Capital, Power and the Struggle Over Teacher Certification

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This article employs Bourdieu’s concept of capital to understand how state officials and teacher educators in New Jersey used three different forms of capital—economic, social, and cultural—in their struggle to shape the undergraduate teacher preparation and the first state sponsored alternative route program to teacher certification. Based on analysis of state archive documents and other primary sources, I describe how state officials successfully exploited their access to cultural and economic capital to establish a legitimate and credible educational policy and to marginalize teacher educators who were forced to rely, almost entirely, on their cultural capital. I conclude that as a result of this struggle, the field of educational policy in New Jersey during the 1980s experienced a shift of power, with the state gaining more power to implement its vision of educational policy (one that relied on neoliberal and neo-conservative ideas and that supported teachers with broader subject matter knowledge and leaner pedagogic training).

Keywords: teacher certification policy; education policy making; politics of education; Bourdieu; social fields; capital; alternative routes to teaching; New Jersey

Education policy-making tends to draw much attention from various groups who bring different ideas, interests, and visions to the table. These ideas, interests, and visions often collide creating a contested terrain. Consider, for example, the intensive intervention of the federal government, corporate business, legislatures, Louisiana state officials, teacher unions,

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think tanks, to name a few, in the struggle over the rebuilding of New Orleans school system. The Conservative Heritage Foundation provides one interpretation of what happened in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

One of President Bush’s last acts of 2005 was to sign a US$1.6 billion education package for the victims of Hurricane Katrina. It was a victory not only for Gulf Coast schools and students affected by the storm but for the principle that education funding should follow students, treating public and private schools equally . . . . Even while the French Quarter was still under water, the teachers’ unions and other public school interest groups were gearing up to fight legislation that would help displaced students enroll in private schools, even if only for a temporary period . . . . But they still lost . . . . Since the bill passed last month, its opponents’ claims have bordered on hysterical. National Education Association president Reg Weaver described the package as part of the “worst assault on public education in American history.” (Lips, 2006)

This excerpt illustrates the fierce battles over educational policy that the United States has been experiencing for years. We can see the self-righteousness of the author who believes in “school choice” and his perception that the unions have no substantive moral interest in students and schools. His support of President Bush’s action reflects the ideological position of the Heritage Foundation in favor of privatization and open market competition.1 The unions and many of the organizations that represent educators and teachers, usually hold the opposite position that favors public education and perceives as a threat any attempt to reform them (see Wilson & Tamir, 2008 for more details). In sum, these struggles over educational policy reflect a collision of values and contrasting conceptions of a desired educational system.

I explore in depth—using an analysis of the New Jersey alternative route to teacher certification and the undergraduate teacher preparation reform—how a similar struggle over the future of education was fought two and a half decades ago with a different set of players and when the ideas of competition, markets, and state intervention were fairly new to the educational arena. In many ways, I argue that the outcomes of the struggle over these reforms in New Jersey paved the way for the increased intervention of state officials in the field of educational policy that we see today.2

Throughout the analysis, I apply Bourdieu’s (1985, 1994, 2005) and Bourdieu and Wacquant’s (1992) conceptual tools to show how state officials in New Jersey led by the newly elected Republican Governor, Thomas H. Kean (1981-1989), employed state resources to take over substantial parts of the field of educational policy. In particular, I focus here on the state officials’ initiative to launch the undergraduate teacher preparation
reform (UTPR) and create the first U.S. state-sponsored alternative route to teacher certification (ARTC; Carlson, 1985, 1990; Cooperman & Klagholz, 1985, 1990; Klagholz, 2000). The attempt to create this broad, revolutionary reform met, as I shall show, fierce resistance, especially among teacher educators and to a lesser extent among teacher unions.

The formation of educational policy is a sociopolitical endeavor carried out by stakeholders who are interested in education and struggle to reshape the reality in which they live, in a way that is aligned with their interests and ideological stances. Bourdieu’s (e.g., 1985) concept of “social field” can be helpful here, because it provides a general framework for understanding struggles between different agents over power and resources. According to Bourdieu, the social field of educational policy is a space, where social agents invest any available capital they possess to capture positions of power, which, if they are successful, provide them the necessary power to inscribe their beliefs, vision, and interests in the social and institutional fabric of the field. Therefore, analyzing the types and volume of capital that agents possess, and the ways in which they use it, is crucial for understanding how educational policy is designed, struggled, and formed by those who control the power structure of the field.

In the analysis to follow, capital is defined as a type of asset or good held by individuals or collectives (e.g., group, community, institution, or state) that may be used as a form of power or as an investment to enhance/empower the profits of its holder in the social space, now or in the future (Bourdieu, 1986). Building on Bourdieu’s notions of social field and capital, I examine how various forms of capital—particularly, economic, social, and cultural—were used by various social agents in the field of educational policy to maximize their control over educational policy. I will then argue that, by both activating, accumulating, and amalgamating capital, state agents were able to take leading positions of power in the field after successfully passing teacher preparation and certification policies.

Adopting a Bourdieuan analysis to consider the struggle over these policies provides an opportunity not only to analyze retrospectively the outcomes of this struggle in New Jersey but also to provide a more general framework to reconsider how and why state agents, business groups, nonprofit foundations, think tanks, and justice activists have developed a solid presence in the field that has allowed them to make significant claims for power.

Such a policy inquiry that is centered on questions of power and ideology is often regarded by critics as unpractical and unconstructive because it does not equip policy makers with tools for improving their policies. I do not share this conviction. Instead, I adopt Taylor and colleagues’ (1997) perspective, who argued that,
[t]o ignore issues of power is to ensure our own powerlessness ... when we understand relations of power, we are better situated to shape policy making processes, to help improve the quality of policy decisions and perhaps even to empower community action ... we feel that critical policy analysis ... cannot afford to ignore the technical issues of planning, but it must also be political and strategic. It can help anticipate political pressures and mobilize countervailing support. It can expose the ways in which agendas are set and framed in favor of dominant interests, and it can identify and overcome obstacles to a democratic planning process. (p. 20)

Critical educational policy analysts have been particularly interested in uncovering the role of ideology (such as neoliberalism and neoconservatism) and state power in shaping the field of educational policy. Scholars, like Ozga (1999) in the United Kingdom, Apple (1993, 2001, 2003), Anyon, (1997, 2005), Tozer & Miretzky (2005) and Tozer, O’Connell, & Burstein (2006) in the United States, argued that since the 1980s such notions played a key role in framing and fueling the transformation of educational policy. Neoliberalism is a philosophical perspective that views the “invisible hand” of the market as a generative force that maximizes the gains of individuals’ interaction and in turn the wealth of society. According to this approach, state’s power should be limited to ensure the flow of information in the market and defending individuals from external threats. According to Weiner (2007),

Neoliberal policies in education, closely aligned with efforts to restructure work and the economy, aim to sharply curtail public expenditures for schooling, replace governmental regulation and oversight of educational quality with the “free market,” and make schooling serve the demands and contours of the job market as its needs are understood by employers (Mauricio-Lopez, 2000). (p. 276)

Neoconservatism is a perspective that views the strong state as a key player in restoring the past and regulating the socialization of its citizens. According to this approach, the state should standardize the curriculum to ensure a unitary understanding of history (Apple, 1993). Apple suggested that these two perspectives somewhat oppose each other. He asked, “Is there not something paradoxical about linking all of the feelings of loss and nostalgia to the unpredictability of the market, ‘in replacing loss by sheer flux’" (p. 228).

