



China ‘goes out’ in a centre–periphery world: Incentivizing international publications in the humanities and social sciences

Xin Xu¹ 

Published online: 13 December 2019
© The Author(s) 2019

Abstract

The current expansion of English language publishing by scholars from China is supported by national and university policies, including monetary and career incentives to publish in English. These incentives, which extend to work in the humanities and social sciences (HSS, the focus of this paper) as well as the sciences and technologies, are situated in evolving strategies of internationalization. China has moved from an internationalization strategy simply based on learning from the West, to a ‘going out’ strategy designed to both lift domestic research capacity and advance China’s influence in the world. However, the ‘going out’ strategy nonetheless embodies ambiguities and dilemmas. The world of academic knowledge is not a level playing field but more closely approximates the centre–periphery dynamic described in world systems theory. This study explores the influence of publication incentives in the context of a centre–periphery world. It draws on analysis of 172 institutional incentive documents and interviews with 75 HSS academics, university senior administrators, and journal editors. The study identifies practices within China’s HSS that reproduce centre–periphery relationships. By focusing on international publications, Chinese universities run the risk of downplaying Chinese-language publications and adopting standards and norms from global centres to assess domestic knowledge production. These could result in creating knowledge from and about China primarily in Western terms without adding a distinctive Chinese strand to the global conversation. Nonetheless, the study also identifies alternative dynamics that challenge the existing power hierarchies in global HSS, highlighting indigenous knowledge and the need to pluralize global knowledge production.

Keywords Centre–periphery · International publications · Internationalization · Humanities and social sciences · ‘Going out’ · China

✉ Xin Xu
xin.xu@education.ox.ac.uk

¹ Centre for Global Higher Education, Department of Education, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK

Introduction

Global research can be understood in terms of a centre–periphery model or core–periphery continuum (Altbach 2009; Galtung 1971). It corresponds roughly with the West/non-West divide, with the leading English language countries especially ‘central’ within the West (Alatas 2003; Altbach 2009). The centre–periphery model, which derives from world systems theory (Wallerstein 2000), functions as both a normative framing of the world and a description of the actually existing hierarchy of resources and influence, in which some countries or cultures are the global metropole and others are successively positioned away from centre with decreasing proximity, power and scope to affect the agenda. Countries on the periphery must work within a world system framed by the centre countries. Here the normative and descriptive modes of the centre–periphery model are joined, reinforcing each other. Discourses are ‘practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak’ (Foucault 1972, p. 49). In other words, by imagining and practising research and knowledge in terms of the centre–periphery model, researchers, universities and national policymakers will tend to reproduce the centre–periphery hierarchy. Correspondingly, the centre–periphery hierarchy is more likely to change when researchers outside the ‘centre’ not only build their own independent capacity in knowledge creation but also take effective global initiatives to shape and communicate new agendas for a multi-centre world.

When the centre–periphery model is applied to global Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS),¹ which is the topic of this study, countries (and universities and academics) with greater academic power and influence such as the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom (UK) are located at the centre of HSS knowledge (Alatas 2003). Those countries generate large HSS research outputs and control the major scholarly journals. Their ideas have global autonomy, reach and dominance (Alatas 2003; Altbach 2009) or in Gramsci’s term, ‘hegemony’ (Marginson and Ordorika 2011). In contrast, countries located on the knowledge semi-periphery or periphery tend to be relatively underdeveloped, marginalized and dependent on the central countries (Mosbah-Natanson and Gingras 2014).

The question of language of publication is important here. There is one global language, English. This is both the medium whereby academics exercise global agency, and a boundary that sets limits on what they can do with that agency. ‘Language use is closely connected to the rhythms of power’ (Held et al. 1999, p. 346). At least until recently, the dominance of English ensured the West, especially the USA and UK, a ‘near monopoly of scientific research’, with periphery countries being dependent on cultural resources from the centre (Phillipson 1992, p. 58). ‘International publications’ are commonly equated with ‘English-language publications’ (Lillis and Curry 2010). In non-English speaking countries, the notion of a ‘good researcher’ is increasingly linked with proficiency in English (Olsson and Sheridan 2012), despite the fact that HSS research tends to be written and published in the native languages (De Rijcke et al. 2016). This has created increasing pressures on scholars from non-English speaking countries, particularly in HSS, who are positioned at a disadvantage in global academia and suffer the additional costs of producing linguistically appropriate writing (Ammon 2006; Berg et al. 2001; Curry and Lillis 2004). In Mainland China, interviews with HSS academics have

¹ In China, Humanities disciplines and Social Sciences disciplines are often mentioned together as ‘Humanities and Social Sciences’ (Zeng, 2001) — a concept in contrast to sciences and technologies (ST) (D. Liu, 2003). Although such sharp distinction of disciplines between the ‘two cultures’ (Snow, 1959, p. 2) has been challenged (e.g. Becher, 1989; Kagan, 2009), the Chinese government and higher education institutions often follow this dichotomy between HSS and ST in research policy and management (Wang, 2009).

revealed the difficulties they face in academic English writing and publishing (Ge 2015; Jiang et al. 2017; Xu 2019; Xu and Jiang 2018).

In global HSS, Chinese academia has been perceived as lagging behind (e.g. Flowerdew and Li 2009). In the face of this perceived problem, since the 1990s the central government and universities have promoted the internationalization of HSS (National Education Committee 1994). The initial focus was to ‘learn from the advanced research in global academia’ (National Education Committee 1994). In the 2000s, this one-way learning approach began to change into a dual strategy of both importing and exporting research, described as the ‘going out’ strategy (Feng et al. 2013). The term ‘going out’ originally derived from an economic strategy to encourage overseas investments (Office of the State Council 2006). The idea has been adopted in many other areas. In HSS, the central government published several policies directed at ‘going out’ through scholarly exchanges and emphasizing the need to improve China’s ‘discourse power’ (Ministry of Education 2011a; Ministry of Education and Ministry of Finance 2011; National Planning Committee of Philosophy and Social Sciences 2006, 2011). In 2016, President Xi Jinping’s keynote speech at a high-profile symposium on HSS recommended that the internationalization of Chinese HSS be both ‘based on Chinese reality, and open to the world’ (Xi 2016), not only to learn from international academia but also to promote Chinese discourses and achieve global impact.

