

Critical Education

Volume 17 Number 3

August 18, 2026

ISSN 1920-4175

The Marketization of “Quality” Academic Capitalism and the Contradictions of Accreditation in Turkish Higher Education

Zelal Beyaz Karçal

Istanbul Nisantasi University

Beyaz Karçal, Z. (2026). The marketization of “quality”: Academic capitalism and the contradictions of accreditation in Turkish higher education. *Critical Education*, 17(3), 88-110.
<https://doi.org/10.14288/ce.v17i3.187281>

Abstract

This study critically examines how accreditation in Turkish higher education system functions as a tool of marketization and commodification within the framework of academic capitalism. Under the influence of neoliberal policies, accreditation carried out within the discourse of "quality assurance" restructure universities as entrepreneurial institutions open to global competition, leading to the commercialization of knowledge and the commodification of academic labor. Findings specific to Türkiye reveal concrete manifestations of these processes: (1) The accreditation process creates a competitive arena among universities where financial capital becomes the determining factor. (2) The standards imposed by national and international accreditation bodies subject universities to a continuous regime of surveillance and performance. (3) The overwhelming majority of accredited programs being in engineering fields reflects a "market-oriented higher education" model tied to industrial needs while simultaneously reinforcing interdisciplinary hierarchies. In conclusion, this study argues that accreditation processes, serve to deepen the marketization of higher education and reproduce social inequalities. As an alternative, it proposes the urgent development of an evaluation model centered on the principle of public responsibility, one that preserves academic autonomy and does not produce inequalities.



Readers are free to copy, display, and distribute this article, as long as the work is attributed to the author(s) and **Critical Education**. More details of this Creative Commons license are available from <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>. **Critical Education** is published by the Institute for Critical Educational Studies and housed at the University of British Columbia.

Linking Accreditation in Higher Education with Academic Capitalism

In the capitalist mode of production, which by its very condition of existence necessitates the commodification of all things, not only physical materials but also abstract entities such as knowledge, skills, and labor power can be commodified (Marx, 1975). The commodification of knowledge refers to the process by which knowledge loses its use value and transforms into a product with exchange value in the market. Similarly, the commodification of education occurs when knowledge is no longer produced to fulfill a need (i.e., for its use value) but rather becomes a service produced for exchange value. The commodification of education paves the way for both marketization and commercialization in this domain.

The marketization of education entails the subordination of goods and services produced in this field to market rules, leading individuals and institutions to base their plans and actions on market mechanisms (Özsoy, 2011, p. 126). On the other hand, the commercialization of education refers to the transformation of educational institutions, their ancillary products, and support services into commodities, as well as their central role in marketing and advertising campaigns (Aksoy, 2011, p. 11). While the commodification of education affects its mode of production, its marketization and commercialization influence its circulation and distribution.

In this context, the commodification of education is a consequence of the capitalist relations of production, which commodify everything. Although the commodification of education inherently leads to the marketization of educational services, the policies implemented post-1980 have significantly accelerated this process. During this period, collective structures that hindered market logic were dismantled (Bourdieu, 2009), while the state established and maintained an institutional framework based on free markets, property rights, and free trade (Harvey, 2015, p. 10).

In the restructuring process of capitalism over the last fifty years, similarly to all stages of education services, universities have transformed in line with neoliberal societal structures, adapting to global and local power dynamics. Unlike earlier stages of capitalism, where universities were not entirely independent of social relations, the current phase has seen higher education institutions become central not only to cultural and ideological reproduction but also to economic processes of capital accumulation (Sabit et al., 2001).

The neoliberal transformation of higher education systems globally has brought about a radical paradigm shift in the epistemological and institutional structures of universities, increasingly subjecting them to market logic. The theory of academic capitalism provides a critical framework for understanding the inequalities, market-driven encroachments, and institutional transformations in higher education. It reveals how universities have become institutions that commodify knowledge, engage in entrepreneurial activities, and adopt profit-driven behaviors. This transformation extends beyond university-industry collaborations, reshaping all aspects of education, from curriculum design to academic evaluation criteria. Thus, "academic capitalism" refers to the increasing determination of knowledge production, circulation, and evaluation by capitalist production relations.

Accreditation processes, conducted under the discourse of "quality assurance," have emerged as a key mechanism for integrating academic labor and knowledge into capitalist production relations. Since the 1980s, these processes have evolved into a regulatory regime that subordinates universities to market logic, eroding the public character of education and deepening

the commodification of knowledge (Bok, 2003). Particularly with the Bologna Process, standardized accreditation mechanisms in the European higher education claim to promote transparency and accountability while restructuring universities as "entrepreneurial institutions" open to global competition (Marginson, 2016). This transformation encompasses funding models, the organization of academic labor, and the reduction of education to a "service sector" measurable by market values (Brown, 2015), restructuring academic activities around economic efficiency (Shore & Wright, 2015).

In Türkiye, this process has paralleled the neoliberal transformation policies of the 1980s. The centralization of higher education began with the establishment of the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) in 1981 under the military junta, aligning with global standards through the Bologna Process in the 2000s. Mandatory accreditation practices, institutionalized with the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC) in 2015, have formalized the marketization of higher education. However, the political-economic dynamics underlying HEQC's accreditation processes and their multidimensional consequences—from the erosion of academic autonomy to resource inequalities—remain understudied.

This study employs a critical political economy lens to analyze accreditation mechanisms in Turkish higher education, combining theoretical frameworks with policy and institutional analysis. The methodology centers on document analysis of key policy texts (CoHE regulations, HEQC reports, accreditation criteria, and strategic plans) and historical institutional analysis to trace the evolution of accreditation systems from the 1980s to the present. Grounded in academic capitalism theory the research interrogates how accreditation processes operate as instruments of neoliberal restructuring, emphasizing their role in marketization, governance shifts, and the reconfiguration of academic labor. By synthesizing policy documents with theoretical critique, the study reveals the structural and ideological dimensions of accreditation in Türkiye's higher education transformation.

The study first presents the conceptual framework of academic capitalism and its connection to accreditation. It then traces the historical evolution of accreditation in Turkish higher education, discussing its contradictions through academic capitalism theory. Finally, it explores public, participatory, and democratic alternatives to market-driven accreditation regimes.

Academic Capitalism: Conceptual Framework and Key Arguments

Academic capitalism theory critically analyzes the integration of higher education institutions with neoliberal policies and market mechanisms. While rooted in critiques of neoliberal transformation since the 1980s, the term "academic capitalism" was first coined by Slaughter and Leslie in their 1997 work, "Academic Capitalism: Politics, Policies, and the Entrepreneurial University". They used the concept to highlight the commodification of knowledge production, the commercialization of research, and the transformation of academic labor, arguing that reduced state funding pushes universities toward external revenue streams, embedding market logic in academic practices (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997, p. 210).

Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) further systematized the theory in *Academic Capitalism and the New Economy*, defining it as the process by which universities and academics increasingly prioritize market-valued knowledge production, the commercialization of research funding, and the commodification of educational services. This repositions universities between traditional

public responsibilities and new economic realities, reshaping both institutional structures and academic work practices (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004, pp. 15–18).

Subsequent literature has expanded the theory's scope, examining the asymmetric effects of neoliberal policies in the Global South (Marginson, 2016); new forms of digitalization and commercialization (MOOCs, patent regimes) (Washburn, 2005); the precaritization and commodification of academic labor (Gill, 2010); the epistemological consequences of university-corporate collaborations (Mirowski, 2011). Critical pedagogy scholars (Giroux, 2014) and higher education policy analysts (Olssen & Peters, 2005) demonstrate how academic capitalism undermines universities' democratic missions by prioritizing market values over public goods. While some researchers frame these shifts as necessary for innovation and economic growth (Etzkowitz, 2008), contemporary debates reveal their problematic consequences: the post-COVID expansion of digital education's profit motives (Zemsky, 2021), persistent gender inequalities in academic labor (O'Hagan et al., 2016; Veijola & Jokinen, 2018; Thornton, 2013), and the perpetuation of colonial knowledge hierarchies (Takayama et al., 2016). Drawing on studies conducted around the theory, it is possible to identify six key arguments put forward by academic capitalism theories.

