A CRITICAL CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT – A CHINESE CASE

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2015

Declaration of Authenticity and Author's Rights

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Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness and gratitude to my supervisors, Professor Christine Cooper and Dr Andrea Coulson. Professor Christine Cooper provided priceless assistance throughout the PhD process. Meetings and discussions, as well as comments and proof reading on my drafts, paved the way to the completion of PhD programme. Her insightful ideas and suggestions contributed a great deal to my thesis. Dr Andrea Coulson played an important role in my application of the method of a case study. Without their encouragement and support, this thesis would never have been completed.

I would like to give my thanks to other members of the Department of Accounting and Finance for their suggestions in annual PhD presentation. My thanks must go out to Professor John Roberts who offered valuable help in clarifying my understanding of key theories. I am especially grateful to Lorna Carlaw for her never-ending kindness and support in my academic life. I thank other PhD students for their help and encouragement.

My final gratitude is dedicated to my parents and my best friend, Xiangrong, who provided consistent understanding, encouragement, and support in my PhD programme.

Abstract

Within a global trend of managerialism, the adoption of performance measures in universities has drawn academic interest. Nevertheless, there has been scant discussion about their impact on academics.

Inspired by a series of events which centre on the significance of performance measurement in Chinese society, this thesis explores the extent of the impact of performance measures on Chinese academics and the reason behind their influences.

Drawing upon a series of Western theoretical perspectives – institutional (for example, Burns and Scapens, 2000; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983), psychoanalytical (for example, Lacan, 1977; Foucault, 1979; Roberts, 1991 and 2009) and Bourdieusian perspectives, this thesis analyses the emergence and the impact of academic performance measures in China.

In doing so, in addition to broadening the theoretical applications of these theories, this thesis develops the theoretical contribution around a framework to guide the analysis of a particular accounting practice.

This thesis adopts critical perspectives and discusses the social constructivism nature of performance measures. It reveals the socially constructed nature of performance measures through showing how academic performance measures in China are dominated by discourses and how discourses are ideologically shaped to facilitate a particular socio-political agenda. Within the boundary of a Chinese university, this thesis examines the nature of the impact of particular performance measures on academics.

In doing so, this thesis makes an empirical contribution of adding visibility to Chinese academia – it finds that academic performance measures in China have been dominated by various discourses that rationalise the significance of research performance for Chinese economic development. In addition, the tenets of opportunism embedded in research and the poor attitudes towards teaching are identified by this thesis.

List of Abbreviations

1985 Decision	*Decision on the Reform of China's Educational Structure*
1993 Outline	*Outline of China's Education Reform and Development*
2003-2007 Action Plan	*2003-2007 Action Plan for Invigorating Education*
21st Century Programme	*Programme of Educational Revitalization for the Twenty- first Century*
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
Eleventh 5-Year Plan	*Outline of the Eleventh 5-Year Plan for the Development of Nation-wide Education Cause*
EI	Engineering Index
Medium and Long-term	*Outline of State Plans for Medium and Long-term Outline Reform and Development of Education*
NSFC	National Natural Science Foundation
SCI	Science Citation Index
SSCI	Social Science Citation Index

1 Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Events

1.1.1 Event 1

In the middle of 2010, the suicides of production-line workers in Foxconn Group attracted public attention to its operating practices. From 23rd of January 2010 to 27th of May 2010 the total number of those who jumped to their deaths reached 13. This rate is statistically close to that of a small city[1].

Foxconn Group operates an extreme military-like mode of production. After the introduction of new working practices, workers could be equated to unthinking cogs in a huge production machine. The working practice changes included the need for 100% quality; time management measured in seconds, and cost savings in the form of extreme reductions in labour costs.

The Foxconn Group environment is more like a prison. This is not only due to their extremely tight security including extra visitor checks but also due to the rules applied to workers, such as wearing uniforms and badges, and being restricted to authorized areas. Moreover, the hierarchical organisational structure in Foxconn underpins the control of performance which is also represented and realised through performance-related salaries.

The overtime working situation in Foxconn is quite common in that there are two working shifts running from 8am to 8pm and 8pm to 8am. This has been institutionalized through employees signing an overtime contract. Every worker in Foxconn has to sign it, meaning that their overtime working is no longer protected by law or agreed by themselves. Failure to sign the contract means that workers lose their right to overtime work, which means they only earn basic pay which is not enough to survive on.

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[1] Foxconn Suicides: 'Workers feel quite lonely'. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10182824, accessed on 20th March, 2011.

1.1.2 Event 2[2]

On 12 March, 2005, *Caihong Yan*, a lecturer in Electronic Engineering at Shanghai Jiao Tong University died at the age of 57 from lung cancer. His lectures were praised by students as being like a brilliant movie and having "magical power" by virtue of his clear explanations and multiple solutions to inspire students' thinking, which won him a full-score on online teaching appraisal. He even shared his ideas and thinking with students for them to complete essays. He was so loved by students that within a week of his death, there were thousands of mourning articles posted on the university bulletin board system and an online memorial was constructed for him.

The celebration of Yan's life was spoiled by the discussion concerning the professional title Yan held, he remained a "lecturer" till his death. According to the current performance appraisal in colleges and universities, promotion for teachers depends mainly on the number of scientific research papers published, which explains why Yan was restricted to his position as a lecturer, as he never published any academic papers.

According to official documents, at Shanghai Jiao Tong University, the promotion criteria for associate professor is two published journal papers, or one textbook (main author), or three published research papers on teaching. An official response from Shanghai Jiao Tong University emphasised their regulations on teaching and research. Professionals holding the position of teacher need to disperse knowledge and generate ideas; there is no trade-off between these two. Measured against this, Lecturer Yan was regarded as "incomplete".

However, his devoted attitude towards students was well known and he spent almost all his time teaching and tutoring students. He also had a serious attitude to scientific research in that his teaching material could have been rearranged and published as a monograph; however, he turned down this idea as he thought published articles must

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[2] As a Lecturer, I Examine Myself, Feeling No Shame. http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2005-04/04/content_2784316.htm (in Chinese), accessed on 4th April, 2011. The original report was adapted for illustrative purpose.

include break-through innovations and he was not prepared to piece material together for the purpose of promotion.

Is there any trade-off between the performance of academics who publish and their accountability as teachers? Furthermore, is there any trade-off between the time spent in educating and developing students and carrying out research?

1.1.3 Event 3[3]

Compared to the above two events, the third one is much lighter although still difficult.

In 2003, *Miaohua Zhu* was ranked seventh in the comprehensive teaching appraisal in Zhejiang University. The first six were all prestigious professors; it was more or less unexpected for *Zhu*, as a lowly lecturer, to be ranked so high. In the same year, his class, History of Western Art, was evaluated as being the highest quality. Ironically, in the same year, he was made redundant.

According to official documents, in Zhejiang University, no exceptions are made for those who have no papers published to keep their professional position. Similar to *Caihong Yan*, *Miaohua Zhu* was turned down for promotion due to being unpublished. However, *Zhu* is still at the university teaching the History of Western Art. The reason why he could keep his teaching role was only because of the popularity of the subject.

Zhu and *Yan* are very similar; not only in terms of their reputation for their attitude to students and classes - *Zhu* said his students are his whole life; but also in their attitude to research. *Zhu* continued to modify his draft manuscript of the History of Western Art over a period of four years but he kept it to himself as he thought that it was not perfect. For him, the accomplishment of his manuscript was simply his duty "to get things done"; he was prepared to write papers, but never for the purpose of promotion.

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[3] No Paper, Made Redundant. http://edu.people.com.cn/GB/3893875.html (in Chinese), accessed on 5th April, 2011. The original report was adapted for illustrative purpose.

1.1.4 Event 4

This is an extreme example indirectly representing the importance of published papers in Chinese academia.

It is compulsory to have a paper published in a journal with a particular impact-factor to gain a PhD degree; this rule has been commonly shared and accepted by most public Chinese universities.

It was the sixth year of a woman's PhD study in the College of Life Science, the case university, when she was waiting for her paper to be published. Once she had the publication, she could graduate and the distance and time spent apart from her husband, lasting for several years due to her doctoral research, would come to an end. However, the length of time before her work was published was longer than she thought it would be.

At the very last stage of her doctoral studies, her husband tried to persuade her to return home. Having researched for such a long time and worked so hard to attain her degree, she struggled with this dilemma. Finally, she decided to wait until her was paper published.

The story concluded with her graduation and a divorce.

1.1.5 Event 5

(Please note that this is mainly taken directly from the journal web pages which contain grammatical errors.)

"Science Index a target for criticism in China"[4]

"SCI was first used for academic evaluation in China in late 1980s...the reason for doing so was that an objective evaluation criterion was lacking in

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[4] Science Index a target for criticism in China. http://www.rsc.org/chemistryworld/Issues/2009/August/ScienceIndexATargetForCriticismInChina.asp, accessed on Jan. 2010. The original report was adapted for illustrative purpose.

the country, and that as many academic disciplines were immature in China, an evaluation based on peer review was impossible...(the) approach was soon favored by the Ministry of Education, and the paper numbers in SCI-indexed journals quickly became the most important tool to evaluate universities and science institutes, which then used the same criteria to assess their scientists.

Funding applications, award entries and academic promotion all require SCI papers as supporting evidence.

But according to Rao (*Rao Yi*, a renowned neurobiologist and the dean of Peking University's College of Life Sciences), the reliance on SCI paper numbers and the status of a journal in which a paper is published has negatively impacted the quality of work produced by China's scientists….The zealous pursuit of SCI papers has led *You Suning*, editor-in-chief of China Medical Association journals, to suggest the acronym is short for 'Stupid Chinese Index'.

The criticism of the SCI in China first appeared in early 2000s…But *Chen Jia'er*, former head of NSFC (the National Natural Science Foundation), admits the enthusiasm for SCI has not eased since then.

When the index was first introduced as an evaluation tool in China, it was welcomed by academia as an objective tool to reward scientists based on their merits rather than on administrative hierarchy.

Yet *Shi Yigong*, deputy dean of the School of Medicine of Tsinghua University, says that the rampancy of SCI in China is just a result of the dominance of administrative officials in the evaluation of academic research. The officials do not have enough professional knowledge so they have to rely on SCI.

Wang Hongfei of the CAS (Chinese Academy of Sciences) Institute of Chemistry suggests that 'the wide use of objective evaluation methods such

as SCI in China is mainly because the evaluators want to find a pretext to justify their decisions.'

Despite the widespread complaints, no one thinks China should say a complete farewell to SCI".

1.2 Motivation and Objectives

There is a common issue hidden in the above events, that is, standard performance requirement. From rigid production performance in a manufacturing organisation to inflexible requirements over academic outcomes in universities, the emergence and the influence of regulations on people are the concern of this thesis.

Most of the preceding events happened in Chinese academia. The specific attention on Chinese academia resulted from the background of the author. She was brought up on campus with her parents working in a Chinese public university and has always been surrounded by academics and witnessed their experiences. This background is the rationale behind her interest in the impact of performance metrics in the arena of academia. Accompanied by a specific interest in academic measurements and the lack of research in this arena, the motivation of this thesis is to develop a better understanding of Chinese academics from the perspective of the extent to which performance regulations[5] could have affected them. In doing so, the impact of performance measures revealed by this thesis is expected to bring along further improvement of the currently adopted measuring systems.

Specifically speaking, this thesis is concerned with the questions – how specified standards listed in the promotion criteria regulate the behaviour of academics (in terms of, for example, attitudes towards teaching and research)? And why the standards have such a powerful impact on them?

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[5] In some Chinese universities, academic performance regulations are normally represented by the promotion criteria.

In order to understand the impact of such criteria, the ancestor of academic performance measurements – the management practice (Scientific Management) and the key issues which relate to it are introduced.

The events outlined in Section 1.1 serve to remind us of the contentious nature of measurement practices and the effect of these practices on human beings no matter in which type of field they are applied.

Even though accountants are regarded as professionals operating with regulations and standards, and accounting "…is regarded as a purely technical matter…" (Loft, 1986, p. 137), there has been much consideration of the social impact of accounting (indicative examples include Hines, 1988; Loft, 1986; Miller and O'Leary, 1987). Research from different perspectives, through different methods, in different countries and over different time periods concludes that accounting is fundamentally a social activity rather than merely a technical one (Arnold and Hammond, 1994; Baritz, 1960, Burchell *et al*., 1980; Ezzamel *et al*., 2007, Ryan *et al*., 2002).

Management accounting is not exceptional – the scrutiny of the socially constructed nature of management accounting, and the influence it casts on people, broadens the perception of management accounting. It not only interacts with institutional environments, it also plays a constitutive role.

In order to understand the socially constitutive nature of managerial accounting practices (academic performance measurements), one should take into account the features of the institutional environment wherein the practices are produced, distributed and enacted. Through learning about the institutional environment, on the one hand, one could develop a better understanding of the practices, including the "realities" or understandings that are institutionally intended to become established through the practices (accounting practices play the role of mediator to deliver the dominant interests); on the other hand, one could develop a better understanding of academics in terms of their subjection to official regulations. Thus, this thesis also focuses on the context in which such practices emerged.

In order to address the socially constructed and socially constitutive nature of academic performance measurements in Chinese academia, a series of theories (Institutional Theory, Bourdieusian Theory, Lacan's Mirror Theory and Foucault's account of disciplinary power) are adopted to compose a theoretical framework to underpin the analysis (see Sections 1.4.1, 1.5 and Chapter Three). These theories originated in the West and have traditionally been used to interpret western phenomenon; therefore, the application of these theories to a Chinese context broadens their scope through interpreting phenomenon in the Far East.

The main empirical contribution of this thesis is to make the impact of academic performance measures visible to the public. There could be more attention paid to this practice and it may bring along further changes to the commonly adopted measuring system. When considering the theoretical contribution of this thesis, in addition to broadening the scope of adopted Western theories, this thesis intends to develop a theoretical framework (constituted by these theories) to guide the analysis of performance measures as accounting practices in terms of their relationships between the state, organisations and individuals.

1.3   Summary of Research Methodology and Methods

According to Burrell and Morgan (1979), the way in which people view the world is determined by the paradigm in which they are located - "To be located in a particular paradigm is to view the world in a particular way" (p. 24).

The background of the author and the socially constructed and the constitutive nature of performance measurement have located her in an interpretive paradigm wherein the experience and opinions of those who live in the world are the resources through which to understand the social world. Even though the author has been physically distanced from the Chinese academic field, she is still subject to its influence. The choice of this research topic is a stellar example of this.

The interpretive paradigm enables the author to view particular accounting practices and to understand the impact of these practices. The requirement for the involvement

of the author and the perspective of the socially constructed nature of accounting practices (Scapens, 1994) determine the research methods.

In order to scrutinise the impact of academic performance measurements in China, a case study is adopted to draw the boundary of analysis. A Chinese case helps to position the analysis of the thesis in a real-life setting.

In order to understand the extent of the promotion criteria's impact on academics, one should gain primary experience of their feelings, understandings and reactions to the regulations. So semi-structured interviews and questionnaires (with the same interview questions in) were carried out among research participants (academics) in the case university to collect primary data.

The socially constructed nature of accounting practice suggests that a research method, discourse analysis, may be relevant since accounting practices could be regarded as discourses which reflect the interests of their producers. The discourse analysis in this thesis (see Sections 4.3.2, 5.3 and 5.4) is positioned in a three-layer analytical framework. In particular, the second-layer analysis (discursive practice analysis), helps to reveal how the institutional influences are involved in the practices (the discourse) in the process of their production, distribution and consumption. One could therefore develop an understanding of the subjectivity constructed by the practices.

1.4   Contribution to Knowledge

1.4.1 Applications of Western Theories in a Chinese Context – A Theoretical Framework

Generally speaking, this thesis is concerned with developing a better understanding of Chinese academia through considering the socially constructed and the constitutive nature of academic performance measurements.

Being regarded as malleable and constitutive subjects, academic performance measurements could be understood through the lens of an institutional and a critical perspective.

This thesis is intended to develop a theoretical framework to understand the emergence and changes of performance measurements in Chinese academia; and their impact on academics in China. As mentioned in Section 1.2, this thesis adopts a series of theories to guide the understanding of Chinese academic performance measurements, which are listed as follows.

Theories	Key References
New Institutional Theory	Carruthers, 1995; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983
Old Institutional Theory	Burns and Scapens, 2000
Bourdieusian Theory	Bourdieu, 1990, 1992 and 1998
Foucauldian Theory	Foucault, 1979
Roberts' Understanding of Lacan's Mirror Theory	Lacan, 1977; Roberts, 1991 and 2009

Table 1.1 Key Theories Adopted in This Thesis

In the remainder of this section, one could find the outline of the justification for the adopted theories and the theoretical framework this thesis intends to develop.

From a methodological perspective, these theories have the same ontological assumption of accounting practices in terms of their socially constructivist nature.

This thesis adopts a new institutional perspective to understand the emergence and the adoption of particular practices that organisational behaviours are created to respond to the dominant interests. An old institutional framework helps to break down these organisational behaviours – through defining particular practices as rules and routines. Their interactions with organisational institutions and employees' actions could be used to demonstrate the socially constructed nature of particular practices.

The "similarity" between an organisational field (which is constituted by organisations in the same institutional context – they are subject to the same institutions – see Section 3.3.3) and a "field", and the modes of organisational and field behaviour suggest that a Bourdieusian perspective might be useful to analyse organisational behaviours. In addition to taking an institutional perspective, this thesis analyses the emergence of academic performance measurements in China from a Bourdieusian perspective.

Besides enriching the analysis within the boundary of an organisational field, Bourdieusian theory is used to understand particular academics' understandings and attitudes towards the promotion criteria – to understand the mode of academic behaviour in the field of academia. In order to reveal the reason for the mode of behaviour, this thesis adopts Lacanian and Foucauldian theories as used by Roberts to discuss the significance of rules (standard requirements).

Even though focusing on different stages of the impact of performance measurement on individuals, these theories have something in common – to reveal the impact of practices either on an organisational level (in academia – universities) or on an individual level (on academics).

No one theory can cover everything. These theories are expected to work together to compose a theoretical framework (see Figure 1.1) to guide analysis. Moreover, the application of these Western theories to the Far East and a socialist country, could serve to broaden their theoretical applications.
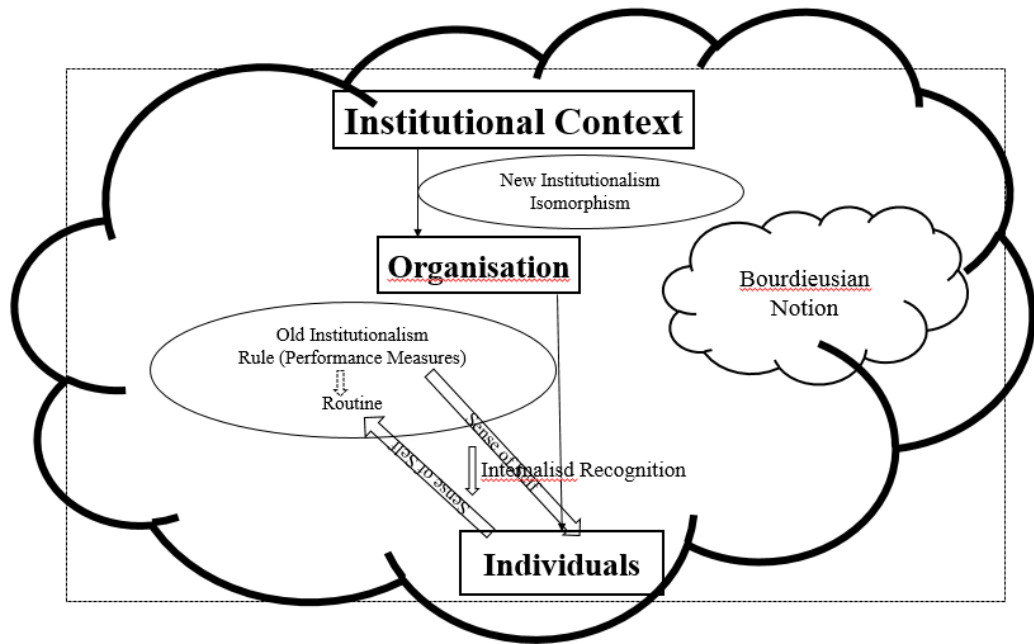
Figure 1.1 A Theoretical Framework to Guide the Analysis of Academic Performance Measures in China[6]

1.4.2 Discussion about Accountability

A discussion of accountability seems inevitable when carrying out research on performance measurement. As a noun, "accountability" can be defined as "a situation in which someone is responsible for things that they do and can give a satisfactory reason for them". Conventional wisdom argues that public sector performance will be improved through improved accountability; improved accountability can be realised through a good set of performance measures (Ammons, 2007). However, it is not always the case.

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[6] Major actors in this thesis are put in rectangles – the institution, the organisation and individuals. Institutional theories – new and old institutional theories are put in ovals. Broad arrows represent the impact of performance measures on academics from a theoretical perspective. Cloud stands for Bourdieusian notions, including field, doxa, illusio, habitus and capital – it covers and permeates through the whole "field". Dashed shapes stand for other key issues which could be analysed from relevant theoretical perspectives, but they are not the foci of this thesis.

McKernan and McPhail's (2012) argue that "With the emergence of accountability, previously autonomous responsibilities arising from social relations, of for example, stewardship, begin to be displaced, subsumed, through quantitatively dominated processes of quantification" (p. 178). What is worse, the "…(calculative) accountability…with a drive to render responsibilities and performances visible, and thereby constrain accountable subjects to respect and live up to their responsibilities" (McKernan and McPhail, 2012, p. 179). For example, in the context of the public sector, the undermined accountability could result from the situation that "If government officials get the message that they are expected to comply with their supervisors' directives regardless of the consequences, they may pay less attention to whether the things they are accomplishing may jeopardise public interests" (Chan and Gao, 2009, p. 58). This situation can be understood as a person making the choice to behave in accordance with either social rules or moral standards [7] (McKernan, 2012).

In China, unlike the two lecturers introduced in Events 2 and 3, some academics pursue research outcomes at the expense of time and effort in teaching. Moreover, the standardisation of research outcomes could have "cultivated" opportunists, who pursue the quantity of recognisable research outcomes at the expense of research quality. In short, the problems of accountability resulting from performance measurements also exist in China.

So far, the concern with accountability has been largely from the perspectives of being accountable "to whom" and "by which means". The former perspective is relevant to this thesis since on the one hand, it is the crux of the (internalised) impact of regulations on individuals; on the other hand, sometimes, it is difficult for individuals at the grassroots level to make changes to politically supported regulations – the promotion criteria ("by which means"). Nevertheless, it is worthwhile discussing the performance measurements *per se* since individuals'

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[7] Messner's (2009) interpretation of the problematic of accountability includes three aspects. The first is concerned with the opaqueness of the accountable person in terms of reflecting on his/her deeds and their rationale. The second is concerned with the results of the opaque requirements of others in either the misunderstanding of requirements or being compelled to distort accounts to make it intelligible to others. The third concerns the tension generated from the different requirements expected by different people. McKernan's (2012) argument is related to the second and the third situations.

understandings of them in some senses determine their impact (Roberts, 1991), yet the problems of accountability resulting from the design of performance measurements should be considered by policy makers.

In addition to the preceding perspectives, the jeopardised academic responsibilities in China could also be discussed from a semantic perspective. By semantic, here it means the meaning of the words or the characters. The definitions in English and the corresponding Chinese characters of accountability, duty and responsibility are listed in the following table. From the column of Chinese Characters, one can see that accountability is the combination of duty and responsibility.

English Term	English Definition	Chinese Characters
Accountability	a situation in which someone is responsible for things that happen and can give a satisfactory reason for them;	有责任, 有义务
Duty	(LAW) a responsibility to do something because it is legally or morally right to do it;	责任; 义务
	(HR) something that you have to do because it is part of your job;	
Responsibility	something that it is your job or duty to deal with.	责任

Table 1.2 English Term, English Definition, Chinese Characters of Accountability, Duty and Responsibility[8]

On the basis of the preceding discussion and the definitions in Table 1.2, without specific illustrations, responsibility can be regarded as carrying a more moral sense than accountability.

It is the same as in Chinese, that the implication of 责任 and 有责任(corresponding to "responsibility") is that something needs to be done under moral rules; and the implication of 义务 and 有义务 is that something is compulsory and needs to be done because it is the job. There will be no confusion as long as the characters of "义务" and "责任" are stated clearly. On the basis of the conventional wisdom (Ammons, 2007), in Chinese political documents about higher educational reforms, academic performance measurements were implemented to construct and improve

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[8] http://dictionary.cambridge.org/, accessed on the 6th Aug, 2012.

personal accountabilities since the improved personal accountabilities were believed to bring about improved personal academic capacities (Gao, 2012). While, the academic morality constructed by the term "responsibilities" is reflected in most of the responses as "imparting knowledge and educating people" in the author's interviews and questionnaires. The onerous requirements for research in the promotion criteria and their positive relationship with merit payment may have undermined the moral duty of academics in teaching (and carrying out unbiased research) – private self-interested concerns of individual success and failure may have imposed an instrumental orientation in academic production (Roberts, 1991). Therefore, in order to ease academics' struggle between "social rules" and "moral standards", the policy makers should either adjust the proportion of the requirements for teaching and research in the promotion criteria or reconsider the term depicting the aim of the performance measurements.

In summary, in addition to making contributions to the understanding of accountability in a Chinese context, the aim of this thesis is to discuss the impact of performance measurement from the perspective of academic accountability.

1.5 Thesis Structure

The rest of this thesis is organised as follows.

Chapter Two reviews issues about academic performance measurements in universities. The adoption of academic performance measures was traced back to the Thatcher and Regan Governments in the 1980s. The significance of neoliberalism in terms of bringing about changes to practices in the public sector and higher educational institutions was through the introduction of new public management in universities. The recognition of the problems of performance measures in the public sector, for example, uncertain objectives and conflicting interests between stakeholders could shed light on the understanding of academic performance measures. Key facets of Scientific Management are reviewed to enrich the understanding of academic performance measurements from the perspective of the redefined roles of academics and the impact of standardisation. Additionally, Chapter

Two reviews different perspectives of performance measures – the institutional, the Bourdieusian and one taken from Tsoukas (1997).

Chapter Three is concerned with the theories which constitute the theoretical framework this thesis intends to develop. Roberts' (1991 and 2009) understanding of Lacanian Mirror Theory is reviewed to understand how the sense of self is constructed through the desire for recognition. This underpins the reason behind the performance measures' impact on academics – they are recognised (categorised) by different academic titles. Roberts' understanding of the Foucauldian account of disciplinary power is used to interpret academic behaviour from the perspective of the power of internalised external disciplines. On the basis of understanding the importance of the desire for recognition, Foucault's account of power and discipline refers to the extent to which performance measures could have affected on academics – disciplines could be individually internalised and academics watch over themselves. In the meantime, the Bourdieusian notions of field, capital and habitus supply a lens through which to understand not only individuals', but also organisations' behaviours – in a field, the modes of thinking and conducts are determined by field-related capitals. These capitals could be obtained, accumulated and maintained through satisfying the requirements set by rules – performance measures. In order to understand organisational behaviour in terms of generating, adopting and changing managerial practices, Institutional theory is adopted to reveal that the changes to an organisation are subject to inter- and intra- organisation environment. Through the lens of the Bourdieusian notions, the psychoanalytical perspective of the extent to which academics are subject to the measurements is connected to the institutional perspective concerning the institutional influences on organisations. In other words, centred on performance measures' socially constructivist nature, the above theories constitute a theoretical framework. It guides and underpins the analysis of performance measures as a mediator connecting the state (organisations) and individuals.

Chapter Four sets out the research methodology and research methods. The author's understanding of the nature of accounting practices as socially constructed and socially constitutive and her background led the thesis to the interpretive paradigm,

in which research is undertaken to understand the social world through learning about the experience and opinions of those living in it. On the basis of the research methodology, the case study set up the boundary of the analysis within Chinese academia and a Chinese university. Interviews and questionnaires of academics from the case university were used to collect primary data in terms of their understandings, feelings and opinions about the issues related to academic performance measures. Accompanied by the understanding of accounting practices as discourses, discourse analysis is adopted as a research method analyse the institutional impact of performance measurement in universities.

Chapter Five is concerned with analysing academic performance measurements from an institutional and a Bourdieusian perspective. Through introducing the Chinese political structure and the state's desire to pursue economic development in the context of a market economy, the emergence of academic performance measurement is diagnosed as the result of institutional isomorphism. In addition, the interests of dominant groups in having particular research outcomes is revealed through scrutinising relevant official discourse (including leaders' talks, relevant policy documents and national projects). The emergence of particular measurements is also interpreted from a Bourdieusian perspective locating Chinese society in a global context, wherein economic advancement (brought about by advanced science and technology, and marketised practices) is critical in order to become superior to peers and wield influence. Burns and Scapens' (2000) old institutional framework is adopted to analyse the process of implementing the performance measurements (the promotion criteria) in a Chinese public university. The socially constructed and constitutive natures of the promotion criteria are disclosed through their interaction with organisational institutions and academics.

Chapter Six focuses on the extent of the promotion criteria's impact upon academics in regulating their attitudes towards teaching and research and the reasons for this impact. In turn, contemporary Chinese academia could be seen in light of the significance of the promotion criteria. Academics' responses to the issues related to the promotion criteria are analysed through the lens of Roberts' understandings of Lacanian Mirror theory and Foucauldian disciplinary power, Bourdieusian notions of

field, capital, illusio and habitus and institutional theories. In particular, the desire for recognition and the perspective of sub-fields (different activities in the same field) are critical to an understanding of the rationalities and the effects of the promotion criteria, they help to enrich the theoretical foundations of the policy implications of the thesis.

Chapter Seven reviews several key issues discussed in previous chapters, including accountability generated by regulations, workplace resistance and the trend of managerialism in universities across the world from a theoretical perspective. Chinese academia is revisited from the perspective of academic performance measurement and academics. The policy implications (for example, the changes to the proportion of requirements for teaching and research, the improvement of and critical evaluation of the metrics) implied by the theoretical analysis are summarised. The implications that this thesis may have for the understanding of Chinese academia are explored.

2 Chapter Two: Performance Measurements in Universities

2.1 Introduction

"T(t)he university as a place for the discussion of ideas, and the transmission of tradition; a cultural institution which can sustain the cultural framework for social interpretation, is… [being] undermined by an embracing structural change: the fusion of intellectual practices and market forces" (Cooper *et al.*, 2002, p. 1).

The above quotation alludes to a global trend of managerialism in universities. Inherited from the private sector and originating from Scientific Management, academic performance measurement is a key managerial practice in universities.

In this chapter, an overview of this practice will start from a review of performance measurements in the public sector and then focus on the review of Scientific Management. The former is concerned with the background and the problems of performance measurements; latter is used to enrich and inspire the understanding of performance measurement from the perspectives of the redefined roles of academics and the impact of standardisation.

On the basis of the reflection of performance measurement on campus, research papers from critical perspectives are reviewed – an institutional perspective will illustrate the impact of the institutional environment on universities; a Bourdieusian perspective will disclose the characteristics of a "marketised academia" and explain academics' modes of behaviour. Since the internalised impact of measurement practices on academics is rarely considered, a critique of information and accountability is used in order to enrich the critical discussion about the impact of performance measures.

The structure of this section proceeds as follows. Section 2.2 reviews the background of new public management in the public sector and reflects upon the

causes of problematic performance measurements. Section 2.3 is concerned with the implications of Scientific Management. Section 2.4 discusses the theoretical perspectives used to analyse academic performance measurement. The review of previous studies into academic performance measurements in China and the significance of research in a Chinese context are set out in Section 2.5. The conclusion is set out in Section 2.6.

2.2   Performance Measurements in the Public Sector

Universities are typically operating within a new public management environment. This is normally termed managerialism, new public management and market-based public administration; and focuses on, for example, the efficiency and value for money of governmental expenditure, market-based competition for the purchase and delivery of goods, the outsourcing of governmental services, and decision making based on the monitoring of individual and group performance against targets (Ferlie et al., 1996; Clarke and Newman, 1997; Deem and Lucas, 2003; Exworthy and Halford, 1998; Parker, 2011; Pollitt 2003).

The most significant historical time period in which public service organisations began to follow the private sector was arguably during the 1980s in the UK and US. The governments of Thatcher and Reagan began to practice neoliberal philosophy to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of product and service delivery in the state sector. The neoliberal philosophy can be seen as −

1. Individual efficiency is emphasised and could be motivated "by promoting individual entrepreneurship in an institutional setting that privileges private property rights, free markets and free trade" (Harvey, 2005; Parker, 2011).

2. Individuals should be responsible for managing their lives; government is only responsible for maintaining the institutional settings (Parker, 2011).

 The implications of the neoliberal philosophy on the practice of measuring performance are summarised by Flynn (1986) as follows −

1. "the idea that professional workers do or should respond to financial incentives and that improving rewards for good performance will necessarily affect effort and commitment";

2. "the admiration for the private sector and the belief that if only the public sector were more like the private it would be more efficient";

3. The "pursuit of performance measurement can also be seen within the context of a desire by the government to cut public expenditure (see Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 1985, p. 23)";

4. There is a "tendency towards more central control and influence over many aspects of the public sector" (pp. 390-391).

With respect to the institutional influences, the last two implications can be seen in universities; while the first two implications are connected with the discussion about the problems of performance measurements and accountability. In addition to the critical perspective of performance measurements and accountability (see Sections 2.4.2 and 2.4.3); a critique of performance measurements could be carried out from a practical and/or technical perspective discussing the design of performance indicators.

> "We know, for instance, that we have to measure results. We also know that with the exception of business, we do not know how to measure results in most organisations" (Drucker, 1968, cited in Kanter and Summers, 1994, p. 220).

The above quotation alludes to one cause of problematic performance measurements. Performance indicators are supposedly designed to be centred on organisational objectives; however, the objectives are not easy to understand. According to Carter (1989), the uncertainty of organisational objectives normally comes from the following three issues. Firstly, it is not easy to express objectives in a clear and precise way; it may be forcing users of performance measures to be unsure of organisational objectives and to simply focus on the measures themselves. Secondly, organisations normally have multiple objectives, some of which may be incompatible,

not only within the same organisation, but also between organisations. For example, the reduced budget of a railway company might require significant safety trade-offs. Thirdly, the rupture between activities represented through performance indicators and their impact always hinders the effectiveness of measures. For example, there could be uncertain relationship between the production of health services and the health of the nation (Day and Klein, 1987).

In addition to the problems generated from identifying objectives, the ownership of performance could undermine the effects of performance measurements – performance measurements are used to measure and control internal organisational operations; however, the output could be the product of combined endeavours. For instance, the recovery of a patient could depend on the work of surgeons, physiotherapists and social workers. As a result, there is a potential conflict between independent indicators and interdependent performance. Moreover, performance could be influenced by factors which are outside the control of the organisation; for example, exam results are also related to the influences of students' social backgrounds, which local educational institutions cannot control (Gray and Jesson, 1987).

The discussion about the independence of professionals gave rise to the concern about the power of various stakeholders and their impact on the implementation and use of information. For example, management control through imposing performance indicators incurs criticism for disrupting the independence of professional accountability, which is why Day and Klein (1987) argue the importance of the relationship between administrators and professionals in holding services accountable. Generally speaking, within this arena, key concerns include the analysis of the relationship between different actors, the emergence of new stakeholders and their effect on other social actors, practices and systems (for example, Brignall and Modell, 2000; Broadbent *et al*., 1991; Brunsson, 1994; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Pollitt, 1986).

Even though there are a series of problems involved in designing, improving and implementing performance indicators, the above discussion is based on an

assumption that information supplied by performance measurements is reliable. In line with this assumption, as long as the impact of the uncertain organisational objectives, the ambiguous ownership of performance and the relationship between organisational actors could be eschewed, performance might be improved. However, this practical perspective overestimates the "objectivity" of the information and underestimates its constitutive nature.

The following sections will focus on the critique of information generated by performance indicators. In order to understand the significance of academic performance measurements, key aspects of Taylorism (the "father" of performance measurements) will be reviewed.

2.3   Taylorism in Universities

2.3.1 Introduction

Through the division of labour in terms of separating workers execution from management conception, and the breakdown of production processes, Taylorism realises management control of workers actions and the measurement of the production process (Braverman, 1974). Although the current working environment is hugely different from the one in which Taylor worked in the late 1800s; the philosophy of Scientific Management is still playing an important role. For example, TQM and ISO9000 are both related to Scientific Management (Boje and Winsor, 1993; Cooper and Taylor, 2000; Danford, 1998).

Aside from the enduring nature of Scientific Management, Taylorism has moved beyond its traditional manufacturing environment. As Taylor stated "the same principles can be applied with equal force to all social activities: to the management of our homes; the management of our farms; the management of the business of our tradesmen, large and small; of our churches, our philanthropic institutions, our universities, and our governmental departments" (Taylor, 1911, p. 8). Today one can find managerial approaches resonant of Scientific Management in universities under

the global marketisation trend of higher education in terms of the focus on centralised management and value-for-money (Parker, 2011).

This section will review some Scientific Management's key issues. On the basis of this review, the significance of the key issues in contemporary higher educational institutions will be discussed and reflected upon.

2.3.2 Standardisation of Scientific Management

The symbol of Taylorism was a stop-watch, implying the rigid and accurate time spent on every necessary operation and movement, including every breath a worker takes. This implies the significance of standards in terms of production and products in Scientific Management.

There have been debates and doubts about Scientific Management techniques. The major concerns about Scientific Management are the uncontrollable power granted to management teams and the ignorance of individual and personal differences in terms of setting up standard requirements (Braverman, 1974; Warner, 1994). Scientific Management is based upon the belief that performance can be expressed in a quantitative way. Its implication for the individual worker is that individuals' work, meanings and values are represented and reflected through their quantitative form of performance. In summary, individual contribution in Taylorised workplaces is recognised by quantifiable performance reflected through measurement against standards or benchmarks.

One of the conduits through which Scientific Management resurges in managerialism in universities is the standardisation of research performance – the quantification of research performance through metrics[9]. When measuring research performance in universities, one might imagine that Scientific Management could not be adopted

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[9] One may argue that current teaching performance is standardised that it is measured by, for example, "counting the number of graduates, courses in the curriculum, and programs for special students, and…other testing devices" (Powell, 1985, p. 564). For illustrative purposes, research performance is taken as an example to critique the standardisation in universities and the social relations of universities to academics inherited from Scientific Management. The standardisation of teaching performance will be discussed in a more specific context in Section 2.5.

literally since neither production nor the products between manufacturing are similar to those in academia. However, the changing nature of the state and its consequent impact on higher educational institutions was achieved through the adoption of Scientific Management in universities alongside the rationalities of Scientific Management. This was accompanied by state restrictions on funding which will be discussed next.

In line with the neoliberal philosophy that individuals should be responsible and accountable for their own deeds and well-being, the coercive pressure in restricting research funds not only gave rise to the competition between higher educational institutions, it also resulted in the establishment of systems in ensuring the efficiency of granted research funds – funding is closely related to the performance of research (Halsey, 1992; Harley, 2000; Hartley, 1997). Similar fund granting mechanisms based on qualified and ranked research performance (through for example, previous research awards, number of publications and citations and journal rankings) have been established in the UK, Australia and New Zealand and are expected to emerge in other developed countries, such as Germany, Sweden and Austria (Alexander, 2000; Geuna and Martine, 2003; Parker, 2011).

The increased quantification of research performance echoes the "one best way" to produce standard products in Scientific Management. Even though the standardised measurement methods were regarded as objective and expected to negate the influence of asymmetric knowledge among evaluators, the quantified performance metrics do not appear to be unbiased. The commonly adopted performance metrics, for example, publication counts, citation analysis and peer review are discussed next.

The number of published papers is probably the simplest type of bibliometric indicator. However, the volume of publications could be irrelevant to the quality of research. For example, bibliometric indicators only count published papers; this means that other types of academic communication are ignored (Edge, 1979). Publication practice is discipline-dependent, country-dependent, and social environment-dependent, all of these characteristics hinder the comparison of research performance (King, 1987) and there is a significant problem when adopting

publication counts in that it diverts researchers' attention towards publications, rather than undertaking research (for example, Greenberg, 1986). Although the two are linked they are not the same.

Citation indices had been assumed to provide the most reliable indicator of paper and journal quality. Compared to the researcher's control of submitting and publishing papers, citation analysis reduces the researchers' influence over their publications – "the scientist most often exercises no direct control over the citation process" (Lindsey, 1989, p. 190).

The basic premise in relying on citation indices could be that "If a scientist's work is important, it will be used and cited by other scientists" (Lindsey, 1991, p. 226). This premise gave rise to the adoption of citation measures in Australia as a component of the Research Quality Framework (RQF) to assess research quality. It was felt that the inclusion of citation metric would "…encourage researchers to achieve highly cited publications — aiming for quality rather than focusing on quantity" (Butler, 2008, pp. 89-90). Nevertheless, while this appears to be a good reason to use a citation measure to decide research quality, there could be unintended negative consequences as Lindsey (1989) explains.

Firstly, citations are sensitive to popular trends in science and favour researchers undertaking work in the mainstream and dominant paradigms. Citations are used to represent the impact of published articles; however, it is regarded as, at best, a "crude proxy" since "…the best single predictor of a citation count is the number of other researchers working in the topic area" (Merchant, 2010, p. 117). This totally undermines the logic behind the association between citation counts and research quality.

Secondly, the differences in terms of research quality between a multiple-cited article and an article without citations may not be that significant. In addition, even though the citation counts may be effective in separating popular from unpopular papers, a bad paper may be frequently cited because it is wrong, so authors may cite it to invalidate that work (Kostoff, 1998).

Thirdly, citation counts are not sensitive to the ethical and moral dimensions of the quality of a scientific contribution.

Fourthly, citation counts underestimate the contribution of applied science. This is because of the understanding that applied science, such as applied technology and engineering, are less weighty than the pure sciences.

The most significant criticism of citation counts is concerned with the aim of using citation counts. The volume of citation, as a metric, is adopted to avoid subjective assessments; however, the behaviour of citing *per se* is subjective.

Other than the above problems, there are several technical limitations of carrying out citation analysis. There are several databases, such as Science Citation Index (SCI), Engineering Index (EI) and Social Science Citation Index (SSCI), where citations are obtained. For illustrative purposes, SCI and SSCI are taken as examples to demonstrate their limitations in supplying reliable volumes of citation.

SCI has been criticised for its preference for the US and other English-language journals and its bias towards journals with non-Roman alphabets (Carpenter and Narin, 1981; Kurmis, 2003). And the yearly inclusion and exclusion of particular journals make the composition of SCI inconsistent (King, 1987; Moed *et al.*, 1985). In addition, as mentioned earlier, field-dependence also exists in SCI. For example, compared to biochemistry papers, mathematics papers have fewer references (Garfield, 1979). In 2004 economists Daniel Klein and Eric Chiang identified several deficiencies in SSCI which result in citation over-counting. Furthermore, the partiality of SSCI is disclosed through a survey which suggests that free market oriented research is not favoured by SSCI. This means the use of SSCI may result in the ignorance of particular fields of research.

The emergence of impact factors represents a further development of citation counts[10]. Impact factors are used to represent the impact of particular journals to the

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[10] The impact factor of a particular journal is determined by the number of papers published in the journal, a given length of time, for example, two years, and the total citations in the given time period. For example, A represents the times that articles published in the year of N and N+1 are

extent that journals with higher impact factors are deemed to be more important than those with lower impact factors. In terms of their validity to represent the quality of journals and papers, impact factors have attracted much discussion and criticism due to its exclusion of citations in non-indexed journals and reports. The volume of citations – one of the elements used to calculate an impact factor, is easy to manipulate – taking self-citations and negative citations as valid citations (for example, Butler, 2008; Hernán, 2008; Reedijk and Moed, 2008; Seglen, 1997). All the deficits of citation counts reviewed previously could have impacted on the validity of impact factors. Generally speaking, as Mingers and Willmott (2013), following McWilliams *et al*., (2005), Mingers and Xu, (2010) and Parker and Thomas (2011) argued, "journals that are long established, which publish topics that are widely researched, use methodologies that are frequently deployed and/or engage familiar theoretical frameworks…" (p. 4) will dominate.

Van Nierop (2009) analysed the diffusion of citations in different disciplines and discovered different speeds of diffusion. This results in an un-balanced volume of impact factors in different arenas. For example, statistics papers were cited substantially less than cited papers in the medical field during the same time period. Similarly, research in the field of social science, including management and business, was found to be less active than the research in natural science in the first years of publication in terms of being cited (Mingers and Willmott, 2013). Impact factors might be questioned in terms of their ability to tell the long-term impact of particular research since "social outcomes and economic payoffs are long-term phenomenon and cannot be generated in the short-term" (Kostoff, 1998, p. 32).

One of the reasons for the adoption of objective indicators was to eschew the "biased" process of peer review (Mingers and Willmott, 2013). However, peers' "subjectivity" was involved in the commonly used "objective" indicators. For example, the reputation of SCI is from its rigorous selection process and the level of its journals is determined through peer review. One could accept that peer review and

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cited by indexed journals during the year of N+2; and B represents the total number of cited articles published by the journal in the year of N and N+1. Then, the impact factor in the year of N+2 is the ratio of A over B. And the result, the impact factor of a journal, X, in the year of N+2 means articles published in the journal in the year of N and N+1 are cited for X times respectively.

metrics "will usually produce similar results" and the logic of using bibliometric indicators to measure quality is that high-level peer review guarantees the quality of papers accepted by indexed journals, and the quality of a paper is positively related to citations (Butler, 2008, p. 91).

However, peer review can be criticised for peers' particular interests and preferences, for example in mainstream and dominant areas which favour the eminent reputation of scientists and research units ("the 'old boy' network" and "the 'halo' effect") (King, 1987). This may hinder the development of emerging fields and new academics.

Particularly, focusing on the use of journal lists in the UK business schools; Mingers and Willmott (2013) critically examine the impact of benchmarks and performance metrics on business research in terms of homogenising the focus and development of a field of research.

Yet, benchmarks also have had an impact on the other side of Atlantic Ocean. Merchant (2010) discusses his finding from the North American experience – the impact of the perceived value of accounting research is that it diverts academics' research foci. Specifically speaking, highly prestigious journals normally publish papers which adopt empirical tests of economics-based models and use large and archival data sets. The prestige of journals and possible high SSCI citations may have tempted researchers to focus on specific types of research. The consequence is the loss of diversity, which is costly to the academic arena and to society. In addition, due to the preference of prestigious journals and high citation counts on particular arenas, the academic arena could be restructured – "The proportion of faculty working in the non-mainstream areas is declining, so the mainstream is gaining political power" (Merchant, 2010, p. 118).

The standardised performance measurements increase and generate the influence of particular arenas and academics; and the performance-based funding schemes could have also changed the collegial relations between academics.

2.3.3 Social Relations

Scientific Management re-inspected and re-constructed the relationship between workmen and management.

Taylor stated that the interests of employees and employers were not necessarily antagonistic as "…prosperity for the employer cannot exist through a long term of years unless it is accompanied by prosperity for the employee, and *vice versa*; and that it is possible to give the workman what he most wants—high wages—and the employer what he wants—a low labour cost—for his manufactures" (Taylor, 1911, p. 10).

In order to achieve prosperity, management was tasked with selecting, teaching, training and developing individual workman to make sure that the workman "…can do (at his fastest pace and with the maximum of efficiency) the highest class of work for which his natural abilities fit him". The duty of management meant creating a clear job description and the division of work. However, the duty of managers was criticised in terms of suppressing "…worker's activity which consists of preparing and organizing the work in his own way" (Palloix, 1976, p. 52) since for Taylor (1909), workmen should "…do what they are told to do promptly and without asking questions or making suggestions" (Littler, 1978, p. 188).

To be adopted in public sector management (Carter, 1989), this centralised and top-down authoritarian style of management is echoed by the permeation of the philosophy of managerialism in higher educational institutions in developed countries (Parker, 2011). In these universities, the roles of academic management and academics and their relationship are regarded as marketised. For example, there might be a senior management group (with or without deans) wielding power not only in directing but also in making plans, setting targets and relevant incentives (Marginson and Considine, 2000; Parker, 2002 and 2011). Academics would be treated as marginal stakeholders and employees if they were not included in the decision-making process (Ackroyd and Ackroyd, 1999; Waugh, 1998). The

relationship between academic management and academics was therefore redefined as executive management and employees.

When considering the criticism that Scientific Management tampers with the social relations between management and workmen such that –

> "it consummated the transformation of the formal subordination of labour (where the capitalist purchases the right to direct labour or labour power) into the real subordination of labour (where the capitalist takes control of the actual process of production)" (Braverman, 1974, cited in Cooper and Taylor, 2000, p. 558).

Moreover, accompanied by the inherent standardisation in Scientific Management, the relationship between workmen and management in terms of gaining prosperity on each side could be simplified as a only one-way "dependence" such that –

> "…there is a minimal connection between the individual and the organization in terms of skill, training, involvement and the complexity of his contribution, in return for maximum flexibility and independence on the part of the organisation in using its manpower. In other words the organisation strives for maximum interchangeability of personnel (with minimum training) to reduce its dependence on the availability, ability, or motivation of individuals" (Davis, 1966, p. 302).

Echoing Braverman's (1974) argument concerning the social relations between management and workmen in Scientific Management, the division of work between managers and workmen reflect a vested relationship and "standards" lock workmen into their position of subordination. From the perspective of labour control, Management was described by Braverman "as the representative of management masquerading in the trappings of science" (1974, p. 86).

When considering the state's influence on university management in developed countries, facing the fierce competition for research funding between universities on the basis of research performance, the adoption and promotion of standard

requirements for research performance arguably reflects the "performance anxiety of university managers" (Mingers and Willmott, 2013, p. 1057). The seemingly objective benchmark not only clarifies and simplifies managerial decision making in presenting research performance within universities, but also in assessing research performance for funding programme assessors – they are keen to "…have simple quantitative indicators which could drive the resource allocation process, and substantiate and justify the resource allocation decisions that are generated" (Kostoff, 1998, p. 32).

The adoption of standard quantified requirements reflects the change to the role played by academic management from the collegial to the commercial decision maker. Not only were academics de-professionalised, academic management was criticised due to their dependence on the straightforward metric to the extent that "The Dean may not know much about research but at least he or she can count" (Worrell, 2009, p. 127, cited in Peng and Dess, 2010, p. 288).

The emerging profit and efficiency-oriented focus and managerial changes in universities rationalised the inheritance of such social relations. In addition, the standard quantified requirements for academics reinforce and amplify this vested relationship between the management and academics. It is to reflect standardisation and quantification and their implications as key issues in Scientific Management that the discussion now turns.

2.3.4 Conclusion

With the awareness of limited resources and the pursuit of efficiency, the idea of performance measurement aligned with Scientific Management, has been adopted firstly in manufacturing moving onto service organisations, and arriving at universities, as Taylor predicted in 1911.

The core of Scientific Management "is the organised study of work, the analysis of work into its simplest elements and the systematic improvements of the workers'

performance of each of these elements…Scientific Management is all but a systematic philosophy of worker and work" (Drucker, 1954, p. 280).

The standardisation and quantification of research performance make it a systematic method; this method determines the value of research performance. Just as Mingers and Willmott (2013) argue on the basis of their discovery from the significance of journal lists in the UK business schools that "it privileges the agenda pursued in those journals; and, conversely, it devalues research published elsewhere, irrespective of its content and contribution" (p. 1052). The innovation, diversification and long-term relevance of research outcomes might have been sacrificed in pursuit of a seemingly objective metric.

Through the systematicalisation of work, the responsibility between management and workmen is re-allocated not only in manufacturing but also in academia. Since through the subjection to the requirements, academic freedom was exploited and academics *per se* were regarded as "…de-professionalized or proleterianised relative to other professionals, as their work has been increasingly scrutinised, made subject to more routinisation…" (Deem and Lucas, 2003, p. 8; Halsey, 1992; Winter, 1995). What is worse, the metric is used as a managerial tool to recruit, promote and motivate academics. The nature, structure and conditions of academic work are accordingly shaped since it will make "an academic a more desirable and highly priced commodity" (Espeland and Sauder, 2007; Mingers and Willmott, 2013, p. 1065; Sauder and Espeland, 2009).

After reviewing the implications of Scientific Management in universities, the next section will review the research into performance measures which are carried out from critical perspectives.

2.4   Critical Perspectives on Performance Measurements

2.4.1 Introduction

This section is concerned with reviewing the research into performance measures from critical perspectives and justifying the theoretical perspectives which will be adopted in this thesis. Section 2.4.2 reviews the critique of information, which is supplied by performance measures. Section 2.4.3 reviews a critical discussion about accountability, which is constructed by performance measures. Section 2.4.4 reviews the research from an institutional perspective, which helps to enrich the understanding of performance measures in terms of being socially constructed and delivering the dominant interests. Section 2.4.5 reviews the research from a Bourdieusian perspective, which helps to enrich the understanding of performance measures' impacts.

2.4.2 Critique of Information

Echoing the preceding critique about the seemingly objective indicators, the criticism of the metric suggests a critical perspective of the information supplied by the measurement.

In 1997, Tsoukas published a paper - "The tyranny of light: The temptations and paradoxes of the information society"; wherein he critiqued the information and information society.

> "To sum up, the information society tempts us into thinking in an objective manner about the world. First, the world, social and natural alike, is conceived of consisting of sums of information (namely, sums of decontextualized representations), waiting 'out there' to be used by someone – this is what I have called information reductionism. Secondly, information is seen through the lenses of the conduit metaphor: information is supposed to be objective and existing independently of human agents. And thirdly, in an information-rich society, social engineering tends to be the dominant form of

policy making: the world is thought to be rationally governable only through the collection, processing, and manipulation of the necessary information about it" (Tsoukas, 1997, pp. 831-832).

The essence of information reductionism is that the phenomenon at hand could be thought to be adequately described and represented by a set of indices. Similar to transferring the description of a patient to a rich set of information about his/her illness, the research capacity of an academic could be determined by how his/her work could be matched with the genre of metric. In this tradition, from the perspective of research capacity, the academic is defined by his/her performance; this is how individualised managerial accountability is constructed (this will be discussed further in Section 3.2.5).

When considering the view of the conduit of a metaphor, information could be "conceived to be a collection of free standing items" – it is objective. However, the significance of information is determined by how it could be interpreted; from another perspective, "information presupposed a purposeful subject" – "Just as there is no database without a designer, so there is no information without a creator" (Lakoff, 1995; Tsoukas, 1997, p. 830). In short, there is no so thing as "neutral information". Any information is constructed or distributed with the purpose of aiming to achieve particular targets and/or disclosing particular things to particular people (Hines, 1988). This understanding of information is resonant of the ontology of discourse analysis (this will be discussed further in Chapter Four).

