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Lessons from the Legacy of Canada-China University Linkages

Abstract This article looks at a series of university linkages between Canadian and Chinese universities that were supported by the Canadian International Development Agency as a result of a development agreement signed in 1983 between the two governments. It first reviews relevant theoretical literature on higher education in a global context, and discusses the methodology adopted for the study. Then it provides an overview of a major program of collaboration in management education between 1983 and 1996, presenting views of leaders and participants on both sides. The next section overviews parallel linkages in the areas of education, engineering, agriculture, and medicine over the period from 1988 to 2001, and draws on the literature around university partnerships to identify factors that led, in some cases, to long-term sustainable relationships, but not in all. The final section of the paper reviews two major culminating linkages in environment and law, and suggests that these may have significant lessons for current and future cooperation between Chinese and Canadian universities in a new era of global geo-politics.

Keywords university linkage, partnership, collaboration, Canada-China relations

The Legacy of Canada-China University Linkages

We were stimulated by celebrations of the 40th Anniversary of Canada-China Relations in 2010 to design a project which would examine three large scale national level programs of collaboration between Canadian and Chinese universities from 1983 to 2001: the Canada-China Management Education

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Project (CCMEP, 1983–1996), the Canada China University Linkage Project (CCULP, 1988–1995) and the Special University Linkage Consolidation Project (SULCP, 1996–2001). These programs were supported by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) with a total of 79 million Canadian dollars in funding.

Firstly, we wanted to reflect on the historical contribution made by universities on both sides that had been involved in these projects. What kind of long-term impact could be traced, and what lessons had been learned by academic participants as well as leaders and facilitators? How did the projects specifically address areas of knowledge that were crucial to China's rapid transition towards the position of economic and geo-political leadership it holds today in the world community?

Secondly, we want to identify new synergies between universities in the two countries that may now be emerging and solicit ideas for future directions of university to university collaboration that could be beneficial to both sides. By tracking down participants from past projects who are now engaged in new roles and networks, with partners in diverse countries, the authors hope to chart new directions for the future. Since those who led past projects are most likely to be able to discern these synergies and pass on the legacy of historical experience to a new generation, we have invited them to a major conference at Tsinghua University, Beijing, in May of 2014. It will bring together leaders and scholars from universities in both countries, to review past experience in each of the major sectors and reflect on its lessons for the current period and the future.

This article provides a brief discussion of the theoretical literature we are drawing upon, discusses the research methodology being employed and presents some preliminary findings arising from interviews held in China and Canada. The purpose is to share a “work in progress” and stimulate creative reflection in the lead up to the 2014 conference.

A Theoretical Framework for the Study

In developing a theoretical framework for the study, we felt we must begin with the dichotomy between centers and peripheries in global higher education development. This conceptual framework emerged from critical reflection on dilemmas of post colonial and other developing societies in the 1960s and 1970s, as they struggled to establish themselves in the polarized situation of the Cold War, and saw universities as crucially important for the formation of capable leaders and for research that could strengthen the nation. Among many others, Philip Altbach (2006) led the way in research that explored the factors that kept universities in a peripheral position: brain drain, inadequate libraries, scarcity of

research funding, issues with language, and access to publication networks. In spite of the difficulties, effective strategies were identified and exemplified in the successful development of universities in some developing contexts.

With the end of the Cold War in 1991, greater space was opened up and universities in East Asia have attracted attention for the ways they have broken out of a dependent mode (Altbach & Selvaratnam, 1989) and asserted new patterns in terms of the interaction between basic and applied knowledge and the role of the “development state” (Johnson as cited in Cummings, 2010, p. 54). Chinese Mainland was a relative latecomer in this, with Japan, Korea, and Chinese Taiwan having moved forward much earlier. Probably few scholars could have anticipated China’s rapid and dramatic economic rise and our question is how far the university linkage partnerships nurtured by the Canadian International Development Agency may have contributed to this, in the view of those who participated in them. The fact that these projects spanned a crucial period of global change, before and after the end of the Cold War in 1991, may also be significant.

The second body of theory we hope to engage with in this study is that of human capital and the knowledge based economy. The end of the Cold War spawned a new era of economic globalization, and forms of economic integration undreamed of in the Cold War period. This has led to an intense focus on ways in which countries around the world can benefit from participation in an increasingly globalized world system. A new importance has been placed on universities as knowledge institutions, since they are seen as crucial to national success in competing in the global knowledge economy. As early as 1993, China led the way in setting goals for its top universities to strive for world-class standing in research and innovation and providing resources under the aegis of Projects 211 and 985 (Zha, 2011). Many other nations developed parallel projects in the years that followed. By the early 21st century, global ranking systems for universities were developed, with Shanghai and London leading the way, and many nations around the world joining the competition (Marginson & van der Wende, 2007).

While the literature on the global knowledge economy is foundational to this study, we wish to balance it with considerations of the global knowledge society and criteria that are not limited to economic indicators of success in evaluating university linkages. In his *Theory of Communicative Action: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, Jürgen Habermas (1984) sketched the contours of a “jagged profile of modernization,” (p. 241) dominated by instrumental technical rationality, and called for the redemption of modernity through the revitalization of the cultural lifeworld in a conscious rationalization of the moral-practical and aesthetic practical spheres. This idea was extended to dialogue across

civilizations in the suggestion that Chinese scholars might view this process as “humanizing modernity” (Hayhoe, 2000) and fruitful understanding could be nurtured through university partnerships that nested scientific technical collaboration in a jointly developed moral and cultural framework. We thus attempt to go beyond the analysis of factors for successful economic competition and collaboration to deeper levels of mutual learning around such major issues for humanity as the environment, health, social cohesion, cultural vitality, and spiritual fulfillment. Recent literature introducing the concept of “path dependence” suggests strong tendencies for the persistence of diverse institutional patterns, rooted in distinctive histories and civilizations that may resist the sweeping pressures for homogenization coming from economic globalization (Krücken, 2003).