In response to the ‘going out’ strategy, a growing number of Chinese universities have formulated incentives to encourage HSS international publications (Xu et al. 2019). Such incentives are part of the shift from ‘inward-oriented’ to ‘outward-oriented’ internationalization strategies (Wu 2018, p. 1), and are against the backdrop of uneven global visibility of China’s HSS research and sciences and technologies (ST) research. China has surpassed the United States in its annual number of science and engineering publications, becoming world number one on this measure with 18.6% of global publications (US National Science Foundation 2018). Comparatively, China’s global share of international publications in HSS has been increasing, from 64 in 1978, to 8040 in 2013, yet still less visible in the world (Liu et al. 2015).

Incentivizing HSS international publications has the potential to strengthen the influence of the global centre within China. However, government and scholars have both expressed concern about tensions between western/eastern ideologies, which appears closer to HSS than to ST. The Communist Party of China Central Committee (2004) warned Chinese HSS scholars against importing knowledge indiscriminately and adapting Western ideologies uncritically in China. The Ministry of Education (2006, 2011b) urged universities to respect both national and international research outputs and use the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) and Arts and Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI) appropriately in the research evaluation.

Prior to the present study there has been little published evidence about the impacts of incentivizing HSS international publications in China. This study explores the influence of such strategies in China, in the context of a centre–periphery world. It draws on analysis of 172 institutional publication incentive documents and also semi-structured interviews with 75 HSS academics, university senior administrators and journal editors. This paper aims to address two research questions: (1) Under incentive schemes for HSS international publications, is there evidence of Chinese HSS conforming with the centre–periphery model? and (2) Are there alternative dynamics in Chinese HSS less conforming with the centre–periphery model? The study contributes to the multi-positional (Sen 1993) literature on the internationalization of

knowledge and draws out implications for policymakers and university practices in countries located outside what has been the global centre.

Centre–periphery framework and English dominance

In the ‘centre–periphery’ model, peripheral countries’ academic quality is evaluated according to standards set by the centre (Altbach 2011). Publications from the centre define and validate academic respectability (Canagarajah 1996; Omobowale et al. 2014). Publications from the periphery are often invisible. Connell (2007a) notes that ‘it has been difficult for works published in the periphery to circulate in the metropole, and to other parts of the periphery’ (p. 219). Western editors and peer reviewers are both facilitators that provide essential feedback (Belcher 2007) and gate-keepers that determine the publishability of research outputs (Altbach 2009; Aydinli and Mathews 2000; Lillis and Curry 2010). Inevitably, their criteria for selecting articles are mostly based on the interests, methodologies and scientific norms prevalent at the centre (Altbach 2011).

Within this framework, which is a hard reality that cannot be simply wished away, scholars from the periphery take varying approaches. Many scholars shift their attention from local issues to Western-defined problems, or Western versions of local problems (though even that move risks marginalization), applying theories and methodologies that cater to Western editors’ requirements (Chou 2014). Yang’s (2005) research found that Chinese academics in the social sciences were ‘emulating the strategies and standards of knowledge production in the West and aspiring to its recognition and rewards in funding, acknowledgement and publication’. This meant that they were ‘losing their opportunities to contribute more substantially to nurturing an international knowledge order’ (p. 82).

Other scholars have advocated a balance between internationalization and localisation (Yuan 2011); or, moving further towards agency freedom, have looked for ‘counterhegemonic currents’ in peripheral scholarly communities (Keim 2011, p. 130) and proposed ‘alternative discourses’ of HSS, such as the call for indigenisation, nationalization, and decolonisation of the social sciences by Alatas (2006, pp. 80–107). The Southern Theory also challenges assumptions of a homogenized knowledge pattern and centre–periphery relations, and asserts alternative knowledge systems and indigenous knowledge, independent from the Western knowledge systems (Connell 2007a, 2014). In the Chinese context, Yang (2005) argues that the ‘wholesale acceptance of western-dominated social theories can be very misleading’ (p. 71). He argues that scholars in China can indigenise HSS research by integrating reflections on local culture/society/history into their work, enabling ‘a re-balancing of Western and Eastern patterns of knowledge’ (p. 68). Deng (2014) suggests that China’s social sciences should ‘make their own contribution to the world scholarship, thus challenging the cultural hegemony of the West’ (p. 240).

While English is the sole global academic language then ‘world scholarship’ remains subject to unequal relations of power. However, the legitimacy of English as the lingua franca has been challenged. Pennycook (2017) pointed out that the global spread of English was never a natural, neutral and beneficial process, which demonstrated the worldwide cultural, economic and political inequity. Previous research found that the lingua franca of science has changed over time. The rise of English language was the result of the economic, political, scientific and technological predominance of the British Empire and then the USA, along with the impacts of World War II (Ammon, U. (Ed.). 2001; Crystal 1997; Kaplan 1993). In HSS

research, scholars argue that when those works are not written in native languages then the richness, subtlety and ambiguity of meaning can be distorted or lost (Sang 2013; de Swan 2001). Swan (de Swan 2001) warns against the dangerous situation in HSS when only the experiences of the English-speaking societies are presented and interpreted as universal norms. The prestige of English-language publications is believed to be responsible for the lack of visibility of non-Anglophone research (Huang and Chang 2008), resulting in a loss of knowledge at the international level (Olsson and Sheridan 2012). Some Chinese HSS academics have noted that the local Chinese-medium articles they cite in English-language publications are never re-cited (Feng et al. 2013). In non-English speaking countries, there are recurring concerns about endangered mother tongue languages and the devaluation of literature in those languages (e.g. Curry and Lillis 2018; Marginson 2007).

There are differing interpretations of and responses to the global spread of English in academic research. Marginson (2004) suggests that under some circumstances the growth of English as a global language in higher education could eventually lead to forms of linguistic plurality rather than homogeneity, both through push-back from other major language groups and through diversified use-forms of English itself. If the dominance of English is increasingly out of step with the diversification of world-wide economic and political power, then language patterns are likely to change. Phillipson (2001) urges that ‘those who believe that all languages have value, and that use of one’s mother tongue is a human right, need to be much more active in counteracting linguistic and professional imperialism’ (p. 197). Researchers also advocate ‘de-anglicizing’ English, so that native and non-native speakers would enjoy equal status when sharing English in academic writing (de Swan 2001, p. 79).