> "Moreover, the purpose of the creator of information is not (it cannot be) made manifest in the information *per se*—it needs to be inferred. Thus, to reduce something to allegedly objective information and then treat that information as if it was an adequate description of the phenomenon at hand, is to obscure the purpose behind the information, a purpose that is not made explicit in the information as such" (Tsoukas, 1997, p. 830).

Analogously to equating someone's trustworthiness to paying their bill on time from the perspective of a credit card company; in academia, the quality of research output

is equalled to its performance reflected through particular indicators. However, the quality in the form of indicators has nothing to do with understanding the content of research. Attention should be paid to the content of research; while instead it was drawn away by the straightforward and manageable appearance of performance metrics. This was seen by Tsoukas (1997) who stated that "…the abundance of information tends to overshadow the phenomena to which information refers…Information becomes a surrogate for the world—what is actually going on tends to be equated with what the relevant indicators (or images) say is going on" (p.833). In addition, the understanding of phenomena could have been further overshadowed – the information could be re-categorised to make things look better rather than making things better. For example, drawing upon Tsoukas' (1997) work, Cole and Cooper (2005) discuss some of the problems with performance measurement systems in the UK railway service – particular indicators were set up to measure the reliability and punctuality of the railway service. The adoption of these indicators appeared as if the railway service was improving; yet public attention was also diverted away from the utmost important issue – passengers' safety. The public expectations about railways could have been re-shaped by the information supplied by these indicators. When considering the adoption of particular indicators in assessing research performance, the expectation of research outcomes could have been reshaped due to the particular metrics in use. Specifically, the tasks which can be measured and rewarded receive more attention and effort; while other tasks of less worth do not receive so much attention.

2.4.3 Critique of the Impact of Performance Metrics on Individuals

One of the objectives of establishing performance indicators is to make phenomenon (performance) transparent and, thus, incite service suppliers to improve their service and improve their accountability (Tsoukas, 1997). However, the amalgamation of transparency and accountability may make accountability problematic (Roberts, 2009); since the critical part of the phenomenon and the intention to visualise the phenomenon could have been concealed and twisted by the information generated through particular indicators. In addition, from an individual perspective,

"When accountability is amalgamated with business ethics, the individual is expected to behave in accordance with social prescriptions rather than with moral principles guiding his or her own conscience" (Joannides, 2012, p. 247).

Specifically when referring to the impact of performance measurement on academics, Hartley (1997) argues that "…the compliance of the worker [faculty member] turns on calculation, on reward for performance. Compliance is not normative or moral" (p. 57). This means academics could have been driven to pay for the visible forms of reward with academic objectivity, neutrality and integrity. Therefore, the aim of constructing a moral and responsible person through setting out performance measurement and making him/her give an account of their conduct is impaired (Joannides, 2012; McKernan, 2012).

2.4.3.1 The Perception of Accountability

The understanding of accountability could be broken down into four interrelated questions – "who" is accountable "for what" "to whom" "by which means" (Joannides, 2012). The preceding review about the performance measurements either from a practical perspective (see Section 2.2) or focusing on the critique of information (see Section 2.4.2) are concerned with the questions of "for what", "who" and "by which means". However, Joannides (2012) argues that the question "to whom" is underexplored; and the account demanders are normally found to be stockholders and other stakeholders (Laughlin, 1996).

On the basis of the preceding review, it is difficult to improve accountability because of the uncertainty of objectives, the paradox of information, and the tension between various stakeholders. The perspective of "to whom" may be relevant to the discussion about accountability. In addition, the perspective of giving an account "to whom" is directly related to individuals *per se* in terms of their compliance with (or resistance to) the measurements and therefore, it may suggest a perspective to consider individuals' impaired morality resulting from performance metrics.

According to Messner (2009), individuals' impaired morality could be traced back to the issue of "to whom" –

> "…forcing the giving of an account exposes the accountable person to violence exerted by others – by the higher principal, peers, or superiors whose demands for good reasons for conduct might sound like an interrogation…because these others are also opaque, meaning the accountable individual does not know exactly what they want of him or her…Conversely, I may believe I fully understand what the other wants of me and be compelled to distort my account to make it intelligible" (Joannides, 2012, p. 246).

Even though the above quotation is taken from Joannides' (2012) following Messner (2009) in arguing the opacity involved in "giving an account", it discloses the significance of the recognition from seniors to individuals at the "grassroots" level. Superficially, individuals seem subject and accountable to the higher principal; this subjection could have been generalised as the effects of disciplinary power without the presence of discipline (Foucault, 1979). In respect of generating compliant persons, Foucault's account of power and discipline have been adopted by Miller and O'Leary (1987) to understand the impact of standard costing and budgets. Disciplinary power is pervasive in our lives and could have been internalised to the extent that "it is difficult to raise our knowledge of the mechanisms of discipline to the level of self-consciousness" (Roberts and Scapens, 1990, p. 108).

In order to reveal the reason for the significance of recognition on the construction of accountability, drawing upon Lacan's (1977) Mirror theory, Roberts (2009) develops his understanding of accountability from a psychoanalytic perspective. To Roberts (2009) accountability –

> "…frequently arouses both longings for love and acceptance and parallel fears of being attacked and turned upon, and I would argue that it is this emotional edge to accountability that gives it its force. There is something of an emotional short circuit at work in accountability such that the present comes to be imbued with these earlier emotional resonances" (p. 961).

This perspective reveals the emotional roots of the compliance to standards and enriches the understanding of the construction of disciplinary power. More discussion about Roberts' (1991 and 2009) understanding of the Lacanian and Foucauldian notions of power and discipline can be found in Chapter Three.

Drawing upon the effects of disciplinary power, Roberts (1991) developed a perspective of two forms of accountability – the hierarchical form of accountability and the socialising form of accountability. This perspective separates the question of "to whom" as to (internalised) hierarchically superior and to equal peers.

Generally speaking, in the hierarchical form of accountability, standards and rewards (sanctions) are central to the production of an individualised sense of self. That self is preoccupied with how one is seen. With this form of accountability, the individualised sense of self is secured through being superior to peers; therefore, the individual relations to others are competitive. Individuals are eventually attempting to be accountable to themselves through being judged against the standards. The preceding discussion about the information rendered through particular measurements discusses some of the problems with hierarchical accountability.

In contrast to the sense of self and the relations to others built by the hierarchical form of accountability, the socialising form of accountability emphasises the confirmation of self through the interdependent self with others (Roberts, 1991). It seems to be the form of accountability that could redeem the lack of moral concern through reminding one's conscience about others. However, this form of accountability may merely be as a soft form of the hierarchical form since there are no peers free from the hierarchical requirements (Roberts, 1996 and 2001). From the perspective of the two forms of accountability, in order to address the question of how to improve accountability, the issue of "to whom" should reconsider the issue of "the superior".

2.4.3.2 Accounterability

In response to the calls for alternative practices and understandings of accountability to solve some of the problems of accountability, an operational practice of

accountability – an account-*er*-ability – "a counter-institution of resistance to the irresistible logic of accountability" is argued to be useful (Joannides, 2012; Kamuf, 2007, p. 253).

Specifically, "accounterability places the emphasis on the need for accountability to rest on an opening in calculating, accountable logic, and seeks to locate a space for other articulations between our accounts and our abilities" (Joannides, 2012, p. 247). In other words, accounterability is enabled by an absence of explicit regulations and by a moment's pause for someone "to stop calculating and listen at another rhythm for something else, for an incalculability and unforeseeability that cause the accountability programme to stammer or stutter" (Joannides, 2012; Kamuf, 2007, p. 253).

Joannides (2012) explores the possibility of implementing "accounterability" through studying an "expressive" case – a Christian charity organisation, the Salvation Army. The acknowledgement of God's omnipotence, the commitment to serve God and the direct communication with God found the feasibility of "accounterability" in terms of actors' minds and behaviours could be tuned to be consistently accountable to God. The accountability and religion share common roots in terms of moralising heuristics (Joannides, 2012; McKernan, 2012); this could rationalise and generalise the specific discussion about accounterability in a religious context (Joannides, 2012; Kamuf, 2007). However, this practice may not be apposite in a Chinese context[11]. Since firstly, there is no institutional environment for workplace resistance; secondly, the explicit requirements for teaching and research leave no space for reflection upon what should and can be (re)counted; thirdly and the most importantly, there seems no shared commitment to the absolute higher principle (in a religious sense or in an instrumental sense) between various actors. One could draw upon the forms of accountability to discuss the improvement of accountability in a Chinese context – the reasons for adopting this perspective will be discussed in Section 3.2.5.

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[11] In Chapter Six, some academics' responses brought to light their "accounterability" in a Chinese context.

In summary, when considering the impact of problematic performance measurements on individuals, the perspective of giving an account "to whom" may be critical. Particularly, in a Chinese context, wherein the institutional and cultural environments seem unfit for the discussion of "accounterability"; the understanding the forms of accountability will be used to discuss the impact of performance measurements.

2.4.4 Institutional Perspectives

According to Boulton and Lucas' (2011) argument, regulated universities can be governmental instruments of social and economic public policy to have desirable and short-sighted outcomes. This perspective is resonant of an institutional lens to analyse practices in universities. Institutional perspectives are regarded as relevant to educational institutions since they "do not operate under market conditions, but rather compete for political relevance and institutional legitimacy" (Carolan, 2008, p.429; Zhang *et al*., 2013).

Even though the above argument about the relevance of institutional perspectives to educational institutions seems unfit for the trend of the marketisation in higher educational institutions all over the world, the emergence of managerialism in universities was a reflection and a practice of the governmental revolutionary movements – the movements based upon the neoliberal philosophy.

As reviewed in Section 2.2, the idea of personal responsibility is a key feature of neoliberal philosophy. Generally speaking, the idea of personal responsibility in universities was extended through reinforcing a culture of entrepreneurialism and launching a series of practices, including surveillance mechanisms, financial accountability requirements and productivity targets (Harvey, 2005; Parker, 2011). In this scenario, the state exercises its "hands on" control through granting governmental funding on the basis of particular achievements (represented by particular performance indicators) and exercises its "hand off" control through granting universities managerial autonomy to deliver particular performance (Alexander, 2000; Coaldrake and Steadman, 1998; Parker, 2011). In short, the

extended idea and relevant practices opened the door to "…the adoption of modern performance management or 'management by the numbers'" (Vosselman, 2012, p. 3).

Research into managerialism in universities normally focuses on the impact of such practices on the commercialisation of universities in terms of the altered culture, governance, structure and operational focus (for example, Christensen, 2004; Lakoff, 1996; Orkodashvili, 2007); and the consequences of such changes on the whole of society in respect of education and research. When considering the emergence of these practices in universities, the permeating belief in the efficiency of marketising service and the reduced governmental financial support are believed to be critical.

Inspired by Parker's (2011) research into the corporatisation of universities, New Institutional theory (in particular, institutional isomorphisms) helps to rationalise the emergence and diffusion of managerialism practices. With respect to their emergence, on the one hand, they are subject to the coercive pressure for reduced governmental financial support; on the other hand, they are the products of mimetic isomorphism in inheriting private sector managerial accounting practices. When considering the global diffusion of these practices, as long as in the context of restricted research funding schemes, the institutional notion of "isomorphic pressures" could explain this diffusion (Halilem *et al*., 2011; Rowlinson *et al*., 2010, p. 167). With respect to the institutional research into Chinese education, Zhang *et al*.'s (2013) research into the changes to the university accounting education in post-revolutionary China enriches the preceding adoption of New Institutional theory. Through categorising the changes in the institutional environment into different institutional pillars, they discern the specific impact of institutional changes on the isomorphic changes.

In addition to explaining the emergence, diffusion and changes of particular practices, the contribution made by the adoption of new institutional theory in accounting research may suggest a more comprehensive theoretical analysis of performance measurements. Specifically speaking, from the new institutional perspective, typical practices were normally analysed as the products of wider institutional arrangements (for example, Ahmed, 1992; Covaleski and Dirsmith, 1988a and 1998b; Mezias and Scarselletta, 1994; Scapens, 1994); which means the process of institutionalisation

was insufficiently considered. In addition, when considering the socially-constructed nature of performance measurement, the new institutional perspective may be criticised for paying too much attention to the powerful group making changes to organisational practices (Abernethy and Chua, 1996; Carruthers, 1995; Clegg, 1989; Covaleski *et al*., 1993; Parker, 2011; Perrow, 1986).

In order to address the process of institutionalisation and the influence of various actors involved in this process, Scapens (1994) argues that when carrying out institutional analysis to understand accounting practices, "it is important not to ignore the habitual and routine nature of organisational behaviour…" (p. 317) – this perspective implies an attention to intra-organisational behaviours and takes organisational actors at multiple-levels into consideration. Returning to the topic of this research – the extent to which academics are subject to performance measurement – academics, as important components of universities, are the main subjects of this research. Therefore, following Scapens' (1994) argument, Burns and Scapens' (2000) application of old institutional theory on the intra-organisational level seems relevant to this thesis in discerning the influences of the institutional environment wherein academics are positioned.

Meanwhile, Scapens' (1994) argument that – "…while case studies of accounting practices as institutionalised routines can provide important insights into the nature of management accounting practices, it is important to recognise the impact of wider institutional arrangements" (p. 317), not only suggests a comprehensive perspective including intra- and inter-organisational analysis, it also recommends a relevant research method – case studies – to understand the nature of management accounting practices. Just as Munro (1995) argues that the implications of management accounting practices should be considered case by case due to their interaction with broader social influences and organisational actors such that –

> "Accounting numbers may be celebrated in some organisations, in others they may run silently and deep; but what that celebration or silence reflects is not accounting per se, but the social. Privileging conceptions of the economic as calculative or technical, instantiates the social as a residual, as what is not

calculative…The crux of the matter is that actors always act on each other through the mediation of artefacts. As such, artefacts such as management accounting, should be considered as part of the social, not distinct from it. The social, even in its most recessive forms, remains the guide to conduct" (pp. 435-438).

2.4.5 A Bourdieusian Perspective

In addition to the critical and institutional perspectives, Pritchard and Willmott's (1997) research into the managerialism in the UK suggests a Bourdieusian perspective to understand the impact of performance measurement in universities –

> "…higher education in Britain is being re-positioned from a field of relatively autonomous production where academics were able to some extent to define their own criteria of production, evaluation, organisational identity, purpose and focus, to a field of general production—a market" (p. 292).

With the help of the notions of field, habitus and capital, the perspective of regarding universities as constituting a market would supply a deeper understanding about the characteristics of educational institutions and the mode of academics' behaviours. For example, academic activities can be marketised to the extent that "…academics in subject areas where applied research is highly marketable to the private sector, have become fully-fledged academic capitalists who are able to supplement their salaries from spin-off companies and consultancy work, whilst the institutions in which these academics work have also become much more finance and enterprise-focused" (Deem and Lucas, 2003, p. 8; Clark, 1998; Slaughter and Leslie, 1997). Moreover, "…academics…saw research as game with rules which they need to learn how to play in order to gain competitive advantage" (Deem and Lucas, 2003, p. 9; Lucas, 2001).

In the field of marketised academia, academics could be regarded as locating different hierarchical positions which are determined by the volume and species of capitals they have. Therefore, academics' activities could be understood as struggling

over desirable capital. Their commitments to the value of particular capitals and their strategies to obtain these capitals are reified in the Bourdieusian analogy of playing the game. In Deem and Lucas' (2003) argument, the "unwitting" reference to "game" in turn gives a reason for the adoption of a Bourdieusian perspective.

Unlike Pritchard and Willmott's (1997) loose application of the Bourdieusian perspective[12], Oakes *et al.*'s (1998) paper uses the work of Bourdieu to examine the impact of implementing new public management business plans in the provincial museums and cultural heritage sites of Alberta, Canada. The changes to the institutional structure, identity, products and identity producers were categorised in a Bourdieusian framework and understood as resulting in changes to the dominant capitals (from cultural to political and economic capitals) in an organisational and institutional field.

Oakes *et al.*'s (1998) research not only supplies specific guidance to carry out an analysis from a Bourdieusian perspective; the subject of their research, the "commercialised" cultural institutions sheds light on the analytical perspective of this thesis in considering the impact of "commercialised" measurements in universities.

The preceding review suggests that a Bourdieusian perspective could be helpful in understanding the changes to organisations and institutions, and to individuals within particular institutions. The Bourdieusian perspective could be central in connecting the analysis from the critical and institutional perspectives. Detailed review and discussion about the theoretical perspectives – institutional theories, Bourdieusian work, and Roberts' understanding of Lacanian and Foucauldian theories can be found in Chapter Three.

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[12] In Pritchard and Willmott's (1997) research, a Bourdieusian perspective was only used to illustrate the context wherein the UK universities experienced the "marketised" transition. This perspective of the context facilitated their discussion about the extent to which the management knowledge and practice could have reconstituted and replaced the existing knowledge and practice.

2.5 Research into Academic Performance Measurement in China

2.5.1 Introduction

In China, higher education was officially regarded as facilitating the state's development in terms of "contributing considerably to China's independent scientific and technological development, and to solving major theoretical and practical problems that crop up in the course of socialist modernisation" (Qu, 1991, p. 805, cited in Qiping and White, 1994, p. 218). Therefore, higher educational institutions were subject to reform to encourage universities "to take the initiative to meet the needs of economic and social development" (Qu, 1991, p. 806, cited in Qiping and White, 1994, p. 218).

Similar to the political impact on the changes to higher educational institutions in the UK and US, the changes to Chinese higher educational institutions were closely related to the political changes – the switch to the state's strategic focus of national polices from 'class struggles' to economic construction.

In the context of a "socialist market economy", wherein "placing the market mechanism in a key position to distribute all social resources"[13] (Qiping and White, 1994, p. 219), the management of Chinese higher education was adapted to the socialist market economy and endowed with market mechanisms. Specifically speaking, according to official policy programmes[14], higher educational institutions would be largely supported by students and various social sectors through, for example, collecting tuition fees, expanding enrolment, launching market-oriented courses and research, and marketising research outcomes. In respect of academic

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[13] See *Beijing Review*, 31 August – 6 September, 1992, p. 4, cited in Qiping and White, 1994, p. 219.

[14] The official policy programmes include "Points Regarding How to Expedite Reforms and Vigorously Develop Ordinary Higher Education", issued by the State Education Commission, in Dec. 1992 and the "Programme for China's Educational Reform and Development" issued in Feb. 1993. For an English text of the latter programme, see BBC, *summary of World Broadcasts: Far East*, 1629, 5 March 1993, B2/1-12.

personnel management, contract-based employment and academic-performance-based promotion have replaced permanent tenure and seniority-based promotion. Accompanied by the merit payment systems, these newly emerging personnel practices could be regarded as market-oriented since in order to maintain the highest positions and obtain the few academic titles, academics need to compete with each other and prove themselves through their academic performance[15].

Superficially, the "marketisation" of Chinese higher educational institutions can be regarded as being "set against the context of a broader international trend towards diminishing the role of the state in allocating resources to higher education in favour of market-like mechanisms" (Qiping and White, 1994, p. 217). The contract-based employment, the performance-based promotion and recruitment, and the merit based payment scheme are resonant of the individual responsibility in the UK and US since the era of the Thatcher and Reagan governments.

However, in China, higher education is not 'marketised' comprehensively – "this is still to remain primary a public responsibility" (Qiping and White, 1994, p. 219) since the Chinese leading party (the Chinese Communist Party) has never fully committed to "economic rationalism" and public education is the "last 'battle-field' of socialism" that the party has tried hard to protect (Mok, 2000).

Therefore, the most significant feature of the "marketization" in China could be the "institutional transition" from a highly-centralised planned economy to the market economy (Li, 1997). And the changes to higher educational institutions could be regarded as the state's strategy to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their operations as well as relieving the state's financial pressure for supplying free education (Mok, 2000). In respect to governmental funding for research, the state's attitudes towards university research and relevant research funding schemes (for example Projects 211 and 985, which will be introduced in Section 5.4.2) construct the understanding of academic performance measurements as appraisal and incentive mechanisms.

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[15] The changes to personnel management could have resulted in a competitive relation. The potential competition between academics rationalise the perspective of the forms of accountability.

In summary, in the UK and US, research performance measurement was launched to guide the allocation of research funds in the context of reductions in government research funds. In China, academic performance measurement was launched, on the one hand, for the purpose of deciding the award of governmental grants on the basis of pre-set standards; on the other hand, to encourage academics to improve their academic capacities. However, due to the state's emphasis on research, academic capacities are normally constrained to refer to research capacities.

2.5.2 Research into Academic Performance Measurements in China

Unlike the rich and deep research into the changes to the public sectors' performance measurement in western countries, there is little research about performance measurement in the Chinese public sector[16]. In China, the first time the term "performance management" appeared in an official document was in March 2008 and this practice is new to the Chinese public sector (Burns and Zhou, 2010).

The limited and fragmented research into performance measurement is typically concerned with its emergence due to public sector reform, its effects in addressing problems at different stages in the reforming process and the challenges faced by this practice due to the uncertainty of organisational objectives and conflicting interests (Burns, 2010; Chan and Gao, 2009; Gao, 2009).

Current research into the performance measurements in the Chinese public sector is based upon the perspective that "…policy instruments are usually chosen according to how well their performance characteristics satisfy the requirements of a particular problem setting. Once governments have clearly defined the policy goals, it is a straightforward matter to locate the tool best fitted to assess performance from among those that appear relevant" (Bobrow and Dryzek, 1987; Gao, 2009, p. 29;

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[16] Here the author uses the search results from ABI/INFORM Complete as an example to demonstrate the limited research on performance measurement in the Chinese public sector. As ABI/INFORM Complete is an electronic service and can be accessed through most higher education institutions. It consists of full-text business periodicals and news sources from ABI/INFORM Global, Dateline, Trade & Industry and Archive.

Linder and Peters, 1998). In line with this perspective, Maskin *et al.*'s (2000) work[17] and Li and Zhou's (2005) finding[18] imply the significance of economic development in contemporary China. This work suggests that analysis through the lens of new institutional theory could be fruitful.

On the basis of the current research, the discussion about the relationship between performance measurement and accountability seems to stop at the point that "Performance measurement serves accountability, but enhanced accountability may not necessarily produce better performance" (Chan and Gao, 2009, p. 58). This understanding could have been carried forward and enriched from a critical perspective. However, as a newly emerging research arena, the literature about performance measurement in the Chinese public sector needs more work from a theoretical and an empirical perspective.

Similarly, due to the lack of the empirical and theoretical literature, current research into academic performance measurement in China from any of the preceding perspectives is rare. Current attention on academic performance measurements in China normally has four characteristics. Firstly, they are the by-products of the research looking into the social impacts of marketised practices on the academic field, for example the social inequality and threats to basic research and non-commercial courses (for example, Mok, 2000; Mok and Lo, 2007; Qiping and White, 1994). Secondly, when considering the specific impact of academic performance measurement, attention is largely on research performance measurement. Thirdly, the discussions about research performance measurement normally focus on the academics pursuing quick but valueless research outcomes. Fourthly, there is research into the improvement of metrics and the variables influencing particular research performance (for example, Ding and Qiu, 2011; Johnes and Yu, 2008; Moed, 2002; Zhang *et al.*, 2013). On the one hand, this kind of research is underpinned by

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[17] Maskin *et al.* (2000) find a correlation between the political status of a province (reflected through the number of Central Committee members) and its economic ranking.

[18] Through examining the relationship between the turnover of provincial leaders and the provincial economic performance, Li and Zhou (2005) find the likelihood of the provincial leaders' promotion and termination increases and decreases with their tenure-average economic performance.

positivism; on the other hand, this kind of research alluded to the significance of particular research performance, which is emphasised by Central Government.

Academic performance measurements, together with self-funded students, partnership with industry, a market influence on course offerings, are normally studied as the consequent practices of higher educational reforms (for example, Li, 2004; Mok, 2000; Mok and Lo, 2007). The political context of the emergence of these practices suggests an institutional perspective since the field of academia is subject to different institutional pressures and practices various isomorphisms, including coercive and mimetic. An institutional perspective is particularly apposite in a Chinese context since Chinese educational institutions are largely subject to political involvement (Carolan, 2008; Zhang *et al*., 2013). In addition, an institutional perspective would supply a deeper understanding of the academic environment as well as of academics.

When considering the intention to launch "market-oriented" academic personnel management − to encourage academics to improve their academic capacities and construct a sense of personal responsibility, a discussion about the performance measurement and the construction of accountability seems relevant. Therefore, a critical perspective may be helpful to supply a deeper understanding of the "responsibility" constructed through performance measurement.

The market-oriented changes to academic personnel management may suggest that an analysis from a Bourdieusian perspective may be helpful since academics are struggling for scare capitals (e.g. the symbolic capital of scarce titles); and performance-based criteria would be central to the rules of the academic "game".

Moreover, teaching as an important academic activity in universities seems almost overshadowed by research [19] − the ignorance of teaching could be regarded as resulting from the impact of "particular" academic performance measurements. This impact is not only reflected through the larger proportion of discussion about

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[19] The case study will illustrate the extent to which teaching could have been overshadowed by research. In turn, it will represent the extent to which academics are subject to the impact of academic performance measurements.

research performance; it also could have profound impact upon academics who are subject to academic performance measurements, which demand more onerous requirements for research.

The emphasis on research could also be understood from an institutional perspective. Official discourses (including political leaders' talks, police programmes and national projects) generate an environment emphasising research. In such an institutional environment, some Chinese universities developed practices to encourage research at the expense of teaching (detailed analysis can be found in Chapter Five).

When considering the requirements for teaching *per se*, even though imparting knowledge and educating people are of value to society; there does not seem to be a well-understood technology to accomplish it (Powell, 1985). In addition, it is more difficult to determine the effort put into teaching preparation than to allocate teaching hours (Qiping and White, 1994). Therefore, for academics, the requirements for teaching performance, from the perspective of Scientific Management, are standardised as teaching hours with respect to academic positions, the types of courses and the results of teaching quality appraisal.

From the perspective of Tsoukas (1997), the quality of teaching has been replaced by a time measure and student feedback. The expectation of the quality of teaching is therefore reshaped as teaching for a particular length of time and students' satisfactions. However, these are nothing to do with the quality of teaching. These measures may jeopardise the quality of education. For example, academics (who are less conscientious) may cut their preparation effort, cut the content of their lectures and make the tests known to students in advance to win positive feedback.

In summary, current research into academic performance measurements in China can be enriched by including more systematically theoretical understandings in terms of their emergence and their impact in academia and on academics[20]. When considering

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[20] Qiping and White (1994) discuss the impact of short-term contracts in undermining basic research; however, their conclusion may not be generalised due to the lower-level of academic mobility in some Chinese universities and the re-appointment programme. Through making comparison between the

the nature of performance measurements, the positivist perspective conceals the interactive relationship between performance measurements and the powerful groups (including the state and leading academics). In addition, when subjected to academic performance measurements, academics would struggle to be morally accountable – in the arena of research, and in the arena of education. In Tsoukas' (1997) language, innovative and diversified research, unvested research interests, and the attitudes and attentions towards education may have been left in darkness.

2.5.3 The Significance of Research into Academic Performance Measurements in China

On the basis of the empirical studies of the academic field in China, this thesis is intended to enrich the understanding of Chinese academics, through the use of critical theories.

Specifically speaking, from an institutional and a Bourdieusian perspective, one could discern the power relations involved in Chinese academia and the socially constructed nature of performance measurements. Accordingly, the understanding of such practices from positivist and functional perspectives could be extended. Moreover, through the lens of Bourdieu, one could construct a theoretical understanding of the modes of conduct of academics.

In addition to building knowledge based upon theoretical understandings of the emergence and operation of performance measurements in China, this research is intended to discuss the extent to which academics are subject to performance measurements and how they could have affected academics. In order to understand the impact of performance measurement on individuals, this research will be carried out from the perspective of internalised disciplinary power and the perspective of the construction of accountability. The understanding of how performance metrics work

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influence of the promotion and merit systems of UC Davis and Wuhan University, González *et al*. (2012) conclude with, for example, the restricted academic freedom and creativity, less job security and eroded work-life balance in the Chinese university and make suggestions accordingly. This empirical research could be further enriched by analysing the impact of the practices from a theoretical perspective.

on academics from a critical theoretical grounding will enable policy suggestions. The critique and application of the forms of accountabilities and "accounterability" could build upon the emerging literature on the understanding and practice of accountability in China.

Moreover, the thesis could serve as a warning to the countries launching or prepared to launch academic performance measurements in education since the discussion about what is happening in Chinese academia could suggest more generalisable structural issues for future studies.

2.6   Conclusion

 According to Taylor's (1911) prediction about the diffusion of performance measurement from manufacturing to universities, this chapter focuses on the implications of standardisation in jeopardising research innovation and diversification; and discusses the changed academics' relations from collegial to commercial.

Through considering the context of the emergence of managerialism in UK and US universities, an institutional perspective is adopted to analyse the market-oriented practices on campus. Even though the Chinese context is different from the British and the American contexts, the institutional perspective could also explain the arrival of the global trend of marketisation in China. Inspired by Oakes *et al*.'s (1998) analysis of the impact of a business plan on a cultural site, a Bourdieusian perspective is apposite to shed light upon the implications of "marketisation" on academics and in academic institutions.

The critique of the information supplied by pre-set normative requirements (Tsoukas, 1997) underpins the problematic of accountability. The relationship between performance measurement and accountability is critical since some Chinese studies have indicated that the impact of academic performance measurement has not only resulted in misleading research; it could also have affected the quality of teaching (see Events 2 and 3). Therefore, the discussion about the construction of

accountability seems to be a relevant perspective from which to consider the extent to which and how academics are subject to performance measurements.

In order to develop a better understanding of the preceding theoretical perspectives, relevant notions will be reviewed and further rationalised in the next chapter.

3 Chapter Three: A Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with developing a theoretical framework to underpin the analysis of academic performance measurement in China. This chapter reviews a series of theoretical perspectives which guide the analysis of the impacts of performance measures on human beings and the reason behind the emergence of the measures.

The theoretical perspectives concerning the impacts of performance measures on human beings are drawn from three dominant writers – Lacan and Foucault and Bourdieu. In particular, Roberts' (1991 and 2009) understanding of Lacan's (1977) and Foucault's (1979) theories in terms of the construction of accountability is used to understand the impact of external requirements (academic performance measurement) on human beings (academics). The thesis adopts a very specific psychoanalytical understanding of accountability. Accountability here refers to the sense of self constructed by others' recognition on the basis of external requirements (performance measures). Bourdieu's work is included to help understand actors' (academics') status in a particular arena (a Chinese university). In order to explore the changes to academic performance measurement in Chinese academia, old and new institutional theories (for example, Burns and Scapens, 2000; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) are also used to understand the processes of the intra-organisational changes and the impact of broader institutions on organisational behaviour.

The structure of this chapter is as follows: Section 3.2 is concerned with the understanding of the construction of accountability from the perspective of Roberts' understanding of Foucault and Lacan's theories. The understanding of fields and actors from a Bourdieusian perspective can also be found in Section 3.2. Section 3.3 is concerned with Institutional perspectives in terms of considering performance measures as socially constructed practices to deliver dominant interests. Figure 3.1

maps these theoretical perspectives in a framework to guide the analysis of performance measures. The conclusion is set out in Section 3.4.
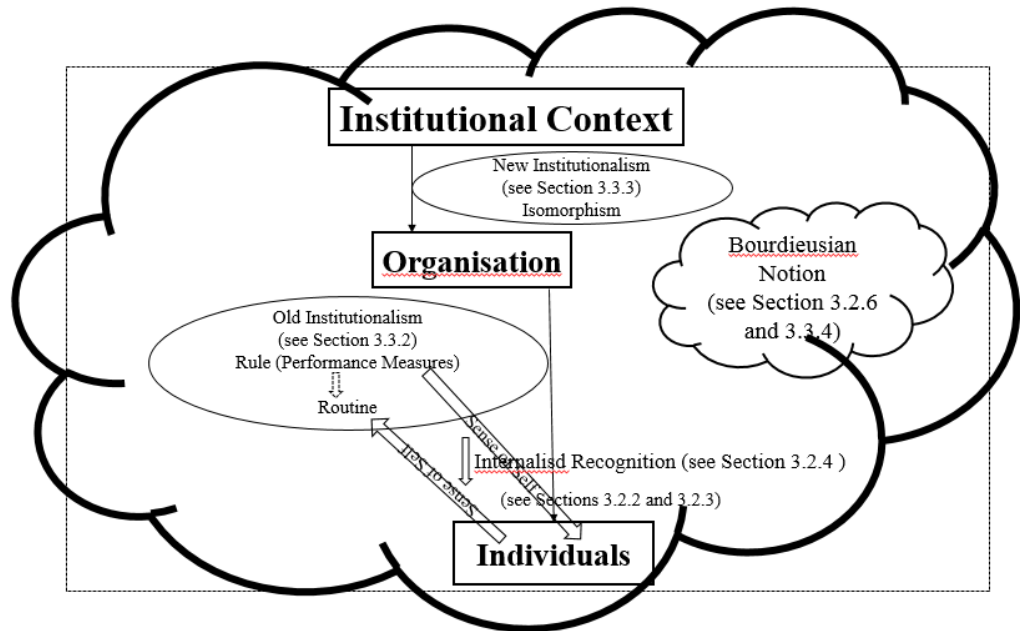
Figure 3.1 A Theoretical Framework to Guide the Analysis of Performance Measures

3.2 Psychoanalytical Perspective of Individualized Accountability

3.2.1 Introduction

As mentioned in Section 1.4.2, the discussion of accountability is inevitable when carrying out research on performance measures. The author's adoption of Lacanian mirror theory and Foucault's account of power and discipline came about through her reading of Roberts' (1991) paper, The Possibilities of Accountability. In this paper, through demonstrating the relationship between accountability and the constitution of the "self", Roberts elaborated different possible understandings of

accountability. These included individualising and socialising forms of accountability – individualised accountability is particularly relevant to analyse the impact of the promotion criteria in Chinese academia.

In this thesis the author will follow the strands of the psychoanalytic theories, adopted by Roberts since she is interested in understanding the impact of particular performance measurements on human beings. In addition, the author will also adopt Bourdieusian theory (for example, Bourdieu, 1990a, 1990b and 1998; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992) to understand academics' modes of conduct which are constructed (and maintained) by the promotion criteria in the institutional setting of Chinese academia. All of the above are introduced and reviewed in the following sections and used to compose a comprehensive framework to illustrate the impact of performance measurement on academic staff.

3.2.2 Construction of the "Self"

According to Roberts (1991), visibility is a key element in the relationship between accountability and the construction of the "self". The importance of "visibility" can be seen in the emergence of self-consciousness in childhood which occurs when a child recognises his visual image in the mirror. In other words, one could argue that human beings are brought up in (and get used to) a way that their senses of self are determined by external recognition of their images (see Section 3.2.3).

> "For the child understanding the specular image consists in recognising as his own this visual appearance in the mirror. Until the moment when the specular image arises, the child's body is a strongly felt but confused reality. To recognise his image in the mirror is for him to learn that there can be a viewpoint taken on him. Hitherto he has never seen himself, or he has only caught a glimpse of himself in looking at the parts of his body he can see. By means of the image in the mirror he becomes capable of being a spectator of himself. Through the acquisition of the specular image the child notices that he is visible for himself and for others" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 136).

Lacan (1977) further developed the understanding of the construction of "self" through observing different behaviours of infants and animals in front of a mirror. Lacan used "recognition" and "subjectivity" to replace Merleau-Ponty's (1962) "visibility" and "self-consciousness". Moreover, Lacan (1977) pointed out that the differences disclose a peculiarly human trait –

> "What demonstrate the phenomenon of recognition, which involves subjectivity, are the signs of triumphant jubilation and playful discovery that characterise, from the sixth month, the child's encounter with his image in the mirror. This behaviour contrasts strikingly with the indifference shown even by animals that perceive this image, the chimpanzee for example, when they have tested its objectal vanity…" (p. 18).

Both Merleau-Ponty (1962) and Lacan (1977) observed the reaction of a child who saw his or her image in the mirror; that his or her figure and movement could be subject to others' observations and attitudes.

For Lacan, the recognition of "self" results more in the mastery of "self"; for example "the external image moves as if in response to the child's movement" and "…the identification of self with the image hints at the future potential of the self as agent", which "paves the way for the acquisition of language, and future capacities for reflexivity and agency" (Roberts, 2009, p. 959). In addition to inspiring the discovery of mastery, the experience of recognition inspires the possibility of alienation between body and image.

> "Narcissuss was the mythical being who after looking at his image in the water was drawn as if by vertigo to rejoin his image in the water. At the same time that the image of oneself makes possible the knowledge of oneself it makes possible a sort of alienation. I am no longer what I felt myself immediately to be. I am that image of myself that is offered by the mirror. To use Dr Lacan's term, I am captured, caught up by my spatial image. Thereupon I leave the reality of my lived 'me' in order to refer constantly to

the ideal fictitious or imaginary me, of which the specular image is the first outline" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 136).

According to Roberts (1991), the capture of specular image supplied by others suggests the possibility of the alienation from self and from others. From the perspective of "from self", the specular image might result in "an egocentric absorption", which refuses to recognise the relational character of selfhood; from the perspective of "from others", the image of self is defined by others' attitudes and expectations since it is "captured and transfixed by the image that others offer" (Roberts, 1991, p. 357). The latter perspective is fundamental to understand the impact of performance measures since they represent "others' attitudes and expectations". This is specifically reviewed in the next section.

3.2.3 The Impact of Others' Recognition on Individuals

Roberts (2009) develops his argument (1991) concerning the force of others' attitudes and expectations in defining individuals. Starting from Lacan's belief about how the "self" is developed to meet the lure of the image, Roberts (2009) emphasises and enriches his argument by pursuing the lure supplied by others, which is an inherent human trait and brings about the feeling of security -

> "One infamous Lacanian formulation of this is that desire is always the desire of/for the other. Others too offer us the same lure of recognition. In the mirror the mistake is to locate the self's existence in the image. Socially and organisationally recognition acquires a similar existential force for my very existence seems to depend upon recognition by others. I find myself in the response of the other and, enigmatic as it is, I am prone for the sake of their recognition to seek to make myself into what will allow me to be recognised by the other…But the price of such recognition, upon which my very existence seems to depend, is the need to make myself into the object of the other's desire. My sense of self and the value of myself are put into play in accountability; it is as if, in order to exist, I must secure other's recognition" (Roberts, 2009, p. 960).

The development of the "self" through the desire of/for others' recognition is an ongoing process instead of finishing in childhood (Goffman, 1971; Laing, 1961; Berger and Luckman, 1967). In the continuous constitution of the "self", accountability is key since it "represents the attitudes of others towards us, and in this way both addresses and immediately confirms us" (Roberts, 1991, p. 358). In this respect, similar to the mirror, accountability represents an external view to reflect, address and confirm self; in contrast to the mirror, it is not necessary for others' attitudes and expectations to physically exist to exert their influences.

In addition to the forces of external influences to construct the "self", it is worth noting that "Accountability is never just a social relationship, nor purely an internal relationship. Instead, each reflects and animates the other" (Roberts, 2009, p. 961). Simply speaking, there are inter- and intra-personal processes of accountability. For example, Chinese academics were subject to the promotion criteria and those who set them; meanwhile, the impact of the promotion criteria and the expectations they represented could be analysed from the perspective of the intra-personal accountability. The intra-personal accountability "involves a reflexive relationship with the self in which I judge myself against an ideal that, through identification, I take as my standard of what I should, and should not be and do. Conscience is the ideal against which I judge myself" (Roberts, 2009, p. 961). In terms of the surveillance of the self by the internalised discipline, this kind of accountability appears to overlap with Foucault's account of power and discipline. Foucauldian account of disciplinary power helps to reveal the extent to which discipline (performance measures) could have impacted on human beings.

In addition, on the basis of the desire for recognition, the "desire for certainty" may also be relevant not only in adopting a psychoanalytical perspective to discuss the construction of accountability; but also in adopting a Foucauldian perspective –

> "…the unacknowledged desire for certainty and acceptance that finds expression in conformity to an externally imposed discipline, whose attraction is precisely that it relieves the individual of his or her sense of

responsibility both to self and others, even at the price of autonomy and creativity" (Roberts, 1991, p. 365).

In summary, the "surveillance of the self by the internalised discipline" and the inexplicit dependence on the certainty generated from complying with standards justify the adoption of a Foucauldian perspective, which will now be reviewed.

3.2.4 Foucault's Account of Power and Discipline

"Disciplinary power is exercised through its invisibility; at the same time it imposes on those it subjects a compulsory visibility. In discipline, it is the subjects who have to be seen. Their visibility assures the hold of the power that is exercised over them. It is the fact of being constantly seen that maintains the disciplined individual in his subjection" (Foucault, 1979, p. 187).

Foucault took the Panopticon, a type of prison building, designed by Jeremy Bentham in 1785 (see Figure 3.1), as a metaphor to demonstrate the execution of disciplinary power - the perfect apparatus "…would make it possible for a single gaze to see everything constantly. A central point would be both the source of light illuminating everything that…must be known, a perfect eye that nothing would escape and a centre towards which all gazes would be turned" (Foucault, 1979, p. 173).
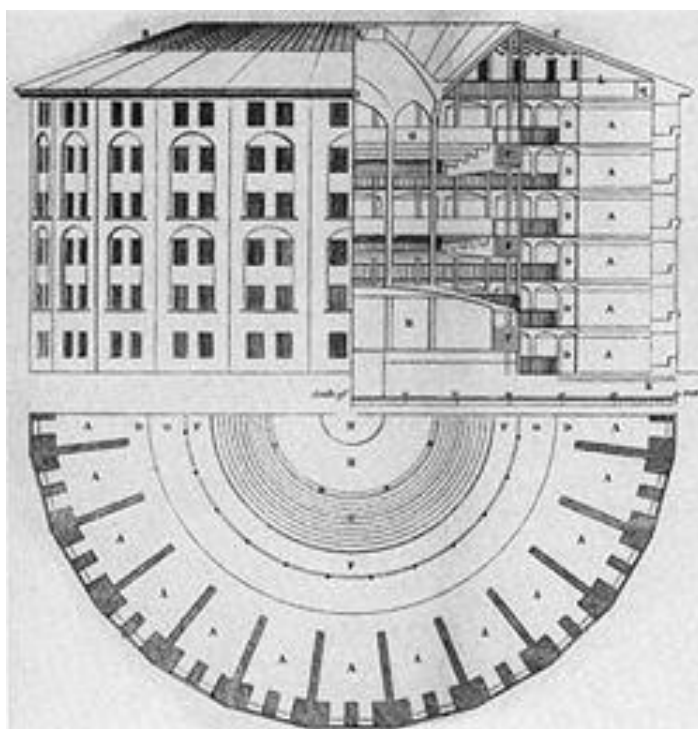
Figure 3.2 Panopticon[21]

The design of the Panopticon allows an observer to observe all prisoners from the central point of a certain height and prisoners have no idea where the observer is. The invisibility of the observer and the compulsory visibility of prisoners determine the execution of discipline power. When considering the emergence of the enduring subjection of the disciplined individuals, the prison metaphor rationalises the subjection of prisoners to the invisible gaze; while for those who are not physically restricted, the susceptibility to seek others' recognition plays a central role.

The subjection to others' recognition can result in being compared, being differentiated, being hierarchized, being homogenised and being excluded. The knowledge of these effects[22], in particular, the fear of exclusion, results in a constant

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[21]Bentham, J. (1785). *The works of Jeremy Bentham* vol. IV, 172-3. Elevation, section and plan of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon penitentiary, drawn by Willey Reveley, 1791. Available URL: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panopticon#mediaviewer/File:Panopticon.jpg, accessed on 30 Sept. 2011.

[22] These effects reflect the psychological need to be accepted and recognised.

self-judgement. This is the moment when discipline is internalised by individuals who judge themselves -

> "He who is subject to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power, he makes them play upon himself. He inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles" (Foucault, 1979, pp. 202-203).

At this stage, the surveillance of self by internalised discipline reflects individualised accountability – one constantly sees oneself through the lens of others' expectations. In management control (accounting) systems, standards or performance indicators represent the expectation of others.

On the basis of the preceding review concerning the reason behind the individualised impacts of performance measures, the next section discusses the accountabilities constructed through particular performance measures in the context of Chinese academia.

3.2.5 Forms of Accountability in Chinese Academia

When considering the function of accounting information in terms of shaping the sense of self and the relations to others, managerial accountability can be classified into an individualising form and a socialising form (Roberts, 1991)[23].

Unlike the individualising form of managerial accountability which consists of shaping and confirming (securing) self through conforming with objective standards; the socialising form of accountability emerges in concrete, face-to-face relations with others, through "the relatively unguarded flow of talk" to mutually engage with and reciprocally recognise self.

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[23] On the basis of Roberts' (1991) argument that "hierarchical forms of accountability, in which accounting currently plays a central role, serve to produce and reproduce an individualized sense of self; a sense of the self as essentially solitary and singular, nervously preoccupied with how one is seen", for illustrative purpose, at some points, individualised (individualising form of) managerial accountability was used to represent hierarchical (forms of) accountability (p. 355).

This research is concerned with the impact of the promotion criteria on Chinese academics. As mentioned in Section 2.4.3, the impact of the promotion criteria on academics is analysed from the perspective of constructing (individualised) managerially accountable academics through the promotion criteria. The reasons for taking this perspective are as follows.

Firstly, in Chinese academia, there is an asymmetric power relationship between the academics and those who set the promotion criteria. Chinese public organisations (including public universities) are subject to the management of Central Government and the rules of working in these organisations are complying with the official regulations[24]. In other words, in this asymmetric relationship, the active negotiation from the people who are subject to the regulations is normally precluded.

The subjection to the interest of state has been constructed over several generations in particular among people who were born in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. When considering the internalised and individualised subjection to the political interests, Mead's (1934) account of the two stages of the construction of "self" may be relevant,

> "At the first of these stages, the individual's self is constituted simply by an organisation of the particular attitudes of others towards himself and towards one another in the specific social acts in which he participates with them. But at the second stage in the full development of the individual's self, that self is constituted not only by an organisation of these particular individual attitudes, but also by an organisation of the social attitudes of the generalised other, or the group as a whole to which he belongs" (p. 158).

With respect to the construction of the sense of self in China, the interest of state was adopted by parents as rules (about right or wrong) to educate their children[25]

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[24] Detailed introduction about the public sector operation in China from the perspective of performance measurement in universities is carried out in Chapter Five.

[25] Chinese people learn the importance of "being politically correct" from a series of cruel revolutionary activities shortly after the foundation the P.R. China.

(introduced around the first stage); whatever was "politically correct" became the fundamental principle guiding people's attitudes towards issues and relations (reinforced at the second stage). Drawing upon a Foucauldian statement (1979) that the "individual is no doubt the fictitious atom of an ideological representation of society…" (p.194), Chinese people are no doubt the fictitious atom of an ideological representation of the interest of state. Recently, due to the emphasis on economic development, the direct impact of political power seems to be diminishing. It is masked by economic rewards.

Secondly, similar to Roberts' (1991) analysis of the power of accounting information[26] (Roberts, 1991), the promotion criteria (see Sections 5.3 and 5.4, and Appendices 5.1 and 5.2) are institutionalised, but primarily politically institutionalised. The underlying metrics are "objective" because they are seen as neutral.

Thirdly, within the promotion criteria, a reflection of academics appear in figures such as the number of SCI papers per person or the monetary amount of national-level research projects. The significance of the numerical information is politically imposed and this information is used to reflect the accountability that academics owe to the state. In this respect, the promotion criteria could realise their effects in comparing, differentiating, hierarchizing, homogenising and excluding academic staff through the construction of hierarchical accountability.

Fourthly, for academics, recognition can be found in the promotion criteria. The desire for recognition leads to an individualised form of managerial accountability in which academics constantly see themselves through the lens of the promotion criteria. In the realm of Chinese universities, positions in the academic hierarchy serve "as an objective confirmation of relative value and worth…one is drawn thereby further and further into conformity with the standards of utility upon which 'success' depends" (Roberts, 1991, p. 360). The positions in each level of hierarchy reflect conditional

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[26] According to Roberts (1991), the power of accounting information arises from the way of being institutionalised "as the most important, authoritative and telling means whereby activity is visible"; its origins and locus is ambiguous due to the seemingly objective and interest-free information (but in fact, it is vested information and not necessary fact) it presents the distance between the information user and the visible activity (p. 359).

and transitory recognition, the constant desire for recognition – individualised accountability carries one further and further along the hierarchical progression.

Generally speaking, hierarchical accountability includes "a constant vigilance over one's self and a restless and endless comparison and differentiation of self from others" and therefore, alludes to a relation to others (Roberts, 1991, p. 360). In particular, in the realm of Chinese academia, within the asymmetric of power in the relationship between the academics and those who set the promotion criteria, academics' relations with each other are highly likely to be competitive and managerial in order to secure the self (rather than the interdependence of self and others realised through more socialising forms of accountability). This thesis mainly uses managerial accountability and its individualising effects to consider the impact of the promotion criteria in shaping the sense of self. Individualised managerial accountability informs academics about what they should do to be accountable. This means conforming to the promotion criteria. Regarding its function in shaping the relations with others, this thesis is mainly concerned with the perspective of academics' understandings of gurus[27] and academics' understandings of the impact of the promotion criteria on junior staff.

In addition to the psychoanalytical perspective, the analysis of academics could be carried out through the lens of the Bourdieusian notions. The Bourdieusian insights supply an opportunity to understand the mode of academics' behaviour from the perspective of the characteristics of academia, which will be reviewed in the next section.

3.2.6 Bourdieu's Theory

The adoption of Bourdieusian insights (for example, in field, capital and habitus[28]), on the one hand, is inspired by the research about the changes brought about by the adoption of performance measures (see Section 2.4.5); on the other hand, is inspired

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[27] The meaning of "gurus" will be set out in Section 6.2.1.

[28] In this section the author will outline relevant Bourdieu's concepts, the application and discussion from a Bourdieusian perspective can be found in Chapter Six.

by Roberts' (1991) outline of hierarchical progression in the discussion of hierarchical accountability –

> "For those who inevitably fail in this competition there is the problem of suffering or rationalizing away the image of self as failure that is offered by the experience. Success superficially carries with it the symbolism of recognition and acceptance. Paradoxically however, the desire for recognition carries one further and further onto the ground of others' expectations. One is accepted not for one's uniqueness but for approximating most closely to the employer's idealized image of what is required. Acceptance gives one a location in a hierarchy which itself can be read as a reflection of one's relative value and worth. Moreover, acceptance is transitory and conditional upon performance; acceptance and recognition are not achieved once and for all but are constantly at stake in the rituals of hierarchical accountability" (p. 358).

In the system which is determined and maintained by rules, actors struggle for continuous progression through satisfying performance requirements. The continuous struggling for progression alludes to Bourdieusian notions of field.

According to Bourdieu (1993b), fields are "structured spaces of positions (or posts) whose properties depend on their position within these spaces and which can be analysed independently of the characteristics of their occupants (which are partly determined by them)". The existence of a field is "correlative with the existence of specific stakes and interests: via the inseparably economic and psychological investments that they arouse in agents endowed with a certain habitus, the field and its stakes (themselves produced as such by relations of power and struggle in order to transform the power relations that are constitutive of the field) produce investments of time, money and work" (Bourdieu, 1990b, pp. 87-88).

In addition to merely drawing upon the Bourdieusian description of fields, Friedland's (2009) understanding of fields is used to outline what fields could be,

"Fields are organized as struggles over the relative powers of capitals, which are, in reality, struggles over power, over what it is and by implication who is powerful" (p. 17).

In summary, a field is integrated with a structured set of positions, some particular capitals (stakes) and the interests in the capitals, a set of agents endowed with certain interests and commitments to the value of capitals (habitus) and a set of strategic struggles (Warde, 2004). The understanding of these features from the perspective of hierarchical progression can be found in the following table.

Hierarchical Progression	Features of a Field
Hierarchical levels; a location in a hierarchy reflects the occupant's relative value and worth; Competition	A structured set of positions
(Success with the symbolism of) recognition and acceptance; the desire for recognition	Particular capitals and the interests in the capitals
Those (who inevitably fail in this competition); (the desire for recognition carries one) further and further onto the ground of others' expectations	A set of agents with a certain way of thinking and doing
Competition; acceptance and recognition are constantly at stake in the rituals of hierarchical accountability	A set of strategic struggle

Table 3.1 Understanding of the Hierarchical Progression from a Bourdieusian Perspective

One could develop a better understanding of the agents' relations in a field through the Bourdieusian analogy of a game[29]. Bourdieu uses the analogy of a game to depict the agents' competition in a field wherein they adopt strategies to gain capitals. The idea of a "game" has been adopted by some academics since they "…saw research as game with rules which they need to learn how to play in order to gain competitive advantage" (Deem and Lucas, 2003, p. 8; Lucas, 2001).

When considering the strategies agents adopt in the field, Bourdieu (1990a) uses the concept of habitus to express field-related (position-related) ways of thinking and doing, so that

"Social agents ... are not automata regulated like clocks, in accordance with laws that they do not understand. In the most complex games ... they put into

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[29] The "limits" of this analogy will be discussed in Chapter Six.

action the incorporated principles of a generative habitus ... This 'feel for the game', as we call it, is what enables an infinite number of 'moves' to be made, adapted to the infinite number of possible situations which no rule, however complex, can foresee ... Where everyone used to talk of 'rules', 'model' or 'structure', somewhat indiscriminately, and putting themselves in the objectivist position ... everyone nowadays talks of ... strategies ... This word, strategies, evidently has to be stripped of its naively teleological connotations: types of behaviour can be directed towards certain ends without being consciously directed to these ends, or determined by them. The notion of habitus was invented, if I may say so, in order to account for this paradox" (pp. 9-10).

Habitus is a concept referring to "the enduring outlooks (perceptions, appreciations, behaviors) which are internalized by particular social groups"; and in academia, the habitus "incorporates many assumptions, beliefs, and behaviours surrounding the question of what scholarly activity means" (Bourdieu, 1988)[30].