Apple (1993), building on Dales’ assertion, argued that these two perspectives have shaped a public policy that is “simultaneously ‘freeing”
individuals for economic purposes while controlling them for social purposes; indeed, in so far as economic ‘freedom’ increases inequalities, it is likely to increase the need for social control” (p. 228).4

The ARTC movement in New Jersey and elsewhere has been affected and shaped by neoliberal notions that consider traditional teacher preparation as no more than an arbitrary obstacle that blocks talented individuals from entering the teaching profession. All the while, neo-conservatives have regularly attacked traditional teacher preparation for being too progressive and out of touch with mainstream “America.” After A Nation at Risk (1983) was released, neoconservatives often used it to attack teacher preparation for doing a poor job that threatens America’s economic and military supremacy. For them, the ARTC has been an opportunity to prepare a new cadre of high quality teachers that would be committed to strengthen public education and support economic growth. Previous studies by Cochran-Smith and Fries (2001), Tozer and colleagues (2006), and Wilson and Tamir (2008) have highlighted the role of these neoliberal and neoconservative ideas in constructing the ARTC movement and fueling its expansion. Nevertheless, none of the above studies have demonstrated how these big ideas shaped a particular case study of ARTC.

I begin with a short historical review of New Jersey’s educational politics in general and the ARTC in particular, focusing on the 1980s and 1990s. Then, I define the four notions of capital and consider their links to power, as well as demonstrating specifically how access to capital played a significant role in the struggle over the ARTC and UTPR policies.

Teacher Certification and Educational Reform in New Jersey

Since the inception of schooling in the 17th Century, decisions regarding teacher certification in the United States have been made by local boards of education (Sedlak, 2008). In the early days of the 20th century, things started to change as states—backed by teachers—have slowly taken the authority to certify teachers and provide them with state licensure (Angus, 2001). In New Jersey, the state board of education (not the legislature) is the state entity regulating teacher certification and licensure. Nevertheless, in reality, New Jersey like many other states delegated most of these responsibilities to university-based teacher preparation programs.

Like other Northeastern states, New Jersey has a long historical tradition of a weak central government and strong localities. The special history and
geography of New Jersey supported this trend in particular. Located between the two urban centers of New York City and Philadelphia, most people thought of New Jersey primarily as a passing zone for the railroad system and later as a characterless suburb area for the two big cities. The lack of identity, the appeal of the big cities to the north and south, and the power of local governments put the central government in a weak position to further any specific state agenda. Thomas Kean was the first governor of New Jersey who used his formal authority and took an active role in education, a field that had historically been controlled by many social agents, including members of the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA), the legislature, the commissioner of education, and the local boards of education (Kean, 1988; Salmore & Salmore, 1993).

In part, the rise of the governor and the state is at least partly linked to the gradual decline in power of NJEA during the late 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s. This decline has been a result of increasing public hostility toward unions, the increasing power of the Republican Party (both at the federal and state level; Salmore & Salmore, 1993; Urban, 2000), and the growing concerns and criticism regarding what many perceived as the “deteriorating” quality of U.S. public education (Cooperman & Klagholz, 1985; National Commission of Excellence in Education, 1983). Given these shifts in power and growing concerns, department and state officials gradually departed from their alliance with educators and began considering new solutions for enhancing teacher quality, like the ARTC policy that was seen as an important policy crafted to specifically address these concerns.

To formally approve the ARTC, the governor and his commissioner (who in New Jersey is appointed by the governor) needed the approval of the state board of education. Although the board presumably represents the people of New Jersey, it is an entity comprised of 13 unpaid volunteers who are appointed by the governor and often have close allegiance to him or her. The commissioner of education, who led the board meetings, was the one who set the agenda, presented the data, framed the discussions, and pressed the board to pass the new regulations. Under these circumstances—where the state, through the board mandate, had the legal authority to initiate action on certification and licensure unilaterally—it is not surprising that state officials decided to challenge the status quo in the field by raising these very issues. In other words, certification and licensure were identified as relatively soft entry point to the field, where attacks were more likely to succeed in paving the way for state intervention in more highly contested terrains, like policies concerning state takeover of failing districts or teacher salaries.
The aggressive push of state officials on teacher quality in general and teacher certification in particular should also be understood in the context of the long-bitter struggle concerning school finance and education equity in New Jersey. In contrast to the administration’s enthusiasm for teacher certification reforms, state officials opposed external initiatives aimed at equalizing educational funding and opportunities. The dominant engines for change on these issues have been New Jersey’s courts and civil justice activists who, because the equity lawsuit, *Robinson v. Cahill* (1973), kept pushing this issue forward pressuring legislatures and administration officials to equalize the distribution of resources among New Jersey’s districts (Cooper & Nisonoff, 2009; Stonecash & McGuire, 2003). Focusing back on the 1980s clarifies that although Kean and his top official, Commissioner of Education, Cooperman, were interested in shaping the course of educational policy in general, they were, first and foremost, interested in market-based policies concerning teacher quality. Equalizing the system by taking more taxes from the rich to provide better funding to the needy urban districts was never part of their reform agenda. A New York Times article from 1990 summarizes the Kean’s administration approach to the School Finance Law from its key spokesman:

Dr. Cooperman has fought the suit [which claimed current state law to be unconstitutional] arguing for a strict interpretation of the state’s education law and Constitution. He contends that the law does not require the state to finance identical educational programs in all districts. For example, he said, just because a suburban district can finance a four-year French program does not mean all districts must have it. (Hanley, 1990, February 10)

Interestingly, despite its desire to limit public spending—partly because of the courts’ pressure and partly as a result of the economic prosperity that New Jersey experienced—the Kean administration had one of the largest budgets devoted for education in the history of New Jersey (Salmore & Salmore, 1993). However, with the growing amounts of funding also came an increasing demand for control by state officials, as witnessed in numerous new accountability and testing regulations for students, teachers, and schools, which turned New Jersey into one of the most regulated states in the country (Cooper & Nisonoff, 2009). Firestone (2003) in his analysis of teaching governance in New Jersey supported this contention, arguing that

Although the local governance structure of schools has remained in place, higher levels of government, especially the state, have become increasingly intrusive . . . . Increasing state funding has enhanced state government’s
interest in education. This interest has been enhanced further by school finance litigation which has often forced state government to invest more in education and direct most funding to the poorest districts. (pp. 8-9)

The state-proposed reforms in teacher certification (ARTC and UTPR) on which this article focuses are part of this bigger trend of state intervention described by Firestone (2003). More specifically, I argue that as the battle over education equity escalated with social activists and New Jersey’s relatively progressive courts forcing the legislature and government to spend far more on education than they wanted to (this was particularly true, during Kean’s two terms in office [1982-1990], and later during Christine Whitman’s [R] tenure [1994-2001]), state officials wanted to make sure that the influx of public funds they were forced to spend is making what they would consider as a “positive impact” on education. As a result, the state has become a central player that tried to steer and oversee educational policy and public education. Looking back on the 1980s and 1990s, one can see that the republican Governors Kean and Whitman advanced a combination of conservative agenda through neoliberal policy solutions guided and framed primarily around notions of market and competition. Although Governor Florio’s (D; 1990-1994) tenure was very different from that of his predecessor, the state continued its march for control over educational policy. At the beginning it seemed as though Florio was pushing for a complete overhaul in education. For example, he pushed Kean’s Education Commissioner, Cooperman, to resign and his aides announced that the governor was looking for a commissioner who was willing to decentralize the power of “Trenton” back to local districts (Hanley, 1990, February 10). Florio, however, is remembered primarily for his radical tax increase, a decision that brought more money for redistribution by the government and resulted in continuous attempts of the state to control how it was spent (this very decision is also considered by many to have cost the governor his reelection). An extreme example of New Jersey’s never-ending appetite for control, which has crossed party boundaries (started with Kean [R] and continued during Florio [D] and Whitman’s [R] tenures), was the law regulating “state take over of failing districts” that New Jersey was the first to authorize in 1988 and was the first to use in Jersey City (1989), then again in Paterson (1991), and in Newark (1995; McDermott, 2007). As in the case of the ARTC, New Jersey had been the first state in the United States to adopt such a law, which represents the harshest form of state control. I suspect that the fact that of the nine cases of district takeover in the United States three have occurred in
New Jersey (Brady, 2003), during the tenure of both republican and democrat governors, is yet another more recent indication to the rising unprecedented power now held by the state.

Before delving into the analysis, I elaborate on the two policies that stand in the center of my inquiry.