Incentives for HSS international publications in China

Incentives to publish internationally first emerged in China in the ST areas in the late 1980s. Academics who published in journals indexed by the Science Citation Index (SCI) received financial rewards (Qin and Zhang 2008). Since the early 2000s, a growing number of Chinese universities have adopted incentive schemes for international publications in HSS (Xu et al. 2019). By 2016, 84 out of the 116 universities in the leading ‘985’ and ‘211’ groupings had introduced university-level internationalization incentives in HSS disciplines, with much larger financial bonuses, higher ranks and considerable weight in research evaluation for SSCI and A&HCI papers than for most domestic publications (Xu et al. 2019).

Such incentives are closely linked to the evaluation of HSS research. Although some HSS disciplines share characteristics of ST (Nederhof 2006), their publication patterns are in general different from ST. For instance, HSS research demands more domestic considerations in the context of internationalization (Altbach 1998) and values non-journal publication channels such as monographs and book chapters (Hammarfelt and De Rijcke 2015; Hicks 1999; Nederhof 2006). It is therefore believed that evaluation methodologies in the ST may not apply for HSS, which commonly highlights metrics and journal publications (Hicks 1999; Huang and Chang 2008; Nederhof 2006; Qin and Zhang 2008). However, those features are wide-spread in current incentive schemes in China (Xu et al. 2019).

As for the impacts of incentives for HSS international publications, some scholars welcome the growth of HSS international publications, which is seen as a manifestation of the increasing global influence (L. Li 2009). Others state that current incentives may affect Chinese HSS academics’ self-confidence and lead to ‘self-colonization’ (Dang 2005; Deng 2010; Qin and

Zhang 2008). China is not alone with such discussions. Similar concerns about institutional emphasis on international HSS publications have appeared in other non-English speaking countries and regions (Chou 2014; Shin 2007).

Data and methods

This study draws on two principal data sources: analysis of 172 institutional incentive documents, and 75 semi-structured interviews. Incentive documents were collected from the official websites of 116 universities in China's '985' and '211' groupings, and during visits to six case universities between February 2016 to May 2017. Case study universities were selected from among the '985' and '211' universities. Interviews were conducted between September 2016 and May 2017, with 65 HSS academics and six senior administrators in the six universities, together with four Chinese HSS journal editors.

Both the '985' and '211' projects aimed to build world-class universities and improve the quality and research capacity of higher education in China (China Academic Degrees & Graduate Education Information 2009, 2012). One of the major strategies for '985' and '211' universities was the internationalization of research (Huang, 2015). Among the 116 universities in the '211' group, 39 were also '985' universities (China Academic Degrees & Graduate Education Information, 2012; Ministry of Education n.d.), considered to be of higher prestige than '211' universities (Ma 2007).

The six case study universities consisted of three '985' universities and three '211' universities and three HSS-oriented and three ST-oriented universities. The number of SSCI and A&HCI publications differed among them—more than 2000 at two universities, between 1000 and 2000 at one university, and less than 1000 at the other three universities. Two of the universities are located in northern China (thereby referred to as Uni-NA and Uni-NB), two are in eastern China (Uni-EA and Uni-EB), one is in western China (Uni-W) and the other one is in central China (Uni-C).

HSS academic interviewees were selected through 'purposive sampling' and 'snowball sampling' strategies (Merriam 1998, p. 63). Nine interviewees were from Uni-NA, 7 from Uni-NB, 11 from Uni-EA, 13 from Uni-EB, 10 from Uni-W, and 15 from Uni-C. Among them, 27 academics were from humanities disciplines and 38 worked in social sciences areas. Fifteen were assistant professors, 29 associate professors and 21 professors. Forty-one participants had international publications, with 33 having published less than five such papers. Thirty-one academics had overseas educational background, with 20 of them receiving their PhD abroad and 11 having overseas master's degrees or joint-PhD experiences. Among the 34 participants without a degree abroad, 26 had visiting experiences at overseas universities.

One senior administrator at each case university was interviewed. Each was involved in formulating institutional incentive policies. Among the 65 HSS academic interviewees, four academics served as part-time editors for newly-established English journals. In addition, four Chinese journal editors were interviewed, one from an SSCI journal, one from an A&HCI journal and two from CSSCI (Chinese Social Sciences Citation Index) journals.

Data was coded in three rounds, from open coding; to pattern coding for developing categories (Saldaña 2015); and to the last step of clustering, comparing, contrasting, building logical connections between codes and generating themes (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

This study documented those institutional incentive policies that existed by 2017. However, when Project 985 and Project 211 were replaced by the 'Double First-Class Programme' in

2017, 25 non-‘985’/‘211’ universities were added to the total national project (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, & National Development and Reform Commission, 2017). Future studies could explore the internationalization strategies used at the newly-elevated universities and examine relevant changes in the ‘985’ and ‘211’ universities in the wake of the structural changes in the designated national university system.

Dynamics between incentives and the centre–periphery model

Incentive documents and interviews provided evidence of internationalization practices in Chinese HSS that were consistent with the centre–periphery model in global knowledge production and exchange. The study also identified alternative dynamics in Chinese HSS, with potential to challenge and reshape the centre–periphery model.

Reproducing the centre–periphery model

The centre–periphery model was evident in the documentary analysis and interviews, as indicated by the prestige of SSCI and A&HCI publications, the desires to communicate with institutions and scholars at the global centre, and the emphasis on the English language.

HSS international publications were often understood simply as SSCI and A&HCI publications. Among 84 universities with university-level incentive schemes encouraging HSS international publications, 80 of them defined ‘HSS international publications’ in this manner. Only four universities generated their own lists of ‘excellent international journals’, independent of the SSCI and A&HCI lists. Interviewees likewise tended to equate ‘international publications’ with ‘SSCI (and A&HCI) publications’ or ‘English-language publications’. SSCI and A&HCI publications enjoyed higher status than domestic publications in bonuses and evaluations. In 172 incentive documents, SSCI and A&HCI publications were mostly either granted the highest bonus value or associated with the highest rank in academic evaluations. Interviews with academics also demonstrated a pervasive perception that SSCI (and A&HCI) publications were the most valued. All interviewees reported the increasingly prominent role of SSCI (and A&HCI) publications in academic employment, tenure promotion, research assessment and financial rewards. In comparison, in incentive documents, publications in Chinese-medium journals were granted a lesser financial bonus or a lower rank. They were seen as less valued by academics interviewed.