From a Lacanian perspective, the Bourdieusian habitus, would be seen as resulting from the desire for recognition. In a particular field, the power of holding capitals is reflected through junior agent's submission to and desire for the valuable capitals. Due to the "natural" desire for recognition, agent's commitment to the value of capitals (illusio) could be evoked by his desire for the relevant capitals. The struggle for the capitals which are valued on a specific field is the feature of position-taking by agents in a field or can be regarded as "the strategic orientations appropriate to their positions" (Warde, 2004, p. 14), which is described by Bourdieu as "habitus". Accompanied by the struggle for capital, his capitals are accumulated (although the habitus includes other practices, for example, ways of dressing). The commitment to the value of specific capitals is reinforced by the power of capital. In summary, the agent's "illusio" is evoked by the features of a field (habitus) and reinforced later – during the process of the struggle for capitals, the agent desires to ascend the

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[30] http://userwww.service.emory.edu/~mhalber/Research/Paper/pci-bourdieu.html, accessed on 14th Nov, 2013.

hierarchy of the field from a position of subjection to becoming the owner of capitals which wield power.

When considering from the perspective of the shared way of thinking and doing by a group of people, "habitus" is similar to "routines" or represents the stage in which "rules" and "routines" are incorporated. This similarity could be the meeting point between the Bourdieusian understanding and Institutional theory. In the preceding discussion, habitus is associated with the interest in capitals (which is fundamental to be recognised); while the construction of rules and routines is understood through an institutional lens. However, as discussed in Section 3.2.5, for Chinese, being "politically correct" in the sense of obeying institutional regulations is a condition of being recognised (by the state and peers) – "the desire for recognition" could be the hidden clue connecting Institutional theory, Bourdieusian theories and Roberts' understanding of Lacan's and Foucault's theories[31]. Contemporary Chinese academia could therefore be understood from the perspective of the operation of the promotion criteria on an individual level.

On the basis of the preceding review, from a Lacanian perspective, individuals are subject to their "images" reflected through others' expectations; through the lens of the Bourdieusian notions, individuals' modes of thinking and doing are field-specified. The meanings, values and powers of others' expectations and the features of a field shed light on the significance of Institutional theories. The next section will review Institutional perspectives in terms of disclosing the processes of changes in research performance measurement on an institutional level and explaining the institutional context wherein organisations (composed by individuals) operate.

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[31] From the perspective of "the desire for recognition", Bourdieu and Wacquant's (1992) argument of "an interest" could be used to bridge the institutions and the construction of rules and routines that "Anthropology and comparative history show that the properly social magic of institutions can constitute just about anything as an interest, and as a realistic interest, i.e., as an investment (in the double meaning that the word has in economics and in psychoanalysis) that is objectively paid back by a specific 'economy'" (p. 117).

3.3 Institutional Perspectives of Changes to Accounting Practices

3.3.1 Introduction

At an organisational level, research into accounting changes can be carried out from economic and institutional perspectives (Burns and Scapens, 2000; Oguri, 2005). Neoclassical economics, based on economic rationality and market equilibrium, relies on market mechanisms to allocate resources through individual decisions. The economic foundation of the neoclassical approach sees the function of accounting as being to supply useful information to facilitate rational decisions (Davidson *et al.*, 1988; Napier, 2006).

This is consistent with Johnson and Kaplan's (1987) perspectives that the function of accounting practice is to pursue efficiency. Nevertheless, this perspective has been criticised by Hopper and Armstrong (1991) due to the rigid understanding of accounting practices in terms of ignoring accounting's function in labour control.

According to the neoclassical approach, the efficient allocation of resources and perfect markets are based upon an assumption that the market mechanism, as a communication device, supplies free information to every individual who is able to make rational decisions and pursue strategies to maximise their utilities.

Even though the postulates of utility and market are both subject to debate[32], the lofty position of neoclassical economics in modern micro-economics has not changed. With respect of this thesis' concern, on the basis of the assumptions and the mechanisms of neoclassical economics, it merely claims to predict market changes rather than to explain individual organisational behaviour. In addition, neoclassical economics research into managerial accounting always assumes economic

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[32] Firstly, individual rationality, described in terms of utility maximisation, is thrown into doubt by empirical evidence derived from cognitive psychology (Kahneman *et al.*, 1982) and bounded rationality (Simon, 1959 and 1979). Secondly, doubts about the efficiency of the market in allocating resources mainly focus on free market information (Hodgson, 1988; Oguri, 2005), which consequently gives rise to the concept of imperfect markets and the cost of information.

optimisation. However, managerial accounting changes may be adopted for other reasons. Burns and Scapens (2000) argue that apart from mainly focusing on the optimal outcomes, neoclassical economics is not helpful in understanding the process of management accounting changes. Echoing Nelson and Winter's (1982) criticism of the inability of neoclassical economics to deal "with uncertainty, or bounded rationality…or institutional complexity, or the dynamics of actual adjustment processes" (p. 5), Old Institutional theory may be relevant since it could provide an alternative perspective, from which one could develop a better understanding of the processes of management accounting changes.

3.3.2 Old Institutional Theory

When considering this thesis' concern with the changes to academic performance measurement in Chinese universities, Burns and Scapens' (2000) old institutional framework may be relevant since it investigates the process of management accounting changes. In order to adopt Burns and Scapens' (2000) institutional framework of conceptualising management accounting changes, one could start from a series of perspectives that – in many organisations, management accounting practices are composed of stable but changeable rules and routines, management accounting practices can shape and be shaped by institutions governing organisational activities. Old institutional theory could be regarded as focusing on organisational routines and their institutionalisation.

The preceding perspectives of management accounting practices set out in the last paragraph could sketch relationships between institutions, rules and routines. In order to clarify their relationships within this framework, one could start from their definitions and the existing understandings of them. Even though there are no agreed definitions of "institutions"; there are some significant understandings of them, which are indicated as follows –

Source	Definition of An Institution
Veblen (1919, p. 239)	"settled habits of thought common to the generality of men"
Hamilton (1932, p. 84)	"a way of thought or action of some prevalence and permanence, which is embedded in the habits of a group or the customs of a people"
Barley and Tolbert (1997, p. 96) and Burns and Scapens[33] (2000, p8)	"the shared taken-for-granted assumptions which identify categories of human actors and their appropriate activities and relationships"

Table 3.2 Understandings of "Institutions"

According to Hamilton (1932), one could find that there is habitual behaviour shared by a group of people. Since routines could be regarded as "patterns of thought and action which are habitually adopted by groups of individuals" (Burns and Scapens, 2000, p. 6), one could argue that routines are central in the relationship between institutions and actions. In addition, following Barley and Tolbert's (1997) understanding, Burns and Scapens (2000) argue that through sharing taken-for-granted assumptions, institutions could exert an influence on human actors, and institutions could "evolve through a process of routinisation of human activity" (Burns and Scapens, 2000, p. 6). The preceding perspectives of institutions and routines resonate with the wider debate about the relationship between actions and institutions via routines (Giddens, 1984; Archer, 1995). The relationships between institutions, routines and actions are demonstrated in Figure 3.2.

In summary, an institution, as a normative way of behaving, constrains and encourages modes of actions or relationships suited the social environment within a particular organisation. This understanding of institutions alludes to the nature of rules and routines in terms of regulating behaviour, which will now be discussed.

Since the old institutional perspective is that management accounting practices are composed of stable and changeable rules and routines; one should consider the nature of rules and routines.

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[33] The quotation of the definition of "an institution" is from Burns and Scapens' (2000, p. 8) paper, which is a modified version of Barley and Tolber's (1997) understanding of "an institution".

	Rules	Routines
Definition	Formally organised way in which 'things should be done'	The way in which 'things are actually done'
Summarised understanding	The formalised statement of procedures	The procedures actually in use
Nature of change	Only at discrete intervals	In a cumulative process of change since continuing to be reproduced
Understanding in the context of management accounting	Comprise the formal management accounting systems set out in the procedure manuals	The accounting practices actually in use

Table 3.3 Understandings of Rules and Routines[34]

Rule-based behaviour is central to the understanding of rules and routines. Even though individual rationality is limited (bounded) and habitual behaviour is emphasised; one should admit that individuals could normally give reasons for their actions (Boland, 1982; Giddens, 1984). Following the perspective that established and accepted rules could be actors' reasons for their behaviour; rules could be defined as indicated in Table 3.3. Through constantly and repeatedly following rules, this behaviour is programmed and gradually transformed into actors' implicit understandings of the circumstances of their actions, which was defined as routines in Table 3.3. Even though on the basis of the understanding of the nature of rule-based behaviour; routines seem to evolve from rules; within different organisations, there is a duality between rules and routines.

The relationship between institutions, rules, routines and actions is discussed in the following framework (Figure 3.2) alongside the process of management accounting changes. The understanding of the changing process could facilitate future studies of changes to management accounting practices. In order to address their relationships, one should draw upon Burns and Scapens' definition of "an institution" as "taken-for-granted assumptions", it informs and shapes individuals' actions. An institution is the product of human activities; in other words, it is socially constructed (Burns and Scapens, 2000).

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[34] The content of Table 3.3 is arranged on the basis of Burns and Scapens' (2000, pp. 6-7) research.

Institutional Realm

Action realm
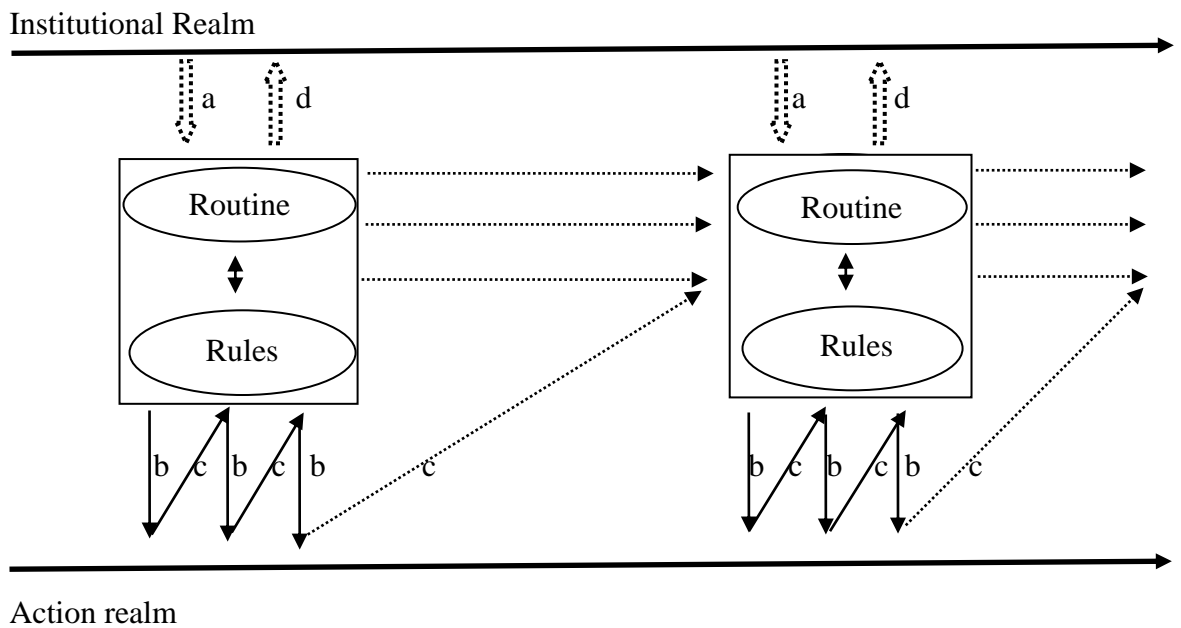
Key: a=encoding   b= enacting   c= reproduction d= institutionalisation

Figure 3.3 Process of Institutionalisation[35]

According to Burns and Scapens (2000), arrows a and b represent the synchronic influence of institutions on action and arrows c and d show the accumulated influence of action on the production and reproduction of institutions. The institutional and action realms experience on-going developments which are developed by cumulative changes, shown by the horizontal solid one-edged lines. The middle section demonstrates the way in which rules and routines link the institutional and action realms. Rules and routines also experience on-going development due to cumulative changes. Occasionally, rules and routines may emerge more discretely, which are represented by separate boxes. Regarding the positioning of rules and routines within the box, routines, as actual behaviour, may be much closer to the realm of action. However, since rules are more observable than routines, rules as observable principles are closer to the action realm.

The first process (arrow a) represents the encoding of institutional principles into rules and routines. In general, the existing routines embody the prevailing institutional principles and shape new rules. The rules will form and/or reform the

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[35] Burns and Scapens, 2000, p. 9.

ongoing routines. The process uses the taken-for-granted assumptions (institutions), which are reflected in existing meanings, values and power.

The second process (arrow b) involves the enactment of the routines and rules which encode the institutional principles. The process of enactment may result from conscious choice or reflexive monitoring or the application of tacit knowledge about the ways of doing. This process may face resistance, in particular when the rules and routines challenge existing meanings and values, and actors have sufficient resources and power to influence this process.

The third process (arrow c) takes place as repeated behaviour reproduces routines. This reproduction may involve either conscious (due to actors' intentional resistance) or unconscious (due to actors' misunderstanding or misconducting) change.

The fourth process (arrow d) is the institutionalisation of rules and routines which have been reproduced through by actors. Rules and routines become the way things are (institutions). The institutionalised routines represent the "appropriate way of doing" for the particular group. These institutions will experience a new process starting from the first process of encoding.

In summary, institutions comprise the taken-for-granted assumptions about the way of doing; in addition to shaping and constraining rules and routines, they determine the meanings, values and powers of individual actors. Since institutions (not being human) could be dissociated from the particular historical circumstances in which they were constructed, they may only remain in the understandings of individual actors and groups. Compared to rules and routines, institutions are more abstract (therefore represented through the dotted line arrows a and d); the longer time for actions to digest enactment and execute reproductions to influence institutions is represented through the several b and c arrows for each pair of a and d arrows. Furthermore, encoding and institutionalisation are on-going processes, hence, broader lines are used to demonstrate processes a and d.

As mentioned earlier, there is a duality between the rules and routines and the enactment and reproduction of rules and routines continue over time. In addition to

the continuing changes happening within a box of rules and routines, more discrete changes may take place. This is represented by the movement from the first to the second box of rules and routines. New rules and routines are not independent from existing ones and they are not only subject to ongoing institutions, but also subject to the reproduction from the existing routines, which is represented through the dotted line between the two boxes and dotted arrow c pointing to the second box of rules and routines.

The above framework in demonstrating management accounting changes could be used to explore the implementation of academic performance measurement in Chinese public universities and the implementation of the promotion criteria in the case of universities.

When considering accounting practices in a specific context, Burns and Scapens (2000) suggest paying attention to the existing institution – even though institutions are subject to continuous institutionalisation; the whole process is set within the context of the prevailing institution. In addition, since an institution "always *exists prior to* any attempt by the actors to introduce change and will, therefore, shape the processes of change", in order to understand specific intentional changes, one should examine the existing institution (Burns and Scapens, 2000, p. 11). Moreover, through Burns and Scapens' (2000) summary of three types of change processes; one could understand the significance of the existing institution in anticipating the issues alongside organisational changes. The summarised types of change processes are found in old institutional economics writings and indicated as follows –

Types of change processes		Characteristics	Requirements for the Success of the Implementation	Additional Facets
Formal vs. Informal	Formal	Conscious design; through introducing new rules and/or through the actions of a powerful individual or group (Rutherford, 1994); top-down	New ways of thinking; sufficient power of those responsible for implementing the new rules	Possibly shaped by the bottom-up changes (see the significance of bottom-up changes in informal changes)
	Informal	At a more tacit level; for example, new routines adapt over time to changing operating conditions	Accompanying change in ways of thinking;	Possibly initiated through bottom-up changes (by organisational members using the practices on a daily basis)
Revolutionary vs. Evolutionary (Nelson and Winter, 1982)	Revolutionary	A fundamental disruption to existing routines and institutions	Recognition of the institutional context of management accounting changes	The term "revolutionary" not related to the particular content of the change; refers to the potential impact on existing institutions; intentional changes may not necessarily be revolutionary; unintentional changes in an informal process may be revolutionary
	Evolutionary	Incremental with only minor disruption to existing routines and institutions	Recognition of the institutional context of management accounting changes	
Regressive vs. Progressive (Tool, 1993)	Regressive	Discriminating between human beings and preserving existing power structures	Alert to the institutional context of management accounting routines and prepared to question the taken-for-granted assumptions underpinning existing institutions	Reinforcing ceremonial dominance and restricting institutional change
	Progressive	Applying best available knowledge and technology to problems and seeking to	Alert to the institutional context of management accounting routines and prepared to question the taken-	Displacing ceremonial behaviour by instrumental behaviour

		enhance relationships	for-granted assumptions underpinning existing institutions; New technology can incite questioning of dominant and ceremonial values	

Table 3.4 Types of Change Processes

Through describing different types of change processes, Burns and Scapens (2000) not only highlight their potential for a holistic study of management accounting changes either from an academic or a practical perspective; yet they also emphasise the importance of understanding the institutional context of management accounting changes. From the perspective of managing intra-organisational changes, the institutional context helps to anticipate the potential difficulties and consequences in the change processes. Moreover, when considering the ways in which management accounting changes influence organisational behaviour, Burns and Scapens (2000) suggest that more attention should be paid to the role of power (for example, a powerful individual or a group of people, or the persistence of ceremonial practices) in different change processes. In addition to Burns and Scapens' (2000) perspectives that power works within intra-organisational processes, organisations are subject to broader institutional influences – the understanding of existing institutions should include the political, economic, social institutions of the organisational field and of the society in which the organisation is placed. In particular, in the institutional context (inside and outside) of Chinese public universities, the force of the state has permeated institutions. In order to study the changes (emergence) of academic performance measurement in Chinese universities, one should understand the interaction between the institutional context and organisational changes. This means that new institutional theory can contribute to the analysis of the impact of institutions on organisational changes.

3.3.3 New Institutional Theory

New institutionalism provides a perspective through which one could understand the tendency of organisations to fit into their environment.

New institutionalism emerged in the 1980s. It "…comprises a rejection of rational-actor models, an interest in institutions as independent variables, a turn toward cognitive and cultural explanations, and an interest in properties of supraindividual units of analysis that cannot be reduced to aggregations or direct consequences of individuals' attributes or motives" (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991, p. 8). New institutional theory could be regarded as concerning the extent to which an organisation is shaped and secured by its environment (for example, legitimacy); since organisational survival may not necessarily be determined by rational and economical control but rather from complying with institutional rules in order to get access to resources, avoiding risk and obtaining social acceptance (for example, DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Meryer and Rowan, 1991; Scott, 2008). Therefore, this institutional perspective may be relevant to all organisations since they all could be regarded as embedded within their environment (Zhang *et al.*, 2013).

When considering the nature of accounting practices, Ezzamel *et al*. (2007) state that accounting is "…recognised not just as a technical apparatus but also a practice that shapes and is shaped by society" (p. 669). In other words, accounting practices could be regarded as environmental products, reflected and shaped by characteristics which may be peculiar to the environment (Radebaugh and Gray, 1997). When there are changes to the environment, DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) institutional isomorphism[36] may be relevant to explain how organisational changes correspond to particular environmental changes. Isomorphism protects organisations from changes and uncertainty in their fields through "constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental

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[36] There are competitive and institutional isomorphism (Meyer, 1979; Fennell, 1980). Competitive isomorphism analyses organisations from the perspective that they are facing free and open competition; while this perspective is not adequate to analyse organisations closely related to other organisations and getting involved in an influential world as organisations are subject to not only economic but also social concerns (Aldrich, 1979; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Kanter, 1972).

conditions" to maintain their congruency with their environments (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983, p. 149).

The three types of institutional isomorphism are coercive, mimetic and normative. There are three institutional pillars – regulative, cultural-cognitive and normative, supporting these institutional mechanisms respectively. These three institutional pillars are developed on the basis of Scott's (2008) understanding of institutions – institutions as "comprised of regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive elements that, together with associated activities and resources, provide stability and meaning to social life" (p. 48). The relationship between isomorphism and the relevant pillars are summarised as follows (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Scott, 2008; Zhang *et al*., 2013).

Environmental Changes	Institutional Pillars	Institutional Mechanism	(Possible) Organisational Actions
Political influence and the problem of legitimacy	Regulative Pillar (prescription of laws and rules to regulate, monitor and govern activity)	Coercive Isomorphism	Adoption of certain practices due to, for example, government legislation.
Uncertainty	Cultural-cognitive Pillar (involvement of shared conceptions and frames to construct worldview)	Mimetic Isomorphism	Imitation of leading organisations or perceived to be successful organisations in their field.
Professionalization	Normative Pillar (establishment, reinforcement and evaluation of values and norms of desirable actions' means and ends)	Normative Isomorphism	Professionalization and standardisation of knowledge and operations.

Table 3.5 Institutional Isomorphism and Pillars

Even though the above institutional pillars and mechanism are conceptually distinct, they are not necessarily operationally separable. For example, an organisational compliancy with an important piece of legislation could be supported by regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive pillars and occurs through the mechanism of coercive, mimetic and normative isomorphism.

When considering organisational congruency with their environments, new institutional theory has been criticised for placing too much attention on decoupling

(for example, Abernethy and Chua, 1996; Carruthers, 1995; Covaleski *et al*., 1993; Powell, 1991). For example, from a new institutional perspective, the adoption of a particular management accounting practice could be explained as an attempt to maintain a rationalised image rather than one designed to generate efficient decisions. This "ceremonial activity" is known as decoupling, which separates rationalised appearances from actual organisational practices (for example, Meyer and Rowan, 1977 and 1991). Even though decoupling exists; the difference between rationalised appearance and actual operation could be too small to detect. Moreover, as reviewed earlier in this section, organisations frequently satisfy different institutional criteria at the same time, for example, "Being technically efficient is not the only path to organisational survival. Achieving legitimacy in the eyes of the world, state, powerful professions, or society at large, is another effective survival strategy" (Carruthers, 1995, p. 317). The discussion about decoupling could be regarded as echoing the discussion about the dichotomy of regressive and progressive institutional changes resulting from different behaviour brought about through pursing either ceremonial or instrumental values (Waller, 1994; Burns and Scapens, 2000). Over time, decoupling may diminish, as newly adopted values, and corresponding changes to organisational systems and structures may be gradually absorbed by organisational members (Dambrin *et al*., 2007; Parker, 2011).

The preceding review of decoupling may draw more attention to the coercive force driving organisational behaviours. This force has been given less importance in recent institutional studies (Clegg, 2010; Zhang *et al*., 2013). Since coercive force is central to understanding organisational "discontinuous change"; in order to understand academic performance measurement in China, it is important to pay attention to the coercive force of the state in realising the "discontinued change" – the introduction of Chinese academic performance measures (Clegg, 2010, p. 5).

Moreover, in order to develop a better understanding of organisational behaviour from the perspective of institutional isomorphism, one should determine the scope of fields so that the institutional context of organisations could be specified. In general, the scope of fields "only exist to the extent that they are institutionally defined" (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983, p. 148); and according to Scott (2005 and 2008), the

applicable scope of institutional theory could span, for example, from the individual in an organisation to the world system as a whole. The focus of new institutional theory in this research is concerned with the institutional influence on the emergence of academic performance measurement in Chinese public universities as a whole. Even though public universities in China are financed and directed by different Ministries, for example, by the Ministry of Finance, by the Ministry of Education or by other ministries together with the Ministry of Education; they are subject to the Central Government indirectly via these ministries. The organizational field may be an appropriate domain "that, in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life: key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies, and other organizations that produce similar services or products" (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983, p. 148).

3.3.4 Comparison between Theoretical Perspectives in Managerial Accounting

New institutional theory could be regarded as being resonant with neo-classical economics since for new institutional theorists, management accounting changes are understood as resulting from either rational decisions or from broader institutions (Carruthers, 1995); while, from the perspective of old institutional theory, management accounting changes are studied as a process (Burns and Scapens, 2000). In other words, the former perspective is concerned with organisational survival and stability in a changing environment; the latter perspective focuses on "why and how an organisation's management accounting becomes what it is, or is not, over time" (Burns and Scapens, 2000, p. 4).

When considering the understanding of accounting in this thesis, old institutional theory seems apposite since its investigation into the duality between institution and action reveals the socially constructed nature of management accounting changes as rules and routines. However, the intra-organisational institutional context is partly formed by its broader institutional dimension; new institutional theory may also be relevant in terms of depicting the institutional context either inside or outside of an organisation. In particular, in China, where the force of the state permeates the multi-

dimensions and multi-levels of organisations and organisational fields; therefore, new institutional theory could help in understanding the way in and the extent to which extra-organisational institutions influence organisations.

"Power" is emphasised from the perspectives of old and new institutional theories. From the perspective of old institutional theory, in order to understand the influence of changes on organisational behaviour, one should understand and analyse the "power" embedded in the four processes (see Figure 3.3) which may result in the persistence of old practices and the resistance to new practices; from the new institutional perspective, the investigation into the coercive force (through the external institutional pillar) is central to understanding discontinuous change in organisations. In this respect, one could argue that even though "power" is highlighted from different perspectives, they both focus on its influence on organisational behaviour – "institutional and interest-based explanations of organizational practices…may yield a more comprehensive theoretical apparatus for gaining insight into the social dynamics of organizations" (Covaleski *et al*., 1996; DiMaggio, 1988).

This understanding of the influence of "power" could gesture towards an enrichment of institutional theory from a Bourdieusian perspective of the dominant capital holders' influence in a particular field. For example, from an old institutional perspective, the power of an individual or a group, or the power of ceremonial practice (to maintain a particular institution or powerful groups' interests) may be the result of their compliance with existing and prevailing institutions and the resources they control (the resources could be the product of their institutional compliancy). This echoes the status and influences of actors in a Bourdieusian field which is determined by and determines their struggles over capitals in the field. A Bourdieusian perspective may offer another lens through which to understand and analyse the changing process of particular practices and the influence of such changes on organisational behaviours.

Burns and Scapens' (2000) explain that "an institution" comprises the taken-for-granted assumptions that determine individuals' meanings, values and powers; and

"at the same time, these taken-for-granted assumptions are themselves the outcome of social actions, i.e. they are socially constructed" (p. 8). In other words, "institutions do not emerge and persist in the absence of actors but precisely because 'somebody somewhere really cares to hold an organisation to the standards' represented by those institutions" (Emirbayer and Johnson, 2008, p. 37; Stinchcombe, 1997, p. 17). This alludes to the significance of the Bourdieusian notion of "habitus" in analysing organisational behaviours (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991; Emirbayer and Johnson, 2008). Specifically, "the relation of an actor's habitus to the field in which it is operative at a particular moment that accounts for that actor's feeling of investment in, or commitment to, this or that institution" (Emirbayer and Johnson, 2008, p. 38). This Bourdieusian understanding of the relation between individuals' enduring ways of thinking and doing and the construction and reconstruction of organisational structures could further enrich the institutional perspective (Stinchcombe, 1997).

With respect to the adoption of Bourdieusian notions, in addition to Prichard and Willmott's (1997) argument about the "repositioning" of higher education in Britain (see Section 2.4.4); the Bourdieusian notions of field and the forms of capital are significant to understanding the impact of institutional changes on organisational behaviours[37]. Rather than focusing on analysing the impact of institutional changes on an organisation on the basis of the dichotomy between the institutional environment and organisations, a Bourdieusian perspective enriches institutional theory through the introduction of multiple structured fields, the changes between and within fields, the dynamic nature of fields and the logic of each field (Oakes *et al*., 1998). In summary, in addition to understanding individual status, Bourdieusian notions could help to explain the status of organisations and organisational behaviour.

Moreover, from the perspective of the relationship between the changes to accounting practices and their institutional environment, the institutional perspectives

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[37] For example, Oakes *et al*. (1998) argue that the newly implemented business plan in the provincial museums and cultural heritage sites of Alberta in Canada had an impact on redirecting the working foci and changing actors' identities. The implementation of business planning transferred the museums and heritage sites from a field of restricted production focusing on cultural capital into a field of large-scale production focusing on (the meaning of cultural capital to) economic capital.

could be correlated with the impact of external requirements – others' recognition (Lacan, 1977) and the way in which discipline (Foucault, 1979) could have impacted on individuals. Therefore, research on an organisational (institutional) level could encompass the study from individuals' perspectives – research on the individualised level may support and generate a better understanding of organisational behaviour.

3.4   Conclusion

This chapter is concerned with developing a theoretical framework to guide the analysis of academic performance measures in China (see Figure 3.1). A series of theoretical perspectives which structure the framework have been reviewed.

Section 3.2 reviews the theoretical perspectives concerning the impact of performance measures on individuals. Drawing upon Roberts' understanding of Lacanian Mirror Theory, one could develop a better understanding of the construction of the sense of self from the perspective of desire for recognition. From a Foucauldian account of disciplinary power, the desire for recognition is constitutive of the power of discipline. Through the lens of the power of the internalised discipline, Roberts argues that there are different forms of accountability – individualized and socializing accountabilities; the former is particularly relevant for understanding academic behaviour in China.

In order to understand the impact of organisational practices, one should understand the organisational context in which such practices emerge and the implementation process since both individual actors and organizational practices are subject to particular organizational ways of thinking and doing. This concern gives rise to the review of institutional theories, which are set out in Section 3.3. Burns and Scapens' (2000) old institutional framework helps to disclose the changing processes of organisational practices. New institutional theory helps to guide the analysis of the broader institutional influences on organisational behaviour. In the meantime, one could find the review of a series of Bourdieusian notions of field, capital, habitus and illusion in Sections 3.2.6 and 3.3.4 since they are not only apposite to understanding the status of the individual, they also shed light on the status of the organisation.

4 Chapter Four: Methodology and Method

4.1 Introduction

This research was carried out in an interpretive paradigm. This paradigm was determined on the basis of the author's understanding of the nature of reality and her personal experience. In line with the interpretive paradigm, in order to address this research into academic performance measurements in China, a case study, interviews and questionnaires and discourse analysis were adopted to set the boundary of the research, to collect data and to set up the analytical framework.

Generally speaking, the most significant difference between positive and interpretive paradigms is their different perceptions of the nature of reality and social practices within it. For example, in the arena of managerial accounting research, a positive paradigm is based on the assumption that the reasons for changes in management accounting are to meet the requirements of economic rationality, to pursue efficiency and to control labour (Kaplan, 1984, Johnson and Kaplan, 1987). This perspective could help to generate a better understanding of the function of accounting. From this perspective, the development of accounting could be regarded as unproblematic and simply meeting the needs of contemporary society. However, this perspective does not consider the power relations involved in the development of accounting and the constitutive nature of accounting practices in constructing reality and governable persons (Miller and O'Leary, 1987). From an interpretive perspective,

> "managerial accounting practices and information as socially constructed phenomena with the full implications of the power and politics of social construction rather than as a technically rational function driven by and serving the internal operations of organizations…once managerial accounting practices and information are implemented, what it accounts for shapes

organizational members' views of what is important and, more radically, what constitutes reality" (Covaleski *et al*., 1996)[38].

In short, the interpretive paradigm may be relevant for revealing the socially constructed and socially constructing nature of accounting practices.

The ontological assumptions about the social world in turn relate to the nature of epistemology – "the way in which it is possible to discover knowledge" (Broadbent and Unerman, 2011, p. 8). Accounting practices "could only be fully understood in relation to the minds which created them and the inner experience which they reflected"; this rejects the desire to study "man as an actor…through the methods of the natural sciences, with their concern for establishing general laws" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979, pp. 229-230).

In particular, when considering the status of the author she is an "academic product" – brought up on campus, closely related to academics and familiar with the institutions under which academics are positioned. This research into the role of academic performance measurement should be carried out through interpretive approaches since –

> "The interpretive paradigm is informed by a concern to understand the world as it is, to understand the fundamental nature of the social world at the level of subjective experience. It seems explanation within the realm of individual consciousness and subjectivity, within the frame of reference of the participant as opposed to the observer of action" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979, p. 28).

In addition to the research questions in revealing the interaction between the measurements and academics, the preceding perspectives further help to explain the adoption of qualitative methods.

The structure of this chapter is as follows; section 4.2 sets out the methodology of this research. Section 4.3 illustrates the research methods this thesis adopts – Section

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[38] http://search.proquest.com/docview/210211021?accountid=14116, accessed on Dec. 2009.

4.3.1 sets out the case study (including interview and questionnaires) and Section 4.3.2 sets out the method of discourse analysis; and the rationales behind their adoption. The conclusion is set out in Section 4.4.

4.2 Research Methodology

4.2.1 The Ontological Assumptions of Accounting Practices

Methodology and methods adopted in accounting research should be closely related to the authors' understanding of accounting and the paradigm in which their research is located.

Accounting research, in terms of the interaction between social institutions and discursive accounting practices, has been marginalised by mainstream accounting studies. These studies largely attempt to adopt their methods from natural science in order to have the application of accounting practices. In other words, the functionalist approach which is based upon the models and methods of the natural sciences is underpinned by the perspective that "the social world is composed of relatively concrete empirical artefacts and relationships which can be identified, studied and measured through approaches derived from the natural sciences" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979, p. 26). For example, accounting is defined as the "…process of identifying, measuring, recording, and communicating economic transactions"[39]. On the basis of the definition, one may develop a perception of accounting practices and accounting information that they are neutral in terms of being constructed without vested interests and for the purpose of supplying objective information. Therefore, from this perspective, performance measurement could be perceived as a neutral tool and the information it supplies is objective and an efficient tool for facilitating managerial decisions.

In line with this tradition, many studies of performance measurement in universities have adopted a positivist perspective in that they are concerned with the significance of indicators in representing research performance. For example, in Schloegl *et al*.,

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[39] Owen. G., & Law, J. (Ed.). (2005). *A dictionary of accounting*. Oxford University Press, p. 5.

(2003) and García-Aracil *et al.*,'s (2006) research, they attempt to find the different results from using different types of indicators and data resources. Their findings encourage further research into the production of a more generalised and acceptable model to evaluate research performance. In addition, in their research, Kao and Pao (2009) and Ding and Qiu (2011) attempt to modify the research evaluation model through introducing more relevant influential indicators and changing the relevant weights of specific indicators. In short, this positivist perspective is concerned with improving the function of performance measurement in supplying relevant information.

In general, this kind of research is "…based on approaches that build and test hypotheses and they seek to provide the possibility of replication in deriving data that are generalisable" (Broadbent and Unerman, 2011, p. 10) or indeed results then are generalisable. Such research results could be meaningful; since the data used by the research represents objectified "facts"[40] and the realities (socially constructed on the basis of such "facts") depicted by such research data may be relatively stable (Broadbent and Unerman, 2011). Therefore, "…inter-subjective consensus on the meaning of items of quantitative data in many research situations can make its interpretation using statistical techniques highly credible and plausible…" (Broadbent and Unerman, 2011, p. 10).

However, this research is seeking to understand the construction of the objectified "facts" by the performance measurement, the implications of such "facts" on individuals and the rationales for their construction and the implications of their use. For this thesis, mainstream approaches to research ignore the particular interests involved in the development of the performance measurement system and excludes the behavioural implications of their impact on individuals.

According to Miller and O'Leary's (1987) understanding, accounting practices would "…no longer be viewed as neutral but rather seen, once the veils of current

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[40] On the one hand, the objectified "facts" are socially constructed due to the human desire for certainty (Beck, 1992, 1999 and 2000); on the other hand, they result from an inter-subjective consensus – some level of certainty, based on which people could maintain daily interactions (Broadbent and Unerman, 2011).

misperception have been drawn back, to clearly reflect and to serve certain economic or political interests" (p. 236).

The relation of ideology to accounting practices could be generalised in Lehman and Tinker's (1987) argument that "discursive accounting practices are more productively regarded as ideological weapons for participating in conflicts over the distribution of social wealth" (p. 503). When considering the relationship between ideology and accounting practice, Mason (1980) remarks that: "At the highest level the social norms which guide the selection process are ideological as the authors[41], drawing on Marx, suggest in their section on the social significance of accounting" (p. 30). This suggests that accounting practices can serve the interests of the ruling class, since they are coherent with the ideology of the dominant group. The relationship between accounting and the interest of the ruling class has been found in some Asian countries, for example, Japan (Oguri, 2005) and China (Ezzamel *et al*., 2007). However, under very rare situations, accounting "…can serve either side in a political struggle" (Arnold & Hammond, 1994, p. 124).

Returning to Mason's (1980) remark about accounting and ideology – "This raises the rather intriguing question of how ideology percolates down into accounting practice" (p. 30). Fairclough's (1989) understanding about ideology might be relevant to Mason's (1980) question. Fairclough suggests that ideology could have been built into various dimensions of the forms and meanings of discursive practices. In short, even though accounting is not an ideology, through accounting as a discourse, ideology exercises its effect (Cooper, 1995). For example, Seal (2010) demonstrated how ideology was implied through accounting discourse –

> "Some managerial action generates texts which become part of wider discourses. These discourses are legitimised by specialist institutional producers of managerial texts such as business schools and management consultants. Thus senior managers, business schools, management

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[41] Mason's (1980) paper – "Discussion of the roles of accounting in organizations and society", built upon Burchell *et al*.'s (1980) study - "The Roles of Accounting in Organizations and Society". And "the authors" in this quote are Stuart Burchell, Colin Clubb, Anthony Hopwood, John Hughes and Janine Nahapiet.

consultants and management gurus all contribute to the production of managerial discourse" (pp. 107-108).

In the discussion of the socially constructed nature of accounting practices, Broadbent and Unerman (2011) review the subjective judgements involved in the development of accounting standards; they particularly note the significance of the "highly political lobbying process" over the consensus required by the standard setting process (p. 9).

In addition, when considering the impact of the interest of the ruling class, in Ezzamel *et al*.'s (2007) Chinese case, accounting is further proved to be an instrument of political ideology and a discourse of political authority. Likewise, through the lens of the "social-political superstructure" (SS) approach, Oguri (2005) argues that the function of institutionalised accounting as part of the superstructure is to sustain the interest of the ruling class and legitimize the status quo of class society.

From the functional positivist perspective, accounting is regarded as a technical neutral apparatus, but the ideological perspective argues that it reflects and serves particular economic and political interests (Ezzamel *et al*., 2007). However, the ideological perspective does not always unearth the impact of accounting practices or recognise "the possibility of democratically reforming the institutions of accounting" (Oguri, 2005, p. 80); since according to this perspective, accounting merely serves to represent the dominant interests.

In summary, the functional perspective fails as it is not concerned with the influence of social, economic and political factors and sees accounting "…as a purely technical matter outside the realm of the social" (Loft, 1994, p. 133); the ideological perspective focuses too much on the power of dominant interests in constructing accounting (Oguri, 2005). Therefore, the constitutive nature of accounting (in constructing "the governable person") is not the dominant focus of the above perspectives.

From as early as in 1970, the historical research in accounting was expected to consider "…the effect that this evolution has worked on the environment" rather than

only focusing on its response to "…changes in the environment and societal needs" (American Accounting Association, 1970, p. 53). This expectation is echoed by Loft's (1986) statement concerning the relationship between accounting and society that it "…must not simply be seen as one way—accounting reflecting the wider society in which it exists" (pp. 167). For example, Seal (2010) investigated the constitutive effects of management accounting concepts on practices through affecting "the way managers frame their reality, ruling in some ways of thinking and doing and ruling out others" (p. 95). Even though the constitutive effects are largely discussed from the managerial perspective rather than from the perspective of individuals who are not experts in this arena; individuals at grassroots level are subject to the constitutive effects through accepting professionals' interpretation. The interpretation in terms of translating subjective issues into seemingly objective numbers is more the power of accounting than that of the professionals.

Drawing upon Hines' (1988) paper, the constitutive role of accounting in terms of the governance or the shaping a person could be generalised as follows –

> "…We create the impression that they do not exist, and that suddenly, they become real, and we recognise them as such. But of course, we make them real, by recognising them as real. Until we recognise them, they are, for just about all intents and purposes, not real" (p. 252).

The so-called objectivity of accounting is challenged in following conversation in Hines (1988) paper "…Well, I suppose it depends what you mean by 'real'. I mean, I think, some of them are true."

> "Unbiased, neutral, do you mean?"
>
> …
>
> "Do you think there ever was a news story that took everything into account; left out nothing; gave the full picture?" (p. 252).

The impact of social constructions in generating so-called objectivity is discussed and revealed as follows –

"…what we consider to be 'objective', what we consider to be 'rational', the way we think, the way we act, our theories, the way our society is structured—it's not real in the way we think it is. It's all just an idea, isn't it?"

"If men define things are real, they are real in their consequences."

…

"We create a picture of an organisation, or the 'economy', whatever you like, and on the basis of that picture (not some underlying 'real' reality of which no-one is aware), people think and act. And by responding to that picture of reality, they make it so: it becomes 'real in its consequences'. And, what is more, when people respond to that picture, and the consequences occur, they see it as proof of our having correctly conveyed reality. Clever, isn't it? That is how society works."

"So, you're saying that anyone charged with the responsibility of providing these pictures, has a lot of power, because people will respond to what they draw-up?"—at the same time, people's response in a particular way (to the picture) makes them powerful.

…

"It seems to me, that your power is a hidden power, because people only think of you as communicating reality, but in communicating reality, you construct reality" (p. 257).

The "dialogues" in Hines' (1988) paper demonstrate the operation of the constitution of reality and more importantly, how accounting could have "worked on people".

Since this thesis is concerned with the institutional influence on the emergence and operation of academic performance measurement and the impact of the performance measurement on academics; the measurement is demonstrated from the perspective

that it is constructed as a malleable object shaped by external desires (institutional influences), while, at the same time, the malleable object exerts its own power to shape academics (Miller and O'Leary, 1987; Ezzamel *et al*., 2007). In other words, academic performance measurement is not only regarded from an ideological perspective as a set of objectives, standardised outcomes and control of labour according to the interests of ruling class; but also it is analysed from a constitutive perspective in constructing governable individuals.

The above discussion of accounting practices reveals the ontological assumptions of this thesis. In general, there are two views of the social world which are based on two perceptions of the nature of 'reality'. One is that "…the social world and its structures can be regarded as having an empirical, concrete existence external to, independent of and prior to the cognition of any individual"; the other views the social world "…as existing only as a product of individual consciousness – the external social world consists simply of concepts and labels created by people to help them understand reality and negotiate a shared conception of its nature with others" (Hopper and Powell, 1985, p. 431).

The perspective of this thesis is consistent with the second opinion that the "reality" of the social world is constructed by human beings. It is neither objective nor exclusive; just as people could have different categories of living species, different divisions of social economic systems and different understandings of accounting – there can be no structures or classifications in the social world without human minds. In addition, the second perspective on reality suggests a method for human beings to understand the social world – the ontological standpoint determines the epistemology of the world. The next section will introduce the author in terms of her position in this research and her presupposition about it. The reason to set out the introduction to the author is to rationalise the paradigm in which her research is located.

4.2.2 The Author and this Research

The author was brought up on the campus of the case university and gained her first degree from there. She is a so-called "academic product". It was relatively easy to

get access to the university (including documents and academics) through her personal connections. Additionally, one should note how much she cares about the performance and operations of the university.

As discussed in Section 4.2.1, the author understands the nature of reality as socially-constructed. This locates this research in the interpretive paradigm and directs her to see the world "in a particular way" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979, p. 24).

> "The interpretive paradigm is informed by a concern to understand the world as it is, to understand the fundamental nature of the social world at the level of subjective experience. It seems explanation within the realm of individual consciousness and subjectivity, within the frame of reference of the participant as opposed to the observer of action" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979, p. 28).

The aims of interpretive research are to grasp the deeper meanings which inform social life through understanding participants' subjectivity. Therefore, the author should become involved in the lives of her research subjects and the neutrality of the standpoint in the interpretive paradigm will be less important than for those who adopt a functionalist paradigm. The presuppositions of interpretivism can facilitate the research with the design of relevant questions which are not only related to the research themes but also easier for participators to answer; since the questions are constructed with an understanding of their social context.

When considering this research, there is a parable in China known as "the blind men touching an elephant". It involves several blind men trying to discern the shape of an elephant by touching some part of it. Finally, they come up with their descriptions of the shape of an elephant, such as long nose, tree-trunk legs and thin tail. This parable serves as a warning not to take a part as the whole.

In order not to fall into the pitfall of "the blind men touching an elephant", the author does not aim to conclude that whether the promotion criteria are positive or negative in terms of their specific influence on academics in Chinese universities, but rather to consider the extent to which the promotion criteria could have impacted upon certain

staff. More importantly, the aim of this research is to depict the contemporary Chinese academia from the perspective of the impact of the promotion criteria with the help of relevant theories.

In summary, the author's personal experience – brought up on campus with parents working in a university – facilitated her research into the academic performance measurements with an interpretive paradigm. This alludes to the epistemology of this thesis, which is discussed as follows.

"To be located in a particular paradigm is to view the world in a particular way" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979, p. 24).

Based on the assumption that "there is no objectivity at all in the world" (Broadbent and Unerman, 2011, p. 11), the interpretive epistemology argues that the understanding of the social world could be realised through learning the experiences and opinions of those living in the world.

4.2.3 The Epistemology of Accounting Research

The research paradigm and research theories echo each other. When considering the adoption or the construction of particular accounting practices, many studies have been carried out from an institutional perspective (for example, Burns and Scapens, 2000; Parker, 2011; Scapens, 1994). Both the ideological perspective that regards accounting practices as instruments serving the ruling class and the historical perspective that regards accounting practices as "progressing in terms of an unproblematic social utility" (Miller and O'Leary, 1987, p. 237) could be understood from an institutional perspective; since ideology and social changes are embedded in social institutions. In short, the selection of accounting practices may be institutionally intentional and rational – this is the essence of New Institutional theory. In addition to revealing the institutional influence on particular measurements, new institutional theory helps to interpret the inter-organisational changes when taking the broader institutional influences into consideration (for example, DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Moreover, Burns and Scapens' (2000) theoretical framework is

an old institutional instrument to analyse the process of the changes to particular practices within in an organisation. Within their framework, relevant accounting practices are regarded as rules and routines and influenced by organisational institutions and individual actions. The old institutional framework sheds light on the significance of particular people in the process of management accounting changes (Burns and Scapens, 2000). The significance of particular actors may result from their positions and/or their resources. The significance of individuals echoes Bourdieusian theory. The recognition of influential organisational actors and the significance of their influence on organisational behaviour could facilitate the analysis from an institutional or a Bourdieusian perspective. Bourdieusian ideas could be adopted to help understand the changes to organisational behaviour (for example, Oakes *et al.*, 1998). These theoretical frameworks help to explain the construction of reality in an institutional context and the power relations involved in the construction. The inclusion of Burns and Scapens' (2000) framework, particularly their attention to the influence of particular (groups of) people on the changes to managerial accounting practices, broadens the view[42] of the interpretive perspectives in avoiding the relationship between accounting and the issues of conflict, domination and power.

Previous research into the impact of constitutive practices on individuals has frequently drawn upon Foucault's account of disciplinary power (for example, Miller and O'Leary 1987; Roberts, 1991). Based on the understanding of the construction of individualised accountability, psychoanalytic perspective is beginning to be adopted by accounting studies to consider the impact of standards on human beings (for example, Roberts, 2009). These theories supply critical lenses through which the status of academics could be understood in a social context.

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[42] Essentially interpretive perspectives, analogously to functionalist traditions, argue that power "is formulated as if it were a possession belonging to someone which he or she exercises for individual gain and further, that this power is diffused over society in a manner as to preclude the sustained and systematic negation of any individuals' preferences" (Alford and Friedland, 1985; Covaleski *et al.*, 1996).

Thus far, the focus has been mainly on the research philosophy and the understanding of accounting practices. The next section will introduce corresponding research methods and discuss how they will be applied in this thesis.

4.3   Research Methods

Research methods are determined by the aim of the research and the methodology adopted by the author; specifically, "it is the question that will define the method to be used" (Broadbent and Unerman, 2011, p. 8). Even though the same research questions can be interpreted from different methodological positions (for example, positive and interpretive); the stance of the author determines the methodological position of the research methods. This thesis adopts a case study approach including interviews, questionnaires and key document analysis (Section 4.3.1) and discourse analysis (Section 4.3.2) as its research methods.

4.3.1 Case Study

4.3.1.1 Introduction to Case Study

A case study as a research method is a detailed analysis of a real-life setting where context is believed to be very important. Accompanied by the objective of interpretive research in accounting to study how accounting practices interact with other social practices to constitute the social system of which they are part, a case study would be apposite since it could help to set up a boundary for this research. Within the boundary, one could understand the influence of specific institutions on academic performance measurements and therefore, rationalise the extent of their impact on academics.

The boundary set up by a case study, according to Ryan *et al*. (2002), could be "a company or other form of organisation, but it could also be a more aggregated unit of analysis… a particular country" (p. 142). The boundary in this thesis was firstly Chinese academia where universities are subject to the government guidance and financial support. Thanks to the author's personal connections, the boundary could

be further specified to a key Chinese university. Lecturers, associate professors and professors in the university were contacted as potential research participants since they were required to teach as well as carry out research. The specific context would help to reveal the extent of a particular academic performance measurement – the promotion criteria on academics. In addition, according to the *Outline of China's Education Reform and Development* (Chinese Communist Party and State Council of the People's Republic of China, 1993) (the 1993 *Outline*), "The Central Government directly administers some key universities that are essential to national economic and social development and play an exemplary role in higher education sector…" (the *1993 Outline*, lines 139-141); these key universities therefore receive more government grants (Wang, 2001). As one of these key universities, the academic performance measurement in this specific university could be more malleable and able to be shaped to reflect governmental interests; consequently, one may recognise more institutional impacts of this practice on the academics. More details about the university and the key actors can be found in Sections 5.4.3 and 4.3.1.3.

Case study are commonly used because of their ability to reveal particular ideologies. For example, the case of the South African divestment debate during 1970s and 1980s can be used to identify the ideology expressed by accounting to "serve the interests of subordinate groups and social movements" (Arnold & Hammond, 1994, p. 111). Moreover, Ezzemal *et al.*'s (2007) research argues that the dominant political ideology regulates accounting practices in China. In addition to the analysis of country-level cases, "case studies of accounting practices as institutionalized routines can provide important insights into the nature of management accounting practice, it is important to recognize the impact of wider institutional arrangements" (Scapens, 1994, p. 317). Following Scapens' (1994) suggestion, Burns and Scapens' (2000) case study sheds lights on the significance of intra-organisational power relations in understanding the nature of management accounting practices.

From another perspective, case studies supply opportunities to scrutinise "particular phenomena" in specific contexts. For example, in this thesis, particular phenomena refer to the specific and quantifiable requirements of research performance and academics' different responses to these requirements in Chinese academia. The "real-

life setting" method supplies an opportunity to scrutinise the reasons behind these requirements and to understand the rationales behind academics' responses in a specific context. This "specification" gives rise to one of the limitations of case studies which is that the research results may not be generalisable. The perspective of new institutional theory may reduce the impact of this limitation, since in the context of globalisation, top universities exhibit mimetic isomorphism in replicating each other's practices and operations (Fisher and Atkinson-Grosjean, 2002; Parker, 2011). Within such a converging context, universities and their academics in the same organisational field (constituted by converging universities) may share similar characteristics. The lessons learnt from one of the converging universities may be generalised and applied to other universities in the same organisational field.

In addition to generating applicable findings from a particular case, it is hoped that, the case studies adopted in interpretive research may be able to "generalise theories so that they explain the observations that have been made" (Ryan *et al*., 2002, p. 149). As "…central to the process of theory development" (Ryan, *et al*., 2002, pp. 150-151), interpretive case studies can explore the extent to which particular theories can be applied. In other words, the aim of interpretive case studies may be 'theoretical generalisation'. As explained in Section 4.2.3, a series of theories are adopted in this research. Within the boundary set up by case study, in addition to understanding the nature and significance of academic performance measurements, these theories are expected to suggest other structural issues for future studies.

Within the boundary set up by the case of Chinese academia, the analysis in this research is largely carried out on the basis of primary sources, interviews and questionnaires. On the one hand, this thesis analyses the official discourses pertaining to academic performance measurements, for example, key political leaders' talks, government documents, national practices and university regulations (see Section 4.3.2); these are used to articulate the extent to which academic performance measures mapped onto dominant political interests. On the other hand, in order to understand the "subjectivity" constructed by the performance measurements (the promotion criteria), this thesis draws upon participants' responses to particular issues (for example, academics' attitudes towards research and teaching,

academics' opinions and understandings of the promotion criteria). Participations' responses were collected through interviews and questionnaires.

4.3.1.2 Interviews

This section is concerned with a discussion of interviews, including the styles of interviews, the formation of interview questions, and how interview techniques were used in this thesis. The analysis of the primary data can be found in Chapter Six.

There are three main types of interviews – unstructured, semi-structured and structured interviews. In this thesis, semi-structured interviews (and open-ended questionnaires) were conducted. The author hoped to elicit information from participants about their behaviour, beliefs, norms, values and attitudes. She felt that semi-structured interviews might elicit open responses from participants which might better reflect interviewees' thoughts (Bryman and Bell, 2003).

Semi-structured interviews can be regarded as the mixture of structured and unstructured interviews. In semi-structured interviews, interviewers can follow up any note-worthy points from interviewees and the interviews do not necessarily strictly adhere to the interview guide; therefore, interviewees are given more leeway with their responses.

