

BOOK REVIEW

Chan, Adrienne and Donald Fisher, eds. 2008. *The Exchange University: Corporatization of Academic Culture*. Vancouver: UBC Press. ISBN 9780774815703. Paperback: 34.95 CAD. Pages: 224.

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In 2003, the Centre for Policy Studies in Higher Education and Training organized a symposium on the restructuring of higher education in Canada. In *The Exchange University*, Adrienne Chan and Donald Fisher bring the symposium presentations together in an edited collection of nine papers. The volume showcases the work of some of Canada's most prolific scholars in the field and uses a series of informative case studies to provide a rich combination of historical context, theoretical background, and empirical evidence within which to locate the current transformation of universities in Canada. These analyses are situated within the structural trends that have impacted Canadian universities in recent years. These include 'globalization, commodification of knowledge and the knowledge economy, science policy, and federal funding and linkages across the boundaries separating the academy, industry, and the state' (2). The book focuses primarily on the changing nature of academic culture inside Canadian universities and the implications for university research.

Drawing on their highly influential studies of academic capitalism, Sheila Slaughter and Gary Rhoades open by outlining the extent to which market forces have become ingrained in universities. They describe an ascendant 'academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime' (19), exemplified by shifting boundaries between public and private space, institutional and professorial efforts to secure outside dollars for market-oriented research, the marketing of educational services, and new organizational structures connecting universities with the corporate world. In contrast to much of the literature in the field, Slaughter and Rhoades point to the active, sometimes leading role that university administrators and faculty play in transforming higher education, an observation taken up in many of the subsequent chapters. The collection also includes discussions of the influence of big business on higher education and the role of governments in encouraging market-based reforms. For instance, in his historical analysis of postsecondary education in Ontario, Paul Axelrod

argues that linkages between higher education and provincial and national policy agendas are not new, but the increasing emphasis on the *economic* function of universities has led governments to assert control in more direct ways.

Several chapters in the volume document the movement toward an outcome-oriented, performance-based research culture. In a case study of the University of Ottawa, Adrienne Chan and Donald Fisher describe how the University's decision to become a research intensive institution meant faculty were under heightened pressure to secure outside funding and contribute to (commercialized) knowledge production. These new performance requirements – particularly internalized by young scholars – had detrimental effects, such as reduced collegiality and solidarity, and the commodification of time and space. Turning from a focus on faculty to the next generation of researchers, Brigitte Gemme and Yves Gingras explore how graduate programs in Quebec have been influenced by an initiative to facilitate collaboration between university and non-university researchers. These authors acknowledge the tensions experienced by students in negotiating the expectations of academic and non-academic settings, at the same time as noting the potential advantages of this kind of research collaboration.

Another theme in the collection is gender equity. Focusing on the discipline of teacher education, Jo-Anne Dillabough and Sandra Acker illustrate 'the processes through which women are repositioned and reconfigured as gendered workers in a globalizing/marketizing academy' (148). They argue that the regulatory logic of fiscal restraint and emphasis on research productivity has unduly affected women, and that these challenges may be especially acute in disciplines with a history of institutionalizing female labour. How fiscal restraints impact women in the academy is also explored in Linda Muzzin's chapter on contingent faculty. She demonstrates that the increasing use of contract and part-time workers in Canadian universities has undermined efforts to address issues of gender and racial equity, as contract employees are disproportionately women and persons from ethnoracial minority groups.

Muzzin's analysis of contingent labour also considers the differential impact of university restructuring across disciplines. Contrasting sociology and anthropology departments with those of law, she shows how law has been relatively insulated from the effects of flexible employment (through its reliance on 'classic' part-time teachers, or community practice-based specialists) whereas the effects have been severe for the social sciences and humanities. Similarly, Theresa Shanahan

looks at legal scholarship at the University of British Columbia and how law's professional status and its connections to a wealthy profession have protected it from commercializing pressures. Analyses of the unique considerations in the legal arena in both chapters provide a worthy contribution to the Canadian higher education literature in their own right, as this issue has received little attention.

The collection also includes important discussions around strategies of resistance and alternatives to the market model, most notably in Janice Newson and Claire Polster's work on academic autonomy and the final chapter by Jennifer Sumner on the academic commons. Newson and Polster posit that individual and collective responses have been grounded in a limited conception of professional autonomy, thereby exacerbating the impact of infringements on academic freedom. For this reason, the authors call for a more robust conception of academic freedom that is firmly rooted in concern for the public interest. Likewise, Sumner outlines how public-private partnerships and the commodification of knowledge have eroded the academic commons, particularly the public university's ability to engage in knowledge production that is freely shared and conducted for public benefit. She sees faculty as playing a key role in the revitalization of the academic commons.

While the book makes a solid contribution to understanding the relationship between universities, capital and the state, it neglects to engage with or theorize 'the exchange university.' In the introduction, the editors make reference to the litany of concepts used to explain the restructuring process, such as commercialization, marketization and the 'enterprise' university. However, aside from this mention and a brief note that knowledge and education are increasingly prized for their 'exchange value' rather than their 'use value,' there is little discussion of its meaning or implications. This omission was somewhat disappointing given the title of the book and the fact that the same framework has been successfully applied in other areas, such as women's work outside the formal economy and the modern environmental movement. In this way, then, the collection missed an opportunity to connect discussions about exchange value in university research, teaching and governance to broader concerns around our increasingly commodified culture. Nevertheless, this unique and comprehensive collection will surely be of interest to faculty, researchers and students who share growing concerns about the restructuring of higher education.