The interviews revealed strong preferences for communicating with and learning from the global centre. All six universities favoured returnee academics in recruitment, especially those educated in the West. Universities administrators associated returnees with a high-level of English proficiency and familiarity with Western norms and expected them to produce more international publications. At Uni-EA and Uni-NB, non-returnee academics were required for promotion purposes to have at least a half-year or one-year overseas research experience. Some participants, unfamiliar with Western academia or academic English, felt they were subordinate to returnee academics. They wanted to collaborate with Western academia and improve their English proficiency through overseas academic visits. One non-returnee academic from Uni-C longed for such an opportunity:

The trend of internationalisation is inevitable, so we must adjust to it. There are many returnee scholars nowadays. So, we have to become one of them, to go overseas and experience it. We have to play with those people [international scholars].

Such academics wanted to go to English-speaking countries, especially the USA or the UK. It was noticeable that participants tended to introduce their collaborators by emphasizing their English-language ability or familiarity with international publishing. Correspondingly, all of the editors who were interviewed shared the desire for their journals to be indexed by Western indices like SSCI and A&HCI.

Within Chinese HSS, not only were Chinese-medium publications positioned lower than English-medium publications, research published in other non-English foreign languages, mostly in non-SSCI and non-A&HCI international journals, were often seen as inferior. Since 89.66% of SSCI journals and 65.64% of A&HCI journals were published in English (Clarivate Analytics, 2017b, 2017a), academics working primarily with non-English language settings were left at a disadvantage under current incentives for SSCI and A&HCI publications. One academic working in Japanese Literature described the ‘troublesome’ procedure of getting Japanese publications recognized in academic evaluation:

Once published, even if it is a top journal in Japan and of high reputation in our field, you have to submit an additional document to prove that it is a top journal ... The whole process requires extra efforts to justify yourself, though is just like proving my mom is actually my mom.

It was also significant that although the interviews were conducted in Chinese, during interviews some participants chose to express certain terms in English. Many were procedural words used in English academic publication, such as *peer review* (used by five interviewees), *reviewer* (used by seven interviewees), *editor* (used by six interviewees), *paper* (used by eight interviewees) and *accept(ed)* or *reject(ed)* (used by four interviewees).² Those terms all had Chinese synonyms and could have been expressed in Chinese, but the English phrases had been integrated into the academics’ discussion of international publications. This constant usage of English terms suggested the socialization effects of academic English language and practices, in academic work or even in everyday life.

Alternative dynamics

The study also identified dynamics within Chinese HSS that were less conforming with the centre–periphery model. Some scholars argued for a more proactive role by Chinese scholars and researchers in asserting distinctively Chinese ideas. Some scholars upheld the value of work in Chinese by challenging the global hierarchies normed by publication incentives. Likewise, certain universities had revised incentive documents to enhance the value ascribed to the leading domestic publications. Some scholars engaged with international journals as reviewers and editors, thereby becoming more active global agents in their own right.

The terms ‘going out’ and ‘discourse power’, which were highlighted in Chinese national policies for internationalization, appeared in interviews with 14 academics, two senior administrators and one journal editor. Participants often talked about ‘going out’ as an advanced

² Except for journal titles, words and phrases marked in italics in this article were expressed in English by interviewees.

reciprocal approach compared with one-way borrowing in the past, echoing the changes in the central government's political discourses and orientations. The senior administrator from Uni-C emphasized that the university's incentive for HSS international publications was 'initiated as a response to the national "going out" policy', aiming at 'improving the quality of HSS research and enhancing the impacts both nationally and internationally.' Similarly, an academic in Management from Uni-NB commented:

Emphasising on SSCI publications is more about conveying a signal, that Chinese academics must become internationalised, and that we must improve our discourse power.

Other participants argued that Chinese academics should 'go out' to 'introduce more Chinese research to the world and deepen discussions with each other' (senior administrator from Uni-EA); or 'to become recognised and accepted internationally' (comment shared by an academic in History and the chief editor of an A&HCI journal). Others commented that the strategy of internationalization by promoting Chinese research globally reflected an improved level of national self-confidence. An academic in Sociology remarked:

Promulgating and spreading the civilisation means we are confident. ... It would be better if our internationalisation is based on domestic research, and if we are more confident. The aim of our internationalisation should be to disseminate our ideas, not just to learn from them—we can learn from them, but the aim of learning should be for better communication.

These comments seem to move freely between building reputation for China by performing according to international norms and building global influence for Chinese ideas. However, in becoming a common property, the term 'going out' took on more than one meaning. The tensions in 'going out' sometimes emerged directly.

Several academics were critical of a certain type of English-language publication produced in China, whose main function was to introduce Chinese contexts and experiences to the world, or employed Western theories to interpret Chinese cases. An academic in Law described those authors as 'academic porters', who exported Chinese experiences as raw materials to the West for theorisation, then imported those Western theories back to explain domestic cases. Some participants argued that such publications did not represent genuine 'going out'; and, moreover, that they offered limited theoretical contributions to knowledge, whether in Chinese terms or Western terms. It was said that Chinese HSS scholars should try to advance their own theories and debates in the global literature, and that this would constitute a more substantial 'going out'. In contrast, there were other academics who considered such publications to be a legitimate form of 'going out' that contributed to global understandings of China. Two social sciences academics from Uni-W and Uni-NA each observed a growing global interest in 'Chinese stories', noting that this tendency had coincided with a growth in the number of international publications by Chinese scholars.

Not all academics interviewed abided by the hierarchies between international and domestic journals that were regulated in incentive policies. Among the 65 academics interviewed, 18 expressed no intention to publish internationally, while 12 inclined to publish both internationally and domestically. Some observed that there was no quality gap between the top domestic publications and international publications. Two academics commented that if some

international publications were translated back into Chinese, their quality would be no better than that of average Chinese articles, or worse. Some academics stated that they preferred to publish in top domestic journals in order to gain reputation, generate impacts in the local community and demonstrate their influence in domestic academia. Among Chinese-medium journals, there was only one top journal in each discipline regarded as the ‘core journal’. Those journals were administrated by either the relevant state ministries or by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. For instance, *Educational Research (Jiaoyu Yanjiu)*, the core journal in Education, was administrated by the Ministry of Education. An academic in Education from Uni-C remarked that:

If I had to choose between SSCI journals or *Educational Research*, I would wish to publish in *Educational Research*. Because it is *Educational Research*, a journal every domestic educational scholar would read.