The first central argument in the academic capitalism literature is the transformative impact of neoliberal policies on higher education. Jessop (2018) argues that there are three main sources of the academic capitalism trend. The first of these is the influence of the 'knowledge-based economy' paradigm in the transition from Fordism to a new accumulation regime. This paradigm requires the restructuring of education and research activities to meet the needs of capital and the transfer of knowledge. Thus, students, faculty members and researchers become entrepreneurial carriers of intellectual capital. The second is that neoliberalism enables financialization and the expansion of its logic into education and research activities. The third is the cuts in public expenditures in these areas under the pretext of fiscal-financial crises (Jessop, 2018: 104). In this process, the restructuring of universities by states to align with market conditions has led to the erosion of institutional autonomy and the redefinition of education as a "service sector." Washburn (2005) explains this phenomenon through the concept of "University, Inc.," demonstrating how universities are increasingly managed with corporate logic, where academic decisions are made based on market values. Washburn's (2005) critique of corporatized universities aligns with broader New Public Management (NPM) reforms, which since the 1980s have reshaped public institutions through market logic (Hood, 1991). Under NPM, higher education has been steered toward efficiency, privatization, and performance metrics—trends evident in Washburn's discussion of universities adopting corporate governance models (Washburn, 2005, pp. 45–48; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997). This shift reflects NPM's emphasis on replacing traditional academic governance with managerialist structures, ultimately redefining universities as economic rather than social institutions (Power, 1997).

Under neoliberalism, discourses on education have shifted from a framework of needs and rights to one centered on market demands and preferences (Lynch, 2006). Universities have entered a transformation process where the primary concerns are market share, responding to commercial needs, economic returns, maximizing investment, and gaining a competitive advantage in the "global knowledge economy" (Shore, 2008, p. 282). Today, universities generate revenue not only through teaching but also by selling scientific inventions, leasing campus spaces, and even licensing their logos and other symbols (Bok, 2003, p.11). Autonomy is now understood in terms of universities' ability to sell their assets, equipment, and buildings or secure loans from

the market (OECD, 2003). Concepts such as "net operating profit" and "branding" have become normalized, with arguments that universities should now be listed among the world's major industries (Pelikan, 2019).

The second key argument of academic capitalism is the repositioning of universities as "entrepreneurial institutions" through higher education reforms that became widespread globally after the 1980s. In this process, universities have increasingly been evaluated based on competitive performance indicators (e.g., number of academic publications, patent applications, rankings in international league tables). Marginson (2016) defines this as the "global higher education market," emphasizing how competition among universities has taken on an increasingly commodified nature. This has created a new hierarchy system determining resource allocation, deepening the divide between research universities and other institutions. Marginson (2016) also notes that this process has led to significant transformations in the production and distribution of knowledge (pp. 563-565). Hazelkorn (2015) argues that global university rankings systematically distort institutional behavior by compelling universities to reallocate resources toward narrow, rankable outputs—such as research publications in elite journals—while neglecting teaching quality, local engagement, and mission diversity (pp. 88, 90). This pursuit of "world-class" status exacerbates internal inequalities, as funding concentrates in select departments or disciplines that align with ranking criteria, often at the expense of broader educational and societal goals (p. 121). Rankings thus act as a homogenizing force, privileging measurable "excellence" over institutional uniqueness or pedagogical innovation.

The third key argument concerns the commodification of knowledge itself. Within academic capitalism, the value of knowledge is increasingly determined by market conditions, leading to commercialization. Slaughter and Leslie (1997) argue that this process has materialized particularly through the proliferation of technology transfer offices and increased university-industry collaborations. The commodification of knowledge has significantly influenced universities' research priorities, favoring projects with short-term economic returns. This trend threatens funding for basic scientific research while also posing serious risks to academic freedom (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997, pp. 210-215).

The fourth key argument highlights the transformation of academic labor, where scholars are increasingly positioned as "intellectual entrepreneurs" subjected to performance-based evaluation systems. Münch (2014) emphasizes that this shift has led to significant changes in the quality of academic work. Early-career academics, in particular, face precarious working conditions due to pressures to publish and secure research grants. This results in academic careers being assessed primarily based on measurable outputs, often at the expense of scholarly depth (Münch, 2014, pp. 89-93).

The fifth key argument is the gradual replacement of public funding models in higher education with reliance on private resources, donations, and student tuition fees. Brown (2015) demonstrates how this shift has altered universities' governance structures and priorities. The rise of private universities, in particular, has turned education into a profit-driven sector. The pursuit of financial autonomy makes universities increasingly dependent on market conditions, posing serious threats to academic freedom. Brown (2015) notes that this process disproportionately affects disciplines such as social sciences and humanities.

Brown (2015, pp.122-126) demonstrates how neoliberal metrics systematically marginalizes humanities and social sciences by privileging quantifiable outcomes like

employability over critical thinking. This epistemic shift redefines knowledge as human capital enhancement, rendering non-utilitarian learning "illegible" within audit cultures. The paradox emerges as universities increasingly resemble corporations while failing to cultivate democratic competencies. Brown frames this transformation as neoliberalism's deliberate colonization of higher education's humanistic foundations. Accreditation regimes exacerbate this marginalization by institutionalizing neoliberal values - privileging quantifiable outcomes, market responsiveness, and utilitarian logic while pressuring disciplines like philosophy and literature to justify their existence through career relevance narratives.

The sixth key argument underscores the transnational nature of academic capitalism. According to Kauppinen (2015), the current transformation in higher education is rooted in the deepening global interplay between "knowledge capitalism" and higher education, transcending nation-state boundaries. Unlike traditional academic capitalism approaches, Kauppinen systematically examines how this process is being reconfigured through "global knowledge marketplaces." Kauppinen (2015) argues that international ranking agencies (e.g., THE, QS) create "commodified competitive fields" among universities. These fields have fueled a \$90 billion global student mobility industry (OECD, 2022) and a 240% increase in patent trading between 2000-2020 (WIPO, 2021). Contrary to the traditional narrative of the "retreating state," Kauppinen suggests that states are being repositioned as "strategic actors" in this process.

Accreditation and Academic Capitalism: Neoliberal Standardization, Competitive Hierarchies, and the Restructuring of Academic Labor

Accreditation can generally be defined as the process where "independent" organizations evaluate the extent to which higher education institutions or programs meet predetermined standards.

The historical development of accreditation in higher education has followed a trajectory parallel to the transformation of capitalist education systems. Emerging in the late 19th century in the U.S., accreditation practices became widespread globally after the 1980s, particularly in EU countries. With neoliberal transformation, accreditation bodies evolved from being mere overseers of educational standards into regulators of the "international education market" (Münch, 2014). This process has led to the dominance of Western-centric standards in the higher education systems of late capitalist countries. Furthermore, the particular assumptions embedded within American accreditation models regarding institutional organization and curriculum design often demonstrate limited applicability when implemented across diverse national educational contexts (Altbach, 2013).

By the late 1990s, the economic dimensions of accreditation became more pronounced. Today, accreditation, which plays a key role in integrating higher education into the global capitalist system, has transformed from a "quality indicator" into a tool that forces higher education institutions to commercialize and determines their market value.

Harvey (2004) argues that the increasing reliance of accreditation standards on market-oriented indicators such as student satisfaction, employment rates, and institutional efficiency forces higher education institutions to be managed like commercial enterprises. This process has also turned accreditation agencies into significant actors in the international education market (Münch, 2014), operating within the state-market-university triangle to standardize academic

education, knowledge production processes, and institutional/administrative activities (Harvey, 2004).

The connection between academic capitalism and accreditation processes in higher education can be understood through the structural changes brought about by neoliberal transformation. This relationship can be analyzed in four key dimensions: standardization and market discipline, the construction of competitive hierarchies, the transformation of governance models, and the transformation of labor.

First, accreditation processes function as a transformation mechanism that integrates higher education into global market logic, going beyond the discourse of "quality assurance." Olssen and Peters (2005) emphasize that this process paves the way for the commodification of knowledge (p. 327). By creating "performativity regimes," accreditation turns education into a quantifiable product (Ball, 2012, p. 112) and serves the institutionalization of commodification in higher education. The Bologna Process's learning outcomes approach, for example, has standardized curricula into marketable units (Shore & Wright, 2015, p. 427). While this facilitates universities' adaptation to market conditions, it undermines institutional autonomy and diversity, prioritizing standardization.

