

## University Linkages and International Development Assistance: Lessons from the Canada-China Experience

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### Abstract

*This paper compares two Canada-China university linkage programs, namely the Canada-China Management Education Program (CCMEP) and Canada-China University Linkage Program (CCULP), to examine their historical contribution to the development of Chinese higher education during the 1980s-90s. Two theoretical lenses are employed, world systems theory, and cosmopolitanism. The findings reveal three key differences between the two programs: (1) while the impact of CCMEP was limited to the field of management education, knowledge and skills from CCULP were disseminated in a wide range of areas; (2) unlike CCMEP, which largely achieved institutional goals only, CCULP projects were able to meet the objectives set by participating institutions and the Canadian International Development Agency; and (3) CCMEP projects were more affected by the 1989 Tiananmen event than CCULP projects. In spite of these differences, both programs shared many commonalities and greatly supported the development of Chinese universities, enabling them to contribute significantly to China's social and economic transformation over the two-decade period following the launch of its open door policy. Based on the history of both programs, the paper concludes with three key recommendations, concerning the significant role of institutional and national agencies, as well as people-to-people relationships in development aid activities.*

**Keywords:** Canada, China, International development, Educational cooperation, University partnership

### Introduction

The late 1970s and early 1980s was a turning point in China's modern history, when the country – under Deng Xiaoping – began to make economic reforms to re-join the world economy. Deng's Four Modernizations were launched to enable China to become a world power in the areas of agriculture, industry, national defense, and science and technology (Agelasto & Adamson, 1998; Hayhoe, 1989). The higher education sector was accordingly restructured so as to be able to produce qualified human resources to meet the demands of this major initiative. However, due to the chaos and tragedy of the Cultural Revolution in the previous decade (1966-1976), Chinese higher education had lagged far behind its Western counterparts by the late 1970s, especially in terms of science and technology (Agelasto & Adamson, 1998; Hayhoe, 1989). There was a lack of qualified faculty and staff locally who could improve the capacity of the higher education sector. International educational cooperation, bilateral and multilateral alike, was thus seen as crucial for importing new knowledge, innovation, and more advanced science and technology from developed nations into China during its early years of recovering from the Cultural Revolution.

Canada was among the first of Western developed countries to re-build official relations with China, as well as to provide it with development assistance immediately after the latter began to be reintegrated into the world. In particular, the Canadian International Development

Agency (CIDA) focused on helping China develop its human resources, by establishing university linkage programs between the two countries. Two of the major CIDA-funded university linkage programs were the Canada-China Management Education Program (CCMEP), which ran between 1983 and 1994 and the Canada-China University Linkage Program (CCULP) between 1988 and 1995. These two projects, among others, played a vital role in improving the capacity of Chinese universities to respond to China's development needs during the 1980s and 1990s. In fact, Canada provided China with around CDN 250 million dollars of development assistance from 1981 to 2000 (Jackson, 2003), most of which went to education, nearly one fourth of the World Bank loans to Chinese higher education at the time. Canada's development assistance approach of pairing its universities with Chinese universities was also relatively unique, in comparison with the smaller scale assistance projects other Western countries provided Chinese higher education throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

It is important to point out that China has also been seen to adopt a distinct approach from a number of Western DAC [Development Assistance Committee] donors, in its involvement in educational collaboration with the global South for over a period of 60 years. In recent years, China's assistance approach has gained increasing attention at the international level, and also, wider recognition and respect, at least by many developing countries, including those in the African region, where much of China's large-scale educational aid has been focused on higher education development and professional training (King, 2013). These sub-sectors have been seen as indispensable for producing competitive skilled labor in the global knowledge economy, but unfortunately, have largely been ignored by many Western governments in their international projects. As King (2013) points out, since early on, China has always emphasised mutual benefits and equality in its international educational collaboration. Hence, while the major emphasis of this paper is on the comparative analysis of CCMEP and CCULP programs, we would also reflect on any parallels between Canada-China educational experience during the 1980s and 1990s and China's development approach in its international educational assistance.

The purpose of this paper is to make a comparative analysis of CCMEP and CCULP programs to explore their historical contribution to the development and growth of Chinese higher education in the 1980s and 1990s. The study begins with the discussion on the theoretical frameworks of the critical neo-Marxist approach of world systems theory and cosmopolitanism. The qualitative research method is then presented, followed by an overview of CCMEP and CCULP programs. Next, a comparative analysis is made, based on the interview findings and other collected documents. The study concludes by offering three major recommendations, based on lessons learned from the success of both programs.

### **Theoretical Frameworks**

To compare CCMEP and CCULP, this study employs two theoretical perspectives, including world systems theory and cosmopolitanism. In this section, however, it is important that we begin by reviewing another relevant neo-Marxist approach, that of dependency theory, since the world systems concept is closely connected to it. Developed by economists and political scientists in Latin America in the 1940s and 1950s, dependency theory views the world in terms of the center-periphery dichotomy, contending that the state of underdevelopment in the global South after the Second World War has taken place through their political and economic interaction with the North, particularly North America, Western Europe and Japan (Holsti, 1985; McLean, 1983; Altbach, 1977; Carnoy, 1974). Central to this theory is the position that the latter controls the global system by dictating and manipulating all economic and political

rules, at the expense of the former. For instance, in international trade, they are able to take advantage of cheap labor and raw materials in the South, which can then import back manufactured goods at higher cost, making capital outflows exceed the inflows of profit in the South. Hence, it is developed nations that benefit from a trade surplus based on unequal exchange. In this regard, dependency theorists reject the capitalist development theory, which maintains that development is a linear process and all countries would undergo the same stages of development (Holsti, 1985; Carnoy, 1974). Simply put, since the international system takes the form of exploitation by capitalist countries, it is impossible for developing nations to “duplicate the process of change which took place in the developed countries” (Carnoy, 1974, p. 53).