A combination of these theoretical perspectives can be seen in a recent book chapter by Gerard Postiglione (2010), commenting on higher education and globalization in Southeast Asia:

Much of what is happening in Southeast Asian higher education is part of a pattern closely tied to global markets and national restructuring for competitive positioning. It is also clear that while much of this development appears to reflect a dependent pattern of adaptations driven by Western-developed economies, there are indications of both a significant resistance to status-quo center-periphery relationships and a vast competitive potential to alter these relationships. The diverse cultural and religious traditions of the region and its experience with colonialism and state-building have played no small role in this. Planning higher education reforms in Southeast Asia increasingly is being driven by more democratic regimes, highly capable of choosing a range of alternative strategies for expansion and massification, and visibly cautious about certain aspects of Western culture.... (p. 41)

The third body of theory that is useful for this study is derived from the extensive literature on university partnerships across nations and regions that has been built up over many years, as projects of collaboration have been monitored and evaluated (King, 1990, 2009). This literature yields a practical framework of evaluation that goes beyond issues of short-term effectiveness in knowledge transfer and application and looks at conditions that might lead to long term and sustainable collaboration capable of drawing in other social institutions on both sides in efforts to address major issues of human well being. King (2009) stresses the importance of adequate time periods in linkages supporting African universities and emphasizes the importance of an enabling environment that can sustain fundamental research as against short-term problem solving projects.

This point was born out in an evaluation of the CIDA-supported university linkages carried out in 2001, which identified the following factors as crucial to

the success of the Canada-China university linkages: 10 to 15 years of organized cooperation, high levels of partnership, trust and respect, continuity of leadership and effective leadership succession, the creation of an organizational vehicle through which skills or knowledge were applied or extended and close service ties to local and provincial governments (Jackson, 2003). The study concluded that these linkages had had considerable impact on policy at the local and provincial level, though much less at the national level. Another study commissioned by CIDA gave an overview of the history of CIDA's China involvement, and noted how the assessment of the first phase of linkages had culminated in a rethinking, in the early 1990s, following the set back of the 1989 events on Tiananmen Square. It concluded that the focus on human resources which shaped the linkages had proven its value, and the program should go forward with three main foci: supporting economic linkages and partnerships, promoting environmentally sustainable development in China and increasing China's capacity to improve governance, respect human rights and foster democratic development (Wilson, 2001).

While the focus of this project is on university linkages, the opportunity has also arisen to interview those involved in leading initiatives in some of the priority areas that emerged out of the linkage experiences. Our interest is in understanding the perspectives of participants on both sides regarding the long-term outcomes of the partnerships, and particularly in exploring how far and in what arenas a genuine dialogue emerged in the process of collaboration, beyond initiatives that were economically or technologically effective at the time. Identifying factors that were seen to hinder this mutually transformative process is also important. Recent research indicates that although China has opened up to a large number of transnational programs and sites of collaboration in higher education, time pressures and a strong commercial agenda on the part of both foreign universities and their Chinese partners are not conducive to a mutually enriching dialogue across cultures (Zha, 2012). It is thus valuable to ask what the legacy of past partnerships might reveal in this regard.

Research Methodology

The purpose of this study is to build a comprehensive and multi-faceted understanding of the outcomes of past university linkages as a basis for identifying present synergies and future possibilities. It is thus an iterative project, in which we see ourselves gathering ideas and reflections on experience, then using them to create awareness and sustain interest among those engaged in or planning new partnerships. An accurate understanding of the historical context is important, and we are therefore searching out relevant documents concerning

these past projects and the context of Canada-China relations that sustained them. We also see the importance of a careful scholarly analysis of the major elements in China's transition—economic, social, political, cultural—between the early 1980s and the turn of the century. The long-term outcomes of the various projects need to be assessed in relation to the major trajectories of change in each of these sectors. An understanding of foreign policy on both sides and the evolution of diplomatic relations between the two countries is also essential. We have thus invited scholars with expertise in these areas to prepare keynote papers for the 2014 conference, which will be subsequently edited into a book.

The main source of information for this paper, however, comes from open-ended interviews with participants of past projects in both China and Canada, including academics, institutional leaders, government officials and those involved in the facilitation of projects at all levels. A set of questions was designed for each interview, which begins with a consideration of historical lessons learned from past projects, then goes on to a discussion of contemporary synergies and future possibilities.

The response has been overwhelmingly positive in both Canada and China. We began the interviews in China in July of 2011 and have interviewed about 35 scholars and officials in Beijing, Changchun, Xiamen, Nanjing, Wuhan, Guangzhou, and Shanghai. Three were senior Chinese government officials at the national level, two were Canadian Embassy officials, one a former provincial vice-governor and institutional leader, while the rest were academics. Many of them have served as department chairs, deans, vice-presidents, and presidents in their respective institutions or as leaders in other public bodies. The fields of knowledge represented by these interviewees included agriculture, engineering, environment, education, management, accountancy, and medicine. In Canada, we have completed over 30 interviews, mainly with scholars in Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Vancouver, Montreal, and Quebec City, also with Canadian government officials in Ottawa.

As noted earlier, this paper reflects a work still in progress, and presents a preliminary analysis of recurring themes that arose in the interview data. In reflecting on both the positive and long-lasting benefits of the projects and perceived barriers and downsides we hope to get to the heart of the dialogue. What kind of synergy made it possible for a few projects to blossom into forms of collaboration that have been continuously transformed over the years and that have modeled a genuine mutuality between university communities on both sides, as well as overflowing into the wider society? And what lessons can be learned from these projects for current and future collaboration?

Analysis of the interview data will be divided into three sections, following the chronological development of the linkages and projects. First we look at interview findings from those involved in Management Education, since CCMEP

began earliest and enjoyed the largest budget over its two phases of operation, a total of 50 million Canadian dollars over the period from 1983 to 1996. Then we turn to a wide array of linkages organized under CCULP and SULCP, running from 1988 to 2001, and covering the areas of education, engineering, medicine, and agriculture, with a total budget of 29 million Canadian dollars. Finally we discuss two major culminating projects arising out of the rethinking of the mid-1990s in the areas of environment and good governance. Perspectives from interviewees in China are presented first, followed by views expressed by Canadian partners and participants, most of whom were interviewed subsequent to the interviews in China. It was not always possible to match the partners on each side of specific projects, but we have tried to listen carefully and make such connections as are possible.