Davies and Bansel (2010) argue that while quality assurance mechanisms in higher education are presented as neutral and technical processes, they have in fact become instruments of neoliberal governmentality. Adopting a Foucauldian framework, they maintain that quality assurance systems, such as Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS) and Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), reshape academic labor processes and subjectivities under the guise of "improvement" and "accountability" discourses (Davies & Bansel, 2010, p. 241). According to Davies and Bansel (2010), quality assurance functions not through direct coercion but as a "productive power" mechanism that induces institutions and academics to internalize neoliberal logic through self-regulation (p. 247). For instance, while AACSB's standards for research outputs or ABET's requirements for measuring learning outcomes are presented as technical necessities, they actually impose market-oriented values (employability, efficiency). This reveals the ideological function behind quality assurance's legitimization as an "objective" tool (Davies & Bansel, 2010, p. 252). These systems transform not only institutional practices but also academic subjectivities. The culture of performativity turns academics into "entrepreneurial subjects" who constantly monitor and optimize themselves according to quality assurance indicators (e.g., EQUIS's internationalization criteria) (p. 250). This process alters the nature of academic labor, prioritizing documentation and compliance efforts over teaching and research activities (Davies & Bansel, 2010, p. 248).

Second, criteria set by international accreditation organizations like AACSB, EQUIS and ABET create a new market-based competitive arena in higher education, redesigning resource allocation. Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) describe this as the most fundamental operating principle of academic capitalism (p. 72). This mechanism privileges "elite" institutions in terms of resources and prestige (Marginson, 2016, p. 570) while distorting resource distribution.

Within Bourdieu's (1988) theory of academic fields, accreditation can be considered an institutionalized manifestation of the struggle for symbolic capital. Within the hierarchical structure of the academic field, the legitimacy criteria set by dominant actors gain institutional quality through accreditation processes. This process serves not merely as a technical

standardization mechanism but also functions to reproduce academic power and sustain symbolic domination.

Third, accreditation processes trigger a transformation that aligns university governance with a market-oriented model. Under the discourse of "transparency," accreditation erodes academic autonomy while increasing centralized oversight (Münch, 2014, p. 95) and bureaucratic burdens (Power, 1997, p. 123). The standardization of course designs by the UK's Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) system (Ashwin, 2020, p. 112) is a concrete example of this effect. This process subordinates academic decision-making mechanisms to administrative bureaucracy and renders democratic structures like faculty senates dysfunctional. The "institutional self-auditing" practices observed particularly in foundation universities essentially function as the "internalization of market discipline."

Today, public universities are viewed as components of 'the higher education sector' and segments of national or regional civil service systems. This perspective clarifies why they now fall under general civil service reforms. In parallel, private systems increasingly regard them as economic entities and part of the industrial landscape (Levine 2001; Slaughter and Leslie 1997). Given its growing scale and financial importance, higher education has gained greater political prominence. As a result, governments across the political spectrum have grown more attentive to higher education's costs, quality standards, and economic impact - particularly regarding graduates and research outputs. This suggests that while contemporary governance may employ more decentralized approaches than in the past, policymakers now seek to influence a broader range of higher education matters (Paradeise et al., 2009). The New Public Management (NPM) paradigm posits that public institutions - including state universities - should transform into "complete organizations" (Brunsson & Sahlin-Andersson, 2000), with clear goals and managerial capacities to operate as strategic actors.

In recent decades, higher education has undergone five major governance "revolutions" that have fundamentally transformed its traditional management and organizational principles: (1) Systemic integration: Higher education now includes a broader range of tertiary institutions under unified legislation, funding, and accreditation systems, replacing the older model of separate academic and vocational sectors (Guri-Rosenblidt et al. 2007). (2) Decision-making: Authority has shifted from senior academics to top-down, executive-style leadership, with institutional managers collaborating closely with external stakeholders (Maassen 2003). (3) Funding: Direct state allocations based on inputs (e.g., faculty/student numbers) have given way to performance-based funding (e.g., graduations, research output) and greater reliance on external research grants (Jongbloed and Vossensteyn, 2001; Lepori et al. 2007). (4) Quality assurance: Individual academic evaluation has been supplemented by institutional accreditation and national/supranational agencies, transferring power from local peer review to centralized bodies (Reale and Seeber, 2013). (5) Work organization: Academic work, once individualistic, now emphasizes teamwork due to cross-disciplinary funding requirements, departmental mergers, and structured research groups (Mohrman et al. 2007). Together, these shifts represent a radical departure from higher education's governance norms of 35 years ago.

Fourth, accreditation mechanisms lead to profound changes in academic labor processes. Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) note that this process repositions academics as "intellectual entrepreneurs." The decline in job security for faculty in non-accredited programs in the U.S. (Rhoades, 2021, p. 15) sheds light on the employment dimension of this process. This situation is a typical example of what Rhoades (1998) calls the "proletarianization of academia." Increased

teaching loads, diversified administrative duties, and intensified publication pressures transform academics into a workforce measured by multiple performance indicators. The precarious working conditions spreading among early-career academics are the most striking outcome of this new labor regime created by accreditation.

Fifth, the neoliberal agenda emphasizing competition, accountability, and audit (Hursh, 2005, p. 13) has led to changes in both practices and philosophical thinking in higher education. The culture of audit has become an effective tool in reshaping academic subjectivity and thought practices (Shore, 2008, p. 283). Particularly with the measurement of research outputs through metric systems, academics are subjected to increasing surveillance (Hammersley-Fletcher & Qualter, 2009, p. 373). These transformations manifest across a broad spectrum—from student-faculty relationships to pedagogical methods, from research priorities to the cultural fabric of universities (Lynch, 2006, p. 7)—deepening the tension between higher education's traditional functions and neoliberal expectations.

The Institutionalization of Academic Capitalism Through Accreditation in Turkish Higher Education

The historical trajectory of accreditation practices in Turkish higher education parallels the marketization dynamics predicted by academic capitalism theory. While the neoliberal decisions of January 24 were implemented under the coercive order established by the September 12, 1980 military coup, the reproduction of neoliberalism's market-oriented ideology necessitated the restructuring of universities. On November 6, 1981, the military junta enacted Law No. 2547, establishing the CoHE to regulate Türkiye's university system.

Initially, CoHE's role was marked by suppression and purges within universities, but over time, its function in creating market-oriented universities became more pronounced. The foundation for private universities was laid by CoHE's own leadership. Reports from the Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (TÜSİAD) in the 1990s (Gürüz et al., 1994) facilitated the early design—far ahead of Europe—of an entrepreneurial, flexible employment-based university model, with significant steps taken in this direction (Kaymak, 2013). During this period, the emphasis on the state's "regulatory" role aligned with Slaughter and Leslie's (1997) thesis of the "retreat of the state."

Although Türkiye's market-oriented university model began earlier than in Europe, developments in Europe, particularly through the Bologna Process, started exerting additional pressure on Türkiye. The 2000s witnessed the institutionalization of accreditation as Türkiye joined the Bologna Process. While COHE undertook some initiatives under the guise of "quality assurance" no national accreditation policy or strategy was introduced in higher education until 2001. The first external "quality standards" application in Turkish higher education occurred in the early 1990s, with the accreditation of engineering programs by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET).

The establishment of the Quality Commission under COHE in 2001 was a concrete indicator of efforts to adapt to what Marginson (2016) termed the "global higher education market." During this period, the founding of the Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Engineering Programs (MÜDEK, 2002) and the Evaluation and Accreditation Association for Arts, Sciences, Languages, History, and Geography (FEDEK, 2005) served to develop national accreditation standards while laying the groundwork for the entrenchment of what Ball (2012)

called "performativity regimes." The increasing number of universities obtaining ABET accreditation for engineering programs exemplified the early stages of knowledge commodification (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004) in Türkiye.

In 2005, the "Regulation on Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement in Higher Education Institutions" came into effect. Regulation of Academic Evaluation and Quality Development in Higher Education Institutions (YÖDEK) was established under CoHE to oversee its implementation. YÖDEK defined systematic processes and performance indicators for academic evaluation and quality improvement in higher education institutions. Accordingly, each university formed an Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement Board (ADEK) responsible for institutional evaluation based on YÖDEK's periodically updated Institutional Evaluation Model (Kalaycı, 2009, p. 631).

The post-2010 period marked a deepening of neoliberal governance with the mandatory enforcement of accreditation. In 2011, COHE's restructuring announcement highlighted five key themes—"performance evaluation and competition," "financial flexibility and diversified revenue streams," "institutional autonomy and accountability," "diversity," and "quality assurance"—demonstrating the adoption of a market-driven approach in Turkish higher education. These themes also structured CoHE's 2016–2020 Strategic Plan (CoHE, 2015).

