

research snapshot

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Is there an emerging Chinese model of the university?

What is this research about?

Today's Chinese university system is having a growing impact on the world. It affects criteria for looking at global university rankings and scholarship. It may be starting a global competition for world class universities. The Chinese university system is also closely connected with the Chinese model for development. This model is praised for its efficiency and effectiveness, but criticized for its ignoring individuals as well as limits on freedom and democracy.

What did the researcher do?

Dr. Qiang Zha looked at the findings of researchers who had studied the views of various people involved in China's current university system. These groups were:

- national education policymakers
- university leaders
- faculty
- students.

He also looked at the historical development of the modern university system in China.

What you need to know:

The new Chinese model of the university sees the university as the state's educational and research arm for national development. The model, which is increasing in global influence, has both flaws and advantages for China and the world.

What did the researcher find?

The new Chinese model of the university is one in which the university is the state's educational and research arm for national and local development. The state promotes the decentralized management of universities. However, the state also sets requirements for:

- institutional performance
- accountability
- the basic norms of knowledge production.

This model has helped produce rapid enrolment growth, new governance structures, and internationally competitive universities. It also may encourage the effective transfer of knowledge to the

economy. At the same time, it tends to focus too much on practical approaches to education and to foster bureaucratization and corruption. The model's "academic centralization" is in tension with a re-emergent Confucian humanism. The Chinese university system can contribute to wider global dialogues, but this may require a world view that does not see democracy and authoritarianism as completely opposed.

How can you use this research?

Education policy-makers within governments and internationally can use this research to better understand the nature of the new Chinese model of the university and its local and global influence. Understanding China's universities will help professionals work effectively with a new generation of Chinese university educated colleagues that is now active around the world.

About the Researcher

Dr. Qiang Zha is an Assistant Professor with the Faculty of Education at York University. This ResearchSnapshot is based on his chapter "Is There an Emerging Chinese Model of the University," to be published in the book, edited by Ruth Hayhoe, Li Jun, Lin Jing, and Qiang Zha, *Portraits of 21st Century Chinese Universities: In the Move to Mass Higher Education*, Hong Kong: Comparative Education Research Centre, The University of Hong Kong and Springer (in press).
qzha@edu.yorku.ca

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Knowledge Mobilization at York

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kmunit@yorku.ca
www.researchimpact.ca