CCMEP and Management Education

Generally we encountered great warmth and enthusiasm as we sat down with scholars in various Chinese universities and went through the interview questions. Most spoke about how this was an opportunity for institution building through a sustained relationship with a Canadian university where faculty had training opportunities, new courses were developed, collaborative research was initiated and new educational models were encountered, from pedagogical reforms in the classroom to ideas of university management that in turn affected governmental styles of management through graduates who subsequently served in government.

We begin with some views from the officials who put the whole relationship in place, then go on to report views from scholars in two of the key universities on the Chinese side of the network. Management was organized as a large scale network project in two phases, the first beginning in 1983, the same year as the first national level development agreement was negotiated between CIDA in Canada and the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation (MOFTEC) in China. Three senior education officials from the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (MOE), two already retired when they were interviewed in the summer of 2011, gave retrospective views on this. They noted the strong consensus on the Chinese side that management education was a matter of crucial need with 300,000 enterprises operating in conditions of an increasingly market oriented economy and no-one capable of training their managers. Academics in the field were largely engineers or Marxist economists, who had been trained under Soviet patterns of macroeconomic planning and had no relevant teaching material, nor the capability to deal with the rapidly changing circumstances in China's economic environment. Management knowledge was a

total blank.

In this situation, the MOE saw the importance of giving high priority to management education and one of the Vice Ministers took responsibility for selecting eight leading Chinese universities to enter into partnership with corresponding universities in Canada. Once the lead partnerships were established under a central coordinating body, each Chinese and each Canadian university then chose one or two additional allied institutions to join forces with them, resulting in eight mini-networks, with five or six institutions in each. The original purpose was to develop courses to train managers in China by sending teachers who could start new MBA programs on their return. In retrospect they realized that sending young scholars for MBAs in Canada was not an appropriate way of preparing academic staff to develop such programs. The strategy therefore changed to sending experienced faculty to engage in research and course development as well as a certain number of students for PhD programs. The key achievement, by 1988, was the unveiling of China's very first MBA programs in five of the eight partner universities. This involved the development of a complete set of Chinese language course materials, the designing of case study methods of research, using Chinese as well as Canadian cases, and the formation of a new cadre of young faculty in this area.

The officials commented on a number of aspects of this long lasting project. One was the scale: They noted that they had approached both Australian and U.S. development organizations for assistance at that early period, but the Americans replied that it was not possible for them to help and the Australians were only able to offer a set of support activities with a very low budget. By comparison, Canada was considered a kind of "savior" to China in this critical period of its economic development. They also noted how cordial and collaborative were the relationships with Canadian officials in CIDA and other government offices. They felt Canadians had a vision, were open and helpful, as well as being respectful at a time when they felt other countries looked down on them. There was no political color to their negotiations with Canada, they noted, and everything was dealt with in a practical way.

Scholars at two of the five universities that were core partners and launched the first MBA programs, Tsinghua and Xiamen, gave their perspectives on the CCMEP project. A Tsinghua scholar noted the desperate need for a scientific approach to management at the time and how engineering universities such as Tsinghua and Shanghai Jiaotong saw it most immediately and clearly. This was because most of the managers of enterprises had been trained as engineers but had no idea how to apply that training to management. This scholar was one of the first to go to University of Western Ontario (UWO) and felt that during his year in Canada he learned a kind of thinking and a knowledge structure appropriate for the establishment of Tsinghua's MBA program. He was involved

in developing case studies at UWO's Richard Ivey School of Business and later collaborated with Ivey professors in Beijing to create Chinese cases. These are now used for training people from all parts of China at Tsinghua.

A second Tsinghua scholar noted that over 30 members of the Management School had been trained in Canada, and since Tsinghua led MBA development for China its influence was widespread. Cooperation with UWO's Ivey School continues today and new case studies are being constantly developed. He compared his experience of cooperation with a major American university, and noted how the fact that CCMEP was negotiated at the national level meant that it led to collaboration across the country, and was not limited to the two universities. He also emphasized the need for China to rethink its model of development in ways which would take the environment more seriously into account. His vision was for a move away from focusing on mega cities, steel and cars and an approach that would enable urban people to buy homes in rural areas, rather than a one way flow from rural to urban areas. Research on this kind of issue he viewed as only possible within the spacious time frame modeled by this long term cooperation with Canada.

Xiamen University (XU) on China's Southeast coast was paired with Dalhousie in Halifax. The interviews with two scholars at XU gave another angle on the impact of the CIDA supported management education project. XU also saw itself as a pioneer in developing China's first MBA, recruiting students as early as 1988 to a jointly developed Chinese-Canadian program. Many textbooks were written by XU professors, some of these also being used by Tsinghua. Over half of the faculty of 50 at XU's Management College have spent time in Canada, with the Dean of the College and one of the university Vice Presidents being returnees. Most recently the Dean led a group from XU to a conference at Concordia University in Montreal, with participation from the US, the UK, France and Hong Kong, on case study development and most of the Chinese cases presented had been developed cooperatively with Dalhousie. The other area of great importance developed through this project was public administration, with a complete change in outlook and perspective accompanying the market economy and the need for a totally different approach to educating public servants.

The other scholar interviewed in Xiamen gave insights into the impact of this partnership on accounting and auditing standards at the national level in China, a crucial area in China's economic development trajectory, particularly its capacity to participate in global business and financial transactions. This scholar got an MBA from Dalhousie and a PhD from XU, rising to head of the Department of Accounting and then Dean of the Management School. He also set up the PanChina Accounting Firm, one of China's largest accounting firms. As a result of his leadership in these areas he was appointed Vice President of the China National Accounting Institute in Xiamen, with the President also being a former

XU Professor who had returned from Dalhousie. This Institute was established in 2003 as one of three national institutions responsible for setting and implementing accounting and auditing standards for the nation, the other two being in Beijing and Shanghai. At the Xiamen Institute 30,000 Masters of Professional Accounting students from all parts of the country are trained every year.