CoHE's post-2015 vision for Turkish higher education, framed under six main headings, signaled a new phase in marketization. This approach necessitated new policies, institutional structures, and legal frameworks. The first step was the enactment of the Higher Education Quality Assurance Regulation, published in the Official Gazette on July 23, 2015 (No. 29423), which established rules for internal/external quality assurance, accreditation processes, and the authorization of independent evaluation agencies (HEQC, 2019). The Higher Education Quality Board (HEQC) was established under this regulation in 2015 and later reorganized per Law No. 7033 (July 1, 2017), which amended Law No. 2547. HEQC's mandate included conducting external evaluations, authorizing accreditation agencies, and internalizing quality assurance culture across institutions. This restructuring granted HEQC financial/administrative autonomy and independent budgetary status (Elmas, 2019).

The period following 2016 witnessed the systematic institutionalization of accreditation process in Turkish higher education, characterized by three key developments: First, the transition from program-based to mandatory institutional accreditation under HEQC's supervision, initiated through pilot implementations in 2016 and fully operationalized by 2017. Second, the formal alignment with European higher education standards through HEQC's admission to ENQA in 2021 and subsequent compliance with ESG 2015 guidelines, representing Turkey's integration into the European Higher Education Area's quality assurance framework. Third, the implementation of performance-based funding models, particularly through the 2019 Research Universities Initiative, which tied resource allocation to predefined quality indicators.

Table 1 summarizes the historical evolution of accreditation in Turkish higher education, contextualized within political-economic developments. The institutionalization process of accreditation in Türkiye has progressed through stages parallel to the country's neoliberal transformation. The foundational period (1981–2001) witnessed the establishment of CoHE under

post-coup authoritarian policies and the launch of operations by 21 “foundation universities”¹, beginning with Bilkent. Middle East Technical University’s (METU) application to ABET for accreditation of two engineering programs and the country’s accession to the Bologna Process can be interpreted as early indicators of market-oriented reforms. The AKP era (2002-) accelerated the commercialization of higher education through the establishment of MÜDEK, the creation of HEQC, and the operationalization of 33 accreditation bodies.

Practices such as the implementation of mandatory institutional accreditation and the conditioning of doctoral program openings on accreditation requirements have completed the institutional framework of academic capitalism. At the time this article was written, it was announced at the CoHE Inter-University Board Meeting that the main goal of CoHE is to increase the competitiveness of universities and that accreditation will be required for establishing academic units such as faculties, colleges, institutes, research and application centers (CoHE, 2025). It can be argued that current policies have fully integrated higher education into market logic through what Ball (2012) defines as “performativity regimes” of control mechanisms.

Table 1

Pivotal Moments in the Trajectory of Accreditation in Türkiye’s Higher Education

Period	Key Developments	Political-Economic Context	Impacts
1981-2001	- Establishment of CoHE in 1981 initiating centralized control - A portion of the cost of higher education services is being collected from students under the name of “fee” - Foundation of Bilkent University (1984) and 21 total foundation universities during this period - METU’s engineering faculty applied for ABET accreditation for two programs (1994) - Accession to Bologna Process (2001)	- Post-September 12 coup neoliberal education policies implemented “Quality assurance” discourse emerged in higher education through Bologna Process -First foundation universities established	- Decline in university autonomy; increased state oversight - First steps toward market-oriented accreditation - Deepening class inequalities in higher education.
2002-present	2002: Establishment of MÜDEK (first national accreditation agency) 2005: Creation of YÖDEK and ADEK 2007: YÖDEK admitted to ENQA 2015: Establishment of HEQC 2016: Launch of institutional accreditation pilot programs 2017: Mandatory external institutional evaluation by HEQC 2019: Research Universities Project implemented	- AKP’s rise to power deepened neoliberal policies - Accelerated commercialization of higher education under AKP - Number of foundation universities reached 75	- Widespread adoption of accreditation - Accreditation transformed into “marketing tool” for universities - Increased bureaucratic burden on institutions - Performance pressure on academic staff

¹ Although foundation universities operate as private universities in practice, they do not have the status of a private university in Türkiye. Foundation universities, like state universities, are “non-profit” institutions and can be established by decision of the Council of Ministers.

Period	Key Developments	Political-Economic Context	Impacts
2002-present (con't)	• 2021: Mandatory institutional accreditation for universities • 2024: Doctoral program applications tied to program accreditation • -As of 2025, there are 33 accreditation organizations (19 national and 14 international) approved by CoHE.	• "World rankings" became strategic priority • Public funding distributed based on performance criteria • Institutionalization of academic capitalism • Complete opening of higher education to market forces • Increased university-private sector collaborations.	• Commodification of academic labor • Accreditation costs marginalized smaller state universities • Intensified marketization of higher education.

Source: Created by the author.

Table 2 summarizes selected accreditation bodies in Türkiye and their functions in the institutionalization process of academic capitalism. The transformation of Türkiye's higher education accreditation system exhibits an increasingly diversified institutional structure, beginning with the establishment of MÜDEK in 2002.

It can be argued that program-based national accreditors (FEDEK, TPD) and the institutional accreditation model introduced by HEQC in 2015 serve more to entrench market mechanisms than to ensure "quality assurance." The accreditation criteria applied by HEQC (2021) in Türkiye rely on quantitative metrics such as student success indicators, graduate employment rates, and internationalization performance, compelling universities to reshape their institutional identities according to market values.

With the entry of international accreditors (such as AQAS and ACEID), accreditation processes have become a tool for global capital to penetrate higher education. Although international accreditation activities existed in Türkiye before AQAS, they were more limited in scope and discipline-specific. Pre-AQAS international accreditations (such as ABET and AACSB) were discipline-specific (e.g., engineering, business) and typically program-based, whereas AQAS introduced a multidisciplinary audit model by conducting both program and institutional accreditation. This has increased standardization, particularly in fields like social sciences and health sciences.

The high-cost and bureaucratic nature of AQAS processes has led major private foundation universities in Türkiye, such as Koç and Sabancı—affiliated with large capital groups—to use them as prestige tools while excluding most state universities. Unlike U.S.-based accreditors, AQAS has mediated the localization of European standards.

As a result, regulations such as YÖDEK, ADEK, Quality Assurance, Accreditation externalize the inspection and evaluation processes and connect them to private agencies. Resource diversification is based on commercialization, performance system, flexible labor and exploitation, and free education and job security are eliminated.

Table 2

Selected Accreditation Agencies and Their Functions in the Institutionalization Process of Academic Capitalism

Accreditation Area	Institution Name*	Affiliated System	Function in the Context of Academic Capitalism
Engineering Programs	MÜDEK	National	- Alignment of engineering education with industry needs. - Employability-focused curriculum revisions. - Promotion of US/European standards. - Curricula tailored to global tech companies' demands.
	ABET	International	
	ASIIN	International	
Medical & Health Sciences	TPD	National	- Rise in accreditation bodies amid healthcare marketization. - Alignment with global health industry.
	AHPGS	International	
	TEPDAD	National	
	ACEN	International	
	SABAK	National	
	HEPDAK	National	
Social Sciences & Humanities	STAR	National	- Social sciences framed as job-training - Humanities departments pressured to secure corporate sponsorships - Rewarding "employability" and "industry relevance"
Business & Related Programs	EQUIS	International	- MBA programs as "luxury products" (e.g., Koç University: €40,000+). - Corporate-led courses (e.g., Bilgi University: 30% by PwC). - Research redirected to corporate projects. - Partnerships like Sabancı University-Goldman Sachs.
	STAR	National	
	AACSB	International	
	FIBAA	International	
	IACBE	International	
Education Faculty Programs	ACEID	International	- Private school chain demands. - Pedagogical training becoming a certification industry.
	EPDAD	National	
Science & Literature Programs	FEDEK	National	Pressure on basic sciences to produce market value.
	ASIIN	International	
Vocational School Programs	PEARSON	International	Vocational education franchising.
Laboratory Accreditation	TÜRKAK	National	Corporate-driven R&D in universities.
Institutional Accreditation	YÖKAK	National	- Encouraging a market-oriented competition system. - Ranking universities with a commercial enterprise logic
	AQAS	International	
	AACSB	International	
	EQUIS	International	
	ACQUIN	International	

Source: The list of accreditation institutions recognized by HEQC as of 26.04.2025 was obtained from the official website of HEQC (<https://old.yokak.gov.tr/akreditma-kuruluslari/uluslararasi-taninan-akreditma-kuruluslari>). The types of accreditation given by these institutions, the fields they accredit, the number of accredited programs and institutions and the systems they are affiliated with were obtained from the official web addresses of the institutions.

