür. Tüm bu çerçevede öğretmenlik mesleğinin Türkiye’de oldukça araçsallaştırıldığı söylenebilir

Key Words: Kolektif kimlik, öğretmenlik mesleği, öğretmenlik kimliği, sosyal medya analizi, durum çalışması

Alınma

Tarihi: 14.02.2025

Çevrimiçi

yayınlanma tarihi:

31.03.2025

² Sorumlu yazar:

Dr.

serdarerdem2019@gmail.com

Introduction

Identity is a transformative agent of a structured entity. At the same time, while expressing the resistance of these entities, it reflects the reversibility of their purpose and meaning, their definition, and the self-awareness of their ontology (SinghaRoy, 2019). This awareness does not emerge solely within the individual. It is constructed in line with the meanings that the individual assigns to their environment and that the environment assigns to them. For this construction, a measure is required, and one of the determinants of this measure is the concept of the “other” or “they.” In this context, individual identity, at its core, belongs to the common environment from which it emerges (Connolly, 1991, p. 199).

Every identity is constructed by internalizing the “other” through the drawing of boundaries, and the process of identity formation cannot be understood merely as the development of a set of characteristics specific to a certain identity (Norval, 1994). In this sense, “collective identity” defines a duality of inner and outer group unity — the “us” and the “them” — by revealing the other through the inner and outer group distinction (Pamuk, 2014). “Us” and “them” do not merely represent two different human groups, but also symbolize two completely different attitudes — emotional attachment versus antipathy, trust versus suspicion, security versus fear, cooperation versus conflict (Bauman & May, 2019). Here, “us” refers to the group one belongs to and feels content to be part of, whereas “them” represents the side one does not wish to belong to. Thus, participation in the creation of collective identities simultaneously shapes individual identities (Erikson, 1980). Therefore, individual and collective identities gain meaning not separately but as a whole and in relation to one another.

Berger (1967, p. 339) describes society as “an unstable organization of different and often conflicting human interests, aspirations, and perspectives about the world.” The inclusive and unifying dynamics of this unstable organization are the elements upon which the concept of collective identity is built. These elements roughly correspond to religious, national, ideological, cultural, and similar ties. These ties are constantly reproduced or reinforced by individuals through language in the “reality of everyday life.” Moreover, the language used in daily life provides continuous objectifications that carry meaning for the individual and thus establishes an order that makes everyday life meaningful (Berger & Luckmann, 1991, p. 35).

With the transformation of meaning-making realms through communication technologies, the discourse repertoire of daily life has also begun to gain continuity in digital environments. However, this continuity also entails transience. Castells (1996) argues that the tendency toward transience in social issues has led people, in a world of uncontrolled and confusing change, to regroup around fundamental — i.e., religious, ethnic, national — identities. According to him, “people are increasingly organizing their meaning not around what they do, but around what they are or believe they are” (Castells, 1996, p. 3). In this context, the new forms of organization offered by digital platforms are more inclined to produce meaning through the creation of connected relationships. As a discursive tool, social media has strong potential to channel the actions of numerous individual users toward something greater (Lindgren & Lundström, 2011). Especially reactions to issues related to society or the commemoration of traditional days and the meanings attributed to them reveal reflections₁₀₀

of collective identities in the form of “values, tendencies, and awareness” on these platforms and lead to their continuous reproduction.

The identity of the teaching profession is also nourished by the balance between individual and collective identities. The teaching profession is regarded not merely as a role in which the teacher transmits knowledge, but also as a vocation through which values, cultural connections, and social responsibilities are conveyed to students. In this sense, the teaching profession in Turkey tends to produce much broader meanings. The following section attempts to draw a general framework regarding the background of this meaning.

Teaching Profession in Türkiye

On November 24, 1928, Atatürk was given the title of Head Teacher of the Nation’s Schools. Based on this date, the military government declared November 24 as "Teachers' Day" starting in 1981. As in Hobsbawm’s (2007) definition of “invented tradition,” this traditional day should also be considered a set of practices that are governed by rules and have ritual or symbolic characteristics. These practices aim to instill certain values and behavioral norms through repetition, while implying a natural continuity with the past. Moreover, such practices attempt to create continuity with a historical past that suits their narrative. In this sense, while different values are attributed to rituals that become traditions, history also functions as a legitimizing tool.

Since the early years of the Republic of Turkey, teachers have been important actors in the reconstruction of the society and have been given a key role in instilling modern values in the public. In this context, the teacher represents the most visible face of the official ideology in the construction of the ideal citizen. The meaning attributed to the teaching profession has always been constructed in this direction. The meanings assigned to teachers as transmitters of dominant discourse are directly related to the roles defined for them by the political sphere. However, teaching is ultimately a profession, and those who practice it are individuals. As a professional occupation, the life practices and experiences of teachers lead to the construction of teacher identity in ways that are independent of the meanings assigned to them. Therefore, it is possible to view teacher identity as a reality constructed both individually and collectively. Professional challenges and experiences have become more visible in recent years with the increasing rate of private schooling in Turkey, bringing teacher qualifications as well as teachers’ rights and social benefits into the center of discussion.

Since the early years of the Republic, institutional arrangements in education policies and the increasing population have led to a shortage of teachers. To address the need for rural teachers, in 1936, young men from villages who had completed their military service as non-commissioned officers were given short-term training courses and assigned to village schools under the title of “educator” (Akyüz, 2007, p. 350). Until the 1980s, teacher training policies in Turkey aimed to close the gap in teacher supply and improve teacher quality. In 1923–1924, there were only 10,238 teachers in public and private primary schools. This number rose to 132,721 in the 1970–1971 academic year and to 211,573 in 1980–1981. In the 2003–2004 academic year, the number of primary school teachers reached 384,029. A similar increase occurred in secondary schools during the same period (Akyüz, 2007). As can be seen, the schooling rate gained significant momentum, particularly after the 1980s.

Since the 1980s, the number of private education institutions in Turkey has increased significantly because of the neoliberal policies implemented during this period (Şimşek, 2022). According to the statistics of the 2021/2022 academic year, there are 14,173 private educational institutions under the supervision of the Ministry of National Education (MEB) (MEB, 2022). According to these figures, private education institutions make up more than 25% of all schools. Especially since 2013, there has been a record increase in the number of private schools. For example, between the 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 academic years, the number of private schools increased by 42.69% (MEB, 2015). Changes in schooling rates overlap with changes in teacher training policies. Because the number of graduates from education faculties each year far exceeds the number of teachers appointed by the government, many graduates apply to work at private school. In addition, students who have not graduated from a faculty of education can earn the right to become teachers by completing a pedagogical formation program. In 2022, only 21,407 out of 407,000 teacher candidates were appointed to public schools. Therefore, 94.66% of graduated teachers were not appointed. Since the number of graduate teachers greatly exceeds the demand of the Ministry of Education, private educational institutions face no shortage of teachers willing to work for low wages.

The share of the education budget allocated to investment was 17% of the total MEB budget in 2002, but this dropped to 4.5% in 2009. In 2008, the share was 8% (Şimşek, 2022, p. 125). In this context, political powers have reduced education expenditure as a matter of policy and tried to open new investment areas for the private sector. This has made educational issues in Turkey, already a subject of debate, even more visible—particularly in terms of education quality and problems experienced by teachers.