This scholar is a member of a small and highly influential committee for national auditing standards and serves as advisor for a parallel committee on national accounting standards. He noted that his participation in the XU-Dalhousie partnership in the early 1980s was fundamental to his personal career as well as to crucially important national developments in accounting and auditing. He expressed a strong interest in cooperating with Canada to launch similar projects of development through partnerships with universities in other developing countries. His institute is already heavily engaged in support projects for underdeveloped hinterland regions in China and he sees the possibility of extending this kind of work to the international arena.

The feedback from these scholars at Tsinghua and XU was very positive, with a focus on benefits to the university and contributions to the nation at a time of rapid and dramatic change. There were also downsides, however, with the most serious resulting from the events of June 1989, and the strained relations between Canada and China in the subsequent year or two. The Tsinghua professors noted that ten of the eleven young scholars sent before 1989 for MBA degrees stayed permanently in Canada and there was a great sense of loss at the time over the disappearance of the cream of their young talent. The XU professors noted similarly that the five doctoral students they sent to Dalhousie for one year of joint doctoral training also failed to return. Subsequently, arrangements were changed so it was mainly mature scholars who went to Canada for shorter periods, with a small number ending up doing doctorates. As CCMEP began some years earlier than CCULP, it was most severely affected by the problem of brain drain.

At the national level, the MOE officials noted that this was a very difficult time and some top government officials suggested terminating all the aid projects with Canada, but the MOE took the position that they must continue. One official noted how their relations with senior personnel at CIDA continued to be warm, in spite of problems and disagreements at the top level, and he found CIDA officials to be sincere, hardworking, and committed to genuinely supporting Chinese universities. As a result, he noted, a number of Chinese universities had ensured these projects were given prominence in their institutional histories.

A second downside noted by the scholars was the somewhat dictatorial stance of some project leaders in Canadian universities, who controlled budgets tightly and did not always include their Chinese partners in financial planning and decision-making. An example given by one scholar related to the publication of

the Chinese language textbooks created for China's first MBA. The Chinese side wanted to have a reputable national publisher, while the Canadian project director insisted on going with a low status provincial publisher in order to get them done at a cheap price. They felt he did not understand the Chinese environment and this undermined the influence of their work in China.

On the Canadian side we were able to interview the Dean who had the earliest involvement in organizing CCMEP while serving as Dean of Management at York University and later established a national CCMEP office in Montreal for the second phase of the project, when he was Dean of Management at McGill. He noted the remarkable speed with which the Chinese developed management programs: from zero to over 300 MBA programs by the end of the second project cycle. The diffusion of models throughout the higher education system was also remarkable. He further noted how many of the returnees quickly rose to positions of leadership as department heads, deans, and vice-presidents in their universities, and had a significant influence on management practices. As for the Canadian universities, he felt this project was of crucial value to Canadian management schools in learning how to manage international projects and developing lasting international linkages. Both of the schools he was associated with went from being very Canadian-focused to collaborating with universities in Thailand, Russia, the Ukraine and various African countries, and have not looked back since.

The other Canadians interviewed were at UBC's Sauder School, which was paired with the Management School of Shanghai Jiaotong University and Alberta's School of Business, which was paired with Xi'an Jiaotong University under CCMEP. One of those at UBC had been a doctoral student from Shanghai under the project, who stayed to develop his career in Canada, and so had perspectives from both sides. On the Chinese side, he felt the most crucial contribution was in the area of faculty development. In the early years, this was mainly through course development and academic upgrading, while now there is considerable collaborative research, which facilitates Chinese faculty in getting articles published in international journals. Other Sauder faculty spoke about UBC's International MBA run out of Shanghai Jiaotong, and the opportunities for UBC students to participate in four-week summer programs in Shanghai. Overall, however, there was a sense that more could have been done to build on the early collaboration after the end of CIDA funding. This was period when universities in many Western countries began to court Chinese university cooperation, especially in the attractive business environment of Shanghai. The greatest benefit to UBC has been an ongoing stream of excellent students and opportunities for faculty research collaboration.

A senior management professor who led the Alberta Business School's collaboration with Xi'an Jiaotong over a 20 year period noted the significant

number of leaders of highly prestigious management schools and transnational institutions such as Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University in Suzhou that emerged from the project. The fact that Xi'an Jiaotong was recognized as China's top management school for three years in a row, from 2005 to 2007, demonstrated how well its leaders had used their opportunities for collaboration in selecting areas of focus relevant to China's needs, as well as the quality of the collaboration they experienced with Alberta. In a competitive third phase of the project, Alberta was able to focus on nurturing women entrepreneurs, as concern for supporting gender equity became a dominant theme in the CIDA development orientation of the later 1990s (Mirus & Wegner, 2010).

It is now 30 years since a group of Canadian management deans visited China in 1982, and gained support from CIDA for the first phase of CCMEP. Most of the partnerships were funded for two phases of five years each, while some continued into new forms of supported collaboration, such as the Alberta-Xi'an program for women entrepreneurs, and programs supporting collaboration between management schools and major industrial sectors in the areas of power (Quebec Hydro and State Power Central Company), telecommunications (China Telecom, Nortel) and financial services (Bank of China and KPMG). It is extremely difficult to evaluate the impact of these long lasting linkages not only on higher education but on China's dramatic economic transformation over these years, from a developing society in transition—a "socialist market economy"—to a manufacturing powerhouse and the world's second largest economy. The economic trajectory is clear, but how much can be attributed to these early experiences of cooperation in management education will probably never be fully known.

From the Canadian interviews it is clear that one of the great satisfactions of these projects lay in the speed and effectiveness with which reforms were carried out. There was certainly what King (2009) has called an "enabling environment" on the Chinese side that was crucial to success. How far was the transformation mutual? It seems only recently has the Canadian side realized how much they benefitted from these opportunities and how important it is to build further upon them in the current period.

Finally, how much evidence is there of a dialogue or a meeting of minds across cultures, that goes beyond issues of economic effectiveness to broader questions of human wellbeing and global justice? The two remarks that the authors found most striking from this perspective were those of the Tsinghua management professor who called for a fundamental rethinking of the interconnection between urban and rural development, and the Xiamen accounting professor who proposed the idea of joint Canada-China cooperation in support of developing countries that are still struggling to function effectively in a global environment.