The interview questions should be closely related to the research questions. The formulation of interview questions can be generalised as follows.
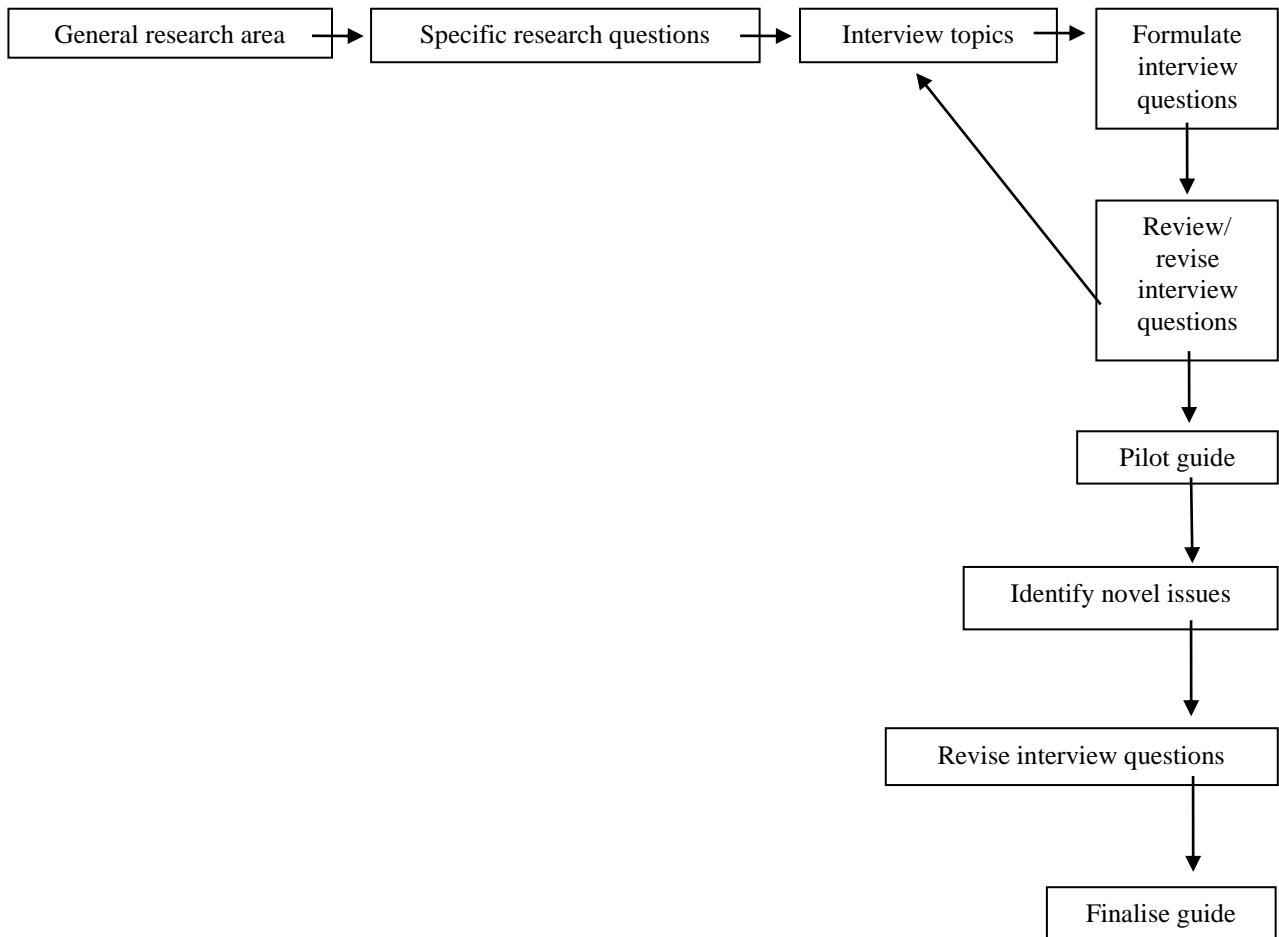
Figure 4.1 Formulating Questions for an Interview Guide[43]

According to Bryman and Bell's (2003) formation process, interview questions should be formulated, reviewed and revised on the basis of interview topics, which are generated from research questions.

- **Interview and Questionnaire Questions**

In this thesis, interview questions were corresponding to four respective topics; the first topic is concerned with the understandings of the hierarchical accountabilities[44],

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[43] Bryman and Bell, 2003, p.350.

[44] The aim of the first topic was to assess the extent to which the promotion criteria had impacted upon academics in terms of regulating their understandings about what the universities and academics need to do. However, according to their responses (listed in Tables 6.1 and 6.2), the promotion criteria seemed ineffective in constructing research-oriented academics. Later on, the analysis of the

the second is concerned with the perspectives of promotion criteria, the third is concerned with the impact of the promotion criteria and the fourth is concerned with suggestions and comments about the promotion criteria.

Topics	Interview and Questionnaire Questions
Part 1 Understanding of Hierarchical Accountabilities	Q1a. What do you think the responsibilities of contemporary Chinese universities are?
	Q1b. How would you rank these responsibilities?
	Q1c. What do you think is the relationship between teaching and research?
	Q1d. How do you allocate your time and energy between teaching and research?
	Q1e. What do you think lies behind the promotion criteria?
	Q1f. What are your responsibilities when working in N University?
Part 2 Understanding of the Promotion Criteria	Q2a. What does (did) the promotion criteria mean to you?
	Q2b. Why is promotion attractive to you?
	Q2c. What do you feel about the effectiveness of evaluation tools which measure research performance in terms of their ability to represent the quality and value of research? Does this impact upon your teaching or research practice?
Part 3 Impact of the Promotion Criteria	Q3a. What is the impact of the promotion requirements on your teaching and research
	Q3b. What is the impact of quantified evaluation on your research?
	Q3c. Do you think there is difference between your research directions and others' in terms of the frequency of publications? Would you adjust your research methods and/or directions to speed up your publications?
	Q3d. How do popular topics in particular research arena emerge? Does research into popular topics draw more attention from journals? Do popular topics attract more research energy and resources? Do you think it matters that comparatively unpopular research arenas may be given limited research resources, which may hold back the scientific development? What are the impacts of the popular topics in your research arena on your research direction and methods?
Part 4 Suggestions and comments	Q4. Regarding the promotion requirements on teaching and research, based on your practical experience, are there any ways in which they might be improved?

Table 4.1 Classification of Topics in terms of the Hierarchical Accountabilities of, the Understandings of, the Impacts of and Suggestions to Promotion criteria

Drawing up the discussion of the accountability constructed through performance measurements (for example, Chan and Gao, 2009; Joannides, 2012; McKernan and

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promotion criteria revealed the decoupling between academics' "official" answers to the questions about accountabilities and the hierarchical images constructed by the promotion criteria.

McPhail, 2012), one may question the reason for using the term "responsibilities" rather than "accountabilities" in interview and questionnaire questions.

The interviews and questionnaires were carried out in Chinese and the Chinese characters used in questions are "职责". Even though the literal translations of "职责" is the responsibilities of a job; "职责" comprise the meanings of "duties", "responsibilities" and "accountabilities" in Chinese. The characters, "职责", were deliberately used by the author; since she would like to leave space for respondents to consider their "responsibilities" or "accountabilities" under the promotion criteria. However, since this thesis is intended to discuss the impact of the promotion criteria from the perspective of accountability, the term "accountabilities" are used in the following discussion for illustrative purposes.

The reason for asking academics about their understandings of universities' accountabilities was to contrast these with their own accountabilities. Since academics were subject to the promotion criteria personally and directly; one could perhaps argue that they might have constructed hierarchical accountabilities due to the specific requirements. Their understandings of universities' accountabilities might disclose more "moral sense" in terms of maintaining decent quality of and attitudes towards teaching and research. In a word, the queries about these two accountabilities were set out to underpin the analysis of the impact of promotion criteria.

- **Validity of the Responses from Interviews and Questionnaires**

In order to address any possible novel issues, the author preliminarily carried out interviews with someone who was once an academic in another Chinese university and with some clerical staff and academics from the case university. These pilot interviews, on the one hand, helped the author to become familiar with the procedure and to be prepared for any novel issues; on the other hand, they helped to make sure the questions were clear, rational and that they were not oriented by the expectation of particular responses. For example, as explained previously, in order to discover the potential subjectivity constructed by the promotion criteria, in the interview

questions, the Chinese characters "责任" (responsibilities) were substituted with "职责" (duties, responsibilities and accountabilities) to give academics more leeway to reflect their identities (see Section 6.3). Moreover, in order to avoid any bias, the interview questions did not mention the difference between the requirements for teaching and research performance.

When considering the validity of interview transcripts and questionnaire answers, misinterpretation of verbal answers, vague presentation of answers and the translation of responses (from Mandarin to English) could be serious issues to this research. In order to address the first two issues, follow-up interviews were set up in advance with participants to ensure the opportunity to clarify responses and follow up any important points. In this research, special attention was paid to the correct translation. The aim of the interviews and questionnaires was to collect academics' personal feelings, subjective understandings and opinions about the promotion criteria. On the basis of the subjective information, one could potentially understand the impact of the promotion criteria; through theoretical lenses, one could frame participants' responses. Therefore, the focus of translation was largely on maintaining the accuracy of representing participants' feelings and viewpoints.

The next section will introduce the data collection process, including research participants and the issues surrounding data collection.

4.3.1.3 Data Collection

As stated previously, lectures, associate professors and professors were all targeted since their posts require both teaching and research. They could be regarded as at the 'coal-face', struggling to divide their time and effort between teaching and research given the requirements set out in the promotion criteria.

In addition, some participants also undertake management oriented administrative roles; this suggests that information may reflect the perspective of management. It is hoped that this information will enable insights into the operation of the promotion criteria.

Before each interview, an introduction to the research was presented to the participant to introduce the objectives of the research, the contribution to the development of knowledge and the data collection procedures. It was hoped that this introduction would encourage academics to participate in the research since getting involved in this research could also help them to reflect upon their identities and the impact of the institutional environment on them.

Among the participants, there were some academics who opted for questionnaires; therefore, they were sent questionnaires containing the same questions as the interviews. The availability of transcripts for correction was discussed between the author and the participants and it was agreed prior to the data collection that research participants could withdraw their participation at any point. This helped to ensure that the participants understood their rights regarding the information elicited from them.

- **List of Research Participants**

There were 23 participants in this part of the study. Their details are included in the following table. In the table, Bio is short for Biology; Bu is short for Business; C is short for Chemistry; H is short for History; M is short for Marxist Philosophy[45]; and Ad is short for Administrative Sections.

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[45] It is a compulsory course normally taken in the first year.

Number	Code	Title	Gender	Means	Date
1	Bio1	Professor	Female	Interview	10th Feb 2011
2	Bio2	Associate Professor	Female	Interview	21st Feb 2011
3	Bio3	Professor	Male	Interview	5th Mar 2011
4	Bio4	Lecturer	Male	Interview	5th Mar 2011
5	Bio5	Professor	Female	Interview	7th Mar 2011
6	Bio6	Associate Professor	Female	Questionnaire	17th Feb 2011
7	Bio7	Professor	Female	Questionnaire	18th Feb 2011
8	Bio8	Associate Professor	Male	Questionnaire	2nd Mar 2011
9	Bio9	Associate Professor	Male	Questionnaire	2nd Mar 2011
10	Bio10	Professor	Male	Questionnaire	8th Mar 2011
11	Bio11	Associate Professor	Female	Questionnaire	29thMar 2011
12	Bio12	Associate Professor	Female	Interview	From Mar. 2011 to Apr. 2013
13	Bu1	Associate Professor	Male	Questionnaire	4th Mar 2011
14	Bu2	Associate Professor	Female	Questionnaire	7th Mar 2011
15	Bu3	Associate Professor	Male	Questionnaire	7th Mar 2011
16	C1	Associate Professor	Male	Questionnaire	4th Mar 2011
17	C2	Associate Professor	Male	Questionnaire	4th Mar 2011
18	C3	Associate Professor	Male	Questionnaire	8th Mar 2011
19	C4	Associate Professor	Male	Questionnaire	29thMar 2011
20	H1	Lecturer	Male	Questionnaire	8th Mar 2011
21	M1	Associate Professor	Female	Interview	5th Mar 2011
22	Ad1	Clerk	Female	Interview	20thMay2010
23	Ad2	Senior Clerk (Professor)	Male	Interview	From Mar. 2011 to Dec. 2013

Table 4.2 List of Research Participants

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires between February and March in 2011. The author contacted participants to ask if they would rather be interviewed or complete a questionnaire. Nine out of 23 opted for a semi-structured interview. Each interview lasted approximately 40 minutes except for the one with Ad2; since the author returned to this participant many times for clarification and further information.

- **Issues with the Data Collection Process**

The author was surprised by the participants' openness to all of her questions and most of the participants were happy to answer follow-up questions to further clarify and explain their answers. Follow-ups were carried out through email and a short-visit to China immediately following the first round data collection. Nevertheless, some academics refused to take part in the research; this is discussed as follows.

In contrast to some academics' willingness to participate, other academics refused. Their concerns were similar. Common responses included "why does the author ask these kinds of questions?!", "what is the relationship between these questions and accounting?" and "I don't think this is about accounting, is the author majoring in management?"

These explicit refusals normally came from staff with a pure science background. Their refusals were likely due to their perspectives on accounting research, which they imagine should be about accounting regulations and practices rather than concerned with the impact of particular regulations on individuals. Aside from these explicit refusals, some academics refused to reply at all. They were mainly in the subjects of arts and business, for example, history, economics and management.

Other than the rigid perspectives on accounting research, the silence of staff with social science backgrounds suggested other considerations. From the perspective of the differences between subjects, academics with social science backgrounds might be more experienced in understanding the ways in which official regulations work. Particularly, in China, official regulations are normally generated in a political context. Their silence suggested their concern with expressing their opinions about particular regulations. Their perspectives might be regarded as dissenting and interpreted as offensive and subversive even though the author promised that their responses would be anonymous and that disclosure would be strictly restricted. The preceding explanation could be further clarified by explaining the author's means of access to the participants. Due to the author's limited personal connections with the disciplines of social science, potential participants were contacted by managerial staff, for example, the head of department and the dean of college. The power of the managerial positions may give rise to academics' concern with being judged by their superior. Their silence might somehow have reflected the power of the political regulations and the official positions. While the refusals could also be due to academics' limited time or interest in this research rather than due to their concerns.

In summary, although it was very disappointing to receive refusals and it was also daunting to consider the misunderstandings about accounting research; the

information collected from participation as well as refusals assisted this research from a critical perspective to consider the impact of the official regulations.

In order to develop a better understanding of the primary and secondary data, the next section will introduce an analytical framework – discourse analysis. Within this framework, data – discourses, is believed to carry the features of the particular contexts in which they are constructed[46]. Therefore, the data can be categorised and understood from the perspective of revealing interest, government mantra and the practice of the field.

4.3.2 Discourse Analysis

4.3.2.1 Introduction to Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis' ontological assumption regards the reality as socially constructed (Chua, 1986; Fairclough, 1995; Zhang, 2012). The epistemology of discourse analysis could be regarded as being grounded in critical social science, which argues that "truth is very much in the process of being hammered out and is grounded in social and historical practices" (Chua, 1986, p. 620).

Echoing Miller and O'Leary's (1987) notion of the significance of social and historical conditions under which particular accounting practices emerged, discourse analysis is apposite to this thesis in terms of neither seeking an absolute "truth" claim regarding the emergence and changes of academic performance measurement in Chinese academia, nor a finding that could be generalised in a positivist way. Instead, in an interpretive paradigm, discourse analysis is adopted by this thesis as a qualitative method to offer an interpretation about the accounting discourse – academic performance measurement – in a particular context.

As stated previously, ideology can be embedded in accounting practices and so guide the subjects of accounting practices to deliver expected outcomes. In this respect,

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[46] By showing "how discourse is shaped by relations of power and ideologies, and the constructive effects discourse has upon social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and belief" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 13), discourse analysis can help to reveal these relationships to people involved (Zhang, 2012).

through accounting practices, ideology realises the "function of the relation of an utterance to its social context…and it concerns the actual uses of language between particular human subjects for the production of specific effects" (Eagleton, 1991, p. 9). Analogously, Covaleski *et al.* (1996) argue that "as a form of language, quantitative data is selectively deployed by the state not to reflect underlying economic conditions, but to create public values, acquiescence and support" (Covaleski *et al*, 1996). Discourse analysis could be appositely adopted to analyse the institutional influences on academic performance measurement and its impact on Chinese academics.

As a research method, discourse analysis "focuses on the thread of language (and related semiotic systems) used in the situation network" (Gee, 1999, p.85). Discourse analysis has been adopted and developed by social constructionists as a way to understand social interactions, since "Language is always an intrinsic part of some particular social situation: it is never an independent instrument or simply a tool for description. By naively perceiving it as a tool, we mask its profound part in creating social relationships and in evoking the roles and the selves of those involved in the relationships" (Edelman, 1977, p. 58). This understanding of language consequently broadens the perspective of regarding discourse analysis as merely involving a "…careful reading of texts… with a view to discerning discursive patterns of meaning, contradictions, and inconsistencies" (Gavey, 1989, p. 467). This understanding of language is resonant with Zhang's (2012) perspective in regarding the conception of language as discourse and "the conception of Discourse is viewed as a process rather than a product – the whole process of social interaction of producing the discourse" (p. 111). When considering the economic, political and institutional settings in which particular discourse is generated, it might be useful to refer to Fairclough's (1992) definition of discourse as "a multi-level social practice" (p. 4)[47] in which text would be just one level of discourse.

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[47] A practice can be a type of activity, which "is materialised in a temporal location and time as a result of dialectic connections with different elements of life, within which humans' experiences, knowledge and ways of using language to communicate play a fundamental role" (Fairclough, 1995; Zhang, 2012, p. 103).

On the basis of the above conception of discourse, the analysis of discourse can be carried out by using a three-layer framework – the first layer is concerned with the discourse; the second layer is concerned with the process of how particular discourse is produced, distributed and consumed; and the third layer critically inspects how particular discourses articulate with other social practices beyond the moment of the "text" (Fairclough, 1992; Zhang, 2012). According to Fairclough (1992), this three-layered conception of discourse is –

> "…an attempt to bring together three analytical traditions: (1) the tradition of close textual and linguistic analysis within linguistics; (2) the macro-sociological tradition of analysing social practice in relation to social structures; (3) the interpretivist or micro-sociological tradition of setting social practice as something which people actively produce and make sense of on the basis of shared commonsense procedure" (p. 72).

The second and third layers mainly correspond to the interpretive and critical perspectives of managerial accounting research. At the second layer of analysis, discourse is perceived as a process of discursive practices and the second-layered analysis spells out how "reality" is constructed through the production, distribution and consumption of discourse. At the third layer of the analytical framework, discourse is perceived as a social practice. The third-layered analysis is concerned with contrasting the meaning constructed by discursive practices (at the second-layered analysis) with real-world experiences. These layers would fulfil the requirements of this thesis to understand how academic performance measures are configured and how they configure academics.

As has been previously introduced, this three-layered conception of discourse could be analysed at the layer of text, discursive practices and social practices (Fairclough, 1992). Analysis at these layers and from different aspects of each layer of discourse have been carried out by accounting research in a Chinese context. For example, through analysing the discourses of governmental officials, accounting researchers and practitioners, Ezzamel *et al*. (2007) argue that Chinese accounting regulations were the malleable objects of dominant political ideology – in both the eras of

Maoism and Dengism, discourses distributed by relevant actors pointed to the dominant ideologies of the time. Their analytical approach could be regarded as falling into the second layer – discursive practices analysis; since they show how political ideology (embedded in discourses) created a context which was compatible with the adoption of particular accounting concepts and practices[48] – in other words, one could understand how particular discourses (pointing to accounting regulations compatible with dominant ideology) could be produced, articulated (distributed), conceived and perceived (consumed) in the political era of Maoism and Dengism. A similar analytical approach was adopted in Zhang *et al.*'s (2013) study of various institutional influences on Chinese accounting education. Their analysis shows that the changes to accounting education represent the underlying consistent theme of changes in Chinese political dynamics – from political orientation to internationalisation. For example, through learning the activities that the establishment of professional accounting institutes (the Chinese Accounting Society[49], the Chinese Institute of Certified Public Accountants[50] and the Chinese Accounting Professors' Association [51]), the supply of training sessions by professional bodies such as ACCA[52] and CGA[53], the cooperation between these

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[48] "A dominant power may legitimate itself by *promoting* beliefs and values congenial to it; *naturalizing* and *universalizing* such beliefs so as to render them self-evident and apparently inevitable; *denigrating* ideas which might challenge it; *excluding* rival forms of thought, perhaps by some unspoken but systematic logic; and *obscuring* social reality in ways convenient to itself" (Eagleton, 1991, pp. 5-6, original emphases).

[49] The Chinese Accounting Society (CAS) was established in 1980 within the Ministry of Finance. It plays an important role to introduce Western accounting ideas and practices into China (Zhang *et al.*, 2013).

[50] Since 1991, the Chinese Institute of Certified Public Accountants (CICPA) began to influence accounting education through establishing consistent academic requirements for certified public accountants, supplying professional development and organising certification exams (Zhang *et al.*, 2013; Yee, 2009).

[51] In 1995, the Chinese Accounting Professors' Association (CAPA) was established as "the first national accounting academic body devoted to accounting education" (Yunwei, 1997, p. 226; Zhang *et al.*, 2013). It promotes communication between Chinese and foreign accounting academics to encourage the development of accounting education, research and practices (Yunwei, 1997; Zhang *et al.*, 2013).

[52] The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) is a professional accounting body in the UK.

[53] The Certified General Accountants Association of Canada (CGA) is a professional accounting body in Canada.

professional bodies and Chinese universities, the establishment of joint programs between universities from foreign countries (such as the US, the UK, Australia and New Zealand) and Chinese universities, and the consolidation of Chinese core curriculum with the standard Western accounting curriculum. These are evidences that are indicative of the internationalisation process of Chinese accounting education. This internationalisation process is consistent with (and underpinned by) the changes to strategic working foci of the Chinese government. There is a dialectic relation between these activities and accounting educational changes in that these activities are both conditions for the internationalisation of Chinese accounting education and effects of the internationalisation.

In order to understand how the discourse – the convergence of IFRS in China, is produced, distributed and consumed, Zhang (2012) demonstrated a detailed analysis of discourse as discursive practices (the second-layer analysis) in his PhD research. First, the production of discourse – through commenting on the convergence of IFRS in China, key participants' [54] produced some discourses which projected the understandings (or "reality") of the convergence of IFRS in China. These understandings are what key players would like to establish through their discourses. Second, the distribution of discourse – through circulating along stable networks (such as mainstream media outlets, prestigious journals and influential academics), key players' discourses about the convergence of IFRS in China are consistent in terms of using consistent words and making similar comments. Third, the consumption of discourse – through highlighting, for example, the prestigious social identity of key speakers and using the characteristics of mainstream media outlets (in terms of its compliance with government requirements), these consistent discourses about the convergence have been promoted and generated influences upon audiences' perception. In short, "the analysis shows that the discourses created by those key players are the mainstream voices that have dominated the discussions within China" (Zhang, 2012, p. 126).

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[54] Key participants in promoting the convergence of IFRS in China include International accounting standard-setting bodies, the Chinese government, Chinese leading news outlets, and Chinese accounting academics (Zhang, 2012).

With respect to the adoption of discourse analysis, analogous to Ezzamel *et al.* (2007), Zhang (2012) and Zhang *et al.*'s (2013) approaches, this thesis largely draw upon the analysis of discursive practices – the second layer of analysis. Since when considering the emergence and the promotion of academic performance measures, the second-layered analysis helps to reveal how the discourses pertaining to these measuring practices are produced, distributed and consumed.

In order to understand the application of the second-layered analysis in this thesis, one could start from Chouliaraki and Fairclough's (1999) notion of how the context of a situation can be realised in language[55]. On the basis of their understandings of the context of a situation, the potential values of the context could be reflected through three variables – the "field" – the activity which the discourse is a part of, the "tenor" – the social participants involved in the activity and their relationships and the "mode" – the part the discourse plays in the activity. Through considering how the social participants articulate the "reality" discursively in the activity, one could see how the "reality", which is represented by the discourse, is produced, distributed and consumed in society (Zhang, 2012). In this thesis, the "field" (the activity which the discourse is a part of) relates to the higher educational reform and the implementation of particular academic performance measurements in Chinese academia. The "tenor" (the social participants involved in the activity and the relations between them) would include key political leaders, the Central Government, the Ministry of Education, public universities and academics, and their relationships (see Section 5.2). The "mode" refers to the part the discourse plays in the activity and its relations with other activities – it concerns the processes of discourse production, distribution and consumption.

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[55] "Lexicogrammar is seen as functionally grounded, shaped by the social functions it serves, and in particular built around the intersection of the 'macro-functions' of language – the ideational function (language in the construction and representation of experience in the world), the interpersonal function (language in the enactment of social relations and the construction of social identities), and the textual function (language in the specifically semiotic – textual – form of productive practice)" (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999, p. 140).

The next section outlines how the data[56] has been framed as the second layer within the three-layered analytical framework.

4.3.2.2 Application of Discourse Analysis

This thesis examines the discourse of some key participants to analyse what they have said about the significance of advanced science and technology, and higher educational reforms (see Sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2). The key participants (such as key political leaders, the Central Government, the Ministry of Education and universities) have produced discourses (either in speeches or in written texts) which projected some "realities" in terms of the effects of higher educational reform and academic performance on the state development – the production of discourse determines the "realities" (or understandings) about academic performance measures that the key players would like to establish.

In order to analyse how the discourse (in terms of the significance of academic performance) is distributed, the focus of the analysis is on the launch of two national educational projects (Projects 211 and 985, see Sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.2) in terms of their objectives, their strategies, their requirements and the objects of these projects. Moreover, the application requirements for government funding, the enactment of merit pay and the promotion criteria (see Sections 5.4.2 and 5.4.3) are all practices[57] responding to the emphasis on academic performance. This layer of analysis explores how the "realities" or the understandings (that the key players would like to establish) are carried forward, realised and render predictable results.

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[56] The sources of data this thesis examines include interview transcripts and questionnaires, the introduction to university and university archives (such as the regulations about merit pay, the promotion criteria), and government documents (such as policies pertaining to higher educational reform), national educational practices (two national educational projects) and key political leaders' talk. It should be noted that some of the data is taken from Chinese sources and translated by the author.

[57] The enactment of merit pay scheme and the promotion criteria could also be regarded as the contextualisation of the discourse in Chinese universities. The real-world experience generated by the contextualised discourse is important since it determines discourse as a social practice. In addition to serving to reflect some underlying reality, it helps to create conditions making reality of "situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relations between people and groups of people" (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, p. 258; Zhang, 2012).

In analysing the consumption of the discourse – how it has influences upon audiences' perception, cognisance is given to other factors than merely the text that shapes interpretation, such as the social identify of key speakers (the position of Xiaoping Deng in the Party and Central Government, for instance), the organisational structure of the CCP (Chinese Communist Party, the sole party in power) and its relationship with the government (and ministries) and public universities.

In summary, by identifying key participants' discourses about the significance of academic performance (measurements), and by examining how their discourses are articulated and circulated, this analysis shows the dominance of these key players in Chinese society. Furthermore, by identifying how the discourses fit in with the academics' experience of the emphasis on academic performance (for example, the onerous requirements for research performance in the promotion criteria), the analysis indicates that influential stakeholders (the state) are actively constructing a particular meaning for advanced academic performance – the economic and social effects of advanced research. This particular meaning points out the possibility of the influences of the emphasis on research upon academics, which will be discussed in Chapters Five and Six.

When considering some academics' responses to the promotion criteria (in terms of their attitudes towards research outcomes) in Events 2, 3, 4 and 5 (see Section 1.1), this thesis could also carry out the analysis of discourse as social practice (the third-layered analysis) – it focuses on contrasting the meaning constructed by discursive practices (revealed by the second-layered analysis) with real-world experiences. The analysis could discuss the trade-off between the presupposed benefits of improved research performance (the increased amount of research outcomes) and utilitarianism in academia, and consider the "demeaning" of teaching due to the enactment of the promotion criteria. However, since this thesis concerns the impact of the promotion criteria upon academics, the analysis will largely focus on revealing the rationales behind the impact.

Discourse is dynamic and constantly changing. In addition, from the perspective of analysing the layers of discourse, there can be different interpretations underlying the same discourse – different ways to categorise the same discourse. For example, in this thesis, the merit pay and the promotion criteria could be positioned in the second layer of discourse since they underpin its distribution. They could also be positioned in the third-layered analysis since they are the contextualised discourse in Chinese universities and their effects could be used to contrast with the "understandings" established through discursive discourses. Due to the subjectivity of interpretation and the understandings of certain discourses, different researchers may have different opinions in terms of the extent of analysis (Zhang, 2012). In spite of these issues, discourse analysis is still apposite given it is a critical approach to research in the arena of social science. Its strength in revealing the relationship between the discourse and the context of a situation is important for this thesis in order to explain the nature of academic performance measures in Chinese academia.

4.4   Conclusion

The conclusion of this chapter starts with Hines' (1988, p. 256) argument as follows –

> "It all just depends on the way you look at things."

The author's understanding of the nature of accounting practices and her personal experience position this thesis in an interpretive paradigm. When contrasting the interpretive with the mainstream paradigm in accounting studies, positivism, the difference is partly in terms of their perceptions of the nature of reality. Positivist research assumes that "the social world can be explained by the simplified, fixed and universally generalizable framework" (Zhang, 2012, p. 104). From an interpretive perspective, the author is agreeing with Chua (1986), Fairclough (1992) and Zhang (2012) that the nature of reality is "an open and dynamic reality where any event is governed by simultaneously interactive relations amongst social participants" (Zhang, 2012, p. 103). Within an interpretive paradigm, one could develop an understanding of the socially constructed and socially constructing nature of accounting practices.

This assumption underlying the interpretive view of reality determines a possible way to understand accounting practices which is that they "could only be fully understood in relation to the minds which created them and the inner experience which they reflected" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979, p. 229). The ontological view underlying this method is resonant with that of discourse analysis – every part of the constituents of social reality (such as practices) "is constructively interactive with fundamental understandings that are shaped by language and its effects on human's communicative actions" (Zhang, 2012, pp. 103-104). When considering the constructively interactive relationship between language and social reality, "language" should be viewed as "discourse" – a process showing how it is produced through social interaction rather than merely a product of social interaction.

Drawing upon Zhang's (2012) understanding of Fairclough's version of discourse analysis, this thesis adopts an analytical framework to understand the processes of discourse (referring to the promotion of academic performance measurements) production, distribution and consumption in a particular context. The (dominant) ideology embedded in discourse and the "reality" or understanding that key social players (such as key political leaders and Central Government) would like to establish through their discourses could be revealed in this process. This analysis would help to develop a better understanding of Chinese academia and the rationales behind the changes to academic measurement practices. The details are presented in Chapter Five.

The significance of social context and ideology in discourse is also the reason for adopting a case study approach to analyse academic performance measures in China. On the one hand, a case study helps to set up a boundary and make conditions for a detailed analysis in a real-life setting, in which context is important and can be scrutinised; on the other hand, a case study is commonly used because of its ability to reveal particular ideologies. With respect to this thesis – discussing the socially constructed and constructing features of academic measures in China, a case study is appropriate since "case studies of accounting practices…can provide important insights into the nature of management accounting practice…" (Scapens, 1994, p. 317).

In the next chapter, the socially constructed feature of academic performance measures will be discussed in a Chinese context on the basis of analysing relevant discourses. The author's personal connections help to specify the research boundary to a key Chinese public university; this thesis will have an opportunity to discuss detailed contextualised measurement practices in the next chapter. The socially constitutive nature of these measurement practices will be discussed in Chapter Six on the basis of academics' (working in the key Chinese public universities) personal experience which is collected through interviews and questionnaires.

5 Chapter Five: Academic Performance Measurement in China – An Institutional Perspective

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with academic performance measurements in Chinese universities and three different theoretical perspectives are set out – the new institutional perspective, the old institutional perspective and a Bourdieusian perspective. The new institutional perspective helps to reveal the dominance of political institutional force in the context and the implementation process of academic performance measurements. Burns and Scapens' (2000) old institutional framework helps to theorize the institutionalisation of academic performance measures, and its interaction with organisational institutions and individual actions. A Bourdieusian perspective is adopted to enrich the preceding institutional analysis in terms of understanding the changes in Chinese academia brought along by the implementation of academic performance measurement – the changing academic field (from a relatively autonomous one to a marketised one).

The remainder of this chapter is organised as follows: Section 5.2 sets out the political structure of the state and the relationship between the government and public universities. Section 5.3 describes the historical background pertaining to the academic performance measurements in China, especially from the reform period after 1976. A new institutional and a Bourdieusian perspective are taken in Section 5.4 to analyse the emergence of a particular type of quantified academic performance measurement. An old institutional framework is used to analyse the implementation of these performance measurements in Chinese academia and in a Chinese public university. The conclusion is set out in Section 5.5.

5.2 Political Structure of the State

The People's Republic of China (PRC) was established in 1949 with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) as the primary political force and the only electable party. The CCP controls all political institutions, including the National People's Congress, the State Council and related ministries (Zhang, 2005). Especially,

> "The CCP's leadership includes the leaderships on politics, thoughts and organisations, of which the most important is the Party's political leadership on the entire state and the government…In return, one of the basic principles of the government's work is 'insisting on the CCP's leadership, which means the CCP's political leadership in various levels of the governments, and the CCP's organisational leadership in all levels of the governments must be guaranteed'" (Zhang, 2005, pp. 61-62).

In addition,

> "The party also sets the general policy line (*luxian*) for the government to implement, approves the government budget and plan, and oversees the work of government. Finally, the party is responsible for the ideological education and evaluation of government cadres and all other members of society" (Shirk, 1993, p. 56).

The organisational structure of the CCP and its relationship with the Central government are illustrated as follows.
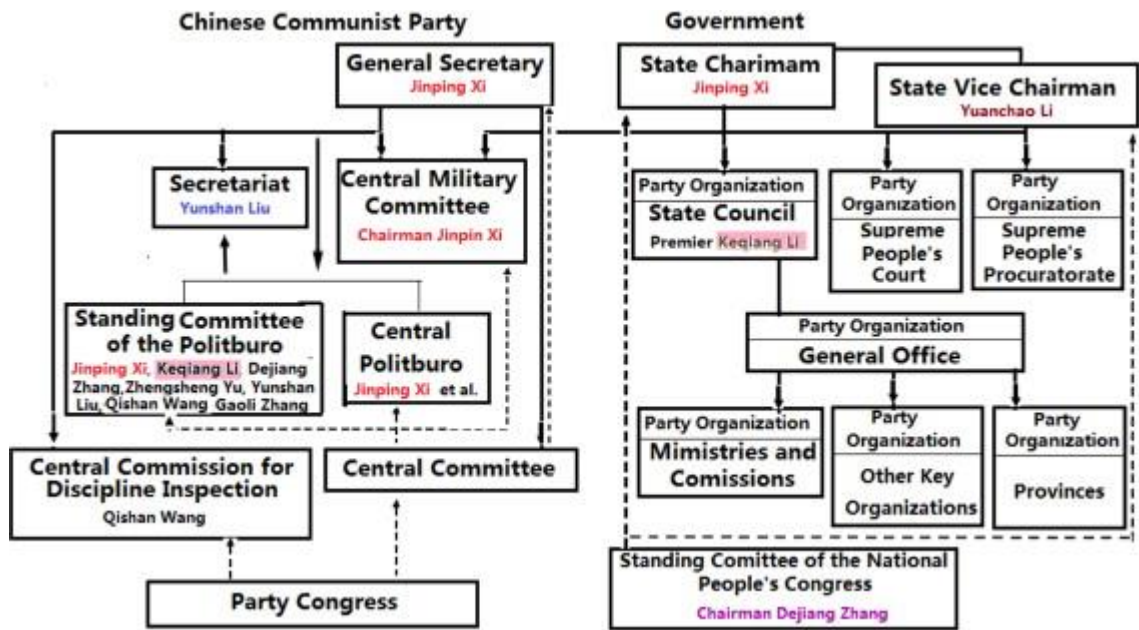
Figure 5.1 Organizational structure of the CCP and its relationship with the Central Government[58]

The Chinese political system is composed of five layers of administration: the Centre (*zhongyang*), provinces (*sheng*), prefectures (*diqu*), counties (*xian*) and townships (*xiang*) (Li and Zhou, 2005; Lieberthal, 1995). The mode of the dominance of the CCP over the Central government permeates the four layers of administration. Specifically, "The Party's authority over the government is primarily based on its authority to appoint and promote government officials" (Shirk, 1993, p. 56); and the dominance of the CCP in controlling governmental personnel carries out the "'management of different levels' through a three-level hierarchy: the Politburo level, the Central Organisation Department, and province-level party organisation department" (Yabuki and Harner, 1999, p. 35).

Similar to the permeated relationship between the Party and administration, the organisational structures in the Central Government, the Ministry of Education, its

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[58] Broken arrows indicate processes of election; other positions are appointed. The coloured shading and words demonstrates how the Party realizes its control over the Government via cross membership of key members who occupy the most important positions in the Party and the Government (based on Xinhua Material from: news.xinhuanet.com/ziliao/2004-11/15/content_2221419.htm and Yabuki and Harner, 1999) (Zhang *et al.*, 2013).

local branches and public universities are identical in terms of the centralisation of managerial power at the relevant-level Party Committee (Gao, 2012; Yao 2009; Zhang 2005). The identical organisational structure could be understood through DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) understanding of institutional isomorphism such that "The greater the centralization of organization A's resource supply, the greater the extent to which organization A will change isomorphically to resemble the organizations on which it depends for resources" (p. 154). Therefore, from a new institutional perspective, one could argue that the regulative institutional force supports the operation of Chinese institutions through the mechanism of coercive isomorphism. This perspective may be particularly relevant to Chinese pubic universities. On the one hand, since they are financed and directed by corresponding governmental ministries – they "compete for political relevance and institutional legitimacy"; on the other hand, they "do not operate under market conditions" (Carolan, 2008, p.429).

With respect to organisational practices, as reviewed in Chapter Two, academic performance measurements are described as the products of Chinese higher education reform (for example, Mok, 2000; Mok and Lo, 2007; Gao 2012); and the higher education reform in China was part of economic reform (Mok, 2000).

Prior institutional studies into the significance of the Chinese economic reforms and openness to "western ideas" for its universities have used an institutional theory lens. For example, Watne and Baldwin (1988) provide an indication of the development of university accounting education in China with a more-Western style approach. Winkle *et al.* (1992) find the similarity between Chinese and American accounting courses. They suggest that the impact of economic reforms on Chinese accounting education could be understood from the perspective of mimetic isomorphism (derived from cultural-cognitive institutional forces) – "China had begun to copy Western styles of university accounting education" (Zhang *et al*., 2013, p. 10). In addition, Chan and Rotenberg (1999) argue that "Universities, management education…are flourishing under focused government policies" (p. 45), their understanding of the effects of government policies suggest the significance of government power through regulative institutional forces. Zhang *et al*. (2013) review

the history of accounting education in Chinese universities since 1949 and redress the lack of academic research into institutional influences on university accounting education. In the context of internationalisation and developing a market economy, together with the recognition of intellectuals and the significance of accounting education on economic development, they find the effects of normative, cultural-cognitive and regulative institutional forces on accounting education in Chinese universities.

In the context of the political dominance over the operations of Chinese institutions and the significance of the economic reforms for Chinese universities, one could develop a better understanding of the emergence of Chinese academic performance measurements through the perspective of the effects of institutional forces (new institutional theory). In the next section, a review of the historical background pertaining to higher education reform will reveal the dominant institutional forces behind the emergence of a particular type of academic performance measures.

5.3 Introduction to the Emergence and the Content of Academic Performance Measurements

5.3.1 Historical Background – Shift from Political Struggle to Economic Development

In order to understand the state's institutional influence on academic performance measurements in China, the historical background is particularly important. The historical background reveals the shift of the state's working foci – Zhang *et al* (2013) state that "universities are largely a reflection of their times, their environment, and of the power structure of societies within which they are located" (p. 23).

In the late 1970s, after a series of political campaigns (for example, the Cultural Revolution) which were promoted according to the state rhetoric of "serving the people and maintaining the class struggle", China turned into a country in which "agriculture was stagnant, industrial production was low, and the people's living standards has not increased in twenty years" (Nathan, 1990, p. 200). Together with

the death of *Zedong Mao* in 1976, these disappointing factors put the CCP leadership under pressure in terms of the public trust[59] (Meisner, 1986; Shirk, 1993).

In 1978, economic reform became an important way for the CCP to restore people's trust and acceptance and to address the nationwide poverty[60] (for example, Shirk 1993; Solinger, 1993). In December 1978, at the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee of the CCP[61], economic development was prioritised as the national agenda and embedded in political discourse as "Focusing on the central task of economic construction" (Gao, 2012, p. 123). Since then, China began to experience the transition from a socialist-planned economy to a capitalist market-oriented economy.

The changes of the economic context in China since 1949 are listed as follows.

Characteristics of Economy and Polity	Periods
The Centrally Planned Economy	1949-1978
The Planned Commodity Economy	1978-1992
The Socialist Market Economy	1992-2001
The Integrated Global Market Economy	2001-present

Table 5.1 The Changes in the Economic Context in China since 1949

In September 1982 in order to develop the national economy, the Twelfth National Congress of the CCP identified education, together with agriculture, energy, communication, and science, as the strategic priority areas (Cheng, 2006; Wang 2008b). The relationship between education and economic reform was officially made clear in October 1984 in the *Decision on the Reform of China's Economic*

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[59] Besides Mao, nobody else in the CCP had the political capability "to sustain the 'iron-fist' control over the nation" (Zhang, 2012, p. 51; Meisner, 1986).

[60] The annual per-capital net income in rural areas in which 80 percent of population resided was "RMB 133.6 Yuan (about US$ 16.25), or about US$70 in total annual household income (the amount was calculated according to the exchange rate in 2005) (Guthrie, 2006, p. 44).

[61] The Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee of the CCP marked the beginning of the "Reform and Openness" policy. This policy was similar to "Glasnost and Perestroika" in the former USSR. "Reform" refers to, for example, an economic institutional transition from a planned economy to a market economy, separating state-owned enterprises from political bodies and modifying democratic governance. "Openness" refers to the internationalisation of Chinese market and economic activities in terms of trading, making and attracting investments.

Structure at the Third Plenum of the Twelfth Central Committee of the CCP. It stated that –

> "with the reform of the economic system, the systems of science and technology as well as education have become a strategic task that needs to be undertaken urgently" (Ministry of Education, 1998a, p. 29).

With respect to the situation in the higher education sector, there was a rigid pattern derived from the centrally planned economy (Hu, 2008). The main challenges facing the universities in the mid-1980s were –

> "First, on the issue of the educational management, relevant departments of the government over-control the schools, especially the universities and colleges, and make them lose their vigour. Second, on the issue of educational structure, there exists an imbalanced ratio of disciplines, departments and administration levels inside the higher education sector. Third, on the issue of educational ideas, curricula and methods, the content of a great number of courses are out-of-date, the pedagogies are rigid and inflexible; practice is not emphasised; and the setup of specialities is too narrow. As a result, all these problems separate the education from economic and social development to varying degrees, and make education sector lag far behind contemporary sciences and cultures of the world" (Chinese Community Party, 1985, lines 22-29)[62].

In order to ameliorate the problematic situation of the then higher education system, the emphasis on education rather than research had a potent effect in drafting the educational reform document. After a series of investigations, studies and revisions, the *Decision on the Reform of China's Educational Structure* (the *1985 Decision*) was issued in May 1985. The *1985 Decision* guided and regulated higher educational reform, for example, granting more autonomy to universities and adjusting the curriculum and teaching approaches. Together with the recognition of the importance

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[62] The recognition of the problems set the ground for future reform in the higher education sector.

of education for economic development, the development of a particular kind of (social as well as academic) human resource, 人才 (*rencai*[63]), was set out –

> "From now on *rencai* is a decisive factor in the success of all matters. In order to solve the problem of human resources, it is necessary to make a great leap of the educational cause on the basis of economic development…Education must serve the socialist construction, and socialist construction must rely on education. The socialist modernisation requires us to boldly employ and upgrade current *rencai*" (Chinese Communist Party, 1985, lines 3-5).

Rencai, as a catchword, appeared 19 times in the *1985 Decision*. This reveals the official emphasis on developing specialised and talented human resources and their importance for economic development. With respect to the development of *rencai*, academics and academic performance are important to maintain and improve the quality of human resources.

In China, the requirements for academics and their performance are reflected through the state award of professional academic titles; this has undergone significant change through five potential periods[64]. These do not map directly to the changes in economic context in Table 5.1.

First, at the beginning of the foundation of the PRC, there were no clear criteria. The promotion of associate professor and above needed to be approved by the Ministry of Education.

Second, accompanied by the development of the state institutional education structures, in 1960, the Ministry of Education issued interim rules which clarified the

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[63] "*Rencai*, which were to be produced by education, were a kind of human capital that played a significant role in the economic development" – they are specialised and talented human resources (Gao, 2012, p. 130). At an early stage, *rencai* were graduates.

[64] http://www.lun98.com/free_info2.asp?id=1834&cid=153 (In Chinese) accessed on 15th January, 2012.

job titles and promotion criteria. The candidates must be "politically sound"[65] and they were examined by the university council and approved by the Ministry of Education. In this period, there was evidence of the coercive power of the state under an emergent system of regulation.

Third, during the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976, the higher education system was destroyed and the award of professional academic titles was terminated. This period represented a time of "debasement of the intelligentsia" since academics were officially categorised as "class enemies" and "the basic root of evil (in society at the time) was 'knowledge' or 'learning' pursued by intellectuals, who devoted themselves to detached studies and were out of touch with the labouring people" (Yeh, 1989, p. 149). The coercive power of the state resulted in the prosecution of academics and almost all academics were transferred to rural areas to have their thoughts reformed through heavy labour.

Fourth, in March 1978, at the opening ceremony of the National Science and Technology Conference, *Xiaoping Deng*, who was at the centre of the Second CCP leading group and the vice premier of the State Council in charge of science, technology and culture, stated that "science and technology are the primary productive force". At the same conference, *Deng* elevated the socio-political position of intellectuals. In December 1978, renewed respect for intellectuals was officially established at the Third Plenum of the Party's Eleventh Congress. It held that –

> "…intellectuals were not a section of people apart, but were members of the working class, an integral part of the proletariat; they differed from workers and peasants only through the division of labour, though they also work for socialism" (Yeh, 1989, p. 151).

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[65] In china, being politically sound refers to supporting the CCP's leadership, adhering to the principles of the CCP and actively participating in political learning and activities. With respect to the principles of the CCP, they were summarised by *Xiaoping Deng* as the "four cardinal principles" in 1979 – upholding the socialist path, upholding the people's democratic dictatorship, upholding the leadership of the CCP and upholding Marxism-Leninism and Zedong Mao thought. In 1992, the "four cardinal principles" were included in the Constitution of the CCP.

The changed attitudes towards intellectuals resulted in the changes to the criteria underpinning academic grades. In 1978, the National Congress approved a document from the Ministry of Education which concerned the recovery and improvement of academic posts. The document emphasised not only political performance, but also outstanding academic achievements – the expectations on academic achievements became stronger, this could be revealed in the next period.

Fifth, in 1986, interim rules and regulations [66] on teaching grades [67] in higher educational institutions were developed by the Ministry of Education and issued by the Central Professional Titles Reform Work Leading Group. The interim rules determined the job title of each grade (such as, teaching assistant, lecturer, (associate) professor, (associate) researcher), the qualifications of each grade, job description of each grade and promotion criteria. In the promotion criteria, the requirement for "political performance" was gradually replaced by academic achievements. The approval of the promotion of associate professor and above was decentralised from the Ministry of Education to the provincial-level ministries and some universities.

The recognition of academics and academic performance was further confirmed in political discourse in terms of governmental investment in increasing teachers' salaries such that "Governments should shoulder more responsibility for educational investment…per capita public funds for teacher salary…should be increased gradually" (Ministry of Education, 1998b, lines 192-193). The plan to increase teachers' salary was officially recorded in the *2003-2007 Action Plan*[68] (Ministry of Education, 2004, lines 233-235).

The emphasis on economic development and the recognition of the importance of *rencai* for economic development restored the status of academics and prioritised academic performance. Since 1978, the profile of institutional forces had shifted

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[66] Rules are recorded in document, numbered [1986] 11 in Chinese and issued on the 3rd March, 1986. http://www.lun98.com/free_info2.asp?id=1834&cid=153 (In Chinese) accessed on 15th January, 2012.

[67] There are no teaching fellows in Chinese universities. Chinese academics are either at research grades or at teaching grades. Academics at research grades focus on research; those at teaching grades need to teach as well as doing research.

[68] The *2003-2007 Action Plan for Invigorating Education*, 2004.

from the sovereign power of the CCP during the Cultural Revolution to the coercive power of the state under the emergent system of rules and regulations.

Furthermore, on the basis of Burns and Scapens' (2000) summary of the type of change processes – revolutionary vs. evolutionary (see Table 3.4 in Section 3.3.2), at an organisational level (Chinese public universities), the substitution of academics' "political performance" with academic achievements and the emphasis on academic performance could be regarded as revolutionary changes to academic measurement systems. Not only would the existing academic routines change, the then institution in terms of emphasising political performance and teaching would be overshadowed by the attention to academic performance – research outcomes (particularly when accompanied by marketisation mechanisms, see Sections 5.3.2 and 5.4).

With respect to the reasons behind the shifted attention to research performance, it is important to understand the effects of institutional forces in a particular context – the context of a market economy and the global trend of the knowledge economy. In this context, academic performance is recognised in a "marketized" way on the basis of particular "knowledge". This particular context will be discussed in the next section.

5.3.2 Historical Background – A Market Economy and the Knowledge Economy

As early as the 1980s, *Xiaoping Deng*, the then leader of the CCP, claimed that Central Government should increase educational financing to 4% of GDP (Lixu, 2004; Mok and Lo, 2007). This was officially recorded in educational policies for example, the *Decisions of the Party Central Committee and the State Council on Deepening Reform in Education and Developing Quality-oriented Education in an All-round Way* stated that –

> "Taking effective and practical measures to increase input in education, the goal that government expenditure on education accounts for 4% of the GNP shall be gradually reached…The central authorities have decided to increase the proportion of education in government expenditure by 1% every year

during the five-year period from 1998 to 2002" (Ministry of Education, 2000c, pp. 49-50).

However, this target was not achieved until in 2012. The following table lists the proportion of GDP spent on public education between 1992 and 2012. In the arena of higher education, the actual governmental support declined. Table 5.2 was constructed through the author's painstaking analysis of government data. (N/A indicated data that was not available).

Year	Government Spending for Education (A)	A as % of GDP	Government Spending for Education in HEIs[69] (B)	B as % of A	B as % of Education Funding in HEIs
1992	72.88	2.99	N/A	N/A	N/A
1993	86.78	2.54	N/A	N/A	93.50
1994	117.47	2.52	N/A	N/A	N/A
1995	141.15	2.41	N/A	N/A	N/A
1996	167.17	2.44	26.26 (23.00)	15.71 (13.76)	80.34 (70.37)
1997	186.25	2.49	30.57 (26.44)	16.41 (14.20)	78.30 (67.72)
1998	203.25	2.55	35.68 (33.51)	17.55 (16.49)	64.94 (61.00)
1999	228.72	2.79	44.32 (42.26)	19.38 (18.48)	62.53 (59.63)
2000	256.26	2.87	53.12 (50.44)	20.73 (19.68)	58.16 (55.23)
2001	305.70	3.19	63.28 (60.61)	20.70 (19.83)	54.24 (51.95)
2002	349.14	3.32	75.21 (72.43)	21.54 (20.75)	50.55 (48.68)
2003	385.06	3.28	84.06 (80.74)	21.83 (20.97)	47.91 (46.02)
2004	446.59	2.79	96.98 (93.10)	21.72 (20.85)	45.54 (43.71)
2005	516.11	2.81	109.08	21.14	42.77
2006	634.84	3.01	125.96	19.84	48.96
2007	828.02	3.22	159.83	19.30	50.60
2008	1044.96	3.33	N/A	N/A	N/A
2009	1223.11	3.59	N/A	N/A	N/A
2010	1467.01	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2011	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2012	1467.01	4	296.53	20.21	N/A

Table 5.2 Proportion of GDP on Public Education Expenditure and Government Appropriation for Education Funding in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) (in 10,000 CNY)[70]

Even though it was claimed that higher education was significant to economic development and it is apparent in Table 5.2 that total government funding for higher

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[69] Government Appropriation for Education in HEIs comprises budgetary and non-budgetary categories. The former mainly includes appropriated funds for education, for research, for capital construction; the latter includes taxes and fees collected by governments at all levels that are used for education purposes; education funding for enterprise-run schools; income from school-run enterprises, work-study programme and social services used for education purposes (Johnes and Yu, 2008). The budgetary data are listed in the brackets in Table 5.2.

[70]Data source: Chen (2006); China Statistical Year Book 1997-2006; Johnes and Yu (2008); Zhu (2011) and China Education and Research Network. The average rate for CNY to GBP from 2010 to 2013 is 0.10. The one tenth of the listed amount is equals to due GBP.

educational institutions has been increasing in recent years, the percentage derived from government support has been gradually decreasing from over 90% in 1993 to slightly over 50% in 2007[71] (Chen, 2006; Johnes and Yu, 2008).

The decreased proportion of government spending is the effect (and the strategy) of the introduction of market forces into higher education. Along with the introduction of a market economy in 1992, in response to the reduced governmental support, higher educational institutions were authorised to seek other sources of funding to support their operations, for example, expanding enrolment, charging tuition fees and offering industrial and professional training. In addition, in adherence to the guideline that "science and technology constitute a primary productive force" (the *1993 Outline*, line 84), universities were authorised to generate income from, for example, establishing "science parks", encouraging academics to market their research findings (the *21st Century Programme*[72], 1998b) and providing technological consultation services (the *1993 Outline*, 1993; the *Eleventh 5-Year Plan*[73], 2007d).

The above practices animate and promote "marketable" research; and they authorise and encourage the marketisation of universities. The products of their research are "sold" to companies (including private companies, the (partly) state-owned companies and university enterprises). They reflect the Central Government's understanding of "knowledge". Similar to *Xiaoping Deng*'s slogan – "science and technology are the primary productive force", knowledge is specified as the "driver of productivity and economic growth, leading to a new focus on the role of information, technology and learning in economic performance" (OECD, 1996, P. 3). With respect to the political discourse in China, the recognition of economic growth derived from knowledge was articulated in the *21st Century Programme* –

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[71] The trend toward isomorphism in educational sectors is occurring worldwide (Boli, Ramirez and Meyer, 1985; Schofer and Meyer, 2005). In the UK many universities have very similar proportions of state funding.

[72] The *Programme of Educational Revitalization for the Twenty-first Century*, 1998b.

[73] The *Outline of the Eleventh 5-Year Plan for the Development of Nation-wide Education Cause*, 2007d.

"In the forthcoming twenty-first century, a knowledge economy with high technologies as its core will occupy a predominant position. National power and international competitiveness will depend more on educational development, sciences and technology as well as knowledge innovation" (Ministry of Education, 1998b, lines 5-6).

In spite of overall decreases in government expenditure, certain areas received more funding. Under the *21st Century Programme* (1998b), ten thousand star teachers[74] were selected on the basis of their academic (research) performance and supported by scientific research funding to enhance their research capacity (Gao, 2012). The targeting of funding was further reflected through the launch of two national educational projects (Projects 211 and 985) aimed at improving research capacities. These will be discussed in Section 5.4.1. In the context of a market economy, in which "resources should be allocated to the most efficient arenas" (this was explicitly stated at the Fourteenth National Congress of the CCP in October 1992), the selective investment in improving research capacity reflects the political concern regarding advanced research outcomes (Xu and Sheng, 2005).