In education, dependency theory began to be widely adopted in the 1960s and 1970s as a critique of the failure of many international development programs in developing nations (Carnoy, 1974; Altbach, 1977; McLean, 1983). Within this frame, educational planning and development in the South in the post-World War II period became increasingly dependent on the expertise and resources of Western scholars, mainly in the form of foreign assistance. The adoption of western models had led not only to the failure of knowledge transfer in international educational programs, but also to the marginalization of local knowledge in developing nations over the years. The resulting issues of educational inequality and dependency between the North and the South, in the long run, help perpetuate economic and political dominance of the former over the latter. Hence, through the lens of dependency theory, international university linkage programs would be likely to provide greater benefits to Northern institutions than their Southern counterparts.

Drawing on dependency theory, world systems theory also discusses the issue of inequality and dependency between developed and developing countries. However, world systems theorists argue that the global order is a complex construct, with many countries holding multiple roles. Hence, instead of viewing the world merely from the center-periphery dichotomy, they add the in-between category of semi-peripheral countries or regions, which they argue played a significant role in maintaining and reinforcing the structural inequalities among countries in the world (Wallerstein, 1974; Forster, 1999). According to Immanuel Wallerstein – a pioneering scholar in the development of world systems theory – “the existence of the third category means precisely that the upper stratum is not faced with the unified opposition of all the others because the middle stratum is both exploited and exploiter” (Wallerstein, 1974, p. 405). In addition, while dependency theory views the center-periphery relationships as zero-sum interactions, world systems theory contends that the position of each country within the global system is not fixed, meaning they could move up or down, depending on how they react or respond to global realities.

In recent decades world systems theory has gained more currency than dependency theory, in explaining issues of inequality within the global system. One of the early examples that support the former was the rapid economic growth, also commonly known as “the economic miracle”, of four Asian societies, namely Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan and South Korea, which began in the 1960s. Later, a number of other emerging economies also surprised the world, including Malaysia, Thailand, China, India and recently Vietnam. China’s economic success, in particular, has been phenomenal, with its annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth of about 10% from 1979 to 2011 (Sutter, 2012). By 2010, it had surpassed Japan and become the world’s second largest economy (Sutter, 2012), indicating a shift in its economic position toward the center. Obviously, the current world order has been restructured and reshaped by the changing geopolitics after the end of the Cold War, as well as the intense

process of globalization over the last twenty years, which has enabled many countries to progress, while at the same time, challenged others, economically and politically.

World systems theory has also garnered more attention than its dependency counterpart in discussing educational issues within the global order. As Forster (1999) pointed out, many countries hold multiple roles at the international level, both as donors and as recipients of foreign educational assistance. For instance, looking at the recent development of higher education in the Southeast Asian region, one could see that countries such as China, India, Thailand, and South Korea, have recently been seen as emerging donors for such countries as Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar (NORRAG, 2007; Sato et al., 2010). China has also been seen as one of the major aid providers to higher education in the African region as well (King, 2008; Gillespie, 2001). In fact, since the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the country had acted as a donor in its relations with other Third World countries (King, 2013).

Another practical aspect of framing educational issues within the world systems lens is related to the possible benefits each country could gain from participating in the global system. Again, China offers the clearest example here. Along with its economic growth over the past 30 years, Chinese higher education has significantly expanded and had enrolled 29 million students by 2008 – the world's largest in absolute numbers (Zha, 2011). Also, since the mid-1990s, China has also focused on strengthening its research capacity, through introducing a number of policy initiatives, including Projects 211 and 985, which had supported the rapid upgrading of 112 research-intensive universities – or 10% of the total number of Chinese universities – by 2013 (Zha & Zhou, 2013). The Times Higher Education World University Rankings (2013-14) shows that over 10 Chinese universities had already joined the top world 400 universities by 2013. Hence, while it still takes time for Chinese universities to be part of the world's elite league, comparable to their western counterparts, in terms of knowledge production, science and technology, it is not an exaggeration to conclude that Chinese higher education has greatly benefited from and moved forward well in the global competition over the years. In fact, China is not alone. In recent years, many elite universities in the Asia Pacific region have gained more recognition and international status. More than ever before, aspiring for world-class university status has increasingly become part of their ordinary policy discourse. Cummings (2010) is very positive about this changing trend, asserting that at present, while the West is still at the core of knowledge production, Asia “has much more potential – investment, talent, unique biosphere, humanistic objectives, a collaborative spirit, and an impressive array of recent accomplishments – than is generally appreciated, suggesting that the Asia-Pacific region may be emerging as the new power-house of knowledge production” (p. 52). For all these reasons, we argue that world systems theory is most appropriate for this comparative study of CCMEP and CCULP.

An important aspect we emphasise in this paper is the successful history of two major university linkage projects, CCMEP and CCULP. Therefore, we find it useful to embody elements from Kenneth King's (2009) study on international university partnerships in our analytical frame of world systems theory. In particular, we adopt two determining factors for successful international partnership programs, the first of which is related to the length of a visit or study program at a foreign partner institution. As King (2009) explains, “the minimum time to allow a visitor to become somewhat more local is a term or a semester, but, better still, an academic year” (p. 38). A shorter time, he claims, would limit their understanding of systems in the host country. The other factor is the enabling environment, which he also sees as integral to help facilitate and support university partnership activities. This includes human

and financial resources, people's commitment, the local cultural values, and political conditions, among others (King, 2009, p. 45).