Similarly, three academics from Uni-C and Uni-EB noted the importance of publishing in *Economic Research Journal (Jingji Yanjiu)*, the core domestic journal in Economics, because it focused on Chinese issues, contributed to the Chinese economy and had considerable influence in academic circles. The Chinese-medium journal *Social Sciences in China (Zhongguo Shehui Kexue)* was seen by some participants as the *Science* or *Nature* of Chinese HSS, because it was the only comprehensive HSS journal administrated by the highest-level research academy in China. Twenty-eight universities now ranked *Social Sciences in China* at an equal or higher level than SSCI and A&HCI journals. Many of the HSS academics who were interviewed believed that publishing in *Social Sciences in China* was a tremendous success; and more difficult than publishing SSCI papers, since *Social Sciences in China* attracted top submissions from across China while offering limited space for each discipline. An Education scholar noted that since the 1980s less than ten academics in Education had published in *Social Sciences in China*.

Some universities were revising their incentive schemes to move towards a balance between international and domestic publications. Senior administrators from Uni-EA and Uni-W placed strong emphasis on top Chinese journals like *Social Sciences in China*. They also intended to classify SSCI and A&HCI journals into different tiers, offering bonuses according to each individual journal’s quality and reputation, rather than conferring on every SSCI journal the highest level of rank and reward.

Some Chinese academics were increasingly engaged with international journals, not only by contributing to them but also as reviewers and editors. Academics often described the reviewing experience as a ‘learning process’ (Academic in English Literature from Uni-EA). It enabled them to familiarize themselves with the standards of international publications, and learn from other reviewers’ comments about techniques of criticism. They could then bring this learned ‘rigour’ to reviewing for domestic journals. Participants also mentioned instances where they argued the case for non-native writers in English. One academic in English studies, said she often felt ‘*offended*’ by native speakers’ ‘sense of superiority’, when they made comments like ‘as far as I can tell, the paper was written by a *non-native speaker* — please find a *native speaker* to *polish* the language’. She would never make such comments, she stated. According to her, papers should be judged on the basis of their originality and contributions, and a good article should never be rejected merely because of the language.

Some academics were making efforts to establish new journals which they hoped would become globally visible. The first objective was to ensure the journal was indexed by international indices. All the journal editors interviewed expressed this intention. The editor

lists and editorial boards of these journals involved many Chinese HSS academics. Though the intended readership of these journals was international, the editors stated that they wanted to focus on China-related content. In other words, they replicated the strategy used by Western-centric journals but from the standpoint of China as an alternate global centre.

Conclusions

In the context of centre–periphery power relations, the form of internationalization embodied in China, as some conforming practices in the incentivization shows, is associated with continuing global inequalities. However, alternative discourses and practices are challenging the centre–periphery model, highlighting indigenous knowledge and the need to pluralize global knowledge production.

In incentivizing SSCI and A&HCI publications, Chinese universities have adopted standards and norms from global centres in assessing domestic knowledge production. As previous research has suggested, SSCI and A&HCI publications reflect the dominance of Western knowledge and the English language (Archambault et al. 2006; Zhou, Thijs, & Glänzel, 2008). All else being equal, placing SSCI and A&HCI publications at the highest rank in academic evaluation and rewards tends to limit the development of indigenous knowledge. As participants noted, when Chinese scholars are confined to Western norms and employ Western theories to interpret Chinese cases, one casualty is their capacity to make new theoretical contributions. This could result in creating knowledge from and about China primarily in Western terms without adding a distinctive Chinese strand to the global conversation. Such literature embodies what Connell (2007b) calls ‘methodological projection’, which frames data from the periphery using language, concepts, debates, and methodologies from the centre (p. 380).

Language-wise, Marginson and van der Wende (2007) note that Chinese, together with English, is one of the only two languages spoken by one billion people, and suggest that the Chinese language might become globally significant in scientific research if China wants that. The findings of the present study suggest that the opposite has been the case. In HSS in China non-English publications were being devalued in comparison to English-medium publications. Even though a variety of HSS research areas require the use of the Chinese language, or non-English foreign languages, as in the study of Japanese literature, in the evaluation of academic performance, research published in English had become essential. This positioned academics working with non-English languages at a disadvantage in their research and careers. It tended to discourage them from contributing to global knowledge production and exchange in the legitimate language of their research.

However, alternative dynamics such as the ‘going out’ of Chinese HSS showcased notions and practices not in accordance with the centre–periphery model. Academics’ disagreements about publications whose primary role was to introduce the Chinese context demonstrated different understandings of ‘going out’. Both sides of the argument can be partly supported. Admittedly, the contribution of such studies is limited. As some participants stated, much of what these papers said was common knowledge in China: they would not be original research if published in Chinese, or would not advance global theoretical discussions. Nonetheless, considering those publications from the perspective of knowledge as a global public/common good (Marginson, 2007, 2016), such research

contributed to global knowledge production by pluralizing and widening knowledge of Chinese perspectives, experiences and discourses. This article suggests that contributions to domestic knowledge and global knowledge should be equally valued. Particularly in HSS, where the research questions and focus tend to be rooted in local and national contexts (Altbach, 1998). While they do contribute to global knowledge production, there is no need to prioritize those introductory studies in research incentives.

Regardless, all the different academics' accounts of 'going out' reveal a common drive to establish and promote Chinese HSS in the global knowledge system. The 'going out' approach could be conceptualized as an ascending process, starting from the level of introducing Chinese contexts, and progressing to more critical, sophisticated and proactive engagements with global knowledge production and exchange. Some academics had positioned themselves at the starting level that of introducing Chinese stories. Others aspired to more profound participation. Those notions and practices are clearly different to just learning from, and staying inferior to, global knowledge from the global centre. It showcases, as Yang (2014) suggests, that China's HSS is moving from 'a one-way import of foreign (Western) knowledge' to a 'much-improved balance between introducing the world to China and bringing China to the world' (p. 157).

