Neoliberal Governmentality and Performativity Culture in Higher Education: Reflections on Academic Identity

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Abstract	Article Info
This qualitative study aims to explore how the culture of performativity resulting from the influences of neoliberal governmentality on the academe is perceived by academics throughout their career and interrogates how their perceptions could reflect on their professional identity. The study was conducted with twenty-four academics from state universities in Turkey. The analysis of the in-depth interviews revealed that the emerging culture of performativity in higher education institutions seems to establish three identity trajectories as perceived by academics. Accordingly, some resist to conforming to the neoliberal norms in the academe, some feel obliged to conform to these norms albeit with ethical dilemmas while some welcome and embrace these emerging norms. The findings highlight some threatening consequences of performativity as a neoliberal policy tool in higher education for both the soul of the academic profession and the quality of work in the context of Turkey. Implications are identified, which include the need to develop new policy tools prioritizing professional integrity and internal accountability to achieve desired quality in higher education.	

Introduction

In the literature, there seems to be a consensus on the transformative influence of neoliberalism on the nature, organization and culture of higher education (Ball & Olmedo, 2013; Dougherty & Natow, 2019; Lynch, 2006). However, existing research manifests two camps in terms of the nature of the transformation. Some of the mainstream research in public higher education management celebrates the use of performance indicators as an influential tool of governing the institutions in general and the employees in particular (Derrick & Pavone, 2013; Geuna & Piolatto, 2016; Heinrich & Marschke, 2010; Hicks, 2012). Critical research, on the other hand, underlines how the same technologies of power can harm the fundamental values and functions of higher education and be counterproductive at both the institutional and individual level (Ball, 2012; Clarke & Knights, 2005; Kenny, 2017; Kim & Bak, 2016; Macfarlane, 2017; Teelken, 2012).

In the present study, the critical research perspective is used so as to investigate academic's professional identity in the neoliberal academe. Critical research analysing the influence of new tools of governing on the academe and academic profession mostly uses the Foucauldian concept of governmentality as an analytical guide (Fimyar, 2008). Governmentality refers to the link between the mentalities and practices of the government and the construction of the subject (Foucault, 2011; Lemke, 2001), and thus helps to analyse

how the neoliberal policy tools and practices are internalised on the level of the self (Fimyar, 2008).The concept of performativity, on the other hand, has been generatively used across disciplines in the recent years, leading to different interpretations of the term (Gond et al., 2016). It can be defined as "a new mode of state regulation ... [which] requires individual practitioners to organise themselves as a response to targets, indicators and evaluations" (Brown, 2003, p. 215). Following the work of scholars such as Ball (2000, 2003, 2012) who applied the term to the field of education relying on Lyotard's (1984, p. 53) definition of performativity as "the predominance of the performance criterion in knowledge creation", performativity, in the present study, is defined as a mode of regulation or a regime of truth in which "the performances ...serve as measures of productivity or output, or displays of "quality", or "moments" of promotion or inspection, ...stand for, encapsulate or represent the worth, quality or value of an individual or organisation" (Ball, 2000, p. 1).

In higher education literature, numerous researchers note that performance indicators such as grant income, higher index scores and the number of international publications have become pressing issues for the academic career, and these have created a culture of performativity in the academe (Kandiko Howson, Coate & de St Croix, 2018; Kenny, 2017; Macfarlane, 2018; Olssen & Peters, 2005). It is frequently underlined that the initiatives of world policy agencies (e.g. the IMF, the World Bank) and the European Union policies of education have triggered the spread of these neoliberal norms to a large extent from the West through the OECD countries (Olssen & Peters, 2005; Morrissey, 2013). Turkey, as a member of the OECD and a candidate for the European Union, has thus undergone similar changes, and neoliberal tenets addressing performativity have taken their place in higher education policies. This has recently been

indicated as having an effect on Turkish academics' perspectives regarding their professional roles and identities (Odabaşı et al., 2010). As Ball (2003) states, the culture of performativity could become a resource in the construction of the self, and while it could become an opportunity for some people to make a success of themselves, it could also cause inner conflicts, inauthenticity and resistance for some others. Therefore, the present paper aims to investigate how the current performativity culture of higher education as an outcome of neoliberal governmentality interacts with academic identity in the Turkish higher education context as perceived by academics. Below, the current higher education system and the state of academic profession in Turkey are discussed for the readers to better contextualise the research and translate its findings to other similar contexts whenever possible.