While world systems theory is central to our comparative paper, we argue that it would be incomplete to compare CCMEP and CCULP, purely from an economic and political standpoint. Especially, we are convinced that the key to the success and sustainability of CCMEP and CCULP lay in human connections built over the years among academic groups from both countries. Therefore, in this paper, we end our comparative analysis of both programs by looking at them through a cosmopolitan lens (Brown & Held, 2010; Held, 2003; Nussbaum, 2010; Pogge, 1994). As a political theory, cosmopolitanism has a long history, with its origin commonly associated with Stoics' idea of a "citizen of the world" (Brown & Held, 2010; Brock & Brighouse, 2005; Held, 2003; Nussbaum, 2010; Brock, 2009). Such an idea is associated with the argument that everyone is "part of a fraternity of mankind and that as a member of the cosmos he could not be defined merely by his city-state affiliation" (Brown & Held, 2010, p. 4). For centuries, however, cosmopolitanism remained largely concerned with the basic ethical, religious and legal principles (often referred to as moral cosmopolitanism), with a loose connection to practical politics (Brown & Held, 2010).

It was the political philosophy of Immanuel Kant in the 18<sup>th</sup> century that "a more robust transition from a moral cosmopolitan orientation to an institutional position" began to take place (Brown & Held, 2010, p. 9). Kant, in his work *The Metaphysics of Morals*, talked about the need to establish "cosmopolitan law and a universal condition of public right", that could be applied to the issue of justice at the global level (Brown, 2010, p. 55). He also argued in his *Perpetual Peace* that "a cosmopolitan legal condition must not only be concerned with the rightful relations between individuals within states, but also with the rightful relations that should exist between state actors and their rightful treatment of all human beings" (Brown, 2010, p. 45). Such a political philosophy, obviously centered on the notion of a global or international society, has had a significant impact on the recent scholarships of many well-known cosmopolitans, including Martha C. Nussbaum, Onora O'Neill, Charles R. Beitz, Thomas Pogge, and David Held, among others. Hence, most contemporary cosmopolitan thought is related, in one way or another, to the idea of global governance, with some cosmopolitan scholars also suggesting the layout of what institutional designs or political institutions are set up to ensure that principles of moral cosmopolitanism are implemented for the benefits of everyone (Brown & Held, 2010). This means cosmopolitanism places a strong emphasis on human values and dignity, and aims to promote mutuality and equality among different communities and societies.

In recent years, cosmopolitanism has gained more attention and acceptance in the field of international relations in general and in international academic collaboration in particular. This is mainly due to the inability of traditional paradigms, including realism, (neo-)liberalism and the Neo-Marxist approaches of dependency and world systems theories, to fully explain and deal with global issues of dependency and inequality among countries. As Held (2010) argues, the mere focus on maximizing one's own national interests, be they political or economic, has thus far created a number of problems, such as poverty, economic crisis and war. In education, the transfer of knowledge between the North and the South since the decolonization era has, for the most part, been seen as a failure (Crossley & Watson, 2003). Especially, there has been a widening gap between higher education systems in the two different zones. In this regard, it needs to be reiterated that the success of the CCMEP and CCULP programs could not be completely understood only from the economic and political

perspective. Hence, it is important for this study to end the comparative analysis by applying the cosmopolitan lens.

### **Research Methods**

This study uses a qualitative research methodology, which Creswell (2005) describes as “an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting” (p. 1-2). In this approach, the researcher usually relies on “the views of participants; asks broad, general questions; collects data consisting largely of words (or text) from participants; describes and analyzes these words for themes ...” (Creswell, 2005, p. 56). The exploratory nature of the qualitative approach is appropriate for this comparative paper, because, as noted earlier, there has been very limited literature about either CCMEP or CCULP, let alone any analysis of the reasons for their success. Hence, using this approach, the study has been able to unfold the history of Canada-China academic relations in the 1980s and 1990s, from the lived experience of past participants.

This study’s primary method of data collection is semi-structured interviews, supplemented by documents from both primary and secondary sources. The purpose of using these documents was to gain a solid understanding of the emerging themes at the analysis stage. In selecting interview participants, the study utilized a purposive sampling technique – a commonly used strategy in qualitative research. This technique involves recruiting certain groups of people with rich information about a particular phenomenon, individuals or events (Creswell, 2005; Patton, 1987). Hence, over a two-year period from 2011 to 2013, the study has completed over 65 open-ended interviews, with both Canadians and Chinese, who had participated in each program, either as administrators, students or faculty, at the time. Many of them were already retired at the time of our data collection and were located in many different regions of both countries. For the purpose of our study, we designed our interview questions in a way that allowed the participants to narrate their past experience. Once detailed notes were completed, data was coded and analyzed qualitatively, then interpreted in relation to documents that had been collected, to identify emerging themes and reflect on similarities and differences between the two distinct types of linkage project, CCMEP and CCULP. Important to note is that these themes were an important part of our rationale for adopting the theoretical perspectives of world systems theory and cosmopolitanism.

### **An Overview of CCMEP and CCULP**

Relations between Canada and China were officially re-established in 1970, and had improved since then, through trade, Canada’s voting for China’s entry into the U.N. in 1971, several visits to China by Canadian officials (including Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau in 1973), and the establishment of a family reunification program that allowed Chinese residents to emigrate to and be reunited with their relatives in Canada (Wilson, 2001). An educational exchange agreement and the Memorandum on Educational Cooperation between China and Canada were signed in the early 1970s to promote educational and cultural exchanges between the two countries. Such an opportunity allowed more than 2,514 Chinese students and scholars to come to Canada for both short-term and long-term study between 1970 and 1983 (Singer, 1986, p. 8). However, university-to-university cooperative activities between the two countries were quite limited throughout the 1970s. Canada’s official development assistance programs did not take place until 1981, when Canada informed China that it was eligible for Canadian official development assistance (Maybee, 1985). This marked the beginning of Canada’s huge development assistance for Chinese higher education as the country was being reintegrated into the world.