From another perspective, the selective investment could be understood as aiming to improve the quality of education as a way of improving the quality of academics. However, with respect to a number of polices[75] and awards schemes[76] established to maintain the quality of teaching and to encourage high-level teaching practice, the emphasis on education was not reflected in governmental expenditure. Moreover, for universities, there is no direct relationship between teaching performance and

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[74] In China, "teacher" is the general term of staff working in schools. In particular, it refers to academics who are at teaching grades – teaching as well as doing research.

[75] For example, *the Plan for Teaching Content and Curriculum Reform in Higher Education for the 21st Century*, 1994; *the New-Century Teaching Reform Project in Higher Education Institutions*, 2000; *the Proposals on Strengthening Undergraduate Teaching and Improving the Quality of Student Training in Higher Education Institutions*, 2001; *the Evaluation Plan for Undergraduate Teaching Quality in Higher Education Institutions (Experimental)*, 2002 and *the Project on Teaching Quality and Teaching Reform in Institutions of Higher Education*, 2003. (Wang, 2008).

[76] For example, *the Award for Achievement in Higher Education Teaching*, 1989; *the Regulations on Award for Achievement in Higher Education Teaching*, 1994 and *the Award for Excellence in Teaching for University Teachers*, 2003. (Wang, 2008)

government funding (Wang, 2008). In other words, the practices concerning the improvement of teaching are "ceremonial".

The preceding review of the political discourses revealed the direct governmental control through their targeting of funding and the state's indirect control in terms of authorising universities to market their research outcomes while at the same time cutting their funding. In effect, the state is forcing universities to marketize. Chinese universities are more dependent on state funding because education systems in China are under central control. Within marketized academic institutions, the policies pertaining to the commercialisation of research outcomes and the support for teachers' research capacity demonstrate mimetic isomorphism to broader market institutions – investing in people who can generate saleable research and making profit from this research. The official recognition of "knowledge" seemed to focus on "advanced research" reflected through the selective investment in improving selected academics' research capacities. From the perspective of the emphasis on developing the specialised and talented human resources (*rencai*), government funding directly benefited academics in terms of equipping them with the capacities to carry out advanced research; and indirectly related to the development of quality graduates – teaching performance was ignored. From the perspective of the philosophy – "resources should be allocated to the most efficient arenas", in addition to undertaking more infrastructure construction and improving research facilities, an important part of the "repayment" for government funding is published research (Johnes and Yu, 2008; Lixu, 2004; Zhang *et al*., 2013). Academic performance measurements could be understood as ex-post mechanisms[77] to monitor government funding of research.

In the Chinese context of the knowledge economy, investment decisions are based on the preference for particular performance. The metrics of academic performance will be introduced in the next section. In order to maintain academic performance, market

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[77] Academic performance measures are also ex-ante practices since government funding of research is allocated on the basis of particular research performance. The significance of particular research outcomes will be included in Sections 5.3.3 and 5.4.

mechanisms related to academics in terms of competition and incentives will be introduced in Sections 5.4.2 and 5.4.3.

5.3.3 The Metrics of Academic Performance

Even though teaching and research are the two main academic activities, on the basis of the preceding discussion, academic performance in this section refers to research performance.

After the Cultural Revolution, the evaluation of research achievements was a problem since there were no "objective" evaluation criteria or possibility of carrying out peer review in the "immature" field of Chinese academia. The lack of established assessment mechanisms and the recognition of the importance of advanced research reinforced the role of normative and cultural-cognitive forces through normative and mimetic isomorphic mechanisms. The institutional pressure of these forces on research performance measures was reflected through the adoption of a particular index – the Science Citation Index (SCI).

In the late 1980s, the Science Citation Index (SCI) was introduced by Nanjing University in China for the first time as a means to evaluate research outcomes[78][79].

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[78] Research Outcomes Evaluation: the Success and Failure of SCI. http://news.sciencenet.cn/htmlnews/2008/12/214507.html (in Chinese), accessed on 20th Dec, 2010. The original report was adapted for illustrative purpose. Introduction to the then President of Nanjing University, Mr. Qinyue Qu. http://baike.baidu.com/view/116076.htm (in Chinese), accessed on 5th Mar, 2014. The original texts were adapted for illustrative purpose.

[79] Nanjing University was one of the best universities in China. But in 1984, it was not included in the state HEIs development plan aiming to construct the best universities in China. In order to improve its capacity and impress the government, the then president Mr. Qinyue Qu formulated a development project. The adoption of SCI might be part of the project.
Since 1989, Nanjing University has become one of the "top 4" universities in China in terms of indexed published papers. Particularly, from 1992 to the end of 1998, Nanjing University has been the "top one" university in terms of SCI papers. In addition to the short of established assessment mechanisms, the outstanding (SCI) performance might be the reason behind the adoption of SCI - SCI was selected because research in Nanjing University was recognized by SCI.
Mr. Qinyue Qu, the then president (1984-1997) of Nanjing University was the member of the state academic degrees committee. He was elected as an academician at the age of 45 and was one of the youngest academicians. He was elected as a deputy to the National People's Congress since 1987.
Mr. Qu had close connections to some universities in the States. He was made a freeman of the city of Baltimore and he was named Honorary Doctors by two universities in the US. He was also as the leader of Sino US University Presidents Forum for three times (1985-1988). The familiarity with the American universities might also explain his introduction of SCI to Nanjing University.

DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) arguments about institutional isomorphism are apposite for the understanding of the adoption of SCI in Chinese academic institutions. They suggested that "the greater the reliance on academic credentials in choosing managerial and staff personnel, the greater the extent to which an organization will become like other organizations in its field" (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983, p. 155).

Accompanied by the renewed respect for intellectuals and the emphasis on research performance, academics have become subject to more rigid performance requirements. The adoption of SCI in Nanjing University could be understood as the result of normative and mimetic isomorphism. Firstly, SCI represents a seemingly objective and independent assessment of research outcomes – research published in SCI journals is deemed to be of a certain standard. Secondly, SCI was developed and adopted in some advanced western countries; the advent and the adoption of SCI are deemed to be a symbol of advanced research in the West. The adoption of SCI, on the one hand, represented the adoption of a norm (means) by which research performance could be evaluated; on the other hand, it symbolised advanced research. The advent of the Chinese Social Science Citation Index (CSSCI) could be understood as the result of normative and mimetic isomorphism – it suggested that China had begun to copy Western styles of evaluating research in the Chinese language.

After the adoption of SCI by Nanjing University, SCI was soon accepted by universities and scientific research institutions as the most important tool to evaluate and represent research outcomes. This extensive acceptance and adoption of SCI in Chinese academia could also be understood through DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) argument that "the fewer the number of visible alternative organisational models in a field, the faster the rate of isomorphism in that field" and "the greater the extent of structuration of a field, the greater the degree of isomorphics" (pp. 155-156). At that time, there were no other available or appropriate research assessment tools other than the SCI; in addition, as set out in Section 5.2, the organisational structures of Chinese public universities and scientific research institutions are identical and they are all financed and guided by the same ministries. The lack of proper assessment

tools and the similar organisational structures and dependence on governmental support could explain the acceptance of SCI.

However, when considering the relationship between public universities and the government, it is important to consider the role played by the state in the adoption of SCI[80]. Particularly, SCI has been officially adopted by the state in the application criteria for national research projects and the award criteria of outstanding research as a representation of research quality.

For example, the research outcomes used to award the National prizes in natural sciences[81] are measured through published papers and their citations, as illustrated in Table 5.3; the papers containing significant research outcomes need to set out specific citation metrics, as set out in Table 5.4.

Sequence Number	Paper/ Journal/ Author	Impact Factor	Volume & Page	Publish Time	Corresponding author/ First author	SCI citation counts (exclude self-citation)	Total citation counts (exclude self-citation)	Whether finished within China

Table 5.3 The Required Research Outcomes

Sequence Number	Cited paper (monograph)/ Journal/ Author	Citing paper/ Journal/ Author	Citing journal/ Impact factor	Publish time of citing paper

Table 5.4 The Citation Status of Significant Paper (Including Monographs)

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[80] For illustrative purposes, SCI is exemplified to represent similar citation index, for example, EI and SSCI; SCI would be a representative of these citation index in the following sections.

[81] This prize is one of the most important research rewards in China. It focuses on the significant discovery in elucidating natural phenomena.

Drawing upon Burns and Scapens' (2000) three different types of change processes (see Section 3.3.2), at the practical level, the early adoption of SCI in Nanjing University could be regarded as an informal change to the existing measurement routines. This "bottom-up" changing mode shaped the formal change process since SCI was not only adopted extensively among Chinese universities and research institutions, it was also adopted in official regulations (see Tables 5.3 and 5.4). The dominant ideology of pursuing advanced research outcomes and the lack of established measurement schemes [82] were the rationales behind the extensive adoption of SCI.

Returning to the role played by the coercive force of the state in the adoption of SCI – even though the adoption of SCI in China could be understood as mimetic and normative isomorphism; the mimetic and normative isomorphism occurs in the context in which political power "counts". The extensive adoption of SCI in the official evaluation mechanisms was indicative of the significance of government power through the regulative institutional forces. Oakes *et al*. (1998) following Meyer and Rowan noted that "the adoption of external assessment criteria and employing external criteria of worth are some of the features of isomorphism, which produces legitimacy" (Meyer and Rowan, 1991, cited in Oakes *et al*., 1998, p. 278). From the perspective of the process of institutionalisation, the extensive adoption of SCI among universities and the inclusion of SCI in official documents marked an institutionalised way to evaluate research – "new ways of doing things may become accepted to the point of being taken-for-granted" (Zhang *et al*., 2013, p. 22).

This process of institutionalisation in Chinese academia in terms of research measures lends support to the contentions in prior studies that the whole process is shaped by the prevailing institutions (Burns and Scapens, 2000). From the perspective of developing the knowledge economy, SCI and quantified metrics serve as a simplified representation of advanced productive forces. From the perspective of

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[82] According to Table 3.4, the requirements for the success in implementing changes are the new ways of thinking and sufficient power of those responsible for implementing the new rules. On an organisational and an organisational field level, these two requirements could be satisfied due to the features of Chinese institutional environment – the CCP has the power to tune the ways of thinking and to implement changes.

pursuing economic development, SCI implicates/echoes the pursuit of quantifiable performance.

The system of SCI and quantified metrics makes elite universities to maintain their position. The role played by the number of SCI journal publications [83] is important for a whole university and individual academics. For example, academic titles, research projects and rewards are closely related to the performance represented through SCI. The importance of SCI is indicated in the following cycle in Figure 5.2.
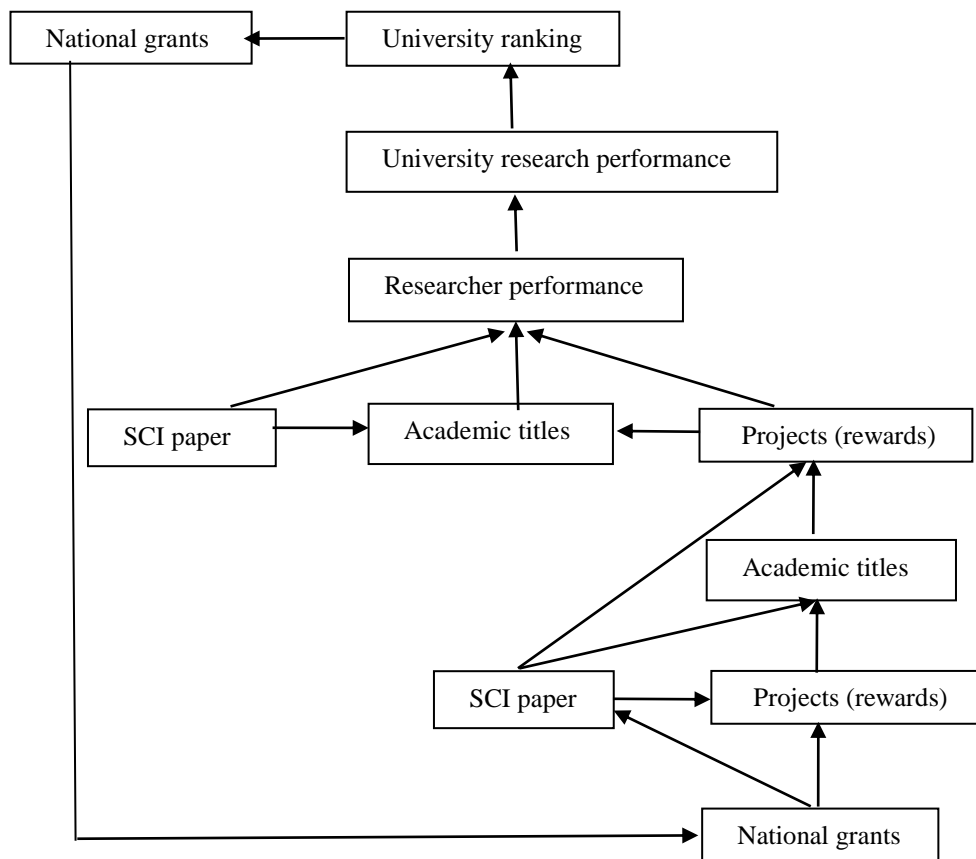
Figure 5.2 Virtuous Cycle

In the context of pursuing quantifiable performance measures and emphasising research outcomes, the extensive adoption of SCI reflects the political performance

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[83] For simplicity purposes, the author uses SCI to represent other bibliometric indicators, such as impact factor, number of papers accepted by other databases.

anxiety of the administrators in the universities – they are eager to make a stand to respond to the state and show the achievements in their official careers. From a new institutional perspective, for administrators, the adoption of SCI could be understood as a decoupled practice – it is merely a form of ceremonial behaviour through which to display their favourable and successful responses to the state requirements[84]. Accompanied by the extensive adoption of SCI, there is growing criticism of these quantified academic performance measurements. On the one hand, the adoption of SCI was criticised for encouraging academics to pursue the quantity of research outcomes; on the other hand, the merit pay plan on the basis of SCI performance was criticised in its consequences in terms of the lack of the concern about teaching. These impacts of SCI give rise to discussions concerning the administration in higher educational institutions. As explained in Section 5.2, the supreme power in public universities belongs to the Party Committee at the university level. This power includes personnel appointments especially management positions and promotions. In the current political structure, the lack of understanding of SCI among administrators is one reason for the undermining of academic performance. Improving the professionalism of the Party members or absorbing professionals into the Party Committee may serve to improve academic performance measurements. However, in line with the discussion concerning administrators' eagerness to display their favourable responses to the state requirements (political performance anxiety), a more tempered attitude towards research and quantifiable performance may be more critical in ameliorating the situation. Nevertheless, the launch of two national educational projects reveals the state's recognition of advanced research outcomes through making selective investment in some universities. This will be discussed in the next section.

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[84] From the perspective of "having little material impact", the adoption of SCI was a "decoupled" practice for administrator. For academics, the adoption of SCI could have material impact on their research.

5.4 The Implementation of Academic Performance Measurement

5.4.1 Introduction to the Two National Educational Projects

As early as 1978, *Xiaoping Deng*'s slogan "science and technology are the primary productive force" revealed the official emphasis on the importance of advanced science and technology for the first time. In the context of the knowledge economy (that the state power and competitiveness are largely determined by advanced science, technology and knowledge innovation), the CCP leaders, who were typically from engineering and science backgrounds, accepted the premise that the "national innovation system must begin producing global-class science and technology as the foundation for long-term economic development" (Zhang *et al*., 2013, p. 766). Due to the need to improve Chinese technological expertise and the limited innovative capacity of Chinese firms, some universities were selected to be equipped by governmental funding in the form of Projects 211 and 985 to address practical problems and to lead advanced research (Fischer and Von Zedtwitz, 2004; Hong, 2006 and 2008; Wu, 2007; Orcutt and Shen, 2010; Zhang *et al*., 2013). For the Chinese public, Projects 211 and 985 were based on the strategy of "revitalizing China through science and education".

Project 211 was entitled the "High-level Universities and Key Disciplinary Fields" project[85]. Its aim was to improve the quality of education, research and management in the chosen universities[86] and to make them into world-class universities in the early 21st century. Funds were issued by the relevant Central Government ministries and provincial governments to improve the infrastructure and teaching and research facilities[87].

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[85] Please refer to "211 Project" Overall Developing Plan for further information (Ministry of Education and Ministry of Finance, 1995).

[86] Project 211 included 118 universities.

[87] During the time period from 1995 to 2005, the project funds were 36.8 billion RMB in total, 45% of which was used on key disciplines, the remaining 55% was used on infrastructure construction. The

In the context of a market economy, in addition to marketizing academic outcomes, the launch of Project 211 strengthened other market mechanisms among Chinese universities, for example, "resources should be allocated to the most efficient arenas" and funding was competitive. Universities were "assessed by quantifiable, objective criteria on staffing, buildings, libraries, laboratories, research, funds, etc. to determine whether they are 'qualified' to be included as top institutions…the selected universities will attract more funding from the central government" (Mok, 2000, p. 119). In addition to the implication of marketization, one could argue that the feature of Scientific Management – the standardisation of research performance – determining research "quality" on the basis of quantitative performance had been strengthened through Project 211.

Project 211 was claimed to be the most significant educational project since the foundation of PRC and aimed to "improve teaching, learning and research" (Ma, 2007, p. 33). Even though part of the funding was spent on improving teaching and study facilities, the returns on the expenditure mainly focused on research performance, for example, the publication of SCI papers (see for example, Lixu, 2004; Zhang *et al.*, 2013).

Research performance was further emphasised in the next government reform. In addition to funding academics to improve their research capacities (see Section 5.3.2), in response to the *21st Century Programme* (1998b), a more thorough reform than Project 211 was officially initiated in 2000 – Project 985.

The purpose of Project 985[88] was to "to improve the global standing of a select group of Chinese universities" (Zhang *et al.*, 2013, p. 765). The major task of Project 985 was specified in the *2003-2007 Action Plan* (2004) – to build world-renowned high-level research universities (Ministry of Education, 2004). In order to realise this

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average rate for CNY (RMB) to GBP from 1995 to 2005 is 0.076 GBP; and 36.8billion RMB is equal to 2.80 billion GBP.

[88] The program was proposed on 4th May, 1998 by then President *Zemin Jiang* at the Centenary Celebration of Peking University that "China must have a number of first-rate universities of international advanced level" (Lixu, 2004, p. 17).

purpose, Project 985 was initiated by a huge transfer of funds[89] to strengthen the research capacities of selected universities in terms of developing new research centres, improving facilities and improving academic exchanges (Jonkers, 2011).

In addition to improving teaching and research facilities, the launch of Projects 211 and 985 helped to set out official expectations of Chinese academia in the way of implementing the requirements for academic performance. As early as 1985, the Ministry of Education made plans to end lifetime academic tenure and introduced a merit pay scheme (González *et al*., 2012). However, there were no new clear guidelines until the *1993 Outline* which changed lifelong tenure to a contractual employment system in which academics had to compete with each other for jobs. Thereafter, a series of revolutionary practices were introduced to assess academics' performance and to motivate academics to improve their performance. For example, in 1999, the Ministry of Education explicitly required Chinese higher educational institutions to implement contractual and merit pay schemes (Mohrman *et al*., 2011); The *Outline of State Plans for Medium and Long-term Reform and Development of Education* (2010) (the *Medium and Long-term*) proposed the use of "performance evaluation" and "incentive mechanisms" to assess academic performance and reward academics who achieved better performance. Even though most of higher educational institutions took a "wait-and-see" attitude towards these mechanisms; universities involved with Projects 211 and 985 actively responded to the requirements (Lixu, 2004). On the one hand, their active responses may reflect their closer relationships to Central Government in terms of receiving government grants; on the other hand, these universities could have benefited from these requirements in terms of encouraging academics to have better research outcomes.

From economic and institutional perspectives in terms of supplying project-related funds and making changes to assessment and incentive mechanisms, the Central Government was involved in the launch of Projects 211 and 985. The requirements for academic performance were imbedded in these mechanisms and when implemented in universities, these requirements were embedded in the form of

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[89] For example, the top two ranked universities were granted US$225 million each over five years since 2000.

contract-based employment, the promotion criteria and the merit pay plan. Therefore, one could argue that through these two national projects, the state constructed its understanding of outstanding research outcomes. These projects also helped to introduce marketization in the arena of academic management; however, they ignored improvement to the (quality of) teaching[90].

5.4.2 Implications of Two National Educational Projects

In the preceding review, Projects 211 and 985 represented the official emphasis on research outcomes. When considering the impacts of the strengthened expectations on research, Burns and Scapens' (2000) framework might be relevant since it is concerned with the impact of changed rules and routines on institutions and actions.

Project 211 was launched on the basis of the strategy – "revitalizing China through science and education". The shared and taken-for-granted assumptions of academic activities among Project 211 universities should be to research and teach in order to revitalize China. An "academic routine" was developed within Project 211 institutions. Alongside the launch of Project 985 among Project 211 universities, a new rule was set out that the selection of Project 985 universities should be based on their research performance. When this rule was introduced and implemented, new routines may have emerged; for example, with the strong recognition of research performance, academics would be motivated to generate international research performance and their performance would be evaluated accordingly. According to Burns and Scapens (2000) in the process of institutionalisation, new rules and newly developed routines must work with existing routines and so they would be shaped by the existing institutions.

According to Burns and Scapens' (2000) perspective new rules which are consistent with existing routines and institutions would be easier to implement than those which challenge the existing routines and institutions. From a research perspective, Project 985 articulated well with the extant institution with its emphasis on research (and

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[90] Even though the project fund is used to improve teaching and study facilities; the state's emphasis on research (disclosed in various discourses) may have overshadowed academics' perception of teaching.

teaching). For example, the enactment of the emerging routines in terms of motivating and evaluating research outcomes could be reflected through the changes in Chinese research performance – the increases in SCI papers and SCI journals, as indicated in Table 5.5.

The information shown in Tables 5.5 and 5.6 represents the numbers of Chinese articles and journals included in SCI[91] from 1987 to 2011; Figures 5.3 and 5.5 demonstrate these changes; Figure 5.4 demonstrates the SCI performance of Chinese science and technology papers among selective countries.

Year	Number	Year	Number	Year	Number
1987	4,580	1996	14,103	2005	62,422
1988	5,572	1997	15,763	2006	75,725
1989	6,214	1998	17,750	2007	84,938
1990	6,853	1999	20,985	2008	97,780
1991	7,222	2000	24,152	2009	112,893
1992	7,994	2001	28,618	2010	124,671
1993	8,591	2002	32,644	2011	131,610
1994	9,330	2003	39,903		
1995	11,649	2004	50,443		

Table 5.5 Number of Chinese Articles Included in the SCI from 1987 to 2011 (Published in Various Languages, such as English, Chinese, French, German and Japanese)

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[91] Through getting access to the official website of SCI - Web of Knowledge, relevant formats of selection with the sample year 2010 are shown in the Appendix 5.1. Starting from the selection of database, the information of paper and journals are stored under the database of Web of Science and Journal Citation Report respectively.
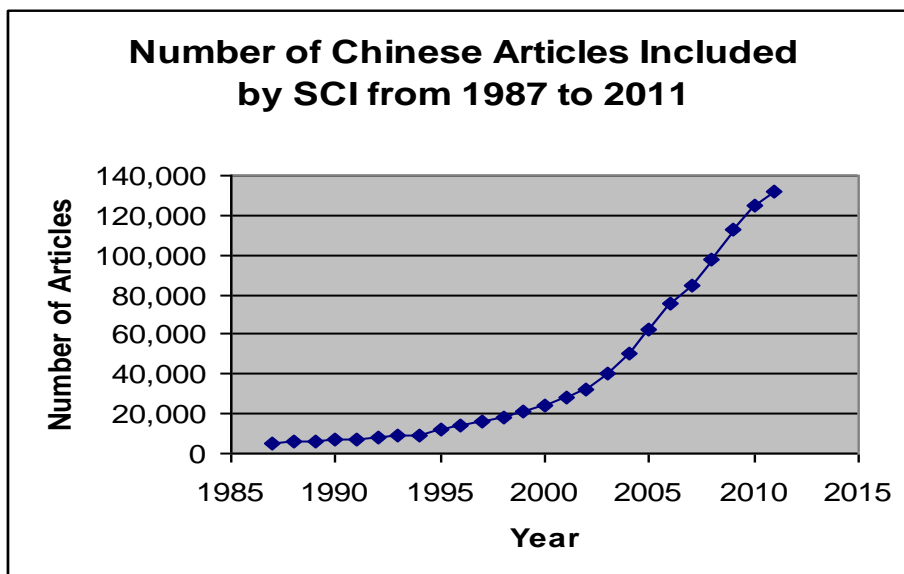
Figure 5.3 Number of Chinese Articles Included in the SCI from 1987 to 2011 (Published in Various Languages, such as English, Chinese, French, German and Japanese)
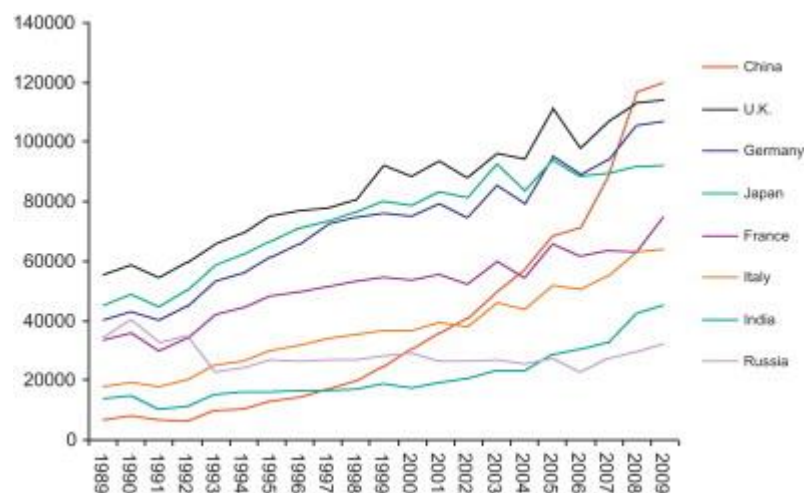
Figure 5.4 Science and technology papers indexed by SCI in selected countries, 1989–2009[92]

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[92] Zhang et al., 2013, p. 767. Source: China Science and Technology Statistics Data Book, 1999–2009. http://www.sts.org.cn/.

Year	No.	Year	No.
1997	20	2004	71
1998	31	2005	75
1999	35	2006	75
2000	47	2007	76
2001	57	2008	81
2002	60	2009	114
2003	67	2010	138

Table 5.6 Number of Chinese Journals included in the SCI from 1997 to 2010
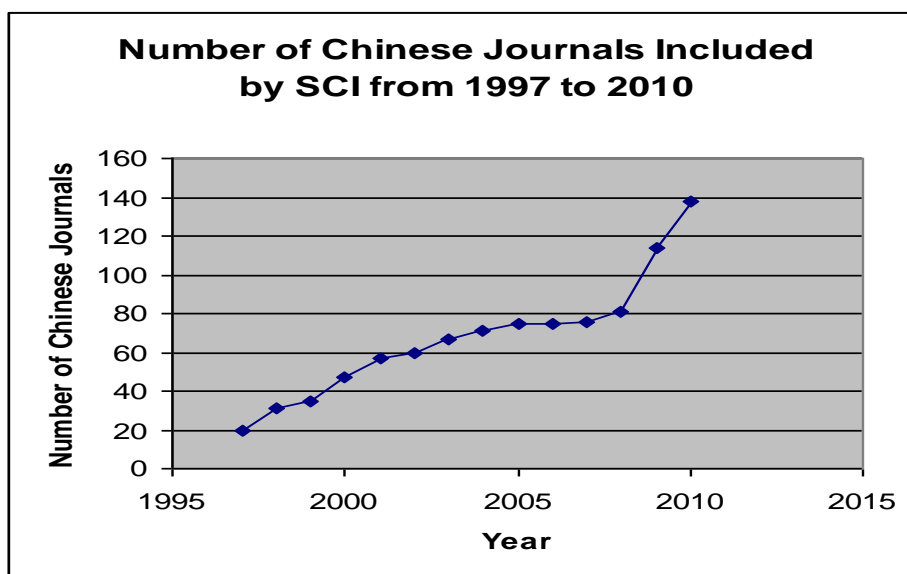
Figure 5.5 Number of Chinese Journals Included in the SCI from 1997 to 2011

The enactment of Project 985 gave rise to a growing criticism of SCI in Chinese society, including academic fraud and the role of universities and academics. Academic fraud could reflect the enactment of routines which emphasises research outcomes. Fraud may be the result of the reproduction of a routine which manipulates SCI to make it appears as if more papers have been published. This reproduced routine might be the reason for the adoption of impact factors to evaluate research outcomes. Impact factors were adopted to counter the impact of a reproduced routine concerned with improving performance metrics – the distortions and unintended consequences for research were addressed. Project 985's emphasis on research outcomes was seemingly accepted without negotiation within the broad

institution (of Project 211) which claimed to "revitalize China through science and education".

According to Burns and Scapens' (2000) perspectives

"In the process of enactment and reproduction of the emerging routines, the intended rules may become modified as acceptable modes of behaviour are negotiated. What is deemed acceptable will be influenced by the meanings and norms embedded in the ongoing routines and also the powers of the individual actors; all of which will be shaped by the existing institutions" (p. 12).

In the case of Project 985, one should reflect upon the existing institution within which the intended rule was implemented. When considering the origins of Project 211 and Project 985, either *Xiaoping Deng*'s slogan, "science and technology are the primary productive force" or the state's strategy of "revitalizing China through science and education" sets out the faith behind the investment in universities such that "the potential of universities to play a central role as dynamos of growth in the innovation process and be huge generators of wealth creation" (Batterham, 2000, cited in Boulton and Lucas, 2011, p. 2509). This faith is also officially disclosed on the website of the Ministry of Education[93].

After the 10-year turmoil of the Cultural Revolution, the improvement in the national economy was a significant task in the context of national poverty. On the one hand, some scholars argued that the emphasis on improving national economy was the way in which the CCP attempted to reconstruct the public trust (for example, Shirk 1993; Solinger, 1993). On the other hand, when considering the reason for the CCP's investment in science and technology, DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) work might be relevant in terms of the impact of vital resources on an organisational field such that "the greater the extent to which an organizational field is dependent upon a single (or several similar) source of support for vital resources, the higher the level of

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[93] "Introduction of Universities' Role in Bolstering up the Economy", http://www.moe.gov.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/moe_2862/200909/52166.html, accessed on 8th Dec 2013.

isomorphism" (p. 155). The development of western countries and their economic superiority were interpreted by the CCP leaders as the result of the development of science and technology, which was generated by investment in scientific research. The desire for "economic capital" makes the CCP leaders focus their attention on the development of science and technology through investing in scientific research. In this respect, in China, the primary aim of scientific research is to benefit society through boosting economic development rather than to satisfy scientific curiosity or to improve the quality of the nation through education.

In the case of Project 985, one could account for the enactment of the rule (which emphasises scientific research) and the reproduction of a routine (increasing research outcomes through taking advantage of SCI) on the basis of Meyer and Rowan's (1977) argument concerning the loose coupling between legitimated external practices and internal organisational behaviour – the emphasis on research outcomes was reproduced as an increased amount of research outcomes. Even though DiMaggio and Powell (1983) claim to have a different perspective from Meyer and Rowan's (1977) in that they expect organisational stability to result from the co-operation between internal changes and ceremonial practices; while Meyer and Rowan (1977) argue that loosely coupled organisations are likely to vary internally – the case of Project 985 might be resonant with DiMaggio and Powell (1983) since the new rules were introduced in certain public universities within the broader extant Chinese institution (emphasising research).

Specifically, both the broader extant institution and the new rules can be seen in the desire for particular "quantitative" research performance (for example, SCI papers). The broader institution was concerned with the repayment of scientific research in the form of economic improvement; the new rules were concerned with quantitative research performance. As set out in Section 5.3.3, the adoption of quantitative performance measurements (underpinned by "political performance anxiety"), realise the embedment of the new rules within the existing institution. In summary, the preceding discussion about the broader institution of Chinese academia not only explains the lack of the concern for education; it also explains the origins of the pursuit of quantitative performance.

Returning to Burns and Scapens' (2000) argument that "What is deemed acceptable will be influenced by the meanings and norms embedded in the ongoing routines and also the powers of the individual actors; all of which will be shaped by the existing institutions" (p. 12), the preceding discussion was carried out from a macro perspective in terms of the impact of the existing institution on the acceptance of new rules; the next section focuses on the interaction between individual actors and the new rules.

In Burns and Scapens' (2000) framework, the individual actors may refer to a significant person or a powerful group who could have been very influential in the process of the enactment of the new rule. This perspective could underpin the impact of administrators' political performance anxiety on the institutionalisation of academic performance measurements in universities. However, in this research, one should pay closer attention on academics. On the one hand, they are subject to the requirements for research and they are at the centre of the "conflicted interests" between the emphasis on teaching and research. On the other hand, under the assessment and incentive mechanisms, they may be influenced by and influential in the enactment of the new rule.

The next section will introduce the implementation of a specific form of academic performance measurements in a key university. The next section will also develop an understanding of how performance measurements and academics interact through analysing the implementation of the measurement system.

5.4.3 Implementation of Performance Measurement on a Micro-Level

This section is concerned with a specific form of academic performance measurement – the promotion criteria in a key university. In order to understand the significance of the promotion criteria, this section will introduce relevant motivation rules to enrich the understanding of the context of the promotion criteria. One could understand the extent to which the promotion criteria were designed on the basis of the political institutions through analysing the metrics of the promotion criteria. The

lens of old institutional theory will help to frame the promotion criteria as a rule and routine which both influences and is influenced by academics.

The official website states that the case university is "A key multidisciplinary and research-oriented university directly under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education". The university, entitled with Projects 211 and 985, receives government grants to develop its research capacity. The products of the newly developed research capacity are outstanding research outcomes (for example, indexed published papers) – the emphasis on these research outcomes is highlighted in its official introduction on its official website.

In order to represent its status as a university entitled with Projects 211 and 985, the official introduction highlighted the number of research centers and its involvement in academic exchange activities. In addition to general information, for example, its history, physical capacity, disciplines and the number of academics and students, the longest paragraph of its introductory webpage sets out its research performance in terms of the ranking and number of SCI papers benchmarked against other Chinese universities, the number of projects, prizes and the number of experts.

Interestingly, the longest paragraph began with a sentence which stated that the university was "the center for both education and academic research". However, the introduction to teaching and education was set out in the next paragraph and merely introduced the educational philosophy, teaching guidelines and the curriculum. When compared to the quantified information about research outcomes, the introduction to teaching and education was highly descriptive.

Universities which qualified for Project 985 were encouraged to establish relevant motivation and measurement mechanisms to improve research capacity in terms of motivating, attracting and measuring outstanding academics.

Generally speaking, universities with research-excellent academics could be recognised by the Central Government through granting particular titles, such as Project 211 and Project 985, and governmental funds. The universities awarded with

such projects would find it easier to attract high quality academics due to the abundant government funds.

Specifically, in the case university there was a rule that when an academic or an academic group received a research grant, some university and departmental sections would collect a particular percent of the research grant as a management fee. Thus, the university could have benefited in terms of both fame and wealth from the research projects.

Academic rewards for significant research outcomes began in the case university as early as 2003. Outstanding research performance was defined as, for example, as having a paper published in the journal of Nature and Science, the number of SCI papers in the top 10 ranked journals, or the number of citations in the top 10 journals. Academics would receive significant economic rewards[94] for the accomplishment of outstanding research.

In 2011, the university started to implement a performance-related pay (merit pay) scheme[95]. Performance-related pay could be seen as a "motivation tool (or rule)"; the differences between grades resulted from different academic performance in teaching and research. For example, an academic at academic grade 1 earns 20 times an academic at academic grade C3.

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[94] For example, the rewards for the papers published by the journals of Nature, Science or Cell and top journal paper were 100,000 and 20,000 RMB; which were approximately 20 and 5 times of a professor's monthly salary.

[95] Previous salary policy can be found in Appendix 5.2. The author takes a sample pay slip as an example to demonstrate the relationship between the amount of salary and the professional position.

Academic Title	Academic Grade	Performance-related Salary	Change in %
Chair Professor	1	20	19.8
	2	16.7	67
	3	10	78.6
Professor	A1	5.6	17.2
	A2	4.7	20.5
	A3	3.9	14.7
	A4	3.4	13.3
Associate Professor	B1	3.0	20
	B2	2.5	19
	B3	2.1	23.5
	B4	1.7	24.1
Lecturer	C1	1.4	16.7
	C2	1.2	20
	C3	1	0

Table 5.7 Performance-related Salary[96]
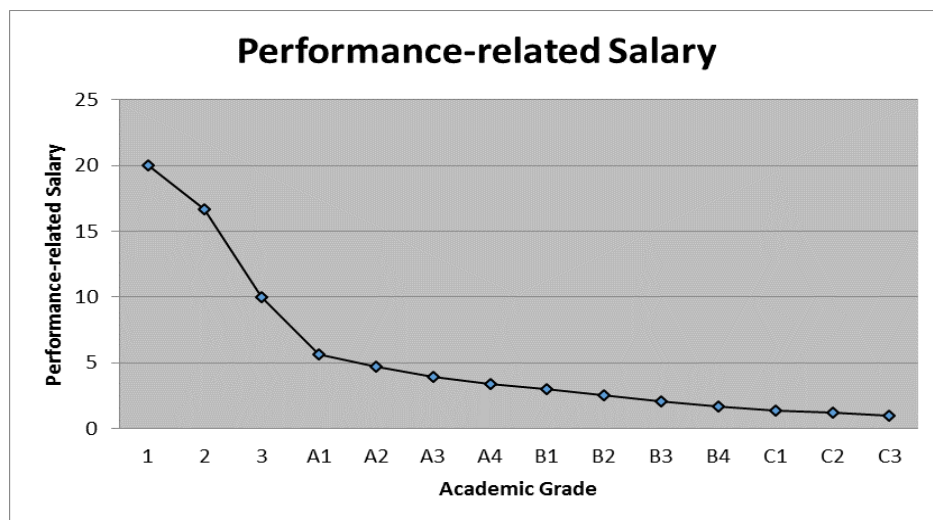
Figure 5.6 Performance-related Salary

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[96] Junior lecturers' salary at grade C3 is taken as a datum point.
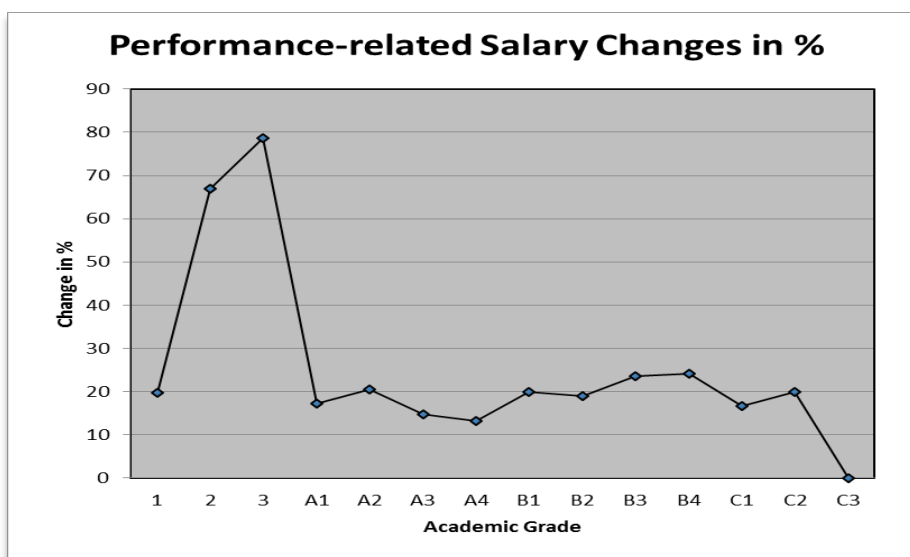
Figure 5.7 Performance-related Salary Changes in %

Chair professors were selected from professors. The selection criteria were largely based on research performance. The teaching performance requirements (in the form of being entitled with "outstanding teacher" and publishing teaching-related articles and monographs) were a small proportion of the selection criteria. In effect, Chair Professors were selected on the basis of their research performance.

In 2012, due to his uncompetitive and inconsistent research performance, a mathematics professor was downgraded from Grade A to B; due to the same reason, there were approximately 40 Chair Professors downgraded to Grade A. Performance-related salary represents the level of research performance; and the huge differences between different grades "price" the different level of research performance. The merit pay scheme introduces marketization in terms of the pricing of academics on the basis of their research performance.

Even though performance-related salary was originally set up to corresponding to academic titles, it was highly related to academics' research performance; this gave rise to a question concerning the role of teaching performance in academic

evaluation. In order to address this question, one should consider the promotion criteria for teaching and research[97].

Meyer and Rowan (1991) note that in "institutionally elaborated environments, sagacious conformity is required: Leadership (in a university, hospital, business) requires an understanding of changing fashions and governmental programs" (p. 53). On the basis of the preceding introduction to the case study university (as a university entitled with Projects 211 and 985), the promotion criteria could reflect the "sagacious conformity" since it was officially argued that the aims of the promotion criteria were to regulate the measurement mechanisms, strengthen the management control systems and encourage academics to improve their academic (research) level. The promotion criteria could be regarded as institutional rules (Project 985).

The relevant promotion criteria, the promotion application form and the promotion application procedures can be found in Appendices 5.3, 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6. Even though the criteria include requirements in terms of teaching and research performances, when compared to the clear and numerical requirements for research performance, the requirements for teaching are really job descriptions.

The remainder of this section will analyse the implementation of the promotion criteria, in particular the requirements for teaching performance through Burns and Scapens' (2000) framework. The emerging routines developed from the rules are central to understanding the specific impacts of the emphasis on teaching performance in Chinese universities.

The requirements for teaching performance in the promotion criteria were composed of two parts. One part was concerned with the quality of teaching, which was evaluated on the basis of students' feedback and university teaching appraisal results. The second was concerned with academics' workload.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the use of students' feedback and teaching appraisal results was really just a formality and the results were only used as

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[97] In the case university, the criteria of academic appraisal are the same as the promotion criteria.

references. In other words, they were merely ceremonial practices. As long as academics were allocated courses, it was very unlikely to find unsatisfactory results. In short, it is highly unlikely for any academics to fail in their quest for promotion due to unsatisfactory teaching quality.

When considering the workload, for example, for those who are applying for the positions of professor and associate professor, applicants must have been taking one 70-hour undergraduate course or at least two 40-hour courses. This workload might appear to be heavy but the requirement was met as long as academics' took their allocated courses. In addition, the supervision of graduate theses was included in workload; for senior academics busy with research, it was common for them to use supervision time to meet the requirements of teaching hours. And, in some official regulations, (for example, the first official requirements for teaching issued in 1995), teaching workloads were negotiable if academics were undertaking significant research projects. So it would be highly unlikely for academics to fail the promotion criteria due to their teaching workloads.

One could conclude that the requirements for teaching are less onerous than for research; the use of teaching hours in the promotion criteria reveals more about the status of teaching.

Seen through Burns and Scapens' (2000) framework, the requirements for concerning the teaching workload began in 1995 as a new rule. Accompanied by this rule, new routines would emerge – actual procedures would be developed and reproduced by the various people involved. In order to understand the development of the new routines, one should consider the extant institution and routines and the way in which the new rules were introduced.

In China, one of the taken-for-granted assumptions about universities was that they should impart knowledge and educate people. Prior to the implementation of the first promotion criteria in the case university, the requirements for teaching and research were not regulated. In this context, the emerging routines might be easily developed alongside the new rules because the existing routines were not firmly constructed. A

'teaching conversion ratio' emerged as a new routine in response to the new rules which not only regulated the performance of teaching and research, but also reflect different attitudes towards teaching and research.

The teaching conversion ratio was generated because some academics were busy with research. The ratio worked as a way of converting different levels of research projects into a certain amounts of teaching hours. For example, a provincial project could be converted into 20 teaching hours.

However, according to Burns and Scapens' (2000) framework, the new rules and the emerging routines were both subject to the existing institution. Here, an important question would be how could rules and routines that seemed to compromise teaching have become embedded within a university whose activities were believed to be imparting knowledge and educating people. The university was subject to the Central Government pressure and so was embedded in a broader existing institution. The construction of the new rules was intended to echo and comply with the government's emphasis on research. This emphasis was amplified by the allocation of state funds towards research performance.

Nevertheless, the emerging routine (the teaching conversion ratio) is still subject to the extant organisational institutional belief about imparting knowledge and educating people – in other words, teaching is a widely recognised important activity. According to anecdotal evidence, the enactment of the emerging routines gave rise to a reproduced routine – some academics snubbed teaching. Under this circumstance, the weight of particular projects in the teaching conversion ratio might be decreased from 20 to 10 hours. Nevertheless, the emerging routine in terms of compromising the value of teaching might be widely accepted in the university and might be institutionalised. In summary, the newly institutionalised routine, on the one hand, resulted from the wider institution in emphasising research; on the other hand, it was subject adjustments in the university. In addition, the adjustment of the conversion ratio resulted from the interaction between academics' attitudes towards teaching and the university's control. One could argue that academics might be subject to the institution in emphasising research; specifically, their attitudes towards teaching and

research could have been regulated by the promotion criteria and the merit pay scheme.

When considering the reason for academic fraud, in Section 5.4.2, on the macro-level, the reproduction of routines (pursuing increased research outcomes through taking advantage of SCI) was ascribed to the desire of the existing broader institution to performance numerically. On the micro-level, the absence of monitoring systems (aside from the promotion system) and the merit pay scheme produced a desire for speedy research results and also served to increase the status of research. The purpose of this thesis is not to judge whether or not the introduction of qualitative performance metrics and other management control changes to Chinese academia 'improved' academic performance. Rather, one of its interests is to consider the extent to which new rules impact upon academic performance.

One of the implications of the efforts of the promotion criteria on academics from the case university could be reflected through the increase in the number of SCI articles published. This is demonstrated in Table 5.8.

Year	Number	Year	Number	Year	Number
1987	1	1996	5.3	2005	15.8
1988	1.2	1997	5.8	2006	18.0
1989	1.3	1998	5.9	2007	18.5
1990	2.0	1999	6.8	2008	21.3
1991	1.8	2000	7.3	2009	21.4
1992	1.7	2001	8.7	2010	22.9
1993	1.9	2002	9.0	2011	21.8
1994	2.4	2003	10.5		
1995	4	2004	13.4		

Table 5.8 Number of Chinese Articles included by the SCI from the case university from 1987 to 2011 (published in various languages, such as English, Chinese, French, German and Japanese)[98]

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[98] The number of articles published in 1987 is taken as a datum point.
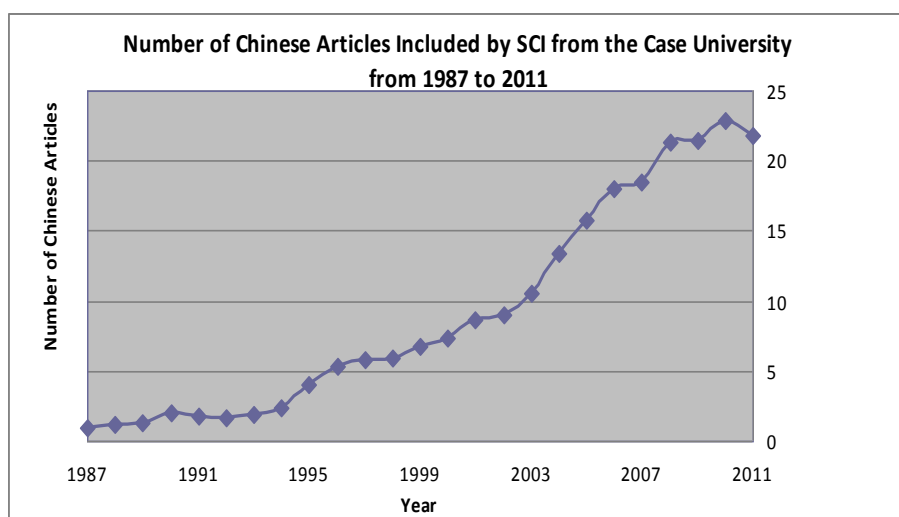
Figure 5.8 Number of Chinese Articles included by the SCI from the case university from 1987 to 2011 (published in various languages, such as English, Chinese, French, German and Japanese)

Additionally, in order to maintain and standardise research quality, there was a regulation about the level of published papers for those applying for associate professor and professor issued in 2010. For example, in the College of Life Science, academics who apply for a professorship must satisfy the following requirements – the first author or corresponding author on no less than one paper with an impact factor of at least nine, in a top journal of their main subjects; or no less than three high-level papers in the top journals of their sub-subjects. The new requirements were more demanding than the previous ones. The impact factors of relevant subjects are specified in the following table.

Subject	Impact Factor (no less than one paper)	Impact Factor (no less than three papers)
Cell Biology	9 and above	≥5.7
Developmental Biology		≥4.5
Genetics & Heredity		≥4.4
Biochemistry & Molecular Biology		≥4.2
Neurosciences		≥3.9
Physiology		≥3.3
Biophysics		≥3.2
Ecology		≥3.1
Botany Sciences		≥2.6
Zoology		≥2.4

Table 5.9 Impact Factors of Papers Published in the Subject of Biology for the Title of Professor

Furthermore, in the College of Life Science, academics who apply for associate professor must satisfy these requirements – the first author or corresponding author on no less than one high-level paper in their main subject; or no less than three relatively high-level papers in their sub-subjects. The impact factors of relevant subjects are specified in the following table.

Subject	Impact Factor (no less than one paper)	Impact Factor (no less than three paper)
Cell Biology	≥5.7	≥2.8
Developmental Biology	≥4.5	≥2.3
Genetics & Heredity	≥4.4	≥2.2
Biochemistry & Molecular Biology	≥4.2	≥2.1
Neurosciences	≥3.9	≥1.9
Physiology	≥3.3	≥1.7
Biophysics	≥3.2	≥1.6
Ecology	≥3.1	≥1.6
Botany Sciences	≥2.6	≥1.3
Zoology	≥2.4	≥1.2

Table 5.10 Impact Factors of Papers Published in the Subject of Biology for the title of Associate Professor

When confronted with the demanding requirements for research, the merit pay scheme and the teaching conversion ratio, academics might reconstruct their habitus to changes on their field of play. In the next chapter, this thesis will discuss the

extent to which academics are subject to the promotion criteria and what made the promotion criteria so powerful in terms of reconstructing the habitus.

5.4.4 A Bourdieusian Perspective on Changes in Chinese universities

As explained in Sections 2.4.5 and 3.2.6, a Bourdieusian perspective could be adopted to enrich institutional theory. Through the lens of the Bourdieusian concepts of field and the different forms of capital, this section will attempt to analyse the reason for Chinese economic reform and the impact of according changes in universities.

From a Bourdieusian perspective, "fields are networks of social relations, structured systems of social positions…hierarchically distributed, depending on the kinds of capital, the number and types of positions in the field…within which struggles or manoeuvres take place over resources, stakes, and access" (Oakes *et al.*, 1998, p. 260). According to Bourdieu (1985), capital "…represents a power over the field (at a given moment)…The kinds of capital, like the aces in a game of cards, are powers that define the chances of profit in a particular field (in fact to each field, or sub-field there corresponds a particular kind of capital, which is current, as a power of stake, in that game)" (p. 724).

Countries can be conceived of as Bourdieusian fields which are in a constant battle with other country fields for position. In this "country field" battle economic capital is the most important. When considering the difficult economic situation after the Cultural Revolution, one could understand the changes of the state's strategic foci from political struggle to economic development. An increase in economic capital would help China to survive the influence of advanced countries. In particular, in the context of a knowledge economy, one could accept the CCP's illusio of the improved "science, technology and education" in bringing about more economic capitals and understand the corresponding habitus in increasing investment in research. From this perspective, the state's research performance (in the form of SCI) has symbolic power in representing the state's development potential.

From a Bourdieusian perspective, academics (and their academic activities) are in the field of Chinese universities; the field is located in a hierarchically structured set of fields, and the most significant is the dominant field of the Chinese government. The quantified performance of academics and universities was criticised by Kamuf (2007) who argued that education has become quantified so as to represent "value added" (p. 256). This was part of the marketization of universities in the US. Even though education was not completely marketized in China (Mok, 2000); research is quantified and priced in such a way (receiving government grants) that it could add added value to the country (and the universities). In turn, academics are "priced" and "labelled" on the basis of their research performance. Academics' research performance in the form of SCI publications (academics' cultural capital) could be regarded as possessing symbolic power in representing their "value".

In the context of a market economy, Chinese university research and academics have been re-recognised and redefined. From a Bourdieusian perspective, alongside the rules which quantify and "price" of research performance, changes to the field of Chinese universities could be understood from the aspects of the changes to the dominant capital of the field, the product, the professional identities of actors, habitus (oriented activities) and the rules of the field (internal evaluation criteria). The changes are categorised as follows.

	Pre-rule Field	Post-rule Field
Orientation between Capital and Field		
Dominant Capital	Cultural (and Social)	Economic (Converting from Cultural and Social)
Product	Education and Research	Commercialised Education and "Priced" Research
Positions within the Field		
Professional Identity	Professors, Associate Professors and Lectures	Hierarchical Employees
Oriented Activity	Teaching and Research	Fund-related Research
Internal Criteria for Evaluation	Internal Peer Review	Quantified Performance Measurement

Table 5.11 Comparison of Fields Pre- and Post-Measurement Rule

From a Bourdieusian perspective, the changes of academic performance measurement (the promotion criteria and the merit pay scheme) could become an act of symbolic violence once they are incorporated into the habitus since it exerts control in a "gentle, hidden form" in terms of regularising social actors' behaviour and making their behaviour meaningful (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 196). By doing so, the power of academic performance measurement reconstitutes academic interests and re-shapes academic value; performance measurement has reduced academics' autonomy in controlling their academic activities – teaching and research.

The stated purpose of academic performance measurement was to maintain and improve academic performance; the improved performance was believed to be of benefit to economic growth and the enhancement of national productivity. However, through the implementation of this practice, the focus of the field is not only on the accumulation of cultural capital, but also on the "ability to quickly translate or convert all forms of capital into economic capital" (Oakes *et al.*, 1998, pp. 277-278). The economic value of cultural capital could explain the diversion from pursuing research *per se* to the positive consequences of research.