This research provides an opportunity to understand how discourses produced on X (formerly Twitter) are shaped and how they contribute to discussions about the teaching profession. Identifying the relationship between teaching and broader social issues, as well as the reflection of these issues on teacher identity, is important for understanding how educational policies, perceptions of teaching, and the social role of the teacher are affected. Accordingly, the aim of this study is to examine how the construction of the teacher is influenced by collective identities through the discursive framework produced on X, a digital medium. This study seeks to answer the question: “What is the effect of collective identity on the construction of the teacher on November 24, Teachers’ Day?”

Sub-questions of the research are as follows:

What meanings are attributed to teaching on November 24, Teachers’ Day?

What are the characteristics of political identity in the construction of the teacher on Teachers’ Day?

What are the characteristics of religious and secular identity in the construction of the teacher on Teachers’ Day?

What are the characteristics of national identity in the construction of the teacher on Teachers’ Day?

What are the characteristics of the use of history in the construction of the teacher on Teachers’ Day?

Method

This section discusses the research method and process.

Research Design

In this study, the case study method, one of the qualitative research designs, was employed. A case study is an approach that describes the subjective experiences, thoughts, and perceptions of individuals regarding a current situation in the form of themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this context, X, as a discursive medium, makes visible individuals' thoughts and perceptions within the framework of current issues. Especially in Turkey, special days such as November 24th often rank high in X's "Trending Topics." Therefore, examining the discourses produced on X on November 24th offers a strategic opportunity to observe the meanings attributed to the teaching profession and how this profession is utilized in the construction of collective identities. In this regard, the case study was determined to be the most appropriate qualitative research design for this study.

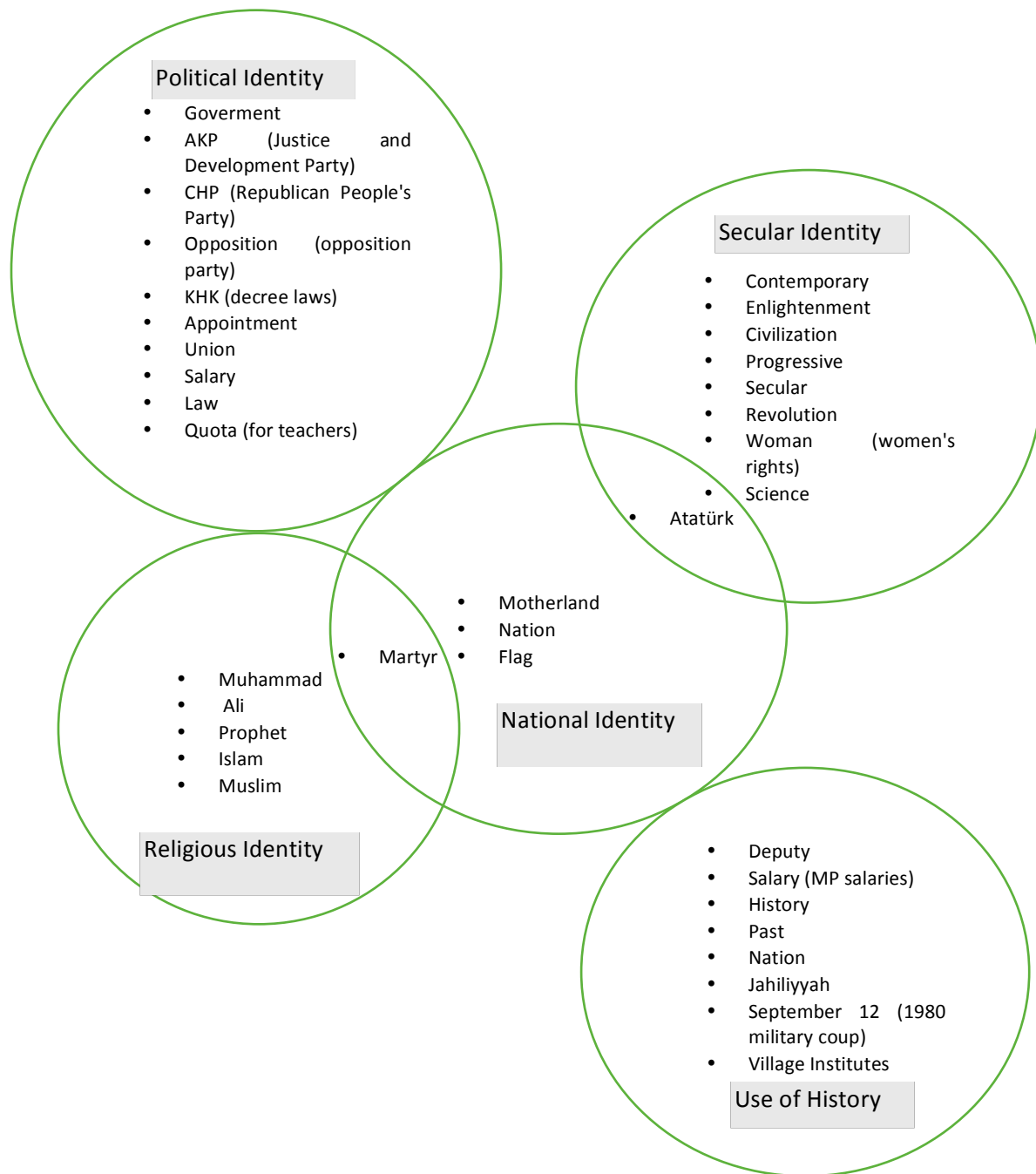
One of the characteristics of qualitative research is that it describes the complexity of the world by presenting multiple perspectives of individuals (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 207). Thus, the selected sample should reflect this complexity. Since this study evaluates the complex nature of identity and culture through the teaching profession, attention was paid to ensuring that the selected sample reflects this complexity. Accordingly, maximum variation sampling, one of the purposeful sampling techniques, was used.

Data Collection Tools and Process

In this research, document analysis, a data collection tool frequently used in case study methodology, was employed. A detailed examination of the documents is essential to understand the main ideas of the texts, identify key concepts, and extract relevant data. Ultimately, document analysis, which is also used as an analytical method, allows for informed estimations regarding the most plausible interpretations of a given text (McKee, 2001).

In this study, 42,403 tweets posted under the hashtags #24november #myteacher #24novemberteachersday and #teachersday on X during Teachers' Day (November 24) in the years 2020 and 2021 were downloaded using the MAXQDA 12 software. Subsequently, using the "tag cloud" tool, the most frequently occurring words relevant to the research context were identified (see Figure 2). Based on these words, sub-contexts of the research questions and the keywords likely to reveal these contexts were formulated. Through these keywords, an advanced word search was conducted in MAXQDA 12. Using word combinations in the advanced search, relevant discourses were identified. The selected tweets, determined through this analysis, were then coded into five categories that ensured maximum variation, as inferred from the study's sub-problems.

Figure 1. Keywords Generated for Content Analysis



Data Analysis

The data were presented using descriptive and content analysis techniques. Content analysis is widely applied to a range of text analysis strategies that include the frequency of word¹⁰⁴

usage in large-scale texts and the statistical analysis of the results (Bazeley, 2013, p. 174). The findings related to the first sub-question (see Table 1) were formed using the data obtained through this strategy. Tweets related to collective identities were identified using the search tools of Maxqda 12. In order to detect the discourses, a set of words and their combinations shown in Figure 1 were used. Given the large volume of data (42,403 tweets), the creation and analysis of specific categories became possible through this strategy. In content analysis, data are divided into specific categories to build a relational network relevant to the research. The aim here is to obtain a condensed and broad definition of the investigated phenomenon as a result of the analysis (Elo & Kyngas, 2007).