From the outset, Canada's educational collaborative program in China was based on the strategic concept of "the multiplication of contacts at the thinking level", suggesting that with its limited resources, Canada would focus its development assistance programs mainly on helping China develop its human resources (AUCC, 1993; Wilson, 2001). The AUCC's report in 1993 indicated that throughout the 1980s, CIDA spent an annual amount of between CND \$10 and \$12 million on the human resources development sector in China. Most of the funding went to supporting university linkage programs, the two major ones the Canada-China Management Education Program (CCMEP) and the Canada-China University Linkage Program (CCULP).

#### *The Canada-China Management Education Program (CCMEP)*

Following a visit to China by Canada's Minister of External Affairs in 1981 and a planning mission to China 1982, the Memorandum of Understanding between CIDA and the State Education Commission of China (SEDC) was signed in 1983, with the purpose to strengthen management education programs in eight of China's key universities (Ryan et al., 1987; Hayhoe, 1989). Both parties agreed upon the establishment of the Canada-China Management Education Program (CCMEP), which linked eight Chinese universities with ten Canadian universities. This first phase CCMEP program ran between 1983 and 1988 and was completed with a total expense of CND \$12.1 million (CIDA, 1992). The second-phase projects (1987-1994) were an expansion of the first-phase program to include 24 Canadian and 24 Chinese schools, with the main focus remaining on management education. However, there was a shift of emphasis in the second phase from mainly training managers, despite still going on, to training Chinese faculty (McLean, 1986). The total expense for the second phase was CND \$27.5 million (CIDA, 1995). Chinese provinces in which CCMEP projects were carried out included Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Hubei, Hainan, Fujian, Guangdong, Shaanxi and Zhejiang.

In CCMEP, the responsibility for implementing the projects was passed to the universities concerned, immediately after CIDA and China's State Education Commission signed the agreement (Song, 1994; Maybee, 1985). Partnering universities then set up their own management team to govern the projects. For instance, the linkage project between the University of Toronto (U of T) and Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST) was managed by two management teams: one was located in the Faculty of Management at U of T and the other in the College of Economics and Management at HUST (Song, 1994). Through university-to-university agreements, various operational objectives were designed, including "training in Canada of young Chinese faculty to the MBA, M.Sc. or Ph.D. level; training in Canada senior Chinese faculty through visiting scholar programs and short-term visit; provision of course, lectures, or research in China by visiting Canadian professors; and provision of books, equipment and materials for management training in China" (Ryan et al., 1987, p. 1-2). The expansion of the CCMEP program in the second phase also added numerous new collaborative activities, especially at the national level. Those activities covered study tours, conferences, joint research, and a national Ph.D. program in China (CIDA, 1992). It should be noted that CCMEP operational objectives in the first phase were broadly designed in a flexible manner so that academics from both sides could explore and learn about each other, due to their limited knowledge of the cultural and academic differences between the two countries, during their early years of partnership (McLean, 1986). Lessons learned from the first phase were, therefore, useful for the planning and design of CCMEP objectives in the second phase, which became more concise and structured (McLean,

1986). Overall, CCMEP has thus far been the largest and longest international collaborative project in Chinese higher education (Mirus & Wegner, 2010).

This program was in response to China's need of management education from Western countries to help accommodate its economic reforms, based on the Four Modernizations plan. As pointed out earlier, due to the chaos and tragedy of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), China had lagged far behind other countries by the late 1970s, in terms of science and technology (Agelasto & Adamson, 1998; Hayhoe, 1989). Also, there was a lack of technical and entrepreneurial skills among Chinese managers at the time, with more than two thirds of them lacking formal technical education (Falkenheim, 1987). Until 1983, China had only five institutes for management training, with a total of 100 teachers and 2,000 students (Hayhoe, 1989). This training system itself had long been dominated by the centrally planned economy concept, which became less relevant to the 1978 economic reforms. Thus, Canada's management education programs were to meet China's urgent need for new knowledge and skills. It was also interesting that China's international cooperation strategies at the time were different from those of other developing countries. Instead of looking at assistance to meet its basic human needs, China focused mainly on economic growth and modernization (Wilson, 2001).

On the Canadian side, maintaining and increasing trade with China were seen as major motives behind Canada's support for CCMEP. During the 1960s, China was Canada's largest wheat buyer and by the early 1970s, Canada's overall export to China had reached \$ 200 million, representing China's third largest trading partner (AUCC, 1985). With many ministerial visits between the two countries involved mainly in the promotion of trade, Canada's export to China kept increasing throughout the 1970s. The opening-up of China and its economy in the late 1970s was thus seen as an opportunity for Canada to increase their trade activities with China. In fact, as Wilson (2001) indicates, the Canadian business community was trying to lobby their government to use development assistance to improve their trade with China. Canada's Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce, along with CIDA and the Department of External Affairs, played an active role in Canada's discussions with China at the time. Hence, the development of CCMEP was seen to be closely tied to Canada's considerable economic interest in China.

#### *The Canada-China University Linkage Project (CCULP)*

By the mid-1980s, relationships between Canada and China as well as between their higher education institutions had greatly improved and matured. With its rapid economic growth, China began to focus on other development areas, in addition to the economic sphere, and thus, sought Canada's support (Wilson, 2001). At this request, Canada announced in 1986 that CIDA would double its development assistance in China to CND \$200 million over the coming years and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) was instructed to develop a development plan for China, called "Canadian Strategies for China", which would focus on the development of human resources in other areas, in addition to trade (Wilson, 2001). The development plan led not only to the expansion of CCMEP into the second phase (1987-1994), as discussed above, but also the development of a new program in 1988, called the Canada-China University Linkage Program (CCULP).