* Agency for Quality Assurance (AQAS), Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation (FIBAA), International Accreditation Council for Business Education (IACBE), The Accreditation Agency in Health and Social Sciences (AHPGS), Accreditation Agency for Study Programs in Engineering, Informatics, Natural Sciences and Mathematics (ASIIN), Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN), Aviation Accreditation Board Int'l (AABI), The European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE), Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating (IAAR), The Accreditation, Certification, and Quality Assurance Institute (ACQUIN), European Association for Quality Language Services (EAQUALS), International Medical Education Accreditation Board (TEPDAD), Social Humanities and Basic Sciences Accreditation and Rating Association (STAR), Teacher Education Programs Evaluation and Accreditation Association (EPDAD), Health Sciences Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Educational Programs (SABAK), Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Nursing Education Programs (HEPDAK).

As of 2024, this multi-layered system, which has accredited over 1,000 undergraduate programs, has institutionalized academic capitalism across various fields—from engineering to medicine, from basic sciences to teacher training. The increasing transformation of accreditation into a 'market tool' also erodes the public nature of higher education and serves as a means of opening the academic sphere to capitalist production relations.

Figure 1 shows the number of accredited undergraduate programs as listed in the 2023 Higher Education Institutions Exam guide, recognized or authorized by the HEQC. As of 2025, there are a total of 208 higher education institutions operating in Türkiye, consisting of 129 public universities, 75 foundation universities, and 4 foundation vocational schools. As of 2024, the number of universities with at least one accredited undergraduate program is 116 in total, comprising 43 foundation universities and 73 public universities. The total number of accredited undergraduate programs is 1,209, with 808 in public universities and 401 in foundation universities. The number of universities with 10 or more accredited undergraduate programs is 42.

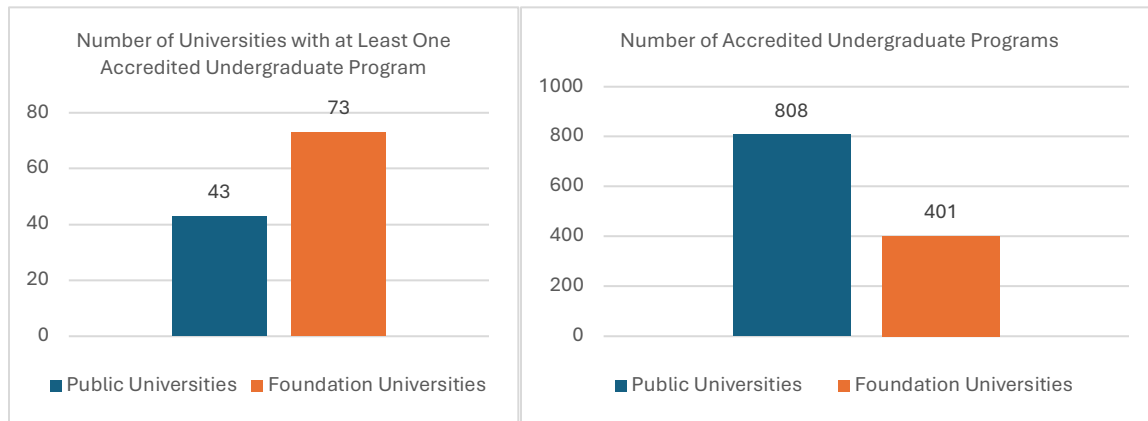


Figure 1. Number of Universities with Accredited Undergraduate Programs and Accredited Program Count (2024).

Source: CoHE University Monitoring and Evaluation General Report (2024, p. 37).

The data presented in Figure 2 reveals the change in the average number of accredited undergraduate programs in Türkiye between 2018 and 2023. The steady increase in the average number of accredited programs in state and foundation universities from 7.73 to 11.07 and from 5 to 9.33, respectively, from 2018 to 2023, generally reflects the universities' efforts to adapt to global competitive pressure. This increase has accelerated especially after 2021, which is consistent with the "CoHE's New Vision for the Future" approach shared with the public by the then CoHE President Erol Özvar (CoHE, 2021). The main lines of this approach are the basic dynamics of academic capitalism, such as "employment-oriented universities, academic performance, new models of university-industry cooperation, and internationalization in higher education."

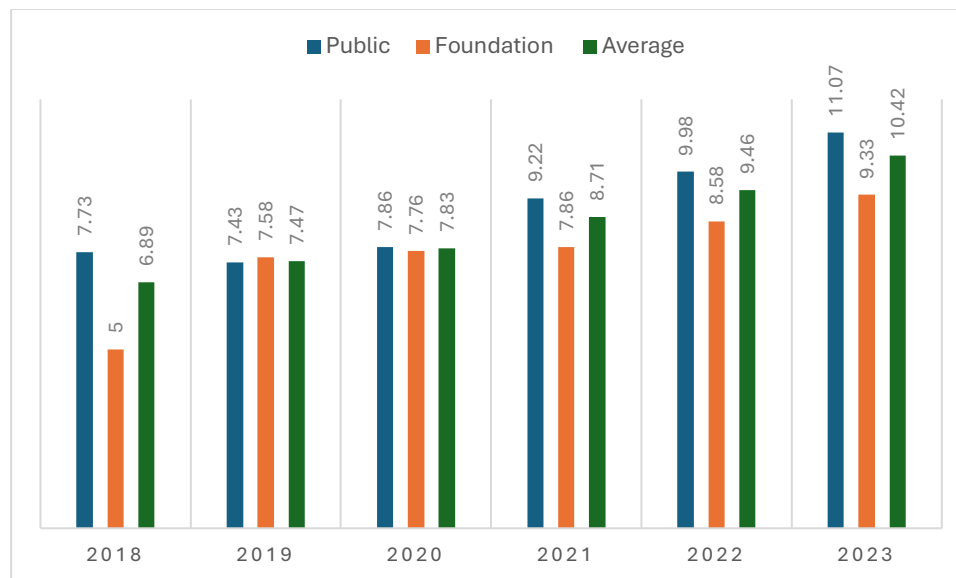


Figure 2. Change in Accredited Undergraduate Program Average Over the Years (2018-2023)

Source: CoHE University Monitoring and Evaluation General Report (2024, p. 38).

According to the CoHE University Monitoring and Evaluation Report (2024: 39), among the top 20 universities with the highest number of accredited undergraduate programs, Istanbul Gelişim University, a foundation university, ranks first with 56 accredited programs. Of these 20 universities, 6 are foundation universities and 14 are state universities. The notably high number of accredited programs (ranging from 27 to 56) at foundation universities such as Istanbul Gelişim, Yeditepe, Istanbul Aydın, Başkent, and Medipol—which rank prominently among the listed institutions—can be attributed to their ability to allocate substantial financial resources toward accreditation processes. These universities strategically prioritize accreditation as part of their institutional investment, leveraging tuition revenues and private funding to meet the demanding financial and administrative requirements of quality assurance bodies (e.g., HEQC, international accreditors). This situation is an example that overlaps with the "commodification of education" process, which is one of the fundamental dynamics of academic capitalism. On the other hand, accreditation processes reduce students to the position of consumers around "preferable" programs, while eroding the social egalitarian function of education (Marginson, 2016).

Figure 3 shows the development of discipline-based accredited program numbers in higher education between 2016-2020, according to the most recent Thematic Analysis Report published by HEQC in 2020. HEQC's (2020) data reveal that the disciplinary distribution of accreditation reflects a market-oriented hierarchy. As of 2020, it is striking that engineering program accreditations (347) nearly equal the total number of all other program accreditations combined (353). After engineering, the field with the highest number of accreditations is science and literature, which includes undergraduate programs such as chemistry, biology, and physics. This reflects a market-driven higher education model tied to industrial demands. In other words, it indicates that the market logic underlying quality assurance discourse directs universities toward "profitable" fields. On the other hand, these data demonstrate how the accreditation process, as part of neoliberal higher education policies, reproduces disciplinary inequalities.