Higher Education in Turkey

Neoliberalism has begun to flourish as a political ideology in Turkish governments since the 1980s. Following the military takeovers in about the same years in addition to the increasing influence of neoliberal governmentality, the establishment of the Higher Education Council (YÖK) and the enactment of Law No. 2547 to regulate academic life have transformed Turkish higher education. Universities where academic autonomy and freedom were assured to a greater extent (Seggie & Gökbel, 2014), underwent a profound change after being placed under the administrative control of YÖK. As YÖK was – and still is – directly connected to the government (Balyer & Gündüz, 2011; Özcan & Çakır, 2016), this system has been criticised for harming academic autonomy and freedom through maintaining political control over universities. Despite several revisions to the law and the structure of YÖK, the core of the system

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has remained the same, and currently issues such as the resource allocation, the foundation of new departments and the training, evaluation, assignment and promotion of academics are all under YÖK's surveillance (Kurul Tural, 2007).

Before the beginning of the new millennium, the privatization of universities and the establishment of quality standards through creating competition among universities became the keystone of higher education policies (Gül & Gül, 2014). Since then, the number of universities has reached 206 in total (130 state and 76 private) with new state universities established in small cities and new private universities in larger cities with the purpose of meeting the growing demands for higher education, increasing growth and efficiency through competition. Furthermore, new performance standards were developed for the allocation and promotion of academics, such as the number of international publications, the research grant earnings, conference attendances and research partnerships (Balaban, 2012). Every university has been subject to these standards under YÖK's surveillance regardless of whether it is a developing provincial university or a well-established university with a strong background.

The global and national forces that have shaped Turkish higher education have also challenged the traditional context of academic work. Increased emphasis on vocational education in response to the demands of labour market, increased ratio of students to academic staff, increased competition among universities, increased duties of leadership and consultation and increased demands for engaging into income generating activities have reshaped academic work life (Kurul Tural, 2007). As a result, traditional scholarly values such as dedication to intellectual inquiry and objectivity, uncompromising search for knowledge without finance or publicity seeking,

collegiality and academic freedom (Bok, 1982) have been greatly challenged by the market-oriented neoliberal norms.

The Current State of Academic Career Progression in Turkey

The norms of performativity that include the routines of constant reporting and recording performance as well as valuing people for their productivity (Ball & Olmedo, 2013) are evident in the recent higher education policies in Turkey. Neoliberal governmentality has currently influenced the system of governing academic careers in Turkish universities, where the logic of quantification, competition, and constant evaluation of performance is being reinforced from assistantship to professorship.

As defined by Higher Education Law (Law No. 2547), there are three positions for professors in higher education institutions: assistant, associate and full professorship, all three positions are assigned by the Rectorate according to academics' scores calculated based on their performance outputs such as article, book and book chapter publications, and projects supported by research grants as well as proof of English language proficiency with a centralised language test score. Assistant professors are assigned with a five-year contract that may be renewed up to three times according to their performance (both research and teaching). Due to heavy teaching loads, which can count up to thirty hours a week, assistant professors already meet the performance criteria and their contracts are normally renewed according to this scale. Associate professorship is a permanent post in a university, which can only be assigned after being awarded the title by the Inter-University Board (ÜAK) and the Higher Education Council (YÖK). Being appointed to a full professorship requires having worked as an associate professor for five years and having gathered over a hundred points from similar

academic activities. Once academics become a professor, they remain a professor until their retirement. No performance requirement is defined for them by the Law (2547), which implies that performativity demands are no longer applicable to them. The title of professor also brings with it the possibility of becoming a dean, a rector or a member of higher management boards of YÖK (Higher Education Law No.2547), so professors are more active agents of the decision-making processes that influence the future of the academe.

Academic Identity and the Performativity Culture

Theories of identity development seem to have evolved under the influence of social and political changes, and this has offered different interpretations of the process of identity construction through time. While essentialist and liberal theories of identity have represented individuals as bearers of a 'core identity' and the source of free rational choices, social theories of identity have signified the interaction between the individual and the society, and attempted to interpret processes of identity construction in the context of social institutions and relationships (Henkel, 2005).Two themes are common in social theories of identity: the structure (i.e. external forces that shape identity) and the agency (i.e. the subjectivity and self-determination of the individual), and they attempt to explain identity development with the dual and ongoing interaction of the structure and agency (Willmont, 1999). Archer (1982) contributes to this line of argument with her theory of analytical dualism and postulates that "structure logically predates the action(s) which transform it" and that "structural elaboration logically postdates those actions" (Archer, 1982, p. 468). Based on this perspective, Archer (1982) develops a three-stage model of social change;

structural conditioning, social interaction and structural elaboration, and underlines that this process is "not only dualistic but also sequential" (1982, p. 458). Archer's theory helps to understand identity development in the social context through identifying structural, cultural and agential interests while simultaneously accepting the social construction of each, and through highlighting the overlapping and intertwining relationship between structural and agential forces (Newman, 2019) that eventually influence identity development.