Furthermore, more Chinese HSS academics are reviewing and editing for international journals, this suggests the emergence of a more diverse group of 'gate-keepers' in international publications (Altbach, 2009); and though the newly established journals are published in English and perpetuate the global prestige of that language, the chief-editors and editorial boards involved many Chinese HSS academics, and the contents are largely China-focused. All of this changes the Western-dominated international academic publishing industry (Altbach, 2009; Belcher, 2007). Ultimately the new journals might contribute to a less Western-oriented field of international publication and knowledge dissemination.

This study has a number of implications for universities in China and those countries outside the English-language global centre. They also face tensions between international and domestic knowledge, English language and mother tongue language and global norms and local discourses in HSS (such as reported in Chou, 2014; Hammarfelt & De Rijcke, 2015; Shin, 2007). As national policy, senior university administrators and some HSS academics all proposed in the study, strategies to internationalize HSS should not simply adapt to the global knowledge centre and implement research incentives governed by Western norms. In China, current incentives were working partly to strengthen the peripheral status of Chinese HSS research. Alternatively, universities should pay attention to the balance between international and indigenous knowledge production, as well as the balance between English-language publications and publications in other languages, particularly in the mother tongue language. Universities could also provide more support for the development of domestic journals and international journals operating from the country concerned. In short, policies should move beyond the ambiguities of peripheral internationalization. Rather than recognize, replicate and reproduce hierarchies in domestic academia, countries outside the centre should challenge the unequal power relations within global HSS and begin to move the research system from the single centre-periphery model towards a multi-centre world.

Acknowledgements The author would like to thank Professor Alis Oancea, Dr Heath Rose, Professor Hubert Ertl and Professor Simon Marginson for their invaluable support and guidance for the research. The author is grateful to the two anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedback and to all participants for generously sharing their insights.

Open Access This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if changes were made. The images or other third party material in this article are included in the article's Creative Commons licence, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the article's Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

References

- Alatas, S. F. (2003). Academic dependency and the global division of labour in the social sciences. *Current Sociology*, 51(6), 599–613.
- Alatas, S. F. (2006). *Alternative discourses in Asian social science: Responses to eurocentrism*. London: SAGE.
- Altbach, P. G. (1998). *Comparative higher education*. Greenwich: Ablex.
- Altbach, P. G. (2009). Peripheries and centers: Research universities in developing countries. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 10(1), 15–27.
- Altbach, P. G. (2011). The academic profession: The realities of developing countries. In P. G. Altbach (Ed.), *Leadership for world-class universities: Challenges for developing countries* (pp. 205–223). London: Routledge.
- Ammon, U. (Ed.). (2001). *The dominance of English as a language of science: Effects on other languages and language communities*. Berlin : Mouton de Gruyter.
- Ammon, U. (2006). Language planning for international scientific communication: An overview of questions and potential solutions. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 7(1), 1–30.
- Archambault, É., Vignola-Gagné, É., Côté, G., Larivière, V., & Gingras, Y. (2006). Benchmarking scientific output in the social sciences and humanities: The limits of existing databases. *Scientometrics*, 68(3), 329–342.
- Aydinli, E., & Mathews, J. (2000). Are the core and periphery irreconcilable? The curious world of publishing in contemporary international relations. *International Studies Perspectives*, 1(3), 289–303.
- Becher, T. (1989). *Academic tribes and territories: Intellectual enquiry and the cultures of disciplines*. Milton Keynes: SRHE and Open University Press.
- Belcher, D. D. (2007). Seeking acceptance in an English-only research world. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 16(1), 1–22.
- Berg, E. C., Hult, F. M., & King, K. A. (2001). Shaping the climate for language shift? English in Sweden's elite domains. *World Englishes*, 20(3), 305–319.
- Canagarajah, S. (1996). “Nondiscursive” requirements in academic publishing, material resources of periphery scholars, and the politics of knowledge production. *Written Communication*, 13(4), 435–472.
- China Academic Degrees & Graduate Education Information. (2009). 211 gongcheng jieshao [An introduction to “Project 211”]. Retrieved March 20, 2016, from <http://www.cdgdc.edu.cn/xwyyjsjyxx/xwbl/zdjs/211gc/257660.shtml>
- China Academic Degrees & Graduate Education Information. (2012). 985 gongcheng xuexiao mingdan [The list of “Project 985” universities]. <http://www.cdgdc.edu.cn/xwyyjsjyxx/xwbl/zdjs/985gc/274805.shtml>. Accessed 16 Mar 2016.
- Chou, C. P. (2014). The SSCI syndrome in Taiwan's academia. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 22, 1–17.
- Clarivate Analytics. (2017a). Source publication list for Web of Science Arts & Humanities Citation Index. Retrieved June 3, 2018, from http://mjl.clarivate.com/publist_ah.pdf.
- Clarivate Analytics. (2017b). Source publication list for Web of Science Social Sciences Citation Index. Retrieved June 3, 2018, from http://mjl.clarivate.com/publist_ssci.pdf.
- Connell, R. (2007a). *Southern theory: Social science and the global dynamics of knowledge*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Connell, R. (2007b). The northern theory of globalization. *Sociological Theory*, 25(4), 368–385.
- Connell, R. (2014). Using southern theory: Decolonizing social thought in theory, research and application. *Planning Theory*, 13(2), 210–223.
- Crystal, D. (1997). *English as a global language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Curry, M. J., & Lillis, T. (2004). Multilingual scholars and the imperative to publish in English: Negotiating interests, demands, and rewards. *TESOL Quarterly*, 38(4), 663–688.