**The ARTC and UTPR**

The desire to implement the ARTC and UTPR echoed wide neoconservative concerns that have developed during the 1980s about the declining quality of education, the competitiveness of the U.S. economy, as well as a fear from social fragmentation and loss of a collective core that once used to presumably unite all Americans. The insufficient quality of teachers and their poor preparation were identified as key factors in this deterioration of the U.S. public education. Proponents, of the new policies, believed that teacher quality can be enhanced by transforming teacher preparation to include emphasis on teachers’ subject matter instead of pedagogical knowledge. They also stressed that for an effective shift to happen, the government needed to open the field for competition, which in turn, would increase quality in education by establishing a rigorous alternative to the traditional “monopolistic” university teacher preparation programs.

The state-sponsored ARTC embodied these very ideas. A common feature of today’s educational system in the United States, it was first established in New Jersey and was part of the new agenda set by the Kean administration. The initial policy was developed by then-New Jersey Commissioner of Education, Saul Cooperman, and the State Director of Teacher Certification, Leo Klagholz, with the active support of Governor Kean and his staff. In 1985 after 3 years of debate, the state board of education has approved the ARTC. The program planners aimed to (a) create a state sponsored program that would recruit individuals with a strong subject matter knowledge in the liberal arts and sciences (preferably from elite colleges) to serve as classroom teachers, (b) provide teacher candidates with a 200 hr program that would cover the core issues of teaching (e.g., class management and student learning) during the first year of teaching (the underlining assumption of the planners was that most teaching skills are best acquired on the job), and by doing so (c) circumvent and break the long-standing monopoly of New Jersey’s “failing teacher preparation programs” (Cooperman & Klagholz, 1985). To this end, and as part of the proposed policy, the state established and maintained regional study centers where new teachers would be inducted into teaching and kept out of teacher educators’ grip.
Apart from the short summer-long preparation, the “provisional” teachers were assigned to classes and became teachers of record who received full salary from Day 1 in school (in contrast to the unpaid college interns from traditional teacher education programs). The program also included an induction component. Districts and schools that hired the provisional teachers were expected to allocate time on their own expense for a mentor teacher, a supervisor, and a school principal to meet with the teachers regularly and support their professional growth. After the first probationary year, a school-based committee was to recommend whether a teacher is eligible for state certification or not.

To further tighten its grip over teacher preparation, the state also proposed the UTPR to reshape the curriculum and structure of undergraduate teacher preparation programs operating in New Jersey. The UTPR called for a complete abolition of BA degrees in education and a cap of 30 credits that a student could take in New Jersey’s teacher education programs (10 of these credits were to be taken as a guided internship) for initial teacher preparation. Committed to their deep disdain for educational research and hoping to promote high quality and improved standards in teacher preparation, state officials did not hesitate to offer guidelines on who should be allowed to teach specific courses to restrict the type of courses education professors could teach. So, for example, all social foundations of education courses (e.g., sociology of education or philosophy of education) were dropped unless the professor who taught them held a graduate degree in the respective discipline (in sociology, not in educational sociology, for instance) or if the professor in question held a joint position in education and a social science discipline.

Taken together, these two policies (ARTC & UTPR) were perceived by many educators as an unprecedented and unjustified intrusion of the state into the internal arena of the teacher education profession. Some argued, that based on their actions, state officials were not trying to foster competition, but rather to replace the old system with a new one. According to this view, instead of having teachers from traditional university programs, state officials wanted to create a new type of a teacher who would be shielded from the harmful impact of teacher educators’ unsubstantiated scientific knowledge and progressive beliefs. Despite the opposition and within this ambitious twofold reform program, the ARTC quickly expanded, preparing 26% of New Jersey’s new teachers within 6 years of its inception (Klagholz, 2000) and 40% by 2006 (Freistritzer, 2006) (more than any other state). Thus although traditional programs continued to prepare most teachers, it was also clear that the state managed to become a dominant player in the...
field of education with a strong control over the preparation of teachers and therefore over the content and kind of people who were certified to teach. The state did this through requirements of college majors and minors, approved coursework for teaching, and a state certification test (that became a requirement for teacher certification in 1985 for both ARTC and traditional route teachers). The old days of the state granting teacher certifications uncritically to all graduates of teacher education programs were over.

What caused and enabled the state to act in such an aggressive way? Some would say that the state is obliged to intervene to pursue the New Jersey constitutional requirement for a thorough and efficient public education for all. I argue that constitutions and laws, like policies, are shaped and interpreted by social agents and thus should be treated as a reflection of social power. This means that structural change of power, in a social field, neither reflect a simple obligation to pursue a constitutional directive nor is it a predetermined natural evolution from previous policies and practices. Rather I will demonstrate in the analysis to come that this political shift was the outcome of a struggle over knowledge, vision, beliefs, ideology, and ultimately power, among the various social agents of the field. Furthermore, I argue that to understand the outcomes of that struggle over teacher certification, one needs to understand which forms of capital were used and how exactly they legitimized certain conceptions of educational policy. Before I move to the analysis, I would like to situate this article’s argument in the larger literature concerning educational policy and politics.

**Capital, Power and the Struggle Over Teacher Certification**

Educational policy is a political maneuver carried out by social agents who are attempting to reshape the educational environment in which they operate. As many sociologists point out, social changes reflect conflicts between various groups on the distribution of resources. This means that whenever a change occurs, it will always be a consequence of the use of power; and it always involves winners and losers (e.g., Collins, 1979; Labaree, 2004). Bourdieu (1985, 1988), and Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) used this assumption as the basis for their concept of the social field, contending that the field is a dynamic social space where social agents constantly struggle for power. All the while, a field also has structural features that shape that struggle. The agents who operate in a field, that is, have a fundamental interest in the viability and continuity of the field, also
differ from one other. Some occupy positions with significant power (e.g., control valuable knowledge, economic resources, intellectual capacity, and organizational/bureaucratic positions), whereas others hold minor, narrow, or marginalized positions, often (but not exclusively) subordinate in nature, which have relatively little power associated with them. Social agents constantly chafe at the extant structure of positions (for those without power are constantly struggling to attain it), but at the same time, this structure is relatively stable and institutionalized as a consequence of an intentional effort made by those in power to preserve the status quo.

So, how do agents struggle to change or preserve the current social arrangements in their field? Or, more specifically, how can state officials, teacher educators, and teacher unions shape the agenda of educational policy and take control over the positions of power in the field of educational policy? The simple answer: They need more power. So the next question is how can social agents collect, create, or reestablish the power needed to support their claims or intentions for the perpetuation or transformation of the structure of power in their field?

Let us now consider the concept of capital as it will be used in this analysis. In almost all of its versions, capital denotes a type of asset or good held by individuals or collectives (e.g., group, community, institution, or state) that may be used as a form of power or as an investment to enhance/empower the profits of its holder in the social space (now or in the future). Therefore an agent’s investments (or agent’s family’s investments) in developing his or her capital can be seen as a strategy of building one’s basis of power in the field or as Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) put it

We can picture each player as having in front of her a pile of tokens of different colors, each color corresponding to a given species of capital she holds, so that her relative force in the game, her position in the space of play, and also her strategic orientation toward the game, the moves that she makes, more or less risky or cautious, subversive or conservative, depend both on the total number of tokens and on the composition of the piles of tokens she retains, that is, on the volume and structure of her capital. Two individuals endowed with an equivalent overall capital can differ in their position as well as in their stances (“position takings”) in that one holds a lot of economic capital and little cultural capital, whereas the other has little economic capital and large cultural assets. (pp. 98-99)

However, having a certain type and volume of capital does not guarantee power or control, as the value of the capital itself is frequently subject to political struggles. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) elaborated on this point arguing that
players can play to increase or to conserve their capital, their number of tokens, in conformity with the tacit rules of the game and the prerequisites of the reproduction of the game and its stakes; but they can also get in it to transform, partially or completely, the immanent rules of the game. They can, for instance, work to change the relative value of tokens of different colors, the exchange rate between various species of capital, through strategies aimed at discrediting the form of capital upon which the force of their opponents rests (e.g., economic capital) and to valorize the species of capital they preferentially possess. (p. 99)

To better understand power struggles between social agents, one has to focus on the forms of capital that are possessed and activated by the social agents who occupy the positions of power in the field, vis-à-vis the capital that is owned and used by their challengers. Following Bourdieu (1988, 2005), I call the group that occupies the positions of power in the field and dictates its values and vision, orthodoxy. The group that challenges the control of the orthodoxy and tries to offer alternative set of values, understandings, and vision for the field is called heterodoxy.