The basic assumptions about the nature of identity have also been challenged by profound epistemological, structural, political and cultural changes that have emerged since the beginning of the 21st century. The definition of identity as a stable construct has given way to an understanding of identity as a fluid, open-ended project (Hall, 1992) as the social and institutional frameworks in which the identity is shaped have become less stable and cohesive, and more transitory and blurred.

The same arguments have also been made for the higher education context. In particular, neoliberalism and the influence of its signifying principles on academic work have become the key themes of recent critical higher education literature (Archer, 2000). Structural, political and cultural changes brought by the neoliberal turn is believed to have changed the key academic institutions, namely the discipline and the university, as newer forms of knowledge creation and dissemination have emerged and new institutional expectations and structures have taken place in universities. As a result, disciplinary and institutional culture, once defined as the basis of academic identity formation (Clark, 1983), is now considered to have weakened (Henkel, 2005) as "traditional academic identities based on

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collegiality and the exercise of autonomy ...are indeed under threat, ...and the newer discourses of higher education are productive of newer subject positions" (Clegg, 2008, p. 331), with significant implications and consequences for academics' professional identity (Archer, 2008; Henkel, 2005). As argued in the literature, the policy technologies of neoliberal governmentality change both what academics as scholars and educators do, who they are, and what it means to be an academic (Ball, 2015; Ball & Olmedo, 2013; Macfarlane, 2018); namely, their academic identity .

Existing studies on academic identity underline the contextuality of identity development (Busher, 2005; Gardner & Willey, 2018; McAlpine & Emmioğlu, 2015), and highlight that academic identity is produced and constantly shaped by the social, political and cultural influences surrounding academics (Fortune et al., 2016; Mockler, 2011; Romanowski & Nasser, 2015). The present study bears a similar theoretical lens, but also recognises the influence of agency on academic identity construction. In other words, our conceptualisation of identity recognises both individual and broader structural aspects. In Foucauldian terms, the study focuses on the interaction of the technologies of power (i.e. the contemporary, performative structure of the academe) and the technologies of the self (i.e. the subjectivities of the individual academic), and investigates the outcomes of this interaction in the form of academic identity trajectories. In this regard, the technologies of power as the means of structural change in academic profession and higher education context provide the conditions under which academics make their choices and these choices create who they become in the end (Ball, 2003; Besley, 2009). Hence, the study particularly looks into how academics organise themselves in response to the culture of performativity as a new mode of state regulation, and attempts to identify academic identity

patterns that are likely to emerge from the juxtaposition of the technologies of power (the norms of performativity) and the technologies of the self (the individual academic's subjectivities) in Turkish academic context.

Existing literature mostly exhibits studies that address the effects of neoliberal policies on university systems and academic work in Western countries, which have long internalised liberal democracy and are now strongly influenced by the practices of neoliberal governmentality. However, such research in a non-Western context is scarce (Fimyar, 2008). In this regard, Turkey offers a different context as it is a developing country where the institutions and values of liberal democracy –from free and fair elections to the rule of law–lack a strong basis. Turkey, also offers a unique context as it combines Western ideals with Eastern, traditional values in all spheres of social life due to its historical and geographical location between the West and the East. Furthermore, Turkish higher education, which had been governed with non-market bureaucratic mechanisms for almost forty years and which has had a rather nascent scientific understanding and intellectualism as compared to the West, is now passing through a transformation phase under the influence of neoliberalism in addition to the other developments unique to Turkey (Kurul Tural, 2007).

Method

This study employs the qualitative research method, which helps to build a complex, holistic picture of a social or human problem in connection to its real context (Creswell, 2007). We believe the qualitative method enables us to analyse the holistic and meaningful characteristics of academic identity in the context of Turkish higher

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education based on participants' rich and detailed accounts of their experiences from their own perspectives.