- Curry, M. J., & Lillis, T. (2018). The dangers of English as lingua franca of journals. Retrieved September 10, 2018, from <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2018/03/13/domination-english-language-journal-publishing-hurting-scholarship-many-countries>.
- Dang, S. (2005). Meiguo biao zhun neng chengwei Zhongguo Renwensheke chengguo de zuigao biao zhun ma?—Yi SSCI weili. [Can American standards set the highest evaluation benchmark for Chinese social sciences? – Take SSCI as an example]. *Social Sciences Forum*, 4, 62–72.
- De Rijcke, S., Wouters, P. F., Rushforth, A. D., Franssen, T. P., & Hammarfelt, B. (2016). Evaluation practices and effects of indicator use—a literature review. *Research Evaluation*, 25(2), 161–169.
- Deng, Z. (2010). Westernization of the Chinese social sciences: The case of legal science (1978–2008). In UNESCO & International Social Science Council (Ed.), *World social science report 2010: Knowledge divides* (pp. 182–183). Paris: UNESCO & International Social Science Council.
- Deng, Z. (2014). *Rethinking Chinese jurisprudence and exploring its future: A sociology of knowledge perspective*. Singapore: World Scientific.
- Feng, H., Beckett, G. H., & Huang, D. (2013). From ‘import’ to ‘import—Export’ oriented internationalization: The impact of national policy on scholarly publication in China. *Language Policy*, 12(3), 251–272.
- Flowerdew, J., & Li, Y. (2009). English or Chinese? The trade-off between local and international publication among Chinese academics in the humanities and social sciences. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 18(1), 1–16.
- Foucault, M. (1972). *The Archaeology of knowledge*. (A. S. Smith., Trans.). London: Tavistock.
- Galtung, J. (1971). A structural theory of imperialism. *Journal of Peace Research*, 8(2), 81–117.
- Ge, M. (2015). English writing for international publication in the age of globalization: Practices and perceptions of mainland Chinese academics in the humanities and social sciences. *Publications*, 3(2), 43–64.
- Hammarfelt, B., & De Rijcke, S. (2015). Accountability in context: Effects of research evaluation systems on publication practices, disciplinary norms, and individual working routines in the faculty of arts at Uppsala University. *Research Evaluation*, 24(1), 63–77.
- Held, D., McGrew, A., Goldblatt, D., & Perraton, J. (1999). *Global transformations: Politics, economics and culture*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Hicks, D. (1999). The difficulty of achieving full coverage of international social science literature and the bibliometric consequences. *Scientometrics*, 44(2), 193–215.
- Huang, F. (2015). Building the world-class research universities: A case study of China. *Higher Education*, 70(2), 203–215.
- Huang, M., & Chang, Y. (2008). Characteristics of research output in social sciences and humanities: From a research evaluation perspective. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 59(11), 1819–1828.
- Jiang, X., Borg, E., & Borg, M. (2017). Challenges and coping strategies for international publication: Perceptions of young scholars in China. *Studies in Higher Education*, 42(3), 428–444.
- Kagan, J. (2009). *The three cultures: Natural sciences, social sciences, and the humanities in the 21st century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kaplan, R. B. (1993). The hegemony of english in science and technology. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 14(1–2), 151–172.
- Keim, W. (2011). Counterhegemonic currents and internationalization of sociology: Theoretical reflections and an empirical example. *International Sociology*, 26(1), 123–145.
- Li, L. (2009). *Woguo shehuikexueyanjiu guojiahua tanjiu: SSCI lunwen de shijiao [Internationalisation of social science inquiry: SSCI papers' perspective]*. Beijing: China Social Sciences Press.
- Lillis, T., & Curry, M. J. (2010). *Academic writing in a global context: The politics and practices of publishing in English*. London: Routledge.
- Liu, D. (2003). Renwenshehuikexue de xuekedingwei yu shehuigongneng [Disciplinary definitions and social functions of humanities and social sciences]. *Journal of Renmin University of China*, 3, 28–35.
- Liu, W., Hu, G., Tang, L., & Wang, Y. (2015). China’s global growth in social science research: Uncovering evidence from bibliometric analyses of SSCI publications (1978–2013). *Journal of Informetrics*, 9(3), 555–569.
- Ma, W. (2007). The flagship university and China’s economic reform. In P. G. Altbach & J. Balán (Eds.), *World class worldwide: Transforming research universities in Asia and Latin America* (pp. 31–53). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Marginson, S. (2004). Competition and Markets in Higher Education: A ‘Glonacal’ Analysis. *Policy Futures in Education*, 2, (2):175–244.
- Marginson, S. (2007). The public/private divide in higher education: A global revision. *Higher Education*, 53, 307–333.
- Marginson, S. (2016). *Higher education and the common good*. Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press.