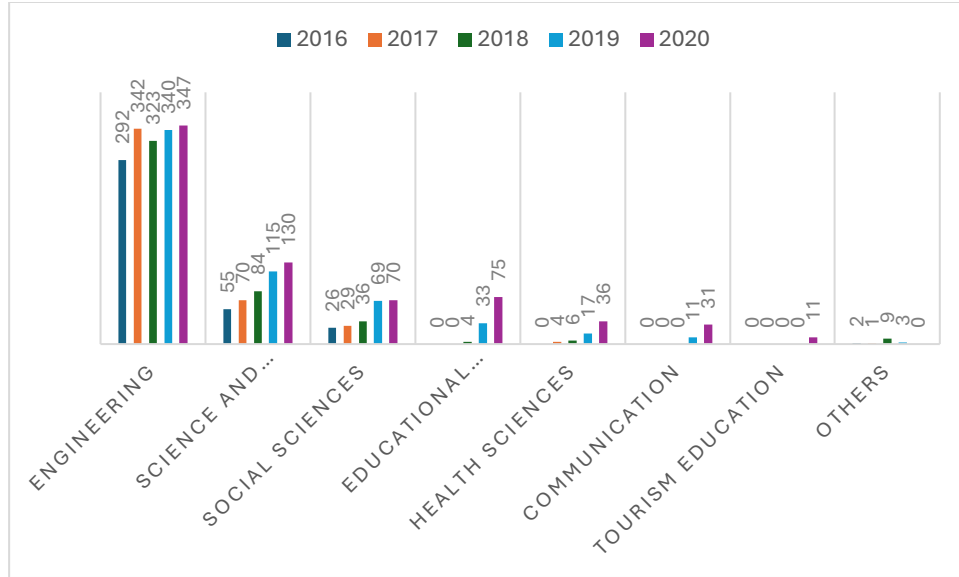


Figure 3. Number of Accredited Programs by field (2016-2020)

Source: HEQC Thematic Analysis Report (2020, p.8).

When accreditation costs are examined, it is seen that accreditation creates a competitive area where financial capital is the determining factor. Table 3 lists the accreditation application, evaluation, annual membership fees and accreditation period for selected accreditation organizations in Türkiye as of 2024. Accordingly, it is seen that accreditation periods vary between 3-6 years and that total costs vary significantly during this period. For example, while the estimated total costs for national accreditation organizations (HEQC, MÜDEK, FEDEK, TEPDAD) are in the range of 4,000-52,000 USD, these costs vary between 80,000-600,000 USD for international accreditation organizations (AACSB, ABET, EQUIS). It is also the case not a one-time cost, but rather an ongoing financial burden with annual membership fees, thus forming an important item in the budgets of universities in the long term. This situation weakens the autonomy of research by making universities dependent on corporate funding and forces them to turn to private sector projects to cover this cost.

Table 3

Department and Program Accreditation Fees of Selected Accreditation Agencies (2024/USD)

Institution	Duration (Years)	Application Fee	Assessment Fee	Annual Fee	Total Estimated Cost (5 Years)
HEQC	3-5	1.315- 3.945	5.260-13.150	789-1.973	13.151-32.878
MÜDEK	6	526-1.315	2.104-6.575	395-921	6.576-17.096
FEDEK	5	395-1.052	1.578-4.734	395-921	4.603-11.836
TEPDAD	6	1.973-3.945	7.890-19.726	1,315-2,630	21.042-52.604
ABET	6	9.000-15.000	30.000-70.000	3.000-7.000	80.000-200.000
AACSB	5	38.000-50.000	100.000-200.000	15.000-30.000	300.000-600.000
EQUIS	3-5	28.500-45.600	91.200-171.000	13.680-28.500	228.000-513.000

Source: Prepared based on data shared by accreditation bodies on their websites. Fees of national accreditation bodies are calculated as 1 USD = 38.02 TL as of 20.04.2025, and fees of European-based accreditation bodies are converted to US dollars based on 1 EUR = 1.14 USD. Total estimated cost: (Application Fee) + (Assessment Fee) + (Annual Fee × Accreditation Period).

Aktaş (2025) highlights that while universities in Türkiye face severe financial constraints, they are compelled to incur substantial expenditures for departmental accreditation processes, including periodic payments amounting to millions of Turkish Lira. The author warns that such expenses may push universities into further financial strain, particularly when resources are insufficient to meet even the basic needs of academic and administrative staff. According to Aktaş (2025), current accreditation practices risk undermining—rather than enhancing—institutional quality and may even hinder the achievement of core objectives. The existence of accredited departments that fail to enroll students exposes one of the contradictions in this process, suggesting that accreditation serves as a revenue-generating mechanism for certain actors rather than a genuine quality assurance measure.

The accreditation process positions accreditation institutions as market actors and forces universities into a constant financial dependency relationship. Based on Bourdieu's analysis of academic fields, it can be said that these processes turn into symbolic capital struggles among universities and marginalize institutions with limited economic resources. One concrete example of this is that Koç University, a foundation university affiliated with Koç Holding, is the only university in Türkiye with EQUIS accreditation. In addition, accreditation is used as a marketing tool, especially by foundation universities, and by reflecting accreditation costs as an increase in tuition fees, it further erodes the public nature of education. In this way, it deepens class differences in students' access to education, restricts social mobility, and turns education into a privileged area.

Accreditation processes in higher education in Türkiye are shaped by a multifaceted relationship with global imperialism, in line with similar dynamics in late capitalist countries. It is observed that accreditation mechanisms universalize Western-centered quality standards and push late capitalist countries into a dependent position in knowledge production. For example, while the criteria imposed by national and international accreditation institutions in Türkiye shape local education policies, these processes generally necessitate the internalization of Western epistemological frameworks and neoliberal governance models (Altbach, 2013).

This situation parallels the commodification of higher education and its integration into international rating systems, observed in countries like India and South Africa (Marginson, 2016). Connell (2007) demonstrates how the dominance of English and Western academic norms marginalizes local knowledge systems, exacerbating global inequalities in knowledge production (pp. 45, 212). In Türkiye, these dynamics manifest through accreditation practices that increasingly align higher education with global capitalist imperatives.

Conclusion

In the late phase of capitalism, knowledge acquires a central position in the process of capital accumulation. Likewise, the channels of knowledge acquisition and transmission are themselves commodified due to the sectoral expansion of the process of capital valorization, which is one of the defining characteristics of late capitalism. Due to this key position that knowledge has acquired in the field of capitalist production relations, the channels of production and transmission of scientific knowledge are increasingly becoming the subject of political struggle. From this perspective, accreditation is seen as an extension of capitalist production relations in the field of higher education, rather than a technical-neutral quality assurance system.

The historical course of accreditation practices in higher education in Türkiye clearly reveal the reflections of neoliberal policies in the field of education and the institutionalization processes

of academic capitalism. This study, which analyzes accreditation practices in the Turkish higher education system in the context of academic capitalism theory, has reached three main findings.

First, the accreditation process creates a competitive arena among universities where financial capital is the determining factor. In addition, the connections of accreditation institutions with global capital mediate the integration of higher education into international market dynamics. The increasing intervention of capital groups in the field of higher education turns universities into profit-oriented organizations, further eroding academic autonomy.

Secondly, the standards imposed by national and international accreditation bodies subject universities to a continuous inspection and performance regime. The standardization efforts of national and international accreditation bodies adapt curricula to market needs. While standardized quality indicators, performance criteria and market-oriented evaluation criteria weaken the autonomy of universities, they also lead to the separation of scientific production from social needs. On the other hand, evaluation mechanisms based on performance indicators transform academics into "intellectual entrepreneurs" and subject scientific production to market values. All of these accelerate the commodification process of academic labor, erode the social mission of universities and reduce collective knowledge production to individually measurable outputs. In the words of Brown (2015), the "ideology of measurability" condemns universities to performance indicators. The fact that accreditation costs consume a significant portion of the annual research budgets of state universities creates a barrier that prevents these institutions from fulfilling their basic functions and erodes the public nature of education.

Third, the fact that the overwhelming majority of accredited programs are in engineering fields reflects a market-oriented higher education model indexed to industrial needs and at the same time reinforces interdisciplinary hierarchies. The fact that "high market value" fields such as engineering receive much more accreditation than social sciences shows that knowledge production is subject to a market-oriented hierarchy. At the same time, it leads to the systematic marginalization of disciplines such as social sciences and humanities.