Research Setting and the Participants

Three medium-sized, typical Turkish state universities with a minimum background of about twenty five years were selected purposefully for the study. Participants were selected from these universities using the snowball sampling method. We started data collection by contacting one academic willing to talk about his/her experiences from each university and asked these participants to identify other academics that could provide us with richer data. In order to gain insights into the issue from different perspectives, participants with different titles, age, gender and disciplinary background were conducted. As the emphasis was on having sufficiently rich data rather than a sufficient number of participants, data collection stopped when data saturation – namely the point where no new and further insights have been provided by the participants and the data have started to repeat itself (O'Reilly and Parker 2012) – was reached. The final sample comprised twenty-four female and male academics aged between thirty-six and fifty-two. The participants were assistant, associate and full professors from different disciplines.

Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews lasting approximately one hour each were conducted in Turkish in 2016. Interviews were guided by these questions: (1) How do you define the academic profession based on your personal experiences?, (2) How do you define the basic values and principles of the academic profession?, (3) What do you think is expected from academics by society and how do these expectations

influence your work?, (4) What is your opinion of being an academic in the past, present and future in relation to the context of Turkish higher education?, (5) What is your opinion of the current higher education policies in regard to the academic career? Some probing questions were also asked to understand the participants' perceptions and personal experiences better. All interviews were tape-recorded with the participants' permission and transcribed on the computer. As declared on the consent sheet, all personal identifiers were removed to preserve anonymity. The participants are referred to by codes (e.g. P-1, P-2 … – participant 1, participant 2 …) at the end of the quotes used for illustrative purposes in the results section.

Data Analysis

Data analysis started with reading and rereading the transcripts individually for an initial and holistic understanding of the participants' accounts. Following this initial phase, emerging codes were identified with a systematic search throughout each participant's accounts for answers to the research question. Then, recurring codes across the transcripts were compiled to form the initial list of codes. At this point, researchers compared their interpretations of data, and discussed any non-convergent codes until an agreed list of codes was formed. Codes that emerged from this thematic analysis were first arranged into categories, and then charted into three main themes. Each theme refers to a pattern (trajectory) of academic identity in the particular research context.

Credibility

Creswell (2007) proposes that a minimum of two procedures of credibility should be adopted in any qualitative study. In this study, to ensure the accuracy of the qualitative findings, the data were

carefully analysed by two researchers and the researchers cross-checked their interpretations of the data. Any inconsistencies between researchers were discussed and resolved before the final list of codes and categories were formed. Additionally, peer debriefing was used to check the accuracy of the findings. In that process, the identification of the codes and categories was reviewed by three uninvolved colleagues, who were experts in qualitative research, to see whether the same or similar accounts resonated with them. At the end of the debriefing process, no significant divergence appeared between the researchers and uninvolved colleagues, which is accepted as the sign of accuracy of findings.

Results

After the analysis of the data, three themes were identified, which delineated three identity trajectories followed by academics. These identity trajectories were named 'academic self as ethical and aesthetic project', 'academic self as calculating entrepreneur', and 'academic self in ethical dilemma'. These identity trajectories reflect who these academics tend to become under the current conditions of the academe.

The First Identity Trajectory: Academic Self as Ethical and Aesthetic Project

Academics following this identity trajectory adhere to traditional scholarly ideals and professional values, following their genuine interests rather than focusing on fashionable or commoditised topics; that is, their priorities are not determined by 'what counts', but by 'what resonates with their ideals'.

> *I specialise in crystallization. Many people do not prefer it because the studies in this field take longer time. If you want to move up as fast as possible, this*

*field would not be a good choice. But this does not bother me, because I like it
and I am happy working like this. Titles and tenures will eventually come any
way if you are scholarly successful (P-21).*

*When I do research I must believe in it. I mean I do not want to study
something because it is popular or because I can publish it more easily (P-6).*

Some of these academics seem to even resist participating in
some conferences, claiming that they have turned out to be 'stones to
jump onto for the sake of collecting points' (P.10) like in some
computer games, just serving the current performativity demands
rather than serving the best interest of the academic society or society
at large.

*They say 'you are different', and I tell them 'you are all the same!' There are
many of them around me who are driven away from real science, and just stick
to some 'buzz words' only because these topics are popular, I mean they 'sell'
now in our field (P-2).*

Academics inclined to this trajectory seem to perceive being an
academic not just as a career but actually life itself; something that
gives meaning and is integrated into their whole lives. It seems to
reflect on how they see, feel and approach to life.

