

State and Private Universities in the Global Education

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ABSTRACT

The impact of globalization opened countries in a competitive international economic market to be able to meet the challenges of global economy. According to these demands, the need of supplying human capital resulted in a change in the role of the universities. This paper discussed that global comparativeness has had divergent effects on the conceptualization and practices of higher education.

Keywords: Globalization, State and private universities, Labor productivity.

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Globalization opened countries in a competitive international economic market hence forced them to be able to demonstrate that they can supply human capital capable of meeting the needs of a globalized market place. Universities are being asked to meet these challenges of enhancing labor productivity and improve economic development. The role of universities have been redefined in this environment, under the increasingly growing pressure. This process is meant to fulfill the needs of social and economic outcomes in the world of work.

This is mentined by Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report.

Hénard (2010, p. 72) put it this way:

‘The quality of teaching must therefore be thought of dynamically, as a function of contextual shifts in the higher education environment, such as the internationalization of studies and the additional missions that education is being asked to fulfill (innovation, civic and regional development), producing an appropriately skilled workforce to meet the challenges of the 21st century.’

This paper argues for the consequences of the impact of global economic competitiveness that resulted in the change in the national higher education policies. This happened in the way to affect access to higher education, to impact curricula, and institutional autonomy on private universities, as so called nonprofit foundation universities, in Turkey.

Privatization of higher education has gained momentum all around the world late 1980s after the application of neoliberal policies in state sectors.¹ In last few decades many countries around the world have witnessed the rise of private

higher education as the one of the fastest growing sector, Erguvan² (2013) puts it;

‘A combination of unprecedented demand for access to higher education and the inability or unwillingness of governments to provide the necessary support has brought private higher education to the fore. Private higher education has long dominated higher education systems in Japan, the Republic of Korea, Taiwan and the Philippines. There has been a dramatic shift from public to private tertiary education in Latin America, such that Brazil, Mexico and Colombia which now have at least half their students in private universities.’

The demands coming from the global economy have put private universities in a position to be more responsive to these demands more than the traditional state universities. Historically, universities have had a tradition of autonomy from the market and from the state. Wilhelm von Humboldt, defended the idea that a university should be established based upon three principles: unity of research and teaching, freedom of teaching and academic autonomy. The first was critical both of research divorced from teaching, undertaken by private scholars or in separate research institutes, without the stimulation of sharing those investigations with young minds, and of higher education divorced from original enquiry. The second was that professors should be free to teach in accordance with their studiously and rationally based convictions. The third principle, of academic, was meant to protect academic work from the distortions of government control.³

Yet, the changing rules of the new era have shown different forms of the traditional universities. They mostly applied the policies for their teaching and the curriculum that has the greatest potential to impact directly on students and the labor markets they will enter. It has been argued that students should be regarded as customers, with the university as service provider, a view that many university managers have accepted, either implicitly or explicitly. Changing the roles of faculties have occurred in an environment that faculty values, norms, and beliefs have changed in accordance with these new roles. This redefinition assumes a direct relationship between the acquisition of specific technical skills and their deployment in specific roles in the contemporary economy. Again, it reflects expectation of a relationship between the current demand for skills and university education.⁴

Research done in private universities in Turkey showed that there has been some concerns according to the academics views. They think that private universities in Turkey are under the pressure of market that they are in a position to apply some policies such as: 'offering only popular programs with high job prospects in order to attract students, accepting academically challenged but affluent students which could result in a differentiation in qualifications between state and foundation university graduates.... Foundation universities are not deemed to be contributing sufficiently to academic research. In addition, the interventions of founders and board members are considered to hamper the process of institutionalization and autonomy. Perceptions regarding the future of these institutions predict an increase in the number and a widening gap in quality.²

It has been widely accepted that global competitiveness has had divergent effects on the conceptualization and practices of higher education. This generated a new tradition for many universities which have not experienced a long history in academic world. However, still there has been a resistance to this new tradition among some of the higher educational institutions. What is necessary to keep societies as solid institutions is that to allow universities to be places where the rational thoughts and meanings are produced.

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