Descriptive analysis involves organizing and presenting the collected data according to parameters determined by the researcher. In this way, the data are clearly described. The described data are then interpreted and made meaningful through the researcher's inferences. In descriptive analysis, direct quotations are strikingly presented and evaluated by the researcher (Şimşek & Yıldırım, 2016). In this context, the data obtained were evaluated and presented in tables to show how X users (coded as "K") positioned the teaching profession and which references they used while constructing or presenting their political, religious, secular, and national identities. Additionally, descriptive analysis tables were created regarding the metaphorical meanings attributed to teaching and the use of history in the construction of collective identities.

Findings

Figure 2. Most Frequent Meaningful Words in the Hashtags #24november #myteacher #24novemberteachersday and #teachersday on November 24th in 2020 and 2021 in X (Shown Parallel to Font Size)



The themes and categories of the data analyzed in this section were determined in line with the keywords presented in Figures 1 and 2. Figure 2 displays the most frequently repeated meaningful words among the tweets posted on Teachers' Day.

By examining the contexts of these words, five themes were identified: “attributed meanings to teachers,” “political identity,” “religious and secular identity,” “national identity³,” and “use of history.”

Findings on the Meanings Attributed to Teaching

Before presenting the findings within the framework of collective identities related to teachers and the teaching profession, it will be useful to examine perceptions of teaching in Turkey through certain concepts and metaphors. This section aims to contribute to the evaluation of other findings from a different perspective by highlighting these perceptions. The positioning tendencies of collective identities are closely linked to the meanings attributed to teaching. This is because teaching in Turkey is not perceived as an ordinary civil service position. There is a strong and prevalent perception in the country that teachers serve a much greater purpose. Table 1 is an indication of this.

Table 1. *Most Frequently Repeated Words in the Context of the Meaning Attributed to Teaching*

Word	Frequency
Future	1394
Self-sacrificing/Sacrifice	1068
Enlightening	887
Light/ One that shines	842
Architect	821
Direction/Path	794
One who raises	756
Beautiful	739
Sacred	481
Wisdom	420
Valuable	417
High/Noble	391
Love	310
Knowledge	194
Patience	183
Entrustment	162
Pride	162

³ In this study, the term national identity is used not in the sense of a political or civic construct related to the nation-state, but rather in the sense of a culturally rooted identity shaped by shared historical memory, values, traditions, and a sense of belonging to a national community.

Table 1 is composed of the most frequently repeated meaningful words (specifically for the context of this section; see also Figure 2) found within 42,403 tweets. When discourses (tweets) are broken down into individual words, a more general picture of big data emerges. The metaphors used for teachers can offer insights into what is expected from teachers, the qualities they are believed to possess, and, in short, the meaning attributed to the ideal teacher in society.

The first characteristic of the teacher's stereotype is the teacher's impact on future. As seen in Table 1, the word most frequently appearing alongside "teacher" is "future." Phrases such as "guiding the future," "enlightening the future," "shedding light on the future," and "architect of the future" are commonly used in discourses about teachers. Due to this association and its relation to other words, the term "nurturer" (or "one who raises") is also included in Table 1. For instance, the adjective "high" is often used together with "nurturer." Some examples include: "with a high sense of national consciousness," "high moral character," "a high society," and "raising our children in line with high ideals." Thus, the teacher stereotype appears as someone who builds both society and the individual.

As an expectation and a defining trait, in 1,068 tweets, teachers are described as "self-sacrificing." For example, user K20 states: *"The most self-sacrificing and most valuable beings of society..."* and K21 says: *"Our country's self-sacrificing teachers, you deserve the very best of everything."* The word "patience" appears in 183 tweets. K22 notes: *"Teaching us with effort, patience, love, and beauty..."* The usage of this word also hints at the challenges of the profession.

Regarding the metaphorical representations of the teaching profession, words like "architect," "light/ One that shines" and "sun" appear. As mentioned earlier, "architect" is used in the sense of shaping or constructing the future. It is also used in the sense of shaping the individual, as seen in K23's tweet: "My mental architects from primary school desks to university lecture halls..." These two usages essentially convey the same idea: building the individual and building the future are seen as one and the same. Similarly, "light" is used to mean enlightening both the future and the individual. In 54 different accounts, "light" was used together with "candle" (with some accounts referencing Atatürk): "A teacher is like a candle; they consume themselves to give light to others." Thus, "candle" can also be considered among metaphorical expressions. Like "light," "sun" is used in the sense of "enlightening the future," as in K24: *"like a sun that enlightens our tomorrows; the light of the path of knowledge and wisdom..."*

In this context, it can be said that the perception of teachers is highly positive, with strong metaphorical associations. It would not be inaccurate to state that teaching is perceived as a sacred profession. In fact, the word "sacred" itself appears 481 times. These lofty missions attributed to teaching may increase public sensitivity regarding issues related to the profession and encourage them to engage in the search for solutions. On the other hand, failure to resolve negative situations related to the teaching profession carries the risk of desensitization. Particularly, the positioning of political identity through the teaching profession increases this risk.

Findings on Political Identity

Compared to other collective identities, political identity is perhaps the one most closely connected to the present. It is reconstructed continuously along with many everyday contexts. As shown in Table 2, political discourses constructed through the figure of the teacher are closely related to current issues.

Table 2. *References to Political Identity in Tweets*

Categories	Number of Tweets	Percentage Distribution
Appointment	3302	79.5%
Government and Opposition	497	11.9%
Union	112	2.6%
Salary	95	2.2%
Private Schools	65	1.5%
Decree Law ⁴ (KHK)	62	1.4%
Professional Law	17	%0,4
Total	4150	

Note: The percentage distribution only includes tweets in the political identity category.

Table 2 presents the topics and percentage distribution of political tweets. The "appointment" category has the highest share among political tweets, with 3,302 tweets, accounting for 79.5%. Other categories include: "government and opposition" with 497 tweets (11.9%), "union" with 112 tweets (2.6%), "salary" with 95 tweets (2.2%), "private schools" with 65 tweets (1.5%), "statutory decree (KHK)" with 62 tweets (1.4%), and "professional law" with 17 tweets (0.4%).

Political identity is often constructed as a form of opposition (Pamuk, 2013), and this oppositional stance becomes more visible through phenomena or events perceived as societal problems. As indicated in the categories in Table 2, in Turkey, the discourse produced by teachers or X users speaking about this profession most frequently revolves around the issue of "appointment." Users most often positioned themselves through the "appointment" issue as a political identity. In this regard, K1's statement, "*Shame on those who didn't appoint us and deemed us worthy of so few positions,*" is a form of collective opposition. This oppositional stance may justify itself by referring to specific examples. For instance, K2 says: "*Happy*

⁴ A decree-law (KHK) is a regulation issued by the government based on authority granted either by a legislative act that defines the subject, duration, and purpose or directly from the constitution. It has the material force of law and will gain legal force in both formal and organic terms with the approval of the parliament. After the "yes" vote in the 2017 Turkish constitutional referendum, following the 2018 Turkish general elections, the president, elected by popular vote, began their term, and Article 91 of the constitution was repealed. Decree-laws were replaced by Presidential Decrees (CBK), which became the new regulatory tool in the new system. 108

Teacher's Day to my teacher Ramazan, who graduated from the Physics Department of the Faculty of Science and Letters, completed a master's degree, has been waiting for an appointment for 13 years, and supports his family by collecting wastepaper." Similarly, K33 states: *"Happy #TeachersDay to Ramazan Gezer, a physics teacher with a master's degree who, unable to get appointed, now collects paper from trash to survive..."* For K2 and K33, Teacher Ramazan is seen as "one of us" within the "we" category. Highlighting someone as "one of us" is particularly important in keeping the existing political stance alive. Because such examples gain symbolic meanings beyond what they express in terms of collective identity. The example of Teacher Ramazan now has the potential to become a symbolic figure for unappointed teachers.