*My profession has become a lifestyle, actually, the life itself. I am an academic
here at work, on the bus going home, cooking in the kitchen or lying in bed
because I keep acting like an academic; observing, thinking critically,
questioning and nourishing my curiosity no matter what (P-5).*

**The Second Identity Trajectory: Academic Self as Calculating
Entrepreneur**

The second identity trajectory –academic self as calculating
entrepreneur– could actually be classified as 'an objective identity' as
opposed to the other two trajectories as 'subjective identity'.
Objective identity refers to how a person might be viewed and

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identified by others in light of certain biological or social facts about that person while subjective identity describes how a person conceive himself/herself to be (Bilgrami, 2006, p.5). Although academics interviewed were self-identified with either one of the two identity trajectories – namely academic self as ethical and aesthetic project or academic self in ethical dilemma, none of them identified themselves as following this second identity trajectory. However, all of these academics explicitly referred to the existence of a group of academics who reflected such a professional identity in Turkish academic context.

The analysis revealed that academics as calculating entrepreneurs were enjoying the opportunities of the metrication system and seemingly feel no regret or need to complain about the current way of knowledge-creating. They have seemingly normalised the systems of performativity culture and are willing to sustain it to progress their academic career. In other words, these academics praise the new metric-based performance evaluation system as a more accountable and transparent means of making an academic career, perceiving the demands of performativity as a duty to be achieved successfully so as to deserve the promised rewards (i.e. status, power, title or tenure).

> *I appreciate the recent developments in the academe. We have started to do good things. Everyone knows what to do beforehand, and works accordingly. The more productive you are, the more you are recognised by the authorities. I believe similar developments in the future will make the academe a better place (P-8).*

Hence, these academics tend to restrict their work to activities that could produce the most measurable and visible output. They conceive the current metric-based system as an opportunity to reach higher positions that could give them more power and reputation in

the academe. When they are appointed to these positions, they begin to believe that they deserve the right to apply the norms of audit culture to those under their surveillance. Indeed, this resembles Ball's (2012, p. 20) statement that "performativity is a moral system that subverts us to its ends. It makes us responsible for our performance and performance of others".

The further analysis of similar statements by the participants also showed that these academics had internalised the audit system so fully that they tended to criticise the academics in pursuit of an ethical and aesthetic self as being selfish, bohemian, lazy, and truant. These academics seem to believe that things are changing in the academe and so are 'the old scholarly ideals'; thus, the academics insisting on these old ideals are actually in a reactionary and non-progressive state. Having internalised the system, these academics' attempts to climb the career ladder seem to aim at executing and instilling the norms of the audit culture they have gone through.

> There are academics who insist on the old school. Now the system has changed. The topics of priority are already determined by the Scientific and Technological Research Centre, so the projects to be worked on are addressed clearly. The criteria for promotion are also clear, but these people are not concerned about any of them. I find these academics really resistant to change (P-10).

Another significant finding that emerged regarding these academics was that the current system of the academe was actually both encouraging and allowing their existence. In fact, the analysis of data portrayed a purpose beyond just surviving in the academe, but indicated a tendency to be freed from the surveillance of others for the purpose of surveiling them instead. The following quotes which also criticise these academics actually indicate the existence of such a case in the academe.

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In the past, academics used to stay away from administrative roles because they thought these roles would keep them away from scholarly activity. However, nowadays the number of academics clamouring for managerial ranks such as deanship or rectorship has risen. People want to become a professor in the quickest way possible, sometimes at the expense of ethics, care for others or care for self even. Why? To become powerful, to control others while not being controlled by them (P-11).

Academics that have neither broad knowledge nor even one authentic study could be encountered everywhere now. Most are even managing us, determining our career. They have the power to influence academics that are actually better than them in every way (P-3).

The above quotes also reveal how academics as calculating entrepreneurs are inclined to seek a short-cut to academic positions without excelling professionally but through working in accordance with the metric demands. The data also implied that these academics have strong ties with social networks. These networks are either close to power or comprise the academics who know the delicacy of surmounting the metric requirements since they are overtly concentrated on the ways and means of acquiring outputs to count in the current system. Their capability of being integral to the decision-making mechanisms through strong social networking could give them the power to shape the academic context through influencing other academics' professional lives, the practices of management, and the procedures for promotion, task and reward allocations.

There are some academics who can earn titles and tenure despite lacking a solid knowledge base. They get the support of their social or political ties. They are so into this publication business that they can simply ignore everything else, justifying themselves that it is the only way to meet the expected criteria. Maybe they are not 'plagiarizing' but still posing a challenge to other research ethics; having their names included in papers to which they have contributed nothing, self-publishing a study all done by their assistants, slicing,

duplicating or falsifying the results. We all observe or hear about these things here and there. I think these academics are dangerous because they can easily become an authority and shape the dynamics of our academic context (P-7).