Unlike CCMEP, which focused mainly on management education, CCULP aimed to help Chinese universities to improve their capacities in a wide range of development areas, including agriculture, forestry, energy, transportation, and telecommunications (AUCC, 1993). At the institutional level, CCULP projects set up seven major themes to be achieved by

participating Chinese universities. Those themes were: (1) the enhancement of university capacities to dealing with their external environment; (2) development of university management capacities; (3) enhancement of teaching; (4) development of curriculum; (5) enhancement of research; (6) enhancement of accessibility; and (7) enhancement of equity (AUCC, 1990). This was different from CCMEP in which there were no unifying themes at the institutional level. This was because the responsibility of all CCMEP projects was passed to universities involved, making the operational objectives varied among all institutions (Ryan et al., 1987). In addition to its support for setting up institutional goals, CIDA included three major priorities in CCULP: (1) sustainable development, meaning that Chinese universities would be able to maintain the activities started by the projects, and that Chinese trainees who study in Canada would be able to be re-integrated into their home upon the completion of their training abroad; (2) participation of women in the development; and (3) environmentally sound development (AUCC, 1991). By comparison, these CIDA's development priorities were not included in CCMEP.

From 1988 to 1995, CCULP covered 31 projects that linked Chinese universities and their affiliated teaching hospitals with Canadian universities. Among those projects, 29% were in health and nutrition; 26% in engineering; 13% in education; another 13% in environmental sciences; and 6% each in agriculture, community development and international relations (Pan, 1995). Similar to CCMEP, CCULP involved such activities as faculty exchanges, collaborative research, training of Chinese students and scholars in Canada, program and curriculum development, conferences, seminars, and study tours in both countries (Pan, 1995). However, unlike CCMEP, which covered only key institutions, as discussed above, CCULP projects were widely dispersed to include small and inland institutions (Pan, 1995). Chinese provinces in which CCULP projects were carried out included Beijing, Guangdong, Shanghai, Tianjin, Hubei, Zhenjiang, Shaanxi, Jilin, Jiangsu, Sichuan, and Gansu.

Also, while there was no executing agency for CCMEP, CCULP projects were managed by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) – a not-for-profit, non-governmental institution whose role is to promote the interests of Canadian universities at home and abroad and also administers, on behalf of government agencies and companies, many international collaborative programs (Nassr & Tunney, 2000). Hence, on the Canadian side, AUCC was responsible for “the coordination, implementation, monitoring and financial management of the CCULP program ...” (Pan, 1995, p. 104). The responsibility on the Chinese side was delegated by the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation to the State Education Commission. The total expense for the CCULP program was CND \$19 million, which was funded by the Canadian International Development Agency, with some matching funding from the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation (CIDA, 1992). Important to note is that all CIDA-funded projects, including CCMEP and CCULP, received an extension of at least one year due to the delay caused by the 1989 Tiananmen incident (Further discussed later in this paper).

Obviously, Canada's increased economic activities with China accounted for the former's decision to expand CCMEP to its second phase as well as to establish a new program of CCULP (Frolic, 2011). However, the fact that CIDA tried to embed its development priorities in CCULP projects suggests Canada's move away from its mere focus on aid ties to its role as one of the actors in promoting sustainable development in China. This policy was clearly related to Canadian political engagement at the international level, especially during the Cold War period. As Trilokekar (2009) points out, after the Second World War, Canada was trying to develop its international image, through establishing “its unique role as a non-colonial,

middle power, seeing itself neither as center or periphery in the world state” (p. 132). Instead of imposing its own ideology on developing countries or following that of either the capitalist or the communist blocs, Canada, like Norway and Sweden, focused its international assistance programs on meeting the development needs of developing countries, including China (Weiler, 1984). Hence, one could see that Canadian foreign policy behind CCMEP and CCULP was economically and politically motivated.

### **Findings and Discussion**

This section presents the comparative analysis based on the emerging themes from the interviews and collected documents, including government reports, project reports and policy papers. One of the key themes is related to the emphasis of both programs on sending Chinese scholars to Canada, either as visiting scholars or graduate students, for their professional development. The study revealed that through this opportunity, Chinese scholars were able to upgrade and broaden their knowledge in their own field, and adopt new approaches of teaching and learning. Like many others, one Chinese interviewee who had participated in the CCMEP project as an MBA student and was a vice dean at Tsinghua University at the time of our interview asserted that knowledge from Canada was very practical and relevant to his career, when China was moving toward a Western model of market economy (Interview with Tsinghua University participant, 7 July 2011). Before then, he had been trained with the concept of a planned economy, which became irrelevant to the 1978 economic reforms. Another interviewee who went for his Ph.D. at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto under CCULP expressed the same opinion about the practicality and applicability of his education from Canada (Interview with East China Normal University participant, 1 July 2011). For instance, he viewed as important the involvement of Ph.D. students in the development of course outlines for their future teaching. Also, to stimulate his students’ critical thinking, he began to adopt a student-centered approach, providing more opportunities for students to participate in class discussion. These were among the teaching and learning methods, which he claimed he had learned from Canada. Obviously, participants’ good understanding of the Canadian education system and its values could be attributable to their lengthy stay in Canada, which was around six months for visiting scholars and somewhat longer for graduate students.

