

## **Shining Stars or Hidden Scars? Unveiling the Quest for Academic Tenure Track System in China**

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### **Research background and purpose statement**

In recent decade, Chinese universities have introduced the academic tenure track system to reform its academic promotion structure. Whilst the academic tenure track system was considered to provide a sustainable career path (Brechelmacher et al., 2015), it seemed to be distorted as an “up or out policy” in China, which has caused a wide disparity among Chinese academics. Previous study indicates academic promotion policies affected the formation of academic identity, and even contributed to the development of new academic identity (Cai & Zheng, 2016). However, it remains unfolded why the implementation of academic tenure track system in China turned out to cause “disparities” on uncertainties of career development in China.

Therefore, the purpose of this case study will be to explore the environmental factors contributing to the implementation of academic tenure track system in China. We raise two research questions:

- 1) How has academic tenure track system been implemented in a Chinese university?
- 2) What environmental factors have contributed to the implementation of academic tenure track system in Chinese universities?

### **Methodology**

We will employ case study as a research strategy and choose a research university in metropolis city in China.

### **Theoretical perspective**

By using this theoretical perspective of institutional logics (Thornton et al., 2012), this study will try to identify how multiple institutional logics in the Chinese higher education system exert influence on the way these universities interpret, plan and implement their tenure track system.

### **Preliminary conclusion**

Since the study is still on-going, these are only some preliminary findings:

- 3) The implementation of academic tenure track system in China entails an emphasis of performance management, which implies the strengthening of mark logic and corporation logic in Chinese academic profession.
- 4) The over-emphasis of the performance management was endorsed by the Chinese national policies, such as double first-class university policy. In this sense, the implementation of the Chinese academic tenure track system has been underlined by a strengthening state logic since its launch.

### **Keywords**

academic tenure track, academic promotion, reform, China, institutional logics

### **References:**

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