The Third Identity Trajectory: Academic Self in Ethical Dilemma

The third identity trajectory called academic self in ethical dilemma seemed to be followed by those academics that experienced ambivalence between sticking to scholarly integrity and conforming to the norms created by the performativity culture. These academics tend to keep up with the system's performance requirements at a level just enough to survive, and at the same time attempt to engage in more authentic and voluntary work such as authentic projects or extracurricular activities that would support students' learning.

When I was an assistant professor, I insisted on doing the job as it should be; I was following the recent developments in the literature, and providing my students with current materials. I was in favour of doing research that really interested me and so on. In the meanwhile, the people around me used to ask how many points I had collected to become an associate professor. Then I observed that some of my colleagues who concentrated on collecting points but nothing else got titles quickly. They are now either professors or in management positions. I began to think that we should not leave the academe to these 'audit minded' people who do not believe in professional ethics but rather in the external accountability systems. Unfortunately, we now lack the luxury to be the academics we wish to be. Although it is already late, I have recently started to collect points by any means like sending my graduate students to these fabrication conferences and so on, even if it felt so humiliating (P-1).

I feel 'kind of guilty' when I publish or produce something that is inauthentic. I try to keep it at minimum, like a side dish to dress my CV. I do a little bit of this and a little bit of that; I keep my authentic work as the main dish on the table though. That's the only way to catch up with the 'number seeker' academics (P-14).

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These academics seem to be constrained between the identity-trajectories previously described, while actually feeling closer to the previous norms of scholarly thought. On one hand, they maintain an awareness of professional integrity and believe that real science requires more effort, longer time and deeper thinking, which is no longer allowed by the current performativity demands. On the other hand, they feel obliged to meet the demands of performativity so as to survive in the academe and perhaps to be able to counter-balance the dynamics created by the frantic 'number seeking' acts of pragmatic and committed 'performers'. From this perspective, in contrast to the academic self as calculating entrepreneurs that normalise and embrace the new numbered performativity culture, academics in ethical dilemma refuse to normalise these standards but feel obliged to prevent their pervasion of the whole system before it is too late.

Discussion

This study examined how the emerging performativity culture in higher education resulting from neoliberal governmentality reflects on academic identity. The study has revealed significant findings supporting the view that the increasing demands of performativity which have reinforced a metric-based evaluation of quality and merit at Turkish state universities seem to reflect differently on academics' identity. According to our findings, some academics resist emerging neoliberal norms in the academe, some feel obliged to conform, albeit with a sense of humiliation and guilt, while others welcome and embrace this new vision. These findings largely support Ball's (2003) statement that neoliberal norms of performativity could have different outcomes in the making of the self as these norms might

lead to inner conflicts, inauthenticity, resistance or opportunities for actualizing a new, potential self.

As suggested by Ball (2015), and Ball and Olmedo (2013), the technologies of neoliberal governmentality set the cultural and social limits to the possibilities of the self through opening new spaces of decision and action, and through shaping academics' purposes, decisions and social relations accordingly. However, the course of identity (re)making is actually determined by academics' activism in engaging with the professional context and the external political environment (Jawitz, 2009; Mockler, 2011; Romanowski & Nasser, 2015).Every individual academic creates a unique balance through their preference of being active or passive, struggling or giving up, and compliance with or opposing to what is given to them (Arasa & Calvert, 2013; Henkel, 2005). The goals to which academics are committed to orient their choices and responses to these environmental demands (Leisyte, 2007), and their stances make them the academic they are (Carra et al., 2017). As a result, a range of identity trajectories that represent different identity formation paths emerge from this inevitable negotiation between the norms of the academic work and the subjectivity and agency of the individual academic (Billett, 2004).

In the present study, this negotiation results in three patterns of identity: *academic self as ethical and aesthetic project*, *academic self as calculating entrepreneur* and *academic self in ethical dilemma*. Teelken (2012) addresses the existence of similar responses to neoliberal governmentality in the European context, and labels the three responses as *symbolic compliance, professional pragmatism and formal instrumentality*. These tendencies bear striking similarities with the

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three identity trajectories in the current study although the two studies were carried out in different contexts.