Another important theme of our comparison is the focus of both programs on strengthening and improving the quality of Chinese universities. Many Canadian professors were sent to China to assist Chinese professors in developing new programs as well as supervising doctoral students. For the first time, for instance, nine Chinese universities were able to develop their MBA programs, eight of which were part of CCMEP projects. According to the participant from Tsinghua University, this would have been very difficult, without CIDA’s support, since all their professors came from engineering backgrounds, yet they were mandated to develop new programs in management. Another Chinese professor participating in CCMEP also indicated that many new MBA courses were offered in the Chinese language as well (Interview with Xiamen University participant, 12 July 2011). Likewise, some Chinese universities, participating in CCULP, were able to develop and strengthen several Ph.D. programs. A Chinese participant in the partnership program between the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and Beijing Normal University pointed out that most Chinese professors at the time had no experience supervising doctoral students at all, so they needed support from their Canadian counterparts (Interview with Beijing Normal University participant, 6 July 2011). He further claimed that at present, his institution – Beijing Normal University – has a strong Ph.D. program in China. Another example was the Tianjin Medical University School of Nursing (TMUSN), which through its partnership with the University of Ottawa’s School

of Nursing, was able to establish the associate's degree program in 1992 and master's program in 1995 (Nassr & Tunney, 2000). Overall, all interviewees mentioned that Chinese universities supported by both CIDA's programs have made remarkable progress over the years, and have become among well-known institutions in China by now, with international standards of teaching and research in a number of fields.

The wider dissemination of knowledge among Chinese academic communities was another interesting theme in this comparative study. As the Xiamen University participant explained, the MBA course books developed by Chinese professors and their Canadian counterparts at Xiamen University were also used by the Tsinghua program at the time. Similarly, medical knowledge under CCULP was also widely disseminated through strong networks among Chinese hospitals in remote and rural China. According to Nassr and Tunney (2000), "Once trained, the staff at Guangzhou Children's Hospital (GCH) were able to improve the quality and delivery of health care to the children of Guangzhou Province and South China..." (p. 6). All this indicates that the long existence of networks among scholars in China (Hayhoe, 1989) played an important role in disseminating new knowledge and skills within the country. This cultural tradition could be seen as part of the enabling environment that helped facilitate knowledge transfer from Canada to China.

It is important to note that due to its main focus on management education, the social impact of the CCMEP program was primarily related to the management education field in China. CIDA's development priorities, such as the environmental sustainability and women's participation may not have received sufficient consideration in CCMEP projects (Bernard et al., 1992). By comparison, with its broader focused areas, CCULP projects had a far-reaching impact on a wide range of knowledge areas. Especially, in addition to the above-mentioned positive effects, CCULP had involved women in many development projects, recognizing their important role in the society. The establishment of the Chinese Minority Women's Studies Center under the CUN-SFU partnership was a good example of this (Nassr & Tunney, 2000). Also, many CCULP projects were concerned with environmental and cultural sustainability (Nassr & Tunney, 2000).

Most importantly, both CCMEP and CCULP programs achieved CIDA's purpose of "multiplication of contacts at the thinking level". The AUCC's report in 1992 indicated that "many Chinese professors [who participated in CCULP] were linked to Chinese policy makers through national advisory boards and councils, the National Academy of Science and the National Environmental Protection Agency" (1992). Both projects also developed networks among Chinese and Canadian scholars, through conferences, missions, meetings of project directors and newsletters. The report was consistent with our study's findings. Especially, all interviewees claimed that many past participants became leaders in their respective fields upon returning to China. Some of them later played an important role in policy making, as consultants or advisors, in many Chinese government entities beyond academia. This means the projects had a wider policy impact on Chinese society. Jackson (2003) indicates that, "as many as one-third of the projects in the higher education portfolio were judged to have made significant impacts on policy" at both the provincial and municipal levels (p. 10). Again, it should be noted that CCULP had made wider contacts outside of academia than CCMEP, due to its broader focus (Bernard et al., 1992).

The third key theme regarding the comparison between CCMEP and CCULP was concerned with the important role of an executing agency, in this case the AUCC, in translating Canada's development policy into practice at the institutional level, bridging the policy gap between the

government and universities, especially on the Canadian side. As indicated earlier, the responsibility for implementing all CCMEP projects devolved upon the universities concerned, immediately after CIDA and the Chinese Ministry of Education signed the partnership agreement. Therefore, CCMEP's operational objectives were overall designed by Canadian and Chinese participating universities, with limited involvement from CIDA. On the Canadian side, the only group who helped coordinate and organise CCMEP at the national level was the Federation of Deans of Canadian Management Schools (Interview with Canadian Management Dean, 4 June 2012). Basically, representatives of Canadian business schools participating in CCMEP held regular meetings to discuss issues concerning the program operational activities. The group also provided CIDA with annual reports regarding the progress and challenges facing CCMEP in each phase. However, only at the end of the first phase in 1988 was a CCMEP office established at McGill University, with financial support from CIDA. According to what a Canadian participant who ran the office pointed out, this was because CIDA expected CCMEP activities in the second phase to be more structured and organised (Interview with Canadian CCMEP officer, 23 September 2012). Despite all its support, CIDA was not directly involved in the management of the CCMEP office or the overall activities of CCMEP program.

The lack of involvement of CIDA in the management and operation of CCMEP illustrates the fact that, like other developed countries, Canadian universities have enjoyed a strong tradition of institutional autonomy, and their approach toward their international cooperation with universities in other countries is also quite independent of their own government. In this regard, there is always a lack of policy consistency between the government and universities (Trilokekar, 2009; Pestieau & Tait, 2004). In fact, Pestieau and Tait (2004) explained that the Canadian academic community oftentimes expresses their discontent with CIDA's bureaucratic system and interference. Hence, CCMEP projects were operated mainly by universities from both countries, although CIDA was the major source of funding. As a result, the program could only achieve its goals set at the institutional level, without much relevance to CIDA's development policy (Ryan et al., 1987).