The "government and opposition" category consists of examples that show collective identity feeds on references made to "the other" and legitimizes itself through them. Tweets in this category directly refer to political parties, politicians, discourses, or policies of the government and the opposition. One of the most repeated tweets (by 39 different accounts) in this category includes statements directed at Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu⁵: *"If there's still a teacher who follows this government, I don't call them a teacher."* K34: *"Kılıçdaroğlu said it, I swear he said it, even on #November24: 'If there's still a teacher who follows this government, I don't call them a teacher. A teacher is not someone who sells their will.' #TeacherEnemyCHP #KılıçdaroğluMustResign."* K35: *"As the child of a teacher, I can't call someone who insults teachers on #November24 a politician."* This discourse both points to an "other" and, by being cited, is presented by another "we" group as identifying an "other." Thus, those who cited this tweet believed that Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu was othering them or the teachers they saw as "one of them."

Among political tweets, those concerning teacher salaries are the fourth most frequently repeated statements. In this category, comparisons between the salaries of teachers and those of security guards (n=15) and members of parliament (see findings on the use of history) stand out. K36 said: *"In a country where a guard earns more than a teacher, seeing teachers' salaries as a burden is disgraceful."* Although the education received for a profession is seen as an indicator of its quality, teaching is considered a highly respected and even sacred profession in Turkey. Therefore, these statements should not be associated only with education received or, in parallel with K37's comment, with experience alone. K37: *"The salary of a high school graduate two-year guard is higher than that of a university graduate teacher with 25 years of experience!"* Teachers in private schools also make this comparison with public school teachers. K38 tweeted: *"We no longer want to listen to fairy tales. We don't want to work like slaves for minimum wage in private schools."* Looking at the statements of private school teachers, it is seen that they more often express a rights-based political stance. The negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic can also be added to this. K39: *"Private school teachers as we know them; pandemic allowances, short-term work, unpaid leave—the exploitation they face is severe and prolonged!"* K40: *"Private school teachers who conducted all their lessons online or in person without fail should immediately be removed from the short-term work allowance scheme."* The existence of private education institutions alone is enough to form a political oppositional stance. K41: *"Every day, I tell my students 'education is a right, not a commodity,' yet I teach in a private school."*

The "union" themed statements, with 112 tweets, are in third place. The majority of tweets in this category point to a single union organization. For example, K1 says, *"Let's become*

⁵ He served as the chairperson of the Republican People's Party (CHP) and the leader of the main opposition in Turkey from 2010 to 2023.

members of the Unity Union. Let's reclaim our rights with our organized strength." These tweets generally consist of rights-based statements mentioned in the previous paragraph. What stands out in the union category is the issue of "us" and "the other" manifested among unions. For example, K43 states: *"Salute to the unionists who had the nerve to come to school on #TeachersDay and only celebrate the day for their own members. A month later, you'll again shamelessly gather teachers in the lounge to talk about the importance of unionism."* Similarly, K44 says: *"Am I the only one who thinks it's wrong for unions to bring gifts only for their own members on #TeachersDay? I've literally heard, 'Those from our union will receive gifts, others can leave.' If they weren't ashamed, they'd say, 'If you want a gift, join our union.'"*

In fifth place are the discourses related to the "Decree Laws" (KHK), which constitute another category of political identity. From this category, K3's statement is as follows: *"Happy Teachers' Day to our teachers who have been dismissed by decree laws and whose work permits have been revoked."* To date, approximately 30,000 teachers who worked in public schools have been dismissed from their positions (Resmi Gazete, 2016), and only a small number have been reinstated. Civil servants dismissed by decree laws—especially teachers among them—represent a tangible reflection of political tensions in Turkey. In a nationwide survey conducted by Metropoll Araştırma (2022), 14.1% of respondents stated that all civil servants dismissed by decree laws should be reinstated. Meanwhile, 25.6% believed that "none of them should return." 45.5% said that those who are cleared by court decisions should be reinstated. Therefore, this political divide is visible in society.

Finally, tweets related to the "professional law" will be addressed. As shown in Table 2, the number of tweets is 17, making up 0.4% of all political tweets. The phrases "The professional law should be enacted!" and "The professional law should not remain just a promise" are the most frequently repeated in this category. In this context, K17's statement is: *"There are 1.2 million teachers, and there is no professional law..."* K18 says, *"#Teaching Professional Law should not remain a promise, it should come to life."* This issue has also been voiced by the main opposition party (CHP). K18, a member of parliament from this party, tweeted: *"With the Teaching Professional Law, our teachers will have an independent and distinct law, and the teaching profession will gain the respect it deserves."* Another MP from the same party, K25, stated: *"With the teaching professional law, our teachers will have an independent, distinct law; the teaching profession will gain the respect it deserves."*

The data obtained indicate that the demand for rights constitutes the broadest area of political identity. This is reflected in the discourse through comparisons, expressions of ideals, and emphasis on the importance of the teaching profession for society. These three approaches, which form the characteristic aspects of rights demands, offer a significant perspective on the relationship between the teaching profession and political identity. The deep and multifaceted relationship between the teaching profession and political identity allows for a better understanding of the profession's role in social, economic, and cultural contexts. In this sense, teachers' demands for rights are not limited to the problems of the profession alone but also encompass a desire for broader social transformation.

Findings Related to Religious and Secular Identities

Table 3. *References of Tweets Related to Religious Identity*

Category	Frequency (f)
Martyrdom	879
Sacred Figures	214

Table 3 presents the most prominent indicators found in the discourses produced under the category of religious identity. Tweets that include the concept of martyrdom ($f=879$) rank first, followed by those referencing sacred figures ($f=214$). In addition to these two subcategories, there are other discourses related to religious identity; however, these are not quantitatively significant enough to form separate categories. Therefore, the evaluations regarding religious identity have been developed in line with Table 3.

According to believers, prophets serve as role models through their behavior and are presented as exemplary figures. As such, in the eyes of believers, prophets are also regarded as teachers. When the statements made on X (formerly Twitter) on November 24 in honor of teachers are examined, it is observed that some individuals construct the concept of “teacher” through prominent religious figures in their own meaning frameworks. In this context, 138 different X accounts emphasize the Prophet Muhammad or his role as a teacher. For instance, K5 states: *“My teacher, my guide, my leader, and my pioneer is Prophet Muhammad– I learned from him how to embrace morality and compassion – how to free myself from servitude to others – how to rebel against oppression – how to resist injustice – how to establish justice – how to attain dignity...”* K5 positions teaching within a framework grounded in religious and moral teachings. Furthermore, the frequent use of phrases such as “my teacher” and “especially Prophet Muhammad” indicates that religious and moral teachings lie at the heart of religious identity as a collective identity, and that these teachings are prioritized in the understanding of the teacher. For example, K6 states: *“Happy Teachers’ Day to all our esteemed teachers, especially our teacher of tawhid, Prophet Muhammad, who have made great contributions to our children.”*