Teelken's (2012) concept of symbolic compliance corresponds to the academic self as ethical and aesthetic project. The term symbolic compliance implies that academics who have an enthusiasm for autonomy and performing in their own way only adapt to changes at a superficial or cosmetic level while remaining loosely-coupled from measures that lie outside the primary process of academic activities. In this regard, symbolic compliance bears a combination of acquiescence and avoidance in addition to an attitude of 'critical resistance' to what is not considered to be genuine academic work. In the present case, academics in pursuit of a self as ethical and aesthetic project display a willingness to be truthful to scholarly ideals despite the pressures of performativity, the temptation of quick routes to power and prestige, or the risks of slower career advancement or being challenged by the power mechanisms. They are inclined to achieve a meaningful academic self rather than a secured one. Thus, they have strong moral concerns in regard to their conduct with students and contribution to the profession and humanity, which seems to provide them with inner rewards rather than the promises of the neoliberal norms (e.g. fast-tracking career, financial support or credibility in the market). Foucault (2011) also defines such identity-making as ethical and aesthetic self-formation, and being inspired by Foucault, Ball (2015, p. 13) defines it as 'ethics as a practice rather than a plan' and 'not a matter of asserting ideals but rather an aestheticism'. Ball (2015) describes this identity trajectory as a resistant self that chooses to refuse the neoliberal norms that potentially harm traditional scholarly ideals.

The second identity trajectory –*academic self as calculating entrepreneur* – is followed by academics that seem to have internalised the current performance standards which value quantity over authenticity and honesty, and be seduced by the rewards such as status, prestige and power. These academics who tend to channel their energies into taking shortcuts to these rewards could easily be tempted to produce the requisite output at the expense of scholarly content or the erosion of research ethics, as supported by some previous research (Clarke, Knights & Jarvis, 2012; Corbett et al., 2014; Keenoy, 2003). Teelken (2012) labels this inclination with the term *formal instrumentality,* which indicates a lack of critical perspective on formal arrangements and tools. These academics appreciate the regimes of performativity and fulfil its formal requirements in pursuit of achieving the recognition and approval of the authorities so as to secure a valued, stable identity. Brown (2003), in his comprehensive description of neoliberalism, states that neoliberalism constructs individuals as entrepreneurial, rational, calculating actors and measures their moral autonomy by their capacity for 'self-care', which he defines as "the ability to provide for their own needs and service their own ambitions" (Brown, 2003, p. 42). In achieving this, neoliberalism 'equates moral responsibility with rational action; it erases the discrepancy between economic and moral behaviour by configuring morality entirely as a matter of rational deliberation about costs, benefits, and consequences' (Brown, 2003, p. 42). Lyotard (1984) also puts forth the view that the culture of performativity tends to pull attention to the measures of performance rather than the real enterprise and potentially drives out aesthetic and justice values such as ethics. Emphasis on performativity could result in a displacement from a 'reasoned justification' to a narrower 'instrumental rationality' (Townley, Cooper, & Oakes, 2003). These

statements and interpretations regarding the influences of the performativity culture could also explain the academic identity as a calculating entrepreneur.

Academics in ethical dilemma (following the third identity trajectory) feel insecure, uncertain and somehow humiliated under the audit culture of performativity. Not having normalised the demands of performativity with a clear conscience, these academics seemingly confront tensions and contradictions due to producing fabrications or engaging in inauthentic work in order to survive in the academe on one hand and experiencing an inner disturbance and ethical dilemma doing so on the other. Hence, they try to catch up with the demands of the performativity culture by demonstrating the minimum performance standard to secure an identity that is valued and rewarded in the current system while at the same time attempting to spare some time for authentic work as much as the circumstances allow. According to Clarke and Knights (2015, p. 17), they adopt an 'if you can't beat them, join them' perspective in playing the new career game, or as Teelken (2012, p. 287) observes, they want "to play the game according to the rules and intend to win". These researchers define it as a pragmatic tendency that indicates the recognition of the new regimes of truth to increase their chances of success while simultaneously remaining conscious of their ethical responsibilities to others and to themselves. Although academics in the present case seem to bear similar concerns, they are also different in that they seem to be sacrificing their priorities in order to prevent the academe from being overwhelmed by neoliberal norms. In a way, they attempt to form a balance between their inner scholarly pursuits and the outer demands, although this often results in ethical dilemmas. From this perspective, these academics are actually not passively complying with the norms but actively reacting

against them in their own way. These academics seem to believe in the possibility of returning to the traditional scholarly academe and preserving the soul of the academic profession by using the current norms as a vehicle to 'win the new career game' ahead of the ones that have internalised the current 'audit culture' as the new academy.