By comparison, CCULP projects were coordinated by the AUCC, which played a key role in bridging the policy gap between national and institutional levels. In particular, the AUCC were responsible for the coordination, implementation, monitoring and financial management of CCULP (Pan, 1995). Thus, both China's and CIDA's development priorities were incorporated into the CCULP program, as discussed above. During the program implementation, the AUCC organised regular meetings among project coordinators and regular exchange visits by universities concerned as well as by staff from both the AUCC and from CIDA (Pan, 1995). In fact, during our study, one Canadian participant on the Canadian side greatly appreciated the supporting role of AUCC in international university activities, in the absence of a central government agency, such as a ministry or a department of education (Interview with AUCC participant, 4 October 2012). Therefore, unlike CCMEP, which could only meet objectives at the institutional level, CCULP achieved the goals of both Canadian government and universities. It is important, however, to point out that women trainees were also included in CCMEP activities (Ryan et al., 1987), suggesting that such CIDA's development priorities as women's engagement were somehow a concern for CCMEP projects, albeit not directly stated in their operational objectives.

The fourth theme for comparison relates to the negative impact of the 1989 Tiananmen event on both CCMEP and CCULP. Ten years after the open door policies were introduced, the Chinese economy had made significant progress, with an annual growth of around 10 percent

(CIDA, 1992). This had substantially improved people's living standards. At the same time, however, the young progressive generation of intellectuals became unsatisfied with limited job opportunities, inflation, the corrupt system controlled by a small elite group, and "the orthodox Marxist and Maoist social science theories" as well (Pan, 1995). To express their discontent toward the government and its system, students began to march on Tiananmen Square in April, 1989. An increasing number of students, elderly scholars, journalists, workers and residents later joined the demonstrations, demanding more economic reforms and liberalization (Wilson, 2001). On June 4, 1989, the government launched a military crackdown against those unarmed civilians, killing hundreds of them (Wilson, 2001). The event shocked the world and resulted in strong reactions and sanctions from the international community. With regard to foreign assistance, most Western countries called a temporary halt to their international cooperative projects with China. For instance, France decided to suspend most of their normal exchange programs with the country, as a response to its bloody crackdown (Hayhoe, 1989).

However, Canada took a different approach from other Western countries by maintaining and increasing educational and cultural programs with China so as to avoid isolating it from the international community (Hayhoe, 1989; CIDA, 1992). CCMEP and CCULP were still affected by the event, though. First, there was at least a one year delay of both programs and as a result, most university linkages were later extended one year to make up for the time lost. Second, as many interviewees mentioned, many trainees and scholars who were studying in Canada at the time under both programs did not return after the event, due to their concerns about their safety if returning to China. For the same reason, the Canadian government at the same time supported students who wanted to stay in Canada as well (Pan, 1995; Wilson, 2001). As a result, the Tsinghua University participant mentioned that among eleven Tsinghua students funded by CCMEP for MBA degrees in Canada, only one went back home upon completion of his/her study. He further explained that half of the visiting scholars also decided to stay in Canada after the Tiananmen event. The non-return problem had a greater impact on CCMEP than on CCULP, largely because the latter had just begun. It should be noted that as Mirus and Wegner (2010) indicated, the non-return problem for the CCMEP program had taken place even before the 1989 Tiananmen event, because most students and scholars saw more opportunities staying in Canada than returning to China, especially at that time. Hence, the Tiananmen event exacerbated a brain drain that had already begun.

Due to the non-return problem after the 1989 Tiananmen event, CIDA's policy on in-Canada study in both CCMEP and CCULP changed from supporting young scholars for degree or long-term programs to sending more senior faculty to Canada for a short-term study, as indicated by many interviewees. The changing policy also applied to those who had already been recruited for their study in Canada. For example, one interviewee mentioned that 15 Chinese from the Norman Bethune Faculty of Medicine at Jilin University could not go to Canada after the 1989 Tiananmen event, although they had already finished their French training at Beijing Normal University as a preparation for their study in Quebec (Interview with Jilin University participant, 11 July 2011). On the positive side, CIDA's changing policy, at the same time, enabled Chinese universities, under both CCMEP and CCULP, to establish their master's and Ph.D. programs with CIDA's support, as already discussed earlier.

Now, through the cosmopolitan lens, we move our analysis to the last theme of mutuality in the approach to knowledge transfer, which was manifested in both CCMEP and CCULP. According to our study, this theme was seen as key to the success and sustainability of both programs, making them relatively unique, compared to other international partnerships in

contemporary Chinese higher education. First, while we indicated earlier that economic and political interests lay behind Canada's support for CCMEP and CCULP, China was in fact allowed to determine what programs were of best interest for its development. For example, before CCMEP came into existence, a delegation of 23 people from the eight Chinese universities were invited to the conference to discuss the development of CCMEP in Hull, Quebec in November 1982 (Maybee, 1985). It was interesting that these Chinese delegates not only came to Canada for the conference but also spent some time visiting many Canadian business schools to learn from them. Related to this point, one Canadian professor who was selected for the CCMEP project said that these Chinese delegates travelled to find people whom they thought would be most appropriate for working in China. Plus, at the conference, the Chinese were the ones to decide on ten of out 28 universities to participate in the CCMEP project (Maybee, 1985). Likewise, the CCULP projects were also initiated and requested by the Chinese side. Hence, from the very beginning, Canada showed great respect for China and its development priorities.

