**How academics deal with the increasing demand for participating in applied projects: a case study of two universities in Mainland China**

Manhong LAI

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

**Abstract:** The Chinese government promulgates a number of policies to support collaboration among industry, university and research. It provides additional funding and incentives to attract academics to participate more in applied research and collaborate with business sectors. Facing the increasing demands to collaborate with external funders, academics use various strategies to respond. This study employed a qualitative research approach; we interviewed 32 informants from one first-tier university and one second-tier university in Mainland China. Our study found that first, academics are exposed to market logic through early exposure in their graduate programs and informal communication at faculty and department level. Second, most academics are moderately familiar with market logic but have found ways to maintain limited academic autonomy in the process of applied projects. Third, academics package their proposals with trendy topics and highlight their professional image to deal with the increasing market demands.

Keywords: Academic capitalism, applied research, collaboration between university and business sectors, competing logics.

A paper presented at the **13th Edition** of the International Conference “**New Perspectives in Science Education”** on 14 - 15 March 2024, at Florence, Italy.

**Reference**

Alexander, E. A., Phillips, W., & Kapletia, D. (2018). Shifting logics: limitations on the journey from ‘state’to ‘market’logic in UK higher education. *Policy & Politics*, *46*(4), 551-569. https://doi.org/10.1332/030557317X15052077338233

Croucher, G., & Lacy, W. B. (2020). The emergence of academic capitalism and university neoliberalism: perspectives of Australian higher education leadership. *Higher Education, 83*, 279-295. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-020-00655-7

D’este, P., & Perkmann, M. (2011). Why do academics engage with industry? The entrepreneurial university and individual motivations. *The Journal of Technology Transfer, 36*(3), 316-339. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10961-010-9153-z

Hoffman, S. G. (2011). The new tools of the science trade: contested knowledge production and the conceptual vocabularies of academic capitalism. *Social Anthropology,* *19*(4), 439-462. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-8676.2011.00180.x

Hoffman, S. G. (2016). Managing Ambiguities at the Edge of Knowledge. *Science, Technology, & Human Values, 42(*4), 703-740. https://doi.org/10.1177/0162243916687038

Johnson, A. T., & Hirt, J. B. (2011). Reshaping academic capitalism to meet development priorities: The case of public universities in Kenya. *Higher education*, *61*, 483-499. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-010-9342-6

McClure, K. R. (2016). Building the innovative and entrepreneurial university: An institutional case study of administrative academic capitalism. *The Journal of Higher Education*, *87*(4), 516-543. https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2016.11777412

Mendoza, P., & Öcal, S. (2022) Faculty engagement in university-industry linkages in Turkey and the United States: national technocenters versus ecosystems of knowledge, *Higher Education*, 84, 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-021-00796-3.

Slaughter, S. A., & Leslie, L. L. (1997). *Academic capitalism: Politics, policies, and the entrepreneurial university*. Baltimore, US: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Slaughter, S. A., & Rhoades, G. (2004). *Academic capitalism and the new economy: Markets, state, and higher education*. Baltimore, US: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Stensaker, B., & Benner, M. (2013). Doomed to be entrepreneurial: institutional transformation or institutional lock-Ins of ‘new’ universities? *Minerva,* 51, 399-416. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11024-013-9238-6

Szelényi, K., & Bresonis, K. (2014). The public good and academic capitalism: Science and engineering doctoral students and faculty on the boundary of knowledge regimes. *The Journal of Higher Education,* *85*(1), 126-153. https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2014.11777321

Tapp, A. (2004). The changing face of marketing academia: what can we learn from commercial market research and practitioners?. *European Journal of Marketing*, *38*(5/6), 492-499. https://doi.org/10.1108/03090560410529178

Yang, P.Y., & Chang, Y. (2010). Academic Research Commercialization and Knowledge Production and Diffusion: The Moderating Effects of Entrepreneurial Commitment. *Scientometrics, 83*, 403-421. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-009-0075-1