CCULP/SULCP and University Partnerships in Education, Engineering, Medicine, Agriculture, and Environment

While CCMEP had its own national coordinating body in Canada, CCULP/SULCP was coordinated through the international office of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) on the Canadian side. In its first phase (CCULP), there were 31 university partnerships across a wide range of knowledge areas, with multiple partners on both sides in some cases. For the second phase (SULCP), 11 partnerships considered to be most effective were selected through a competitive process for a second period of five years. From the perspective of officials at MOE who coordinated the projects on the Chinese side, this was a truly collaborative relationship with projects that were jointly designed, and jointly implemented, managed and evaluated. There was a joint steering committee which met every year, alternately in Canada and China, and included scholars as well as officials in discussing and trying to solve the various problems that arose. They noted how they felt respected and treated on equal terms, something that was quite unusual at the time.

On the Canadian side, we learned from those involved in the early decision making over the education focus in CIDA's development work that the educational exchange program with China, negotiated shortly after the restoration of diplomatic relations in the early 1970s, had resulted in very positive people to people relations, with the AUCC's International Division being requested by the government of Canada to take responsibility for managing this exchange. A senior CIDA official, who had a long term involvement with the China program, further noted that it made sense for CIDA, as a medium size organization, which could not compete with the kinds of infrastructural projects being supported by World Bank loans, to focus on human resources, and aim for "the multiplication of contacts at the thinking level." The rest of this section of the article will present feedback from participants in four of these projects—education, engineering, health, and agriculture—to see how far this often quoted CIDA aim can be detected in what actually transpired.

Education

We begin with the field of education. One interviewee had been vice president of Beijing Normal University, which housed the Canada China language training centre for almost a decade, providing English and French language preparation for scholars and graduate students nationwide who went to Canada under the projects. In addition, he served as project director for Canada China joint

doctoral programs in education, a CCULP project which linked seven Chinese normal universities in all regions of the country to the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto. He noted how this project was extremely important for education in a situation where educational theory had been dominated for decades by the ideas of the Russian theorist Ivan Kairov, which had been informed, in turn, by the pedagogical views of the 18th century German philosopher Johann Herbart. Educational scholarship in China was greatly in need of new ideas and perspectives at the time.

In his view, the project nurtured a generation of students who became leaders in the field, and who were spread throughout the country, since he had ensured that all normal universities that had doctoral programs at the time should be included in the project. However he felt outcomes might have been even better if there had been more exchange and dialogue. In terms of sustainability of collaborative relations, he felt there was the need for an organization at the university level which could give long-term continuity to changing forms and themes of partnership. He had developed such a center with a high profile U.S. partner somewhat later, and felt regret that cooperation with the Canadian partner was not sustained after CIDA funding came to an end.

Nevertheless, outcomes of the project were wide-ranging, and interviews held with six educators who participated in the project, three doctoral students and three visiting scholars, in six institutions in different geographical regions, give some insights into them. In total, the project had sent 22 young scholars to Canada, ten as doctoral students, 12 in visiting scholar roles. Twenty returned to China, and 15 continued to be active in educational leadership, teaching and research, including one university president, two vice presidents, four deans, and a number of department heads.

One influential dean noted how intercultural understanding was a key dimension of the project, and stressed the importance of educational scholars on each side understanding how problems in education are viewed and analyzed. The gap between the language and thought world of the two cultures is so great, that this had inspired him to find ways of communicating core educational values and perspectives from the Chinese tradition on a global stage through promoting publications about Chinese education in English.¹ The second major impact the project had had on his scholarship was in the arena of teaching. He was deeply impressed by the detailed course outlines he saw at OISE, and has established a practice at his institution where all faculty members are expected to make their course outlines available publicly, updating them every year, and all doctoral

¹ This scholar played a crucial role in developing *Frontiers of Education in China* from a journal of translations into a peer reviewed journal that presents educational scholarship from and about China in a form that is accessible to the international community.

students are required to develop and defend one course in their specialist field before graduation.

Another scholar articulated her strong sense of how timely this experience was. She had wanted to develop her doctoral research in a feminist framework, yet found this more or less non-existent in the Chinese literature of the time. Her period of study in Canada thus opened up this world of scholarship and she was, in turn, able to assist Canadian scholars and activists in preparing for the UN's Fourth World Congress on Women, held in Beijing in 1995. She also found a fully developed field of research on multiculturalism in Canada, which stimulated her to work in this area on return. "In a period of rapid social change, gender problems are particularly notable, while when things settle down, this is no longer the case," she commented. For her, timing was crucial, and she felt that 15 years later the quality and status of gender studies in China was high, giving women holding leadership positions in Chinese universities a scholarly basis to support their work and enabling them to make their voices heard in leadership circles where men still dominate.

A third scholar is now vice president of China's National Institute for Educational Research (CNIER). His research focused on classroom environments and on return he set up China's first research institute for educational experimentation, as well as organizing a related national association and a number of experimental schools. The ideas nurtured in these projects were to be seminal to national curricular reform initiated in 2001, where his standing in the CNIER gave him a strong leadership role.

Another area that was crucial to China's educational development at the time was moral education. As China moved rapidly to a market economy, its old style ideological political education became more and more dysfunctional and a new approach to ethics and moral education was needed. A fourth scholar highlighted how the research project he was involved in enabled principals and teachers to learn how to analyze their decisions, from moral, environmental, economic, and political perspectives. They developed ideas for dealing with the conflict between moral and environmental concerns and the brash pursuit of economic benefit that was engulfing China's rapidly changing society. This subsequently had some impact on both policy and curricula for moral education.