5.5   Conclusion

In the context of a market economy and the knowledge economy, the strategy of developing the country through science and technology reified a market mechanism in universities – academic performance measurement. The academic performance measurement was implemented in the name of maintaining teaching and research performance in order to help to create a new and efficient China.

On the basis of the analysis of policies and practices regarding academic performance, this section found that the Chinese government claimed to emphasize higher education but focused on improving research performance.

This section uses institutional isomorphism to explain the operation of Chinese public universities and academic performance measurement (the promotion criteria and the merit pay scheme) – universities have exhibited coercive isomorphism since

they are subject to Central Government's directions and financial support. Even though normative and mimetic isomorphic behaviour was found in universities' adoption of a research assessment method from western countries; in the Chinese context in which the political institution is dominant, normative and mimetic isomorphism was underpinned by the regulative institutional pillar (in the context of pursuing economic performance, SCI echoes the pursuit of quantifiable performance).

Burns and Scapens' (2000) framework is adopted to understand the implication of Projects 211 and 985 which promoted and valued research performance. This emphasis on research performance was revealed in the case university through scrutinising the implementation of the promotion criteria. The scant appraisal of the quality of teaching and the teaching conversion ratio, on the one hand, echo the political emphasis on research performance; and on the other hand alludes to the changed academic orientations.

A Bourdieusian perspective helps to explain the marketization of Chinese universities. The changes brought about by academic performance measurements are clarified through changes to what constitutes the dominant capital, the academic product, the professional identities of actors, their habitus (oriented activities) and the rules of the field (criteria for evaluation). The adoption of the concepts of field and the forms of capital further help to explain the academics' behaviours since the promotion criteria (and merit pay scheme) determine the economic value of cultural capital.

The marketization of academic activities was criticised since academics could be "…mobilized to eradicate residual capacities for resistance and to displace thought and responsibility with arithmetic and obeisance to an inexorable quantitative logic the automatic operation of markets"[99] (McKernan and McPhail, 2012, p. 178). In order to understand the extent to which academics are subject to the promotion criteria, and why they could have been subject to that extent, academics'

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[99] Confronted with the different requirements for teaching and research, the status, struggling and performance of academics will be discerned in Chapter Six.

subjectivities in terms of their feelings, understandings and opinions towards the promotion criteria, research and teaching will be analysed in the next chapter.

Appendix 5.1 Relevant Formats of Selection[100]

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[100] The relevant formats of selection takes the year 2010 as an example.

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☐ 1. Title: Cloning and characterization of a novel gene with alternative splicing in murine mesenchymal stem cell line C3H/10T1/2 by gene trap screening
Author(s): Wang Mingke; Sun Huiqin; Jiang Fan; et al.
Source: BMB REPORTS Volume: 43 Issue: 12 Pages: 789-794 DOI: 10.5483/BMBRep.2010.43.12.789 Published: DEC 31 2010
Times Cited: 0 (from Web of Science)
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☐ 2. Title: Effects of dissolved oxygen on electrochemical and semiconductor properties of 316L stainless steel
Author(s): Feng Zhicao; Cheng Xuequn; Dong Chaofang; et al.
Source: JOURNAL OF NUCLEAR MATERIALS Volume: 407 Issue: 3 Pages: 171-177 DOI: 10.1016/j.jnucmat.2010.10.010 Published: DEC 31 2010
Times Cited: 0 (from Web of Science)
[⊞ View abstract]

☐ 3. Title: Hydrodynamic modeling of Lake Ontario: An intercomparison of three models
Author(s): Huang Anning; Rao Yerubandi R.; Lu Youyu; et al.
Source: JOURNAL OF GEOPHYSICAL RESEARCH-OCEANS Volume: 115 Article Number: C12076 DOI: 10.1029/2010JC006269 Published: DEC 31 2010
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☐ 4. Title: Deep structure and seismogenesis of the north-south seismic zone in southwest China
Author(s): Wang Zhi; Zhao Dapeng; Wang Jian
Source: JOURNAL OF GEOPHYSICAL RESEARCH-SOLID EARTH Volume: 115 DOI: 10.1029/2010JB007797 Published: DEC 31 2010
Times Cited: 2 (from Web of Science)
[⊞ View abstract]

☐ 5. Title: UNEXPECTED FLUORESCENT BEHAVIOR OF A NEW PH CHEMOSENSOR BASED UPON BIS-4-PIPERIDINE-1,8-NAPHTHALIMIDE LINKED BY THE DIETHYLENETRIAMINE
Author(s): Xu Hui; Dai Huiling; Ran Junqiang
Source: HETEROCYCLES Volume: 82 Issue: 1 Pages: 473-478 DOI: 10.3987/COM-10-S(E)20 Published: DEC 31 2010

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☐ ZHEJIANG UNIV (4,597)	☐ UNIV SCI TECHNOL BEIJING (878)	☐ HARBIN MED COLL (535)
☐ SHANGHAI JIAO TONG UNIV (4,032)	☐ HUNAN UNIV (871)	☐ MINIST EDUC (533)
☐ PEKING UNIV (3,934)	☐ CHINESE ACAD AGR SCI (843)	☐ WUHAN UNIV TECHNOL (532)
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☐ JILIN UNIV (2,227)	☐ BEIJING UNIV CHEM TECHNOL (712)	☐ BEIJING UNIV POSTS TELECOMMUN (488)
☐ UNIV SCI TECHNOL CHINA (2,204)	☐ NANJING UNIV AERONAUT ASTRONAUT (707)	☐ NATL UNIV DEF TECHNOL (474)
☐ SUN YAT SEN UNIV (2,049)	☐ CHINA UNIV GEOSCI (700)	☐ NANCHANG UNIV (468)
☐ XI AN JIAO TONG UNIV (1,936)	☐ MIL MED COLL 2 (697)	☐ NANJING NORMAL UNIV (466)
☐ DALIAN UNIV TECHNOL (1,834)	☐ S CHINA NORMAL UNIV (697)	☐ FUZHOU UNIV (450)
☐ CENT S UNIV (1,711)	☐ ZHENGZHOU UNIV (688)	☐ YUNNAN UNIV (445)
☐ WUHAN UNIV (1,607)	☐ BEIHANG UNIV (682)	☐ SHAANXI NORMAL UNIV (423)
☑ NANKAI UNIV (1,579)	☐ NE NORMAL UNIV (644)	☐ YANGZHOU UNIV (417)
☐ SOUTHEAST UNIV (1,543)	☐ NANJING MED UNIV (633)	☐ SO MED UNIV (405)
☐ LANZHOU UNIV (1,494)	☐ HUAZHONG AGR UNIV (632)	☐ S CHINA AGR UNIV (403)
☐ TONGJI UNIV (1,441)	☐ NANJING AGR UNIV (631)	☐ NW UNIV XIAN (395)

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Journal Summary List   Journal Title Changes
Journals from: countries/territories PEOPLES R CHINA
Sorted by: Impact Factor   SORT AGAIN

Journals 1 - 20 (of 138) |◄ ◄◄ ◄[1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7]► ►► ►| Page 1 of 7
MARK ALL   UPDATE MARKED LIST   Ranking is based on your journal and sort selections.

Mark	Rank	Abbreviated Journal Title (linked to journal information)	ISSN	JCR Data						Eigenfactor™ Metrics	
				Total Cites	Impact Factor	5-Year Impact Factor	Immediacy Index	Articles	Cited Half-life	Eigenfactor™ Score	Article Influence™ Score
☐	1	J MOL CELL BIOL	1674-2788	108	13.400	13.800	1.250	28	1.3	0.00044	4.586
☐	2	CELL RES	1001-0602	4243	9.417	6.992	1.604	96	3.0	0.02690	2.735
☐	3	NANO RES	1998-0124	900	5.078	5.091	1.150	100	1.8	0.00606	2.029
☐	4	FUNGAL DIVERS	1560-2745	1181	5.074	3.311	0.712	59	3.0	0.00291	0.584
☐	5	MOL PLANT	1674-2052	944	4.296	4.307	1.024	83	1.8	0.00629	1.630
☐	6	WORLD J GASTROENTERO	1007-9327	15119	2.240		0.325	813	4.1	0.06085	
☐	7	EPISODES	0705-3797	1115	2.041	2.313	0.048	21	8.2	0.00259	0.833
☐	8	CELL MOL IMMUNOL	1672-7681	1051	2.026		0.712	66	4.1	0.00531	
☐	9	ACTA PHARMACOL SIN	1671-4083	4364	1.909	2.033	0.338	207	5.8	0.01005	0.484
☐	10	COMMUN COMPUT PHYS	1815-2406	680	1.835	1.862	0.390	105	2.6	0.00571	0.900
☐	11	INT J SEDIMENT RES	1001-6279	271	1.708		0.139	36	3.2	0.00050	
☐	12	CHINESE PHYS B	1674-1056	2974	1.631	1.639	0.238	1163	1.9	0.00611	0.192
☐	13	ASIAN J ANDROL	1008-682X	1194	1.549	1.679	0.765	98	4.0	0.00362	0.400
☐	14	ACTA BIOCH BIOPH SIN	1672-9145	1131	1.547	1.371	0.128	117	3.9	0.00438	0.372
☐	15	HEPATOB PANCREAT DIS	1499-3872	1020	1.514		0.139	101	4.0	0.00334	
☐	16	J ENVIRON SCI-CHINA	1001-0742	1951	1.513	1.340	0.064	283	3.4	0.00720	0.314
☐	17	J GENET GENOMICS	1673-8527	414	1.494	1.323	0.169	77	2.6	0.00210	0.371
☐	18	J HYDRODYN	1001-6058	560	1.475		0.200	105	2.8	0.00103	
☐	19	J NAT GAS CHEM	1003-9953	443	1.345		0.225	111	3.0	0.00159	
☐	19	SCI CHINA SER C	1006-9305	892	1.345	1.114		0	3.7	0.00304	0.267

MARK ALL   UPDATE MARKED LIST

Mark	Rank	Abbreviated Journal Title (linked to journal information)	ISSN	Total Cites	Impact Factor	5-Year Impact Factor	Immediacy Index	Articles	Cited Half-life	Eigenfactor™ Score	Article Influence™ Score

Appendix 5.2 Salary Policy

Date	Position salary	Grade Salary	Price subsidy	Others 1	Housing subsidy	Backpay	Remain allowance	Heating allowance	Working allowance	Others 2	Position allowance	Gross salary
	930	904	212	840	50.26	335	110	75	1020	600	720	5796.26
Jun. 2010	Water & electricity	Accumulation fund	Medical insurance	Unemployed insurance	Tax	Total salary						
	100	645	60.62	30.31	156.49	4960.33						

Table 5.12 Sample Pay Slip (in Chinese Yuan(s), RMB)

Position salary, as its name implies, is the closest link to the academic position, this is the amount which is determined by the Central Government.

Grade salary is the second closest item to the level of position; its amount is also determined by the central government. As long as a member of academic staff passes an annual assessment successfully, it can be increased according to a particular rate.

Price subsidy is the same for everyone.

The item "others 1" is composed of a duty fee and overtime pay. The amount of duty fee is 300 RMB and is the same for everyone; the amount of overtime pay is determined by the level of professional position.

Teaching and nursing allowance[101] is particularly issued for nurses and teachers in university hospitals and schools.

Housing allowance is 0.16% of the housing base. The housing base of the university = 15% (Position pay + scale pay + price subsidy + teaching and nursing allowance +

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[101] It is not shown in the above table as it is not applicable to those holding teaching posts.

retained allowance + working allowance + heating allowance + 400 RMB) + absolute number.

The amount of the absolute number is related to the level of professional position. Those holding the title of professor receive 270 RMB, associate professors receive 220 RMB, and lecturers receive 140 RMB.

The special allowance is a kind of state allowance. It can only be awarded to particular professors; the candidates are evaluated against national standards.

The amount of the special allowance, which is for those who qualified in 1990 to 1991, was 100 RMB per month; for those who qualified in 1996 was a one-off 5,000 RMB payment; and those who were qualified during 2008-2009 received 600 RMB per month[102].

The only-child subsidy is issued to those who only have one child in one family until the child is eighteen.

Back pay is the adjusted salary for unpaid pay rises. For example, an associate professor applied for a promotion in October, 2012. The evaluation process can last up to six months; in this sense, he may learn the final result in May, 2013. According to relevant regulations, if he is promoted, her salary should be raised in January, 2013. Back pay is the compensation for the increased salary for five months (from January, 2013 to May, 2013). Even though in the UK, back pay is normally the adjusted salary for unpaid pay rises; back pay in Chinese universities are the products of changed staff grades.

The retained allowance is related to the academic grade, the length of service and the starting date. This allowance is only applicable for those who started work before October, 2000.

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[102] It is not applicable for the sample pay slip analysis, as it is about the salary of an associate professor.

Regarding the monthly amount of heating allowance, academicians receive 135 RMB, professors receive 115 RMB, associate professors receive 75 RMB, and lecturers receive 40 RMB. This is directly related to the residential housing area. The residential housing area is positively linked to one's academic grade.

The amount of the working allowance is firstly determined by academic grade, secondly determined by the length of service in that position and thirdly determined by the starting date. There are several bands in terms of the length of service in a grade, such as 5-years, 6-8 years and 9-years and above; there are also 5-yearly bands in terms of the time since starting up to 36-years.

Other 2 is composed of 2 local allowances, part 1 and part 2. Local allowances are related to academic grades. For part 1, professors receive 700 RMB, associate professors receive 600 RMB and lecturers receive 500 RMB; part 2 is the extra increase since January, 2010, for professors it is 830 RMB; for associate professors and lecturers 710 RMB and 600 RMB respectively.

The position allowance is a product of a distribution reform[103] and is related to academic grades. The amount of the allowance is determined by reference to other universities, such as Peking University and Tsinghua University.

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[103] Chinese public universities have experience three significant salary reforms in 1956, 1985 and 1993. However, the reform results are not significant in reflecting individual capacity and motivating individual development. In this case, a distribution reform is carried out to terminate egalitarianism and construct a competitive environment. The position allowance can be understood as a performance allowance.

Appendix 5.3 Promotion Criteria of Associate Professor in 1995, 2002 and 2005

Category/ year	1995		2002	2005
General requirements	Systematic and solid theoretical basis and relatively rich practical experience		Exactly the same	Exactly the same
Teaching requirement	Systematic teaching 1 foundation course for 70-160 hours approximately Or More than 2 other courses (40 hours/course) With good teaching outcomes, satisfactory teaching evaluation result		Exactly the same	Almost the same except lower teaching requirement 70 hours (instead of 70-160 hours roughly)
achievements	Liberal arts	Science	Randomly satisfy two of the following requirements, Same requirements for journal papers Or Same requirements for publications in both column Or First Prize of excellence in teaching at university level Or Undertake R&D project and have good outcomes	Independently compile ≥ 4 papers published in core journals (the amount could be adjusted according to either the academic and social impact of the paper or paper included by SCI, EI, ISTP, SSCI, SSHP) And Independently or jointly compile 1 monograph or textbook (over 50, 000 words contributed in person) And one of the following requirements, Better than third prize of excellence in teaching at province or ministry level Or As main participator or writer undertake (or participate in) a R&D project at provincial or ministry level or higher or have research outcomes by self-raised funding (recognition due to the research funding recognized in the account of the university finance office and the record with relevant university science-related office)
	More than 3 academic papers published in core journals compiled independently Or Jointly compiled monograph of over 50,000 words (jointly compiled textbook of over 100,000 words)	Same requirement of journal papers Or As main author of a jointly compiled monograph or textbook		
	Undertake R&D project at provincial level or higher and have outstanding achievement or create large economic and social benefits And Have the capacity to supervise Masters' students			

Table 5.13 Promotion Criteria of Associate Professor in 1995, 2002 and 2005

Appendix 5.4 Promotion Criteria of Professor in 1995, 2002 and 2005

Category/ year	1995		
General requirements	Systematic and profound theoretical basis and rich practical experience; learn leading and advanced subject development		
Teaching requirement	Systematic teaching 1 foundation course Or More than 2 other courses With complete system and information, good teaching quality and outcomes And Have supervised high-quality master students And Have the capacity to supervise Masters' students for those who are from the departments haven't had the qualification to grant Master Degree and those who are promoted exceptionally(younger than 45 years old)		
achievements	Liberal arts	Science Teaching-centred	Science Research-centred
	> 5 academic papers published in core journals as main author (>3 compiled independently) Or compile > 2 monographs (1 independently compiled)	> 5 academic papers published in core journals as main author Or ≥3 papers included by SCI Or compile >2 monographs	> 15 academic papers published in core journals (≥10 as first author) Or ≥5 papers included by SCI Or Better than third national prize (as main participator) Or Two first or second provincial prize
	Undertake R&D project at provincial level or higher and have outstanding achievements Or Create large economic and social benefits from significant innovations Or Obtain the patent with great academic and economic value		

Table 5.14 Promotion Criteria of Professor in 1995

Category/ year	2002	
General requirements	Almost the same as of 1995	
Teaching requirement	Almost the same as of 1995 in teaching aspect And Have supervised high-quality Masters students And Have the capacity to supervise Masters students for those who from the departments haven't had the of subject without master granting qualification to grant Master Degree	
achievements	Science Teaching-centred	Science Research-centred
	Satisfy two of the following, $\geq$ 5 papers published in core journals as first author Or compile >2 monographs (1independently compiled) Or 1 monograph or textbook independently compile and 3 papers published in core journals as first author Or $\geq$3 papers included by SCI Or Published 1 paper with impact factor of $\geq$3 Or Have supervised $\geq$10 postgraduates Or Better than second prize of national excellence in teaching or first prize of provincial excellence in teaching	Satisfy two of the following, $\geq$ 15 series of papers published in core journals ($\geq$ 10 independently compile or $\geq$ 5 included by SCI) Or $\geq$ 8 papers included by SCI, EI or 2 papers published with impact factor of $\geq$3 Or Compile $\geq$3 monographs Or 1 national reward in social science (top 3) Or First prize in national natural science (top 5), second prize (top 4), first prize in scientific and technological progress (top 4), second prize (top 3), first prize in technology and innovation Or First prize at province and ministry level scientific research in achievements (top 2), second and third prize (top 1) Or $\geq$100 million research funding Or Undertake R&D project at province level or higher and have outstanding achievement Or Obtain the patent with great academic and economic value

Table 5.15 Promotion Criteria of Professor in 2002

Category/ year	2005
General requirements	Exactly the same as 2002
Teaching requirement	Exactly the same as 2002
achievements	Independently compile ≥ 6 papers published in core journals (the amount could be adjusted according to either the academic and social impact of the paper or paper included by SCI, EI, ISTP, SSCI, SSHP) And Independently compile ≥ 1 monographs or textbooks And one of the following, Have supervised ≥10 postgraduates Or Better than second prize of national excellence in teaching or first prize of provincial excellence in teaching Or First prize in provincial scientific research in achievements (top 2) or second and third prize (top 1) Or Undertake R&D project at province level or higher and have outstanding achievement or obtain the patent with great academic and economic value

Table 5.16 Promotion Criteria of Professor in 2005

Appendix 5.5 Application Form for a Professorship

Department		Name		Gender	
D.O.B		Final Academic Degree Obtained			
Name of University/Other Institution and Dates Attended					
the Starting Point of Time of Engaging Work		the Length of Teaching in University		the Length of Holding Current Position	
Subject		Research Speciality			

Work Since Holding Current Position					
Teaching	Undergraduate Courses	Course Title	Year	Course Hours	Qualified Course at University Level or above
	Supervision of Postgraduate (N/A to Lecturers)				

Research	Project Title		Level of Project (National/ Provincial)	Responsibility Taken (host/ participate)	Amount of Funding

Paper Published Since Holding Current Position	Total Paper Published（Independent or First Author） Key Journals： SCI(SSCI) Accepted: EI Accepted： ISTP Accepted：			
Masterpieces	No.	Title	Name of Journal/Press /Date of Publication	Section Participated
	1			

	2			
	3			
Awards Obtained	Teaching Awards	Level	Name/Level/Ranking/Attribute (Group/Individual) of Award/ Awarding Institution	
		National		
		Provincial		
	Research Awards	Level	Name/Level/Ranking/Attribute (Group/Individual) of Award/ Awarding Institution	
		National		
		Provincial		
	Other Awards			

I guarantee the truthfulness and validity of the above-mentioned content.

Applicant Signature：

Date (year/month/date):

Table 5.17 Application Form for a Professorship in the Case University

Appendix 5.6 Promotion Application Procedure

In the case university, the department of Administrative Office for Professionals is in charge of the promotion procedure. It is a sub-office of the Personnel Office. The promotion application procedure in the case University is set out in the following table[104].

According to application requirements, applicants prepare their application material, which normally includes application forms, the application fee and a collection of their research outcomes. Applicants need to exhibit their research outcomes in departments, colleges or schools for public approval and then submit their application material to a department-level committee. This committee is composed of professors and experts from the department, college or school. On the basis of the performance of applicants, committee members vote to determine the ranking of applicants.

The ranking results and relevant application material are sent to a higher level committee for further evaluation to verify the ranking results. The higher level committee is a professional evaluation group and organised by the Administrative Office for Professionals. The final ranking results made by the professional evaluation group is approved by a senior group which is composed of a (vice) principal and senior administrative staff. After gaining final approval from the senior group, successful applicants complete the relevant forms from the Personnel Office for the archives.

For individual applicants, the length of time from material preparation to final approval is approximately two to three years. It usually takes more than two years to have significant research outcomes since it takes at least six months to have a paper published on top of the time spent doing the research. The procedure of promotion application and approval normally lasts two months. The following table sets out a genuine timescale of promotion application and approval –

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[104] This thesis uses the timescale in 2011 as an example to demonstrate the promotion application procedure.

Timescale of Promotion Application and Approval	
1st of March	Announce relevant documents and delegate evaluation members
8th-10th of March	Applicants start to enrol
11th - 13th of March	Departments collect and check application material
14th - 15th of March	University collects application material
16th - 18th of March	University investigate application material in subjects
22nd of March	University issues quota of each staff grade
23rd - 31st of March	Professor committee meeting
	Departmental evaluation committee meeting
	Evaluation sub-committee meeting in subjects
	Exhibit application material and report evaluation results
	Fill in evaluation form
1st-20th of April	External expert evaluation arranged by relevant administration departments
21st -30th of April	University evaluation committee meeting

Table 5.18 Timescale of Promotion Application and Approval in the Case University

6 Chapter Six: Impact of Academic Performance Measurement – the Promotion Criteria

6.1 Introduction

As set out in Sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.3, in universities, academic performance measurement and performance management take the form of the promotion criteria. This chapter is concerned with the impact of the promotion criteria on academics. In order to understand the impact of the promotion criteria, academics' understandings, opinions and feelings about the promotion criteria and relevant issues were collected through interviews and questionnaires (the list of research participants, issues with the data collection process and interview questions are set out in Chapter Four). These subjective understandings are analysed from the perspectives of an institutional, a Bourdieusian and Roberts' understandings of Lacanian and Foucauldian theories. In addition to displaying the significance of the promotion criteria in Chinese academia, these analyses help to broaden the applications of these theoretical perspectives through interpreting phenomena in a Far East context.

The structure of this chapter is as follows: Data analysis and interpretation of the findings are included in Sections 6.2 and 6.3 from different perspectives – Section 6.2 sets out the data analysis of the responses concerned with teaching and research and Section 6.3 sets out the understanding of Chinese academia. Key insights obtained from the theoretical analyses are set out in Section 6.4.

6.2 Analysis of the Responses concerned with Teaching and Research

6.2.1 Discussion of Academic Accountabilities[105]

The literature (for example, Bobrow and Dryzek, 1987; Linder and Peters, 1998; Gao, 2009) suggests that the design and determination of performance measurements should be closely related with the organisational goals which actors are expected to achieve and maintain. The promotion criteria in the case university should reflect the university's expectations on academics, which might be reflected in academics' understandings of their (hierarchical) accountabilities (what do they think they need to do).

6.2.1.1 Prioritising Education

Q1.a. and Q1.f. are concerned with staff's understandings of what universities and academics need to do. On the basis of the onerous requirements for research, participants were asked about the significance of the promotion criteria prior to the question of their hierarchical accountabilities (what do they think they need to do). The theoretical perspectives would suggest that the performance measures in the promotion criteria might motivate academics to focus more on research. However, after a comprehensive survey of all responses, the understandings of the hierarchical accountabilities of universities and academics are highly consistent in prioritising education.

These highly consistent responses in prioritising education could perhaps be regarded as corresponding to the state's development strategies. As reviewed in Chapter Five, in the global context of knowledge economy, improved science and technology are believed to be critical for the development of a country; and the improvement of education quality was therefore an important aim of higher educational reform. However, in addition to improving educational quality, the importance of advanced research and researchers were further emphasised through various official discourses.

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[105] Relevant interview questions are Q1.a., Q1.b., Q1.c. and Q1.f., which are listed in Table 4.1.

One could regard the phase "imparting knowledge and educating people" as a "model answer" to the question about academic accountability. It is the state mantra on educators' accountability. In other words, the consistent and automatic responses in "imparting knowledge and educating people" could be regarded as doxa in a Chinese context.

From the perspective of Institutionalism (Burns and Scapens, 2000), the "doxic phrase", that "imparting knowledge and educating people" can be seen as "an institution", which is defined as "the shared taken-for-granted assumptions which identify categories of human actors and their appropriate activities and relationships" (p. 8). This definition underpins the following discussion in the specific realm of Chinese universities.

The highly consistent responses can be classified into two types. Firstly, education is prioritised. Secondly, education and research are equally important. Several responses, which are classified as the first type, merely contained teaching when talking about the hierarchical accountabilities. The following are indicative −

Respondent	Title	Accountabilities of Universities	Accountabilities of Academics
C2	Associate Professor	"Developing the talents of students…it is to supply relevant professional knowledge, to develop various technical abilities and the most important thing is to develop the people required by our country"	"…imparting knowledge and educating people"
C3	Associate Professor	"…to develop the talents needed by contemporary society, to create a healthy and positive cultural atmosphere and to maintain the good quality of the nation"	"…imparting knowledge and educating people. I will try my best to not mislead students and live up to the title of 'people's teacher'"
C4	Associate Professor	"…pay attention to students' thoughts and help them to have good views on life and the values to enable their involvement in society. The first priority is to cultivate ideas and thoughts; the second is to strengthen professional knowledge"	"…imparting knowledge and educating people"

Table 6.1 Understandings of the Hierarchical Accountabilities of Universities and Academics

The reason for the participants to be classified as the second type (in terms of seeing that education and research are equally important) was that they believed new ideas and scientific development from relevant research would inspire students; so this second group saw a synergistic link between teaching and research. In addition, fresh scientific research findings can be used to enrich teaching material, which in turn improves the quality of lectures. Consequently, the reason for doing research and at the same time teaching is to keep up-to-date with the scientific development in relevant arenas. In short, some academics had faith in the results of research in terms of equipping students with better knowledge. For example,

Respondent	Title	Accountabilities of Universities	Accountabilities of Academics	Relationship between teaching and research
Bio 1	Professor	"…develop people"		"In order to improve education, it is compulsory to do research, since new ideas can inspire students. The aim of doing research is to direct students to a better arena"
Bio 2	Associate Professor	"…educate people but not to pay too much attention to research"	"The first priority is to impart knowledge and educate people. It is necessary and compulsory to teach when working in a university"	"…research and teaching go hand-in-hand. New research finding can be used to improve the quality of lectures"
Bio 5	Professor	"It is the major duty of universities to educate people, which is different from that of research institutions"	"…to educate students and teach undergraduate classes."	"The aim of doing research is just to maintain high quality teaching. It is said that research benefits society, since research enables a better quality of teaching and fulfils the responsibility to educate students…the aim of taking on research projects is to have opportunities to get involved in contemporary research and the aim of doing research is to equip postgraduates with a greater ability to do their own research."

Table 6.2 Understandings of Hierarchical Accountabilities of Universities and Academics and Their Relationships

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When considering the possible impact of the promotion criteria on academics' understandings of their accountabilities, one should pay attention to any inconsistency in responses. For example, "Bio 4" stated that contemporary Chinese universities need to be concerned with students' education, especially potential "gurus" of each subject; however, with reference to his own accountabilities, the accomplishment of his own projects was prioritised over good teaching[106].

At this stage, the meaning of "gurus" should be set out in this research. As previously introduced, the interviews and questionnaires were carried out in Chinese; when translated into English, "gurus" should be "experts" or "research leaders" or refers to a group of people who take the lead in particular arenas. The reason for keeping the word "gurus" is to represent their influence on junior academics, especially in a Chinese context.

Returning to "Bio 4"'s significant answer to Q1f, it is worth noting that "Bio 4" was a lecturer. From a Bourdieusian perspective, "Bio 4"'s lower position on the hierarchy of the field suggests that he would have less field-specific capitals than those in higher positions, for example, associate professors. This suggests that "Bio 4" might be subject to the influence of his senior; since "a species of capital is what is efficacious in a given field, both as a weapon and as a stake of struggle, that which allows its possessors to wield a power, an influence, and thus to exist, in the field under consideration, instead of being considered a negligible quantity" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 98). Although the association between more capital and more influence is not deterministic, it is the case in academia that the power of senior academics derives from their "attainment of positions which govern the reproduction of the corps" (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 84). In order to eschew the influence of senior academics, junior staff need to start building up their own capitals, which can be rationalised according to Friedland's (2009) understanding of fields that "Fields are organized as struggles over the relative powers of capitals, which are, in reality,

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[106] "Bio 4" stated that "On the one hand, it is to educate students from all walks of life. On the other hand, it is to educate future gurus since the best gurus had the best university education. My responsibilities are to complete my projects, including writing up project reports and publishing papers, which are my daily work; and to teach well, including preparing teaching material and maintaining the quality of lectures."

struggles over power, over what it is and by implication who is powerful" (p. 17). The preceding discussion suggests the reason for "Bio 4"'s attention paid to completing his projects that they are directly related to the accumulation of his economic, academic and social capitals. From the perspective of the Bourdieusian analogy of the game, "Bio 4"'s behaviour was a strategic move (which was determined by his holding of capitals and the rule of the game) to enable him "to win".

In summary, from the analysis of "Bio 4"'s response, the Bourdieusian perspective suggests the dominant capitals in a specific academic institution and interprets his strategies through identifying his vulnerable position in a lower hierarchy of the field of academia. For "Bio 4", the promotion criteria were the rules to play and win the game; accompanied with the power of the dominant capitals, the onerous requirements for research performance in the promotion criteria alluded to the significance of particular capitals and therefore determined his strategies.

The preceding discussion about the influence of senior academics gives rise to a consideration of the "habitus" and "illusio" in the field of academia. As discussed in Section 3.2.6, capitals with their power could be recognised by the subjects of their influence; an agent's commitment to the value of capitals (illusio) could be evoked by his subjection to the power of capitals. His subjection to the power of capitals (and his consequent struggle for these capitals) could be the features of position-taking agents in a field or could be generally regarded as "the strategic orientations appropriate to their positions" (Warde, 2004, p. 14). This is described by Bourdieu as the habitus. Due to the struggle for capitals, his capitals are accumulated; his commitment to the value of capitals is reinforced by the influence of the power of these capitals on other subjects – illusio and habitus are dialectically related. During this dialectical process, the position of this agent is ascending the hierarchy of the field from the subject of power to the one wielding power; it is worth noting that the process is indefinite and that the agent could be wielding power and subject to power at the same time.

As indicated in Table 3.1, the indefinite progression in a field and the implied desire for recognition suggest that the preceding situation could be analysed from the perspective of hierarchical accountability. The subjection to senior academics represents the junior's recognition of the senior. Motivated by the "natural" desire for recognition, the strategy the junior academics might adopt would be the struggle for others' recognition through promotion - to be hierarchically accountable according to the promotion criteria. As discussed in Section 3.2.6, the desire for recognition is not satisfied once and for all but is constant – it "carries one further and further onto the ground of others' expectations" – "the rituals of hierarchical accountability" (Roberts, 1991, p. 358).

Moreover, as discussed in Section 3.2.5, analogous to Roberts' (1991) understanding of accounting information, the promotion criteria play a central role in constructing academics' hierarchical accountability. Through the lens of the promotion criteria, academic performance is made visible. The quantified and comparable results and the articulated rewards encourage academics to achieve the performance which count. The promotion criteria have become the mirror through which academics are viewed, judged and compared and through which academics could view themselves and their relations to others - "It is in this way that the routines of hierarchical accountability individualize, for they produce a nervous preoccupation with the image of self as an object of use, which is either indifferent to others, or conceives of others only as competitors from whom one must differentiate oneself" (Roberts, 1991, p. 363). This may be the way in which the promotion criteria work on and among academics; since from a Bourdieusian perspective, both the dominant capitals and the higher positions of the hierarchy in a field are scarce – academics need to struggle with (be competitive to) each other to secure themselves.

Paradoxically, the rewards are efficacious to motivate academics to do "countable" research. Therefore, the aim to develop the country through improving research might have been realised. However, the problem is that their research may be useless or even detrimental for the benefits of the country.

6.2.1.2 Benefiting the Country?

Returning to the discussion of academic accountabilities (what do academics think they need to do), as discussed in Section 2.4.3.1, when discussing accountability, there is always a problem of being accountable to whom. Normally, "being accountable to whom" is concerned with "being judged by whom" (for example, Messner, 2009; Roberts, 1991); yet it could also be concerned with "benefiting whom". The understanding of academics' accountabilities can be laid out in terms of the beneficiaries of academic activities in the following way,

	Teaching	Research
Directly Benefit	Students	Academics *per se*
Indirectly Benefit	Whole country (including the quality life of the citizens)	Students and the Whole country (maybe only partially)

Table 6.3 Understanding and Analysis of Academic Accountabilities

From Table 6.3, one could tell that students could benefit directly from teaching and indirectly from academics' research through inspiration and improved quality of teaching materials (Deem and Lucas, 2002 and 2003; Lindsay *et al*., 2002). Students, who are regarded as the chief cornerstone of a country, are consequently the major future constructors of a country. In other words, the whole country could eventually benefit from teaching[107].

When considering the significance of research for academics, in addition to the discussion in Section 5.4.3, more discussion about the significance of research in terms of promotion can be found in Section 6.2.2.

As introduced in Sections 5.3 and 5.4.1, from the perspective of the state, the aim of research should be to build up state power and competitiveness and to help China to survive the influence of advanced countries. At the university level, this aim was

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[107] However, it is still possible for students to learn things which are detrimental in benefitting the country; for example, developing nuclear power and weapons.

emphasised in official introductory documents. For example, for Business School of the case university, the aim of research is to develop strategies, which are used to improve the managerial capacities of Chinese enterprises and the state's governance. Moreover, the relationship between research and the construction of the country has been summarised in the introduction to the case university that "…in order to satisfy the requirements of modern construction of socialism… (the case) University builds up…research institutes"[108]. In short, it has been doxa that improved research and higher education are significant for China.

As reviewed in Chapter Five, Chinese public universities must carry out the strategies of Central Government. As a result of the central strategy of developing the country by improving the quality of science, technology and education, the relationship between scientific research and the development of China is indicated as follows [109] - scientific research could benefit the country directly and indirectly through refining education.
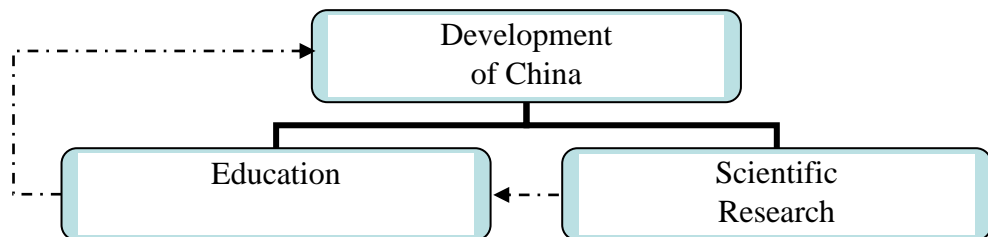
Figure 6.1 Relationships between Scientific Research, Education and the Development of the Country

However, according to academics' responses, the preceding expected relationship is only constructed between the development of China and education; and scientific

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[108] http://www.nankai.edu.cn/index.php?content=history_1&type=1 access on the 30th Nov. 2011.

[109] The dash lines connecting "Scientific research" and "Development of society" via "Education" represent the indirect influence of scientific research on the development of society, which is realised through refining education by scientific research.

research is only used to improve education. The indirect connection between the development of the country and scientific research may be only a matter of time. However, the instrumental interest in research outcomes implied in the promotion criteria[110] have given rise to the attention on what academics can gain from research rather than any long run strategy for research. Reminded by the academic "tricks" discussed in Chapters Five and the disconnection between scientific research and the development of China, the instrumental orientation in research could have been imposed through the promotion criteria in the way of "playing upon the essentially private self-interested concerns of individual success and failure" (Roberts, 1991, p. 366). In other words, the intention for academics to carry out research is highly likely to benefit themselves rather than the country[111].

The disconnected relationship between research and the development of the country can also be analysed through the lens of Institutionalism. From the perspective of management, one of the institutions in Chinese academia is that the regulations of Chinese universities must conform to Central Government strategies. From the perspective of Central Government, their strategies are to adopt the metrics which determine the improvement of research on the basis of, for example, the increased volumes of SCI papers; yet to implement the incentive mechanism to encourage academics to improve their research. As introduced in Section 5.4.3, in the case university, two aspects are incarnated in the managerial rules – the practices of the promotion criteria and the performance-related salary. These managerial rules (regulations) are used to regulate and guarantee the performance of academic activities. From the perspective of academics, the implication of the institution is that they must comply with the official regulations in order to be socially accepted and have a social position. Their academic routines are to regulate themselves by the managerial rules. The disconnection between research and the development of the

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[110] The central strategy to development the country through science and education is implemented on the university level as the promotion criteria, which pay onerous attention on research performance. The onerous requirements of research could give rise to the lack of concern with teaching; this could have marred the "development of society".

[111] This is not concluding that if the two are linked it is almost coincidental. This thesis emphasizes the consequences of the instrumental interests of research.

country might be an institutional problem arising from the design of the managerial rules.

6.2.1.3 Guru's Influences

In addition to the consequences of the instrumental interests of research, the influence of gurus in promoting research in their own arenas could mean that "dead-end" scientific research projects may be pursued.

The central strategy is implemented through granting research performance-related funds, assessing research performance by seemingly objective metrics and gurus' opinions. The authority to determine the quality of the research, research topics and the allocation of research funding was handed from politicians to professionals (gurus). This represents the official recognition of gurus' expertise; nevertheless, Central Governmental plays a key role in gurus' decision making. On the one hand, the political preferences are always dominant particularly in some critical cases[112]; this alludes to a situation that in order to get governmental support (research funding and resources), gurus' opinions could have been tuned to be consistent with the political preference[113]. On the other hand, gurus may promote some research topics in their arenas and draw political attention in order to gain governmental support.

As discussed previously, from a Bourdieusian perspective, the influence of a guru in a field is closely related to his holding of the field-specific capitals. Accompanied by the preceding understanding of "habitus" and "illusio", the power of capitals might drive gurus further and further to collect more capitals[114]. In order to maintain their

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[112] For example, the plan to construct the Three Gorges Dam was opposed by many experts due to its disastrous effects on environment, wild animals and cultural attractions. However, Central Government wanted to launch this project to promote modernisation and national pride; the project was eventually passed as expected (two third in favour and one third against and abstentions through voting at National People's Congress).

[113] There might be experts who have the same opinion as the government. In the case of the Three Gorges Dam, the chief project engineer *Yanzheng Wei* spent his whole career life to promote this project.

[114] Gurus' power "stems from the attainment of positions which govern the reproduction of the corps" (Bourdieu, 1988, p. 84). In addition, "…intellectuals…are dominant, in so far as they hold the power and privileges conferred by the possession of cultural capital and even, at least as far as certain of

privileged positions, gurus must make sure their arenas are always highly valued. Even though gurus' are always portrayed as neutral, this is not necessarily the case. From the perspective of the desire for recognition, the recognition of gurus is reflected through their authority over research (equally, the power of capitals), which is hard to resist. In order to achieve constant recognition, gurus need to make sure that attention is paid to their own research arenas. In this respect, gurus may be subject to a potential conflict between maintaining "unbiased opinions" and creating a "vested fad" through their influence.

In addition, according to Steinmetz (2006), the reason for Bourdieu to complement his category of "cultural" capital with "symbolic" capital is that both the dominated and the dominant search for recognition. The influence of gurus on junior staff in terms of controlling their academic career paths reflects the symbolic feature of gurus' capitals since it "enables forms of domination which imply dependence on those who can be dominated by it, since it only exists through the esteem, recognition, belief, credit and confidence of others" (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 166). When considering the influence of gurus on the state (this represents the state's recognition of gurus) in terms of determining the importance of particular research topics, Steinmetz's (2006) understanding of symbolic capital complements Bourdieu's understanding of symbolic capital, such that it "…can be perpetuated only so long as it succeeds in generating a system of mutual interdependence in which all the actors in the field depend on recognition from all of the others and grant all of the others recognition – even if this is recognition of an inferior (or superior) status" (p. 454).

When considering the supposed impartiality of gurus, one could draw upon "habitus" and "illusio" according to which Bourdieu states that the "mind is structured according to the structures of the world in which you play, everything will seem obvious and the question of knowing if the game is 'worth the candle' will not even asked" (1998, p. 77); in other words, the recognition from the dominated and the dominant could have disabled gurus from objectively reflecting their own decisions.

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them are concerned, the possession of a volume of cultural capital great enough to exercise power over cultural capital" (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 145).

From the perspective of the influence of gurus, the preceding discussion merely suggests a possible origin of detrimental research. Therefore, one could not simply conclude that gurus' determinations are always in their interests or their determinations would necessarily drive academia away from benefiting the country[115].

6.2.1.4 Desiring Recognition from the Country and Students

Returning to academics' understandings of their own accountabilities, apart from teaching and research, there are other accountabilities mentioned by some academics.

Respondent	Title	Other Understandings of Academic Accountabilities
Bu 1	Associate Professor	"fulfil trust from the Party and the state, to satisfy students' expectations and the reputation of N University"
Bu 2	Associate Professor	"…live up to students' expectations"
Bu 3	Associate Professor	"…the accountability of working in N University is to operate according to university regulations…"

Table 6.4 Other Understandings of Individual Accountabilities

"Bu 1" and "Bu 2"'s use of the words, "trust", "expectations" and "reputation" suggest their desire for recognition and therefore suggest an analysis from a psychoanalytic perspective. Drawing upon Lacanian theory, Roberts (2005) argues the purpose of the social dynamic of control "…to secure the self by seeking to make oneself into the object of the other's desire and thereby to complete oneself in the gaze of the other" (pp. 630-631). Different from the preceding discussion of hierarchical accountability, through the lens of Roberts' (2005) understanding of Lacanian theory, "Bu 1" and "Bu 2"'s responses reflected an "interdependent" (socialising) form of accountability, which builds different senses of relations to others. It is a sense of mutual dependence rather than being recognised through

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[115] Because it is difficult to conclude exactly what benefits society; when considering the impact of research, the influence of research in pure science and engineering is probably easier to determine than the social science one. In addition, in China, there is doxa that in order to maintain societal steadiness and effective control, people had better not to be enlightened. From the political perspective, research in social science (for example, discussing and arguing the democracy and human rights) may be regarded as not necessarily benefiting the whole society.

satisfying internalised instrumental interests that "Self is confirmed…in a way that simultaneously acknowledges and articulates the interdependence of self and other" (Roberts, 1991, p. 363). According to "Bu 1" and "Bu 2"'s responses, one could learn that they desired recognition from students. Students were their "account demanders"; however, they were also subject to higher authority – the state. In addition, the "positive attitudes" embedded within the significant words in their responses suggest an internalised "socialising" form of accountability that they could have shaped their own behaviours according to the possible impacts of their actions on others. Since generally speaking, people will feel badly about the opposites of "trust", "expectations" and "reputations", which means "Bu 1" and "Bu 2" will make sure to do what they need to do (what they think they need to do) in order to avoid the sanctions of neglecting their accountabilities.

As discussed in Section 2.4.3.1, these accountabilities may be useful in arguing the interdependence of self and others (and even useful in discussing the possibility of implementing "accounterability"). They could perhaps redeem the lack of moral concern through reminding one's conscience orders, because "imparting knowledge and educating people" is Chinese academic mantra that academics' instrumental interests might by masked temporarily by the mantra; from another perspective, this form of accountability may merely be a soft form of the hierarchical form of accountability since there are no peers free from the hierarchical requirements (Roberts, 1996 and 2001). The following discussion about the significance of the promotion criteria might help to supply a deeper understanding.

"Bu 3"'s understanding of his accountability is highly institutionalised. On the basis of the preceding review of Institutionalism, his response could be regarded as a "standard answer" (institution – he must comply with the official regulations; routine – he need to regulate himself through the managerial rules). Analogously, from a Bourdieusian perspective, his response suggested that in the case university "to operate according to university regulations…" might be his habitus which could be used to understand his scholarly activities. However, this speculation needs more information about the context for a deeper analysis. This context will be developed in the following sections.

The aim of this section was to discuss the impact of the promotion criteria on academics' understandings of accountabilities and to analyse the construction of such accountabilities from theoretical perspectives. On the basis of Chapter Five, the impact of the promotion criteria was believed to be very significant. However, most answers were highly consistent in mainly emphasising "imparting knowledge and educating people". In addition to suggesting the influence of doxa (the moral consideration of being academics) in China, this result might suggest a reason for their denials of the impact of the promotion criteria. The following sections will draw upon the preceding theoretical methodologies to discuss the extent to which academics were subject to the promotion criteria.

6.2.2 Implication of the Promotion Criteria[116]

The promotion criteria and the regulations about the promotion process help to construct and maintain the state's unchallengeable authority; in this respect, these regulations reflect the "symbolic capital" of the state in terms of its domination of Chinese universities.

In the case university, during the promotions application process, applicants need to bring their materials (for example, publications and certificates) to a specialised administrative department in another public university to have them stamped before submission. This amounts to an official recognition of their achievements. For applicants, in addition to satisfying the requirements of research performance, there are official procedures to approve the value of research outcomes. This official requirement of the approved materials can be analysed from the perspective of "symbolic capitals"; since the requirement counts on the conformity of applicants. In other words, the official domination of the application procedure also depends on "those who can be dominated by it". The symbolic feature of the official regulations is reflected in the recognition and conformity of academics[117].

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[116] Relevant interview questions are Q1e., Q2a. and Q3a., which are listed in Table 4.1.

[117] The notion of "cultural capital" is used to analyse ordinary academics' (not gurus') particular behaviour because academic production results in various forms of cultural capital; senior academics'

From an institutional perspective, in the case university, academics' shared taken-for-granted assumptions as Chinese academics and their ways of doing things are regulating themselves according to university regulations including carrying out recognised academic performance and following official application processes. This assumption and the way of being academics make sure they are identified as academics in public universities and therefore in appropriate relationships with the management and other academics.

From a Bourdieusian perspective, the position of the hierarchy in a field is determined by the species of capitals due to their implications to their possessors in wielding power, influencing and existing (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). In academia, "social capitals"[118] can be understood as the connections to academic resources (academic networking) and it is influential in terms of reproducing economic and cultural capitals. Academics' conformity with the official regulations reflects their commitment to the value of social capitals.

The analysis from the above institutional and Bourdieusian perspectives both suggest the significance of the desire for recognition, which dialectically determines the symbolic feature of the regulations in terms of being recognised by academics and the domination of them. On the one hand, the desire for recognition drives academics to maintain their existence through conforming to the regulations, which reflects academics' recognition and the domination of the regulations; on the other hand, the domination of the regulations reinforces the sense of academics' existence and may further evoke academics' desire for recognition.

When attempting to analyse the conformity with the regulations, the symbolic features may not, on the surface, appear to be significant. This is analogous to the invisibility of disciplines.

(gurus') capital can be regarded as symbolic capital from the perspective of being recognised by the state and junior academics and deciding the importance of particular research topics, which have been discussed in Section 6.2.1.

[118] Social capitals are defined as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationship of mutual acquaintance or recognition" (Bourdieu, 1986).

The generation of disciplinary power is normally understood from the perspectives of the invisibility of disciplines and the visibility of subjects' performance; disciplinary power normally works in the form of constructing a self-disciplined self[119].

In order to understand the symbolism of regulations in China, a Foucauldian notion of another type of power – sovereign power, may be relevant. According to Foucault, sovereign power and disciplinary power are different -

> "The problems to which the theory of sovereignty was addressed were in effect confined to the general mechanisms of power, to the way in which its forms of existence at the higher level of society influenced its exercise at the lowest levels…In effect, the mode in which power was exercised could be defined in its essentials in terms of the relationship sovereign-subject. But…we have the…emergence, or rather the invention, of a new mechanism of power possessed of highly specific procedural techniques…which is also, I believe, absolutely incompatible with the relations of sovereignty…It is a type of power which is constantly exercised by means of surveillance rather than in a discontinuous manner by means of a system of levies or obligations distributed over time. It presupposes a tightly knit grid of material coercions rather than the physical existence of a sovereign…This non-sovereign power, which lies outside the form of sovereignty, is disciplinary power" (Foucault, cited in Boyle, 1997, p. 177)[120].

However, sovereign power and disciplinary power, to some extent, are overlapping and related in China. The official regulations stand for the political authority and therefore could be regarded as sovereign. Due to the knowledge of the management

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[119] The generation of disciplinary power could also be understood from the perspective of recognition. According to Foucault, the disciplinary domination is pre-set (for example, institutionally set) rather than determined by the subjects' recognition of discipline. However, being a disciplined self could be resulting from their recognition of (and conformity with) discipline and their desires for being recognised by discipline (in Foucauldian words, their recognition of discipline may result from their constantly being seen by discipline). The dialectical relationship between the desire for recognition and the conformity with discipline could develop into a form of self-discipline.

[120] Michel Foucault, Two Lectures, in MICHEL FOUCAULT, POWER/KNOWLEDGE: SELECTED INTERVIEWS AND OTHER WRITINGS, 1972-1977, 78, 103-105 (Colin Gordon ed. & Colin Gordon et al. trans., 1980).

of civil affairs, people obey the regulations in order to avoid sanctions for rebellion. In other words, Chinese conformity is determined not only by the constant surveillance but also the management of the sovereign. This is the meeting point of these two types of power since in China the effect of constant surveillance is not separable from the sovereign management. The sovereign is recognised by Chinese people and therefore guarantees its control previously through its direct management and nowadays through its distant control by the constant surveillance of official regulations and the self-disciplined Chinese people.

The preceding analyses gesture towards a comparison between the Bourdieusian, Foucauldian and institutional theories which is demonstrated as follows in Table 6.5.

Perspectives Breakdowns	Bourdieusian	Foucauldian	Institutionalism
Conformity with the Regulations	Habitus	Disciplined self	Routine
Desire for Recognition	Commitment to the value of capitals	Subjectivity	Institution
Power Relations	Position in the hierarchy in a field	Compulsory visibility by constant invisible surveillance	An institutional organisation

Table 6.5 Comparison between Bourdieusian, Foucauldian and Institutionalism

In summary, from the Bourdieusian and Institutional perspectives one could argue that conformity with the regulations is a field (institution)-specific way to behave; through a Foucauldian lens, academics' conformity could be understood as the effect of an individualised and internalised context-specified discipline. Analyses from the preceding theoretical perspectives are suggestive of the significance of the desire for recognition to the power relations and academics' mode of behaviour in Chinese academia. As demonstrated in Table 6.5, one could also recognize the significance of the "desire for recognition" as a means of linking thoughts of the individual and the institutional perspectives. In this respect, the "desire for recognition" is foundational to developing the theoretical framework.

When considering the discussion about the impact of the promotion criteria, their implications to academics can be classified into three types[121]. Firstly, academics regarded the promotion criteria as standards which motivate them. Secondly, the promotion criteria work as a handbook, which outlines their aims and work priorities. Thirdly, the promotion criteria work as an elimination tool, which implies the sanctions for not meeting the requirements[122]. For example,

Respondent	Bio 2	Bio 4
Title	Associate Professor	Lecture
Type 1 "willing conformity"	"…a target to guide, supervise and encourage me to fill the gap between my current level and the target"	"No other means other than the targets to get myself recognised when working in a university"
Respondent	Bio 10	Bio 11
Title	Professor	Associate Professor
Type 1 "willing conformity"	"…encourages me to improve my professional work"	"…an approval of my work"
Respondent	Bu 2	C 4
Title	Associate Professor	Associate Professor
Type 2 "mechanical conformity"	"the objective of research"	"…need to prioritise my research "
Respondent	Bio 7	Bu 1
Title	Professor	Associate Professor
Type 3 "helpless conformity"	"…determine whether or not you're in or out"	"…no negotiable space in the rigid requirements"

Table 6.6 Understandings of the Promotion Criteria

Among the responses regarding the promotion criteria as standards (Type one), "Bio 4"'s responses suggested an analysis of the impact of the promotion criteria from the perspective of Roberts' (1991) understanding of the construction of accountability. For him, the promotion criteria became the mirror through which his performance was made visible for others (the university) to see, judge and compare his with others (peers). The condition, "working in a university", further ensured that the unavoidable image of himself was known in such a way that he "was" his academic

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[121] In the promotion criteria, the requirements of teaching are less onerous than that of research. This might be the reason for no responses mentioning the impact on teaching ("Bu 2" only mentioned "research"). From another perspective, this could suggest that the requirements of teaching somehow might be ignored by academics.

[122] As introduced in Section 5.4.3, some professors in the case university have been downgraded to lower grades due to their uncompetitive research performance.

performance to both himself and to the university. This may be how the accountability (to be accountable to the university) started to be incorporated into himself through the promotion criteria in regulating his sense of himself, his relation to others and his behaviour. In addition, his response reflected an academic institution that his identity was determined by his recognition of and his conformity with the promotion criteria, which would develop the way in which he would actually behave in the university.

When considering the reason for the conformity with the promotion criteria, the words "recognised" and "approval" in "Bio 4" and "Bio 11"'s responses suggested an analytical perspective of the desire for recognition. Their desires for academic ("professional") recognition and approval could make them behave with the aim of having recognisable and approvable results[123].

In addition to the preceding analysis, "Bio 4"'s response can be put together with "Bu 1"'s ("helpless conformity") since they both suggested the "authority" of the promotion criteria through the expression of "no other means" and "no negotiable space". This authority is not only capable in rendering visibility but also in reflecting a feature of the hierarchical form of accountability – the power relation between subjects and the superior (regulations). When considering the sense of self and the relations to others built by the socialising form of accountability, one could tell that being hierarchically accountable excludes a possibility of interdependence of self and other. In other words, the implied "authority" only reflects the dependence of self on the authority in the process of shaping oneself so that "the subordinate accounts for himself to the superior rather than reciprocally" (Roberts, 1991, p. 361).