These academics with a revolutionist compliance seem to believe that insisting on pure science with an antagonistic attitude towards performativity would remain too utopian under the new, pressing circumstances and would put them at a disadvantage in their race for the rewards (e.g. titles, tenure, prestige, power) promised by the technologies of power. As a result, academics embracing fabrications in their pursuit of collecting points in the shortest and easiest way could possibly become the winners of the race, and turn the academe into a business enterprise rather than a scholarly atmosphere in ceaseless search of the truth, while 'real academics' (in their terms) could become the losers.

Conclusion and Implications

Neoliberal interventions to increase performance and efficiency through increasing competition and research-based performance evaluations have been progressively deployed in higher education around the world. Previous studies have highlighted how these interventions could damage the fundamental values and functions of higher education and prove to be counter-productive at both the institutional and individual level (Ball, 2012; Clarke & Knights, 2015; Kim & Bak, 2016; Lynch, 2006; Marshall, 2009). Although carried out in a different context from these studies, the present study yielded similar findings, and potentially contributes to the existing literature by discussing the perceived influence of performativity as a

neoliberal policy tool, which is a new mode of governance, on the (re)formation of academics' professional identities in a developing country which already lacked liberal ideals.

As Hanlon (1998) describes, there are winners and losers in the struggle for the soul of professionalism under the pressures of performativity. In the Turkish context, academics as calculating entrepreneurs seem to be winning the new performativity game since the current neoliberal norms sustain their existence and operation in the academe. Those in pursuit of a self as ethical and aesthetic project, on the other hand, strive at maintaining their academic professionalism and integrity albeit risking a slower career and being deprived of the potential rewards. Academics in ethical dilemma seem to be even more troubled, due to taking a critical stance on the alluring and coercive demands of the current norms on one hand and struggling to compromise the demands of performativity with traditional academic professionalism on the other. Thus, these academics with *revolutionist compliance* might be unconsciously enforcing the norms that victimise them, or they might become *passive conformists* with a feeling of learned helplessness. Future studies (maybe in ten or fifteen years from now) could yield clearer results regarding the status of these academics.

The findings of the present study underline that attempts to fulfil the desired quality of higher education through the neoliberalist policy tools (i.e. external accountability systems, auditing, paying for performance…) are likely to fail, which is also supported by previous research (e.g. Ball 2012; Ball & Olmedo, 2013; Clarke & Knights, 2015; Kenny, 2017;McAlpine & Emmioğlu, 2015; Teelken, 2012). The current trends in the academe support conditions that reinforce an instrumental approach to academic work or create tensions,

dilemmas and conflicts. In fact, a common conclusion that can be inferred could be the need for extending scholarly integrity (that is largely based on internal accountability) to the whole system in the academe so as to create genuine scientific knowledge and offer quality education. As the technologies of power (i.e. the government and its policy tools) seem to have a significant influence on academics' work and views, educational policy makers aiming to increase the quality should benefit from the result of this study and, in planning the future of academe, responsible parties must reconsider the adverse effects of the neoliberal norms and develop ways to reinstitute them. Emphasizing the significance of being truthful to science, having a critical mind and bearing a strong sense of ethical self as well as calling attention to quality rather than solely focusing on output quantity are some of the ways that can be prioritised. In addition, initiatives must be taken to support academics in ethical dilemma and the ones in search of ethical and aesthetic self, who already bear internal accountability and attend to professional integrity, before the soul of academic professionalism vanishes from the academe. Current practices of performance evaluation and reward allocation should also be reconsidered, recognizing the intrinsic motivational nature of the academic profession as well as its responsibility to protect truthfulness in science (Kenny, 2017; Macfarlane, 2017).

The present study might offer a conceptual and methodological perspective for future studies on the neoliberal governance of educational institutions that would contribute to the debate over the harmful effects of neoliberalism on the essence of educational practices and would keep these criticisms fresh in the minds of policy-makers. Furthermore, this study attempted to explore the possible identity trajectories that could emerge from the interaction of

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academic subjectivities with the performativity demands of governmentality, and thus the influence of demographic factors such as age, gender, discipline or title were not in the scope of this paper. However, a future investigation into how Turkish academics form and maintain the emergent identity trajectories could yield interesting and useful insights.

In addition, the present study did not reveal any significant findings that indicate a possible connection between academic title (or the career phase) and the selection of the three identity trajectories. Similarly, the fact that the present study revealed similar identity trajectories as compared to Western contexts might be implying that some factors (e.g. globalisation, universal academic values, and professional socialisation) other than the cultural context might be more imperative in the formation and selection of identity trajectories. Future studies that are designed accordingly could offer significant findings to enhance our understanding in this regard.

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