One major strategy used by state officials as they attempted to overthrow the orthodoxy was to devalue the knowledge base (cultural capital) possessed by teacher educators, which consisted mainly of the professional “scientific/academic” knowledge of teaching (like pedagogical knowledge and knowledge of educational foundations) that prospective teachers were expected to acquire in traditional teacher education programs. Instead, state officials proposed an alternative model for teacher preparation and recruitment that built on ideas of Bestor (1953) and Koerner (1963) concerning the importance of broad liberal education and specific disciplinary background for the preparation of teachers (Cooperman & Klagholz, 1985). But how was the state to become an active agent in the teacher education field—using old ideas (from the 1950s and 1960s)—after years of looking on the field from the sidelines?

To answer this question—and the more general question from which it emerged (How do social agents achieve capital and/or transform its value [“rate of exchange”] to gain power and legitimacy that enable them to shape educational policy?)—I will use the theoretical modeling of three major forms of capital, demonstrating how those forms of capital were employed by social agents to establish power and legitimacy in the field of educational policy. After considering each form of capital alone, I conclude with a discussion showing how the various forms of capital interacted in terms of their relative value; this will provide a more holistic picture of the struggle.
Economic Capital and Education Reform

Economic capital is the most powerful and effective capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Swartz, 1997). Nevertheless, in most fields, the social transactions of economic capital are camouflaged by sophisticated cultural practices. This is probably also true in the case of the struggle over teacher preparation policy in New Jersey. In other words, economic capital had an important impact—behind the scenes—by providing state agents with the resources to build (and fund) a counter argument to the cultural capital that was used by teacher educators.

First, it was only in 1968 that the first general substantial state tax was introduced in New Jersey. According to Salmore and Salmore (1993), “by the mid-1950s, 31 states had a state income tax, 33 states had a general state tax, and only three—including New Jersey—had neither” (p. 244). A more detailed account of New Jersey’s tax revenue system reveals that during the period from 1962 to 1987 local governments’ tax revenues in New Jersey fell by half, whereas state revenues doubled (p. 248). Thus during the 1970s, the state government significantly increased its economic resources. This is illuminating, especially in light of Bourdieu’s (1994) discussion about the rise of the state and its bureaucratic capital in which he argued that the European nation-state evolved as a powerful player in accordance with its capacity to collect tax from a certain populace (the citizens). Thus when most tax is collected and spent at the local level, as has been the case of New Jersey before the 1970s, it is clear that the central government had very limited tools to assert its power vis-à-vis other social agents.

When Governor Kean was elected in 1981, substantial tax revenues were flowing in. During his two terms in office, this stream of revenues increased to a record high, as New Jersey’s economy was booming (Kean, 1988). Some of these revenues went directly to the department of education operational budget, which in 1983 received more than US$34 million. Overall, the department was responsible for a budget of US$2.1 billion (Schwaneberg, 1983). As already suggested, much of the growth in education expenditure was demanded by New Jersey’s court rulings. Nevertheless, the Kean administration had its own priorities in education that were particularly focused on enhancing teacher quality (Kean, 1988). For that purpose, the administration proposed and implemented new policies that were backed by state funds. The ARTC was one of these new policies, which depended on state funding to establish and operate regional state-sponsored centers to induct a new generation of alternatively certified teachers. To further legitimize its status in the field, the department of education substantially strengthened its
certification unit with funds and personnel to create a more systematic and pervasive oversight of teacher licensures. One major accomplishment for the department of education was to set new standards concerning teacher licensures, like the requirement to pass a subject-matter test with a certain minimum score. Soon, after establishing the new test, the state started using its result not only to determine eligibility to certification but also to rank and evaluate the “quality” of traditional teacher preparation programs and compare the grades of their teachers to those received by the alternate route teachers. In sum, apart of improving teacher quality, the creation of the ARTC program and the strengthening of the certification unit should be understood as state investments aimed at expanding its control over the field.

On a different level, the state (like any other agent) invested economic capital to lobby and promote its policy proposals. Indeed, state officials (the governor, high-ranking department of education officials) traveled across the state giving hundreds of talks emphasizing the importance of reforming teacher certification to improve the quality of the profession (Kean, 1988). These efforts were intended to mobilize political support for these educational reforms. One of the governor’s assistants characterized the executive branch as one that put enormous emphasis on informing the public. To this end, several state employees spent their time writing talks for the governor. In addition, these assistants were sometimes writing responses and articles in the name of the governor to local and national media (C. Riemann, personal communication, January 18, 2006). Although for most readers this may well sound like the ordinary work that governments should do, it should also be acknowledged that the time and work invested by state officials in building the capacity and carrying out the actions in support of their policy agenda cost money and thus depended on economic capital.

Opponents of the reform included the NJEA, which enjoyed the support of most New Jersey teachers and was considered, for years, to be one of the most powerful political actors in the state (Salmore & Salmore, 1993; Tamir, 2008). From the late 1970s, the union experienced some decline in power, but continued to be considered a prominent agent in the field of educational policy. NJEA President, Edith Fulton, elaborated on the union’s power,

We use the media, that’s how we get our message out. We have a column starting September every other week in all major newspapers under the president. We try to educate the public on all kinds of issues . . . . If we really want something controversially we need to pay for it. We are called the 900 pounds gorilla. Where does the gorilla want to sit? Anywhere it wants. We
are probably perceived the top political organization with no clout to match . . . . (E. Fulton, personal communication, August 8, 2004)

One source of the NJEA’s power was the union’s membership dues, which helped establish substantial economic capital for the union. At first, the NJEA leaders perceived the ARTC proposal as an attack on the profession because they feared it would create an oversupply of teachers that would drive down the salary level and occupational prestige of teachers. To communicate their concerns to the large public, as mentioned above, union leaders put paid advertisements in the media (e.g., Fulton, 1983, August 28), supporting the current system of teacher preparation, proposing a substantial salary raise for teachers as a way for attracting young bright students into the profession, and attacking the states “irresponsible” actions.

According to Carlson (1990, 2004), it was also economic capital—NJEA officials were led to believe that in exchange to their cooperation the state would offer them a considerable share in the operation (and revenues) of the ARTC training centers—that helped convincing the NJEA to cease its criticism and start to support the policy.12

Other opponents to the alternate route and UTPR were teacher educators and the union that organized most of them, NJFT.13 For teacher educators, the two proposed policies were a direct attack on their knowledge-base of how to prepare teachers (cultural capital) and employment prospects as university faculty (economic capital). All the while, there were other agents supporting these reforms for the very same reasons. Top state officials like the chancellor of higher education and university presidents thought that there were too many teacher educators in the system and were looking to use the diminishing demand for education courses (recall the cap that was put on the number of education courses allowed to be taken by students aspiring to become teachers as part of the new UTPR regulations) as an excuse to close down departments of educations, wipe out faculty positions in education, and transfer those lines to more prestigious and profitable fields like business, engineering, or computer sciences (Carlson, 1990).