The name of Mus'ab ibn Umayr, who is regarded as the first teacher in Islamic history, is also frequently mentioned. In 32 different X accounts, his name appears alongside the Prophet Muhammad, described as “the first teacher in Islamic history.” For example, K6 expresses: *“I congratulate Teachers’ Day for all my colleagues who have taken as their guide the Head Teacher Prophet Muhammad and the first teacher in Islamic history, Mus'ab ibn Umayr.”* A similar statement is made by K7: *“I congratulate Teachers’ Day for all my colleagues who have taken as their guide the Head Teacher Prophet Muhammad, the first teacher in Islamic history Mus'ab ibn Umayr, and our parents who taught us about life.”*

The use of expressions such as “my teacher,” “especially Prophet Muhammad,” and the title “Head Teacher” in these discourses implies a distinction between “us” and “others.” As a collective identity, religious identity reconstructs the “other” through the concept of the teacher. Conversely, secular identity also defines its own “us” and “other.” Individuals who define themselves as secular or position themselves within a secular context tend to associate the meaning of teacher with concerns related to “secularism” and a “modern society.” For example, K13 states: *“First of all, happy Teachers’ Day to Head Teacher Ghazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, and then to our esteemed teachers who, only by following his path, raise generations loyal to secular principles.”* In tweets reflecting a secular identity, terms such as “Atatürk,” “enlightened,” “contemporary,” and “modern” are frequently used.

Table 4. *References of Tweets Related to Secular Identity*

Category	Frequency (f)
Atatürk ⁶	3959
Intellectual / Enlightenment	907
Modern / Contemporary	142
Science	266
Reform	42
Woman	32
Secular	26

Another reflection of secular identity is observed through the image of women. Accordingly, the teacher is also seen as a significant agent in the construction of the modern woman. For instance, K14 states: *"I celebrate the Teachers' Day of all teachers who raise or aspire to raise independent, strong, modern women and contemporary, questioning, and resilient individuals, and I bow before them with respect."*

On the other hand, discourses that address the distinction between "us" and "the other" in a more general context may be considered as expressions of a superordinate identity. This can be interpreted as representing the dominant culture. For example, K8 says: *"I celebrate the Teachers' Day of the teacher of the sublime Islam, Prophet Muhammad, of the Head Teacher of the Republic of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, of all martyred teachers, teacher candidates, and current teachers."* Another example is the statement by K9: *"From Imam Ali, who said, 'I would be a slave for forty years to the one who teaches me a single letter,' to Mustafa Kemal, who said, 'Teachers, the new generation will be your masterpiece.' Happy Teachers' Day to all the teachers who have enlightened our paths and contributed to our lives."*

Another reflection of religious identity in the discourses is the frequent reference to Imam Ali. A total of 44 tweets include the quote attributed to him: *"I would be a slave for forty years to the one who teaches me a single letter."*

Religious identity, by its very nature, derives its reference points from history. As rituals, belief systems, and values are products of cultural transmission, religious identity is intrinsically linked to historical consciousness. This connection is historically manifested through the prominence of exalted figures who represent the core values of Islam. A similar situation applies to secular identity. The figure representing the values of secular identity is Atatürk. The reforms initiated under Atatürk's leadership symbolize steps toward the modernization of the social structure and the departure from traditional frameworks, making the references in Table 4 more comprehensible. Although religious and secular identities often exist in tension, the data reveals a notable balance between the two. This balance offers a meaningful perspective for understanding the multifaceted nature of Turkish identity.

⁶ Atatürk serves as a central point of reference in secular identity discourses, not only due to his advocacy of secularism, but also because of his foundational role in modernization, scientific rationality, and the construction of the nation-state.

Findings on National Identity

The first objective of Turkish National Education (1973) is “to raise citizens who are loyal to Atatürk’s reforms and principles and to Atatürk’s nationalism as expressed in the Constitution; who adopt, protect, and develop the national, moral, humanistic, spiritual, and cultural values of the Turkish Nation; who love and constantly strive to glorify their family, homeland, and nation; and who are aware of and have internalized their duties and responsibilities towards the Republic of Turkey, a democratic, secular, and social state governed by the rule of law, based on human rights and the fundamental principles outlined in the preamble of the Constitution.”

Within this framework, the collected data show that the most evident manifestation of dominant culture appears in national identities. Indeed, national identity ($f=2793$) is the second most frequently encountered theme in the construction of the teacher figure, after political identity. Three different expressions of national identity are observed in this context. The first consists of references solely to the love or sanctity of the homeland and nation. The second includes references to homeland-nation and religion as a whole. The third refers to both founding (secular) values and homeland-nation together. All three align with the stated aims of the Ministry of National Education (MEB).

Table 5. *References in Tweets Related to National Identity*

Category	Frequency (f)
Homeland/Nation	1358
Martyrdom	879
Flag	16

This study, a total of 1,358 tweets containing the words “homeland” (*vatan*) or “nation” (*millet*) were identified. The statements of K11 are as follows: “*Happy Teachers’ Day to all our teachers who strive to raise moral, virtuous, and honest generations under the guidance of science and in the shadow of our national and spiritual values, for the future of our cherished nation. #November24 #TeachersDay*”. Similarly, K12 stated: “*I celebrate the Teachers’ Day of our devoted teachers who are in love with the homeland and the nation, whose hands deserve to be kissed.*” K23 described the teacher as someone “*who raises individuals loyal to their ancestors, their flag, and their homeland.*”

In the context of Turkey, the structure of national identity cannot be understood solely through references to the sanctity of homeland and nation. National identity also refers to religion. For example, K13 said: “*For religion and state, homeland and nation, so many teachers have given their lives...*” In this sense, martyrdom appears as a value that unites the concepts of religion, nation, and homeland. Therefore, tweets dedicated to martyred teachers also serve as references to national identity. Indeed, the data shows that the martyred teachers Aybüke Yalçın and Necmettin Yılmaz were mentioned by 181 different accounts.

Another manifestation of national identity appears in references to founding values, which are also reflections of a secular identity. For instance, K14 stated: “*Happy Teachers’ Day to all idealist teachers who walk the path illuminated by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who are devoted to the principles of the Republic, and who are secular, modern, and patriotic.*” Likewise, K15

said: “*Happy Teachers’ Day to all teachers who raise just, patriotic, enlightened, visionary, innovative, thoughtful, and Followers of Atatürk generations.*”

It should be noted that the data presented here cannot be used to evaluate how successful or unsuccessful the Ministry of National Education (MEB) is in raising citizens, nor should it be interpreted in that context. However, it does allow for commentary on how influential social media is in shaping culture. The data shows that the meaning attributed to teachers in Turkey (through X) is laden with values.

National identity can be seen as a supra-identity formed around a community’s historical experiences, values, and shared goals. In some cases, national identity may emerge as an attempt to embrace diversity and differences within multicultural societies. However, in this context, it is observed that national identity is represented in a more homogeneous and patterned manner. These patterns are nourished by both Turkish-Islamic and Kemalist ideologies.

Findings on the Use of History

Up to this point, it has been observed that collective identities generally derive strength from current issues and cultural values while constructing the notion of “us.” However, collective identities may also utilize history as a reference tool to legitimize and support themselves either in opposition to the “other” or within their own dynamics. In previous sections, these reflections were partially illustrated within the framework of religious and secular identities. In this section, the forms of legitimation provided by history are discussed in more detail. Accordingly, Table 6 presents the reference points related to the use of history.