While this educational project had a wide-ranging impact throughout the country, including the areas of minority education and bilingual education in addition to moral education, gender in education and curriculum, no genuine institutional partnership survived the end of the 12 years of collaboration. This was seen as regretful by the first Chinese project director, as noted above, and seemed to reflect the issue of continuity in leadership, which is raised in the partnership literature. The leadership for the second phase of the project under the SULCP moved from Beijing Normal to Shaanxi Normal University in Xi'an,

and shortly after the project concluded, the two dynamic leaders at Shaanxi Normal moved to Shanghai and Guangzhou in the more open environment for faculty mobility facilitated by the market economy.

Although there was no follow-up in terms of institutional linkage, there were many spin-offs which continue up to the present. One of the most striking is the development of hundreds of English language immersion schools, adapted from the model of French immersion in Ontario, and integrated into public elementary school environments in Guangdong, Beijing and Xi'an (Qiang & Kang, 2011). A reason for the long-lasting impact of this project in different sectors of education that was identified by the second project director lay in the focus on basic research in areas of common concern. By contrast, her experience of collaboration in development work with other Western countries had been highly practical and responsive only to current problems. The importance of collaboration in basic research was one of the points raised in King's (1990) research on university partnerships with African countries and seems to be born out in the perception of this Chinese project leader.

Engineering

In the field of engineering, one significant CCULP project was led by a visionary institutional vice president who subsequently rose to be vice-governor of his northwestern province and then vice chairman of a national democratic party. His retrospective view of the project was thus extremely broad. The focus was on railway engineering, on the surface a rather specialized area, yet he felt the impact of the project had been very broad. This scholar had prepared in detail for the interview and emphasized that the project had involved new knowledge, new technology, new ways of teaching, new ways of thinking, and new approaches to the use of technology. Within the institution, teaching content and methods, as well as classroom organization, were transformed, and the fact that five institutional leaders from the Lanzhou Railway Institute spent periods of time at the Ryerson Institute of Technology led to considerable changes in institutional management. One example was open access to the library and computing facilities that had hitherto been a privilege of the few.

Of even greater consequence, this scholar believed, was the influence on national and provincial government ministries that had to face institutional leaders who were far more demanding and pro-active than in the past, as well as employing graduates who had new engineering and management skills. Specifically, the project's focus on the use of technology led to much closer relations with enterprises and a transformation of the railway system through the introduction of new CAD CAM devices. Since civil engineering, mechanical engineering, industrial control systems, electronic communication and railway

systems are all dependent on computer science, it was impossible to measure the extent of influence, he felt. Social influences were also notable, particularly in the area of gender and leadership. CIDA's demand for full participation of women in the project meant that three of the five institutional leaders who spent time at Ryerson were women and a project-initiated training seminar for women managers in technical work resulted in a book of proceedings that garnered considerable attention. Even though this project was not one of the 11 selected for a second phase under SULCP, its outcomes were remarkable.

On the Ryerson side, the specific institutional linkage was not maintained, yet this early experience of international collaboration has had significant long-term influences. The key institutional leader went on to become one of the world's most renowned scholars in the area of internationalization of higher education. Ryerson itself was upgraded from a technical institute to full university status in 1993, and its international programs are now both innovative and extensive, including significant current research collaboration with Chinese institutions. One high profile project which has recently won a major grant from the National Natural Sciences Foundation of China is a digital media lab operated in cooperation with the Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications.

Medicine and Health

In the area of medicine, Laval University in Quebec city had a long-lasting partnership with the Norman Bethune University of Medical Sciences in the Northeastern city of Changchun, an institution that now forms the medical school of Jilin University after a major merger. This was supported through both the CCULP and the SULCP. The focus was on treatment for cancer, and the senior surgeon whom we interviewed in Changchun noted how cancer had originally been dealt with in a highly sectoral way in China, with treatment divided among many different specialists. Through this project a Bethune-Laval oncology unit was established, and under the second phase SULCP project it became a national model for holistic cancer management and prevention. He was involved in every phase of the project's development and as a young medical professional he felt it enabled him and his colleagues to develop a much broader perspective than would have been possible without the opportunities of the project.

Many of those working with him in the early years of the project have now located elsewhere, some in the south of China, but he sees that as a positive factor that has contributed to the national influence of the model developed for oncology treatment. Of the ten core people in his unit, seven are returnees from this collaboration with Laval. Even though CIDA funding ended in 2001, they continue to have a flourishing relationship with Laval. Both undergraduate and masters students are sent there for periods of study and Laval professors are

invited to lecture and participate in collaborative research. Some of the wider offshoots of this focused medical cooperation are a sister city relationship between Changchun and Quebec City, as well French language capacity that is often helpful at international conferences and in receiving visitors to the university or city from France or Francophone countries. Finally, there is a strong sense of confidence and competence when he and his colleagues participate in international colloquia in their area around the world, which he sees as rooted in their experience with the project.

On the Laval side, we were able to meet with three generations of surgical leaders, the founding director of the project, formerly head of surgery and a legendary figure in China, his successor and the current head of the surgery department. Leadership continuity was clearly an important factor in the longevity of this collaboration. Another factor we found striking was the fact that Laval itself had been in the process of creating an integrated oncology unit at the time of its efforts to establish the Bethune Laval Oncology Unit in Changchun. This made the collaboration with Changchun very stimulating, as conditions for cancer treatment in China at the time were so problematic that the need for a totally new approach was even more evident. Now that Laval medical school is going through a process of transformation into a school of health sciences, with allied health fields integrated with medicine, the dean anticipates the possibility of a parallel and hopefully even larger scale cooperation with China.

Agriculture

One of the highest profile CCULP/SULCP projects was that in agriculture, because of the dramatic commercial success of rapeseed or canola oil as a health-enhancing edible oil. Jackson (2003) noted that the project was credited with enabling low-income Chinese farmers to plant three million hectares of new rapeseed varieties, increasing the value of their yield by 1,500 RMB per hectare (p. 45). Of all the university-linkage projects, this one clearly had the most direct impact on poverty alleviation. On the Canadian side, one of the participating scholars noted that canola has surpassed wheat as a cash crop in Canada, and is number one in terms of global income.