Also, a number of interviewees from both sides retained their memories of the CIDA-funded programs quite well and mentioned that their experience with CCMEP and CCULP were deep and gratifying, personally and professionally. One participant in the Laval-Norman Bethune partnership said that both sides treated each other like a family and their relationships remained strong although formal partnerships ended (interview with Jilin University participant, 11 July 2011). Canadian participants also expressed the same feelings about their deep understanding of Chinese culture and values after joining CCMEP and/or CCULP. Both sides viewed their relationships as genuine, with many interviewees claiming that although Canada was the major provider of financial support to Chinese higher education at the time, CCMEP and CCULP took the form of equal partnerships, rather than donor-recipient relationships. Having said this, most of them felt that connections had gradually disappeared once CIDA's funding ended. Furthermore, they registered their concern about the lack of such deep people-to-people engagement in recent international projects in Chinese higher education, most of which are mainly concerned with revenue generation.

### **Concluding Remarks and Recommendations**

In this paper, we have compared two key Canada-China university linkage programs, namely CCMEP and CCULP, to examine how they contributed to the development of Chinese higher education in the 1980s and 1990s. The discussions have revealed three key differences between the two programs. First, with its broader focus, CCULP had produced a wider impact on Chinese higher education and the society in a variety of knowledge areas, while the dissemination of knowledge from CCMEP had been limited to the field of management education. Second, CCULP was able to achieve its objectives set by both participating institutions and CIDA, with the AUCC playing a coordinating role between the government and institutions. By comparison, the responsibilities of CCMEP, once the program had been initiated, devolved directly on each participating institution, so the program could mainly achieve its institutional objectives only. The third difference was that CCULP was less affected by the issue of brain drain, partly caused by the 1989 Tiananmen event, than CCMEP. This was due to the fact that the former just began when the event erupted, while the latter had already been in its second phase. Despite all these differences, both programs shared many commonalities and were, in most respects, successful in the transfer of knowledge between the two countries.

Looking back to our theoretical argument of using world systems theory as one of the analytical lenses, we could see that Chinese higher education has made remarkable progress

over the last thirty years, benefiting a great deal from the country's interactions with the world community. As this study pointed out, both CCMEP and CCULP made a significant contribution to this history of successful development. Now, we would like to end this paper by providing three key recommendations. First, we have learned from CCMEP and CCULP that participating Chinese institutions had a clear sense of the patterns of knowledge they wanted, and tried to select Canadian universities best matched with their own interests and needs. In the face of limited resources, they also had to make hard choices regarding their selection of outstanding faculty and students with the right skills and commitment to participate in CCMEP and CCULP. Most interviewees saw this as one of factors leading to the success of both programs. Based on this lesson, one of our recommendations is that to successfully engage in international university partnerships, institutions in developing nations need to first have a clear vision and understand their own needs, capacities and limitations.

Second, a comparative analysis between CCMEP and CCULP has also suggested that nation-states remain important in coordinating and regulating the higher educational sector, especially within developing nations. From the beginning, the Chinese government took the lead in initiating partnership agreements and designating their higher education institutions to participate in both CCMEP and CCULP. The patterns of foreign knowledge and skills were selected based on the national development plan, with CCMEP and CCULP designed respectively to support China's economic reform and to tackle development issues the country was experiencing. This finding supports Cummings' (2010) argument that the economic success of many Asian countries, including their educational progress, has been largely attributable to the facilitating role of their respective governments. Hence, our second recommendation is that in their international university partnerships, developing nations should be free to develop their own education policy and be allowed options to explore patterns of education best suited for their national development.

Our first and second recommendations, which are concerned with the significant role of institutional and national agencies, reflect that Canada, as a donor, emphasised the development priorities of China, by helping the country meet its economic and social needs at the time. Hence, one could see a parallel between Canada's international assistance approach, adopted in CCMEP and CCULP, and China's development model with other developing nations over the last 60 years. King's (2013) recent study on China-African education collaboration has brought to light many characteristics of China's international development approach. As noted in the introductory part of the paper, since early on, China has used its assistance to respond to the demand of countries in the global South, including the African region, where much of China's education aid has recently been focused on higher education development and professional training. China has also stressed the importance of the local autonomy and ownership of development programs. For instance, all schools and other educational institutions built by Chinese assistance are always handed over to local ministries of education. Even Confucius institutes in Africa are jointly directed by the Chinese and local universities. In recent years, the Chinese government has also provided tens of thousands of African students and professionals with long- and short-term training in China. Above all, as King (2013) concludes in his study, China does not try to present itself as a donor to the African region, but instead, maintains a form of South-South cooperation, which both parties could benefit. Hence, Canada and China share many commonalities in their international educational development models, which have increasingly gained wider recognition and respect at the international level, as compared to many other DAC donors.

Another important lesson we learned from this comparative study is that regardless of their different areas of focus, CCMEP and CCULP had established strong human connections between academics from the two countries – the kind of relationships that had allowed university partnerships to take place in a two-way, rather than unidirectional manner. Such deep human relationships were seen to build the foundation for the success and sustainability of both programs. This lesson makes us more aware of the paradoxical realities of our increasingly interconnected world in which on the one hand, cultural sensitivity becomes a main concern for peace and prosperity for the international community, but on the other hand, revenue generation seems to become the major incentive for international university partnerships around the globe. I would like to echo Samuel Huntington’s statement in *The Clash of Civilizations (1993)*: “the conflicts of the future will occur along the cultural fault lines separating civilizations,” and his suggestion that an understanding of different cultural values and knowledge systems would be the only solution (p. 25). In this regard, our last recommendation is that to ensure successful and sustainable university partnerships, more attention should be paid to building human relationships, through respect and willingness to be receptive to different cultural values.

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