Table 6. *References in Tweets on the Use of History*

Category	Frequency (f)
Atatürk	1551
Mus'ab bin Umeyr	44
Village Institutes ⁷	16
September 12 coup d'état'	15
Jahiliyyah ⁸	12
Fatma Refet Angın	4

As seen in Table 6, the most frequently referenced figure in tweets is Atatürk. These tweets (f=1551) do not primarily consist of generic phrases such as “Especially Head Teacher Atatürk,” but instead contain direct references to Atatürk or his words. An example of such usage, which aligns with a secular identity framework, is Atatürk’s statement: “*Teachers! The Republic expects from you generations who are free in thought, free in conscience, and free in*

⁷ The Village Institutes (Köy Enstitüleri) are a type of school established in Turkey by the law numbered 3803, dated April 17, 1940, with the purpose of training primary school teachers. They are regarded as the most significant type of school for teacher training by secular and modernist-oriented individuals in Turkey.

⁸ A term referring to the pre-Islamic era in the Arabian Peninsula, characterized by polytheism, tribalism, and a lack of divine guidance, often translated as the “Age of Ignorance.”

knowledge,” cited in 214 different accounts. Similarly, his words *“Teachers! The Republic requires guardians who are strong in intellect, science, and physical ability, and who possess high character. It is up to you to raise the new generation with these qualities,”* were shared by 70 different X accounts.

Among the data gathered for this research, a historical anecdote attributed to Atatürk has circulated during periods when teachers’ salaries became a public issue in Turkey (f=15): *“Year: 1923 — ‘Pasha! We are going to regulate ministers’ salaries, how much should we give?’ Mustafa Kemal Atatürk: ‘They must not exceed the salaries of teachers.’”* Whether Atatürk actually made such a statement is unclear, and this claim has not been verified; the source is also ambiguous. However, whether it is historically accurate is of little importance here. What matters is history’s capacity to legitimize individuals. This is evident in the above quote and the statement from participant K38: *“The day when MPs’ salaries do not exceed those of teachers is the true Teachers’ Day.”*

In the context of religious identity, participant K16’s expression and those of 12 other users serve as an example of using history: *“For me, the Head Teacher is the one who lifted girls from under the ground during the Jahiliyyah and placed paradise beneath their feet. I loved you before I ever saw you, O Messenger of God.”* The term “Jahiliyyah” refers in Islamic literature to the pre-Islamic Arab society. Thus, K16 invokes a historical reference to moral conduct from this period.

Another religiously rooted historical reference is to Mus’ab bin Umayr, recognized as the first teacher in Islamic history. By citing a symbolic figure from Islamic history as the “first teacher,” users demonstrate how history, entwined with religious values, is used in constructing the “us.” Similarly, in the context of secular identity, references to Fatma Refet Angin as a symbol of the “first teacher” were identified. For example, participant K45 states: *“The generations raised by the Republic are the work of teachers like our first female teacher Fatma Refet Angin, who walked in Atatürk’s footsteps...”* Just as the Prophet Muhammad plays a central role in the religious identity construction of the teacher figure, Atatürk is prominent within the secular identity framework. In this respect, references such as “the path opened by Atatürk” and “Atatürk’s legacy” frequently appear in the collected data. As shown in Figure 2, Atatürk is the most frequently mentioned name across all tweets.

References to the Village Institutes appear in 16 tweets. For example, participant K17 states: *“I celebrate Teachers’ Day in memory of the Village Institute graduates who set out to illuminate the darkness after graduation.”* The Village Institutes, as a symbolic representation of the early period of the Republic, serve as historical references in users’ narratives. Although they can also be interpreted within a secular identity framework, due to limited interpretative depth in the tweets, this example is considered primarily a usage of history.

“Invented traditions” symbolize collective values. However, these symbolic values also draw strength from the societal prestige of those who invent them. For instance, participant K42 rejects the tradition created by the military regime with the statement: *“The product of the 1980 coup, which dismantled all professional organizations and unions, and created today’s system, continues to kill those who resist the devastation of our heritage and nature by darkness and capitalist greed.”* Similarly, participant K43 proposes an alternative, universal historical date for Teachers’ Day: *“What I mean is, salute to every worker-teacher who rejects November 24 — a ‘gift’ from the coup plotters — and instead celebrates October 5 like the rest of the world.”* Despite this, the significance of Teachers’ Day as a contested historical construct remains relatively weak in the data. Although November 24 originated during the 1980 military regime, it does not seem to be a major area of contention. This is

because as an “invented tradition,” Teachers’ Day corresponds to well-established societal values and carries strong symbolic meaning. Indeed, it was not invented to negate the past but to commemorate Atatürk’s official designation as “Head Teacher” on November 24, 1928. Therefore, it functions more as a unifying ritual.

History is an important tool in the construction and maintenance of collective identities. The mission attributed to the teaching profession derives its legitimacy from history as well. Consequently, these examples serve as sources for understanding Turkish society’s culture, values, and social structures. As shown in Table 6, the selective use of history reveals interpretative differences among various collective structures. On the other hand, this can influence society’s shared memory. Historical narratives can shape collective identities by emphasizing certain events, overlooking others, or distorting facts in a post-truth context. The potential danger lies in the possibility of history being framed through ideological perspectives.

Conclusion

Time and space are fundamental phenomena that shape mass communication. Before the popularization of the internet, mass communication had a more one-sided structure; the relationship between the information provider and receiver was one-directional. Now, however, individuals who receive information have increased opportunities to respond to it. Social media platforms have expanded the possibilities for communication and participation in the public sphere, thereby broadening the discourse possibilities. Platforms like X allow individuals to engage in “communicative action” by expressing opinions, sharing information, and participating in discussions on various topics, thus opening up a vast space for public and social discourse. Social networks have contributed to the increase in connected relationships, which in turn has led to a diversification and greater visibility of the meanings produced.

In Turkey, the teaching profession holds a special position, partly due to its historical background and the duties ascribed to it. As seen in Table 1, teachers represent the future. The frequent use of expressions such as “enlightening,” “light,” “architect,” “direction/path,” and “nurturer” in discourse is an indication of this. “Consequently, the meanings attributed to teaching are laden with positive values. In this context, Rietmulder’s (2023) metaphor of “lighting a fire”—a metaphor that ignites a flame for the children of modernity and enlightenment regarding the role of teachers—aligns with these perceptions of teaching. The teacher is regarded not only as a subject who conveys knowledge but also as a transformative figure who inspires curiosity and a desire to learn in students, guiding their cognitive and moral development. Therefore, the meanings attributed to teaching go beyond knowledge transmission and encompass the shaping of individuals’ intellectual and value-based worlds.

Adjectives and nouns such as “sacred,” “wisdom,” “valuable,” “elevated,” “love,” “pride,” and “sun” — both literal and metaphorical — have also been used alongside this profession. Other research in Turkey (Aslan, 2013; Atabek-Yiğit & Balkan-Kıyıcı, 2019; TEDMEM, 2014; Yılmaz et al., 2013) shows that teachers also use similar metaphors and positive meaning patterns about their profession. Unlike their counterparts in Europe (European Commission/EACEA/ Eurydice, 2015), teachers in Turkey are aware that their profession is regarded with respect and positively by society. In Europe, the prestige of the teaching profession is largely associated with the education system and the opportunities available within the profession (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2021), and some EU countries have developed strategies to promote the positive image of the teaching profession (European

Commission, 2013). On the other hand, according to one study (Iriarte Redín & Erro-Garcés, 2020), despite experiencing higher levels of stress, anxiety, fatigue, or sleep problems compared to other professions, European teachers report greater satisfaction with their jobs. Therefore, it can be said that European teachers are, in some way, content with their profession. Hence, external factors (e.g., socio-economic) affecting the status of teaching exist. Of course, in Turkey, the opportunities within the profession and the structure of education can also be seen as sources of respect. However, as the findings show, the prestige of the teaching profession in Turkey is also nurtured by cultural and historical elements. According to the Global Teacher Status Index (Varkey Foundation, 2018), the teaching profession in Turkey holds a relatively good status. Although cultural and historical elements provide supportive references to the prestige of the teaching profession, the potential for teachers' demands to remain unaddressed carries the risk of diminishing the profession's prestige.