In conclusion, these findings reveal that the market-oriented logic behind the quality assurance discourse has transformed higher education into an area where neoliberal domination is institutionalized. This process erodes the public nature of universities, transforming them into competitive institutions indexed to the needs of capital, reinforcing the commodification process of education and scientific knowledge.

This study demonstrates that accreditation practices in Türkiye play a key role in the institutionalization of academic capitalism and argues that alternative evaluation models that will preserve the public nature of higher education should be developed.

In this context, it is important to discuss alternative models that will ensure that processes aimed at improving quality in higher education are carried out in a transparent and pluralistic manner, strengthen universities' self-evaluation processes, support academic freedom and university autonomy instead of standard control mechanisms, and include all components of the university in decision-making mechanisms.

In Türkiye, alternative initiatives such as the Free University (1994) and the Solidarity Academies (2016), which advocate for a free, scientific, and democratic university and strive to produce and share knowledge within a spirit of solidarity outside of formal educational processes and institutions, offer valuable experience. These initiatives represent a transformative critique of

the current global hegemony of academia, and their long-term impact depends on their ability to scale resistance through both local and international solidarity networks.

References

- Aksoy, N. (2011). Türkiye Kamu Eğitiminde Gizli Ticarileşme: Kurumsal Sosyal Sorumluluğun İşleyiş Biçimleri ve Eğitimi Ticarileştirme İşlevleri. [Hidden commercialization in Turkish public education: Corporate social responsibility and its function in commercialization of education]. *Eğitim Bilim Toplum Dergisi*, 9(35), 8-27.
- Aktaş, E. (2025). Yükseköğretimde akreditasyon tuzağı üzerine düşünceler. [Reflections on the accreditation trap in higher education]. *Güney Gazetesi*, 6 Ocak 2025. <https://www.guneygazetesi.com/yazi/4618/yuksekogretimde-akreditasyon-tuzagi-uzerine-dusunceler.html>
- Altbach, P. G. (2013). *The international imperative in higher education*. Sense Publishers.
- Ashwin, P. (2020). *Transforming university education: A manifesto*. Bloomsbury Academic.
- Ball, S. J. (2012). *Global education Inc.: New policy networks and the neoliberal imaginary*. Routledge.
- Bok, D. (2003). *Universities in the marketplace: The commercialization of higher education*. Princeton University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1988). *Homo academicus* (P. Collier, Trans.). Stanford University Press. (Original work published 1984).
- Bourdieu, P. (2009). *Sınırsız Sömürü Ütopyası: Neoliberalizmin Özü*. [Utopia of endless exploitation: The essence of neoliberalism]. In G. Akalın & U. S. Akalın (Eds.), *Neoliberal İktisadın Marksist Eleştirisi*. (pp. 23-32). Kalkedon Yayınevi.
- Brown, W. (2015). *Undoing the demos: Neoliberalism's stealth revolution*. Zone Books.
- Brunsson, N., & Sahlin-Andersson, K. (2000). Constructing organizations: The example of the public sector reform. *Organization Studies* 21, 721–746.
- Connell, R. (2007). *Southern theory: The global dynamics of knowledge in social science*. Polity Press.
- Davies, B., & Bansel, P. (2010). Governmentality and academic work: Shaping the hearts and minds of academic workers. *Journal of Education Policy*, 25(2), 241-258. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02680930903414270>.
- Elmas, M. (2019). *Yükseköğretimde kurumsal iç kalite güvencesi* [Institutional internal quality assurance in higher education]. HEQC. <http://yokak.gov.tr/heqcorganizes-meeting-on-internal-quality-assurance-system-in-higher-education-institutions-andqua-34>
- Etzkowitz, H. (2008). *The triple helix: University-industry-government innovation in action*. Routledge.
- Gill, R. (2010). Breaking the silence: The hidden injuries of neoliberal academia. In R. Flood & R. Gill (Eds.), *Secrecy and silence in the research process: Feminist reflections* (pp. 228–244). Routledge.

- Giroux, H. A. (2014). *Neoliberalism's war on higher education*. Haymarket Books.
- Guri-Rosenblidt, S., Sebková, H. and Teichler, U. (2007). Massification and diversity of higher education systems. *Higher Education Policy* 20(4):373–389.
- Gürüz, K., et al. (1994). *Türkiye'de ve dünyada yükseköğretim, bilim ve teknoloji* [Higher education, science, and technology in Türkiye and the world]. TÜSİAD Yayınları.
- Hammersley-Fletcher, L., & Qualter, A. (2009). From schools to higher education: Neoliberal agendas and the implications for professional autonomy. *Journal of Educational Administration & History* 41(4), 363–375. DOI: [10.1080/00220620903211570](https://doi.org/10.1080/00220620903211570)
- Harvey, L. (2004). The power of accreditation: Views of academics. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 26(2), 207–223.
- Harvey, D. (2015). *Neoliberalizmin Kısa Tarihi*. [A Brief History of Neoliberalism]. (A. Onacak, Trans.). Sel Yayınları. (Original work published 2007)
- Hazelkorn, E. (2015). *Rankings and the reshaping of higher education: The battle for world-class excellence* (2nd ed.). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hursh, D. (2005). Neoliberalism, markets, and accountability: Transforming education and undermining democracy in the United States and England. *Policy Futures in Education*, 3(1), 3–15. <https://doi.org/10.2304/pfie.2005.3.1.6>
- Jessop, B. (2018). On Academic Capitalism. *Critical Policy Studies*, 12(1), 104-109.
- Kalaycı, N. (2009). Yüksek öğretim kurumlarında akademisyenlerin öğretim performansını değerlendirme sürecinde kullanılan yöntemler [Methods used to evaluate teaching performance of academics in higher education institutions]. *Kuram ve Uygulamada Eğitim Yönetimi Dergisi*, 15(4), 625–656.
- Kauppinen, I. (2015). Towards a theory of transnational academic capitalism. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 36(2), 336-353.
- Kaymak, M. (2013, May 29). Üniversitelerin dönüşümü ve mücadelenin dinamikleri [The transformation of universities and the dynamics of struggle]. *Özgürlük Dünyası*, 241. <https://www.ozgurlukdunyasi.org/2013/05/29/universitenin-donusumu-ve-mucadelenin-dinamikleri/>
- Lepori, B., Benninghoff, M., Jongbloed, B., Salerno, C. and Slipersæter, S. (2007). Changing patterns and models of higher education funding: Some empirical evidence. In A. Bonaccorsi & C. Daraio (Eds.), *Universities and strategic knowledge creation: Specialization and performance in Europe*. Edward Elgar.
- Levine, A. (2001). *Higher education as a mature industry: In defense of American higher education*, In P. G. Altbach, P. J. Gumpert, & D. B. Johnstone (Eds.). Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Lynch, K. (2006). Neo-liberalism and marketisation: The implications for higher education. *European Educational Research Journal*, 5(1), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.2304/eeerj.2006.5.1.1>

