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**Abstract**

Through an examination of the higher education systems in three countries (Indonesia, Nicaragua, and Vietnam), the authors explore how the use of academic credits for monitoring student progress has been and continues to be linked to policies and institutions associated with capitalist, market-driven economic systems. The recent histories of these countries and their current social and political contexts are analyzed in relation to three interrelated themes that have emerged from the analysis of the three cases. These themes are: (1) Linkages to political and economic systems: higher education as vocational training, (2) Standardization, efficiency, and technocracy, and (3) Who controls the curriculum? In conclusion, the authors suggest that the academic credit system, embedded within a network of other educational practices, has transformed the university into an institution focused on relatively narrow, utilitarian aims rather than a more universal pursuit of knowledge. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)