Business groups were also important stakeholders that had vested interest in these policies. Their involvement, however, was generally behind the scenes. Carlson comment on the connection of the state with them, is thus illuminating,

Before they [the state] made the announcement [about the ARTC] they were meeting with business groups and telling them about it . . . they did not meet with us [teacher educators]. Initially, I confronted the commissioner about
this, because I said I know you have met with the business groups and he said, no, we did not. And I said, well you did, because one of the business people, after the meeting, called me to let me know that you were meeting with business groups. And he [Commissioner Cooperman] said, OK we were meeting with some of them. So they were softening the business community trying to get them, to support it. (K. Carlson, personal communication, August 4, 2004)

Teacher educators, who had a clear interest in stopping these proposals, did not possess sufficient economic capital to back their resistance. The NJFT was a relatively small organization with no capacity to fund a large, visible public campaign in support of the status quo. Other organizations, like the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE; 1984), offered small monetary support to organize a call in support of the resistance of New Jersey’s teacher educators to the state’s initiatives (Carlson, 1990; Carlson & Silverman, 1985). Carlson (K. Carlson, personal communication, August 4, 2004) also recalls, “Deans of Ed. in the state . . . they were meeting monthly to talk about this and they were all agitated about it.” In general, however, teacher educators were unorganized and under-funded, which compromised their capacity to be heard or listened to.

**Social Capital and Education Reform**

Bourdieu (1986) provided the first contemporary definition to social capital, one which is tightly aligned with his broad political economic theory. Social capital, he argued, is

> the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possessions of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition—or on other words, to membership in a group—which provides, each of its members with the backing of the collectivity—owned capital, a “credential” which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word. (p. 248)

Like other forms of capital, social capital can be accumulated based on the size of social networks and the agent’s capacity to effectively mobilize those networks. As such, social capital can be an important asset in political processes like educational policy-making. When social agents (either individuals or groups) know, value, and trust each other, their relationships can be beneficial for both sides. Coleman (1988) argued this point with the example of the Jewish community of diamond dealers in New York. This
community, he suggested, is a close collective of members who use their trust in each other and the fear from severe sanctions (in case of deviance) as a catalyst for developing effective business ties. The closest concept that may demonstrate, more or less, this principle in politics is the idea of a coalition. Coalitions can be built on shared, short- or long-term interests, and sometimes—if two agents also trust each other—their partnership can become even more beneficial, optimizing their capacity to hold power. The same notion, however, goes the other way around: if agents do not know or have access to each other and cannot agree on shared interests and/or do not trust each other, their chances to build a beneficial partnership/coalition are low and the potential for rewards in terms of power are minimal. In other words, although it is important to analyze instances where social capital helps agents gain power, it is also revealing to understand situations in which the potential for power is not realized.

This last notion is helpful in conceptualizing the relationships among the social agents of the teacher education establishment in New Jersey (the loosely coupled alliance of teacher unions, educational administrators, and teacher educators that constituted the orthodoxy of the field for many years). Indeed, the state initiative that proposed the alternate route and teacher preparation reforms demonstrated how fragile that alliance or orthodoxy was in New Jersey. When the state challenge was posed, every social agent in the orthodoxy tried to find the best way to preserve its power, independent from the coalition that he was part of. The NJEA, which opposed the reforms at the beginning, changed its mind and supported the plan after realizing that the reforms would not be all that harmful to them. Edith Fulton, NJEA President at that time, insisted that the union had changed its mind because the administration revised the initial proposal based on the union’s demands—“we were the movers and changers of the program [ARTC] . . . this is what we pushed them to do. We are responsible for this” (E. Fulton, personal communication, August 8, 2004). Even if this interpretation is accurate, the governor’s support of a minimum salary for teachers, and a possible agreement on rewards for the teacher union should it support the reforms, probably acted as an additional incentive for the NJEA to withdraw from the struggle (Carlson, 1990, 2004). The educational administrators supported the state reforms as well. They did not see the state policies as a threat but rather as a vehicle that would help them achieve more flexibility and control in the teacher recruitment process (Carlson, 1985). On the other side of the aisle, the NJFT and the teacher educators, those who would be hurt most by the reform were left alone without much economic or social capital.
This stream of events is not surprising. The teacher education establishment was never really successful in consolidating a solid professional alignment, like the one existing in medicine or law (Crowe, 2008). The most notable attempt to achieve this goal was during the 1950s and 1960s when teacher educators and teachers worked together to develop an inclusive and cohesive professional network through the National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards (TEPS) and the establishment of the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). But even this attempt, as Angus (2001) noted, never matured into a coherent professional alignment that could have yielded high volumes of social capital. Despite these potential benefits (in terms of power), the struggle over educational policy in New Jersey resonates with the historical pattern of chronic fragmentation among the teacher education establishment, a pattern that has led to a loss of social capital which in turn made teacher educators more vulnerable to challenges of agents like the state. A comment by the NJEA president illustrates this professional fragmentation and mistrust, “that’s kind of my rove with college professors. It’s all theory, because they never taught in a K-12 classroom. They teach theory and we teach reality” (E. Fulton, personal communication, August 8, 2004). Later, the same fragmentation allowed the state to propose and implement an alternate route for educational administrators as well. This time, not surprisingly, the educational administrators stood alone trying to make their case against the reform but failed to do so. One might imagine, in the tradition of the objective possibilities raised by Max Weber (1952) that a coherent alliance between the social agents of the orthodoxy could change the field’s development. It is feasible that a coherent alliance among the agents would yield substantial social capital, which could have been used to resist more forcefully and successfully the state’s intervention.

**Cultural Capital and Education Reform**

Cultural capital played a significant role in the struggle of state officials and teacher educators over the ARTC and the UTPR. Here I consider the differences in the volume of cultural capital (in this part I will refer mainly to what Bourdieu (1986) referred to as embodied and institutionalized cultural capital) that was possessed by the two groups, state officials and teacher educators.

As mentioned earlier, prior to the 1980s the state used to hold the formal responsibility over teacher preparation and certification, but rarely exercised it. During the 1980s, this balance was interrupted as state officials started to claim more control. How were they able to do that?
One crucial component in the state officials’ claim for power was based on the premise that they identified themselves as educators, not simply as politicians who cared about education. The three major figures that led the state initiatives in teacher preparation and certification reform, Governor Kean, Commissioner Cooperman, and the Director of Teacher Certification Klagholz, were teachers and had graduate school experience in education. However, their professional trajectories never positioned them in the orthodoxy of the teacher education establishment. Much of that can be explained by their embodied and institutionalized cultural capital.

Consider Governor Kean, who taught for several years in the same private boarding school that his father attended and where he spent 6 years from the age of 12. A Princeton graduate and a son of a wealthy U.S. Congressman, Kean left his teaching position to work on his PhD at Teachers College, Columbia University. He did not complete his studies and went on into politics. For a while, he owned a real-estate business, but his political instincts drew him into the political arena of New Jersey where he became an active legislator and the governor who was elected with the smallest margin in the history of New Jersey. As what would be called today a moderate, Republican Kean believed

> in limited government and a reverence for fiscal discipline . . . I believe that the private sector, in almost every instance, can do things better than the public sector . . . . In general, my political philosophy is that government ought to stay out of people’s lives as much as possible. (Kean, 1988, p. 40)

This argument for small public bureaucracies and support of privatization was part of the neo-liberal wave of the 1980s, which faced resistance from teacher educators and teacher unions. Kean, however, did not fall into the trap of positioning himself against the teacher education establishment. Instead he kept reminding everyone of his own background as an educator:

> I have been part of the reform movement, viewing the problems as a member of the most distinguished policy commissions, and getting another perspective in countless hours spent with teachers and students. Because of my background as a teacher, I had thought about education for twenty years before I became governor. So when I assumed office, the issue naturally became my top priority. (Kean, 1988, p. 209)

Although being governor positioned him well to push the reforms, it was not enough. It is rather the claim, I argue, of being part of the field and having a stake in it that provided Kean the legitimacy that was needed to
embark on his struggle to reshape public education, for his background meant that Kean had certain embodied and institutionalized cultural capital that was related to the field. Without that capital, Kean might have been dismissed by the teacher unions and teacher educators and remained an insignificant challenger to the orthodoxy. His distinguished family, his wealth, his elite education in a small boarding school, and his academic credentials from two Ivy League colleges made Kean a tough competitor. This meant that the orthodoxy had to face somebody from its own field who was raised and socialized in a way that endowed him with the highest embodied and institutionalized cultural capital.