Drawing upon a Foucauldian perspective, Roberts (1991) argues that "All these effects (comparing, differentiating, hierarchising, homogenising and excluding) can be seen as the product of routine accountability…The fear of exclusion somehow leads to a sort of self-absorption; it forces one back repeatedly to a concern with one's own singular survival which depends upon meeting the standards that are set and advertised through routine accountability" (p. 359). Therefore, one could

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[123] More discussion about the desire for recognition is in Section 6.2.3.

speculate on the basis of "Bio 7"'s ("helpless conformity") response in regarding the promotion criteria as elimination tool that the knowledge of the sanctions might be the reason behind her conformity with the promotion criteria.

When considering "Bio 2", "Bio 10" ("willing obedience") and "C 4" ("mechanical obedience")'s responses in regarding the promotion criteria as standards and a handbook to guide their work, their responses suggested their recognition of the promotion criteria. According to the analysis of the symbolic feature of the official regulations in the first half of this section, their recognition (which dialectically determines the domination of the promotion criteria) could be the reason for their conformity with the promotion criteria.

In the preceding analysis, the impacts of promotion criteria were analysed through academics' understandings of them. When considering their impact on academic activities, one might argue that teaching might be ignored by academics due to the much less onerous requirements for teaching than that of research. However, on the basis of the discussion about Chinese doxa in academic accountability, it is worth noticing academics' attitudes toward teaching. In addition to understanding the impact of the (onerous requirements of research in) the promotion criteria on academics, the discussion of the attitudes towards teaching might disclose more about academics' situation under such promotion criteria.

The responses to the question concerning the impact of the promotion criteria on teaching[124] can be classified into two types. Firstly, it resulted in less serious attitudes towards teaching than research; secondly, the attitudes towards teaching were not influenced by the proportions of requirements for teaching and research in the promotion criteria. For example,

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[124] Relevant interview question is Q3a, which is listed in Table 4.1.

Respondent	Title	Type	Attitudes towards teaching
Bio 1	Professor	1	"satisfying the requirements for teaching hours; pursuing excellent quality of research"
Bio 4	Lecture	1	"guided by the onerous requirements for research…less investment in teaching"
Bio 6	Associate Professor	1	"…take research seriously; since it is important for my development…my teaching would be better if I invested more…"
C 3	Associate Professor	1	"In order to be promoted, I may reduce time and effort invested in teaching"
Bio 8	Associate Professor	2	"…it does not influence me a lot, as I've seen through the fame and wealth…I just want to accomplish my own work and not disappoint my conscience"
Bio 10	Professor	2	"no influence"
Bio 11	Associate Professor	2	"no influence…since my natural academic accountability is imparting knowledge and educating people"

Table 6.7 Impact of the Promotion Criteria on Teaching

When considering the first-type responses, one might argue that the onerous requirements for research had formed an attitude towards teaching and formed a type of academic behaviour in terms of teaching and research. In other words, the reinforced weight in the requirements for research had determined how academics need to think and behave. In addition, the extent to which the promotion criteria could have impacted on academics could be understood from the following two responses which were not put in Table 6.7 –

"I always feel pressure from promotion. Once upon a time, I was given a heavy teaching workload, which occupied my time (for research) so I worried a lot…" (Bio 2).

"It is quite easy to fulfil the requirements for teaching, but there is pressure from research" (Bu 2).

According to "Bio 2" and "Bu 2"'s responses, one could argue that their pressures were from the "onerous requirements for research". In line with this, their words – "worried" and "pressure" suggested an analysis from the Foucauldian perspective

that they might be pushed by an internalised discipline[125]. Specifically speaking, in order to meet the onerous requirements for research, some academics might have judged and regulated their performances by the requirements as if they were under the surveillances from themselves.

However, with regard to the second-type responses, the promotion criteria seemed less influential on some academics. Bourdieu and Wacquant's (1992) notion about "indifference" may be relevant in this respect. They argue that -

> "To be indifferent is to be unmoved by the game: like Buridan's donkey, this game makes no difference to me. Indifference is an axiological state, an ethical state of non-preference as well as a state of knowledge in which I am not capable of differentiating the stakes proposed…To be interested is to accord a given social game that what happens in it matters, that its stakes are important (another word with the same root as interest) and worth pursuing" (p. 116).

For example, in "Bio 11"'s response, she emphasised her accountability as an academic in teaching; this might be her axiological and ethical state of "not preferring" the stakes of research and therefore explain her "immunity" to the promotion criteria. This perspective might also explain "Bio 8"'s "indifference"; not only due to his claim to have no interest in the rewards of promotion (fame and wealth), but also due to the prioritised status of education (and research) in his understanding of academic accountability[126]. However, the notion of "indifference" seems conflicted with the features of a field – organised by the struggles over the capitals. There might be no agents that are really "indifferent" to the field's capitals; otherwise they would have been excluded from the field. Therefore, one might ask if this is the case, how "Bio 8" and "Bio 11" could survive. The understandings of "Bio 8" and "Bio 11"'s responses will be further rationalised through analysing their

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[125] The analysis of "Bu 2"'s "pressure" would be carried further on the basis of her opinions about the effectiveness of the performance metrics and the attractiveness of promotion. The conclusion to the analysis of "Bu 2" is in Section 6.2.4.

[126] "…to be a qualified normal university teacher and accomplish my own job in teaching and research".

opinions of promotion (including the effectiveness of the performance metrics and the attractiveness of promotion), which will be carried out in Sections 6.2.3 and 6.2.4.

When considering "Bio 10"'s situation, the limited expression in his response left more space to understand his attitude towards teaching which was not "influenced" by the promotion criteria. For example, in addition to the perspective of "indifference", as a professor, his academic position might be the reason for his "immunity" that he could have been secured by the holding of capitals. However, in line with the aporia of being indifferent to the game of the field, he might not be able to survive. Accompanied by his understanding of the promotion criteria[127], he was not unmoved by the game. "Bio 10"'s "immunity" could be reflected his inability to see that he had internalised the rules.

In summary, various understandings of the promotion criteria were analysed according to Bourdieusian, Foucauldian and institutional theories from the perspective of the generation of the power of the promotion criteria. Drawing upon the comparisons in Table 6.5, the desire for recognition (which exists in different forms in different theories) might be a significant perspective from which one could analyse the impact of the regulations. In addition, the disclosure of academics' attitudes towards teaching enriched the understanding of the impact of the promotion criteria. In the next section, academics' perspectives of the evaluation tools will be analysed to enrich the discussion about the generation of the power of the requirements for research.

6.2.3 Effectiveness of Evaluation Tools in Measuring Research Performance[128]

On the basis of the preceding discussion about the onerous requirements for research, their impact could be further considered through a discussion of the effectiveness of the performance metrics.

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[127] "…encourages me to improve my professional work" in Table 6.6.

[128] Relevant interview question is Q2c. and Q3b., which are listed in Table 4.1.

As set out earlier in Sections 5.3.3 and 5.4.2, "SCI x.x"[129] has become one of the most important indicators representing the quality of published papers. However, does it mean that this indicator is effective in representing research quality? As discussed in Section 6.2.2, some academics represent their recognition of the promotion criteria as their guidance. In order to understand the origins of such recognition (from their effectiveness in representing research quality and/or from the rewards of promotion), one should note academics' perspectives about the evaluation tools used by the promotion criteria. In addition, in order to understand the impact of the promotion criteria, one should also note that there were some academics who indicated a mistrust of the evaluation tools but claimed to conform to the promotion criteria (for example, some responses listed in Table 6.9).

The reasons for the effectiveness of the evaluation tools can be classified into three types. Firstly, they are seen as numerical, objective and fair. Secondly, they are commonly and broadly adopted. Thirdly, they are currently the best available evaluation tools. For example,

Respondent	Title	Type	Attitudes towards the research measurements	Reasons for their attitudes
Bio 5	Professor	1	Agree	"…numerical…comparable…the results are quantifiable and can be used to evaluate"
Bio 6	Associate Professor	1	Agree	"basically complete and are evaluated by a third party"
Bio 10	Professor	1	Agree	"scientific laws"
C 2	Associate Professor	1	Agree	"fair for everyone"
Bio 1	Professor	2	Agree	"(the measurement) has become a way of thinking…has been a general trend"
Bio 4	Lecturer	2	Agree	"both international and commonly accepted…no better standards other than this"
C 1	Associate Professor	2/3	Agree	"keeps up with the times"
Bu 3	Associate Professor	3	Agree	"…could not come up with any better ways"
H 1	Lecturer	3	Agree	"…more difficult to assess one's academic level without these quantified indexes"

Table 6.8 Positive Attitudes towards the Research Measurements Tools

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[129] "x.x" stands for the impact factor of the journal publishing the paper.

From the perspective of Roberts' (1991) understanding of the construction of accountability, the first-type respondents could be expected to be hierarchically accountable to the university due to the visibility of their performance rendered by the promotion criteria. Their reasons for considering the measurements to be effective are suggestive of their belief in the capacity of the measurement to present (seemingly) objective and fair information (even though it is not necessarily true)[130]. This is similar to that of "mythical"[131] accounting numbers which execute power over individuals through rendering them visible. Another similarity between the information generated by accounting and performance metrics is that they are both seemingly independent of the interests of both information producers and users. The performance metrics are effective in offering "instrumental images" of academic performance; once these images are accepted by academics, they can be used to shape academics' activities through the promotion criteria and the rewards of promotion[132]. This may be how academics start to be hierarchically accountable to the promotion criteria.

Before analysing the second type of responses, one should review the context of the adoption of particular performance metrics. As introduced in Chapter Five, the main reason for adopting SCI (and impact factors) was Chinese political eagerness to develop the country – the Chinese government believed that the developed status of western countries is positively related to their advanced levels of science and technology. SCI was therefore adopted due to its origins in the west as a symbol representing advanced measurement in "advanced" countries. The preceding review may gesture towards the use of an institutional perspective to analyse the second-type of responses. Since the second-type understandings of the effectiveness of the metrics are consistent with the state recognition of the "advanced" SCI; consequently, academics are subject to a compulsory visibility of their research performance

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[130] The objective image of performance metrics is constructed through involving a neutral third party as decision makers. However, as discussed in Chapter Two, the objectivity is hardly achievable.

[131] "Mythical" in a Barthsian sense that signs are rubbed of their history and became "natural" and powerfully symbolic.

[132] This perspective could also help to explain why for academics had less serious attitudes towards teaching, which were discussed in the preceding section.

rendered by SCI. In addition, drawing upon Roberts' perspective which was used to analyse the first-type of responses, SCI could shape academics' research activity through its seeming objectivity. Its seeming objectivity in the analysis of the second-type of responses lies in the institutional recognition of it; even though the recognition originates from Chinese leaders' assumptions. The effects resulting from SCI's seeming objectivity and the regulated academics' research activities suggest a Bourdieusian perspective that the symbolic requires an interdependence between the dominant and the dominated. The domination of SCI is determined by academics' (and management's) recognition of it and the dominant SCI (through being dominated) reinforces academics' recognition of SCI. On the basis of this analysis, it is highly likely that participants categorised in the second category would conform to the promotion criteria.

The issue of "desire for recognition" is involved in the preceding interconnected perspectives. In the preceding discussion about the power of capitals (see Sections 3.2.6 and 6.2.1), of gurus, of the official regulations and now of the SCI indicators, academics are analysed as desiring recognition. This may be that people want positive reflection, and the positive images created by, for example, holding certain species of capitals, gaining socially granted status and having good-quality research. In other words, people desire the positive way in which others' recognitions reflect them and this may be the reason for their constant effort to satisfy requirements since they are rewarded by recognition[133].

The promotion criteria as the foundation of hierarchical accountability face the same criticisms in constructing twisted and instrumental senses of self and relations to others – academics are recognised on the basis of, for example, the number of published papers, the amount of research funds, and the hierarchy of their academic positions; consequently, academics' relations with peers may become, for example, competitive over resources or instrumentally co-operative. Accompanied by the

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[133] In Table 6.6, "Bio 4" and "Bio 11"'s responses, ""No other means other than the targets to get myself recognised when working in a university" and "…an approval of my work" suggested their desire for recognition by the promotion criteria.

merit payment scheme (see Table 5.7 in Section 5.4.3), academics could feel "priced" according to their salary.

Returning to the analysis of the third-type of responses, they contained a significant implication that research performance was measurable and must be measured. In these responses, one could argue that the instrumental interest of academic activities could have been incorporated into academics' understandings of research – or into their subjectivities.

On the basis of the preceding analysis, one may conclude that academics are disciplined to be positive about the measurements. However, there were other research participants with different perspectives of the metrics[134].

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[134] Even though "Bio 11" sidestepped this question and responded that "This kind of measurements does not influence my teaching or research"; she admitted that "To some extent, the quantified evaluation motivates me to do more research".

Respondent	Title	Attitudes towards the measurements	Reactions for the measurements	Reasons for the reactions
Bio 1	Professor	"not fair"	"no way to break through (but to conform)"	"redundancy will be the only consequence"
Bio 2	Associate Professor	"inconsistent in representing research quality; resulting in heavy attention on research project and research fund"	"conform according to my circumstance"	"it is a motivation…about improved research…"
Bio 8	Associate Professor	"a negative relationship between the quantity and quality of SCI papers"	"not influence my research work; the only influence may be no promotion"	
Bu 1	Associate Professor	"no sense…to agree or disagree"	"…the only thing I can do is to conform and act accordingly"	"the subject of investigation"
Bu 2	Associate Professor	"…the publication of papers in some Chinese core journals is not determined by their quality but by personal relationships, money or submission tricks"[135]	"Sometimes, I am indeed resistant to research" ("originally a pressure…now…my driving force")	(The contradictory opinions of the measurements would be discussed in Section 6.2.4)
C 3	Associate Professor	"…do not agree"	"…must conform to it"	"…in order to survive"
M 1	Associate Professor	"…I disagree"	"nothing I can do (but to conform)"	"under the current political framework and promotion regulations"

Table 6.9 Negative Attitudes towards Research Performance Measurements

Drawing upon the preceding perspective which analysed the power of performance metrics, for "Bio 1"[136], "Bio 2"[137], "Bio 8"[138] and "Bu 2"[139], one could perhaps argue that they would be able to eschew the power of performance metric since they distrusted the information it generated. One could accept "Bio 8" and "Bu 2"'s responses – "not influence my research work; the only influence may be no

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[135] According to "Bu 2"'s response, Chinese academia is not a level field wherein papers published by prestigious journals and successful project applications may be due to supervisors' influence on particular academic committees. Her opinion can be used to consider the influence of Chinese academic gurus.

[136] "not fair".

[137] "inconsistent in representing research quality; resulting in heavy attention on research project and research fund".

[138] "a negative relationship between the quantity and quality of SCI papers".

[139] "…the publication of papers in some Chinese core journals is not determined by their quality but by personal relationships, money or submission tricks".

promotion" and "Sometimes, I am indeed resistant to research". However, this was not the case for "Bio 1" and "Bio 2" - "no way to break through (but to obey)" and "obey according to my circumstance".

When considering "Bio 1"'s conformity to Roberts' (1991) understanding of a Foucauldian perspective on the effects of discipline in particular in terms of exclusion, he suggests that –

> "Exclusion…Its real power…is…in its impact on those who witness the exclusion. For them it is an example of what might happen. It traces out a possible future and thereby reinforces the weight of the standards by which they are judged. It reminds them of the conditional nature of their membership. It reminds them that their security depends upon their utility" (p. 359).

In the case of "Bio 1", the fear of exclusion might be the reason for her conformity. This is reflected through her response that "redundancy will be the only consequence"[140] (see Section 5.4.3). In Chinese culture, a social position is highly important; therefore, exclusion is very tough for individuals since it represents an "unaccepted social status". Yet, exclusion also represents a negative image reflected through the promotion criteria. In short, exclusion represents a destroyed image from both a social and an individual perspective. In "Bio 1"'s case, one could argue that sanctions are not only the way in which the requirements for academic performance affect and represent her, but they also reinforce the weight of the promotion criteria and therefore maintain her conformity. According to the case of "Bio 1", one could perhaps argue that the sanctions (redundancy) could reinforce the weight of the standards to the extent that the subject could tolerate the negative image reflected through the metrics – in a Chinese context, being socially accepted and recognised are more important than her perspective.

Similarly, "Bio 2"'s conformity might also be analysed from the perspective of the effects of the performance metrics in excluding academics. Even though "Bio 2"

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[140] "C 3"could be put together with "Bio 1" to be analysed from the perspective of the sanction of not meeting the promotion criteria due to his reason that "…in order to survive".

thought that the quality of the performance which was approved by the metrics was not always consistent; her understanding could be understood as that sometimes, the performance metrics are not effective but sometimes they are. The opposed understandings were tempered by her understanding of the promotion criteria as a standard (which was listed in Table 6.6), and she recognised the effects of the promotion criteria as a way of encouraging academics to improve their research. One could suggest that her conformity resulted from her recognition of the "bright side" of the promotion criteria; from the perspective of the desire for recognition, her conformity could be understood as resulting from her desire for a positive image reflected through the promotion criteria.

Analogously, "Bu 2"'s resistance might be from her nonrecognition of the performance metrics. She was unwilling to be reflected through the metrics; since what she resisted might be the image that would be reflected through the metrics[141]. Here is the moment, at which academics are about to substitute the image of themselves with their research performance. Even though academics' resistance might mean that they had not internalised the performance metrics, it might merely a matter of time before they do; since there are no other commonly accepted reflections (recognitions) other than the metrics and people need to be (are used to being) recognised.

From a paradoxical perspective, academics' resistance may simply reflect that the impact of the performance metrics has been individualised and internalised. One might challenge this perspective because if one has internalised something, he/she would not (claim to) resist it. However, people obtain greater satisfaction from challenging themselves since it would bring along a more solid sense of existence and superiority. For example, Roberts (2005) sets out an understanding of workplace resistance, paradoxically, as employees' desire for management's recognition. In order to eschew the abject image (reflected through management's refusal to recognise employees' existence and capability and management's refusal to admit their need and dependence of the employees), employees might resist. Following Lacan, Roberts (2005) suggests that this resistance serves to empower the

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[141] "Bu 2"'s resistance would be further discussed in the following section.

management since their resistance assumed that management have what they need and if only resistance could persuade the management to give it to them. Even though the management may take steps to temper employees' resistance, which seems animated by the desire to eschew their abject images, the management are still in control. The understanding of workplace resistance is consistent with the above analysis in terms of the power of the "standards" "to recognise". But the steps taken by the management in Roberts' (2005) example may not happen in China, which might be explained through the following analysis of "Bu 1" and "M 1"'s responses.

"Bu 1" and "M 1"'s conformity could be analysed from the perspective of institutional influences. The reasons for their reactions were they thought they were "the subject of investigation" and "under the current political framework and promotion regulations". "Bu 1"'s understanding of his status and "M 1"'s mention of her circumstance reveal that they must comply with the official regulations in order to secure themselves. Within this institution, one could argue that academics could hardly resist. Because, firstly, on the basis of the cruel state treatment to previous political campaigns, they may not dare to resist overtly neither individually nor collectively; secondly, they have no resources, for example, institutional protection or support; thirdly, resisting may result in social exclusion. In summary, in China, overt resistance is hardly feasible from an institutional or an individual perspective. In this respect, the management at the state or university level is unlikely to take any steps to temper the negative opinions about the performance metrics due to the unlikelihood of any threat from academics' resistance. In addition, Fleming and Spicer (2003) argue that "when we dis-identify with our prescribed social roles we often still perform them—sometimes better, ironically than if we did identify with them" (p. 160)[142]; in order to have better performance, the management at the state or university level may exaggerate the "dis-identification" by reinforcing relevant practices.

In line with the preceding analytical perspectives, "Bio 8"'s responses could perhaps be analysed from the perspectives of the desire of recognition and the construction of hierarchical accountability. "Bio 8" had similar opinions about performance metrics

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[142] The status, which is described in this quotation, will be further analysed in Section 6.3.3.

as "Bu 2". From the perspective of the construction of hierarchical accountability, in the context of Chinese academia, academics' utility is mainly determined by their research performance which is recognised through the performance metrics. In this respect, "Bio 8"'s response[143] suggested an indifference to the recognition from the performance metrics. On the basis of the preceding analysis, academics' responses could be seen through the lens of their desire for recognition in academia; for "Bio 8", one might question whether his desire was for the recognition from promotion or what he thought was his accountability? "Bio 8"'s responses seemed to suggest another type of relation to others (instead of being competitive); from Roberts' (1991) perspective, "Bio 8"'s claimed relations to others reflect the feature of the socialising form of accountability. In other words, even though "Bio 8" was physically "subject to" the performance metrics, there were possibilities for him to develop other forms of accountability than the hierarchical accountability. Within the socialising form of accountability, the value of his existence was not determined by his performance seen through the performance metrics. His claim suggested he was not interested in trying to "win", accompanied by his response to the impact of promotion criteria on teaching[144], the status of "Bio 8" seemed in contradiction to Bourdieusian theory which argues that fields are sites of social struggles (Warde, 2004). This thesis will discuss the "contradiction" between "Bio 8"'s status and Bourdieusian idea of fields in more detail in Section 6.3.3.

In this section, the discussion about the power of the promotion criteria mainly concentrates on the recognition (images) from the performance metrics. When considering the significance of the images generated by the metrics, the management should probably take careful steps to manage the performance metrics to maintain and (re)construct their power. In particular, for those mistrusting the effectiveness of the performance metrics, the management should probably start to discuss their limits more openly not only in the realm of academia but also in public. This might encourage academics (for example, "Bio 1" and "Bu 2") to react to the standards more positively and discourage short-sighted research (for example, research

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[143] "not influence my research work; the only influence may be no promotion".

[144] "…it does not influence me a lot, as I've seen through the fame and wealth…I just want to accomplish my own work and not disappoint my conscience".

generated by academic "tricks") designed to win social recognition. However, from the perspective of the management (state and university), these steps may result in tension between the short-term and long-term goals (recognisable research outcomes and healthy attitudes and understanding towards research). In addition, in China this "openness" may be seen as a threat to state supremacy. Within the current institutional framework, it seems to be impossible to make changes through overt resistance (and generally, dis-identification may generate better performance), any changes would be due to the state's "weighing and balancing" between the benefits of increased research outcomes and the risk of utilitarian attitudes towards research[145].

6.2.4 Attractiveness of Promotion[146]

As discussed in Section 6.2.2, some academics represent their recognition of the promotion criteria as guidance. In addition to understanding the origins of such recognition from the discussion of the effectiveness of the performance metrics in Section 6.2.3; in this section, the impact of the promotion criteria is discussed through the significance of the rewards of promotion for academics.

For academics, the attractiveness of promotion are revealed in the following four ways – firstly, improved welfare; secondly, an approval of capabilities; thirdly, security in terms of job and the quality of life; fourthly, easier project and research funding application (see Section 5.3.3).

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[145] This would all be due to the state's working foci. The state has different working foci at different stages. For example, education and academic performance were emphasised since the 1980s. Nowadays, the focus on environmental management for the last couples of years is followed by anti-corruption construction. The improvement to the current academic performance measurement system would be addressed if it became the working focus again.

[146] Relevant interview questions are Q2b., which is listed in Table 4.1.

Respondent	Title	Type	The attractiveness of promotion
Bio 1	Professor	3	"The importance of getting promoted is security…it is about the policy known as 'up or out', promotion guarantees an academic job"
Bio 2	Associate Professor	1/2/3	"security in terms of elderly support, medical treatment and the living allowance, recognition of my social value"
Bio 3	Professor	2/4	"…much easier to successfully apply for better projects…the title of professor represents a higher level of professionalism"
Bio 4	Lecturer	4	"…approvals…easier to have the chance to take some national projects if carrying the title of associate professor… taking a teaching position, being promoted is necessary to realise self-value…it is normal to climb the academic-title ladder from the bottom towards top…more negotiable when transferring to a lower-level university. In a word, the future will be brighter if restarting from the position of associate professor."
Bio 5	Professor	2/4	"…performance-related pay is based on research performance, which is reflected through the level of academic position… the level of academic position is the symbol of social position and social and peer approvals…National projects have requirements for the applicants' academic titles…it is necessary for those who desire higher level projects to gain promotion"
Bio 7	Professor	1/4	"1, better remuneration; 2, more opportunities for external communication; 3, easier to apply for projects (funding)"
Bio 9	Associate Professor	1/2/4	"1, easier to apply for good research projects; 2, improved salary; 3, satisfied vanity."
Bio 10	Professor	2	"…an approval of my ability and comprehensive quality...it brings increased remuneration and social position"
Bio 11	Associate Professor	1/2	"…an approval of my work and it brings an improved salary"
Bu 1	Associate Professor	1/2	"…any welfare is based on the level of academic title… (without promotion) it is common for us to feel lost or unrecognised"
Bu 2	Associate Professor	2/4	"…about honour, face; it carries more academic influence, and more opportunity to get research funding"
Bu 3	Associate Professor	2	"Remaining at the same level would make me feel guilty because of what China has done for me"
C 1	Associate Professor	2	"…I cannot bear to be left behind. If I could not have been promoted or held an academic title lower than my peers, I would choose to leave"
C 3	Associate Professor	1	"…the improved remuneration"
C 4	Associate Professor	2/1	"Firstly, the atmosphere that almost all the academics are ambitious and I do not want to be left behind. Secondly, improved remuneration. Thirdly, …holding a higher title are seen…as of a higher quality and if I am not promoted, I feel pressure from my peers"

Table 6.10 The Attractiveness of Promotion

In line with the preceding analysis, Roberts' (1991) understanding of the construction of hierarchical accountability could be used here to explain the significance of promotion to academics. Simply speaking, the management at the university level could construct a hierarchically accountable academic through

measuring him/her against reward-related requirements. The image of an accountable academic could therefore be constructed through meeting these requirements. Promotion and improved remuneration are the rewards for meeting the promotion criteria; these could be the sources for academics to determine their images.

This perspective might help to rationalise "Bio 8"'s "indifference" to promotion. Accompanied by "Bio 8"'s understanding of promotion[147] and his attitudes towards the impact of the promotion criteria[148], he was not interested in the rewards nor the image. On the basis of his distrust of the effectiveness of the performance metrics, the promotion criteria could not oblige him to conform. As discussed in Section 6.2.2, his understanding of his accountability[149] suggested an ethical stance in being a qualified teacher from the notion of Bourdieu and Wacquant's (1992) "indifference" [150] . However, his indifference seemed inconsistent with the Bourdieusian understanding of the field as a site of struggle. This finding enables reflection upon Bourdieu's theoretical work – How should one theorize actors who do not strive to reach the top of a field[151]?

In addition to clarifying "Bio 8"'s attitudes, the discussion of the attractiveness of promotion might supply a deeper understanding of "Bio 11" and "Bu 2". For example, on the basis of "Bu 2"'s responses in Tables 6.9 and 6.10, one could start to consider "Bu 2"'s contradictory attitudes towards the performance metrics from "pressure" to "driving force". In Section 6.2.2, her "pressure from promotion" was analysed from a Foucauldian perspective as the result of a disciplined self. The understanding of her pressure was enriched in Section 6.2.3 through an analysis of

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[147] "…not so attractive to me to be promoted…it is nothing…but face…I will not try hard to get it, just let it be".

[148] "…not influence me a lot, as I've seen through the fame and wealth…".

[149] "…to be a qualified normal university teacher and accomplish my own job in teaching and research".

[150] "To be indifferent is to be unmoved by the game: like Buridan's donkey, this game makes no difference to me. Indifference is an axiological state, an ethical state of non-preference as well as a state of knowledge in which I am not capable of differentiating the stakes proposed…To be interested is to accord a given social game that what happens in it matters, that its stakes are important (another word with the same root as interest) and worth pursuing" (p. 116).

[151] The discussion about the feasibility of Bourdieusian theories will be carried out in Section 6.3.3.

her mistrust of the effectiveness of the performance metrics – she would not like her image to be reflected and recognised through such a "mirror"; however, it is institutionally unlikely for her to resist. Her contradictory attitude towards the metrics as "a driving force" was in doubt until understanding about her recognition of the (rewards of) promotion. In other words, the weight of the standards which was reinforced by the rewards might have overwhelmed her ethical concerns about the quality of research. Similarly, even though "Bio 11" sidestepped a response to the author's question about the effectiveness of the performance metrics, the reason for her seemingly contradictory replies – "indifferent to the promotion criteria" and "be motivated to do more research" (see footnote 134 in Section 6.2.3 for a quick reference) might result from her recognition of the rewards of promotion. Oakes *et al*. (1998) argue that the contradiction could be understood by drawing upon the Bourdieusian understanding that actors "…are often operating within or moving between several fields in which differential capital and positions are available" (p. 266). For "Bio 11", she seemed swing between (from) the sub-fields of "teaching" and (to) "research (– promotion)", which are parts of the field of academia.

At this stage, the author should set out the understanding of "sub-field" in this thesis. The reasons for not including the review of the idea of "sub-field" in Chapter Three (the theory chapter) are, firstly, that subfields are parts of a field and they preserve the same characteristics[152]. Secondly, the activity of "teaching" is subordinate to the activity of "research" since there is no teaching fellow position in Chinese universities and teaching performance is not a key promotion criterion. One could argue that the sub-field of "teaching" does not exist since academics cannot survive by merely teaching and there is no boundary surrounding the field of "teaching" – academics have no automatic entry to the field. In summary, the field dominated by contemporary Chinese academia is a field of research, in which actors' positions are determined by their research-related capitals.

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[152] The agents who own the largest volume of particular capitals occupy the best positions on the hierarchy of the (sub) field, and could wield power and remain in control over the agents with less volume of capitals.

The discussion of the activity of "teaching" in the field of contemporary Chinese academia sheds light on the limits of the Bourdieusian perspective of field. The Bourdieusian idea focuses on actors' struggling for higher positions on the hierarchy of the field (or at least struggling to maintain their positions). One may find that this perspective of field is difficult to apply in practice due to the complexity of a field in terms of different activities. For example, in the field of a university, other than academics, there are people taking supporting roles. The characteristics of a field in terms of actors' struggle for dominant capitals can be apposite to explain actors' behaviour in their own arena – even though academics and support staff are from the same field (the university), there is no competition (defined by the Bourdieusian idea of the field) between these two types of actors. In other words, the "field" from the Bourdieusian perspective is activity-defined.

Returning to the significance of "teaching", as discussed in Section 6.2.1, the phrase "imparting knowledge and educating people" has become doxa in China, the state and university could consider setting up the sub-field of teaching through setting up positions for teaching fellows. This might help to maintain the quality of teaching and attract people who have real interests in teaching so that current academics could have the choice of either focusing on teaching or research. However, the dominant capital in the sub-field of teaching might cause problems. For example, if the better the student feedback people receive, the higher they are ranked, people may "bribe" their students through telling them exam questions in advance or being generous when marking. In other words, the dominant capitals and the strategies to obtain them could be the sources of the problem. The problematic conditions might merely be put to rights by trial and error.

When considering academics' feelings about "not being promoted", for example, "Bu 3"'s "feel guilty" and "C 1"'s "cannot bear to be left behind" (unbearable), a Foucauldian account suggests that they could have been subject to disciplinary power. In Foucault's own words,

> "He who is subject to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power, he makes them play upon himself.

He inscribed in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles" (Foucault, 1979, pp. 202-203).

Their feelings reflect that they saw (judged) themselves from the perspective of (meeting) the promotion criteria. It was as if they stand outside themselves in order to anticipate the expectations and recognition of the promotion criteria. From another perspective, since to be held accountable and the desire to be accountable can make people feel good and make others feel good about them, "Bu 3" and "C 1" could have constructed their understandings of accountabilities on the basis of meeting the promotion criteria (Douglas, 1994). Particularly, from "C 1"'s response, one could argue a sense of competitive relations to his peers and therefore, perhaps argue that he was subject to an internalised hierarchical accountability. In summary, having this feeling could suggest that the promotion criteria and the value of the "accountable image" (reflected through the promotion criteria) may be internalised. In addition to the pressure and resistance discussed in Sections 6.2.2 and 6.2.3, the feelings of guilt and "being left out" could be another representation of a disciplined self and therefore might be used to diagnose the "self-disciplined status".

In addition, Bourdieu and Wacquant's (1992) notion of capital [153] suggests a perspective from which one could reflect upon the attractiveness of promotion for academics; yet it also supplies a perspective from which one could generally understand some academics' responses [154] and therefore develop a deeper understanding of academia. From the perspective of the Bourdieusian analogy of the game, players try to win and their movements are strategically related to their capitals and their positions-taking. In the case of the field of academia, "victory" could be represented through holding the species of capitals and a superior position

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[153] "…the value of a species of capital …hinges on the existence of a game, of a field in which this competency can be employed: a species of capital is what is efficacious in a given field, both as a weapon and as a stake of struggle, that which allows its possessors to wield a power, an influence, and thus to exist, in the field under consideration, instead of being considered a negligible quantity" (p. 98).

[154] For example, "Bio 4"'s response – "it is normal to climb the academic-title ladder from the bottom towards top" and "C 4"'s response – " Firstly, the atmosphere that almost all the academics are ambitious".

to others. In other words, being promoted could be regarded as some academics' strategies to win the game.

However, in order to resolve the aporia of "indifference" set out in Sections 6.2.2 and 6.2.3, this perspective should perhaps give rise to a concern with the definition of victory in academia. This will be discussed further in the next section.

6.3   Understanding of Chinese Academia

6.3.1   Introduction

This section is concerned with the contemporary Chinese academia from the aspects of the origins and the significance of popular topics and the difference between subjects in terms of academic outcomes. In addition to building up the understanding of Chinese academia, this section will further analyzed particular academics' responses, for example, "Bio 8" and "Bio 10", through the lens of relevant theories. The analysis will help to understand the differences between academics in the same context of emphasizing research performance.

The reasons why this section focuses on academics' perspectives of particular academic phenomenon were on the one hand, in addition to developing a deeper understanding of Chinese academia, one could also reflect on academic regulations and make some policy recommendations to the state; on the other hand, one can push back against the theories in analysing academics' understandings and behaviour.

6.3.2   Understanding of "Popular" Topics in Chinese Academia

As set out in Chapter Two, Merchant (2010) contributes to the understanding of accounting research in the North America. He set out the relationship between particular accounting research, high citation rates and the aims and objectives (preferences) of prestigious journals. In order to understand the significance of "popular topics" in China, research participants were asked about their opinions of popular topics. Some Chinese academics' responses suggest that the significance of

popular topics in China produce similar consequences to those in North America. This can be seen in the responses which were classified as Type One in the following table.

Respondent	Title	Type	Relationship between Popular Topics and Promotion
Bio 5	Professor	2	"Popular topics are determined by national projects guidelines, guidelines reflect national investment"
Bio 6	Associate Professor	1	"No doubt it is easier to attract the attention of journals and more research resources"
Bio 7	Professor	1	"…journals are following the direction of research…"
Bio 10	Professor	1	"the research in popular topics definitely draws more research attention and resources and draws more attention from journals"
Bio 11	Associate Professor	1	"it is easier to get a paper published if it is in a popular field and it attracts more research attention and resources."
Bu 1	Associate Professor	1	"it is quite trendy to be around popular topics;…journals are keen to publish papers bearing popular titles as they are eager to earn more attention"
Bu 3	Associate Professor	1	"…popular topics definitely attract more peer resources."
C 1	Associate Professor	2	"…the preferences of the top journals could provide a short-cut to good research performance"
C 2	Associate Professor	1	"…the research into popular topics is of the favour of journals…"
C 3	Associate Professor	1/2	"Everyone would like to do research around popular topics, as it is easy to publish papers and apply for funding…it is easier for research in popular areas to draw the favoured attraction of journals. Meanwhile, they would attract more peer energy and resource."
C 4	Associate Professor	1	"…it attracts more attention of journals and research resource"
H 1	Lecturer	1	"…definitely for research on popular topics attracts more peer attention and resources and favour of journals."

Table 6.11 Significance of Popular Topics

In addition to the relationship between particular accounting research and journal performance, Merchant (2010) emphasises the impact of such relationships on academic behaviour in diverting research foci. This therefore gives rise to a concern with the loss of research diversity, which could be harmful to the development of academic arenas and to society. Such an impact on academics' behaviour had been implied in Table 6.11 in some of the responses, for example, "Bio 5", "C 1" and "C 3" (which were classified as Type Two).

Unlike the basis of Merchant's (2010) research, which is concerned with the type of papers published in prestigious journals, the impact of particular research on Chinese

academics was understood directly through their response to interview and questionnaire questions. For example,

Respondent	Title	Type	Impact of Popular Topics on Academics
Bio 2	Associate Professor	1	"In order to apply for projects, I may adjust my research direction according to the project requirements as projects have particular tendencies, which means applications will never be successful if not along with the trend".
Bio 5	Professor	2	"…no…have been doing what…always do;…not applying for the popular with which…not familiar"
Bio 9	Associate Professor	2	"I will focus on my direction "
Bio 10	Professor	1/2	"develop better research methods to deal with popular topics and adjust research direction to delve into creative topics which are probably unpopular but more practical or more theoretically significant"
Bio 11	Associate Professor	1	"I made some adjustments, including the selection of research material and research method. There are indeed teachers changing their research directions".
Bu 1	Associate Professor	2	"I learned a lot from previous experience. Now I hold fast to my own research area, tolerate solitude and wait for success for a little bit further persistence"
Bu 2	Associate Professor	1	"Regarding the influence of popular subjects, I will try to do research related to the popular".
Bu 3	Associate Professor	2	"…not influenced by the popular topics; …always stick to…own research direction. At most…maintain a wait-and-see attitude to a freshly popular topic if it is different"
C 1	Associate Professor	2	"…as a researcher…should stand…ground instead of looking left and right…may include the popular points in…research, but…will not deviate"
C 3	Associate Professor	1	"In order to be promoted, I may reduce time and energy invested in teaching and I will divert my research to the area where it is easier to publish paper with higher impact factor on the price of my research interest and national needs to my original research" since "The productive rate is relatively high in my research area; it is only not easy to publish high-level paper"
H 1	Lecturer	1	"…try to include both unpopular and popular topics in my own research…in my subject…it is hard and slow for research in unpopular topics to have research results"
M 1	Associate Professor	1	"…will incline…research direction a little bit to the popular, especially for project applications…If…not popular…no matter how good it is for students, it will be outside of students' views"

Table 6.12 Impact of Popular Topics on Academics

In addition to the high citation rates and the preferences of prestigious journals, some Chinese academics connect "popular topics" with research project applications. This, on the one hand, corresponded to the requirements for research performance in the promotion criteria; and on the other hand, suggested the origins of popular topics in China. Besides the influence of key actors in particular accounting arenas which

Merchant (2010) alludes to, Chinese academics had other opinions about the origins of popular topics, for example,

Respondent	Title	Type	Origins of Popular Topics
Bio 5	Professor	1	"…determined by national projects guidelines…"
Bio 6	Associate Professor	1	"…tightly related to the entire social needs and development"
Bio 10	Professor	2	"…due to the new discovery of urgent social needs"
Bio 11	Associate Professor	1/2	"…along with the scientific development and daily needs"
Bu 2	Associate Professor	1/2	"…could be traced through the influence of foreign research outcomes; governmental policy guidance and practical demands"
H 1	Lecturer	1/2	"…closely related to the development of disciplines and the requirements of society"
M 1	Associate Professor	1	"…determined by individual experience, particular social events and topics that everyone is interested in"
Bio 7	Professor	3	"…guru's prediction of the bright future of…this topic is publicised and becoming more and more popular"
Bu 3	Associate Professor	3	"…popular topics in particular subjects are those which famous experts or government officers are excited about"
C 3	Associate Professor	3	"…popular topics…are driven by gurus, outstanding research outcomes or important scientific rewards"

Table 6.13 Origins of Popular Topics

The responses regarding "popular topics" could be classified into three types. Firstly, popular topics were determined by the state; secondly, popular topics reflected the development of science; thirdly, similar to Merchant's findings, popular topics were closely related to gurus' influence.

When considering their understandings of the origins of popular topics, one probably could conclude that they reflected the impact of political domination. Bourdieu and Wacquant's (1992) notion of the impact of external determinations on agents[155] might be relevant in this respect. They write that -

> "…the external determinations that bear on agents situated in a given field…never apply to them directly, but affect them only through the specific mediation of the specific forms and forces of the field…" (p. 105).

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[155] Their notion of the impact of external determinations on agents could be understood as the influence of external institutions (for example, political, social, economic and cultural) on organisational individuals through the lens of an institutional theory.

Generally speaking, in China, the popular topics are subject to political determination. The involvement of the political determinations could be reflected directly through institutional regulations and indirectly through the official (construction and) recognition of particular images and the influence of some key experts. In Chinese academia, firstly, research is normally funded by the government. This is an institutional regulation to align academics' research with government project guidelines. The potential of project-related publication and a certain percentage of research funds might be attractive enough for academics to follow particular directions. When considering Merchant's (2010) concern with the loss of research diversity, such regulations discourage academics from developing diversified research. Secondly, in addition to the rewards of following the project guidelines, a "positive" academic image might also be important. On the basis of the Central Government development strategy (through advanced science technology), one could perhaps argue that academics might be satisfied with their images as scientific contributors to the development of the society and the country. Thirdly, the relationship between gurus and the state and gurus' influence in controlling academia (see Section 6.2.1) might be relevant in considering the conduit of the impact of the political determinations.

According to Merchant's (2010) research, accounting gurus do not only wield their power in determining which types of accounting research should dominate and consequently what will be published in journals; they could also have political influence such that "The proportion of faculty working in the non-mainstream areas is declining, so the mainstream is gaining political power" (p. 118). Analogously, as reviewed in Section 6.2, in Chinese academia, there was a close relationship between the authority of gurus and the political determinations in terms of the recognition of particular research arenas. However, in contemporary China, one probably could argue that the symbolic power of gurus was largely granted by the state in return for their compliance with the official state development directions. Therefore, it would be unlikely that their preferences would be different from those of the state. In this situation, one might argue that university research in China is policy oriented and

funding driven and is decoupled from the traditional perspective of research in terms of being "curiosity-driven, fundamental and critical" (Parker, 2011, p. 445).

Merchant (2010) argues that in North America, in order to be in mainstream arenas, accounting research must use empirical tests of economics-based models and large, archival data sets. This phenomenon alludes to a positivist trend, which lacks concern about the social context. The positivist trend – understanding phenomenon and making decisions according to the results of quantitative analysis could be regarded as a resonating with the global trend of managerialism in universities. As discussed in Chapter Two, the political influence over the operation of Chinese academia is analogous to that of the global trend of managerialism. In particular, the quality of research is evaluated in a quantitative way and research funding is granted on the basis of quantitative evaluation results. This gives rise to the competition over research funding between academic institutions and eventually to the competition between academics.

Therefore, the following discussion can be related to the discussion of hierarchical accountability. In addition to the suggestions made in Sections 6.2.3 and 6.2.4; the policy implication here is that Central Government could consider developing a more specific vision in terms of the contribution of specific research, wherein academics' research behaviour and outcomes could be placed in a wider social context (rather than around individual instrumental interests). This might circumvent academics' self-interested concerns and encourage their interdependent co-operation and commitment to the vision. As Lewis (1952) argued "…we shall never save civilisation as long as civilisation is our main object. We must learn to want something else even more"[156]. When considering the authority of the state, even though the state is highly unlikely to publicly recognise failures, more public critique about policies and regulations might help to free people from the preoccupation of how one is seen and judged by others; and people perhaps could begin to develop interdependent (group) recognition.

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[156] http://usminc.org/images/MereChristianitybyCSLewis.pdf, accessed on 24th Nov. 2013.

In summary, there may be more roots to the origins of popular topics than those in the responses from the research participants. Academics' understandings reflected the impact of political influences. Chinese research is to a greater or lesser extent influenced politically and gurus' who follow the party-line and might be more influential; but they are not necessarily "immoral". China is a huge, profound and dynamic country; one cannot predict the outcomes of state initiatives on individual actors. Certainly, actors react in different ways. Just like the attitudes towards the promotion criteria, some people love them since they motivated people to develop themselves; others hate them since they disrupt the nature of research and divert attention from teaching. Nevertheless, Chinese academics are socially constituted in Chinese academia. This suggests that they possess the necessary properties to be in the field and conform to (and grow in) the features of the field. Therefore, this could allow people to understand their different perspectives (singularities).

6.3.3 Understandings of Particular Academics

As indicated in the introduction to this section, the responses to the questions about the impact of popular topics would be used to reflect upon the preceding theoretical analysis of some academics' responses. In doing this, one could discuss the contribution of some theories for analysing academic activities in China.

On the basis of preceding theoretical analyses in Sections 6.2.3 and 6.2.4, this section will continue to discuss academics' responses which contained contradictory and "indifferent" perspectives (for example, "Bio 11", "Bu 2", "Bio 8" and "Bio 10").

For "Bio 11", her persistence in teaching and her "indifference" towards promotion (discussed in Section 6.2.2) were disrupted by the rewards of promotion (discussed in Section 6.2.4). In Table 6.10, her response[157] further disclosed the impact of the promotion criteria on her. For "Bu 2", her distrust in the effectiveness of the performance metrics was overwhelmed by the attractiveness of promotion; and this might be the reason for her to be motivated by the quantified evaluation to do

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[157] "…an approval of my work and it brings an improve salary" (Bio 11).

research. The impact of the promotion criteria on her was as expected as disclosed in Table 6.10[158]. As mentioned in Section 6.2.4, the notion of actors "operating within or moving between several fields in which differential capital and positions are available" could be used to understand their contradictions (Oakes *et al*., 1998, p. 266).

For "Bio 8" (major in Botany), one probably could argue that he set out his "indifference" with his response that "it normally takes longer to have outcomes in the arena of Botany and Botany-speciality journals relatively have low impact factors. But I will not adjust my research direction to improve research outcomes as I am not working for outcomes but for interests". As discussed in Sections 6.2.3 and 6.2.4, "Bio 8"'s indifference to the promotion was highly consistent with his distrust of the performance metrics and his distaste of the attractiveness of promotion. His indifference could be used to question Bourdieusian theories in analysing people like "Bio 8" who showed no interest in the value of capital and becoming superior to others and his "indifference" seemed conflicted with the idea of a field as a site of struggle.

However, this may not be the case.

"Bio 8"'s "indifference" was recognised for the first time in his response to Q3a[159], which was "…it does not influence me a lot, as I've seen through the fame and wealth…I just want to accomplish my own work and not disappoint my conscience". This response suggested that he had no interest in pursuing fame and wealth or the rewards of promotion; however as an associate professor, this academic title must have been the attainment of his previous pursuits.

There was another possibility that he was interested in research and he never did research with the aim of being promoted. Thanks to the promotion criteria, he was entitled as an associate professor. However, this probably could not be the case; since

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[158] "…about honour, face; it carries more academic influence, and more opportunity to get research funding" (Bu 2).

[159] Q3a, What is the impact of the promotion criteria on you?

in China, academics need to apply promotion in person. In other words, "Bio 8"'s position was struggled by himself on the basis of his academic performance. Or "being promoted" might merely be his strategy to obtain capitals for further research, which would be discussed later in this section.

Even under the current system, as an associate professor, he might have had the capitals to maintain and carry out his research. Specifically, his economic and social capitals (as an associate professor) would expose him to research opportunities, his cultural capitals in terms of knowledge and experience would help his future research. From another perspective, changing his research arena would be "costly" for him since it would mean to start from zero to build up new capitals. Returning to the perspective of Roberts' (1991) account of the construction of accountability, "Bio 8"'s distrust of the performance metrics and his despising of the "attractiveness" of promotion could be used to explain his "indifference" to promotion such that he would not like to be recognised through the promotion criteria anymore.

When considering the seeming conflict between Bourdieu and Wacquant's (1992) notion of indifference and the features of a field raised in Sections 6.2.3 and 6.2.4, one should make sure that "research" and "promotion" were separated analytically. The clarification between "research" and "promotion" should also be made in the discussion of the limits of the Bourdieusian analogy of the game. In the field of contemporary Chinese academia, the game Chinese academics play is that people who have recognisable research performance can survive and even stay ahead of peers (be promoted). In other words, in order to survive and ascend in the field, academics need to do research. As reviewed in Section 5.3.3, academics at higher positions (with senior academic titles) will be exposed to more academic opportunities. This means that in order to have the capacity to carry out research, academics need to occupy particular positions in the field. One could regard the game to be composed of two inseparable activities – one is "research"; the other is "promotion". The relationship between these activities will be discussed in the rest of the section through analysing "Bio 8" and "Bio 10"'s statuses.

"Bio 8"'s "indifference" to promotion would not threaten his position in the field of academia since his position was secured by his capitals and his interest in research, which would bring him more capitals. If seen from the lens of the analogy of the game, it might not be that "Bio 8" did not attempt to win, but he might have already learnt the strategy to win the academic game (of research) and he would struggle continuously to keep "staying ahead".

When considering the relationship between "research" and "promotion", even though "Bio 8"'s "indifference" to promotion did not threaten his position in the field of academia; one could not deny that his position in the field resulted from promotion. "Being promoted" could be regarded as "Bio 8"'s strategy to win him the position in the field. If this was the case, "Bio 8"'s "indifference" is probably akin to Bourdieu and Wacquant's (1992) notion of "indifference" (see Section 6.2.2); since the promotion criteria were not the rules of the game he thought he had been playing. His interest in research and the satisfaction from research might be the reason for his commitment to research; simply speaking, the word, research, could reflect both his "illusio" and "habitus". From "Bio 8"'s case, one could argue that the promotion criteria could be a good thing; since they could be used to form strategies (being promoted) for academics (who have real interests in research) to win capitals and positions for further development in the field of contemporary Chinese academia.

At this stage, one could return to the analysis of "Bio 10" in Section 6.2.2. His "indifference" to the promotion criteria shown in Table 6.7[160] was analysed from a Foucauldian perspective of disciplinary power. This perspective could be further rationalised through his recognition of the effectiveness of the performance metrics and the attractiveness of promotion. However, in Section 6.2.2, when attempting to analyse "Bio 10"'s indifference from a Bourdieusian perspective, neither his indifference nor his position could secure him in a field, since he may be substituted by more ambitious actors. In line with the analytical perspective of "Bio 8", "Bio 10" might have been playing the game of promotion; and research might be his strategy to win him the position in the field of academia. His "indifference" to the promotion criteria, in addition to being understood as an internalised discipline, could be

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[160] "no influence" (Bio 10).

understood as his "habitus". On the basis of the analysis of "Bio 10"'s "indifference", one could make comparison between "habitus" and "internalised discipline". On the surface, "habitus" and "internalised discipline" are similar in terms of an unconscious status – the shared ways of thinking and behaving by particular groups of people. For Foucault, "internalised discipline" reveals the extent to which circumstance-specified disciplines could have impacts on people. Bourdieu uses "habitus" to refer to enduring outlooks, which are field-specified (and the enduring outlooks are internalised by particular social groups). From a Bourdieusian perspective, "habitus" is the unconscious fight for power (dominant capitals). It is evoked by the commitment to the value of dominant capitals and it is the driving force to generate the strategies which help actors to keep ahead in the field (Warde, 2004). From a Foucauldian perspective, "internalised discipline" (self-judgement) results from a desire for certainty, which in particular, results from the fear of exclusion (Roberts, 1991). In short, "habitus" refers to unconscious struggle over power – being competitive in a field; "internalised discipline" refers to the impact of the desire for certainty and of the fear of exclusion – being eliminated in a certain circumstance. A Bourdieusian perspective might be more apposite to explain "Bio 10"'s response since he recognised the improved capitals from promotion (see Table 6.10).

In addition, when attempting to analyse "Bio 8" and "Bio 10", it might be relevant to draw upon Bourdieu and Wacquant's (1992) notion of strategy,

> "…the strategies of a "player" and everything that defines his "game" are a function not only of the volume and structure of his capital at the moment under consideration and of the game chances they guarantee him, but also of the evolution over time of the volume and structure of this capital, that is, of his social trajectory and of the dispositions (habitus) constituted in the prolonged relation to a definite distribution of objective chances" (p. 99).

In this respect, strategies can not only bring about an increase in capitals and positions; but can also affect the potential of further improvement and the constitution of the habitus; and the habitus is closely related to the potential for

further improvement. For example, in order to be equipped with more resources to carry out research, "Bio 8" needs to undertake the strategy of "promotion". It helped him to improve his capitals and position. The improved capitals and position could place him on a broader platform with more research resources. During the continuous improvement of capitals and positions, his commitment to research would be further confirmed. This perspective could also be used to reflect upon "Bio 10". His strategy is to "research"; his research performance would improve his capitals and position in the field of academia. In order to be superior to others, "Bio 10" must undertake the strategy of "research" to secure his position. On the basis of understanding his recognition of promotion, one could argue that during the process of improving capitals and position, he experienced, recognised and confirmed his interest in "being promoted"; in other words, "research" (as his strategy) made him "taste" the "deliciousness" of promotion and desire to have more.

In summary, the positions in the field of contemporary Chinese academia are grounded in either the interest in "research" or the strategy of "research" since the rules of the game in the field were the promotion criteria, which were composed of onerous requirements for research performance. In such a field, some agents (like "Bio 8") were unlikely to prioritise the activity of "promotion" (play the game of "promotion") since their habitus was grounded in "research". This was underpinned by "Bio 8"'s indifference to promotion but interest in research. His interest in research explained how he could survive. In this respect, the promotion criteria could be "positive" since "promotion" could be taken as a strategy and only be a strategy.

"Bio 8"'s status (in terms of being indifferent to the rules of the game but being committed to research) exemplified a type of resistance argued by Roberts (2005). In addition to Roberts' (2005) argument (discussed in Section 6.2.3) about one form of workplace resistance originating from employees' desire for the recognition from management, drawing upon Fleming and Spicer (2003), he points out that another form of workplace resistance can be found in which even though employees' behaviour could be regarded by management as resistance, they still "act as efficient and meticulous members of the team" (Roberts, 2005, p. 626).