- Marginson, S., & Orderika, I. (2011). ‘El central volumen de la fuerza’ global hegemony in higher education and research. In D. Rhoten & C. Calhoun (Eds.), *Knowledge matters: The public mission of the research university* (pp. 67–129). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Marginson, S., & van der Wende, M. (2007). *Globalisation and higher education* (Vol. 8). OECD education working papers.
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.
- Ministry of Education. (n.d.). 211 gongcheng xuexiao mingdan [The list of “Project 211” universities]. Retrieved March 16, 2016, from http://www.moe.gov.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/moe_94/201002/82762.html.
- Ministry of Education. (2006). Jiaoyubu guanyu dali tigao gaodengxuexiao zhexueshehuikexueyanjiu zhiliang de yijian [Opinions on the quality improvement of Philosophy and Social Sciences research in higher education institutions]. Retrieved February 18, 2016, from http://www.gov.cn/zw/gk/2006-07/10/content_331906.htm.
- Ministry of Education. (2011a). Jiaoyubu guanyu shenru tuijin gaodengxuexiao zhexueshehuikexue fanrong fazhan de yijian [Opinions on further and vigorous development of Philosophy and Social Sciences in higher education institutions]. http://www.gov.cn/jrzg/2011-11/13/content_1992063.htm. Accessed 20 Feb 2016.
- Ministry of Education. (2011b). Jiaoyubu guanyu jinyibu gaijin gaodengxuexiao zhexueshehuikexueyanjiu pingjia de yijian [Opinions on further improvement of the evaluation of Philosophy and Social Sciences research in higher education institutions]. http://www.moe.edu.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/A13_zcwj/201111/126301.html. Accessed 20 Feb 2016.
- Ministry of Education, & Ministry of Finance. (2011). Gaodengxuexiao zhexueshehuikexue fanrong jihua (2011–2020 Nian) [Programme for the vigorous development of Philosophy and Social Sciences in higher education institutions (2011–2020)]. Retrieved February 12, 2016, from http://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/A13/s7061/201111/t20111107_126304.html
- Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, & National Development and Reform Commission. (2017). Jiaoyubu, Caizhengbu, Guojiafazhangaigewei guanyu gongbu shijieyiliudaxue he yilixuekejianshegaixiao ji jianshexueke mingdan de tongzhi [Releasing the lists of “world first-class universities” and “world first-class disciplines”]. Retrieved January 23, 2018, from http://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/A22/moe_843/201709/t20170921_314942.html.
- Mosbah-Natanson, S., & Gingras, Y. (2014). The globalization of social sciences? Evidence from a quantitative analysis of 30 years of production, collaboration and citations in the social sciences (1980–2009). *Current Sociology*, 62(5), 626–646.
- National Education Committee. (1994). Guanyu jiaqiang he gaijin gaodengxuexiao renwenshehuikexueyanjiu gongzuo de ruogan yijian [Opinions on the improvement of Humanities and Social Sciences research in higher education institutions]. Retrieved February 12, 2016, from http://www.gdjjw.com/jyfg/16/law_16_1479.htm.
- National Planning Committee of Philosophy and Social Sciences. (2006). Guojia zhaxueshehuikexue yanjiu Shi Yi Wu (2006–2010 Nian) guihua [The National 11th five-year plan for Philosophy and Social Sciences research (2006–2010)]. Retrieved February 28, 2016, from <http://www.npopss-cn.gov.cn/GB/219555/219556/14587978.html>.
- National Planning Committee of Philosophy and Social Sciences. (2011). Guojia Zhaxueshehuikexue yanjiu Shi Er Wu guihua [The National 12th five-year plan for Philosophy and Social Sciences Research (2011–2016)]. Retrieved February 28, 2016, from <http://www.npopss-cn.gov.cn/GB/219468/14820244.html>
- Nederhof, A. J. (2006). Bibliometric monitoring of research performance in the social sciences and the humanities: A review. *Scientometrics*, 66(1), 81–100.
- Office of the State Council. (2006). Genghao di shishi “Zouchuqu” zhanlue [To further implement “Going-out” strategy]. Retrieved April 26, 2016, from http://www.gov.cn/node_11140/2006-03/15/content_227686.htm.
- Olsson, A., & Sheridan, V. (2012). A case study of Swedish scholars’ experiences with and perceptions of the use of English in academic publishing. *Written Communication*, 29(1), 33–54.
- Omobowale, A. O., Akanle, O., Adeniran, A. I., & Adegboyega, K. (2014). Peripheral scholarship and the context of foreign paid publishing in Nigeria. *Current Sociology*, 62(5), 666–684.
- Pennycook, A. (2017). *The cultural politics of English as an international language*. London: Routledge.
- Phillipson, R. (1992). *Linguistic imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Phillipson, R. (2001). English for globalization or for the world’s people. *International Review of Education*, 47, (3/4), 185–200.
- Qin, H., & Zhang, R. (2008). SSCI yu gaixiao renwenshehuikexue xueshupingjia zhi fansi [Reflections on SSCI and academic evaluation of humanities and social sciences in higher education institutions]. *Journal of Higher Education*, 3, 6–12.
- Saldaña, J. (2015). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3rd ed.). London: SAGE.

- Sang, H. (2013). Xueshuqikan yu Zhongguo xueshu guojihua [Academic journals and internationalization of Chinese academia]. *Journal of Yunnan*, 4, 47–49.
- Sen, A. (1993). Positional objectivity. *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 22(2), 126–145.
- Shin, K.-Y. (2007). Globalization and the national social science in the discourse on the SSCI in South Korea. *Korean Social Science Journal*, 1(1), 93–116.
- Snow, C. P. (1959). *The two cultures and the scientific revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- de Swan, A. (2001). English in the social sciences. In U. Ammon (Ed.), *The domination of English as a language of science: effects on other languages and language communities* (pp. 71–84). Berlin; New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- The Communist Party of China Central Committee. (2004). Zhonggongzhongyang guanyu jinyibu fanrongfazhan zhexueshehuikexue de yijian [Opinions on the further development of Philosophy and Social Sciences]. Retrieved February 12, 2016, from <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64184/64186/66691/4494623.html>.
- US National Science Foundation. (2018). Science and engineering indicators 2018: Academic research and development.
- Wallerstein, I. (2000). *The essential Wallerstein*. New York: The New Press.
- Wang, B. (2009). Renwenshehuikexue yanjiu de lishiyishi [Historical awareness in humanities and social sciences research]. *Journal of Beijing Normal University (Social Sciences Edition)*, 3, 22–28.
- Wu, H. (2018). Three dimensions of China's "outward-oriented" higher education internationalization. *Higher Education*, 77(1), 81–96.
- Xi, J. (2016). Xi Jinping: Zai Zhexueshehuikexuegongzuotanhui shang de jianghua [Xi Jinping's speech at the philosophy and social sciences symposium]. Retrieved from http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2016-05/18/c_1118891128.htm.
- Xu, X. (2019). Performing under 'the baton of administrative power'? Chinese academics' responses to incentives for international publications. *Research Evaluation*, 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1093/reseval/rvz028>.
- Xu, X., & Jiang, K. (2018). Gaoxiaojiaoshi shijiaoxia de renwenshehuikexue guojifabiao ji jilizhidu [Humanities and social sciences academics' perspectives of incentive mechanism for international publications]. *Journal of Higher Education*, 39(1), 43–55.
- Xu, X., Rose, H., & Oancea, A. (2019). Incentivising international publications: Institutional policymaking in Chinese higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 1–14. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2019.1672646>.
- Yang, R. (2005). Internationalisation, indigenisation and educational research in China. *Australian Journal of Education*, 49(1), 66–88.
- Yang, R. (2014). China's strategy for the internationalization of higher education: An overview. *Frontiers of Education in China*, 9(2), 151–162.
- Yuan, B. (2011). Internationalization at home. *Chinese Education & Society*, 44(5), 84–96.
- Zeng, J. (2001). Youguan "Renwen xueke" de jidian bianxi [Discussions on "humanities disciplines"]. *Journal of Huazhong University of Science and Technology (Social Science Edition)*, 2, 121–126.
- Zhou, P., Thijs, B., & Glänzel, W. (2008). Is China also becoming a giant in social sciences? *Scientometrics*, 79(3), 593–621.

Publisher's note Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.