This cooperation arose out of a joint interest in the potential of this particular plant, with pioneering early research having been done by a distinguished scientist at University of Manitoba, and quite independently by a senior scientist at the Central China Agricultural University during China's Cultural Revolution decade. After two phases of CIDA-supported collaboration, the departments of plant science and food science continue in active research collaboration with partner departments at Central China, and collaboration has spread to involve numerous other agricultural institutions in both China and Canada.

On the Chinese side, scholars interviewed noted the impact of the project on the university's leadership, with both the president and vice-president being returnees from Canada in the mid-1990s and significant honors having been won by several other returnees. The university has two members of the prestigious Academy of Sciences, one being the pioneer in rapeseed research, four national key labs and ten national research centers. On the Canadian side, one senior researcher who joined University of Manitoba toward the end of the project noted that he was able to attract excellent doctoral students and visiting researchers through this project with China, and also got connected to "a beautiful network of collaboration" with colleagues in his area of plant pathology in other agricultural universities as well as Central China.

Downsides and Upsides in Collaboration

These four CCULP/SULCP projects in education, engineering, health, and agriculture were not without downsides, of course. Although they started some years later than CCMEP partnerships, they were still affected by the aftermath of the events of June 1989, losing a number of the younger scholars sent for degree study in the early years. There were also some concerns about the need for Canadian models to be carefully adapted to the Chinese environment, and the tendency for Canadian project managers to have such an intense commitment to projects that they could not see beyond such short-term setbacks as the failure of younger Chinese project members to return and serve their institutions.

The positive side of this was a strong sense of family relations between project members on both sides, set in the context of a national framework of cooperation between the two countries. A number of the interviewees noted how this was different from later cooperation with American and Japanese universities where there was a greater focus on immediate pragmatic goals to be fulfilled and less sense of working together in a context of mutual learning. Most unique of all, and mentioned by most of the interviewees, was the sense of a critical period of social transition for China, when Canada was present to her universities and ready to engage in wide-scale cooperation around areas of crucial importance for China. As far as we are aware, Canada was the only Western country to make higher education a core focus of its development aid to China over this crucial period, and to reaffirm that cooperation after the tense period of the late 1980s. The emphasis was on human resources, the multiplication of people-to-people contacts in areas of importance to the modernization drive, complementing the major infrastructural improvements in Chinese universities facilitated by loans from the World Bank over the same period (Hayhoe, 1989, Ch. 7).

Culminating Linkages in Priority Areas

CIDA officials explained to the authors that it was always intended for the linkage projects CIDA supported to become self-sustaining, also that the China program should evolve in response to changing circumstances on both sides. We have noted the reframing effort of the mid-1990s and the decision to focus on the three broad areas of environment, governance, and economic cooperation. In this next section, the paper will look at two culminating projects in the areas of environment and good governance.

Environment

The University of Toronto was linked with the Institute of Geographic Science and Natural Resources Research of the Chinese Academy of Sciences under both CCULP and SULCP for collaborative research in the area of soil erosion management through geographic information systems. The earliest cooperation had been funded by Canada's International Development Research Center (IDRC) in Guangdong province. Out of that had developed the CCULP/SULCP project which look at land management issues in Shanxi province and Inner Mongolia and sought to integrate bio-physical and socio-economic factors. The social dimensions that involved a strong education and training element, including workshops for women, was intended to ensure that farmers were motivated to adopt the new techniques developed. Close cooperation with government bureaus at the provincial level in both regions was also important. The great benefit of this for the University of Toronto was the opportunity for graduate students to have extended field experience in China and opportunities for faculty members to work with scholars at the Chinese Academy of Sciences already far more advanced in the use of GIS systems than the University of Toronto at the time.

While the CCULP/SULCP projects had relatively modest budgets, the opportunity arose for University of Toronto to compete for a larger scale third project that built upon the earlier linkage work and ran from 2002 to 2006. It was entitled "Confronting Global Warming: Enhancing China's Capacity for Carbon Sequestration," and the linkage was expanded to include three other Canadian institutions and seven Chinese institutions. The project was led on the Canadian side by a Canada Research Chair who had just come to University of Toronto from the Canada Center for Remote Sensing in Ottawa, where he had been responsible for building Canada's capacity for monitoring vegetation by satellite. This major project, with a budget of 2.3 million Canadian dollars, made it possible to test models he had been developing in the Canadian context in temperate and subtropical forests in China, terrain very different from that of

Canada. As a result the model is now used globally.

The overall purpose of the project was to produce research outcomes that would enable China to develop a scientific system for accumulating data that would substantiate its commitment to the Kyoto Climate Change Accord. This was clearly a project of national significance on both sides, and in 2010 the lead Canadian scholar was invited to sit on a panel under China's Ministry of Science and Technology that decides how 300 million RMB is distributed for global climate change research in China each year.

Law and Good Governance

None of the CCULP/SULCP projects had focused specifically on law and good governance, so the 4 million Canadian dollar project developed to support China's National Judges College in 1997 represented a strong interest on the Canadian side in strengthening the rule of law in China. The tender was won by University of Montreal's Faculty of Law, and although the project was not a university linkage per se, it provided the opportunity for the University of Montreal to build significant and ongoing linkages with the China University of Political Science and Law as well as other Chinese institutions. Over a period of four years, two cohorts of judges were trained, with each spending one year in Canada and one year in China under the project. There were two joint seminars each year in which a group of Canadian judges and legal scholars would meet with a large number of Chinese counterparts, judges, law specialist, and legal scholars, for a week around legal themes that had decided by joint negotiation. These seminars were held in different regions of the country and used lively methods of communication such as mock trials. The Canadian project director felt the Chinese may not have been quite ready for a profound change in legal culture, but a second phase of the project could have deepened the mutual impact. However, the second phase was awarded to the Supreme Court of Canada rather than to the university and developed somewhat differently.

Nevertheless, the University of Montreal benefitted greatly from this project, as the Dean of Law who organized it moved on to become Vice Rector International of the University and subsequently Provost. As Dean, he observed how faculty members were invigorated by the presence of the young Chinese judges in training, and decided to launch some exchanges. He started with organizing a four to five week summer seminar in Beijing for law students from Montreal, which was followed by a summer program in Montreal for Chinese students to learn about Western legal systems. This has been followed in turn by a Masters degree in international law oriented to Chinese students. As Vice Rector international he went on to negotiate with the China Scholarship Council to fund 30 PhD students to come to the university each year, concentrating in the

discipline areas they chose.