As a result, the ideas, perspectives, and standards that Kean embraced were different from those held by the teacher education establishment. Kean’s description of his term as the chairman of the assembly’s education committee reveals much of this disjuncture between the governor and the establishment:

Educators were calling for a move away from the basic curriculum and for new programs to allow students to realize what was regarded as more of their innate creativity. “Access” and “equality” were the big themes, as colleges and universities lowered standards to allow in more students. High school students were given almost unlimited choice in curriculum, which naturally included frill courses. Homework assignments became less frequent. And in some schools, walls between classrooms were torn down, to create what was thought to be a more open and relaxed learning environment.

It was a time of grand and good intentions and big mistakes . . . . By 1981 [he concludes] . . . disillusionment with the schools was widespread . . . . Our country had made great progress politically, economically, and technologically. The suggestion that education, the underpinning of all of the improvement, had gone backward really made me wonder how long the advance in other areas could continue. (pp. 215-216)

For Kean, it was the progressive tide of the 1960s that led New Jersey’s schools backwards. A new reform agenda for education was needed.

The governor’s plans to reform the UTPR and set up the ARTC caught teacher educators by surprise (Carlson, 1990). Teacher educators were not used to acting collectively and had no serious organization that would support any collective operation in their part. Nevertheless, their fundamental problem was the rapid deterioration in the volume of their cultural capital. Because they themselves did not have a strong, public leader, I will dedicate this part of the discussion to focus on their institutionalized cultural capital as a group.
Teacher educators maintained control over teacher preparation and certification for years because they successfully claim they had the knowledge to do that and because the department of education that held the formal power over certification supported them (Salmore & Salmore, 1993; see also Bestor, 1953, who made the same argument). Historically, this “professional” knowledge had shielded them during the 1950s and 1960s when they were criticized by serious academics like Bestor (1953) or Conant (1963) and during the public outcry after the launch of the Sputnik. However, 20 years later in New Jersey, this very professional knowledge, what Bourdieu would call embodied cultural capital and economists, like Becker (1976) would call “human capital,” was seriously challenged by state officials. Teacher educators understood this point, as one of their proponents, Hendrik Gideonse (1984), former president of the AACTE, articulated in a detailed testimony before the New Jersey state board of education: “in a curious way, the very concept of expertise and the way in which it is held is a fundamental issue in the policy debate now unfolding” (p. 2). Carlson (K. Carlson, personal communication, August 4, 2004) chose to describe the state officials’ disdain to teacher educators’ knowledge in a more straightforward manner:

Cooperman . . . always thought of himself as a very well educated man and better than people in education generally. People used to tease about his intellectual pretentious. So, I think part of this appeal for him [i.e., to adopt the UTPR reform] was that he could say more liberal arts makes people smart, education courses make them dumb, even although he took his doctorate in education [at Rutgers]

This understanding, however, came too late in the process, considering the fact that cultural capital (embodied and institutionalized) is obtained over long periods of time. As a result, teacher educators were unable to adopt their cultural capital in time to meet the new challenges.

David Labaree’s work, *The Trouble With Ed Schools*, is very helpful in clarifying the low status associated nowadays with teacher educators’ knowledge. In his introduction, Labaree (2004) argued that

Institutionally, the ed school is the Rodney Dangerfield of the higher education: it don’t get no respect. The ed school is the butt of jokes in the university, where professors portray it as an intellectual wasteland; it is the object of scorn in schools, where teachers decry its programs as impractical and its research as irrelevant; and it is a convenient scapegoat in the world of educational policy, where policymakers portray it as a root cause of bad teaching and learning. Even ed school professors and students express embarrassment
about their association with it. For academics and the general public alike, ed
school bashing has long been a pleasant pastime. It is so much a part of ordi-
nary conversation that, like talking about the weather, you can bring it up
anywhere without fear that you will offend anyone. (p. 2)

There are a few common explanations given to this institutional weakness
of teacher educators: (a) the background of teacher educators and their stu-
dents (Lanier & Little, 1986), (b) the nonacademic nature of their work and
their poor research capacity (Labaree, 2004; Lanier & Little, 1986), and
(c) teacher educators’ ideological dogmatism and refusal to accept criticism
(e.g., Conant, 1963; Hirsch, 1996; Ravitch, 2000; Tamir & Wilson, 2005;
Wilson & Tamir, 2008). These three elements work separately and together,
constructing teacher educators as a unique breed among academics with
inferior cultural capital in the institutional context of the academia.

In the case of New Jersey, this low cultural capital of teacher educators
was perceived both as incapacity and a vulnerability inviting the state to
step in. The governor who enjoyed higher volume of cultural capital com-
pared to that held by teacher educators used it to argue authoritatively that
the professional knowledge of teacher educators should be subject to rigor-
ous scrutiny and reform.

All the while, the governor and his commissioner of education were
cautious not to appear as acting in an unprofessional way. They established
a major professional committee, the Boyer Commission, to discuss and
answer only two questions:

1. What is essential for beginning teachers to know about the profession?
2. How do effective teachers teach? (Boyer, 1984, p. 15)

The members of the commission agreed not to comment on the proposal
to establish the ARTC, although it was clear that their work would inform
the policy. This meant that the state could use the commission’s work as a
“pure” professional artifact to enhance its own cultural capital, without
risking politicizing it.

The work of the commission was intended to lay out the infrastructure
and core content for a larger project—the establishment of a credible and
thoughtful alternative path into teaching. For such an ambitious plan, the
state needed to rely on the most credible professional knowledge (cultural
capital) of the field. Thus the individuals who were asked to be part of the
commission were described by state officials as the leading education pro-
essionals in the nation. It was led by the distinguished president of the
Educational Policy

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Ernest Boyer, and included the following additional nine members: David Berliner (University of Arizona), Frank Brown (University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill), Edgar Epps (University of Chicago), Emily Feistritzer (National Center for Education Information), Jay Gottlieb (New York University), Lawrence Lezotte (Michigan State University), Archie Lapointe (National Assessment Office, Educational Programs), Kathryn Maddox (Kanawha County Schools), and Barak Rosenshine (University of Illinois).

This list of names raises a few interesting issues to consider. First, if the list indeed represented the best minds in the nation, it is clear that the teacher education community of New Jersey did not have much to offer the Commission, as none of them was invited to participate. Another interesting aspect concerns the internal hierarchies of prestige within the teacher education establishment. Teacher practitioners and teacher educators did not have any representation in the Commission, whereas educational psychologists and educational administrators comprised the majority.

Carrying out this plan allowed the state to extend its weight and authority (symbolic capital) by drawing on the cultural capital that these professionals had to endow itself with high volume of cultural and symbolic capital. Klagholz (1984) explained the strategy to the state board of education:

[The Commission’s report] authors provide a sound base of research credibility and authority lacking in previous definitions. The fact that the Boyer report represents the consensus of some of the most respected educators and behavioral scientists in the country has contributed to its universal acceptance in all segments of the professional community. Some professional organizations have cited it as the best effort in recent years and they, along with other states, are using it as the foundation for their own standards. (p. 6)