"Bio 8" was regarded by his peers as a person who had no desire for promotion. His indifference to promotion (reflected through his distrust of the promotion criteria and nonrecognition of the attractiveness of promotion) could be seen as him working at a cynical distance. According to Zizek (1989), "cynical distance is just one way to blind ourselves to the structuring power of ideological fantasy; even if we do not take things seriously, even if we keep an ironical distance, we are still doing them" (p. 32). "Bio 8" exemplified Zizek's (1989) argument. His indifference might be his way of blinding himself to the structuring power. He maintained an ideological fantasy that he did not recognise performance metrics (therefore he would not recognise his image reflected through the metrics); but even if he kept an ironical distance from the promotion criteria, he was still doing research. In other words, his nonrecognition of the metrics or promotion had no impact on his research since SCI papers or promotion might not be his aim.

Under the current measurement system, there are two implications for management[161]. On the one hand, for academics like "Bio 10", the state should probably review and adjust the performance metrics regularly to maintain the quality of academics' research; on the other hand, for academics' like "Bio 8", in addition to improving the effectiveness of the performance metrics, management should probably leave more space to recognise their attitudes toward research both publicly and in person in order to support their interests in research.

The policy implications developed from the understanding of "Bio 8"'s status from a Bourdieusian perspective suggests a conduit to discuss and construct other forms of accountability (than the hierarchical accountability) and the tentative practice to resolve the aporia of accountability – "accounterability" in Chinese academia. As discussed in Section 6.2.3, "Bio 8"'s indifference to the promotion and commitment to research and teaching reflect the feature of the socialising form of accountability. Within the socialising form of accountability, he could eschew the impact of the image generated through the performance metrics and do what he thought he should

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[161] In China, any revolutionary changes to current performance measurement systems will all be due to the state's decision. The author was not arguing that current performance measurement systems are useful, the implications were grounded in the preceding analysis and aimed to make improvements to the current system.

do. The implications for management evolved from the understanding of "Bio 8"'s status could contribute to generate socialising forms of accountabilities between academics.

Moreover, even though accounterability and resistance were reviewed as institutionally unfit in a Chinese context (see Sections 2.5.3 and 6.2.3); "Bio 8" could be regarded as a useful example to discuss the possibility of implementing "accounterability". In response to the impact of the promotion criteria on teaching, "Bio 8" said that "I just want to accomplish my own work and not disappoint my conscience" (see Table 6.7). Echoing Joannides' (2012) research into implementing "accounterability" in the Salvation Army (a Christian organisation), "Bio 8" used the word "conscience". This suggests that the refinement of "(being accountable) to whom" may be another conduit to construct actors with better performance. Accompanied by an emphasis on teaching in academics' understanding of their accountabilities (see Section 6.2.1), more discourses emphasising teaching may be effective in redeeming the overshadowing of teaching activity by research.

In summary, on the basis of the preceding analysis, "Bio 8" and "Bio 10" were taken as examples to demonstrate two kinds of academics in one university. Tentative analysis was carried out from a Bourdieusian perspective to understand academics in the context of Chinese academia. In addition to constructing the theoretical grounds of the evolved policy implications, this analytical perspective suggests the policy implications of constructing accountability and accounterability from the perspectives of "being accountable" "by which means" and "to whom".

6.4   Conclusion

As set out in the introduction, this chapter is concerned with the impact of the promotion criteria on academics. Through understanding the significance of the promotion criteria, this chapter depicts contemporary Chinese academia. In this chapter, the analyses of the promotion criteria's impact are carried out through the lens of Institutional theory, Bourdieusian and Roberts' understanding of Lacanian and Foucauldian theories. The analyses from different theoretical perspectives not

only help to enrich the understanding of such practices; they also help to broaden the applications of these theories.

Through identifying the taken-for granted assumptions and the ways of doing things in Chinese academia, the institutional perspective suggests that the roots of problematic performance measurement might be in the strategies of Central Government (using incentive mechanisms to encourage the production of particular research products) and the incarnation of these strategies on a university level (the promotion criteria and merit payment scheme).

The questions about academics' understandings of their accountabilities is a starting point to analyse the impact of the promotion criteria. The thesis found highly consistent responses in terms of "imparting knowledge and educating people", the onerous requirements for research of the promotion criteria seemed not be able to construct the accountability of carrying out research. With the help of Roberts' (2009) understandings of the significance of the desire for recognition, the rewards supplied by promotion reveal the impact of the requirements for research on academics, including less serious attitudes towards teaching, more time and efforts in research and the narrowly focussed direction of research.

Accompanied by Foucault's account of disciplinary power, the rewards of promotion, the recognition obtained from the metrics and the effects of the criteria were regarded as critical for constructing disciplined academics and consequently generating internalised hierarchical accountability. These understandings of academics and accountability have policy implications, for example, changing the proportion of teaching and research in the promotion criteria, increasing the openness to the critique of particular metrics and continuingly improving the effectiveness of metrics.

Some academics' responses and their academic titles (for example, "Bio 4"'s response and his junior status – lecturer) suggest a Bourdieusian perspective. This perspective helps to reveal the significance of the dominant capital through the influence of gurus in academia. The discussion about gurus and the roots of the "popular" research topics helps to expose Central Government's control over

Chinese academia through recognising gurus' expertise and controlling research funding.

In addition, the Bourdieusian perspective helps to explain academics' responses in terms of their attitudes towards teaching and research. On the basis of the discussion about academics' desire for recognition, some academics' "indifferences" (resistance) to the promotion criteria were highlighted and seen through a series of Bourdieusian ideas. Through identifying the activities of research and promotion in the field of contemporary Chinese academia, academics' seemingly similar "indifferences" were understood as different "habitus" which were grounded in different activities. In addition to exemplifying a series of Bourdieusian ideas of field, capitals, illusio and habitus, the analyses of particular academics enrich the theoretical grounds on the implications of this thesis, for example, improving the effectiveness of metrics and leaving more space to recognise positive attitudes towards research. More importantly, the recognition of the importance of research (as an activity in the field of Chinese academia) enriches the discussion of the form of accountability and supplies the grounds for implementing the practice "accounterability"[162] to resolve the aporia of accountability.

In order to avoid merely focusing on the effects of theories in analysing and rationalising individual responses, a quotation about the understanding of the meaning of research in social science might be relevant here -

> "…the true object of social science is not the individual, even though one cannot construct a field if not through individuals, since the information necessary for statistical analysis is generally attached to individuals or institutions. It is the field which is primary and must be the focus of the research operations. This does not imply that individuals are mere "illusions," that they do not exist: they exist as agents – and not as biological individuals, actors, or subjects – who are socially constituted as active and acting in the field under consideration by the fact that they possess the necessary

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[162] "Acounterablity" is critical in understanding and realising the better performance from cynical employees.

properties to be effective, to produce effects, in this field. And it is knowledge of the field itself in which they evolve that allows us best to grasp the roots of their singularity, their point of view or position (in a field) from which their particular vision of the world (and of the field itself) is constructed" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 107).

7 Chapter Seven: Conclusion and Reflections

7.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an opportunity to conclude the key issues that have been raised by the operation of academic performance measurements in Chinese academia, and discuss the possibilities that this may have for the future development of performance measurement in response to the trend of managerialism in academia. Accordingly, this chapter revisits the ideas raised in previous chapters and reflects upon the implications and the practical and theoretical importance of this research to the field of study.

The remainder of this chapter is structured as follows: Section 7.2 concludes the key issues raised by the operation of performance measurements including managerialism in universities – the understanding of Chinese academia from the perspectives of the emergence and operation of academic performance measurements, and Chinese academics from the perspective of the impact of performance measures. In addition to reflecting on the limitations of this research and the implications that this research may have for future developments, Section 7.3 concludes the contributions this thesis makes in terms of the discussion of accountability (workplace resistance and accounterability), the policy implications, and the development of the theoretical framework.

7.2 Chinese Academia and Academics

7.2.1 Managerialism in Universities

7.2.1.1 Introduction to Managerialism in Universities

Through reviewing academic performance measurements, one could recognise the arrival of the trend of managerialism in universities in many countries. This section concludes the emergence of managerialism and the implications of academic performance measures in terms of commercialising academic identities and activities.

Performance measurement, as an important managerial accounting practice in the private sector, was adopted in public sectors in the UK and US during the 1980s. Driven by a neoliberal philosophy that individuals should be "responsible and accountable for their own actions and well-being, from education, to health, to welfare" (Parker, 2011, pp. 437-438), performance measurement was firstly adopted in governmental departments and later in higher education – in order to improve the "value for money" of government.

For higher educational institutions, the performance measurement scheme was introduced along with restrictions on research funding. In the context of restricted research funding, higher educational institutions began to compete for government grants and the allocation of funding is determined on the basis of their research performance (Halsey, 1992; Hartley, 1997; Harley, 2000). Accompanied by the global trend of pursuing "better value for money", similar funding schemes were developed in the UK, Australia and New Zealand in which funding is allocated on the basis of, for example, previous research funding, publications, citations and journal rankings. Similar schemes are about to emerge in other developed countries (Alexander, 2000; Geuna and Martine, 2003; Parker, 2011).

Unlike the trajectory of adopting performance measurements in the UK and US universities – from the private sector, to governmental departments, to universities; academic performance measures in China are the products of the state's development strategies. However, both in the UK and US and in China reforms took place in a context of a market economy and a globalised knowledge economy. In China, since the late 1970s, the attitudes towards academics and their performance have changed along with the changes of the state's strategic working foci from class struggle to economic development. Driven by the faith in the significance of "knowledge" – high technologies to economic development, academic performance measures are required to implement in universities to encourage academics to improve their academic performance. In short, one could argue that the reason behind the implementation of performance measures in Chinese academia is not merely for better "value-for-money"; it is also designed to encourage academics to produce technological innovation.

When comparing performance measures in western countries and in China, the essence of performance measurements (standardisation) has generated similar impacts in terms of changed social relations between management and academics, and they have changed the identities of academics.

The standardisation embedded in performance measurements is, from the perspective of Scientific Management, the core of which is "all but a systematic philosophy of worker and work" (Drucker, 1954, p. 280). In order to improve the value-for-money of government expenditure and to encourage academics to improve their capacities, the standards of expected performance are constructed through material recognition, for example, research grants and promotion.

The systematic method (constructing and maintaining standardised performance through recognising particular outcomes by material rewards) have changed the identities of academics and the nature of academic activities – academics have been de-professionalised since the "value" of their activities and products were subject to established standards. In other words, academics and their outcomes have been "labelled" and "priced" on the basis of particular standards and the nature of academic activities have been commercialised. Moreover, since university research is largely policy oriented and funding driven, the research carried out by academics, in practice, is very different from the more traditional perspective of research as being "curiosity-driven, fundamental and critical" (Parker, 2011, p. 445).

The commercialisation could also be reflected through the changes to the collegial relationship between academic management and academics. In the context of "pricing" and "labelling" academics by the "value" of their performance, academic management have taken more responsibilities to make more strategic decisions in terms of promoting particular types of performance.

In addition to the impacts of the preceding issues involved in performance measurements, the problems of bibliometric indicators (standard metrics) could have impaired the development of research. For example, citations are sensitive to particular trends and favour research in mainstream and dominant paradigms and

prestigious journals are merely interested in particular agendas. These features of bibliometric indicators would result in homogenising the focus of research and the loss of research diversity.

In summary, the standardised and rewards-related requirements for outcomes and the social relations determined by the measurements demonstrate a business style of operation. The trend of managerialism in Chinese universities is particularly reflected through the adoption of particular performance measures, for example, the promotion criteria scheme. The next section will conclude the understanding of academic performance measures in China from the perspective of representing and delivering the dominant interests of the country.

7.2.1.2 Academic Performance Measurements in China

In China, academic performance measure is a highly institutional product. Firstly, from the perspective of Chinese public universities, they are directed and financed by relevant governmental ministries and it is important for them to have "political relevance and institutional legitimacy" (Carolan, 2008, p.429). In other words, the practices adopted by universities need to be "institutionally wise". Secondly, in the context of a market economy, the emergence of academic performance measurement could be attributed to the state's strategy to improve the value-for-money of governmental expenditure. Thirdly, in the global context of the knowledge economy, academic performance measures reflect the state's recognition of the significance of academics and their performance to economic development in China.

Under the circumstance of the state emphasising research performance, SCI was adopted by a prestigious Chinese university (Nanjing University) to evaluate research outcomes in the late 1980s since there were no established assessment methods. The adoption of SCI could be seen from an institutional perspective as the result of normative and mimetic isomorphism – papers published in SCI journals are regarded as of a certain standard and SCI was developed and adopted in some western countries. After the adoption of SCI by Nanjing University, SCI was extensively accepted and adopted by higher educational institutions to evaluate

research outcomes and they use research published in SCI journals to represent research achievements. When considering the features of Chinese higher educational institutions in terms of lacking appropriate evaluation models and operating with the identical operational modes (directed and financed by Central Government), DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) arguments are helpful in explaining the extensive acceptance and adoption of SCI – "the fewer the number of visible alternative organisational models in a field, the faster the rate of isomorphism in that field" and "the greater the extent of structuration of a field, the greater the degree of isomorphics" (pp. 155-156). In addition to being adopted in universities, SCI was officially adopted by the state in the application criteria for national research projects, the award criteria of outstanding research and promotion. The official adoption of SCI could be understood as an institutionalised routine in evaluating research on the basis of quantitative performance.

From the perspective of administrative management, the adoption of particular metrics (SCI) reflects university management's political performance anxiety. In the context of pursuing quantified performance measurement metrics and emphasising research outcomes, the adoption of SCI could be understood as their response to the state. The performance reflected through SCI could represent their career achievements. In other words, the adoption of SCI could be as ceremonial behaviour on the part of administrators – instead of using SCI to understand the impact of research, it is used to represent their favourable responses to the state.

In line with performance anxiety, the aim of adopting performance indicators could be understood as a means of informing the public that public services are being improved. For example, in the UK, privatised railway performance measures were "designed to reassure dissatisfied rail users that the situation is improving" (Cole and Cooper, 2005, p. 205). In addition to revealing the dichotomy between their ceremonial and instrumental values, performance indicators could have had more serious implications. For example, in Cole and Cooper's (2005) paper, they find that particular indicators were set up to measure the reliability and punctuality of the railway service. However, the image of an improved railway service was constructed

at the expense of passengers' safety; since public and managerial attentions had been drawn away from safety by the measures focusing on reliability and punctuality.

Analogously, academic performance measurements could have similar implications in diverting attention from important issues – teaching quality and the actual types of research undertaken since in the context of the knowledge economy, academic performance measurements in China emphasise research outcomes.

For academics, academic activities are mainly teaching and research. Academic performance measures are supposed to be concerned with measuring the performance of teaching and research. However, the analysis of political discourse, which includes political leaders' speeches, government documents and national practices, reveals the state's recognition of academics with significant research capacities and their research performance.

In order to emphasize the significance of research performance and to encourage academics to improve research performance, the Ministry of Education required Chinese universities to implement contractual and merit pay schemes (Mohrman *et al*., 2011). Universities involved with Projects 211 and 985 actively responded to the requirements since they have a closer relationship with Central Government and their research performance is critical to attract government grants. When implemented in universities, these requirements were embedded in contract-based employment, the promotion criteria and the merit pay plan.

In the case university, which is entitled with Projects 211 and 985, research performance is highly emphasized. The emphasis on research is reflected through the significance of research achievements to the grades of merit pay and the onerous requirements for research in the promotion criteria. Under the merit pay scheme (payment is largely determined on the basis of research performance) and the promotion criteria (containing onerous requirements for research performance); one could argue that in Chinese universities research is being developed at the expense of student experience. When considering the requirements for teaching performance, in addition to the "ceremonial" practices to assess the quality of teaching (students'

feedback and teaching appraisal results), there is a practice known as the "teaching conversion ratio". It was generated for academics who were busy with research that different levels of research projects could be converted into certain amounts of teaching hours.

According to Burns and Scapens' (2000) old institutional framework, the "teaching conversion ratio" could be understood as an emerging routine developing from the requirements for teaching performance which could be regarded as a new rule (since there were no regulated requirements for teaching and research performance until the implementation of the first promotion criteria emerged in 1995). Even though the emerging routine could be regarded as the product of the circumstance of emphasising research performance, it is still subject to an extant institutional belief that academics should impart knowledge and educate people – the weight of particular research projects in the teaching conversion ratio could be adjusted when some academics snubbed teaching. From this perspective, the practice is socially constructed since it is subject to the interaction between actors and institutions.

In addition to the institutional perspective, a Bourdieusian perspective is adopted to understand the changes brought about by academic performance measures and merit pay schemes to Chinese academia. In the field of Chinese academia, the dominant capitals of the field, the products of the field, the professional identities of actors, their habitus (oriented activities) and the rules of the field (internal evaluation criteria) have all changed through quantifying, "labelling" and "pricing" research performance. The changes have been indicated in Table 5.11 and re-listed as follows –

	Pre-rule Field	Post-rule Field
Orientation between Capital and Field		
Dominant Capital	Cultural (and Social)	Economic (Converting from Cultural and Social)
Product	Education and Research	Commercialised Education and "Priced" Research
Positions within the Field		
Professional Identity	Professors, Associate Professors and Lectures	Hierarchical Employees
Oriented Activity	Teaching and Research	Fund-related Research
Internal Evaluation Criteria	Internal Peer Review	Quantified Performance Measurement

Table 7.1[163] Comparison of Fields Pre- and Post-Measurement Rule

In summary, from an institutional perspective, one could recognise the role of academic performance measures as a mediator to represent and deliver the dominant interests in emphasising the pursuit of research performance in the context of a market economy and the knowledge economy. Moreover, one could develop an understanding of Chinese academia from a Bourdieusian perspective that the field of Chinese academia has been changed by the practice of academic performance measures in terms of the dominant capitals, the professional identities, their activities and internal evaluation criteria. The understanding of academics which is developed in this thesis from the perspective of the impact of academic performance measures will be specifically concluded in the next section.

7.2.2 Chinese Academics

7.2.2.1 Non-Participants

In order to understand the extent of the promotion criteria's impact on academics, the author undertook interviews and questionnaires to collect academics' responses to the issues related to the promotion criteria.

Before each interview (academics who were unavailable for interview were sent questionnaires containing the same questions as the interviews), an introduction to the research was presented to the participants. The introduction included the background to the research, the objectives of the research, the contribution to the

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[163] The content in Table 7.1 is same as that in Table 5.11. The table is only re-captioned as Table 7.1.

development of knowledge, the content of research questions and the anonymity of the transcripts of their responses.

After reading the introduction, some academics refused to take part. Their concerns were similar and one common response was "what is the relation of accounting research to these questions?" The explicit refusals were normally from academics with a pure science background (for example, Biology). From their perspectives, accounting research should be concerned with accounting regulations and practice rather than their impacts on individuals.

Other than the explicit refusals resulting from the rigid perspectives on accounting research, some academics refused to reply. These silent refusals were mainly from academics with social science backgrounds (for example, in the subjects of history and business studies). Paradoxically, their "silence" might be suggestive of their understandings of official regulations. On the one hand, academics with social science backgrounds are more familiar with the impacts of official regulations on individuals. On the other hand, in China, the official regulations represent the interests of the Party and people's opinions (comments) about official regulations may be interpreted as subversive. In short, their silence might suggest their concern about expressing their opinions and their concern about particular regulations. One could develop a better understanding of their concern through learning about the author's means of access to academics. Due to the author's limited personal connections with social science academics, potential participants were contacted by senior managerial clerks. Academics' silence suggested that they were concerned about being judged by the authorities. In other words, their silence had revealed the power of official regulations and their subordination to the authorities.

Even though the author did not obtain "ideal" responses to the promotion criteria from these academics in terms of taking part in this thesis research; their refusals assist this research from a critical perspective on the significance of the research into official regulations.

7.2.2.2 Gurus

Gurus are constitutive of academia. In this thesis, instead of interviewing gurus, the significance of gurus[164] to Chinese academia is learnt through "laity" academics' perspectives. At this stage, the term "laity" is not adopted literally from its religious perspective in terms of believers worshiping their priests. "Laity" academics refer to ordinary staff who "worship" (the work of) gurus – who are (unconsciously) subject to gurus' symbolic power in terms of believing their academic authorities.

The significance of gurus was implied through their influence in determining the research direction (promoting particular research in their own arenas) and the allocation of research funding. One could argue that the research direction determined by the guru is in line with (or at least not against) the state's interest since significant research funding is awarded by the state. In other words, gurus recognise the research which suits the state. As set out in Chapter Five, after the 10-year turmoil, the socio-political positions of academics have been elevated by *Xiaoping Deng* since the late 1970s. Accompanied by the high value the state put on advanced science and technology, experts' opinions were taken seriously. This means, in China, the status of "guru" is "determined" by the state.

The relationship between the state and gurus demonstrates the symbolic feature of gurus' capital – "it succeeds in generating a system of mutual interdependence in which all the actors in the field depend on recognition from all of the others and grant all of the others recognition – even if this is recognition of an inferior (or superior) status" (Steinmetz, 2006, p. 454).

In the meantime, gurus' symbolic power is reflected through their control over "laity" academics' research. According to Bourdieu (2000), symbolic capital "…enables forms of domination which imply dependence on those who can be dominated by it, since it only exists through the esteem, recognition, belief, credit and confidence of others" (p. 166); gurus' influence on research directions could be

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[164] As introduced in Section 6.2.1, in this thesis, gurus are "experts" or "research leaders" or refer to a group of people who take the lead in particular research arenas. The reason for using the word "gurus" is to represent their influence on junior academics.

regarded as a form of domination. Moreover, due to the mutually interdependent relationship between the state and gurus, one could argue those "laity" academics' esteem, recognition, belief, credit and confidence towards gurus are determined by the state's recognition of gurus.

In addition to the symbolic perspective on gurus' power, their influence could be understood from the understanding of the relationship between "illusio" and "habitus". Returning to the interdependence in terms of mutual recognition between the state and gurus, one could suggest that this relationship may result in dead-end research and detrimental research – gurus may promote research in their arenas which may not be promising, and they may raise research topics which suit some political leaders' interests but may not be beneficial to the state's long-term development. For gurus, their research would help them to accumulate their capitals and maintain their positions. From a Bourdieusian perspective, "promoting such research" could be understood as their habitus – "the strategic orientations appropriate to their positions"; and this habitus is driven and maintained by their commitment to acquiring capitals – illusio (Warde, 2004, p. 14). The idea that people have a "natural" desire for recognition could help to explain gurus' commitment to acquiring capitals. Gurus' influence (in terms of their positions and symbolic power) is determined (and reflected) by the recognition from the state and "laity" academics; their recognition would evoke their commitment to obtaining particular capitals to maintain this recognition. From the perspective of junior academics, their "illusio" of gurus includes, for example, thinking gurus know everything and things are easy for them. From the perspective of gurus, this "illusio" represents the recognition form junior academics.

When considering the consequences of gurus' habitus, which may be potentially dead-end [165] and detrimental [166] research, one may challenge gurus' supposed "unbiased opinions". The perspective of illusio and habitus could help to explain

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[165] According to "Bio 7"'s research experience, the research into stem cells and gene chips were promoted by gurus but eventually turned out to be of little practical value.

[166] A critical case is the construction of the Three Gorges Dam. The project was opposed by many experts due to its disastrous effects on ecological environment. Nevertheless, the project was promoted by some academics and eventually launched since it was in Central Government's interest.

gurus' involvement in creating the "vested fad" of research. Nevertheless, one could not simply conclude that gurus always make decisions in their own interests since the preceding discussion merely suggests one possible origin of detrimental research.

7.2.2.3 Participants

This research is concerned with the extent of the promotion criteria's impact on academics. Academics' responses to the issues related to the promotion criteria were collected among lecturers, associate professors and professors (none of them were gurus) working in the case university. According to the promotion criteria, their posts require teaching and research.

The Lacanian perspective of the desire for recognition helps to explain the implications of the promotion criteria. A promotion represents recognition in academia; it will improve an academic's quality of life through the improved welfare provisions associated with promotion. One could argue that the approval (recognition) of academic capacities and corresponding material rewards are the reasons for academics to comply with the promotion criteria. In short, academics' compliance with the promotion criteria suggests the significance of the reflection which can be obtained from the criteria.

When considering the impact of the official regulations in a Chinese context, the perspective of institutional influences is apposite to explain relevant actors' behaviour. In China, there are neither institutions nor traditions for people to be against official regulations – firstly, historically, there have been severe sanctions against those participating in political campaigns; secondly, there were no institutional facilities or protection for people who raised objection; thirdly, objection may have resulted in social exclusion. Gradually, the knowledge (and the experience) of the severe sanctions, the institutions and social exclusion could be absorbed by academics. The internalised knowledge (and experience) could result in academics' unconditional and unconscious compliance with the criteria. On the surface, this unconscious compliance with regulations is in line with Foucault's account of power and discipline, which is discussed as follows.

Foucault's (1979) account of disciplinary power is another perspective through which to consider the impact of the promotion criteria. Academics are subject to the promotion criteria[167], they know their performance is visible and will be measured against the criteria. The visibility of their performance and the consequences of measurement (in terms of being compared, differentiated, hierarchized, homogenised and particularly excluded) may result in constant self-judgement –

> "He who is subject to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power, he makes then play upon himself. He inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles" (Foucault, 1979, pp. 202-203).

Drawing upon the Foucauldian perspective, Roberts (1991) argues a form of accountability – individualised hierarchical accountability, which is constructed through the surveillance of self by internalised discipline. Academics' compliance with the promotion criteria could be understood as the result of satisfying the internalised requirements.

Even though the preceding explanations are carried out from different perspectives – the desire for recognition, disciplinary power and individualised accountability, the "desire for recognition" plays a key role. The effects of standards in terms of differentiating individuals and constructing the internalised individuals' self-judgement could be understood as being underpinned by their desire for recognition from the academic performance measurement metrics.

In line with the preceding discussion of the significance of recognition, one could argue that the recognition from the requirements for teaching may have been overshadowed by the requirements for research since there are different (proportions of) requirements for teaching and research in the promotion criteria. These have been reflected in some participants' responses to the attractiveness of promotion in terms of easier project and research funding application and less serious attitudes towards teaching.

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[167] In china, people are subject to official regulations; in other words, there is automatic subordinate relation of people to the regulations.

In Chinese academia, some academics take (particular) research performance more seriously than teaching performance because of research's significance to promotion. However, the author came across an academic who claimed to be indifferent to promotion. In order to explain different actors' modes of conduct in a specific context, this thesis adopts a series of Bourdieusian ideas (for example, field, capitals, illusio and habitus). Generally speaking, a field is inhabited by differently positioned actors' struggling over field-related capitals. Actors are committed to the value of capitals (illusio) and adopt strategic orientations appropriate to their positions (habitus). In the field of Chinese academia, academics' positions are largely determined by their possession of research-related capitals. In order to progress up the hierarchy of the field (or at least maintain their positions), they need to accumulate capitals through carrying out research and delivering recognisable research outcomes. Therefore, the requirements for research in the promotion criteria could be regarded as the dominant rule of the field.

Analogously to the discussion of gurus' commitment to acquiring capitals in Section 7.2.2.2, the "desire for recognition" is helpful in explaining academics' modes of conduct. On the one hand, holding capitals represents some form of recognition; on the other hand, the subjection to the power of capitals could be explained as recognising the (power of) capitals.

The Bourdieusian/Lacanian desire for recognition originating from the power of capitals seems different from the Foucauldian self-discipline from the perspective of individualised accountability – the former reveals a mutual relationship between actors in the same field; the latter focuses on recognition from an internalised discipline. The form of individualised accountability will result in a competitive relation of self to others – trying to be superior to others. In other words, even though the "desire for recognition" could work on inter- and intrapersonal levels, it will generate the same relation of self to others.

In summary, this section concludes the construction of the understanding of Chinese academics, which is guided and underpinned from theoretical perspectives. Specifically speaking, the Bourdieusian perspective and the understanding of the

institutional environment in China suggest that the compliance with the promotion criteria is a field-specific way to do things. From the Foucauldian perspective, the internalised discipline developed from the visibility rendered by standards and a series of effects of being measured against standards are key issues to the understanding of academics' compliance with the promotion criteria. The desire for recognition is embedded in the preceding perspectives and significant for explaining the academics' modes of conduct.

On the basis of the theoretical analysis of academic performance measures in terms of representing and delivering the dominant interests to Chinese academia and their impacts on academics, the next section will conclude the contributions this thesis makes and the implications for future research.

7.3 Contributions, Limitations and Future Work

7.3.2 Discussion about Accountability and Resistance

7.3.2.1 Accountability

In addition to analysing performance measures from the perspective of their impacts on individuals, the discussion of accountability is also an important and inevitable issue, which will be concluded in the rest of this section.

Chinese academia has been depicted and concluded in Chapter Five and Section 7.2.1.2 from an (interpretive) institutional perspective. Due to the transition of the state's strategic foci from class struggle to economic development since the late 1970s, Chinese higher education began to shoulder the responsibility for building up the state power and competitiveness through developing *rencai* (a kind of human capital, produced by education, which plays a significant role in economic development) and contributing to advances in scientific research. In order to improve the quality of human resources and research, particular metrics (SCI) were introduced in Chinese academia to evaluate research performance.

The preceding finding that a very particular type of research performance is pursued at the expense of improving teaching and maintaining blue skies, heterogeneous and critical research gives rise to a discussion about the academics' accountabilities which have been constructed by academic performance measurements.

The discussion of accountability seems inevitable when carrying out research into the impact of performance measurements on individuals since accountability can be regarded as the product of standards, which are embedded in performance measures (Miller, 1994; Roberts, 1996; Vosselman, 2012).

Conventional wisdom argues that there is a positive and reciprocal relationship between a good set of performance measures and improved accountability (Ammons, 2007). This argument may be "true" if a "good" set of performance measures exists. However, as set out in Sections 2.2 and 2.4.2, the uncertainty of organisational objectives, the divergent interests between stakeholders and the paradox of information could all prove to be problematic in terms of producing a "good" set of performance measurements. Moreover, the constitutive force of performance measures in generating problematic individualised accountabilities, makes the production of "good" performance metrics extremely difficult. More specifically,

> "When accountability is amalgamated with business ethics, the individual is expected to behave in accordance with social prescriptions rather than with moral principles guiding his or her own conscience" (Joannides, 2012, p. 247).

With respect to the problems of accountability generated by performance measurement in universities, Hartley (1997) argues that "…the compliance of the worker [faculty member] turns on calculation, on reward for performance. Compliance is not normative or moral" (p. 57).

There is a growing interest in the problems of accountability generated by performance measures. Accountability can be understood from four perspectives – "who" is accountable, "for what", "to whom", "by which means" (Joannides, 2012), and so the problems of accountability could be diagnosed through these four conduits

accordingly. For example, from the perspectives of "for what" and "by which means", McKernan and McPhail (2012) argue that the emergence of accountability may result in displaced and subsumed autonomous responsibilities "through quantitatively dominated processes of quantification…(calculative) accountability…with a drive to render responsibilities and performances visible, and thereby constrain accountable subjects to respect and live up to their responsibilities" (pp. 178-179). From the perspective of "to whom", accountability may be problematic since "forcing the giving of an account exposes the accountable person to violence exerted by others – by the higher principal, peers, or superiors whose demands for good reasons for conduct might sound like an interrogation" (Joannides, 2012, p. 246; Messner, 2009).

The preceding perspectives suggest a Lacanian understanding of the force of accountability – the desire for recognition. Returning to the definition of accountability – "a situation in which someone is responsible for things that happen and can give a satisfactory reason for them". Giving "a satisfactory reason" alludes to the involvement of others' judgement in someone's responsibility to rationalise what has happened. The involvement of "others' judgement" is in line with Roberts' (2009) understanding of accountability from a psychoanalytic perspective which –

> "…frequently arouses both longings for love and acceptance and parallel fears of being attacked and turned upon, and I would argue that it is this emotional edge to accountability that gives it its force. There is something of an emotional short circuit at work in accountability such that the present comes to be imbued with these earlier emotional resonances" (p. 961).

The longings for acceptance and fears of being turned upon not only determine the power of the standards set out by performance measurements; they also reveal the social relationships of the subjects to the measures and to the hidden dominant groups.

Drawing upon Foucault's (1979) account of disciplinary power, Roberts (1991) argues that there are two forms of accountabilities – individualised hierarchical

accountability and socialising accountability; they generate different senses of self and relations to others. In Chinese academia, due to the asymmetric power relation of academics to the institutionally constructed performance measures, the endless desire for hierarchical recognition is critical to understand the construction of academics' accountabilities.

The competitive relations to others and the internalised surveillance of self, which are involved in hierarchical accountability, explain the impaired responsibilities resulting from the subordinate relation of academics to performance measures. This thesis rationalises this perspective through revealing the extent of the promotion criteria's impact on academics.

From a semantic perspective, particular Chinese characters help to reveal the relationship between performance measures and accountability. The author deliberately used the characters "职责" in the interviews and questionnaires, which comprise the meanings of "duties", "responsibilities" and "accountabilities". When being asked about their "职责", most of academics' responses were concerned with "imparting knowledge and educating people". When being asked about the implications of promotion-related issues, most of academics came up with research-oriented and research-related activities, which were more critical for individual success. In other words, performance measures (containing onerous requirements for research) help to construct a sense of accountability in terms of delivering "good-quality" research. In order to generate a consistent understanding of academic accountability, Chinese policy makers should consider the term used to depict the aim of the performance measurements.

7.3.2.2 Resistance and the Practice of Accounterability

On the basis of the preceding discussion of the accountability constructed by organisational standards (performance measures), the perspective of being accountable "to whom" is not only critical in recognising the internalised disciplining of self; it is also important to suggest practices to counter the impaired responsibility resulted from complying with the standards.

Accompanied by the visibility rendered by the standards, the materialised form of recognition (for instance, promotion and rewards) and the asymmetric power relations of standards to subjects, social rules embedded in standards could have been internalised and overshadowed any individual or organisational moral values – for organisational members, the accounts owed to higher principals, who hold 'supreme' authority over the whole organisation (including its members) may gradually and eventually substituted by the accounts owed to themselves. The perspective of being accountable "to whom" suggests the existence of an "absolute other", to whom organisational members give an account of themselves. Giving an account of self to an "absolute other" could have three implications. Firstly, it could free organisational members from their internalised surveillance (of the social rules). Secondly, it could construct a non-competitive relationship between subordinates (organisational members). Thirdly, it could help subordinates to concentrate on their work rather than being distracted by the consequences of (not) meeting the standards.

Giving an account of self to an "absolute other" is analogous to the socialising form of accountability since the latter emphasizes a direct and interpersonal communication. However, the supreme authority of the "absolute other" challenges the equality[168] between organisational peers in the socialising form of accountability. Encouraging people to give an account of themselves to an "absolute other" may facilitate the development of a practice – "account-*er*-ability" – "a counter-institution of resistance to the irresistible logic of accountability" (Joannides, 2012; Kamuf, 2007, p. 253). However, unlike the context where Joannides (2012) undertakes his ethnographic study of the day-to-day practices, the Salvation Army, the problematic accountabilities generated by the promotion criteria (and merit pay scheme) in Chinese academia could not be "countered" by the practice of "accounterability"[169].

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[168] The equality refers to a situation in which there are no vested interests (aroused by different positions along organisational hierarchy) in the communication between organisational members. However, in daily activities, this "equality" seems not exist – "Peers and other group members operate as the wardens of organisational doctrine and demand reasons for conduct they expect to be consistent with what the higher stakeholder is supposed to require. Peers serve as surrogates for the higher stakeholder, exerting lateral controls" (Joannides, 2012, p. 246).

[169] Due to the explicit requirements for teaching and research, the lack of the institutional environment to resist and the lack of the commitment to an "absolute other", this practice is regarded as inapposite in Chinese context.

Nevertheless, in this research, some academics' "resistance" (for instance, "Bio 8"'s indifference to promotion) sheds light on the possibility to discuss the emerging practice to "counter" the accountability and "recover" the responsibility which has been undermined by the explicit and onerous requirements for particular research results.

Academics' indifference (resistance to the promotion criteria) could be explained through Bourdieusian theory. The recognition of the activities of research and promotion in the field of academia helps to explain actors' status – how could academics indifferent to promotion survive in the field of academia? For academics who are interested in research, promotion would be their strategy to maintain their positions and to obtain the capital for the activity (research) they commit themselves to. Analogously, for academics who are interested in the benefits of being promoted, research would be their strategy to maintain and improve their positions.

The preceding explanation supplies a theoretical foundation to underpin the practice of accounterability. The counter-accountability could be constructed among particular academics, for whom the "moral aspects" of the rules of the field is dominant in terms of determining dominant capitals, meaningful activities and actors' dispositions. For example, "Bio 8"'s commitment to research[170] helps him to eschew the influence of the promotion criteria in pursuing vested research (and neglecting teaching).

Through the lens of accounterability, one could understand the seemingly paradoxical findings learnt from workplace resistance that "when we dis-identify with our prescribed social roles we often still perform them—sometimes better, ironically than if we did identify with them" (Fleming and Spicer, 2003, p. 160). The "dis-identification" of prescribed social roles could be regarded as countering the

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[170] According to "Bio 8"'s response, for example, to his accountability and to the implications of the promotion criteria – "…to be a qualified normal university teacher and accomplish my own job in teaching and research" and "…not influence me a lot, as I've seen through the fame and wealth…", one could argue that he was in the sub-field of teaching and the sub-field of research. However, due to the large proportion of the requirements for research in the promotion criteria, this thesis does not use the term – the sub-field of teaching (see Section 6.2.4) and uses the term – the field of academia which contains the activities of research and promotion.

accountability, which is constructed through obeying social rules. Better performance could be regarded as resulting from the countered accountability. Moreover, this perspective could help to explain some other circumstances – under which even though employees' behaviour could be regarded by management as resistance, they still "act as efficient and meticulous members of the team" (Roberts, 2005, p. 626).

Unlike the resistance underpinned by the counter-accountability, there is another form of employees' resistance which is designed to draw management's recognition (Roberts, 2005). Even though this form of resistance aims to make management compromise so that relevant changes could be made to improve the images of employees; this resistance serves to empower the management – the management have what employees need and they are still in control (Roberts, 2005). From the perspective of the desire for recognition, this form of resistance reflects employees' desire for the management's recognition. For organisational members who exercise "accounterability", their images should have been determined by the "absolute other" – there will be no room for further improvement or changes; the "absolute other" is supreme in that his/her status is regardless of subordinates' empowerment – a religious setting in its essence may facilitate the understanding – God does not need believers' recognition; the identity of believers has been determined at the point when they came to know God.

In China, there are no apposite institutions for people to seek changes through resisting management. Nevertheless, some academics' (for example, "Bio 8") indifference to promotion suggests that the practice of "accounterability" could be implemented to recover the undermined responsibility.

From the perspective of the social context, the existence of "accounterable" academics in the case university in an atheistic country enriches the types of social context in which it might be possible to implement "accounterability". Moreover, the discussion of "accounterability" sheds light on the development of some policy implications, which are concluded in the next section.

7.3.3 Policy Implications

Within the boundary of Chinese academia, a series of theories have been adopted to reveal the socially constructivist nature of academic performance measurements – the promotion criteria in a case university are not only playing the role of a mediator to represent and deliver the state's emphasis on research; they are also an important practice in generating compliant academics. Accompanied by the theoretical analysis of the impacts of the measurement practice on academics, there could be policy implications for university management.

From the Lacanian perspective of the desire for recognition, the rationalising behind academics' compliance with the promotion criteria (in particular, the requirements for research performance) is their desire for recognition (from the metrics) – the desire for their images to be reflected through the metrics. Therefore, under the current measurement system, a continuous review and improvement of the metrics and more discussion and critique of these metrics may be useful in terms of improving the quality of research performance. However, academics may become frustrated by continual changes to the requirements for their performance.

Promotion is a type of recognition and it is attractive to academics in terms of representing academic approval, bringing about improved welfare and brighter research prospects. These attractive features reinforce the weight of the promotion criteria by which academics are judged. These individualised benefits suggest an instrumental orientation in research and they could result in "essentially private self-interested concerns of individual success and failure" (Roberts, 1991, p. 366) and they could result in less serious attitudes towards teaching.

In order to rectify the attitudes towards teaching and research, policy makers could reconsider the proportion of requirements for teaching and research in the promotion criteria and consider establishing some role models who are promoted due to their serious attitudes towards teaching and excellent teaching performance. In addition, since the phase "imparting knowledge and educating people" has become doxa, the state could consider setting up positions for teaching fellows to attract people who

are interested in teaching. However, analogous to the sources of the problem rooted in the requirements for research performance, the metrics of teaching performance could also cause problems in terms of constructing individualised hierarchical accountability and resulting in instrumental interest in teaching. These problems may be rectified by trial and error.

In order to rectify the instrumental interests in research, policy makers could adopt other means than material rewards to encourage academics, for example, emphasising the contribution made by specific research. This could broaden academics' vision in terms of the social implications of their research. From the perspective of the individualised form of accountability, a new broader perspective may help to relieve the competitive tension between academics and to encourage academic co-operation.

In summary, the images reflected through the metrics and the rewards of promotion are critical in constructing compliant academics. These understandings suggest the policy implications of, for example, changing the proportion of teaching and research in the promotion criteria, increasing the openness to the critique of particular metrics and continuingly improving the effectiveness of metrics.

The preceding policy implications are developed on the basis of how the promotion criteria had impacted on academics. After a whole theoretical analysis, one may consider these policy implications to be rather conservative. Nevertheless, one should note that the current regulations are generated in line with the state's strategies. Within the current institutional framework, any unauthorised changes to the regulations may result in less governmental support or even be seen as a threat to state supremacy; any changes would therefore need to come from the state.

However, this thesis reveals some academics' "indifference" to the promotion criteria. Their interests in research (and teaching) help them to eschew the influence of the promotion criteria. The finding of the features of these academics suggests the possibility of implementing the practice of accounterability. From the Lacanian perspective of the desire for recognition, the recognition of their attitudes towards

research (and teaching) could be useful to maintain their commitment to research (and teaching).

In order to overcome the problems of individualised hierarchical accountability, policy makers could consider removing the current type of performance measurements – the promotion criteria and performance-related pay. According to Fleming and Spicer's (2003) findings on better performance – ironically, it results from countering accountability which is constructed through complying with performance requirements. The country may benefit from better research (and teaching) performance under a new system – no-performance-measures system. Instead of paying academics on the basis of their performance, policy makers could start the new system with establishing a standard pay which is applied to every academic regardless of their positions. From the perspective of research, academics could be equipped with extra resources when their research projects fit the development of the country. This pay scheme could help to attract people who have real interests in research. From the perspective of teaching, academics could get non-monetary rewards, for example, being role models as the "star teacher" of the year. This reward scheme could help to attract people who have real interests in teaching. In short, these schemes could be established to attract people who are really interested in their work and the recognition of their work is not in material forms.

In addition to supplying the non-monetary type of recognition, policy makers could (re)construct/(re)introduce the "absolute other". His/her supreme position determines academics' images (identities) and they are therefore secured – academics' natural desire for recognition will be satisfied by the recognition from the "absolute other" – academics do not need to meet hierarchical requirements to prove that they are "valuable".

The "absolute other" has different meanings in different contexts. In a neoliberal context, the "absolute other" is the pursuit of individual wealth maximisation. In the context of Joannides' (2012) research (the Salvation Army), the "absolute other" is God. In China, from the perspective of Central Government, the "absolute other" (was Chairman Mao and) has always been the Party and the people. Being

accountable to the Party and the people has become doxa and permeated organisational culture and is reflected in the form of organisational mottos, for example, the motto of the case university emphasises the dedication to public interests and acquisition of all-round capacity. However, in the context of marketization, the supreme position of "the Party and the people" has been (is being) substituted by material rewards – this softens the symbolic power of "the Party and the people" in terms of making people accountable.

In order to (re)construct/re(introduce) the "absolute other" in the Chinese context, policy makers could take a bottom-up strategy – starting from reconstructing the organisational culture in terms of (re)emphasising the duty of organisational actors. The organisational culture could be reconstructed through, for example, giving seminars and setting up role models. The preceding suggestion regarding setting up a new system (no-performance-measures system) could be regarded as a practice developed under the reconstructed organisational culture – the removal of the current type of performance measurements could help actors to (re)concentrate on their work *per se*; this could help to firm up the reconstructed organisational culture.

When considering the feasibility of implementing the new system (no-performance-measures system), one should understand the Chinese context – rules are established and promoted in line with the state's strategies. In order to introduce a new system, Chinese government should attempt to trust academics rather than trusting the metrics. From a Bourdieusian perspective, current performance measurement is a dominant rule of the field of Chinese academia, which is determined by actors at the top of the field – a new system could be introduced by a new group of senior staff managing the field of higher education.

In summary, the existing features of "accounterability" shed lights on the possibility of changing the current measurement system. The establishment of a standard pay, the determination and distribution of the idea of setting up the "absolute other" and the selection of the new group of senior staff managing higher education could be taken on board in future research.

7.3.4 A Theoretical Framework

As set out in Chapter Two, previous research and discussion regarding Chinese academic performance measurements is either taken from a positivist perspective (for example, Ding and Qiu, 2011; Johnes and Yu, 2008; Moed, 2002; Zhang *et al*., 2013) or set out in a descriptive and story-telling style. This thesis contributes to the literature concerning performance measures in Chinese universities by adopting an interpretive perspective.

An interpretive analysis concerning the socially constructivist nature of performance measures is carried out through adopting a series of theories. On the basis of Parker's (2011) research into the corporatisation of universities and Zhang *et al*.'s (2013) research into the changes to the university accounting education in post-revolutionary China, this thesis theorises the emergence of Chinese performance measures from a new institutional perspective. In addition to recognising the institutional influences in generating particular types of academic performance requirements, this thesis theorises the process of implementing performance measures within an organisation (an organisational field) through drawing upon Burns and Scapens' (2000) old institutional framework. In summary, this thesis develops a holistic study of management accounting changes from an interpretive institutional perspective.

Burns and Scapens (2000) promote the importance of "power" (to maintain particular institutions or the interests of powerful groups) in terms of its influence on organisational behaviour. This thesis builds on the understanding of intra-organisational "power" from the Bourdieusian perspective of a field – in the case university, academics' modes of conduct were analysed through the Bourdieusian lens of struggling for dominant capitals which determines their positions and influences. In addition to analysing actors' behaviour in a field (for example, in the case university), the Bourdieusian perspective helps to analyse the state's behaviour in terms of adopting "advanced" research performance measures and pursuing "advanced" research performance. In this world (as a field), a state's position could be determined by its economic capital which is believed to be positively related to

advanced science and research. The mode of a state's conduct – trying to have more "advanced" research could be analysed through the Bourdieusian lens of struggling for more dominant capitals to maintain its position.

As discussed in Sections 6.2.3, 6.2.4 and 6.3.3, one could find that the Bourdieusian idea of a field was difficult to apply in practice due to the complexity of a field in terms its very different activities. The empirical analysis of the activities in Chinese academia – teaching, research and promotion, gestures towards redefining the Bourdieusian "field" – the "field" from a Bourdieusian perspective is activity-defined. This "limit" of the Bourdieusian idea of a field suggests more academic and/or practical considerations in future studies.

Drawing upon Roberts' (2009) understanding of Lacanian theory, the impact of performance measures on Chinese academics is attributed to the "desire for recognition" (from promotion). It gives force to "accountability" in terms of constructing "governable" people – compliant academics. The desire for recognition (fear of exclusion) is also the reason behind Foucauldian account of disciplinary power. Foucauldian account of disciplinary power helps to reveal the extent of the effect of external recognition (from promotion criteria) on people – gradually the recognition is absorbed and internalised and people will watch over themselves on behalf of external requirements. As discussed in Section 6.2.2, the "desire for recognition" is significant to understand actors' commitment to dominant capitals (from the Bourdieusian perspective) and people's "taken-for-granted" assumptions about the way of doing (from the institutional perspective). On the basis of the preceding theoretical analysis, making visible the "desire for recognition" is foundational to building the theoretical framework and the empirical contribution.

The last but important contribution this thesis makes is the development of a theoretical framework (see Figure 7.1) which is composed of the adopted theoretical perspectives in terms of explaining the emergence and significance of academic performance measures. The theoretical framework developed in this thesis suggests some structural issues for future studies. In addition, from a methodological perspective, this research reveals the role played by an accounting practice –

performance measure in the form of promotion criteria, as a mediator to carry the state's interests.
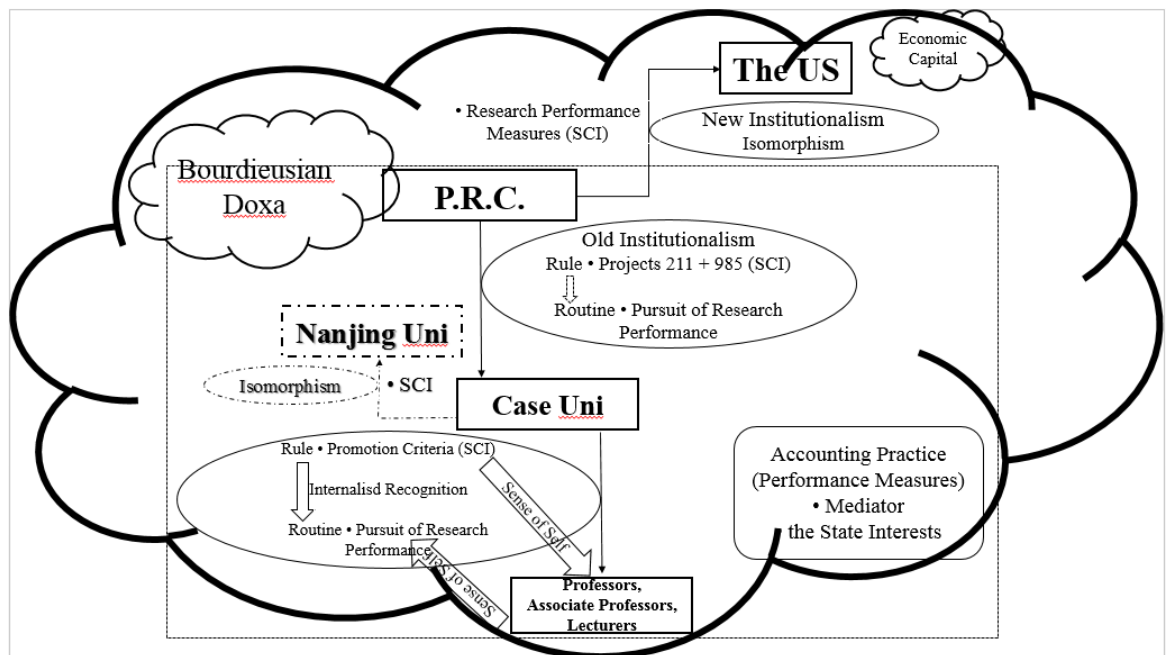

Figure 7.1 The Understanding of Chinese Academic Performance Measures from the Perspective of a Theoretical Framework[171]

7.3.5 Limitations and Future Work

Performance-related pay has become an important incentive tool to reward hard work – in Chinese academia, academic performance measurement and merit pay schemes have been adopted to motivate academics to improve their capacities and deliver better quality performance. The increased and improved international research performance could be regarded as positive feedback on the management practices in Chinese universities.

However, the increased research outcomes and improved research performance could have been achieved at the expense of teaching and perhaps some significant research

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[171] One could learn more in Figure 7.1 than in Figures 1.1 and 3.1 in terms of the theoretical application in the arena of Chinese academia, for example, the specification of state's strategy to emphasize research quality – Projects 211 and 985. In addition, the role played by accounting practices in representing and delivering the state interest is demonstrated in Figure 7.1.

arenas. This finding is underpinned by this research. In addition, at the time when this thesis is being finalised, the analysis of employees' neural systems has found that performance-based monetary rewards could undermine people's intrinsic motivation – in the case of this research, academic intrinsic value is to teach and research regardless of promotion criteria (Murayama *et al.*, 2010; Ma *et al.*, 2014). On the basis of their research results, Ma *et al.* (2014) suggest that merit pay schemes cannot be easily withdrawn once they have been implemented since the employees would be less serious about their tasks due to the undermined intrinsic motivation.

In contrast to the "acute" reaction to the performance-based incentive systems, there are academics (for example, "Bio 8") whose intrinsic values are not impaired by extrinsic rewards. This thesis has explained how these academics could have survived in the field of Chinese academia through drawing upon Bourideusian ideas.

In line with Bourdieusian theory, Oakes *et al.* (1998) argue that habitus, as a set of "internalised dispositions", is formed "through formal education, experience, and the inculcation that occurs as actors learn to negotiate social relations, to use language, and to recognize their context" (p. 266). Analogously, the importance of people's earlier experience is recognised by Roberts (2009) in his argument about the significance of recognition to the construction of accountability[172].

In order to generate a more complete analysis of Chinese academics, an examination of the formation of academics' habitus and their earlier experiences could be considered in future work. This is beyond the scope of this thesis research.

This thesis research adopts the "real-life setting" method – case study to scrutinise the impact of promotion criteria on academics. The research participants in this thesis are all from the case university. The specific context of this research and the small sample size (23 participants) may give rise to a limitation of case studies that the research results may not be generalised.

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[172] "…frequently arouses both longings for love and acceptance and parallel fears of being attacked and turned upon, and I would argue that it is this emotional edge to accountability that gives it its force. There is something of an emotional short circuit at work in accountability such that the present comes to be imbued with these earlier emotional resonances" (Roberts, 2009, p. 961).

In the current Chinese context, public universities share similar characteristics (in terms of promoting particular academic performance measures) and academics are subject to official rules. Nevertheless, in order to develop a holistic study into the impact of particular type of performance requirements on academics, more public universities should be included in future work. Moreover, the involvement of more public universities could help to enlarge the sample size – the inclusion of many different academics will also help to generalise the impact of particular type of performance requirements.

The empirical analysis in this thesis was carried out on the basis of primary sources – interviews and questionnaires, which are carried out in Chinese in the first place. The transcripts and answers were then translated by the author from Chinese to English. When considering the contextualisation of language, information embedded in responses might be lost in translation. In the future, the involvement of professional interpreter/translator may help to improve the quality of translation. However, a professional interpreter/translator may be too skilled to reveal the nuances of participants' responses – this problem could be solved by the involvement of the author and participants in terms of introducing the context and clarifying the meanings.

In addition to understanding the impact of the promotion criteria, this thesis is concerned with the institutional influences in the emergence and the operation of academic performance measures in China. Unlike the impact of the promotion criteria which was analysed on the basis of academics' responses, institutional influences were analysed on the basis of secondary data. In the future, the research into the institutional influences on academic performance measures could consider including the management's opinions. Their responses could assist the understanding of the significance of institutional influences.

From the perspective of policy implications, in order to eschew the influence of the current performance measurement system, future work could be concerned with the feasibility and implementation of a standard pay and the "absolute other".

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