Meanwhile the current Dean of Law, who was also involved in the National Judges College project, has developed close cooperation with both the China University of Political Science and Law (CUPL) in Beijing and the East China University of Political Science and Law (ECUPL) in Shanghai. The cooperation includes exchanges of Masters and PhD students, research projects, faculty visits and the joint organization of conferences in constitutional and administrative law and international economic law in Beijing and Montreal. There are also active programs to publish scholarship on each side in books and journals that they sponsor.

On the basis of this strong bilateral program, Montreal is now beginning to see itself as a bridge between law students in the two emerging countries of China and Brazil, since a large number of graduate students funded by the Brazilian government are coming to Montreal, and connecting with Chinese counterparts. A further visionary effort funded by the MOE focuses on global governance and the international legal order, and Montreal's Law Faculty is partnering with CUPL, Wuhan University and a U.S. Law School to bid for this project.

While the balance of benefit in the earlier linkages was weighted towards the Chinese side, the way in which University of Montreal has moved forward on the basis of its CIDA supported opportunity to train judges illustrates a remarkable shift that is underway. The former Dean and Vice Rector who built so effectively on this project sees how much Canadian universities now have to learn from their Chinese counterparts, and how important it is to engage in active dialogue with Chinese peers, with critical thinking, values and ethics at the heart of the discourse.

Conclusion: Lessons from the Legacy of Past Linkages

The purpose of our planned conference at Tsinghua University in May of 2014 is to pass on to a new generation lessons from the legacy of CIDA-supported collaboration between Chinese and Canadian universities. This article is one small step in that direction, with the effort that has been made to synthesize findings from the interviews with scholars and leaders on both sides. Returning to the theoretical frameworks sketched out at the beginning of the article, there is no doubt that China has moved from a peripheral position in the world economy in the early 1980s to a central position, and the speed at which this has been achieved is stunning. In terms of path dependence, it is also clear that China has done this on its own terms, while making effective use of the support provided through such external funders as the World Bank, CIDA and many other agencies.

A recent volume on “China’s move to mass higher education,” profiling twelve universities in different parts of the country that represent different knowledge areas, demonstrates how epistemological and institutional aspects of China’s scholarly heritage have shaped this process (Hayhoe, Li, Lin, & Zha, 2011). Meanwhile China’s universities have been assigned the role of key partners with universities, school boards, schools, and NGOs around the world, in the creation of Confucius Institutes intended to foster cross-cultural dialogue and understanding.

For more specific reflection on lessons from the legacy of Canada-China cooperation, probably the partnership literature is most helpful. The first point emphasized by both King (2009) and Jackson (2003) is the need for a lengthy time frame, so that partners on both sides can develop a real understanding of one another. This was a unique feature of the linkage projects described above, with time frames between five and 15 years. While not all of them continued after CIDA funding came to an end, some blossomed into ongoing collaboration and widening circles of engagement.

A second point noted was the importance of collaborative research at a basic level around issues of common concern on both sides. Much of the current collaboration is commercially motivated, as institutions on both sides look for the revenue generated by students, programs and even institutions moving across borders, and fail to take up the challenge of seeking long-term and stable funding for the advancement of knowledge and mutual understanding (Zha, 2012). The cases of collaboration in the priority areas of environment, law, and good governance that culminated from the CIDA supported linkages provide a model in this regard. Everyone would recognize these areas of development as crucial to China’s current and future well-being, as well as to its emerging role in global governance. What could be more important or satisfying themes for Canadian universities to engage in long-term research cooperation? Another area that was highlighted by our conversation with scholars and leaders at Laval was that of health and social policy in China. No matter how much progress is possible in the most advanced treatment of diseases such as cancer and heart disease, if this treatment is not available to the majority of Chinese due to a failure to develop an effective healthcare system, to what avail are all the scientific efforts?

A global knowledge economy that focuses entirely on competition in the areas of instrumental-technical rationality and fails to address fundamental human needs is clearly unsustainable. There is a whole range of areas around health provision, balancing excellence with equity in education, environmental protection, protection of cultural diversity, which are rooted in the deep regions of what Habermas (1984) has called “the cultural life world.” These need to be addressed through efforts to connect the moral and spiritual heritage of Confucianism and Daoism on the Chinese side with Judaeo Christian values and

indeed the broader values of multiculturalism on the Canadian side. This could be the wellspring of a shared vision for the future that could be developed by scholars and leaders in Chinese and Canadian universities. Under the current global neo-liberal environment, modernity is in even more urgent need of redemption or humanization than when Habermas first coined the phrase in the early 1980s. The kinds of short-term commercially motivated collaboration that are increasingly evident will not suffice. This may be the most important and most difficult lesson to be learned from the legacy of past collaboration between Canadian and Chinese universities.

To drive this point home, we would like to close with a quote from a young scholar of higher education in China, deeply concerned about the crisis facing Chinese universities today:

...the reputation of a university does not depend on how many books and articles its faculty have published, but on how it guides every member in taking up their social responsibility through what they publish and the way in which it formulates moral standards and develops its mission, guiding ideas and approach to education. Unfortunately, few contemporary Chinese universities have this kind of tradition, perhaps due to the disruptions in their history over the 20th century. During the last three decades, except for responding to governmental policies, there is little evidence of efforts to develop a unique ethos. (Xun, 2012, p. 244)

Are Canadian university scholars ready to join hands with young Chinese scholars such as this author and develop linkages that respond to the real human, social and environmental needs universities should be concerned about in both countries? Clearly, this is one of the urgent lessons that has to be learnt from the legacy of the past. It may be that there are more resources now on the Chinese side than the Canadian side for such efforts, but first there needs to be a vision. “Where there is no vision, the people perish” (Proverbs 29:18, King James Bible). Or, in Confucian terms, “The master focuses on what is fundamental, and the way grows once the foundation is established” (君子务本, 本立而道生, Analects 1:2).

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