Probably unaware of Bourdieu, Klagholz expresses here the importance of symbolic capital and why social agents are so eager to have more of it. One can also see here how social agents tried to stretch and maximize the capital that they possessed to gain additional benefits. Here, for example, Klagholz talks about a “consensus” and “universal acceptance in all segments of the professional community,” although it is clear that, by stating so, he is deliberately excluding many other “respected educators” from the debate. In sum, this example demonstrates the way in which the state has decontextualized and repossessed, skillfully, the cultural and symbolic capital of respected professionals to further its agenda in a highly contested arena.
Teacher educators in New Jersey tried to resist the state’s intervention in two ways. First, they tried to approach their universities and colleagues hoping to receive their support, which—if not driven by a sense of collegiality—would grow out of a concern from a potential similar overriding of academic freedom by the state that may occur to them in the future. For example, in a letter to Chancellor Hollander, the state’s highest officer of higher education, Carlson (see Carlson & Silverman, 1985), the associate dean of Rutgers School of Education and a prominent voice among teacher educators who sought to block the state initiative, wrote relatively early in the process to warn the chancellor of the “anti-intellectual” nature and “disingenuousness” of the policy. Carlson himself admitted later that these attempts were not successful vis-à-vis the state machinery. In public, senior higher education officials paid lip service to the notion of academic freedom, saying that changes in the curriculum of teacher education training programs should be decided by the university (and under the higher education department mandate) and that proposed centers for the training of ARTC teachers should be maintained by university faculty. All the while, in private, higher education officials supported the reform because they were looking to replace unneeded education professors with faculty in high demand areas. This fact was revealed in a bitter letter sent by Commissioner Cooperman (see Carlson & Silverman, 1985) to Chancellor Hollander where Cooperman expressed his disappointment with the chancellor’s dishonesty:

In our discussions with you [Hollander] and your staff, other issues have consistently come up which do not relate to certification. For example, over and over again you have described the problem of the number of tenured faculty members in education programs which have low enrollments. These faculty members, you have said, tie up the resources of the college without generating tuition revenues and therefore prevent the institutions from hiring new faculty in “growth” areas. (quote from Carlson and Silverman’s (1985) appendix, as taken from the original letter sent by Cooperman on September 20, 1984)

The failure of teacher educators to mobilize support from the higher education community (their biggest potential source of social and cultural capital) was one of their great losses. However the importance of this social capital rested primarily in its potential impact on teacher educators’ cultural capital. In other words, if they won the support of other professors (who, on average, enjoyed higher volumes of cultural capital), they could have used it to enhance their own cultural capital.20

Second, teacher educators tried to organize and respond through their union, the NJFT, and through their professional associations, New Jersey
Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (NJACTE), and AACTE (Carlson, 1990; Klagholz, 2000). In these professional circles of teacher educators at the state and national level, the ARTC proposal raised concerns and was widely condemned (see, for instance, the position of AACTE Task Force on Teacher Certification and alternative routes, as published in the organization’s professional journal, *Journal of Teacher Education* [1984]). Nationally prominent figures in the teacher education establishment like Gideonse (1984) publicly condemned the plan and actively participated in the struggle against it. A group of teacher educators from Rutgers Graduate School of Education compiled and published a detailed document titled, *An Analysis of the Proposal by the New Jersey Education Department for an Alternative Route to Teacher Certification*, in which they laid out a detailed analysis of the potential pitfalls of the state’s plan (Carlson et. al., 1983). Teacher educators tried desperately to block the reform also by appealing to the public at large through columns that they sent to New Jersey’s prominent newspaper, the *Newark Star-Ledger*. By all accounts, this resistance of teacher educators to the ARTC and UTPR initiatives was fierce. Nevertheless, their critic provided “more of the same,” that is, they reiterated and emphasized the negative portrayal of teacher educators as a small interest group trying to defend its turf vis-à-vis the altruistic, even if to some extent uninformed, attempt of the state to improve teacher’s quality. Teacher educators were not willing or able to introduce anything new that would challenge the amalgamation of economic, cultural, and symbolic capital that fuelled the state proposals and thus were not able to elevate and strengthen their own lowly cultural capital.

**Re-considering the Value of Capital in the Field of Educational Policy**

So far I have discussed the forms of capital that were employed by the different agents in the field of education. Now I would like to conclude by considering the changing relationships among these capitals. This step might help clarifying the internal hierarchy among the various capitals in the field of education as reflected in each capital’s rate of exchange.

When agents share more or less a similar interpretation of a capital’s value, the transaction system within the field tends to be relatively stable (i.e., there are relatively clear expectations regarding to the rewards assigned for a given capital volume). This also means that when agents invest in one type of capital, they have a good chance of enjoying the rewards they had in mind when they initially invested in it. For example, it was common for years that those who earned their PhD in education and
became teacher educators in universities enjoyed the highest professional authority on issues concerning the content and character of teacher preparation. It has been the relative autonomy (and stability) of the field of teacher education that was able to preserve this (relatively high) value of cultural capital possessed by the teacher educators.

Nevertheless, when some members, from within the field and/or others who used to be external to the field, feel that there are better ways to achieve the big goals that they have in mind for the field (e.g., improving teacher quality), they might slowly depart from the old conventions they used to support in the past and adopt, instead, new types of knowledge, strategies, and solutions to effectively achieve their aims. They become, what Bourdieu called, the heterodoxy. In such conflictual environment, the values attached to certain forms of capital depend on the agents who are evaluating the said capital. In New Jersey, this meant, for example, that the professional knowledge of teacher educators would be highly praised by segments of the education establishment community, while being held at the lowest status among state officials.

The picture gets even more complicated, sometimes, when new types of capital enter the field. In our case, it happened during the 1980s when the state poured substantial economic and cultural capital into the field of education forcing the various agents in the field to reconsider the values attached to each capital in the field.

So how can one make sense of this picture of a seemingly ordered chaos? Which capital is worth more? And if we have several interpretations regarding to the value of a single form of capital, which one carries more weight?

I suggest that when the data are considered as a whole (regarding to the various forms of capital), it was the amalgamation of cultural, symbolic, and economic capital for state agents and cultural capital for teacher educators that seemed to have the most impact on the social positions of their holders. And in the clash between the two, after considering the outcomes of the battle (i.e., the successful implementation of the two policies by the state), it was cultural and economic capitals that enabled state officials to acquire the power they sought.

This transformed hierarchy of capitals was shaped by the new forms of capital that were pouring into the field, in particular economic and cultural capital and a process of capital discreditation. Because this article already considered the impact of the new forms of capital, I would like to devote the last part of the discussion to the process of capital discreditation.

Bourdieu (2005) and Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) argued that one of the most common strategies of a heterodoxy was to discredit the capital held by the orthodoxy to legitimize its rule. The reasons and advantages for
employing such strategy in part of the heterodoxy are clear. Discrediting provides the heterodoxy a chance to tip the balance of power by rhetorically establishing a viable alternative to the current version of capital held by the orthodoxy. Sometimes ideas alone can be enough to establish that alternative and thus force a change in the distribution of power in the field. In our case, the state of New Jersey worked fervently on discrediting the major capital (cultural) that was held by their opponents (teacher educators) and portrayed it as weak and inconsistent. For example, Cooperman (1984, September 20) wrote

I think that I have made my position on the proliferation of weak education courses clear. A major thrust of my teacher education initiative has been to make forceful public statements on the issue. During the past year, [1984] I identified 120 such courses and publicly exposed their titles, their inconsistencies, and their weaknesses. This public assessment was necessary and extremely controversial. (p. 3)

This is but one example of the continuous attacks by state officials aimed at discrediting teacher educators’ knowledge and skills. By discrediting the cultural capital held by teacher educators and establishing an alternative form of capital (through the work of the Boyer Commission), the state was able to lower the value of teacher educators’ cultural capital, destabilize the longstanding structure of power, and ultimately redistribute the positions of power in the field.

Concluding Remarks

The consolidation of capital, particularly economic and cultural (and as a result symbolic), in the hands of state officials during the 1980s, changed the balance of power in New Jersey’s field of educational policy. This transformation is substantial, especially in light of the historical weakness of New Jersey’s central government. During the 1980s, the State of New Jersey was able to generate, for the first time, considerable economic resources, which were funneled into education. I have emphasized the very active court rulings on issues of resource allocation and educational inequities that forced the state to step in and equalize districts’ disparities and the governor’s background and inclinations as major reasons for that. The sudden influx of economic resources was accompanied by state’s demands for greater control on the field of teacher education. Governor Kean, with his education agenda and genuine interest in the field of education, was able to make the first move
in putting the state back into the field. However, to deal with the specifics, the state needed to find relatively quick and sophisticated ways that would enable a significant elevation of its symbolic capital. In other words, the state needed to gain people’s respect and legitimacy in its intellectual/professional capacity and genuine commitment to create a positive change that would benefit the general public. Thus the state spent substantial resources (economic capital) on establishing tools (e.g., tests) for assessment/evaluation of teachers, teacher preparation programs, and on students that would provide informational capital and reached out for professional knowledge (cultural capital) of prominent educators to enhance its symbolic capital.