In Turkey, teaching represents a phenomenon frequently referenced in the construction of political identity. As shown in Table 2, these references are primarily made through rights-based demands. Particularly, the issue of "appointments" is the most dominant reference point in the category of political identity. Indeed, the imbalance between the number of teachers needed and the number of teacher candidates trained has made the teaching profession a basis for political stance. This imbalance in teacher employment policies has led to the emergence of teacher candidates who are waiting for appointments and are in a victimized position, which weakens the status of the teaching profession (Güllaç, 2023). While this research has presented some positive metaphors regarding the prestige of teaching, another study (Epçaçan, 2016) shows that teacher candidates produce highly negative metaphors regarding the exam they have taken (KPSS), such as "stress-anxiety," "nonsense," "marathon-race," "nightmare," "slavery," and "exploitation." In this context, while the perception of the teaching profession in society is associated with the importance of the profession, it is understood that the perceptions of teachers and teacher candidates are not entirely aligned with this. The phrase "unappointed teacher" has become a popular term in Turkey today. Given that current issues tend to generate political discourses, one encounters a connection with the updating political identity. Therefore, the teacher identity is linked not only to different meanings attributed to the profession by society but also to the problems of this profession. In this context, the teacher identity is not only a professional role but also interwoven with citizenship rights and social responsibilities. Within Marshall's (1950) concept of social rights, teachers should be seen not only as individuals providing educational services but also as key actors in the construction of social welfare, equal opportunities, and democratic citizenship. The rights-based citizenship perspective emphasizes that the professional status of teachers should be supported by the social rights provided by the state, not solely through individual efforts. In this regard, teachers' working conditions, their professional autonomy, and the guarantee of education as a public right are integral parts of social citizenship.

In the context of political identity, the discourses evaluated are related to contemporary issues, while references to religious and secular identities tend to be grounded in historical contexts. Another common feature is the references to values. The experiences, leadership, and teachings that have shaped Islamic civilization throughout history play a significant role here. This historical context is crucial for understanding the values and identity of Islam, as the values of Islamic society have been shaped by historical events and influential figures. In this context, the categories of "martyrdom" and "sacred figures" in Table 3 have been prominent reference points in discourses directed at the teacher. As Berger (2011, p. 95) stated, religion legitimizes social institutions by assigning them a final ontological status and situating them

in a sacred and cosmic framework. Martyrdom is more closely related to an ontological context, while references to sacred figures represent religious teachings and values in a historical context. People who desire to realize their religious identity individually or collectively naturally seek cultural continuity by reconstructing religious values. Teaching, in this respect, is an important tool that supports this continuity.

Secular identity, structurally, also draws from similar foundational points. Historically, the reference points of secular identity are the early periods of the Republic of Turkey, with Atatürk being a central figure in terms of leadership. Regarding the construction of the teacher's identity, there is an emphasis on scientific progress, rational thought, and secular moral values. History, from the perspective of secular identity, is generally regarded as a product of scientific, cultural, and social developments. However, it should be noted that secular or religious identity can differ based on various cultures and individual experiences. Each individual may interpret and emphasize their religious or secular identity in unique ways.

Secular and religious identities are in a state of tension within the context of collective identities, and traces of this tension can be observed in the data. For example, the expression "Head Teacher Atatürk," a marker of secular identity, contrasts with the use of "Head Teacher Prophet Muhammed," which holds significance within religious identity. This reflects a concrete example of the tension between these two collective identities, as the phrase "Head Teacher Prophet Muhammed" directly alludes to the title "Head Teacher," which is officially attributed to Atatürk and has a significant societal recognition. In other words, it is a rejection of this title. National identity interacts with both religious and secular identities, and references to this identity vary according to the cultural and historical context of the country, the understanding of religion within society, and the secular or religious nature of the state. In this context, the "us" and "other" categories are more distinct in religious and secular identities, while in national identity, there is an attempt to find a balance. However, it is also clear that there is tension between secular and national identity. Particularly in situations where religion plays a more significant political role, secular individuals may wish to separate their national identity from religious elements. The opposite is also true.

The concept of "homeland" serves as a magical word capable of generating macro thoughts and behaviors on everything from political organizations to civil organizations and individuals. In this context, founders, rulers, and thinkers desire to control this meaning. The interaction between this balance reflects the societal standards of thinking and behavior (Özkan, 2019). Therefore, the collective structures that produce meaning are central here. As seen in the data, within the framework of national identity, the concepts of homeland and nation hold dominant positions in the meaning attributed to the teaching profession. "Martyrdom," as it involves sacrificing one's life for the homeland, is closely related to the idea of nation and homeland. Teaching, in turn, derives some of its sanctity from this connection.

Attributing sanctity to the national or important elements for national interests is one of the methods of legitimizing national identity. As Smith (1994, p. 35) also stated, national identity is a fundamental reference point for the legitimacy of social order and solidarity today. Martyrdom, homeland, and nation, along with the meanings attributed to them, have become the key reference points here. Indeed, as observed in the data, the teacher is seen as an individual who transmits certain cultural and social norms to students, making them compatible with the nation's collective identity. Therefore, it would not be incorrect to say that teaching serves as a tool to strengthen national identity and provides foundational points in terms of the meaning of the profession. The meaning attributed to teaching is laden with

values, and it is inevitable that such a profession, with such a broad range of values, references collective identities.

The construction of collective identities, being a historical process, also legitimizes itself through history (Pamuk, 2013). History provides individuals with examples of how social values, ethical rules, and belief systems have been shaped. In this context, individuals externalize their value systems by strengthening them with historical references. As seen in Table 6, individuals have made references to historical figures and periods in the collective construction of the teacher identity. Atatürk's historical relationship with Teachers' Day has been one of the most important reference points for secular and national identity, and this is a fundamental factor in highlighting this connection. In terms of religious identity, references to Mus'ab bin Umeyr, the first teacher in Islamic history, and the pre-Islamic period have emerged.

It is quite natural for individuals to present examples from history to legitimize a meaning or value. However, the use of history does not always align with historical accuracy. A person may validate the present by distorting the past (Pamuk, 2013). Similar instances have been identified in this study. For example, some quotes attributed to Atatürk were not his own. Although these quotes align with Atatürk's emphasis on education and teachers, there is no evidence to support that they were his. This represents a historical error. Anecdotal quotes are compelling and impactful, which can give legitimacy a certain grandeur. Therefore, individuals may be drawn to their allure. A study on misinformation (Vosoughi et al., 2018) shows that false news spreads more rapidly online than factual information. The study reveals that, despite network and individual factors supporting the truth, people are more likely to retweet false information, thus causing it to spread faster. In this context, references without historical accuracy can feed post-truth environments.