- Maassen, P. (2003). *Shifts in governance arrangements: An interpretation of the introduction of new management structures in higher education*. In A. Amaral, V. L. Meek, & I. M. Larsen (Eds.), *The higher education managerial revolution?* (pp. 31-53). Kluwer
- Marginson, S. (2016). *Higher education and the common good*. Melbourne University Press.
- Marx, K. (1975). *Kapital I*. (A. Bilgi, Trans.). Sol Yayınları. (Original work published 1867)
- Mirowski, P. (2011). *Science-mart: Privatizing American science*. Harvard University Press.
- Mohrman, K., Ma, W. and Baker, D. (2007). The emerging global model of the research university. In Philip G. Altbach & P. McGill Peterson *Higher education in a new century*. Sense
- Münch, R. (2014). *Academic capitalism: Universities in the global struggle for excellence*. Routledge.
- O' Hagan, C., O'Connor, P., Myers, E. S., Baisner, L., Apostolov, G., Topuzova, I., Sağlamer, G., Tan, M. G., Çağlayan, H., (2019). Perpetuating academic capitalism and maintaining gender orders through career practices in STEM in 532 universities. *Critical Studies in Education*, 60(2), 205-225.
- OECD. (2003). *Education policy analysis: Chapter 3 – Changing patterns of governance in higher education*. OECD Publishing.
- OECD. (2022). *Education at a glance 2022: OECD indicators*. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/3197152b-en>
- Olssen, M., & Peters, M. A. (2005). Neoliberalism, higher education and the knowledge economy. *Journal of Education Policy*, 20(3), 313–345. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02680930500108718>
- Özsoy, S. (2011). *Bilginin Metalaşma Süreci: “Eğitimdeki yapısal dönüşüme ilişkin bazı çıkarımlar* [The Process of Commodification of Knowledge: Some implications regarding the structural transformation in education]. In F. Ercan & S.K. Kurt (Eds.), *Metalaşma ve iktidarın baskısındaki üniversite* (pp. 121-142). SAV Yayınları.
- Paradeise, C., Reale, E., Bleiklie, I., & Ferlie, E. (2009). *University governance*. Springer.
- Pelikan, J. (2019). *The idea of the university: A reexamination*. Yale University Press.
- Power, M. (1997). *The audit society: Rituals of verification*. Oxford University Press.
- Reale, E., & Seeber, M. (2013). Instruments as empirical evidence for the analysis of higher education policies. *Higher Education* 65(1), 135–151.
- Rhoades, G. (2021). *Academic capitalism in the age of globalization*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Sabit, A., Benli, F., & Akça, İ. (2001). Geç kapitalizm, yeni sağ ve yeni üniversite [Late capitalism, the new right, and the new university]. *Birikim Dergisi*, 142–143. <https://birikimdergisi.com/dergiler/birikim/1/sayi-142-143-subat-mart-2001/2334/gec-kapitalizm-yeni-sag-ve-yeni-universite/5116>
- Shore, C. (2008). Audit culture and illiberal governance: Universities and the politics of accountability. *Anthropological Theory*, 8(3), 278–298.

- Shore, C., & Wright, S. (2015). Audit culture revisited. *Current Anthropology*, 56(3), 421–444. <https://doi.org/10.1086/681534>
- Slaughter, S., & Leslie, L. L. (1997). *Academic capitalism: Politics, policies, and the entrepreneurial university*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Slaughter, S., & Rhoades, G. (2004). *Academic capitalism and the new economy: Markets, state, and higher education*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Takayama, K., Sriprakash, A., & Connell, R. (2016). Toward a postcolonial comparative and international education. *Comparative Education Review*, 60(S1), S1–S24.
- Thornton, M. (2013). The mirage of merit: Reconstituting the ideal academic. *Australian Feminist Studies*, 28(76), 127-143.
- Washburn, J. (2005). *University, Inc.: The corporate corruption of higher education*. Basic Books.
- Vejjola, S. E. & J., Jokinen, E. (2018). Coding gender in academic capitalism. *Ephemera: Theory and Politics in Organization*, 18(3), 527-549.
- CoHE (2015). Yükseköğretim Kurulu Stratejik Planı 2016-2020 [Council of Higher Education Strategic Plan 2016-2020]. https://www.yok.gov.tr/Documents/Kurumsal/strateji_dairesi/YOK_Stratejik_Plan_2016_2020.pdf
- CoHE (2021). YÖK Başkanı Erol Özvar ‘YÖK’ün geleceğe dair yeni vizyonu’nun detaylarını açıkladı [YÖK President Erol Özvar announced details of YÖK’s new vision for the future]. <https://www.yok.gov.tr/Sayfalar/Haberler/2021/yok-baskani-erol-ozvar-yok-un-gelecege-dair-yeni-vizyonunun-detaylarini-acikladi.aspx>
- CoHE (2024). YÖK Üniversite İzleme ve Değerlendirme Genel Raporu, 2024 [YÖK General Monitoring and Evaluation Report for Universities, 2024]. <https://www.yok.gov.tr/Documents/2024/universite-izleme-ve-degerlendirme-genel-raporu-2024.pdf>
- CoHE (2025). UAK Toplantısı Yükseköğretim Kurulunda gerçekleştirildi [The UAK meeting was held at the Council of Higher Education]. <https://www.yok.gov.tr/Sayfalar/Haberler/2025/uak-toplantisi-yuksekogretim-kurulunda-gerceklestirildi.aspx>.
- HEQC (2019). Yükseköğretim Kalite Kurulu [Council of Higher Education Quality Assurance]. <http://yokak.gov.tr/>.
- HEQC. (2020). Tematik Analiz Raporu: 2020 Yılı Akreditasyon Kuruluşları [Thematic Analysis Report: Accreditation Agencies in 2020]. <https://www.yokak.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Tematik-Analiz-Raporu-2020-Yili-Akreditasyon-Kuruluslari-v1.0.pdf>.
- Zemsky, R. (2021). *Checklist for change: Making American higher education a sustainable enterprise*. Rutgers University Press.

Author

Zelal BEYAZ KARÇAL teaches economics at the Faculty of Economics, Administrative and Social Sciences at Istanbul Nisantasi University. Her works include “The Accumulation by Dispossession after the February 6 Earthquakes” (2025); “COVID-19 Vaccines: Public Health Under the Ownership of Information” (2022); “New Tools of Sustainable Development Paradigm with a Green Look: The “Circular Economy” Discourse and “Zero Waste” Project” (2021); and “Financialization and the Place of Digital Technologies in the Financial Inclusion Process” (2019).

Critical Education

criticaleducation.org

ISSN 1920-4175

Editors

Sandra Mathison, *University of British Columbia*

E. Wayne Ross, *University of British Columbia*

Associate Editors

Abraham P. DeLeon, *University of Texas at San Antonio*

Adam Renner, 1970-2010

Co-Founding and Past Editor

Stephen Petrina, *University of British Columbia*

Editorial Collective

Wayne Au, *University of Washington Bothell*

Jessica Bacon, *Montclair State University*

Jeff Bale, *University of Toronto*

Grant Banfield, *Flinders University*

Dennis Beach, *University of Gothenburg*

Kristen Buras, *Georgia State University*

Paul R Carr, *Université du Québec en Outaouais*

Lisa Cary, *Murdoch University*

Antonio J. Castro, *University of Missouri*

Erin L. Castro, *University of Utah*

Alexander Cuenca, *Indiana University*

Noah De Lissovoy, *University of Texas at Austin*

Ardavan Eizadirad, *Wilfred Laurier University*

Gustavo Fischman, *Arizona State University*

Derek R. Ford, *DePauw University*

Four Arrows, *Fielding Graduate University*

David Gabbard, *Boise State University*

Rich Gibson, *San Diego State University*

Panayota Gounari, *UMass, Boston*

Keith Heggart, *University of Technology Sydney*

Dave Hill, *Anglia Ruskin University*

Nathalia E. Jaramillo, *Kennesaw State University*

Richard Kahn, *Antioch University Los Angeles*

Gianna Katsiampoura, *University of Athens*

Harper Keenan, *University of British Columbia*

Kathleen Kesson, *Long Island University*

Ashwani Kumar, *Mount Saint Vincent University*

Ravi Kumar, *South Asian University*

Saville Kushner, *Drew University*

Yulong Li, *The Chinese University of Hong Kong*

John Lupinacci, *Washington State University*

Kevin R. Magill, *Baylor University*

Alpesh Maisuria, *University of East London*

Curry Stephenson Malott, *West Chester University*

Gregory Martin, *University of Technology Sydney*

Cris Mayo, *University of Vermont*

Peter Mayo, *University of Malta*

Peter McLaren, *Chapman University*

Shahrazad Mojab, *University of Toronto*

João Paraskeva, *University of Strathclyde*

Lana Parker, *University of Windsor*

Brad Porfilio, *California State University, Stanislaus*

Marc Pruyn, *University of the Sunshine Coast*

Lotar Rasinski, *University of Lower Silesia*

Leena Robertson, *Middlesex University*

Sam Rocha, *University of British Columbia*

Edda Sant, *University of Manchester*

Doug Selwyn, *SUNY Plattsburgh*

Özlem Sensoy, *Simon Fraser University*

Patrick Shannon, *Penn State University*

Steven Singer, *The College of New Jersey*

Kostas Skordoulis, *University of Athens*

John Smyth, *Federation Univ. Australia*

Hannah Spector, *Boston Psychoanalytic Society & Institute*

Marc Spooner, *University of Regina*

Inna Stepaniuk, *Simon Fraser University*

Paolo Vittoria, *University of Naples Federico II*