Over the years, the ARTC of New Jersey has become a model of successful state intervention. Today almost every state has at least one ARTC. What used to be seen two decades ago as no less than a casus belli for the education establishment, has become a natural part of teacher education. It is revealing to consider the political struggle of New Jersey, when trying to conceptualize and analyze the power structure of the field of educational policy today. Having such a historical context in mind could facilitate a more informed discussion on critical questions concerning the hierarchical structure of the field of educational policy, what forms of capital constitute power and legitimacy in the field, and to what extent the current power arrangements in the field allow for democratic procedures and spirit to thrive.

Appendix 1

Method

This research is based on data that were collected from New Jersey state archives, several semistructured interviews with key participants in the struggle over teacher certification, and research documents published by teacher educators of New Jersey.

In my archival search, I reviewed approximately 75,000 pages of files concerning education from the governor’s office, the special assistant of education, the policy director, and the governor’s chief of staff; the files concerning alternate route to teacher certification and the UTPR were of particular interest to me. Documents included policy proposals, meeting memos, and internal correspondence. They documented the policy-making process from its inception (as a one sentence note from the chief of staff to the governor), going through the first drafts of the alternate route policy, the committee’s work and recommendations, meetings and correspondence regarding the struggle, numerous announcements to the media, and—at last—the policy as it was approved by the state board of education.

(continued)
I conducted several semistructured interviews to clarify details and issues concerning the perspectives that different groups have advocated during the struggle. Among those I interviewed were the NJEA President, Edith Fulton (who served as president during the 1980s, and served additional term during the 2000s), a professor at Rutgers University, Kenneth Carlson (a leading figure among the teacher educators of New Jersey during that time), and Governor Kean’s education speech writer, Chris Riemann.

Last, I reviewed research that was written about the creation of the program as well as numerous manuscripts and documents that were published by teacher educators and New Jersey Federation of Teachers (NJFT) officials and reflected their perspective of the policies.

Data analysis

I began by immersing myself in the data, familiarizing myself with what was there. In the back of my mind, I intended to focus the analysis on three forms of capitals—economic, social, and cultural—which Bourdieu (1986) defined as the most comprehensive and important in his seminal The Forms of Capital. After I had a clear picture on the content of my data, I went back to the data and tried to sort it conceptually in terms of these three notions of capital. I used the various sources of data to clarify questions: Who were the main players involved in the policy-making process and how were they stratified in the field in terms of the power they possessed? What issues were raised in the discussions over the policies and how were they related to the different forms of capital? How did these policies evolve over time? How could the four forms of capital explain their final shape? The narratives compiled from the different sources were then used to shed light on the transformation of power and redistribution of capital among the various agents of the field.

The “results” of this analysis do not take the form of a traditional empirical analysis in social science but are much more like a historical analysis in which I use both evidence that I found in the archives, the interviews that I conducted, and other scholarship on education politics, politics in New Jersey, and teacher education to flesh out an argument about the different forms of capital used by the various agents during this battle.

Notes

1. These ideological positions also seem to be aligned with the interests of the Heritage Foundation corporate funders.

2. Following Skocpol (1979), I use the term “state” or “state officials” to denote the state’s executive branch. In doing so, I embrace her classification, but reject her assertion that strong states are autonomous from society. I believe that states are a social construct that reflects and responds to segments in the social fabric (Mitchell, 1991).

5. This means, that state officials also controlled the type of data which informed members’ decisions. As a result, although this issue was not empirically studied, it would probably not be inappropriate to suggest that the board rarely challenged policy proposals brought by the state.
6. According to McDermott (2007), by 2001 “26 states had the power to take over school districts” (p. 78).
7. For a detailed description of the ARTC and UTPR, (see Tamir, 2006, 2008; Boyer, 1984; Cooperman et. al., 1983).
8. It is important to note that in New Jersey, as in most other states, teacher education programs at state funded colleges and universities have been subjected for many years to state regulations and control, especially compared to most other university professors (Goodlad, 1990; Labaree, 2004, 2005). Nevertheless, although constrained and pressed by state regulations, teacher educators usually served on tenure track positions and enjoyed some of the freedom held by university professors. The ARTC aimed to further and deepen the state’s control by establishing a teacher preparation alternative that would be fully accountable to the state.
9. Department of education documents refer to these teachers as “provisional” teachers and to the ARTC as the Provisional Teacher Program (PTP).
10. Smith (1991) argued that despite paying US$900 mentor stipend of their personal funds, provisional teachers received poor mentoring, support, and evaluation at school. His research concludes that the lack of appropriate state funding, together with tight school resources left the provisional teachers, especially in urban poor districts, with inadequate support. Nevertheless, findings show that during this period New Jersey department of education approved 98% of the provisional teachers for teacher certification.
11. For a fascinating analysis highlighting the troubling relationship of the ARTC and the standards-based reform movements to the dwindling status of educational foundations in teacher preparation, see Tozer & Miretzky (2005) and Tozer et al. (2006).
12. Readers should note that I have not been able to find any formal or informal sources that supported this claim.
13. NJFT has been the AFT affiliated union of New Jersey. Unlike the New York branch, NJFT enjoyed relatively minor support among K-12 teachers (NJFT controlled only the district of Newark), but was far more successful in organizing New Jersey’s teacher educators and professors in colleges and universities. In this struggle, NJFT supported a critical hard-line opposition to the state reform that could be associated with its more radical tradition.
14. For space limitations, this section seeks to highlight the missed opportunities of teacher unions, teacher educators, and higher education institutions to join forces and resist the state intervention. While it is clear that the state has used social capital to further its aims, the findings suggest (perhaps also because they are not sensitive enough to capture social capital) that such use was minor in its overall effects, when compared to economic and cultural capital.
15. It is important to note here that this is a conceptual analysis of the findings, not a normative judgment or suggestion of the author.
16. Embodied cultural capital relates primarily to the practices, norms, and codes of behavior that an individual or group experience and assimilate throughout one’s life. Bourdieu elaborated: “embodied capital [is] external wealth converted into an integral part of the person . . . . [which] cannot be transmitted instantaneously (unlike money, property rights, or even titles of nobility) by gift or bequest, purchase or exchange” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 244). Institutionalized cultural capital mainly refers to the independent power of credentials and academic certificates as objects of cultural capital that an agent can possess. For Bourdieu the
academic qualification, [is] a certificate of cultural competence which confers on its holder a conventional, constant, legally guaranteed value with respect to culture, social alchemy produces a form of cultural capital which has a relative autonomy vis-à-vis its bearer and even vis-à-vis the cultural capital he effectively possesses at a given moment in time. (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 248)

17. As I have indicated above, most of the actual fight over the policies that are the subject of this study was limited to teacher educators and state officials. Therefore, here I focus on these two groups.

18. By shielding, I mean that teacher educators were able to maintain their relative autonomy compared to the developments during the 1980s, which are discussed here. This does not mean that I am not aware of the fact that teacher education—compared to other academic units in higher education—was always considered a relatively subordinated discipline that was subjected to various demands put by state departments of education (e.g., Goodlad, 1990) and by the federal government.

19. The third, objectified, is dependent on the availability of economic resources, which teacher educators in New Jersey were also lacking.

20. Here I do not mean to imply that teacher educators are the only low status segment in academia. They are certainly joined by other faculty like those from nursing and social work. The faculty in these semiprofessions has always enjoyed lower status compared to their colleagues in the fields of mathematics, engineering, or philosophy.

21. See for example, the columns of Carlson (1985, November 10) and Soyka (1985, June 9).

References


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