As a marker, this research draws attention to the opportunities that social networks offer researchers in analyzing the construction of collective identities. The visibility of communication on special days, which hold societal significance, presents a good opportunity to assess these possibilities. In this respect, based on the data, Teachers' Day (November 24) inferred directly to the meaning attributed to the teaching profession and teacher-related issues. This creates a capacity for meaning regarding identity and cultural discourses and leads to the instrumentalization of this issue. In the context of the Frankfurt School, Teachers' Day also represents a process of "instrumentalization" or "instrumental rationalization." In this regard, two questions could open up avenues for further research:

- Does the instrumentalization of culture and identity lead to homogenization and a loss of intrinsic values?
- Does cultural challenge, that is, cultural criticism and alternative cultural expressions, challenge instrumentalization and create space for individuals to shape their own identities?

References

- Akyüz, Y. (2007). *Türk Eğitim Tarihi*. Pegem Yayıncılık.
- Aslan, S. (2013). Birleştirilmiş Sınıflarda Görev Yapan Öğretmenlerin "Öğretmen" Kavramı ile İlgili Algılarının Metaforik İncelenmesi. *Journal of Turkish Studies*, 8(Volume 8 Issue 6), 43–59. <https://doi.org/10.7827/TurkishStudies.4599>

- Atabek-Yiğit, E., & Balkan-Kıyıcı, F. (2019). Öğretmen Adaylarının Öğretmen Algısı. *Muğla Sıtkı Koçman Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 6(1), 20–39. <https://doi.org/10.21666/muefd.460666>
- Bauman, Z., & May, T. (2019). *Thinking Sociologically* (3rd ed.). Blackwell Publishing .
- Bazeley, P. (2013). *Qualitative Data Analysis: Practical Strategies*. SAGE Publications.
- Berger, P. L. (1967). Religious Institutions. In N. J. Smelser (Ed.), *Sociology: An Introduction* (pp. 329–381). John Wiley & Sons,.
- Berger, P. L. (2011). *Kutsal Şemsiye/Dinin Sosyolojik Teorisinin Ana Unsurları*. Rağbet Yayınları.
- Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1991). *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* . Penguin Books.
- Castells, M. (1996). *The Rise of the Network Society: The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture* (Vol. 1). John Wiley & Sons.
- Connolly, W. E. (1991). *Identity/difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox*. Cornell University Press.
- Creswell, J. W., & Guetterman, T. (2019). *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research* (6th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE.
- Elo, S., & Kyngas, H. (2007). The Qualitative Content Analysis Process. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 107–115.
- Epçacan, C. (2016). Öğretmen Adaylarının Kpss ve Öğretmenlik Atamaları Hakkındaki Görüşleri. *Journal of Turkish Studies*, 11(Volume 11 Issue 3), 1065–1065. <https://doi.org/10.7827/TurkishStudies.9390>
- Erikson, E. H. (1980). *Identity and the Life Cycle*. Norton.
- European Commission. (2013). *Study on Policy Measures to improve the Attractiveness of the Teaching Profession in Europe, Vol. I*. <https://doi.org/10.2766/40827>
- European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice. (2015). *The teaching profession in Europe – Practices, perceptions, and policies*,. <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2797/031792>
- European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice. (2021). *Teachers in Europe: Careers, Development and Well-being. Eurydice report*. https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/teachers_in_europe_2020_chapter_1.pdf
- Güllaç, E.T. (2023). Eğitim Fakülteleri Lisans Programlarının Yeniden Yapılandırılmasına İlişkin Öğretim Elemanlarının Görüşlerinin Değerlendirilmesi. *Trakya Eğitim Dergisi*, 13(1), 559–575. <https://doi.org/10.24315/tred.1065688>
- Hobsbawm, E. (2007). Introduction: Inventing Traditions. In E. Hobsbawm & T. Ranger (Eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (pp. 1–15). Cambridge University Press.

Iriarte Redín, C., & Erro-Garcés, A. (2020). Stress in teaching professionals across Europe. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 103, 101623. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2020.101623>

Lindgren, S., & Lundström, R. (2011). Pirate culture and hacktivist mobilization: The cultural and social protocols of #WikiLeaks on Twitter. *New Media & Society*, 13(6), 999–1018. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444811414833>

Marshall, T. H. (1950). *Citizenship and Social Class and Other Essays*. Cambridge University Press.

Mckee, A. (2001). Textual Analysis: A Beginner's Guide. *Metro Magazine*, 138–149.

MEB. (2015, October 21). *Özel okullaşma oranında yüzde 41 artış*. <https://www.meb.gov.tr/ozel-okullasma-oraninda-yuzde-41-artis/haber/9778/tr#:~:text=Mill%C3%AE%20E%C4%9Fitim%20Bakanl%C4%B1%C4%9F%C4%B1%20%C3%96zel%20%C3%96%C4%9Fretim,71%20oran%C4%B1nda%20art%C4%B1%C5%9F%20oldu%C4%9Funu%20kaydetti>

MEB. (2022). *National Education Statistics Formal Education 2021/'22*.

MetroPOLL. (2022). *Türkiye'nin Nabızı Eylül 2022: KHK ile kamu görevlerinden atılanlara ilişkin ne yapılmalı? #MetropollTürkiyeninNabızı*.

Milli Eğitim Temel Kanunu (1973). https://oygm.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2017_11/08144011_KANUN.pdf

Norval, A. J. (1994). The Making of Political Identities. In E. Laclau (Ed.), *The Making of Political Identities*. Verso.

Özkan, B. (2019). *Türkiye'de Milli Vatanın İnşası: Dâr'ul İslam'dan Türk Vatanına*. Kırmızı Kedi Yayınevi.

Pamuk, A. (2013). *Kimlik ve Tarih*. Yeni İnsan Yayınları.

Resmi Gazete. (2016). Olağanüstü Hal Kapsamında Kamu Personeline İlişkin Alınan Tedbirlere Dair Kanun Hükmünde Kararname, Pub. L. No. 672, Kanun Hükmünde Kararname (2016). <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2016/09/20160901M1-1.htm>

Rietmulder, J. (2023). *Çocuklar Okulu Yönettiğinde: Demokratik Eğitimin Gücü ve Vaadi*. Yeni İnsan Yayınevi.

Şimşek, H. (2022). *Devlet Okulu Neden Hedefte?* Yeni İnsan Yayınevi.

Şimşek, H., & Yıldırım, A. (2016). *Sosyal Bilimlerde Nitel Araştırma Yöntemleri*. Seçkin Yayınevi.

SinghaRoy, D. K. (2019). Identity and Its Transformative Dynamics in Knowledge Era: Some Critical Reflections. *Contemporary Education Dialogue*, 16(2), 157–178. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0973184919858501>

Smith, A. D. (1994). *Millî Kimlik*. İletişim Yayınları.

TEDMEM. (2014). *Öğretmen Gözüyle Öğretmenlik Mesleği: Rapor Dizisi 3*.

Varkey Foundation. (2018). *Global Core Teacher Status Index*. <https://www.varkeyfoundation.org/what-we-do/research/global-teacher-status-index-2018>

Vosoughi, S., Roy, D., & Aral, S. (2018). The spread of true and false news online. *Science*, 359(6380), 1146–1151. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aap9559>

Yılmaz, F., Göçen, S., & Yılmaz, F. (2013). Öğretmen Adaylarının Öğretmen Kavramına İlişkin Algıları: Bir Metaforik Çalışma. *Mersin Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 9(1), 151-164.